PDS Partners

BRIDGING RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

Connecting Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy and Intentional Internship Placements in PDS and Partnership Schools

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Due to large size of our teacher education programs our university has both Professional Development Schools (PDS) and Partnership Schools. Our PDS network consists of 21 active schools in five local districts and is one of the largest and longest-standing Professional Development Schools Networks in the nation. Our network includes partnerships between the university professional education programs and P-12 schools and consists of a three-member Coordinating Council to include a school-based administrator, school-based clinical adjunct, and university-based liaison. The mission of our PDS is to collaboratively establish and maintain research and innovative practices that seek to investigate student learning, professional development, clinical preparation, and induction to institutionalize best practices across learning contexts. The Partnership Schools in our network are P-12 schools that provide clinical placements for pre-service teacher as they work side by side with classroom teachers to hone their teaching skills and meet university course requirements. In Partnership Schools, classroom teachers support our pre-service teachers as they try innovative ideas that align theoretical concepts learned in their university classrooms with practical embedded experiences in P-12 sites. In addition, University-based faculty also visit Partnership Sites regularly to supervise advanced practicum students and interns. There are currently over 144 partnership schools across the state.

Haberman (1995) notes that beginning teachers have minimal experience in diverse settings. The university considers diversity of experiences as integral for teacher preparation and strives to achieve diverse placements of our students throughout their internship experiences. This paper describes and examines how our coursework was reflected in the pre-service teachers' internship experiences in partnership and PDS schools. We wanted to see how closely aligned to theory these experiences were and to use this understanding to make improvements to our existing program. The goal was for pre-service teachers to engage in the theory of culturally sustaining pedagogy ([CSP]; Ladson-Billings,1995, 2001; Paris, 2017) in their coursework and enter diverse classrooms that reflected those practices. The perspectives of the selected pre-service teachers and their coaching teachers were collected to better understand

President's Corner

Michael Cosenza, California Lutheran University

As we get further into the fall, I would like to provide you with an update of the ongoing work of the NAPDS. From July 26-28, 2019, the elected members of the executive committee met with all the committee chairs and journal editors for a three-day NAPDS leadership retreat. During this retreat the leadership reviewed and updated the association's strategic plan, set goals and objectives for the next three annual conferences (2020-2022) and reflected on the meaning of the association's vision and mission statements. Work on the strategic plan will continue with smaller sub-committees over the next few months, and the conference committee will be visiting venues to plan for future annual conferences.

Additionally, the leadership of the association has made a commitment to step up our efforts as it relates to providing resources and advocacy for the PDS model. To achieve this goal, NAPDS is working on a variety of initiatives which include: 1) an active partnership with the National Coalition of Educators, 2) providing broader online access of NAPDS publications, 3) discovering more opportunities for collaboration with ATE, AERA and AACTE, 4) seeking grant opportunities for more research about the PDS model, and 5) an updating of the NAPDS Nine Essentials.

The work of the Nine Essentials committee has been a multi-year project which began with a focus group discussion at the 2017 conference in Washington DC, followed by a forum at the 2018 conference in Jacksonville FL to discover how the essentials are being used nationally. Last year during the 2019 annual conference in Atlanta GA, a two-day symposium was held with more than 40 participants seeking to better define each essential. Using data gathered from these three conferences, a smaller group of PDS leaders have been meeting to revise each essential and update the narrative that supports each one. The draft will be sent back to the participants of the two-day symposium for feedback and further discussion. It is our hope that this project will result in an updated and more relevant version of the Nine Essentials that will guide the work of school-university partnerships for many years to come.

Lastly, the 2020 NAPDS Annual Conference Committee is working diligently behind the scenes to develop an excellent program in Atlantic City, NJ which will take place Feb 13-15, 2020. Proposals, registrations and sponsorships are now being accepted. Please watch your email for announcements and updates about the 2020 Conference. Also let us know if you have an interest in becoming more deeply involved with any of these projects.

Sincerely,

Michael Cosenza, President

National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS)

Michael Cosenza, is an associate professor and the Director of Professional Development Schools for California Lutheran University. ●

What Students Taught Us

Overall, students held positive perceptions regarding the different areas investigated by the survey. On average, students agreed that their teacher candidates had a positive influence on them academically. However, the answers to questions 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 provided areas of focus for continued improvement in developing our PDS partnerships, and the quality of experiences that all stakeholders shared during these experiences. In the greater context of continued improvement in building stronger PDS partnerships, we identified that these areas of focus could be addressed during methods courses; internship seminars; school-based 'chew-and-chat' sessions for teacher candidates; and mentor training. Additionally, it is interesting to note that while the overall response was one of positivity, only half of the students surveyed agreed that they would like another intern in following years. This will be an area worth following up on when we administer the survey next year.

Anticipated Next Steps

This snapshot into student perceptions of teacher candidates provides us with a better understanding of the areas in which interns need additional support in both the university teacher preparation experience, and the clinical field experience. Working as a PDS collaborative, the PDS site can supplement what is learned in the IHE, providing a real world context. From the data, we can see that additional attention needs to focus on 1) ensuring that interns provide frequent communication to families in order to include them as part of the school community; 2) acknowledging and addressing student differences (culture, gender, race, language, etc.) in their teaching; and 3) using multiple strategies (differentiation) to teach a topic to ensure that students gain mastery of the concepts taught. Finally, in the context of the PDS network, students in partner schools should be given the opportunity to provide feedback on their teacher candidates in order to help the school and IHE better serve them during the student teaching experience. Overall, data collected from student surveys allows PDS partners to refine their practices and provide additional support to both the teacher candidates and the public school students they serve.

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WIN Writing Time: Perspectives on *W*orthwhile, *I*nterest-Based, *N*o-Stress Writing Partnerships

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"I've never liked writing until today," a fourth-grade student remarked as she worked on her Rebus writing activity with her pre-service teacher writing partner. Her eyes lit up, and she smiled as she continued explaining that she didn't realize that writing could be this much fun. At 10 years old, this was her first encounter with Rebus writing, a type of writing that represents words with pictures. She was fully engaged as this approach to writing afforded her a novel and creative way to express her thoughts. She enjoyed writing about her self-selected topic of the season of fall, using stickers to symbolize certain words; and for the first time over the course of the semester, she asked to share her writing with the class.

This student's revelation about writing occurred during *W*orthwhile, *I*nterest-based, and *N*o-stress (WIN) Writing Time. In order to address commonly held misperceptions about writing and pitfalls of writing instruction, one of the authors created WIN Writing Time, an intentional, focused experience where teacher candidates collaborated with elementary teachers and students to provide high-impact, low-stakes writing opportunities for students (Fletcher, 2017). After discussing the framework, design, and implementation of this writing initiative, this article will elaborate on the perspectives and takeaways of key partners, including literacy faculty, fourth grade teachers, and pre-service teachers.

Why WIN Writing Time?

The field of literacy has long been divided about best practices for reading and writing instruction. Writing continues to be an often neglected process in schools, even though corporations continue to cite written communication as one of the top desired skills for their employees (Murawski, 2019; NWP & Nagin, 2006). Sometimes writing is not given priority in the classroom due to a perceived lack of adequate time to specifically address writing instruction. In a study conducted by Moats, Foorman, and Taylor (2006), only approximately 10% of English language arts (ELA) instructional time for upper-elementary students was devoted to writing instruction, and more striking, students only engaged in reading their own writing 1% of the time.

Another reason why writing instruction is sometimes avoided is due to teachers' lack of confidence in themselves as teachers of writing. To combat teachers' lack of self-efficacy as writers and as teachers of writing, schools sometimes opt to purchase writing programs because they provide organizers, prompts, worksheets, scripts, and other resources that guarantee results; yet, the danger with writing programs lies in the fact that they actually prepare teachers to learn how to use a program, rather than how to more effectively teach writing (Routman, 2005).

Writing needs its own designated instructional time where students have opportunities to engage in and focus on the craft of writing (Ray & Laminack, 2001). The only way to build more experienced writers is to prioritize writing time. The more time that teachers and students spend engaging with writing for meaningful purposes, the better writers they will become.

Grappling with Tensions

As a teacher educator who teaches a writing pedagogy course with pre-service teachers, I (Allen) have noticed that many of the students I encounter report that they once loved to write as young children, but as they progressed through school, they lost their joy of writing because it felt more like a meaningless chore than an opportunity to tell their story, express their thoughts, and critically reflect on their learning. For them, writing was often defined by prescribed topics, test preparation, and formulaic writing—there was an ulterior motive that had very little to do with their own reasons to write and more to do with the expectations of the teacher, the test, or the assignment.

Since I desire to lead students into the teaching profession armed with a passion for writing and a confidence in themselves as teachers of writing, I wanted to develop an approach to writing instruction in my undergraduate writing methods courses that would boost pre-service teachers' confidence both as writers and as teachers of writing as well as provide elementary students with a way to connect with writing through high-impact, low-stakes experiences with writing (Fletcher, 2017). After many conversations with classroom teachers, pre-service teachers, elementary students, and literacy colleagues, I developed WIN Writing Time in hopes that all participants involved might ultimately (re)consider their notions of writing and writing instruction.

I have been fortunate to teach at two local Professional Development School (PDS) partner sites, which has given my students access to working with elementary writers. WIN Writing Time was possible because of the ongoing PDS partnership between the university and a local school system. This partnership has existed for three years and has provided a multitude of meaningful learning experiences not only for the university pre-service teachers but for the university faculty and the teachers and students at the elementary schools as well. Currently, every fall semester, two literacy courses—one a writing methods course and the other a reading assessment course—are taught on-site at both elementary schools. Because of this ongoing partnership, the university faculty are able to collaborate with the elementary school teachers to provide pre-service teachers with opportunities to immediately implement what they have learned.

WIN Writing Time Framework

WIN Writing Time was designed and implemented to put high-impact, low-stakes writing time front and center in both the university and elementary classrooms (Fletcher, 2017). As was mentioned previously, writing time is often neglected in the classroom, but when it is taught, standardized assessments often drive the instruction, resulting in writing instruction that is dominated by standardized writing assignments that feel like empty exercises instead of meaningful experiences (Hansen, 2012). Many teachers succumb to the accountability pressure by assigning assessment-based writing prompts that stifle student creativity and cause them to disconnect from the enjoyment of writing.

Writing should be approached as a meaning-making process where an emphasis is given to the process writers undergo while working toward a product (Atwell, 1998; Calkins, 1994; Campbell, 1996; Fletcher, 1993; Graves, 1994; Kerr, 1999). As teachers, we must help students become "motivated, confident writers who see writing as an everyday, useful, even enjoyable tool" (Routman, 2005, p. 4). In order for writing to be meaningful for students, it should be approached in a way that allows students the freedom to write what matters to them. Writing can only become a worthwhile experience for students if it has relevance and authenticity in their lives.

Students should be given increased control in making decisions about their own writing, resulting in teachers—and standardized assessments—no longer having control over student writing. Students should play more active roles in choosing topics that revolve around their personal interests so that they feel invested in their writing because they are interested in the topic and they write to reach an authentic audience for a meaningful purpose.

Creating a community of writers is also important so that students feel free to take risks and share their writing ideas with others. The partnership between the pre-service teachers and elementary writers fostered a non-judgmental, stress-free writing zone that allowed for a balance of the sharing of ideas, feedback through conferencing with other writers, and validation of students' voices as writers (Duke, Cervetti, & Wise, 2018). Thus, the worthwhile, interest-based, and no-stress elements of WIN Writing Time combined to

Table 1: Components of WIN Writing Time design and roles and responsibilities of key partners in its implementation.

Components	Key Partners	Roles and Responsibilities
University faculty teaches regularly scheduled writing course to pre-service teachers at PDS site.	**University faculty**	Teach
	Pre-service teachers (Tall Teachers)	Learn and reflect
Pre-service teachers plan WIN Writing Time experience for elementary students utilizing information learned from class and reflecting on past WIN sessions with their Small Teachers.	**Pre-service teachers** (Tall Teachers)	Reflect and plan
WIN writing time-Pre-service teachers meet in small groups with fourth-grade students (small groups meet in classroom, cafeteria, hallway, etc.).	**Pre-service teachers** (Tall Teachers)	Teach, provide guidance and feedback, write
	Elementary students (Small Teachers)	Write and teach
	Classroom teacher	Monitoring, providing support when needed
	University faculty	Monitoring, providing support when needed
Fourth-grade students and pre-service teachers read their writing to each other. First in small groups then several share their writing with the entire class.	**Pre-service teachers** (Tall Teachers)	Listen to others read their writing and provide feedback
	Elementary students (Small Teachers)	Listen to others read their writing and provide feedback
Pre-service teachers return to their PDS classroom.	**Pre-service teachers** (Tall Teachers)	Reflect on what happened during the WIN writing time session, use reflection to plan for next WIN writing time session.
	University faculty	Provide guidance and feedback

nurture writers who were enthusiastic about and comfortable with writing.

WIN Writing Time Design

University faculty and elementary partner teachers guided the Tall Teachers in planning weekly writing sessions for their Small Teachers. In this partnership, the pre-service teachers were referred to as Tall Teachers, and the elementary students were referred to as Small Teachers. This terminology was borrowed from faculty at the University of South Carolina and reflects the transactional approach to teaching and learning, as both groups are continuously teaching and learning from one another.

The Tall Teachers and Small Teachers met one day each week for approximately eight sessions and focused only on writing for 30–45 minutes. After administering a writing inventory to determine the Small Teachers' strengths, interests, and habits as writers, the Tall Teachers planned and implemented writing activities that they learned about and discussed in their university coursework to foster engagement in high-impact, low-stakes writing experiences (Fletcher, 2017). In essence, Tall Teachers worked with Small Teachers to capitalize on the benefits of engaging in meaningful, authentic writing experiences where students received guidance in choosing a writing topic that mattered to them. During these sessions, the Small Teachers also received feedback on their writing, were provided opportunities to revise their writing with peers, and were invited to share their writing in large and small group settings—all crucial components necessary to develop students who see themselves as writers (Calkins, 1994; Fletcher, 2017; Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001; Ray & Laminack, 2001).

WIN Writing Time is student-centered and process driven that provides students with authentic and meaningful opportunities to write. Students write on topics of their own choosing, work on multiple drafts of a piece, and receive feedback from peers as well as their Tall Teachers (Kerr, 1999). These key components of ownership, time, and feedback are necessary for allowing students to function as real writers while simultaneously developing their skills with written communication. Thus, WIN Writing Time helps to create life-long writers as students regain control over their own writing experiences and discover the power and joy of the written word.

Perspectives

Because this was the first time implementing WIN Writing Time, the perspectives of key partners and collaborators in this initiative were of particular interest. As partners who were directly involved in implementing this initiative, the perspectives of the classroom partner teachers and the pre-service Tall Teachers are first presented followed by the outside perspectives of two literacy faculty members, one of whom also presented an authentic writing lesson. The takeaways presented demonstrate the overall effectiveness of the WIN Writing Time approach.

Partner Teachers

As elementary classroom teachers, we (Author 5 and 6) noticed that WIN Writing Time was engaging and beneficial for our students, yet required very little preparation prior to the implementation of WIN Writing Time and as the weeks progressed. Having said this, there were a couple of logistical considerations that needed our attention. First, two Tall Teachers would be working with two Small Teachers so we needed to consider how to group our students as we reflected on their personalities and abilities. Classroom space also needed to be addressed since we were almost doubling the number of people who would be sharing a space during WIN Writing Time. We encouraged Tall and Small Teachers to utilize the hallway, cafeteria, and the PDS classroom so they would have ample space to work.

The obvious benefits we noticed about WIN Writing Time were the low teacher-to-student ratios, with most groups being comprised of two Talls and two Smalls. This not only helped to create a sense of trust between the Talls and Smalls, but it allowed the Tall Teachers to plan and implement individualized writing instruction in a no-stress environment and modify as needed. Tall Teachers were also able to offer personalized support for writers, giving them specific and immediate feedback on their writing. Perhaps the most awe-inspiring aspect to WIN Writing Time was being able to witness authentic student engagement along with the connections that the Tall Teachers and Small Teachers made through writing.

Tall Teachers

As pre-service teachers, we (Authors 7 and 8) were thrilled to gain experience where the writing "curriculum" was driven by the Small Teachers' interests and needs instead of scripts and mandated prompts. We appreciated having no formulaic lesson plans to follow and no specific requirements for product outcomes. We also enjoyed developing ourselves as writers, engaging in writing activities alongside our Small Teachers. If our Small Teachers wanted to write poetry, we worked on poetry. If our Small Teachers wanted to write a collaborative chapter book, we wrote a collaborative chapter book. This allowed for us to witness what providing choice and considering interests can do for writers. Further, we gained experience in the formative assessment cycle as we informally assessed our Small Teachers' writing process and tailored lessons to address their needs. When Small Teachers needed ideas to kick-start their writing, we created heart maps (Heard, 1999) with them as well as slides that included unusual images, intriguing facts, engaging story starters, and unique vocabulary words to spark their ideas for writing.

Each week, we came prepared with our Small Teachers' writing folders and any other materials or mentor texts we needed for that day's session. Following each session, we debriefed with our partnered Tall Teacher to reflect on the strengths and struggles of the session as well as what we learned about writing and writing instruction. These reflective discussions informed our plans for future sessions with our Small Teachers and helped us become more informed future teachers of writing.

Literacy Faculty Guest Presenter

As a faculty member who is also passionate about writing instruction, I (Author 4) heard wonderful stories from my colleagues about students' experiences during WIN Writing Time. I asked to come and observe, and they, to my delight, invited me to teach a writing lesson. Without having previously met my audience, I faced the challenge of being able to share a new writing strategy that would transfer across a range of writers and would also be a lesson that could easily be replicated in the classroom. I decided to connect with my audience using a technique of writing first used in the Middle Ages called Rebus writing, where writers substitute a picture for a word. In today's world, Rebus writing is similar to writing with emojis.

However, instead of using technology and emojis, I decided to offer students a variety of stickers. After giving the Tall Teachers a brief history of Rebus writing, I chose five stickers from the bucket and modeled a planning strategy for writing a poem about trees. We collaboratively wrote the tree poem using a sticker to replace the word *tree*. I then invited the Tall Teachers to choose five stickers to incorporate into their writing. After the Tall Teachers had completed and shared their Rebus writing pieces, it was time for them to immediately implement their new writing strategy with their Small Teachers.

THE OBVIOUS BENEFITS WE NOTICED ABOUT WIN WRITING TIME WERE THE LOW TEACHER-TO-STUDENT RATIOS.

The Small Teachers took to the Rebus writing strategy with little to no hesitation. No one could have predicted the variety of writing pieces that emerged from this Rebus writing lesson. Small Teachers wrote poems, letters, narratives, and more. Through this simple, yet effective writing strategy, both Tall Teachers and Small Teachers learned the value of using images as springboards for low-stress writing. Thus, the world of possibilities that exist for writing was opened a little more for students that day. Further, the fourth grade partner teachers learned a new idea they could implement into their future writing instruction. Given the success of this writing lesson and my observations of WIN Writing Time, I noticed that when students are given opportunities to engage in worthwhile writing experiences in a low-stress environment, their engagement with writing increases.

Literacy Faculty Observer

As a member of the literacy faculty, I (Author 3) was invited to give an outsider's perspective on WIN Writing Time. When I first stepped into the PDS classroom, I encountered an inviting, positive, low-stress atmosphere. I saw Tall Teachers and Small Teachers actively engaged in meaningful collaborative writing tasks. The writing tasks were tailored and authentic, and Tall Teachers allowed their Small Teachers to choose writing activities that interested them. I saw Small Teachers taking ownership of their own writing and authentic give-and-take between Tall Teachers and Small Teachers centered on the early stages of the writing process (e.g., planning, drafting, etc.). Small Teachers received immediate positive feedback from their Tall Teachers, and toward the end of class, Tall Teachers and Small Teachers stood up and shared their written products.

Modeling was also at the heart of these authentic writing experiences. Tall Teachers wrote alongside their Small Teachers. How often do we as teachers require our students to write something that we haven't written ourselves? During WIN Writing Time, the Small and Tall Teachers were actively and jointly engaged in the writing task and worked to produce two separate but similar products. The Small Teachers felt validated that they were working on something that the adult next to them was also working on.

So often teachers and students fall into the trap of viewing writing as strictly an academic exercise in preparation for the next state-mandated assessment (Davis & Vehabovic, 2018). With WIN Writing Time, the focus shifts away from test-centric writing to enjoyable, authentic, meaningful writing. One of the central strengths of WIN Writing Time is that it allows students and teachers to leave behind the pressures of school

for a little while and actually grow as writers and critical thinkers.

Reflections on WIN Writing Time and Points to Remember

The WIN Writing Time experience benefitted all partners involved and created a community of writers by inviting them to join a writing space that accounted for the following elements:

1. A stress-free writing zone with an intentional focus on writing itself, which allowed Talls and Smalls to take risks as writers as they were not held to perfecting conventions or confined by the need to incorporate specific subject area content.
2. Tall Teachers to develop as writers themselves and as teachers of writing as they wrote alongside their Small Teachers and received guidance on planning from university professors and classroom teachers.
3. Conversations about writing, which connected Tall Teachers and Small Teachers on a personal level as a result of their willingness to open up through writing.
4. Learning about new possibilities for writing and writing instruction that included seemingly small instructional choices that resulted in significant impact.

University-school partnerships centered on literacy best practices like the one described in this article are beneficial to all parties, as we work in tandem to transform writing into a meaningful, transformative experience.

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