

2013

## Preparation IN Practice: Simultaneous Preparation of Educational Leaders and Future Teachers for Social Justice in Professional Development Schools

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### Citation Details

Petti, A. & Flamoe, S. (2013). Preparation in practice: Simultaneous preparation of educational leaders and future teachers for social justice in professional development schools. In S. Harris & S. Edmonson. (Eds.), *Critical Social Justice Issues for Educators Today*. (pp.193-213). Ypsilanti, MI: NCPEA Press.

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Preparation *IN* Practice: Simultaneous Preparation of Educational Leaders and Future Teachers for  
Social Justice in Professional Development Schools

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In times of crisis there are opportunities for innovation. Teacher preparation, leadership preparation, and education in general are facing a time of crisis. Teacher and principal preparation and performance are no longer just the fodder of educational journals and elite academics. When mainstream publications such as *Newsweek* run a cover image of a chalkboard with repeated lines of text, “We Must Fire Bad Teachers” as the solution to “saving American Education” (2010), we know the public perception of teacher preparation, teacher professionalism, and leadership in schools is in a crisis.

This chapter examines a case study of a school committed to change the way teachers learn and collaborate *in practice*. Chavez Middle School built on decades of reform and research in teacher and leadership preparation, but offers an innovative twist to include *simultaneous* preparation (of preservice teachers and administrators), professional development (of preservice and *inservice* (tenured) teachers and administrative interns), and finally simultaneous system change in the school-university partnership (SUP) model invoked from Dewey to Teitel (Dewey, 1916; Teitel, 2004). By preparing in practice while in a setting committed to social justice for students who are often ignored (students with disabilities, students learning English, and students of poverty), Chavez Middle School forged new innovative strategies that inform the future of teacher and principal preparation. Chavez’s story illustrates how to prepare, support, and challenge good teachers at all stages of their careers to teach and lead for social justice.

### **Purpose Statement and Research Questions**

The purpose of studying Chavez Middle School was to examine the benefits and challenges of simultaneous preparation of preservice teachers with an administrative intern. The case examines the professional development of preservice and tenured teachers and administrative interns during a school-university partnership (SUP), modeled after the Professional Development Schools (PDS) research (Clark, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 1994; Goodlad, 1994; Mullen, 2000; Petti, 2011; Teital, 2003;

Zeichner, 1992). This article focuses on the shared professional development aspects of the SUP, as teacher candidates and tenured teachers participated in collaborative professional development, leveraging best practices of shared walkthroughs (Downey, Steffy, English, Frase, & Poston, 2004), coaching (Knight, 2007; Petti, 2010a), rounds (City, Elmore, Friarman, & Teitel, 2009), lab classrooms (demonstrations and lab-sites) (Petti, 2010a). Chavez was poised as a crucible for change when the partnership was formed during financial crisis. The research questions were:

1. Does placing and explicitly supporting a cohort of teacher candidates in a high-poverty school prepare the teacher candidates, and support the growth of mentor teachers?
2. Does simultaneous preparation of an administrative intern as the coach/mentor/supervisor of the preservice teachers improve leadership preparation for leaders?

### **Context & Crucible for Change**

To examine the innovation of simultaneous preparation of a leadership intern and several teacher interns within a Professional Development School (PDS), one must understand the conditions of readiness of the school. Chavez was on the upswing after four years of intensive change and improvement. In 2006, an instructional coach was added to what many insiders referred to as a ‘toxic’ staff. Chavez had experienced steady student academic decline, and received transfers of undesirable personnel. Staff morale was low, staff commitment was marginal, and a few angry staff had formed a negative allegiance creating what Deal and Peterson (2009) referred to as ‘toxic’:

Schools become fragmented silos; meaning is derived from subculture membership, anti-student sentiments, or life outside work.... Separate, powerful departmental or grade level fiefdoms replace collaboration and community.... Small cohorts of veterans pander to worn-out educational philosophies and perpetuate negative attitudes toward work and students. (p. 163)

By 2006, Chavez Middle School was under intense pressure to improve, and due to staffing needs, afforded the hiring of 14 new teachers. The new teachers, the coach, the principal and two new assistant principals planted seeds of change, focusing on the new hires and a few key positive veteran staff. Each year, the staff grew more collaborative and saw improvement gains in student achievement; in the fall of 2009, Chavez changed its status from a school that was a breath away from full-scale reconstitution to one of the few middle schools in the state that met adequate yearly progress (AYP). Riding this turnaround wave, Chavez MS was approached to host a two-year extended clinical preparation for dual certified teachers (teachers who would exit State University's program with licenses in both general and special education). When asked to become a PDS with the local university, the staff agreed to "just do it." The instructional coach also enrolled in an administrative preparation program and recorded the journey through observation, interviews, written reflection, discourse and student data. State University recognized an opportunity to change the preservice supervision model, and employed the administrative intern in the role of supervisor of the cohort.

State University's teacher preparation and administrative leadership preparation program coordinated and collaborated on simultaneous teacher and administrator preparation, challenging the dilemma Sarason (1993) described as, "teachers and administrators, never the twain shall meet" (p. 249). Sarason continues, "There is no overlap whatsoever between preparatory programs for teachers and administrators. The two programs differ not only in substance (courses) but in the teaching faculty" (p.251). The instructional coach was enrolled in the State University's leadership program, preparing her to be a future principal with an administrative license.

The simultaneous preparation aspect was another layer of collaboration in the SUP. The university sought a willing supervisor who knew the culture of the school and was skilled at discussing high leverage pedagogy and giving specific feedback; the administrative intern (instructional coach) was responsible for a leadership project and observation and supervision of volunteer teachers. The

cohort of preservice teachers all volunteered to participate. The mixture of assignment, need, will, and enthusiasm was the perfect crucible to explore a layer of simultaneous preparation with existing collaborative structures for professional development already established at Chavez. For this article, administrative intern describes the role of the administrative intern/coach. Her “day job” was instructional coach, but due to co-enrollment in State University’s administrative preparation program, she was coaching through an administrative lens. Instructional coach is used to refer to her role prior to enrollment in leadership preparation.

### **Partnership Formation**

Led by the instructional coach, Chavez began a two-way dialogue with State University about becoming a PDS, with the shared goal that every student at Chavez could and would achieve academic success through literacy. Chavez’s mission for each student to *read well, write well, speak well, think well, and be well* resonated with the ideals of social justice and the mission of State University’s preparation programs. For clarity in this article, the SUP was the agreement between Chavez Middle School and State University, and the PDS offered collaborative practices for professional development. Social justice as agreed upon by the SUP embraced the transformational aspects of social justice defined by Frattura and Capper (2007), “requiring transforming beliefs and practices about leadership; transforming teaching and learning; transforming teacher capacity to teach a range of students; and transforming how to acquire and how to reallocate resources” (p. xv). After agreeing to this common mission and purpose of social justice, the next steps included inviting preservice teachers into Chavez and incorporating them into lab classroom professional development. This became the “Chavez way”: the preservice teachers entered into an environment with a focus on collaboration, a quest for ongoing improvement, and a true belief that all students can learn. Chavez’s laser-like focus on literacy as a civil right was up front, consistent, and powerful:

We believed that the preservice teachers should learn to teach in the midst of teaching and that we would improve our own teaching practices by becoming increasingly metacognitive about our instructional decisions as we shared with those we mentored. We extended an invitation to any teacher already teaching at Chavez who was open to growth, desiring change, and excited about mentoring new teachers to join us. For all members of the learning community, our desire was to create a safe, productive, reflective, collaborative environment for growth; our desire was to offer the most fertile and open learning ground for any professional educators at all stages in their careers to learn amongst our students and one another. It is our belief that by becoming a Learning Lab [PDS], we will see our belief in our students come to fruition. (Administrative Intern, interview, June, 2012)

The administrative intern presented the concept of the Learning Lab (Chavez called their PDS a Learning Lab) to the entire cohort of Secondary Dual Education Preparation (SDEP) students at State University. Teacher candidates were selected through an application/interview process. Chavez's administrative team (principal, assistant principal, administrative intern) discerned strong matches between teacher and teacher candidates. All teacher candidates (TCs) had to be interested in learning to teach in a low-income school setting, believe students deserve the very best educational opportunities, and believe in "equity through literacy." The administrative intern led a book study with TCs using Suzanne Plaut's *The Right to Literacy in Secondary Schools* as the basis for building background in social justice, emphasizing that students furthest from benchmark deserve more opportunities for rigor, critical thinking, and advanced content—instead of watering down curriculum to meet low entry skills and even lower expectations. In other words, TCs had to have a social justice perspective to be selected to participate in Chavez's Learning Lab.

### **Financial Crisis and Audacious Hope**

Mentoring preservice teachers in a PDS can be perceived as a burden, as Sandholz and Merseth (1992) found: “Added to the already heavy demands of full-time teaching, the time and effort required to participate in the partnership may lead teachers to question their involvement” (p. 309). However, in Chavez’s situation, with large classes due to budget cuts, and students with disabilities far from meeting the benchmark, the school university partnership was perceived as a potential benefit to students and staff. Mentor teachers, the administrative intern and the principal at Chavez expressed their hope and enthusiasm at the concept of participating in the learning lab. Mentor teachers sought a learning opportunity, not just an extra hand in the classroom, as the following comments illustrate:

- I am excited about the idea of working closely with a student-teacher, team teaching with a student teacher and having flexibility that comes from having another proficient adult in the room for small pull out groups. (mentor teacher reflection, November 2011)
- I am excited to transform the experience of student teachers so they grow professionally and transform education. I’m also excited to be more metacognitive in my practice by coaching a student teacher. (mentor teacher reflection, November, 2011)
- I am excited to continue to work/reflect on my own teaching and best support my most at-risk students. (mentor teacher reflection, November, 2011)

The principal’s role in successful SUPs and PDS is well documented (Mullen & Hutinger, 2008; Teitel, 2004). The Chavez principal stated, “I’m hopeful about Chavez as a learning lab because it offers us the opportunity to be continuously learning from each other” (Principal, statement at planning meeting, August, 2011). The principal insisted that he would host a dual-certified (general and special education) group of teacher candidates, rather than a general education only cohort, because



students with disabilities, those learning English, and those who are academically behind deserve teachers prepared and predisposed to help them excel. The dual-certified cohort appealed to his sense of social justice.

### **Relevant Concepts and Literature**

#### **Preparation for Teaching and Leading for Social Justice**

State University purports a commitment to social justice, as the school's motto states: "Let knowledge serve the city." The Graduate School of Education's vision is, "preparing professionals to meet our diverse communities' lifelong educational needs," and the first tenet of the school's conceptual framework is "Diversity and Inclusiveness," including the indicator that "candidates work effectively with diverse populations and promote inclusive and therapeutic environments." Following Harris' (2005) findings, State University's intent and purpose for the partnership and Chavez's interest in the partnership was firmly grounded in embedding democratic community and social justice in the partnership's purpose.

Social justice is a broad concept that strikes the moral core of teacher candidates and leaders in high-poverty, diverse schools. Yet at times, students with disabilities are left out of the categories of "diversity." Ysseldyke (2001) reported that the number of students labeled with a disability has increased 183% from 1977–1997 (p. 303), which represents an annual growth rate of 9.1%. Students with disabilities come from a variety of racial, linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds, yet are the most segregated population in the daily functions of schools. Students with disabilities are often shuttled to small special education classrooms, out of sync with the mainstream teaching and learning of schools. As Frattura and Capper (2007) state:

A second key factor in teaching... for social justice is the understanding that nothing magic has ever happened behind the doors of a special education classroom or reading

resource room, or an ESL (English as Second Language) room or gifted and talented resource room. (p. 116)

Frattura and Capper continue with the collaborative integrated service model: “Instead, these educators [specialists] must view their primary roles as developing the capacity of each other to teach to a range of students in the [mainstreamed] classroom” (p. 117).

Situating the PDS at Chavez defies the typical preparation model, where “ equity and social justice are rarely addressed in the literature on teacher education, including that of the practicum” (Zeichner, 1992, p. 302). The PDS at Chavez put equity and social justice squarely on the agenda of the participant’s practices. Instead of bypassing the cultural, linguistic, economic, and ability diversity that often occurs (Goodlad, 1990), the Chavez-State University partnership embraced it.

The community of teachers at Chavez emphasized the focus on equity and their roles as educators for social justice with the guiding statement “Equity through Literacy.” The school belief statement reads as follows:

***Equity through Literacy.*** We believe that each student and teacher can and must learn at high levels. It is our job to create an environment in our classrooms that results in this high level of performance. We are confident that with our support and help, students can master challenging academic material, and we expect them to do so. We are prepared to work collaboratively with colleagues, students, and families to achieve this growth.

(Chavez Staff Handbook, vision statement, 2010, p. 2.)

Providing an equitable learning community for all Chavez students and support for teachers leading for social justice became the filter for all decisions.

### **School University Partnerships**

School university partnerships (SUPs) have been explored and refined for decades, and it has been established that there is benefit to teacher preparation and tenured teacher learning (Darling-Hammond, 1994; Goodlad, 1994; Mullen, 2000; Teitel, 2004). Critical to the formation of and important to the maintenance of successful partnerships is the emphasis on purpose, shared goals and mission (Clarke, 1999). Successful school university partnerships value the input and inquiry of practitioners, especially teachers (Bodilly, 1998; Goodlad 1994; Trachman, 2007; Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

Key roles were important to the successful integration of school and university structures and culture. Chavez employed two key people in what Clarke (1999) referred to as boundary spanners, or people who function well in both the university and the school environment. The university administrative cohort leader, and the university SDEP cohort leaders were the boundary spanners. The university administrative cohort leader had recently left Chavez's district office, and was in that intersection of praxis and policy: well acquainted with the K-12 operations, yet understanding the higher education culture and roles. The university cohort leaders of the SDEP program were well versed in higher education culture and norms, yet were readily present in the weekly operations of Chavez.

### **Professional Development Schools**

The Chavez-State University partnership agreement established conditions for the restructuring of the preparation program to include mentor and other tenured teachers in simultaneous professional development. This model, with the innovation of the simultaneous preparation of the administrative intern, was borrowed heavily from the Professional Development Schools research. The Professional Development School model (PDS) has been refined, revisited and renovated since Dewey's laboratory schools in the early 1900s. Consistent revisiting of the model has occurred with resurgence in the 1990s

(Clark, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 1994; Kersch & Masztal, 1998), and at the turn of a second century (Doolittle, Sudeck, & Rattigan, 2008; Mullen & Huntinger, 2008; Teitel, 2003).

Inherent in the Chavez-State University PDS was the structure of the laboratory classroom. Lab classrooms utilized regular, daily job embedded professional development for the preservice teachers, a practice that is consistent with best practices for professional development (Hord & Sommers, 2008; Knight, 2007). They also included the collaboration aspect of simultaneous professional development with facilitated walkthroughs, demonstration lessons, and lab-sites (Hord & Sommers, 2008; Petti, 2010a). Chavez's PDS structure was aligned with Tobia and Hord's (2012, p. 17) summary of effective professional learning communities, or schools with the following features: (a) there are structural conditions; (b) intentional collective learning; (c) supportive relational conditions; (d) peers supporting peers; (e) shared values and vision; and (f) shared and supportive leadership. See Appendix A for a table aligning these characteristics with Chavez's practices.

## **Methodology**

### **Case Study Methodology**

The Chavez case study utilized a social anthropology approach (Miles & Huberman, 1994) within a case study. The researchers employed ethnographic methods, recording the day-to-day events of participants, as well as interviews, dialogue, and electronic communications. Typical to ethnography, the researchers were interested in language use, artifact, rituals, relationships, and individual narratives and stories. As Van Maanen (1979) states, the purpose of the case method is to "uncover and explicate the ways in which people in particular (work) setting come to understand, account for, take action and otherwise manage their day-to-day situation" (Van Maanen as cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 8). The "uncovering" was done through a year of observation, interviews, informal dialogue, and analysis of written response and artifacts.

### **Context**

The participants of the PDS/Lab School within Chavez Middle School were the unit of study, for the school year 2011–2012. Chavez’s demographics are described earlier in this article.

### **Role of Researcher**

The first author/researcher was State University’s cohort leader for the administrative intern/coach. She was a participant researcher and had the responsibility for collecting data from the leadership (principal and administrative intern), but conducted all analysis after the school year ended. The second author was the coach/intern, who was a participant researcher. She held primary responsibility for collecting data from preservice, tenured teachers, and students. She also collected artifacts (work products, videos of teaching, minutes, professional development agendas). Her research was embedded in an educational leadership project, a requirement for administrative licensure. Both researchers had either former or current employment in the district, so while not neutral, the insider view and access afforded them insights to the school and district history that an external researcher would not have.

### **Sample**

The sample was purposive and convenient. Leadership participants included Chavez’s principal and the administrative intern/coach(AI/C). Teacher participants included eight teacher candidates (TCs), eight general education cooperating teachers (CTs), four special education cooperating teachers (SpEdCTs). University participants included State University’s dual preparation professors. The leadership and teacher participants were at Chavez full time, while the university participants were at Chavez six hours per week.

### **Duration of Data Collection**

Data were collected from August through June, 2011–2012. Teacher candidates (TCs) and respective cooperating teachers (CTs) met for one hour per week for professional development/dialogue facilitated by the administrative intern. TCs spent an additional week with the administrative intern for extended, specialized professional development and “troubleshooting.” Troubleshooting was the term

defined by the TCs to address typical beginning teacher priority issues (e.g., classroom management, school procedures). Two times per year, TCs, CTs, and the administrative intern met for extended professional development workshops. Chavez Middle School had a “late start Wednesday” structure, devoted to two hours of weekly professional development. TCs attended whole staff professional development or Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings during the first hour of late start, and during the second hour, TCs and the administrative intern met for extended professional development (collaborative lesson study, student assessment training, book studies, and small group coaching).

### **Data Collected**

Interviews, exit tickets after late start professional development, in-class observation of TC teaching, lab-site observations and participation sixteen times per year were part of the data set collected.

Artifacts included minutes and field notes from preliminary and debrief sessions associated with lab-sites, written lab-site protocols (Petti, 2010a), lesson study, dialogue field notes, electronic communications, observations of lab-sites, and coaching observations of TCs practicing one-to-one conferring with students.

### **Data Analysis Method**

Data were analyzed using vertical and horizontal grounded theory based on the different roles. A role ordered matrix was designed (Miles & Huberman, 1994) to determine salient aspects of the PDS/Lab School/Simultaneous Prep, change, and implications for preparation development. Vertical analysis determined within-role themes, and horizontal analysis determined across-role themes and patterns. See Appendix B. The vertical analysis informed the horizontal analysis of across-role themes, which contributed to the development of the conceptual framework of simultaneous preparation. It occurred to the researchers that the study was influenced by and replication would be affected by the role of the administrative intern. In other words, if the administrative intern had not been enrolled in

administrative preparation, her actions and influence on the model and teacher candidates would have been different. The developing conceptual framework is depicted in Figure 1.

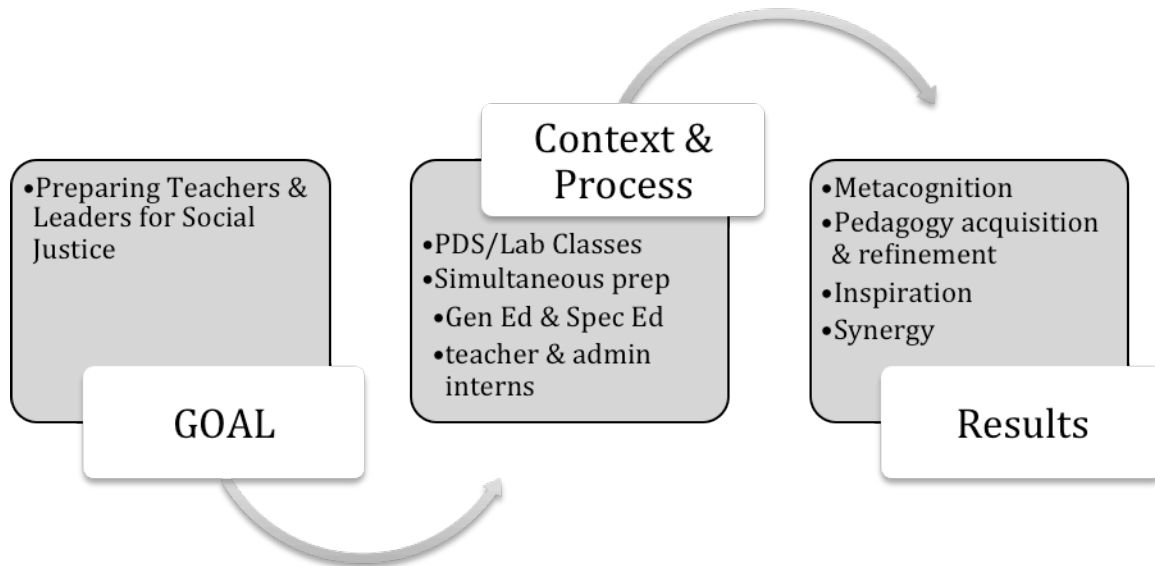


Figure 1: Simultaneous Preparation Conceptual Framework

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the Chavez experience are represented in Appendix B, a role ordered matrix. The discussion for this article focuses on those concepts that emerged across roles, metacognition, pedagogy acquisition and refinement, inspiration, simultaneous preparation, and synergy.

#### **Metacognition**

All stakeholders received benefits through a mindful, metacognitive approach to modeling reflective, engaging instruction. Metacognition is often simplified into “thinking about one’s own thinking.” Yet, studies such as Zulkipli, Kabit, and Ghani (2009) measured how metacognition is related to academic achievement, especially with students who are learning English. Zulkipli et al. conclude:

Metacognition enables one to be a successful learner. Metacognition refers to higher order thinking, which involves active control over the cognitive processes engaged in learning. Activities such as planning how to approach a given learning task, monitoring comprehension, and evaluating progress toward the completion of a task are metacognitive in nature. Because metacognition plays a critical role in successful learning, it is important to develop metacognition in students. (p. 104)

Zulkipli et al.’s findings are similar to the TCs’ perceptions; as one of the TCs stated:



I receive open and honest feedback both during and after instruction. The relationship with my mentor teachers has so many opportunities for us to talk about instruction, sometimes in front of the students and often before and after a class. I get to ask questions of the students, my mentor, and the coach...I always gain a new perspective from so much feedback.

A mentor teacher shared, “ I have never had to explain the reasons why I make certain decisions in my classroom. Now I am metacognitive in front of my kids and TC; it seems to be helpful for all of us.”

Coaching in a Social Studies class, the coach witnessed a teacher invite students into a small group in the front of the room. About three minutes into the group, a student who had originally chosen to work on her own approached the group and politely said, “Can I join this group? I thought I could do this assignment on my own, but I need some help.” This interaction speaks to the strength of the classroom community and the beauty of a student learning to be metacognitive (as she checked her own understanding and realized she was confused, and was able to advocate for inclusion in the small group to meet her needs).

### **Pedagogy Acquisition and Refinement**

Teacher candidates and mentor teachers indicated they either acquired or refined pedagogy by participating in the PDS. One example was the benefit from learning how to both teach *and* learn in small group settings, a setting that has not been utilized much during middle school instruction at Chavez. A mentor teacher best summarized changes in her teaching practice:

I am so much more comfortable pulling out a small group during workshop time when I know there is another adult to monitor the rest of the class, but the best thing is I've started pulling small groups even when the TC isn't there!

After participation in a lab, a TC commented, "I didn't even really know what people meant when they said 'pull a small group.' Now I've seen it, I get it, and I'll do it!"

### **Inspiration**

After analyzing the data, the concept of inspiration emerged as both TCs and tenured teachers reported being inspired by the partnership collaboration, and reinvigorated to refine their practices. Students, teachers, and administrators all mentioned the nature of the partnership as providing inspiration. Middle School students reported:

I love listening to the teachers talk about teaching; it helps me understand what they are doing and asking us to do...I really like listening to the teachers during lab class.... I've never been asked to think about what the teacher is doing and why. I kind of like it. (Student, interview, February, 2012)

A teacher candidate elaborated, "I get inspired to do things differently and better....I love lab classes; it makes me feel like I am a part of something bigger. It models for me how to be a leader in a school community" (Teacher Candidate, debriefing dialogue, January, 2012).

While initially inspired to help the novices, mentor teachers reported personal benefits to the PDS and lab-sites:

My TC helps give me freshness in approach to my students.... Not only do I get the extra support for one-on-one help with students and a gopher to help me prepare, but I also see open-mindedness to learning. (Cooperating Teacher, interview, February, 2012)

The administrative intern noted there was unanticipated inspiration in the spread of the PDS work to tenured teachers, who were not directly mentoring TCs. The intern wrote the following:

As the coach in this model, I am daily inspired by the work of the students, TCs and mentors. I also am inspired to find creative ways to invite others into this process. Some Chavez teachers who are not mentoring a TC have seen the benefits and have asked what they would need to do to have a TC work with them. This has opened conversations about how we may expand the program. It has also presented an opportunity with teachers to discuss the philosophy of the Learning Lab, and what is expected from each teacher participating; it may provide the inspiration for some average teachers to reflect upon how their own practice needs to improve. (Administrative Intern, written reflection, January, 2012)

### **Simultaneous Preparation**

Key to the success of Chavez's dual teacher preparation was the role of the administrative intern. The intern facilitated the collaborative practices of Chavez's model of lab classrooms and contributed to increased deprivatized practice—or allowing peers and colleague to observe teaching in real time. The facilitation role was expected, as the intern was leading much of the PDS work. However, as an *administrative* intern, she was also learning to give critical feedback to TCs. She had to sometimes tell them how to improve. The administrative intern had to balance the supportive role of coach with the evaluative role of administrator. She could assert

more leadership for social justice, due to her simultaneous roles of administrative intern/coach and university supervisor. She commented:

As the instructional coach at *Chavez* and the administrative intern responsible for a leadership project (creating, facilitating, and supporting the learning lab), I was able to be a coach, a researcher, a practitioner, a learner, a teacher, advocate for social justice, and a school leader in unique ways. I had the constant mentorship of both my school principal and my university supervisor. I was able to problem solve as well as share successes with my mentors.

Being in the role of researcher provided a depth to the work that would not have occurred without the additional role of intern....Collecting data, quotes, evaluations, exit tickets, and informal assessments throughout the school year informed the work of the lab—from learning how to better support mentor teachers, to constantly guiding teacher candidates in their daily learning, to learning how to best elicit meaningful feedback from students about their own learning. The simultaneous aspect of me learning to be a social justice leader, and TCs learning to teach for social justice provided a true atmosphere of “praxis”—reflection and action on a daily basis. (Administrative Intern, written reflection, June, 2012)

Since implementing the PDS/Learning Labs was the administrative intern’s leadership project, she shared its progress with her intern cohort and colleagues. By mid-year, other administrative interns wanted to see the Chavez lab-site in action, so the intern held a lab-site for

her administrative intern colleagues. Had she not been in an administrative preparation program, the Chavez experience would have remained more isolated:

As an administrative intern, I have been inspired to share the practices becoming the norm at Chavez with my fellow students in the State University's administrator preparation program. By extending the invitation to my [administrative] cohort, educators from outside of our school have come to participate in lab classes and walkthroughs. This has helped Chavez gain clarity about our practices while at the same time providing a model for others [administrative interns] to take into their buildings. Expanding the invitation had provided additional authentic leadership opportunities as a part of my administrative preparation. (Administrative Intern, interview, March, 2012)

## **Synergy**

Synergy is defined as, "the interaction of elements that when combined produce a total effect that is greater than the sum of the individual elements, contributions, etc" ("Synergy," n.d.). The findings of the Chavez PDS definitely elicited synergistic experiences for the variety of roles. While not a new phenomena in the literature of professional development schools (see Mullen and Lick for extended discussion of synergy), for the participants, it was a new experience. The Chavez staff believed the experience was unique to them, to the PDS setting.

The Chavez TCs shifted from their experiences as *students* driving their pedagogy and decisions to their shared experiences in the learning lab as the chief influence of their pedagogical decisions. Instead of teaching as they were taught, they became mindful, purposeful, and explicit about newly acquired pedagogy such as shared lesson architecture, small group instruction, inquiry, metacognition and reflection. Chavez's TCs were not *surviving* student

teaching, but instead, they were thriving. The TCs enthusiasm and open stance to learning became contagious to other tenured teachers, the administrative intern, and even the students. One of the initial perceptions of combining coaching and lab-sites was that the students would be confused or suffer as a result of adults dialoging about teaching in the midst of instruction, but instead, the students benefited from better understanding of the teaching/learning process, saw models of adult metacognition, and respectful discourse. As students stated:

I noticed when you are talking to each other [tenured teacher and coach] you are really respectful of each other... I had no idea our teachers plan so much for us...

I like to hear you talk, because I want to be a teacher someday. (Student, interview, February, 2012)

The foundational structure of the Chavez PDS were the lab classrooms, where professional dialogue occurred with real practitioners *during* instruction with students in real time. Chavez's example of practice *in practice* (Darling-Hammond, 2010) encompassed the aspects of deprivatization, inspiration, and the willingness to be a public learner. All adults involved perceived benefit by adding specific tools to their professional repertoires.

The Chavez PDS built structures and supports in order change the community from isolated private practices to one of an open, genuine learning community. Learning at Chavez was social, communal, and democratic. These characteristics underscore the key purpose of creating conditions for learners (adults and students) that are rooted in social justice. The PDS expands the definition of "student" to include students, teacher candidates, tenured classroom teachers and colleagues, school administrators and university professors who were involved in the lab school. The synergy created inspired, collaborative adult learners and provided concrete tools for replication (protocols for observation, co-teaching, and reflection). Instead of telling

students that they are the only learners, the Chavez model created a community where all members (students and adults) were active participants in the practices of teaching and learning.

### **Conclusion: From Co-Teaching to Co-Learning**

Participants in the Chavez PDS entered the agreement with existing ideas about the roles of teachers and teacher candidates hoping to create co-teaching relationships. But through structured and supported professional development in lab classrooms, the co-teaching model morphed into a co-learning model, where veteran, mid-career and novice teachers learned to collaborate in the midst of their practices. Collaborating in practice, or the deprivatization of practice, became the essence of the Chavez learning lab or PDS.

The administrative intern placed herself in the midst of a real-time classroom learning in order to teach, support, observe, and reflect upon practice with practitioners and the students themselves. Dialogue about the professional work of classrooms became a normal daily practice. However, the dialogue occurred not only before and after school, but primarily *within a classroom full of Chavez students*. Barriers of isolation come down and were replaced with community. First, the classroom door was opened, and teaching and learning were seen and discussed from multiple angles, and within the presence of other teachers poised as learners.

What began as an “adult treatment” of deprivatized practice transferred to students who were learning in the midst of the teachers in lab classrooms. Students were asked to be metacognitive about their own learning. A Chavez student commented, “I really enjoy listening to my teachers talk, it helps me understand what they are asking me to do and gives me a different perspective.” A teacher reflected:

Usually I have to wait until the end of the day, or longer, to get feedback. Now, I get both feedback and compliments during class time, so I can make changes immediately. It is not only helpful, it is also encouraging and changes my practice the very same day!

One of the challenges of maintaining highly effective partnerships is moving beyond the charismatic engagement of individual leaders. The Chavez PDS certainly had more than a single charismatic leader: the principal was a champion for the PDS/labsite model; the simultaneous preparation of the administrative intern with the teacher candidates created a clear facilitator and shepherd for the PDS; and the genuine level of interest, time, and personnel committed by the university all contributed to a successful PDS. The crisis of reduction of preparation and professional development time and resources spawned creative innovation. Layering dual preparation (teacher candidates and cooperating teachers who were preparing and supporting simultaneous general education and special education skills), simultaneous administrator preparation, and lab classrooms created a collaboration of planning and practice between general education, special education, and university preparation programs as never experienced before. All of these layers of effective learning communities contributed to a community focused on social justice and learning for all.

### **Recommendation for Future Research**

The Chavez Middle School case builds on prior PDS research, but the model of impact of simultaneous leadership preparation with socially just teacher preparation has not been explored, and deserves a closer look. As mid career teachers move from teacher leader to administrators; they have much to share to inform the thinking and practices of novice teachers; bringing the two preparations (administrators and teachers) into a supportive learning laboratory could be the next version of teacher/leader preparation especially in high poverty schools. There is a need to



examine the concept of dual preparation, especially in preparation for teaching and leading in schools for social justice. The Chavez story may be a catalyst for a larger study and a wider audience.

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## Appendix A

### Alignment of Tobia & Hord's Professional Learning Community Characteristics and Chavez's PDS Practices

<b>6 Characteristics of Effective Professional Learning Communities from Tobia and Hord (2012)</b>	<b>6 Characteristics of Effective Professional Learning Community at Chavez Middle School</b>
Structural Conditions	Walk-throughs, lab classes, lesson architecture, common literacy skills and strategies, weekly instructional meetings
Intentional Collective Learning	1x week all staff/professional development AND professional development explicitly for student teachers led by coach/intern
Supportive Relational Conditions	Open dialogue and norms for all Chavez educators (Discourse Level 1 vs. 2) Eubanks, E., Parish, R., & Smith, D. (1997). Changing the Discourse in Schools. In P. Hall (Ed.), <i>Race, ethnicity, and multiculturalism: Policy and practice</i> . NY: Routledge.
Peers Supporting Peers	Mentor teachers supported by coach/intern and one another Student teachers supporting one another through formal and informal meetings
Shared Values and Vision	All work rooted in Chavez mission Statement, consistent instructional strategies and norms
Shared and Supportive Leadership	Multiple individuals taking leadership (principal, university supervisors, mentor teachers, other Chavez teachers, instructional coach/intern, student teachers)



## Appendix B: Role Ordered Matrix of PDS/Lab School

<i>Role</i>	<i>Stance on Learning</i>	<i>Social Justice Concept</i>	<i>Benefit/Challenges Benefits in Bold</i>	<i>Implications</i>
Teacher Candidates	Open to feedback, Inspiration Synergy Self-reflection Dedication to rigor Pedagogy acquisition	Voice Empowerment Culturally responsive pedagogy Inclusion of Gen Ed & SpED in gen ed	<b>Discussing instructional decisions in front of students led to urgency about learning &amp; metacognition. The dialogue created a change in dynamics between the teachers in the room.</b>	Discussing instruction in the midst of the classroom supported learning. Apprenticeship model create additional opportunities for learning, reflection, and char
Cooperating Teacher General Education	Open to feedback, Sense of belonging Inspiration Synergy Self-reflection Pedagogy acquisition and/or refinement	Voice Empowerment Culturally responsive pedagogy Inclusion of Gen Ed and SpED in gen ed	Cooperating teachers needed to be taught how to mentor. <b>Opportunity for veteran teachers to gain new skills &amp; learning. Mentor teachers desire to apprentice new teachers.</b>	Administrator (intern) or co needed to be skilled and available to mentor cooperat teachers
Cooperating Teacher Special Education	Open to feedback, Sense of belonging Inspiration Synergy Self-reflection Dedication to rigor Pedagogy refinement	Voice Empowerment Culturally responsive pedagogy Inclusion of Gen Ed and SpED in gen ed	<b>Open to having other adults in the room with them.</b> Providing support and guidance for how to have others in the room was essential.	When supported, having a student teacher in the room provides numerous benefits to students and mentor teachers
Principal	Open to feedback, Inspiration Synergy Self-reflection Dedication to rigor	Voice Provide professional development on culturally responsive teaching	The principal was involved in the placements and philosophy of the learning lab, saw value of partnership, set positive tone for instruction and learning.	The principal needed to be involved and supportive, modeling school leadership with a stance of continual learning.
Administrative Intern/Coach	Open to feedback, learning and growth Sense of belonging Inspiration Synergy Self-reflection Dedication to rigor	Voice Empowerment Guide to access & power Culturally responsive pedagogy Provide professional development on culturally responsive teaching	The school needs consistency about mission of our work. We must reflecting constantly and invite others input.	Opening practice is risky and requires ongoing reflection and openness to learning. The benefits are multi-dimension
Chavez Students	Open to feedback, learning and growth Sense of belonging Inspiration Synergy Self-reflection Dedication to rigor	Voice Empowerment Learn to advocate for access and power Access to relevant content	Students desire to be a part of the process of teaching and learning. They can and will reflect upon their own learning. Metacognition from adults is a powerful modeling tool for our students.	Student voice must be involv valued and honored in the process of teaching and learn
University Professor	Inspiration Synergy Self-reflection Dedication to rigor	Voice Empowerment Culturally responsive pedagogy	More time in one building builds stronger relationships and more relevant practice. University professors gain by bringing a stance of learning into public schools.	Systems need to be build tha support professors being in fewer schools. Professors ne to bring a stance of learning the dialogue.

## **Biographies**

Amy D. Petti, Ed.D is an associate professor of Educational Leadership & Policy, following a 27 year career as a teacher, principal, and Director of Instructional Improvement for high poverty schools.

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