BEYOND DETERMINED EFFORTS BY INSPIRED INDIVIDUALS

A STUDY OF EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Teaching Australia

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VICTORIA UNIVERSITY | A NEW SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The project standpoint

The year 2007 marked what appeared to be a new approach to preservice teacher education in Australia. 'Top of the Class', the report on an inquiry into teacher education by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training, made recommendations which were so novel that they prompted approbation from the teacher education community. Uniquely among more than 20 reviews of teacher education in the past 30 years, 'Top of the Class' proposed extensive funding for initiatives into teacher education. One of the most stimulating recommendations was for the Commonwealth to offer support for partnerships in teacher education through the establishment of a National Education Partnership Fund.

'Top of the Class' defined partnerships as: the sharing in responsibility for the partnership by the stakeholders in teacher education and '*a willingness to work together with other partners*' (p 79). In recognising that existing partnerships were the result of '*determined efforts by inspired individuals in universities, schools and systems*' (p 79) the report sought to promote the adoption of partnerships as a condition of teacher education in Australia. It opted for an approach in which partnerships were widely based rather than narrowly located in a professional development school model.

The evaluation of partnerships in teacher education by 'Top of the Class' should be taken as accurate but disappointing. Arguably, the form of successful partnerships involving schools and universities had been worked out in the last decade of the 20th century. What has impeded their development? Has it been anything other than a failure of will - political, academic and professional will?

Looking back over the 25 years, one initiative stands out in the evolution in Australia of university-school partnerships in teacher education. In the early 1990s, the National Project on the Quality of Teaching and Learning (NPQTL) projected the idea of the university-school partnership for the first time in a formal way in Australian education and teacher education. It was the NPQTL's vision of the university-school partnership which impelled Victoria University (VU) to explore and eventually adopt the discourse and practices of partnership-based teacher education. Not that we at VU would present our achievements as any kind of unimpeachable model for colleagues to imitate. A visit to the wrong school at anytime or the right school on the wrong day would not provide convincing evidence in favour of university-school partnerships. But both situations are not the rule of our experience.

Three related developments associated with the NPQTL have been critical in the formation of partnerships at Victoria University. The first was the establishment of the National Schools Network (NSN), which for six or more years achieved what had then been unthinkable in Australian education: a respectful and constructive relationship of equals involving schools and their teachers, the teacher unions, school systems and university teacher education faculties. The NSN was a model with learning at its core: school student learning, school teacher learning, university teacher learning and also institutional learning. Its work has been evaluated widely. A useful international assessment of the NSN is that of Furlong, Barton, Miles, Whiting and Whitty (2001) in their discussion of teacher education in Britain.

The second prompt for Victoria University's partnerships was its participation in the Innovative Links Project (1994-1996). More focused on the contribution of the university role than the NSN, the Innovative Links Project provided the teacher education program at VU with specific tools for the support of partnership-based preservice teacher education and professional learning. Judyth Sachs' reflection on the Innovative Links Project (Sachs 2003) argued that the evidence of Innovative Links is that school and university colleagues experienced their collaborations in the Project as highly significant for their professional learning and for their efforts in educational change and innovation.

The awarding by Teaching Australia of the tender to investigate the formation of effective and sustainable university-school partnerships in teacher education needs, as a result, to be contextualised by the evident commitment of the VU research team to partnership-based teacher education. Finding successful partnerships, working with colleagues to establish their effects and what sustains them is a kind of mutual appreciation of valued work. This standpoint admits the VU's team interest in the research – interest in the sense that the desirability of partnerships is not being questioned. What is also of interest is what makes partnerships work in different locations and how they have come to exist at a time when institutional forces are so much against their formation. Emerging from its own problematic efforts, the VU research team brings alertness to the substantive questions which confront any universities and schools seeking to establish partnerships in teacher education.

Inevitably, in the opinion of the VU team, the formation of effective and sustainable partnerships will emerge from and will create new institutional forms. There can be no other reading of the proposals for teacher education contained in 'Top of the Class'. The imagined nature of teacher education constructed within the framework of 'Top of the Class' is so different from the niggardly conditions experienced now by preservice teachers, teachers and teacher educators that it can only be interpreted as a new and hither-to unexperienced domain of collaboration, change and innovation.

This report is an attempt to burrow into the largely unacknowledged partnership spaces constructed from the 'determined efforts of inspired individuals' in Australian teacher education. For the VU team, the traces of understandings and practices first made explicit by the NSN and the Innovative Links Project come to the surface in any partnership-based teacher education setting. But this research is no nostalgic return to a fondly recalled golden age. The language of 'effectiveness' and 'sustainability' demands a location for the project within the uncompromising strictures of evidence-based research. The VU team doubts if its methodology possesses the qualities which are commonly associated with politically significant evidence. But the collaborative inquiry methods adopted in the project have connected the researchers in an intimate way to the practices of partnerships which are currently subsisting in the often insensitive inter-institutional terrain which exists between Australian universities and schools.

The research team hopes that its proximity to and familiarity with VU's partnerships have not dulled the critical inquiry focus needed for the research and most certainly have not privileged its own work over colleagues' efforts throughout Australia. Their work in establishing working university-school partnerships should prompt respect from all who understand their complexity and instability. The more-or-less approving evaluation of existing partnerships by 'Top of the Class' is deserved by each partnership studied in this project, even if that approbation is coloured by the disappointment that they are not the common and valued experience of teacher education in Australia.

Project Report

Australian teacher education, for all its travails, is in a hopeful condition. A national report into teacher education has recommended increased funding for teacher education for the first time and national project funding for research into partnerships in teacher education has been awarded to a research team with evident social commitment. Little wonder then, that the course of the project and the form of the project report is optimistic about the possibility that partnership-based teacher education is an achievable goal and that it can actually lead to claimed benefits beyond an instrumental improvement in the 'training' of teachers, without being mandated by governments or by elite institutions such as universities.

Accordingly, the report of this investigation into the nature of effective and sustainable university-school partnerships has adopted an approach which seeks underlying explanations rather than an arms-length and theorised critique. The report of the project has what might be regarded as a conventional form. A brief discussion of the literature precedes an outline of the project's methodology culminating in a detailed exposition of the results of the collaborative analysis of the data and what might be termed a set of findings.

Chapter 2 presents descriptions of the seven partnerships selected for extended study in the project. Each of the snapshots of partnership practice has been generated from the stages of the collaborative practitioner research summarised in the following section. At the conclusion of Chapter 2 is a summary of the characteristics of the partnerships studied in the project. The collaborative practitioner research also identified the key themes which have been incorporated into the report of the analysis on Chapter 3. Those themes, bundled and organised, form the basis for the action proposals presented in Chapter 4.

The intention of the final chapter is to set a challenge for colleagues in schools, school system authorities and university teacher education faculties. We also hope that the report's propositions provide Teaching Australia and the nation's education political leaders with a pathway of possibility. More an imagining than a recommendation, the final chapter sets out a first step in the development of a distinctively Australian approach to partnerships if, by happy coincidence, the Commonwealth Government decided to establish a National Teacher Education Partnership Fund distributing $20 million dollars per year for three years for initiatives (Top of the Class 2007: 81).

Project Aims

The Project Aims defined by Teaching Australia were for the research team to:

- Identify examples of effective and sustainable university-school partnerships as part of preservice teacher preparation programs, as well as research, induction and continuing professional learning for practising teachers; and
- Analyse these programs to identify the characteristics of effectiveness and sustainability.

For the VU research team, those project objectives led to a set of analytical aims. The project has sought to propose:

- A set of criteria for the evaluation of the *effectiveness* of university-school partnerships;
- A set of criteria for the evaluation of the *sustainability* of university-school partnerships.

The analytical aims became the basis for methodological goals. The project aimed to:

- Scan the university-school partnership literature with an emphasis on the examination of the experience of university-school partnerships rather than an evaluation based on pre-determined assumptions about partnership characteristics
- Survey teacher education programs in Australian universities on the nature, if any, of their partnership relations with schools;
- Use the survey data to identify possible university-school partnerships for in-depth study; selection criteria were negotiated with Teaching Australia and took into account clarity of survey response, program type, system characteristics and demographic and geographic criteria;
- Apply a process of 'collaborative practitioner research' requiring: An extended profiling of seven partnerships; data to be collected included program documents, narratives such as case writing, proceedings of group meetings and personal/group interviews;

The participation in data collection and analysis by the direct stakeholders in school-university partnerships – school teachers and principals, preservice teachers, teacher educators and system leaders;

Exploration of the ways in which university-school partnerships conceived the stakeholders in university-school partnerships: preservice teachers and their mentor teachers and teacher educators; but also school students and system authorities

The proposition of the effects of university-school partnerships and the resources deployed by stakeholders in support of those partnerships

- Propose methodologies for the evaluation of university-school partnerships consistent with best practice;
- Propose a responsive and dynamic framework by which Teaching Australia will be able to support the development of new programs.

Summary of literature scan

The ideology of partnerships in teacher education is of relatively long-standing duration. In Australia, the university-school partnership entered the formal discourse of teacher education in the early 1990s, prompted by the then Federal Government's National Program for the Quality of Teaching and Learning. That nearly two decades later the university-school partnership concept continues to be a recommendation in parliamentary reports signifies separation between the ideological significance accorded to partnerships in policy documents and the commitment invested by schools and universities in their practical accomplishment. Building university-school partnerships is either not very important to many universities and schools, or the task is just too hard, demanding too many resources with insufficient return for one or both sides of the relationship. In a typically terse commentary, Ramsey (2000: 29) concluded that partnerships were *still largely unfulfilled* promises.

Yet the insistence by policy makers of the value of university-school partnerships cannot be ignored, especially when the urging is accompanied by recommendations for additional funding. Most recently, the Education and Training Committee of the Victorian Parliament (2005) and the Federal House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training (2007) have published reports on the quality of teacher education in Australia. The reports of both committees, respectively entitled 'Step Up, Step In and Step Out' and 'Top of the Class' were in agreement about the importance of partnerships in teacher education. Importance may be too restricted a term. 'Necessity' more closely matches the significance that both reports accord to the university-school partnership. Each report proposed increases in funding for the practical component of teacher education within a university-school partnership arrangement.

This is an assertion with which the Victoria University School of Education strongly agrees. In the opinion of the School, the practice and discourse separations between universities and education settings such as schools, and most significantly between school teachers, preservice teachers and teacher educators, are the most challenging impediments to improvement in teacher education: not only to preservice teacher education but to teacher professional learning in general.

What are partnerships?

The House of Representatives Committee accorded substantial prominence to the promotion of partnerships. In approving the development of university-school partnerships, 'Top of the Class' (79) noted evidence of

> 'outstanding partnerships…particularly around the provision of the practicum. These partnerships are often the result of determined efforts by inspired individuals in universities, schools and systems. Key ingredients in these partnerships are the awareness that teacher education is a shared responsibility and a willingness to work in partnership with other parties to fulfil that responsibility'.

'Top of the Class' made no effort to define what such partnerships might look like other than to collect the evidence presented to the Standing Committee in an Appendix.

On the other hand, a Victorian Parliamentary Report (Step Up, Step In, Step Out 2005: 57) was more certain on the form and significance of partnerships, in which teacher education programs…

> … have been successful in forging stronger links with schools, generating increased involvement of schools in (the) university's programs, enhancing the reflective engagement of pre-service teachers in the learning and teaching process and increasing the satisfaction of pre-service teachers and their commitment to the course. Furthermore, the Committee received evidence that … the benefits of partnerships extend to all involved: the pre-service teachers, university staff, principals and teachers, school children and the broader community.

From the perspective of policy, partnerships appear as a distinguishing characteristic of those teacher education programs with practices which link school teachers, preservice teachers and teacher educators in more direct and ongoing ways than the conventional teacher education practicum. The nature of the partnership is that its impact is in the participation and learning of the individual participants but also that the enhanced university-school relationship needs to be organised at the level of the institutions. Clearly, that is the intention of 'Top of the Class' which recommended funding for innovation in partnership-based teacher education, where partnerships comprised schools, school systems and universities.

What are the failings in teacher education that partnerships are perceived to overcome?

'Top of the Class' lists the 'problems with the provision of practicum' as the shortage of placements, the weak connection between practice and theory, the quality of supervisors and inadequate funding to sustain high quality placements (70-74). Geographical location was also a factor for the House of Representatives Committee which identified rural and remote settings as problematic environments for high quality teacher education. For the Committee, the *establishment of strong authentic partnerships between all parties* would be an effective

antidote for the *division of responsibilities for delivering teacher education and the lack of a sense of shared responsibility between the major parties*' (75) which is the principal cause of the practicum's problems.

'Step Up, Step In, Step Out' catalogues the gaps in teacher education contained in evidence presented to the Victorian Parliamentary Committee. Not all of the failings are practicum related but many are and can be seen as being solved by enhanced partnership relations between university teacher education faculties and schools. For example, the Victorian report (p 112) notes that two of the '*greatest barriers to achieving a better balance between theory and practice in teacher education, and thus to improving the suitability of current courses*' are that teacher educators are out-of-touch with school classroom practices and that teachers are not asked to contribute to teacher education course design.

The comment, in the foreword to 'Top of the Class', that teacher education in Australia *is not in crisis* notwithstanding, the implication in both the Federal and Victorian reports is that the learning of teachers about teaching and their competence in teaching are substantially less than ideal. However much research and development in university-school partnerships becomes a matter of the relationships between institutions, the fundamental question to be studied and to be worked on is the learning of teachers: in initial teacher education, preservice teachers of course. But the potential of partnerships is that teachers in schools and teacher educators in universities will derive learning benefits from working together.

'How to sustain effective partnerships over the long term'

'Top of the Class' recommends research into the ways in which partnerships can be made effective and sustainable. It is an interesting question – and not just because it is educationally significant. If partnerships are as valuable in improving teacher education as both the Federal and Victorian reports assert, then the simplest approach to the establishment of partnerships would be for government to mandate them as has been required in Britain. In the United States, university-school partnerships have become mandatory in some locations through concerted action by university and school district leaders (for example, see Arizona State University 2007).

But in its proposal for partnerships to be researched, the House of Representative Committee has recognised the possibility that a likely consequence of mandated partnerships are that they are examples of contrived collaboration, what Furlong et al (2000) have termed 'complementary partnerships' characterised by strict division of educational responsibility and with only minimal efforts at education-based communication between the university and the school. Table 1.1 presents a summary of the differences between collaborative and complementary partnerships. The significance of the Table and the research conducted by Furlong et al is that close learning-based relationships between preservice teachers, teachers and teacher educators are not guaranteed, even under the mandated conditions in British teacher education.

Through its selection of exemplars, the House of Representatives Committee has signalled its preference for partnerships which are 'collaborative' (Furlong et al 2000) typified by university and school colleagues and preservice teachers working together in teams, discussing professional issues and negotiating the practices of the partnership

Areas/Key Features	Collaborative	Complementary
Planning	Emphasis on giving all tutors and teachers opportunities to work together in small groups	Broad planning of structure with agreed areas of responsibility
HE visits to schools	Collaborative to discuss professional issues together	None or only for 'troubleshooting'
Documentation	Codifies emerging collaborative practice	Strongly emphasised, defining areas of responsibility
Content	Schools and HE recognise legitimacy and difference of each others' contribution to an ongoing dialogue	Separate knowledge domains, no opportunities for dialogue
Mentoring	Defined as giving students access to teachers' professional knowledge-mentor 'training' as professional development, learning to articulate embedded knowledge	Mentoring comes from knowledge base of school
Assessment	Collaborative, based on triangulation	School responsible for teaching assessment
Contractual relationship	Negotiated, personal	Legalistic, finance led with discrete areas of responsibility
Legitimation	Commitment to value of collaboration in initial teacher education	Either principled commitment to role of school or pragmatic due to limited resources

Table 1.1   Collaborative and Complementary University-School Partnerships

Collaborative partnerships which are effective and sustainable require substantial investment. The reference in 'Top of the Class' to '*determined efforts by inspired individuals*' is unlikely to be a convincing recommendation for the widespread adoption of collaborative partnerships by teachers and teacher educators. Collaborative partnerships do exist as 'Top of the Class' demonstrates, but the report's evidence does not provide information on the effects of such partnerships although it does offer insight on the critical place of such partnerships in advancing Australian teacher education and on the investments required to sustain them.

Reading the literature

As university-school partnerships became generalised as a VU School of Education approach, the commitment to school student learning has provided the foundation for a coherent framework within which the practices implicit in the partnership concept have been opened up for examination, understanding and improvement. Subsequently developed through later projects on teacher professional learning (Kruger et al 2002; Cherednichenko et al 2005), this framework provides a useful analytical starting point for this Teaching Australia funded study. In the experience of university-school partnerships at Victoria University, school teachers, preservice teachers and university teachers, when learning together in university-school partnerships, adopt practices which are:

▪ *Personalised*, emerging from and connecting with the specific demands of each teacher's practice and each teacher's commitment to students;
▪ *Localised,* in the ways teachers interpret their own shared interests and those of their students;

- *Instances of professional learning* where innovation and development depend on how well schools provide environments supportive of *professional conversations* and *professional collaboration* e.g. as in mentoring practices;
- An accomplishment dependent on *groups or teams* of teachers and preservice teachers with *professional relationships* whose characteristic is one of professional trust: that participating teachers, preservice teachers and teacher educators, can be open about their own practices and understanding and be ready to receive feedback from colleagues;
- *Structured by the decisions* taken by universities and schools on the curriculum and pedagogy which is regarded as appropriate for students, teachers, preservice teachers and teacher educators. Teachers and, in some VU partnerships, preservice teachers too are active in constructing those decisions and the ways in which they are enacted in schools;
- *Implicated in institutional structures and system power* which provide enabling conditions and resources for teachers' learning, system guidance and support including, in teacher education, standards for teacher registration and processes for teacher education course accreditation. At the core of this organisational characteristic are *institutional agreements*: most certainly involving universities and schools, but ideally school system authorities.

The strength of this analytical framework is that it presents a basis for the evaluation and understanding of the contributions and practices of all of the direct stakeholders in teacher education. Importantly, the stakeholders include school students, the advancement of whose interests must be the commitment of schools and, the VU School of Education asserts, of teacher education too. By using this inclusive framework, an investigation could commence in one domain and make connections with all other components of the framework, avoiding the omission for example in a policy study of the practical considerations in local partnerships.

Judging the effectiveness of a university-school partnership within the framework is then a question of assessing the effects of partnerships on the individual participants, on how they work together and how the participating university and schools are affected by the relationship. Sustainability suggests a cost-benefit analysis of the relationship. If all that drives partnerships are the inspiration and determined effort of individuals as 'Top of the Class' claims, then it is likely that the school-university partnership will continue to be unusual, something of a novelty in Australian teacher education.

Recent Research

A striking feature of the recent literature on university-school partnerships is the increase in the number of research-based accounts of the effects of partnerships. Ten years ago, the partnership literature was largely descriptive and often consisted of reports of what particular partnerships intended to achieve. Since 1998, a number of research studies have been published, with some including quantitative investigations of relatively large-scale programs.

The personalised nature of partnerships appears in the emphasis in the research on participants' perceptions (eg Scharman 2007; Edwards and Mutton 2007). Evaluating the support of teachers, preservice teachers and teacher educators for partnerships appears to be an important research strategy. Of course, that support is also critically important in the practices of the partnership. The studies by Davies, Edwards, Gannon and Laws (2007) and Norman (2006) demonstrate the dependence on teacher commitment if a well-intentioned partnership is to succeed.   A partnership can easily erode if a participant group perceives little benefit in the relationship.

An interesting term used to describe the level of involvement in partnerships is the extent to which teachers and teacher educators are 'boundary spanners' (van Zandt 1998; Edwards and Mutton 2007; Borthwick, Stirling, Nauman and Cook 2003; Firestone and Fisler 2002). Mutton and Butcher (2008:60) have quoted Wenger's similar term 'broker between communities'. The positive experience of teachers seconded on short term contracts to work in a teacher education faculty (Russell and Chapman 2001) points to an effective boundary-spanning practice.

More often attached to the practices of school teachers and leaders who desire to work within a university environment/discourse, boundary spanning also is an appropriate descriptor for the uncertain commitment of teacher educators to university-school partnerships (Scharman 2007; Peters 2002). The university-focused work of 'academics', with its emphasis on measurable research outputs for example, is at odds with the time demands of the school-focused work of teacher education in building strong relationships with colleagues in schools and supporting their reflective inquiry into practice. For both teachers and teacher educators, successful participation in a university-school partnership might relate to the extent to which they are favour an inquiry-based approach to teacher professional learning (Carroll 2006).

Localised advantages appear to be an important consideration for teachers who have become active participants in university-school partnerships. The prospect of working on a valued curriculum program of benefit to the school and classroom practice can engage teachers (Scharman 2007). For preservice teachers, the authenticity of the specific practice setting is important in an experience which encourages the deep integration of practice and theory (Elmer 2002). But the localised nature of teacher education is also to be observed in the ways in which partnership schools shift the intentions and practices of the partnerships so that the curriculum, pedagogies, staffing and organisational systems in the school are not greatly affected by the work with the university (Edwards and Mutton 2007). Unmet teacher expectations that collaborative research would lead to practical professional development is an example of the problems which occur when teacher and teacher educator intentions are incongruent (Davies et al 2007). It is in the local school setting that partnerships develop through the building up over time of relationships, strong communication and shared understandings among the participants (Beck and Humphries 2000).

The cost of voluntary and mandated partnerships is the extent to which the relationship might be a component of a long-term development of a school or teacher education faculty, or whether a forced partnership is directed to the immediate concern of lifting a school's test scores (Borthwick, Stirling, Nauman and Cook 2003). Partnerships, it seems, are dependent for their success on the micropolitics of the participating institutions (Firestone and Fisler 2002). A useful insight into the micropolitical complexity in partnerships is the ways in which they lead to 'interruptions' in the taken-for-granted local practices of both universities and schools (Grundy et al 2001). The success of the partnership appears to be dependent on the extent to which they are given time to develop in schools and that the participants are able to trial and improve practices (Sealey, Robson and Hutchins 1997).

Reflective inquiry in p*rofessional conversations* is the 'methodology' of teacher professional learning in partnerships. The research reports that successful partnerships ensured that professional conversations were a planned and supported partnership activity (McLaughlin and Black-Hawkins 2007; Carroll 2006; Borthwick, Stirling, Nauman and Cook 2003; Cole and Ryan 2001; Martinez and Coombs 2001; Grundy, Robison and Tomazos 2001). Similarly, partnerships were less successful if 'working together' was not an explicitly organised practice

(Firestone and Fisler 2002). The discussion of professional conversations in the literature points to purposeful and collaborative planning by partners and reflection about practical improvement and not so much to the critical reflection linking broad areas of knowledge and understanding which might be the quality preferred in the university setting (Barton et al 2000). This last question would appear to be important if partnership-based teacher education is not to reduce to a form of apprenticeship in which practice is again separated from theory (Wubbels, Korthagen and Van der Valk 1998).

Associated with the professional conversations involving the partners was that the partnership in a school was frequently organised as a *collaborative team*, in which the university teacher educator and the school coordinator have substantial leadership responsibilities (Scharman 2007; McLaughlin and Hawkins 2007; Carroll 2006; Peters 2002; Firestone and Fisler 2002). Wenger's 'community of practice' (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002) and 'community of inquiry' (Cochran-Smyth and Lytle 2001) signify the ideal types of settings for teacher professional learning.   Two recent papers (Le Cornu and Ewing 2008; Gorodetsky and Barak 2008) have applied the idea of the community as the appropriate domain for professional learning about practice in teacher education. Importantly for this research, the former authors defined *reciprocity* as an essential practice of such learning communities.

An interesting feature of the partnership literature in recent years is the relative paucity of studies of the importance and role of the mentor in preservice teacher education. An explosion of advocacy and 'how to' mentoring monographs accompanied the mandating of partnerships in teacher education in Britain in the 1990s. Perhaps the mentoring literature reflected a loss-of-control concern from teacher education as substantially increased time in schools was a requirement of the shift to partnerships in British teacher education. But the emphasis on mentoring also signifies the importance of the quality of the interactions between teachers and preservice teachers in practice-based settings.

Discussions of the viability of partnerships inevitably turn to the *organisational arrangements and decisions* made by universities and schools. These *institutional structures* provide the enabling conditions for teachers, preservice teachers and teacher educators to engage in partnership teams and in the professional conversations which are the educative work of the partnership. Without clear agreements and supportive arrangements, partnerships may just be assimilated into existing school arrangements (Edwards and Mutton 2007) or dissolved (Norman 2006) as the ongoing everyday work of teachers and teacher educators is perceived to have greater professional and career importance than boundary spanning partnership collaboration. Edwards and Mutton (2007) and Carroll (2006) have pointed to the formation of new 'identities' in partnership-based teacher education. If partnerships are to be an ongoing feature of teacher education then they will be dependent on the extent to which universities and schools can find ways for teacher educators and teachers to take on the identities of 'boundary spanners' in ways which provide professional and career rewards.   What appears essential is that the participants in partnerships invest value in what each brings to the relationship. This is a cultural shift which requires altered structural arrangements supporting cross-institutional collaboration through high-level management support (Walkington 2007).

While the literature notes the effective elements of developing university-school partnerships, it also identifies a number of factors which influence sustainability: teacher commitment ; teacher educator time and resource management; employment reward and promotion structures for teacher educators; structural barriers such as the timetables in schools and university; the role of leadership of each system (see for example Borthwick et al 2003, Carroll 2006, Davies 2007,

Firestone and Fishler 2002, Grundy 2001, Peters 2001, Russell and Chapman 2002). These matters need to be addressed to support on-going effective university-school partnerships.

Partnerships will not be sustainable if they result only from '*the determined efforts by inspired individuals'.* Enduring institutional support will be an essential ingredient in the successful transition of teacher education from a program with a perceived practice-theory split to one in which the work of teaching is regarded as integrated praxis, and learning about education and learning to teach are the outcomes of institutional cooperation and professional collaboration across institutions.

The Project Methodology

The methodology for this study was influenced by the VU project team's desire to deliver a practical outcome from the Teaching Australia project, clearly connected with the interests of the participants in partnership-based teacher education. Not only would the study present a constructive critique of partnerships in Australia, it would also provide inspiration for future innovation and research. These intentions required the research team to:

- put practitioners at the centre of the research
- design an open analytical process
- ensure the collaborative generation of findings, and
- take an ethical approach to the study ensuring that data would be de-identified.

The methodology by which data was collected and analysed was designed to enable the research team to meet the elements of the project as agreed with Teaching Australia:
- Identifying a limited number of programs around Australia in a range of different contexts, from the perspective of schools, universities and employers, that demonstrate effective and sustainable partnerships;
- Documenting the characteristics of the identified partnerships;
- Analysing the partnerships and identifying the characteristics evident in each case;
- Proposing possibilities that might guide the development of new programs and constitute a framework for the examining the quality of existing programs.

The research comprised the following stages.

Nomination of Partnerships

The project team, with the direct support of Teaching Australia, mailed a letter outlining the project to school system authorities, university education faculties and other professional and educational organisations. The letter sought nominations of university-school partnerships for inclusion in the latter stages of the research. Eighty-one partnership nominations were received.

Expressions of Interest

The research team contacted each of the 81 nominated partnerships by email with an invitation to express their interest in participating in the research project. The invitation was accompanied by an electronic questionnaire which asked the respondents to:
- Provide details of the characteristics of the partnership program (with a particular focus on effectiveness and sustainability);
- Provide any related partnership documents (e.g. policy documents, course/program outlines, agreements, statements of procedure, assessment).

Thirty-five of the nominated partnerships returned completed Expression of Interest questionnaires.   An analysis of the written responses and documentation was conducted to establish evidence of effective and sustainable university-school partnerships. The partnerships identified as having submitted evidence of effectiveness and sustainability were classified by program type and specified demographic and geographical characteristics. Criteria used in the classification included: partnerships of varying size; remote, rural and metropolitan locations; indigenous locations; and both secular and non-secular settings. The 35 responses to the Expression of Interest are summarised in Table 1.2.

Lead Institution	Single School	Multiple Schools	Preservice Teacher Focus	Professional Learning Focus	System Involvement	Sustainable?	Effective?
School	✓		✓		✓	Began 2003	Enhances school student & pst learning & meets system need
University	✓		✓	✓	✓	Began 1995. Varied funding for specific aspects of project	Improvement in teaching practices linked to improved student outcomes
University		26	✓	✓	✓	Began 1997	Won awards
System		60		✓	✓	Began 2003. Funded	Partnership focus has broadened
University		33	✓	✓	✓	Began 2000. Transient staff impacts on sustainability	Successful teacher & teacher aide professional development
University		6	✓	✓	✓	Began 2005 with system support	Effective for psts & mentors
School	✓		✓			Began 2006	Positive experience for psts, teachers & university
University	✓		✓			Began 2003. One academic & one school leader	Effective for school students, psts & mentors
School	✓		✓			Began 2004	Win- win for school & uni
University		50	✓		✓	Difficult to maintain level of lecturer liaison	Enhanced PST knowledge of schools
University		5	✓			Began 2007	Unknown
University		4	✓			Workload is barrier to sustainability	PSTs rate program well
University		4	✓			Began 2000 Requires commitment	PSTs value 'real life' component
University		14		✓		Began 1994.	Effective research

						Voluntary	network
University		20	✓			Began 2004 as pilot. Workloads a barrier	PSTs value collaboration with teachers
University		9	✓	✓	✓	Project not continuing, but links will continue	Valuable shared pst/ teacher learning
University	✓		✓	✓		Began 2004	Highly effective
University	✓		✓	✓		Equipment & space limitations	Effective for school students & teachers
University	✓		✓			Coordination difficult	Effective for psts
School		20		✓	✓	System, university & school support	Effective for school students & teachers
School		3		✓		Teacher workload a barrier	Effective for school students
System		16		✓	✓	Funded 2005 - 07	Staff confidence increased
System		105	✓	✓	✓	Been operating 8+ years	Focus is religious dimension of practice
University	✓		✓			Began 2007	Effective for school students
School	✓					Began 1997	Effective for school students
School	✓				✓	Began 1997	Effective for school students
University		2	✓	✓		International funding	Effective for psts
University		6	✓			Funded by university	Effective for psts
School		2+			✓		
University		3				Dependent on individuals	One program approved
University			✓	✓			
University	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Valued by school students & teachers &, psts
University		40		✓	✓	Planned for 2008 - 10	
University		35	✓		✓	Funded 2005 - 09	Effective for psts
University		400+	✓	✓		Began 1994	Many successful partnerships

Table 1.2 Summary of data from Expressions of Interest

The research team selected seven partnerships for further investigation. Once identified each partnership was then invited to nominate the members of the partnership who would participate in the study. Table 1.3 shows the number and role of participants from each partnership.

Partnership	Teacher educators	Teachers	Preservice teachers	Other	Totals
Outer University	2	1	3	3 (1 Prin, 2 DP)	9
Plains University	1	1	2	2 (1 Prin, 1 RTO)	6
River University	2		1	2 (1 Prin, 1 DP)	5
Regional University	2	2	2	1 (Prin)	7
Western University	2	2	2	1 (Prin)	7
Local University	1	5	2		8
City University and Beachside PS	2	5	0	1 Principal	8
Totals	12	16	12	10	50

Table 1.3   University-School Partnerships Selected for In-Depth Study

Collaborative Practitioner Research

Partnerships imply collaboration and for the VU research the implication in the research brief from Teaching Australia was that collaboration should characterise the research methodology. A form of inquiry was needed that retained the participants in the research as fully as possible in all stages: data collection, analysis and generation of findings. Collaborative practitioner research (Kruger et al 2002; Cherednichenko et al 2005) presented the research team with an inclusive strategy flexible enough for application in a bounded funded project. Proceeding from simple description to an open analytical engagement by participants with their own data to a final agreement on findings, each of the seven selected partnership groups presented theorised reflections on their partnership experiences and reflections.

Data collection: personal accounts

Once the partnerships and participants in the study had been identified, the first step in the collaborative practitioner inquiry was the writing of a personal account of partnership practice from each participant. Each participant was invited to participate in a series of elaborated electronic interviews with a member of the VU research team. In the first instance each participant was asked to:
▪ confirm the description of the partnership provided in the expression of interest and
▪ describe their experience of the partnership.

Using a set of questions designed for each partnership, each participant was prompted by the VU project team member to describe and interpret key aspects of their experience in partnerships and to report their knowledge of effective and sustainable university-school partnerships. The coordination of this process was complex requiring initial communication and follow-up with every participant and an up-to-date data base for the tracking the progress of the 50 developing personal accounts.

This electronic interview approach was conceptualised as an interpretation of the case writing methodology (Wassermann, 1993) which has been used frequently by the VU team in the initiation of practitioner inquiry. The elaborated online interviews were designed to lead each research participant to:

- compile a public body of professional knowledge through descriptions of partnership activity;
- explain the outcomes of thorough reflection on experiences;
- identify and generalise the underlying principles arising from individual events within university-school partnerships; and
- provide a basis for the development of personal theories and identification of strategies which lead to change and improvement in university-school partnerships.

Elaborated Profiles of Each Partnership

At the conclusion of the writing of the personal accounts, the research team collected each partnership's personal accounts into a single document, preceded by summary of the partnership presented in the Expression of Interest. The focus for this part of the research was to develop an initial profile of each partnership that provided a rich, multi-perspective description of activity and engagement. Each profile included:

- a summary including the university details, the number of schools involved, the duration of the partnership, the number of people involved, the focus of the partnership and the participants in the study
- information about the stakeholders including preservice teachers, preservice teacher coordinators, teacher educators, practicum coordinators, school systems, school students and any other partners including universities and other organisations
- a statement about the purpose and activities of the partnership and
- each of the personal accounts.

The research team took care at this point to take a 'light' approach to editing the personal accounts with the original drafts remaining in their original state except for alterations that would facilitate communication of the ideas to other members of the partnership.

Once these documents had been compiled the research team sought permission from the contributors to share their accounts with the other participants in the partnership.

These elaborated profiles were the documents that became the basis for validation and analysis at the seven roundtables.

Roundtable validation: from annotated profiles to theorised concept maps

The VU team provided the participants in each selected partnership with its collected elaborated profile, which became the basis for collaborative analysis within an on-site research roundtable validation meeting. The purpose of the validation meetings was to analyse partnership effectiveness and sustainability from the perspective of each stakeholder and also from the perspective of the partnership.

Each roundtable meeting used the initial profiles to stimulate further inquiry and explanation. Important outcomes of the validation process included:

- confirmation of partnership descriptions provided in the personal accounts
- personal explanations achieved through reflection on personal accounts
- personal theorising based on the personal accounts
- collaborative theorising based on the combined accounts.

The analysis involved the participants reflecting on their personal accounts by sketching, threading, identifying statements of belief and in some instances developing personal concept maps to depict the partnership experience (Kruger et al 2002; Cherednichenko et al 2005). By the end of this process each roundtable participant had annotated their personal accounts and when combined had achieved an annotated profile.

Following the individual process the focus turned to the whole partnership group with participants reporting to each other on their perceptions. In working with the group the participants were able to construct a concept map which brought the range of ideas and experiences together in a collaborative view of effective and sustainable partnerships. Audio recordings made during these reports and the discussion during the construction of the concept maps documented the collaborative analysis.

The concept mapping stage sought to engage the participants in a personal and collective theorising of their partnership practices. The questions that underpinned this activity were:

- Based on your experience, what do you think makes an effective and sustainable partnership?
- What is the opinion, interpretation or theory that you see being expressed in the personal account?

In this activity we sought to produce a set of practitioner generated statements about effective and sustainable partnerships. These statements provided the substance for discussion and formed the basis for collaborative concept mapping.

From the research perspective the project aimed to:
- ensure that the focus remained on the words and ideas articulated in the sketch and thread
- be sure that the sketch and thread accurately reflect the ideas of the individual participant and
- produce statements of understanding which could be explicitly or implicitly identified in the personal accounts and therefore connected with the descriptions and explanations of partnership practice.

The following chapter presents the products of the collaborative analysis summarised in the concept maps for the seven partnerships, together with a brief description or snapshot of each partnership, written by the project team from the outcomes of the elaborated profile preparation and the data analysis. In working through the participant generated data and the snapshots, the project team was able to identify the principal characteristics of the partnerships in preservice teacher education.

CHAPTER 2: ANALYSIS OF PARTNERSHIPS

Partnership practices emerge from the direct investments made by the key participants in responding to the questions, challenges and opportunities which confront them in their engagement across educational settings. Of the 35 Expressions of Interest received in the research, most were driven by University demands and initiatives, although one was driven by a school and some others had clear outcomes for schools and demonstrated responsiveness to school needs. All of them appeared to have developmental possibilities with none arguing their partnerships were yet fully embedded and sustainable under current arrangements. Similarly, none of the seven partnerships selected for inclusion in the collaborative practitioner research phase of the project displayed anything other than challenge and problematic status. That is the condition of partnerships in Australian teacher education where the near to complete absence of any mandating requirements or other formal institutional infrastructure and support renders the university-school relationship an outcome of personalised and localised activity by teacher educators and teachers, primarily. While the data collection emphasised current partnership activity, each of the cases included in the research presented indications or traces of the personalised contributions and localised conditions which prompted the formation of the university-school and teacher educator-teacher relationships. In the case of the City University-Beachside Primary School partnership, the relationships trace back to 1994!

Chapter 2 attempts to describe the seven partnerships from the standpoints of the partnership participants. In preparing the seven snapshots, the project team considered that it was important to value the contribution of each participant in the project. Surely that is a necessary condition of research about, in and for partnership-based teacher education! Accordingly, the snapshots employ the different vocabularies through which the participants have come to agreement about the purposes of each partnership and the practices which they have adopted. Another point of distinction is that each of the snapshots has been written by a different member of the project team. That indicates another characteristic of Australian partnerships: that they have called forth the particular understandings held by each participant and the educational practices which those understandings underpin. In an effort to establish coherence across the snapshots, however, the project team has organised them so that each concludes with an analysis written within the framework proposed in the literature scan; that is the extent to which partnerships are:

- Personalised and localised
- Contained within relationships and conversations associated with professional learning
- Located within structural or institutional arrangements which provide both opportunities and constraints for partnership participants.

The analysis process leading to the writing of each snapshot involved:

- Creating digital versions of the concept maps from each partnership
- Using the concept maps to construct an analytic grid for each partnership
- Working from the concept maps and the analytic grids to craft the snapshot for each partnership
- Constructing a table of partnerships characteristics which has formed the framework for the detailed discussion of the outcomes of the collaborative analysis presented in Chapter 3.

Snapshots of Partnerships

Outer University Partnership

The schools in this school-university partnership are two of approximately 400 schools that provide preservice teachers with opportunities to develop practice within either the Bachelor of Education or the Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary) courses at the university. These school-university partnerships are designed to enhance the learning of school students and preservice teachers. They provide opportunities for curriculum inquiry, curriculum development and teaching practice for preservice teachers.

These partnerships also provide preservice teachers with opportunities to work with mentor teachers on a negotiated applied curriculum project or initiative. From 2006 - 07, the Forrest Secondary School program involved the university preservice teachers in planning, implementing and evaluating an applied curriculum project that focused on supporting selected school students who exhibited low levels of literacy. Using a multiliteracies – photostory approach, each preservice teacher supported a selected student in developing a photostory telling a personal story based on 5 student selected photographs. The preservice teachers and students worked together building their knowledge, skills and familiarity with the software, developing scripts of dialogue (voice over) and text for their digital presentations. In the second year of the project, Year 10 students initially worked with the preservice teachers and then using a peer mentoring approach, supported Year 7 students in developing their own photostories.

The Sheoak Primary School program has involved university preservice teachers in a broad range of applied curriculum projects from 2003 – 08. The focus of these projects has varied from the development of a DVD related to the building of middle years student relationships and learning outcomes; the production of a Years 1 and 2 visual and performing arts performance; a Year 5 and 6 maths trail and the adoption of digital portfolios to support students' reporting of academic progress.

The University conducts units of study that support preservice teachers in making the critical links between their work place learning in schools and their academic studies at the university. Preservice teachers typically spend one day per week and a series of consecutive or block days (length varies between 1-6 weeks depending on the year level of their course) in the schools. Teachers in these schools act as mentors to the preservice teachers, providing a range of learning opportunities in both the applied curriculum projects and in classroom teaching activity. Mentor teachers are remunerated for this work: approximately $25 per preservice teacher per day of attendance. They are required to complete a mid year and final year assessment report based on the preservice teachers' completion of the applied curriculum project and demonstrated teaching competency as it relates to the statewide quality standards.

Key themes reported by the participants in this partnership included the development of a school professional learning team of mentor teachers, preservice teachers and a university teacher educator. These teams took on the responsibility for negotiating the applied curriculum project and facilitating a collaborative practitioner research process to evaluate the outcomes of the project. Features of these professional learning teams were the explicit communication and committed relationships between members of each team. The leadership of individual preservice teachers, teacher mentors and university teacher educators was evident through out the projects. The relatively small amounts of funding that supported these school based

partnerships facilitated opportunities for additional teacher mentor time to support preservice teacher reflection. Preservice teachers were able to access relevant school professional development activities and purchase resources to support the applied curriculum projects.

The <u>personalised and localised</u> characteristics of these partnerships ican be seen in the ways that preservice teachers developed an understanding of the learning needs of the school students. As one teacher mentor stated: *As the preservice teachers gained an understanding of students, they were able to fully appreciate the challenges faced by the school and make informed contributions in response to such challenges.* Building on the knowledge and strengths of the members of each professional learning team increased the capacity to focus on the key teaching and learning needs of school students and members of the team. The localised nature of the projects was important as it focussed the team's work and research on identified teaching and learning priorities within each school. It also provided preservice teachers with opportunities to demonstrate in practice their professional capacities in authentic settings.

These applied curriculum projects facilitated <u>professional learning opportunities</u> for all members of the collaborative research teams and thus strengthened the school-university partnerships through the development of <u>professional relationships and professional communication</u>. One mentor teacher stated: *Both preservice teachers and mentors have encouraged one another to establish and continue to build a culture of professionalism by designing powerful learning experiences. Time for discussions, observations and reflection are key components of these active learning communities.* The commitment, shared vision, mutual accountability collaborative engagement and effective communication between team members enhanced the effectiveness and sustainability of each partnership.

The <u>institutional and structural arrangements</u> of these partnerships were importantly ones that met the needs and intent of both the university and the schools. One mentor highlighted some essential features of her partnership that enabled it to be both effective and sustainable: *Identify what we want to achieve, look at ideas from different perspectives, a willingness to try something new, persistence, an ability to communicate, make the project a priority, establish achievable goals, establish clear decision making and strategic planning processes and develop a community learning culture within the team.*

The role of the university teacher educator within the professional learning team is an important one. One described it as follows: *I work on projects that focus on innovative practice that connects and supports the team with the expectation that everyone will be learners and will regard reflection on teaching and learning with students, teachers, preservice teachers and university colleagues as vital.* This partnership work is included in the university's workload model.

These partnerships are effective and sustainable when individuals join to become collaborative research learning teams that are committed to enhancing the learning opportunities of not only the school students, but also the members of the team. Maintaining sufficient flexibility within the university and the schools provides opportunities to engage in collaborative work that meets the needs of all involved.

Outer University Partnership Concept Map

Everything is for learning
Assessment - as of & for learning
Indirect link to VET 8
Expectations that all will be learners
Learning
New knowledge and building on
Personal goals and connectedness

Research
Cater to learning needs of all key stakeholders
Educational perspective
Parallel - research and development
Learning community
Learning with, for on behalf of each other
Enjoyable
Tangible outcomes

Focus on learning - both students and student teachers
The project relates to big picture thinking and doing
Multiliteracy approach
Intertwining theory and practice
Developing a learning culture
Convergence of philosophy
Professional conversations and learning
Emotional intelligence
...

Relationships
Positive relationship - University- school - PST
PST's developing meaningful relationships with students
Strong relationship
Active participation
Build relationships based on trust and commitment
Supportive atmosphere - School - PST
Relationship with University
Values
Alignment of values
Shared objective and goal
Develop a professional identity as a partnership
Leadership - University - School - PST - Yr 10 - Yr 7
...

Communication is central
Ongoing communication for all involved
Trust, Candour and withholding of judgement
Good relationships between all stakeholders
Trust and open communication
Collaboration
Avenues of communication between stakeholders
Communication
Regular feedback from schools and mentors to student teachers
Reflection and feedback
Feedback - Input
Constant feedback - University - School - PST - School students
Highly explicit use of reflection
Collaborative
Making public / Articulating practice
Articulation
Vision
... Reps need to be empowered to act on

Culture Building for Sustainability
? of key stakeholders
Commitment to improve
Commitment to partnership
Recognition of potential contribution of PST's
School must gain something from it - Student ?, New methods, Funding
School applied curriculum projects - Project objectives
Implementation
Imperative - Action
Clear goals of learning philosophy
Vision of equitable partnership
Continuity of personnel
Trust
Shared vision
Capitalize and build upon each others strengths
Experiences different schools and school cultures
Prioritize the partnership - make it part of your work
Professional energy
Fluid and flexible
Cyclic process with an aim of building on learning process
Conducting similar / simulation applied curriculum project focus over 2 years helped develop / roll out program
Research as a component of the partnership enhanced the partnership
Collaborative and cultural shift
PST's spending a year in the school enabled / enhanced familiarity / stronger relationships / contribution to school
University Colleagues play a key role in clarifying expectations with PST's / school personnel
High expectations
Belief in the project partnership
Accessibility and cultural knowledge
A culture of risk taking - going beyond - Diff paces - Actively seeking / creating
Performance & development
... for learning

Leadership

Start here ....
Technical Practices
Capacity
Space / Time
Leadership and facilitation
Mobilise ideas
Embedded practice
Develop scope / opportunity
From best practice to next practice
Systems and organisation
Management support
A team of facilitators
Whole school approach
Flexibility of approach
Recording and document practice
... can be forgotten
... Can be forgotten

What do we bring?
Disposition
Self confidence
Personality
Professional energy

Footprint
Footprint / Legacy

'It' factor.
What isi it?

What to we leave behind?
Lifelong learning

Shared learning
Enriching profession

Facilitates/is a conduit for/is blended in Balance/tension/No significant moment Needs to be accountability to each other

Plains University Partnership

The Plains University partnership was initiated to meet the growing demand for qualified outdoor education teachers in government secondary schools and to complement the existing modest Outdoor Education program offered within the Bachelor of Education (Secondary), Physical Education at the university. As an innovative training regime, Plains University Partnership involves pre-service teachers working in a structured, multi layered mentor program within a government senior secondary college.

Pre-service teachers work in a small team over a period of three to four years to gain a range of skills, knowledge and experience during formal training sessions and while participating in the senior secondary college outdoor education program. Pre-service teachers are assessed in an active learning environment with senior secondary students under mentor supervision. Throughout this process, pre-service teachers provide invaluable role modelling and mentoring to senior secondary students.

The partnership developed out of the shared professional passion of a secondary teacher and a university educator for improving the safety and quality of Outdoor Education. Initially, the partnership was developed informally with pre-service teachers working with school students on outdoor adventure trips and gaining experience, skills and limited qualifications.

In parallel with this informal process, the university, the university Registered Training Organisation (RTO), school and Department of Education worked over five years towards formalising the partnership. This involved support from the school and university leaders and advice from the Department Solicitor who drafted the final Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the school, university and university RTO. At the same time, the school developed and introduced a VET course for secondary students in Outdoor Education and established an Outdoor Education Skills Centre.

In 2008, a group of pre-service teachers was recruited to participate in the formal Plains University partnership program. It is not part of their coursework but an added layer of training, experience and certification linked to an extensive range of formal qualifications.

In a typical partnership experience, the preservice teachers will do a day's training at the coast focussing on snorkel diving. The team will complete theory study individually or in a group. Later they will participate singly or in small groups of 2 or 3 in school trips supervised by school staff. During this school trip their leadership of snorkelling will be further developed through ongoing mentoring and they will be assessed and if competent will gain a snorkelling guide qualification from the University RTO.

Key themes reported by participants in the research include the reciprocal benefit to all participants in the partnership: the secondary students benefit from the very powerful role modelling and mentoring process involved in them working closely with dynamic young adults in leadership roles; the pre-service teachers access accredited Outdoor Recreation training and develop their skills, experience and knowledge in a real setting with real clients within a safe and supervised environment; the school benefits from the participation of the Plains University Partnership pre-service teachers who increase the student to adult ratio and often provide gender balance of adults. From the university's point of view the partnership provides an opportunity not widely available for its students to gain experience and qualifications in Outdoor Recreation.

The personal and localised characteristics of the partnership are reflected in its formation by two outdoor education practitioners to address a perceived need for an outdoor leadership preparation pathway which includes a blend of mentoring, academic and industry related learning. Mentoring is also personalised and localised in that it is embedded in the delivery of the outdoor education curriculum at a specific senior secondary school.

Professional Learning, Professional Communication and Professional Relationships. Participants emphasised the critical importance of all partners working together and sharing information throughout the process. They said that the development of strong working relationships was based on mutual professional respect, role clarity, the small size of the education community, large amounts of good will and confidence in the value of the Plains University partnership model.

Located within a three-way partnership between the school, the university and the university RTO, the mentoring program begins with university staff inviting pre-service teachers with an interest in outdoor education to apply to join the program. Once enrolled in Plains University partnership, pre-service teachers meet with school and university staff to develop a learning plan which incorporates their prior skills, experience and interests and the school's outdoor education program. The preservice teachers commit to the school sessions they can participate in and additional training sessions with the school teacher or their peers. During the program, pre-service teachers participate in the secondary school outdoor education program as learners who are trained in new technical skills by the teacher (and sometimes by the secondary students), as mentors to the secondary students when they have the technical skills to act in this role and as organisers and planners of adventure activities as their skills and experience grow. In this way, the mentoring program is pointing to a new model of teaching and learning in teacher education in which students are teachers and mentors as well as learners. Moreover, it is the school's outdoor education program which drives the pre-service teachers' learning of practical outdoor education skills, facilitation of group learning, group management, organisational skills and leadership skills.

The program is embedded in the institutional arrangements and power structures of each setting. The formal partnership involving the school, the university and the university RTO ensures that course accreditation, administration, quality assurance and risk management issues associated with the program are addressed.   The university has enrolment processes in place for pre-service teachers to participate in the course, the RTO ensures administrative oversight and quality assurance of the Outdoor Recreation training and the school implements the program because it enhances their students' outdoor education experiences in a safe and stimulating environment.

Plains University Partnership participants believe that effective and sustainable partnerships

feature people that …
Shared passion
Subject area:
 vital for planet
 psts, deep rationale
Program interest
Professional expertise
Professional passion (for developing outdoor leaders)
Personal commitment and innovation

nurture partnerships …
Pre-existing relationship of partnership developers
Positive professional relationships
Easy relationships between partners
Model roles and relationships
Relationships, personal trust ?
institutional relationships

… are prepared to work through and develop institutional arrangements …
Formalised relationships
Formalising process time…
Sustainability, staff expertise
Disheartening, stalling legalities
Risk management practices
Institution, quality assurance
Institution (university) - mission to allow programs
Institution- relationships between institutions
Sustainability - admin time?
Formal communication
Very supportive school university admin
Institution, admin process, academic/admin communication
Strategic vision
Clear vision
University-school partners collaborating - working together
Physical resources
New form of collaborative endeavour
Coordination and management of Plains University Partnership
Review and development
$$$
Quality of university students
…

create programs with these features …
Casualised uni staffing is a disadvantage
Integrated experiences: personal, social, professional
Plains University Partnership program: extra to degree
Developing outdoor leaders is rewarding
Active support for ideas and goals
Innovative programs: rewarding, exciting, satisfying
Blended, mixed model of the program
Practical avenue for research partnerships
Maintenance of important connections, specific colleagues
Ownership of program
Revitalising, energising
Shared peak experiences is best form of education: students, staff in Plains University Partnership
Maintenance of long term commitment
Multi-layered mentoring

which provide these outcomes …
Models for learning
Collaborative learning
Experience
Teamwork
Leadership
Role model
Professional learning/experience
Mentor
Students share (with staff and other students)
Confidence
Skills, knowledge, experience
Developing experience, understanding
Co-development of learning plans
Quick development of learning programs
Older young people
Vital, meaningful
… and these learning experiences
Celebrate successes
Stakeholder engagement
Win, win for all stakeholders/parties
Template for other partnerships

… for all the stakeholders:
-University: teacher educators
-Lakeside Secondary College: parents, college, students (present and future), staff
-Plains University RTO
-Plains University Partnership students
-Ed Dept: experienced teachers, future teachers

which result in support for students and…
Recognition of learning/work participation
Accreditation
Support
Useable qualifications
VET, course qualifications
Curriculum, accreditation (VET!)

River University and Indigenous Communities Partnership

In this partnership River University works with more than 30 schools in remote communities. The partnerships were initiated by teacher educators who wanted to enhance Indigenous students' mathematics learning in remote communities. To this end they work with mathematics teachers and teacher aides so as to improve teaching practices. Because the non-Indigenous teachers are transient the university focuses on providing Indigenous teacher aides with effective content and pedagogy knowledge with respect to specific mathematical concepts. This innovative practice is designed to change the cycle of school students' poor numeracy skills.

Teacher aides are staying longer with the school because the program sends out clear messages that teacher aides are valued. It is the first time that there has been a professional development activity for teacher aides and this is a source of pride for individuals and the community.

The teacher aides are committed firstly to improving the children's life chances and secondly to improving their own education levels. This programme offers them a variety of strategies to help the students' numeracy levels. The concepts and methodology behind the project also improve their own learning of numeracy. This empowers teacher aides in their positions within the school. The effectiveness of the project has been inhibited where there has been a lack of opportunity for the aides to implement and use the knowledge they have gained through professional learning.

The program also helps to change the culture of the students' and their parents' expectations. The school was able to send lots of maths certificates home and people in the community began discussing what certificates their children had achieved. These increased expectations had a marked effect on the students. State-wide test results have improved significantly since 2005 as a result of the increased rigour in the planning and teaching of maths and because the teachers have higher expectations of the students. The teachers also had the skills to implement strategies that would engage the indigenous students who are very hands on in their learning. These strategies worked. And teacher aides have the confidence to get involved in the maths activities.

The training program for teachers' aides revolves around providing professional learning experiences across four consecutive days in each school. This is a big ask for the teachers within these schools. There is also an after-school meeting with the teachers to outline what the professional learning is focusing on and also to leave them a copy of the training materials that have been developed. Each of the four days has a training component with the aides and then a trialling component where the aides work with students using the ideas and activities that were included in the training component. The day concludes with a discussion with the aides of what worked in the trial, what didn't and why. The training sessions are based on ten principles of Professional Learning. These include taking into account social principles as well as maths, pedagogy and professional learning principles Thus to account for the social principles, morning tea and lunches are provided preferably in a space outside the school to which others in the Community are able to attend.

The role of the pre-service teachers in this partnership is to assist the university staff to prepare and implement aspects of the program. On site, their primary role entails working closely with individual teacher aides who have difficulty processing some of the information. They may also intervene, offering alternative methods of approaching an area, if the concept is complicated or
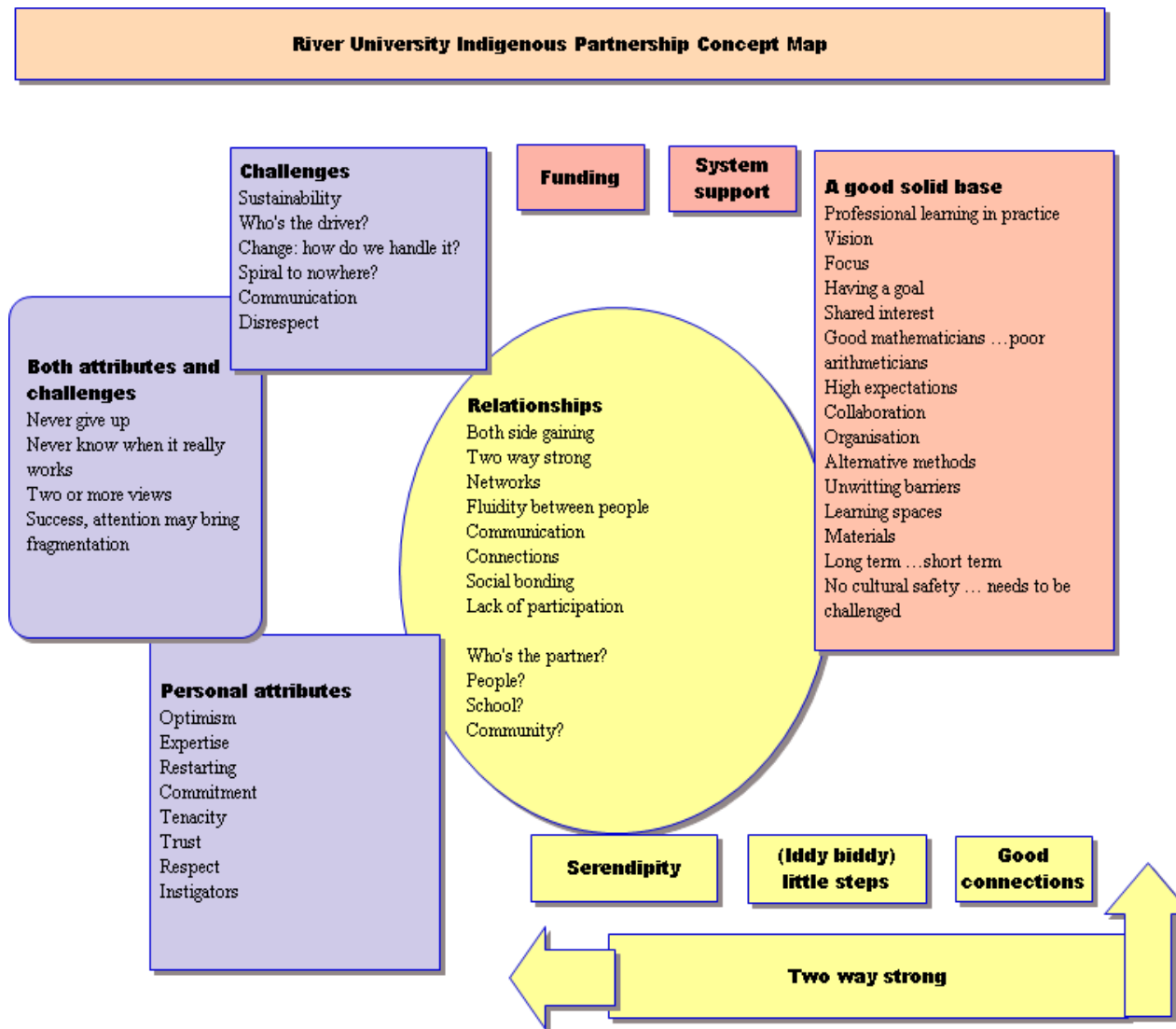
not working for the teacher aides. During the lunch breaks the pre-service teachers may sit with the teacher aides and discuss everything else but the professional development, making fluid connections.   Pre-service teachers also undertake general research assistant duties including project coordination, community liaison, preparation of materials for professional development and training.

Considered from a <u>personalised and localised</u> perspective, this partnership is driven by the passion of two university Maths educators for improving mathematics education in remote communities. Setting up partnerships with remote communities requires a lot of trust on both sides which is often developed across many years. This normally involves the university staff meeting with the Mayor and Council to inform them of the project and the anticipated outcomes and to get a signed letter of support. For each visit, separate permission to visit is sought and then the Mayor and Council are kept up to date on progress. The researchers also establish informal, long-term relationships with key members of the Community and other residents. Every time there are staff changes in the school, however, the partnership has to be re-negotiated at the school level.

The partnership draws strength from multi-layered <u>professional relationships and professional learning</u>. The central focus of the program is getting teachers and teachers' aides to work as a partnership in classrooms – getting outcomes for school students. To do this both parties need the knowledge of strategies to engage Indigenous students. This was made possible because the university had two programs running in the school. One was focused on up-skilling teachers and the other on teaching mathematical concepts to teachers' aides. The two programs operated separately, but were brought together through reflection.

The personal accounts provided evidence of <u>institutional arrangements</u> designed to support the program – for instance at each school the teacher aides were released from their normal responsibilities to participate in the program and a teacher also participated in the program. At the school which was the focus of this study, the teacher who participated in the training became deputy principal. So, when there was a triennial school review, she and the principal wrote mathematics into the school's strategic plan for the next three years. This means that the Maths program is not a bolt-on, but part of the school's core business and that teacher aide and teacher up-skilling needs to be continued. This will ensure that the partnerships that have been forged and developed between the university and the school and between the teachers and teachers' aides do not slip away. It also ensures that the very good resources left with the school are used because the strategies and maths activities are embedded in the school's teaching.

In other schools, however, the university staff felt that the transience of school staff brought the sustainability of the program into question. The piecemeal nature of the partnership funding also makes sustainability problematic. This raises the possibility that the partnership, to be sustainable, should be between the university and the State education system or the Regional education office. Such a partnership could ensure funding so that each new principal in schools in remote communities is informed of the program and makes it available to teachers and teacher aides on an on-going basis.

River University Indigenous Partnership Concept Map

Challenges
Sustainability
Who's the driver?
Change: how do we handle it?
Spiral to nowhere?
Communication
Disrespect

Funding

System support

A good solid base
Professional learning in practice
Vision
Focus
Having a goal
Shared interest
Good mathematicians …poor arithmeticians
High expectations
Collaboration
Organisation
Alternative methods
Unwitting barriers
Learning spaces
Materials
Long term …short term
No cultural safety … needs to be challenged

Both attributes and challenges
Never give up
Never know when it really works
Two or more views
Success, attention may bring fragmentation

Relationships
Both side gaining
Two way strong
Networks
Fluidity between people
Communication
Connections
Social bonding
Lack of participation

Who's the partner?
People?
School?
Community?

Personal attributes
Optimism
Expertise
Restarting
Commitment
Tenacity
Trust
Respect
Instigators

Serendipity

(Iddy biddy) little steps

Good connections

Two way strong

Regional University Mentoring Partnership

The Regional University Mentoring Partnership was initiated to offer a range of curriculum specialisations for students by using experienced teachers as mentors to deliver the practical curriculum components of the course. Mentor teachers fulfil an academic role in the provision of small group tutorials addressing educational theories in practice, philosophies and professional performance and effective teaching strategies. The mentor teachers have a role throughout the year and provide another opportunity for reflective practice for the pre-service teacher beyond the practicum.

In this city, the regional system authority was concerned about the lack of secondary teaching graduates from the regional campus of the University's Faculty of Education. The system authority consulted with secondary school principals who expressed their support for the university campus to offer the Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary).

Because of the course's relatively small student load (30 students) the University Faculty of Education indicated it would have difficulty in offering a wide range of curriculum specialisations especially in the science field. The senior officers of the regional system authority decided to approach the University with a proposal that suitably qualified and experienced teachers in local secondary schools would share in the responsibility of teaching the course's curriculum specialisations.

Academic staff at the University, deliver a 1 hour lecture and each mentor contributes 2 hours of mentoring for 10 weeks of each semester. An important feature of the program is that the regional system authority pays each teacher for their mentoring of preservice teachers. The remuneration is at least a partial compensation for the mentors' additional workload. The mentoring takes place after school hours, eg from 4-6 pm. As the year progresses, the preservice teachers become active in deciding the content of the mentoring sessions with the mentors who are valued for their flexible responses by the student teachers.

Key themes reported by participants in the research include the importance of the mentoring being carried out by current practitioners whom the preservice teachers regard as having more practical credibility than University academics. The relationships and quality of communication between the mentors and University staff are important in establishing connections between the discussions in the school settings and University coursework. A notable outcome is the learning that all participants achieve in the program. This reciprocity is highly valued, including by the mentors who have come to recognise that the demand to explain their practical understanding to the student teachers is an effective form of professional development.

The personal and localised characteristics of the partnership are reflected in its formation as an initiative involving the regional office of the system authority, secondary school principals and staff in the University's Faculty of Education. Mentoring is also personalised and localised in the small numbers of preservice teachers who work with the mentors in schools as they bring the credibility of immediate classroom experience and understanding to their discussions.

Professional Learning, Professional Communication and Professional Relationships are significant characteristics of the Mentoring program. Located within the three-way partnership involving the regional office of the system authority, the University and local schools, the mentoring program is initiated by the University staff who introduce the mentors and student teachers to the relevant course requirements. Over the year, mentoring occurs in small groups in each mentor's school. These small group settings are very important as preservice teachers

and mentors discuss and work through the real-life teaching issues which the preservice teachers are facing. In this way, the mentoring program is pointing to new models of teaching and learning in teacher education.

The formal partnership involving the regional office of the system authority, the University and local schools has conferred considerable authority on the mentoring program. The program is embedded in the <u>institutional arrangements and power structures</u> of each setting. School principals are critically important in securing high quality mentors from among their teaching staff. The initiative of the regional office of the system authority in financing of the mentoring program has ensured that mentors are compensated for additional work responsibilities. A vital contribution of the University Faculty of Education was the writing of the course so that the mentoring was an explicit component and the adoption of course review processes which were inclusive of the mentors.

Regional University Mentoring Program
Concept Map

New models of Partnership
"System Authority and University partnership is important
School, System Authority/University remuneration for mentor teachers

Relationships
"Connections
"collaboration
"Symbiotic relationship
"Importance of university colleagues' support for mentor teachers
"Strength in the personal and small scale of the partnership
"Mentor and lecturer relationship
"Relationship between lecturer and mentor
"Safety/openness of relationship

Communication
"Feedback
"Place for discussion
"Communication (effective)
"Mentors important in providing

Workloads
"Workloads on school mentors
"Staff availability
"Time and workload

Organisation
"Consultation
"Course reviews
"Course evaluations
"Course development
"Interaction
"Responsive to community needs

Staff Development
"Staff professional development
"Sensational PD
"Professional development
"Orientation to university policies
"Professional development for mentors
"Assessment and standards meetings are helpful
"Benefit in own mentor practice/ development.

Learning
"Learning from practitioners
"Current practitioners
"Professionals in the field
"Learning in situ
"Access by psts to resources (in schools)
"Relevance of CURRENT practice/theory
"Schools are ideal settings
"Realism and credibility
"Real-life teaching issues
"Formality of mentoring sessions
"Passion of lecturer/mentor
"Commitment
"Identifying good mentors
"Theory - practice link is invaluable

Outcomes
"New models of teaching and learning
"Leads to new initiatives
"Value in continuing mentoring relationship after pst graduates i.e. a mentor-graduate relationship

Western University Partnership

Situated in an outer urban area, the partnership enables Year 2 preservice teachers to spend a day a week for 10 weeks in primary schools in which they already have completed formal teaching rounds under separate arrangements. It has been in practice for 10 years and one of the school principals interviewed has been working with the partnership since it began. Most other participants have been in the project less than 1 – 2 years. The explicit focus of the partnership is the application of university theory in practice and improved preservice teacher learning. The project is situated within a substantive discipline based subject and a general education subject at the university.

The project is part of a wide of range of initiatives from the university to increase preservice teacher time in schools, strengthen their substantive discipline based knowledge and their knowledge of primary school organisation as well as extend their understanding of young people and their learning.

Prior to this partnership experience, preservice teachers have had a formal teaching round when they spent time in a single classroom. For the university, the distinct innovation is to enable preservice teachers to build substantive content knowledge through working across the school in developing teaching resources and conducting activities for students. In other words, one explicit academic imperative is to stimulate preservice teacher learning through both traditional lectures and tutorials at the university and then through application of that knowledge within the context of an authentic environment. The associated assessment tasks are assigned at the university and negotiated by the teachers and preservice teachers at the school, but restricted to the designed curriculum or knowledge area. Preservice teachers must work in teams in the school. The tasks these teams take on include the completion of a whole school project in the discipline area and the development of a tangible resource which becomes the property of the school.

Alongside this task, a similar larger, but more school focussed project is also negotiated and the team produces another set of resources which respond to a specific need identified by the school and in any part of school operations and curriculum. This project is well defined by the university assessment, but is overseen by the school based co-ordinator and the university academic who visits regularly to meet with the co-ordinator and preservice teachers.

The central outcome is reportedly achieved in that preservice teachers work across the school, observe a wide range of teacher and student engagement around learning, focus on specific tasks that apply knowledge presented at the university and develop resources which connect with that knowledge and to the school.

The project is university driven and directed with input and oversight at the school level. While all partners are keen to improve teacher quality, there is little or no capacity for renegotiation at the school beyond the specific topic and exact nature of the project products.. The conceptual work is already in place and schools service the university program. This results in a low level of ownership by the school personnel.

The project sustainability appears to depend on developing clear and shared goals and directions which are negotiated locally at the school. School based negotiation of the projects and possible integration of the two distinct assignment tasks is identified as having potential to respond purposively to the needs of school students, enable the engagement and development of teachers and the potential for preservice teachers to work effectively alongside the most

appropriate teachers in the school. The relationships and mentoring which result from the partnership and 'working out' of the project tasks are significant learning opportunities for preservice teachers and are deliberate goals of the partnership from the university perspective.

Barriers to development of the project and the achievement of authentic engagement which enable practice to be enhanced include:
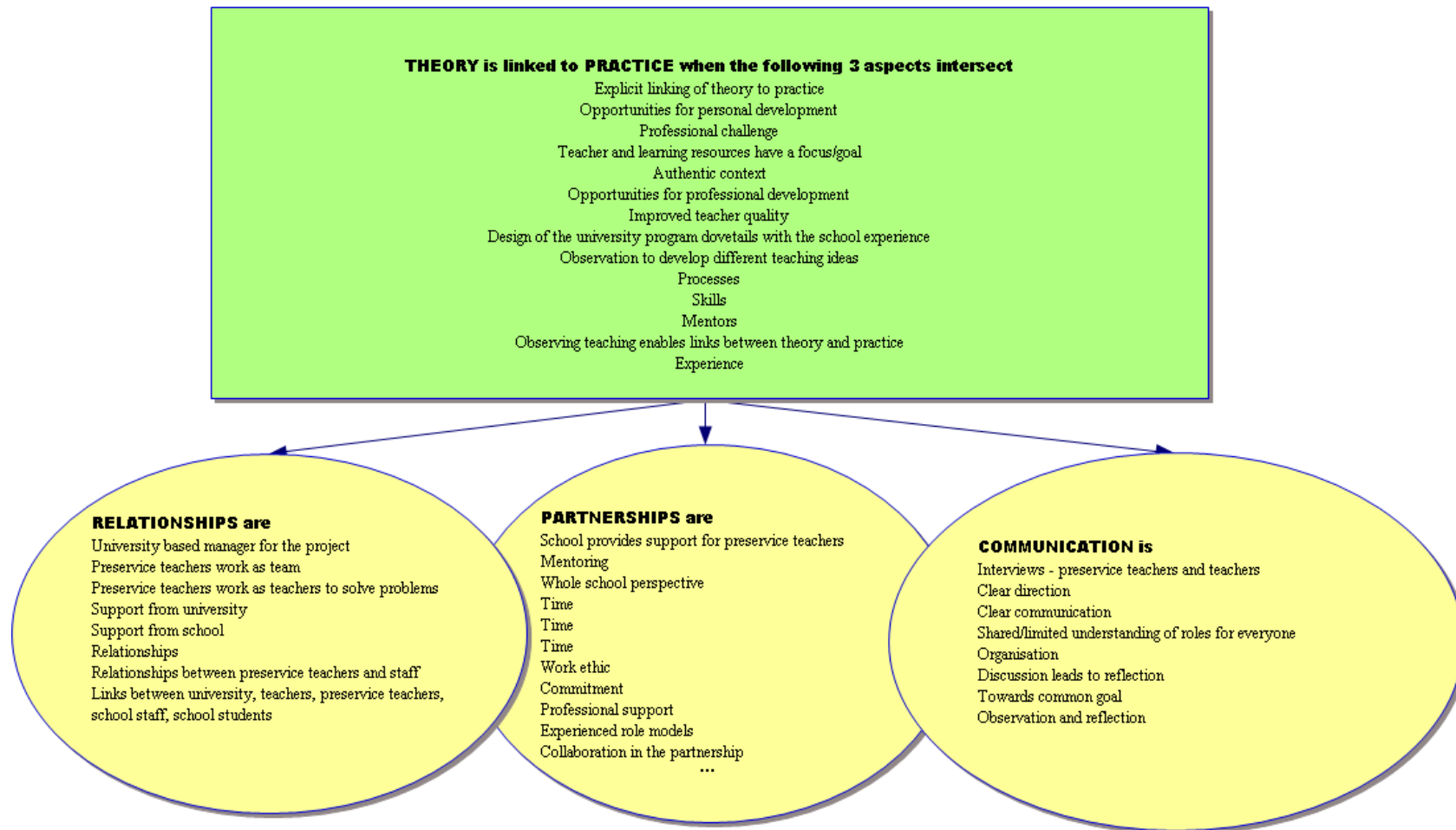
- the rigidity of the university program and systems as it does not allow for individual preservice teachers to develop differently, from a different experiential base and in the different contexts of schools, classrooms and individual students with whom they are working;
- workload models in schools and universities that do not fully acknowledge time and outcomes from school based teacher education and
- the resulting limits on both teacher and academic time and capacity to work closely at the school to develop effective professional learning outcomes from the partnership.

This partnership identifies personalised and localised characteristics present in the management and development of the project tasks locally and through the relationships and mentoring which result from the long term engagement at the school and on school focussed resources development. Interpreting and applying theory through practical tasks at school is strong and valuable for preservice teachers. While school teachers are keen to be involved in preservice teacher education, there is limited capacity for interpretation of the university tasks to enable them to respond to the needs of the school. In this context preservice teacher learning is strengthened although the value to school teachers is less clear, and there is very little account of impact on school student learning.

Professional Learning, Professional Communication and Professional Relationships are evident for preservice teachers. Implicit mentoring is identified as a valuable addition to the expectation of the partnership. As well, considerable learning outcomes are identified for preservice teachers about how to work in professionally focussed teams, to build relationships and improve communication within and across the school and profession. There is limited opportunity for school teacher professional learning as a component or outcome of the partnership, although it is highly desired by the school. For academics, the partnership is a time-consuming but valuable contribution to the program, but this time commitment is a source of professional conflict as this type of work does not normally contribute to academic advancement or promotion opportunities.

The institutional arrangements and power structures of each setting both enable and complicate the partnership. Both the schools and the university are keen to actively work together to graduate quality teachers who are 'school-ready' and the partnership is seen as adding significant value to this outcome. There is great capacity for stronger communication and deeper relationships to be constructed which support and enable improved school based experience and which build explicit career outcomes for not only preservice teachers, but also school teachers and university academics. University structures and systems are seen as a major inhibitor to achieving the increased flexibility which would allow the partnership to respond to the learning needs of the professional partners and begin to address the potential learning outcomes for school students.

Western University Partnership

THEORY is linked to PRACTICE when the following 3 aspects intersect
Explicit linking of theory to practice
Opportunities for personal development
Professional challenge
Teacher and learning resources have a focus/goal
Authentic context
Opportunities for professional development
Improved teacher quality
Design of the university program dovetails with the school experience
Observation to develop different teaching ideas
Processes
Skills
Mentors
Observing teaching enables links between theory and practice
Experience

RELATIONSHIPS are
University based manager for the project
Preservice teachers work as team
Preservice teachers work as teachers to solve problems
Support from university
Support from school
Relationships
Relationships between preservice teachers and staff
Links between university, teachers, preservice teachers,
school staff, school students

PARTNERSHIPS are
School provides support for preservice teachers
Mentoring
Whole school perspective
Time
Time
Time
Work ethic
Commitment
Professional support
Experienced role models
Collaboration in the partnership
...

COMMUNICATION is
Interviews - preservice teachers and teachers
Clear direction
Clear communication
Shared/limited understanding of roles for everyone
Organisation
Discussion leads to reflection
Towards common goal
Observation and reflection

Local University Partnership

A prep teacher, who was concerned about the substantial number of 'at risk' students in her school, approached the Faculty of Education at the Local University Campus (LUC) with a proposal that undergraduate Bachelor of Education preservice teachers might work collaboratively with the school's teachers to provide individual programs for the students who were falling behind in their learning. Subsequently, the LUC Faculty of Education has employed the prep teacher with the result that the she has developed Local University Partnership as a formal, elective component of the Bachelor of Education program.

The Partnership was designed to enable each participating preservice teacher to work with a child, who requires additional learning support, on regular basis within a Local University Partnership school. While improving the learning achievement of each child is the primary aim of the program, the goal of the Partnership also involves the development of preservice teachers' understanding of students with additional learning needs and knowledge of the practical classroom strategies which can support these students.

At the beginning of the year, the university lecturer contacts local school principals to invite their schools' and colleague teachers' participation. The expectation for the preservice teachers is that each must work in a classroom for 1 ½ hours per week for a period of 8 weeks. A third year theory unit in the Bachelor of Education involves research about a specific learning difficulty or disability as well as some planning for a child or sometimes a small group of no more than 4 children. The preservice teacher's focus is on a particular child despite planning for a small group of children. In the 4th year of the course, the lecturer usually organises two guest speakers choosing a speech therapist, occupational therapist, guidance officer or social worker depending on the needs of the group and the professionals' ability to attend. In year 4, the preservice teachers assume a higher degree of autonomy in planning, delivery and assessment of activities. The numbers in the elective unit vary from 20-50 students, that is 1-2 tutorial groups.

At the commencement of the semester, students are provided with a hard copy of the elective unit outline which provides an overview of the unit, and requirements of the Local University Partnership. Students also receive a handbook outlining the structure and key dates for the unit. The program does not receive particular funding nor do the teacher educators receive any financial payments; their participation is entirely voluntary but their participation and contribution is recognised in an email. The program is now part of the undergraduate coursework and thus receives the same funding allocation available to other electives in the course. During the semester undergraduates attend two learning contexts, one at the university and the second setting, in the classroom. In the tutorials delivered at LUC the preservice teachers are provided with both theoretical and practical resources that may be of assistance to them in the Local University Partnership classroom.
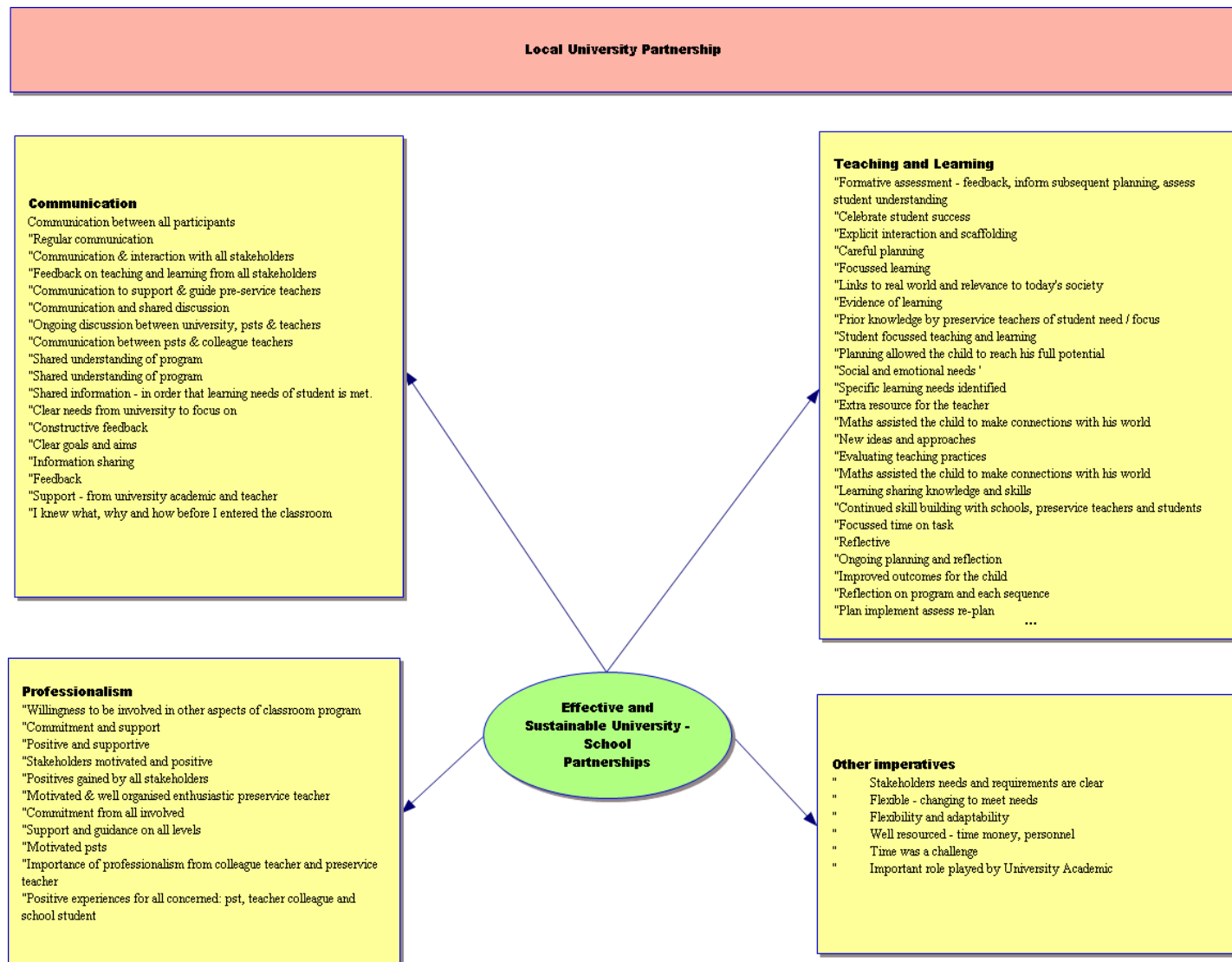
The dominant themes reported in the collaborative analysis related to the learning of the school students and the professional learning of the preservice teachers. Critical to the learning were the frequent conversations about the children with whom the preservice teachers were working. Assessment of the preservice teachers' participation was a noteworthy element of the Local University Partnership. For assessment, the preservice teachers were required to maintain journals which contained their reflections on their work with the child/children whom they were teaching. That is, each preservice teacher was working with the classroom teacher in support of students' learning. Their relationship was different from that occurring in supervised teaching practice where the supervising teacher is required to make a formal judgement on the

practical competence of the preservice teacher. In the Local University Partnership, the practices of the preservice teacher are the focus for discussions with the classroom teacher. The distinctive quality of those conversations, however, is that their attention is on an authentic teaching demand for the classroom teacher who has welcomed the contribution of the preservice teacher.

The personal and localised characteristics of the Local University Partnership are evident in its initiation by a university lecturer with recent experience in local schools. She contacted local schools with a proposal which appeared to provide the possibility that classroom teachers might be able to support school students who were struggling in their work. Not all schools accepted the opportunity to participate and only some teachers in each school have been prepared to work with the preservice teachers. The teachers who have worked in the Local University Partnership made explicit reference to the need for preservice teachers to show professional commitment in the ways in which they worked with the school students.

The Local University Partnership demands that the preservice teachers and their school colleagues have strong professional relationships and engage in frequent professional conversations about the students who are the focus of the preservice teachers' classroom work.   All participants in the research pointed to the professional learning for the preservice teachers which resulted from the discussions about their work with students who had specific learning needs.

Throughout the collaborative analysis, the research participants communicated the importance of the university staff who initiated and sustained the Local University Partnership. Their careful work enabled the preservice teachers to negotiate differing institutional arrangements and power structures by locating the Partnership activity within a course elective unit of study. An assessment based on reflective practice and not on supervisor judgement appeared to call forth the need for the preservice teachers to take on the elective on the basis of professional commitment to school students, rather than for the satisfying of a course requirement.

Local University Partnership

Communication

Communication between all participants
"Regular communication
"Communication & interaction with all stakeholders
"Feedback on teaching and learning from all stakeholders
"Communication to support & guide pre-service teachers
"Communication and shared discussion
"Ongoing discussion between university, psts & teachers
"Communication between psts & colleague teachers
"Shared understanding of program
"Shared understanding of program
"Shared information - in order that learning needs of student is met.
"Clear needs from university to focus on
"Constructive feedback
"Clear goals and aims
"Information sharing
"Feedback
"Support - from university academic and teacher
"I knew what, why and how before I entered the classroom

Teaching and Learning

"Formative assessment - feedback, inform subsequent planning, assess
student understanding
"Celebrate student success
"Explicit interaction and scaffolding
"Careful planning
"Focussed learning
"Links to real world and relevance to today's society
"Evidence of learning
"Prior knowledge by preservice teachers of student need / focus
"Student focussed teaching and learning
"Planning allowed the child to reach his full potential
"Social and emotional needs '
"Specific learning needs identified
"Extra resource for the teacher
"Maths assisted the child to make connections with his world
"New ideas and approaches
"Evaluating teaching practices
"Maths assisted the child to make connections with his world
"Learning sharing knowledge and skills
"Continued skill building with schools, preservice teachers and students
"Focussed time on task
"Reflective
"Ongoing planning and reflection
"Improved outcomes for the child
"Reflection on program and each sequence
"Plan implement assess re-plan
                                    ...

Professionalism

"Willingness to be involved in other aspects of classroom program
"Commitment and support
"Positive and supportive
"Stakeholders motivated and positive
"Positives gained by all stakeholders
"Motivated & well organised enthusiastic preservice teacher
"Commitment from all involved
"Support and guidance on all levels
"Motivated psts
"Importance of professionalism from colleague teacher and preservice
teacher
"Positive experiences for all concerned: pst, teacher colleague and
school student

**Effective and
Sustainable University -
School
Partnerships**

Other imperatives

"   Stakeholders needs and requirements are clear
"   Flexible - changing to meet needs
"   Flexibility and adaptability
"   Well resourced - time money, personnel
"   Time was a challenge
"   Important role played by University Academic

City University and Beachside Primary School Partnership

This partnership, which began as a professional learning initiative, originated when a teacher educator and a principal met through a mutual acquaintance. The partnership has continued for more than ten years.

Together, university teacher educator and school staff have taken a research approach to their partnership using qualitative and quantitative approaches and in some instances teachers have reported their professional learning and changes in pedagogy with the school and the wider education community. This has broadened teachers' horizons and taken them out of their own school to view what others are doing and share their own learning. Other strategies for sharing their work and learning have included publishing in professional journals and collecting resources in a web environment accessible through links between the school and university website.

In this partnership: teacher educators are able to stay in touch with the "coal face" instead of being in the "ivory tower"; there is the capacity to discuss system initiatives and for schools to provide written information about them to teacher educators; teachers have access to a research base to inform innovative classroom practice; teachers are able to have questions answered; and resources are identified.

The teachers are keen to explore ways of improving their teaching and they feel that their concerns lead the partnership. They are committed to working with the teacher educator even though it is sometimes seen as a difficult and challenging journey. Teachers see their collaboration with the teacher educator as incorporating planning, implementation, evaluation, reflection, refocusing and sharing. They observe that more time for planning and implementing would be good. Viewing the practice of others has been a feature of this partnership. Most significantly, the experienced teacher educator has been seen by the teachers as an expert who has worked in the classroom, co-teaching and modelling fresh ideas and approaches. The teachers trust the teacher educator and are able to confide their concerns about their own pedagogy in the knowledge that she will advise and assist them. As a result teachers feel that this partnership has led them to attempt things that they would not otherwise have tried.

In effect there is a two way mentoring with the teachers being mentored by the teacher educator in parallel with the teachers acting as mentors for the preservice teachers. The teachers connect their own learning with a commitment to the development of the profession and the provision of practical and professional experiences for preservice teachers through the practicum, internships, observation days and also through a virtual classroom and links to the school website. The work in the classroom has also led to the provision of university courses at the school and these have been attended by both preservice and experienced teachers.

There is a strong belief that the partnership must be symbiotic – the academic partner must benefit as well as the teachers. This belief is accompanied by an awareness that it takes time to build a relationship where both teachers and mentors are prepared to be honest and take risks – to be critical friends. This partnership is built on a commitment to sharing with others, sharing goals and sharing expertise. The principal endeavours to build a culture where mutual trust and respect is a hallmark of the relationship with the university: communication is central, goals are regularly revisited and 'professionalism' is modelled.

Throughout, these two initiators have continued to play a key role by creating systems and establishing institutional arrangement and power structures with the principal ensuring that the
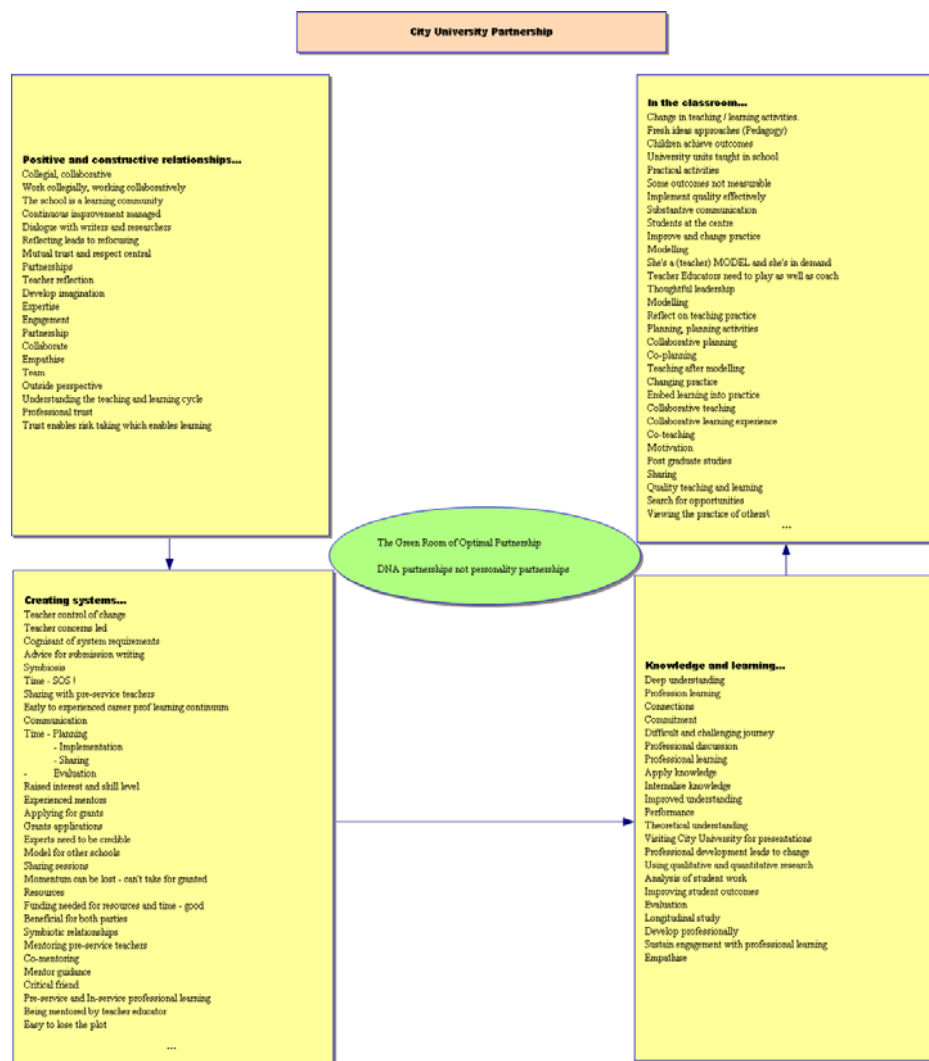
many organisational elements come together and the teacher educator acting as a mentor in multiple contexts. The process has not been linear and there is a commitment to embedding changes.

In order to support the partnership the principal organises regular meetings that build relationships, maintain the momentum of the program and establish realistic goals, action plans, time lines and evaluation and or reporting mechanisms. From her perspective it is too easy to be diverted by day to day concerns so that developmental work is always on the back burner or drops off the agenda completely. In addition she encourages the involvement of staff and identifies staff members, especially new staff, who will benefit from mentoring support.. In recent years, as she has come closer to retirement, she has planned for sustainability by encouraging independent leadership by project leaders. She also takes responsibility for maintaining the documentation of the partnership and supporting the writing of applications for grants. The teacher educator's role at the school has evolved and with large amounts of professional energy she has worked alongside teachers and preservice teachers as a mentor, critical friend and advisor. She has responded to identified needs in order to support professional learning and enhance student learning outcomes. The longevity of the teacher educator's commitment to the school means that they have established, and been able to maintain, a culture of continuous improvement within the school learning community.

The partnership is dependant on funding. A series of grants have enabled the partnership to pay some "consultancy fees" to the teacher educator and to purchase resources and teacher time for professional learning and planning. There is an ongoing need to apply for grants to pay for the time needed to continue the program and fund the work with the university. The teacher educator is an enormous help in preparing funding applications and it is felt that without this input the partnership might not be so successful with its submissions.

The personalised and localised characteristics of this partnership are evident in the classroom. Here they have adopted a model in which academic partners work **with** teachers in the classroom and then follow up with the opportunity for professional dialogue which is beneficial for both teachers and students. Having an academic partner has meant there have been many opportunities for teachers to build on and improve their practice and engage much more successfully with system initiatives. Action learning drives the educational programs and much of the work has related to the use of quality texts and the creative arts, especially drama, to enhance student knowledge and understanding. More recently they have used action learning together with a quality teaching framework to shape projects related to science and mathematics.

In the City University – Beachside PS partnership the preservice – experienced teacher professional learning continuum is highly valued. The partnership characteristics which shape the professional learning, professional communication and professional relationships are evident in this model for teacher professional learning which is built on sharing of knowledge and skills between teacher educators and classroom teachers which is mutually beneficial and in the interests of improved teaching and learning. For the teacher educator the partnership kept her at the cutting edge in relation to teacher concerns about curriculum and quality teaching. Having regular contact with teachers and primary children meant that her work with preservice and postgraduate teachers was always current and so was therefore a better teacher educator.

City University Partnership

Positive and constructive relationships...
Collegial, collaborative
Work collegially, working collaboratively
The school is a learning community
Continuous improvement managed
Dialogue with writers and researchers
Reflecting leads to refocusing
Mutual trust and respect central
Partnerships
Teacher reflection
Develop imagination
Expertise
Engagement
Partnership
Collaborate
Empathise
Team
Outside perspective
Understanding the teaching and learning cycle
Professional trust
Trust enables risk taking which enables learning

In the classroom...
Change in teaching / learning activities
Fresh ideas approaches (Pedagogy)
Children achieve outcomes
University units taught in school
Practical activities
Some outcomes not measurable
Implement quality effectively
Substantive communication
Students at the centre
Improve and change practice
Modelling
She's a (teacher) MODEL and she's in demand
Teacher Educators need to play as well as coach
Thoughtful leadership
Modelling
Reflect on teaching practice
Planning, planning activities
Collaborative planning
Co-planning
Teaching after modelling
Changing practice
Embed learning into practice
Collaborative teaching
Collaborative learning experience
Co-teaching
Motivation
Post graduate studies
Sharing
Quality teaching and learning
Search for opportunities
Viewing the practice of others\
...

The Green Room of Optimal Partnership

DNA partnerships not personality partnerships

Creating systems...
Teacher control of change
Teacher concerns led
Cognisant of system requirements
Advice for submission writing
Symbiosis
Time - SOS !
Sharing with pre-service teachers
Early to experienced career prof learning continuum
Communication
Time - Planning
    - Implementation
    - Sharing
    - Evaluation
Raised interest and skill level
Experienced mentors
Applying for grants
Grants applications
Experts need to be credible
Model for other schools
Sharing sessions
Momentum can be lost - can't take for granted
Resources
Funding needed for resources and time - good
Beneficial for both parties
Symbiotic relationships
Mentoring pre-service teachers
Co-mentoring
Mentor guidance
Critical friend
Pre-service and In-service professional learning
Being mentored by teacher educator
Easy to lose the plot
...

Knowledge and learning...
Deep understanding
Profession learning
Connections
Commitment
Difficult and challenging journey
Professional discussion
Professional learning
Apply knowledge
Internalise knowledge
Improved understanding
Performance
Theoretical understanding
Visiting City University for presentations
Professional development leads to change
Using qualitative and quantitative research
Analysis of student work
Improving student outcomes
Evaluation
Longitudinal study
Develop professionally
Sustain engagement with professional learning
Empathise

Partnership Characteristics

When observed from the standpoint of the framework applied to write the snapshots, the essential characteristics of partnerships become practically apparent. The participants are those whose activities are described in each elaborated profile. What is important, however, is that each participant is not written about in some kind of individualised location: preservice teachers are in conversation with mentor teachers; teacher educators are meeting with teachers and preservice teachers; and in many of the partnerships the preservice teachers and teachers and teacher educators are working directly with school students.   Even when school students don't appear in the narratives, their presence is one step away as all partnership participants were working together for improvements in their practices and their settings' curriculum and pedagogical provision.

Table 2.1 summarises the characteristics of the partnerships as they have been manifested in the analysed elaborated profiles, associated concept maps and snapshots. The characteristics have been organised so that they open up the discussion of the practices which will form the introduction to Chapter 3. At this point, the interest of Teaching Australia in the nature of effective and sustainable university-school partnerships becomes the reference point for the structuring of Chapter 3 as it shifts from presenting the analysis to the proposition of what can be seen as a theory of Australian partnership-based teacher education.

Table 2.1: Partnership Characteristics

	Characteristic	Outer University Partnership	Plains University Partnership	River University & Indigenous Partnership	Regional University Mentoring Partnership	Western University Partnership	Local University Partnership	City University Partnership
Relationships	PST – relationship with school student learning	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	X
	PST - relationship with mentor/teacher	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
	PST - relationship with teacher educator	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
	PST - relationship with other psts	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X
	PST – other relationship	X	✓ TAFE/ RTO	✓ with teacher aides	X	X	X	X
	Partnership relationships - other	✓ Research colleague	✓ TAFE/RTO	✓ Communities	✓ System	X	X	✓ Placement Coordinator & critical friend
	Partnership initiated by …..	Uni/school	School/uni	Uni	System	Uni	Uni/school	Uni/school
	Personal/collegial dimension to partnership initiation	✓ sometimes	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Resources	Partnership dependent on significant individuals	X	✓ (school/uni)	✓ uni	X System dependent	X	✓ uni	✓ Prin/uni
	Personal expertise of partnership initiator/s	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓
	Personal commitment of partnership participants/s	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
	Short term funding e.g. grants	✓	X	✓	X	X	X	✓ School
	Long term funding/resource allocation	✓	✓ capital for OE Centre at school	X	✓ System	✓ Uni –. component of 2 uni courses	✓ Uni elective. No extra funding	X
	Institutional support for partnership	✓ Uni	✓ School/uni/system	✓ release for TAs	✓ System/ university/ School	✓ Uni	✓ Uni	✓ School

	Characteristic	Outer University Partnership	Plains University Partnership	River University & Indigenous Partnership	Regional University Mentoring Partnership	Western University Partnership	Local University Partnership	City University Partnership
	Institutional support - partnership is a formal component of teacher education program/qualification	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X
	Institutional support - partnership activity is written into workloads of staff in universities	✓	X	X Research grant activity not teacher ed responsibilities	✓ Coordination	✓ Partially	✓ Partially	X Grant activity
	Institutional support - partnership activity is written into workloads of staff in schools	✓ pst co-ordination	X	X	X extra paid work	X	X	X
	Other institutional support	✓ Teachers financially rewarded	✓ MOU – legal framework RTO - accreditation	✓ in strategic planning in some schools	✓ System funding	X	✓ Included in elective	X Prioritised by school but not funded
Learning & other benefits (reciprocity/ mutuality)	PST learning evident?	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
	Teacher/ts' aide learning evident?	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
	Teacher educator learning evident?	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	✓
	School student learning evident?	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓
	Connected to school/system need	✓	✓ teacher supply	✓	✓ System	X	X	✓ Teacher PL
	Is there a research relationship to partnership?	✓	X	✓	X	X	X	✓
	Is there evidence of conversations between teachers & teacher educators?	✓	✓	✓	✓ Mentor input into course review	X	✓ email exchanges	✓
	Curriculum focus	Various	Outdoor Education	Maths Indigenous ed	Various	Various	Special needs	Literacy, arts, quality process
Other	Size/scope of partnership	University 400+ schools	University single school	University 30+ schools	University 6 schools	University 26 schools	University 20 schools	University single school

CHAPTER 3
CROSSING THE BORDER: THE PRACTICES OF UNIVERSITY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships – a less institutionalised space

In collaborative partnerships, the institutional domains of preservice teacher education show an opening-up of taken-for-granted structures associated with the participants taking on new personal/professional practices. The partnership setting sets up a less institutionalised space spanning the borders of university, school and (in the best of worlds) school systems. Within the partnership space, preservice teachers, teachers and teacher educators have scope to establish the justifications for the partnership and to create and trial practices for the integration of partners' interests in the previously distinct institutional domains. These practices are clearly evident in all of the partnerships studied in the Project. For example the Local University Partnership shows how even a relatively modest change in course arrangements leads to altered ways of working.

> *During the semester undergraduates attend two learning contexts, one at the University and the second setting, in the school classroom. In the tutorials delivered at the Local Campus of the University undergraduates are provided both theory and practical resources that may be of assistance to them in the school classroom.*

> *In the school classroom, undergraduates are required to research, plan, deliver and provide learning program for a student, or small group of students with a specific learning focus. Planning for the focus student/s is undertaken in collaboration with the colleague teacher and the University lecturer responsible for overseeing the University unit/program. The undergrads spend 1 ½ hours for 8 weeks in schools. Individual timetables vary according to undergrads' and colleague teachers' needs. (University lecturer)*

The partnership space at Local University extends from the university campus where students take an elective unit of study which directly introduces them to the challenges they will confront in their partnership activity with school students; to the school classroom where each of the preservice teachers will work with the classroom teacher in supporting the learning of a student with special learning needs; and back to the university classroom. In this space, the practical demands on preservice teachers are quite different from those they experience in the supervised teaching practice. In the practicum, the surveillance attention of the supervising teacher is on the adoption of effective classroom practices by the preservice teacher. The partnership-based classroom is also a place where the concern is upon the improvement of teaching, but it now has a renewed purpose where both the teacher and the preservice teacher are planning and working together in the interests of school students and their learning.

What appears in this collaborative partnership space is that preservice teachers, teachers and teacher educators have a mutual interest in school student learning. That mutuality initiates reciprocities in that each stakeholder in the partnership is called on to contribute in ways not experienced within the conventional teacher education. The reciprocities include the inclusion of authentic classroom interests in the formal university program and teacher educator's planning, the additional time and responsibility demands on preservice teachers and the readiness of teachers to work with the preservice teachers in the expectation of their

contribution to learning by school students, but without the marginal benefit of supervised teaching payments.

Not all partnerships included in this research were as explicit in their concerns for the learning of school students as the Local University Partnership was. What is clear, however, is that those partnerships which had generated justifications and practices based on the learning of school students were the partnerships which impressed as having best established the conditions for effectiveness and sustainability.   In those partnerships, principles for the partnership, its improvement and continuity had emerged without the artificial stimuli of system funding or policy command. The border spanning spaces in those partnerships depend as much on participant initiative and creativity as they do on institutional resources and power.

This section will set out the practices of partnership-based teacher education encountered in the research.   It will map the border-spanning partnership space, presented in Table 2.1 through an examination of the distinctive and interactive relationships between:

- Preservice teachers and school students
- Preservice teachers and their mentor teachers
- Preservice teachers and their peers
- Preservice teachers and teacher educators
- Mentor teachers and teacher educators.

The discussion of altered relationships within personalised and localised partnership space will lead to a consideration of the institutional conditions which participants encountered within their partnerships.   One striking outcome of the research is the role of school systems in the university-school partnerships: mostly absent and if present with only restricted agency.

In conclusion, the section will summarise the findings of the research in definitions of the effects of and resources used to sustain university-school partnerships. The loose specification of effects and resources will culminate in a speculation on the nature of the effective and sustainable university-school partnership in which 'all stakeholders benefit'.

The practices of the partnership space

Preservice teachers and school students

Three partnerships required preservice teachers to work directly with school students. In two of them, Outer University and Local University, partnership activity was a formal component of the university course. In the third partnership, involving Plains University and Lakeside High School, the preservice teachers worked in the School's outdoor education program as volunteers but were also able to seek TAFE credit for the development of some of the adventuring and leadership skills they were acquiring through their participation.

Authenticity is the best term for valuing the interactions which characterises the preservice teacher – school student relationship in a partnership such as those in the Plains University partnership.   Liberated, at least partially, from the constraints of the taken-for-granted assumptions about their involvement in school settings, preservice teachers become active in the formation and outcomes of partnership practices in ways which serve their developing professional interests. Authentic practice calls forth from the preservice teacher the personal responsibility the teacher has for the school student and the understanding and practical accomplishments which support students' learning. Significantly, in taking some accountability

for student learning, preservice teachers are able to articulate how they are applying their developing understanding and skills.

> *I worked with the student from 9:30 till 11:00 once a week for eight weeks. The only previous experience I have had was the regular literacy at university over the last two years in particular. I have also experienced regular literacy activities with my eldest daughter and I used a lot of resources from home which I use with her e.g. board games, books etc. Practical experience has also allowed me to take literacy with students and has allowed me to observe the particular levels that students would be at. I felt comfortable with this module and I had plenty of time to plan and from week to week on what was working and what wasn't working. My peers were always available to talk, my university lecturer was always available and very helpful and my colleague teachers although was unavailable most times was very helpful in informing me all about my student and giving me direction. The support involved discussing with the student and getting feedback. I was also allowed to access resources from the school. I used literacy text books from my own collection, the uni library and information from the internet.*

> *We were also made to fill out an assessment record of the students over three different occasions. This included writing about the child's strengths, recent accomplishments, evidence of accomplishments, reflecting back on the learning context and the details of assistance provided to child, emerging areas of knowledge and/or skills and future provision for learning. This assignment encouraged deep reflection and direction on where to go next with the student.* (Local University preservice teacher)

At Outer University (OU) partnerships are integral to a large scale teacher education program which is located in more than 400 schools and education settings. One component of partnership activity is an applied curriculum project which each school proposes for small teams of preservice teachers. An applied curriculum project at Sheoak Primary School involved OU preservice teachers in working with students in the development of digital portfolios which, in the way that ICT seems to stimulate, placed the school students preservice teachers and classroom teachers side-by-side as teachers and learners together.   In another project at Forest Secondary College, the school had considered how the applied curriculum project needed to extend the previous year's achievements.

> *Having experienced each component of the story writing process the Year 10 students were guided by the pre service teachers to reflect on their personal learning as a way of preparing them for their future role in the project. Each Year 10 student was assigned three Year 7 students who were considered suitable to benefit from the use of multiliteracies approach to story writing. The challenge was to improve the literacy skills of twelve Year 7 students as compared to the four participating students in the first phase of the project. The pre service teachers demonstrated some similar challenges to those of the previous year. The embracing of the need/opportunity to operate outside of their selected teaching area, the confident use of ICT, a relatively high degree of autonomy in a realm that was quite new to them were just some of the common conditions that were identified, articulated and I believe responded to, as part of the learning for each pre service teacher.* (FSC leading teacher)

The demand to contribute directly to the learning of school students in an activity which has an acknowledged priority in the work of classroom teachers and a school's program can place each

preservice teacher at the limit of their pedagogical and curriculum capabilities. In working with students at Lakeside Secondary College *the opportunity to extend myself*, for a preservice teacher, was a clear incentive for her to develop enhanced group management understanding and skills. In such situations, teachers express the belief that preservice teachers need to show the kind of commitment, dedication and motivation which are expected of professionals. For the preservice teachers, making a tangible difference to the participation and learning of school students confers a connected and up-to-date quality on the teacher education program which preservice teachers can discern may be lacking in university coursework.

Preservice teachers and their mentor teachers

The professional conversations between preservice teachers and their school mentor teachers are the clearest expression of the value imparted by collaborative partnerships in teacher education. In working together around an important practical challenge, the preservice teacher and mentor adopt shared language which each needs to connect to their respective institutional settings. Commonly, preservice teachers and their mentors participate in planning activities, reviewing and reflecting on their experiences in and the outcomes of those activities and discussing how to improve learning and teaching. In the Plains University-Lakeside High School partnership, the mentor teacher emphasised the importance of the induction of the preservice teachers to the outdoor education program. While the preservice teachers were university undergraduates with physical education qualifications, they had limited backgrounds in the kinds of adventuring activities – snorkelling or caving for example – which are typical in outdoor education programs. During the outdoor field trips the mentor teacher and preservice teachers made time to de-brief their experiences and the mentor may be involved in formal assessment of the preservice teachers' outdoor skills.

Mentor teachers in the Local University Partnership are similarly active in working with preservice teachers in their contributions to the learning of children with special needs in their classrooms.

> *The student teacher spends several weeks (1 session per week) observing and working alongside the colleague teacher with the focus child. The student teacher develops a teaching plan/sequence in conjunction with the colleague teacher and university lecturer and visits the school for 1 session a week and takes the lessons he/she has planned. After each lesson the student teacher reflects on the lesson and the student's responses/learning in conjunction with the colleague teacher and refines and adjusts the program accordingly and where it is necessary. The university lecturer visits the school once during this time.* (Local University mentor teacher)

The mentor teachers emphasised how important it was for the preservice teachers to be committed to the work as the learning of the school students was at stake. Mentor teachers took on additional workload in participating in the partnership and they needed assurance that the preservice teachers they had would *be professional about what they're doing' to ensure that the* pr*ogram doesn't fall down around everybody's ears* (Local University mentor teacher).

While the Regional University relationship with schools had the character of a less-developed complementary partnership, its core was the communication between mentor teachers and preservice teachers.   Preservice teachers valued the program because it dealt with the 'real' circumstances in classrooms and not the ideal types which they claimed were presented in the university lecture theatre. They greatly esteemed being given authoritative advice on how to organise teaching and professional practice successfully.

I found the program very effective in that it exposed me to the school environment early on in my course. As I hadn't really been at school for over 20 years this was invaluable. Both my mentors were clever and dynamic teachers who were very positive and motivating role models. The program also gave me a chance to learn and practice the practical aspects of teaching such as how to organise practical activities in the class room and how to develop a unit of work.

I feel that I would have been quite under-prepared for prac teaching if I did not have the mentor program. It gave me a repertoire of teaching techniques and also some ideas on behaviour management. The conventional teaching program focussed on the theory of learning and developmental psychology. I also appreciated having contacts with practicing teachers as some teachers at uni had not taught for quite a while. I guess for me the mentor teacher's advice was more credible.

Another strength of the program was that the mentors were able to change things to meet the needs of the students to a certain extent. For example, I really wanted to do lots of experiments in science because I wanted to familiarise myself with some of the equipment I would be using. My mentor then arranged for us to do lots of experiments because other members of the group were keen to do this as well. Our mentor asked us what we would like to get out of the program. Initially we didn't really know but after 5 or 6 weeks we were quite definite and our mentor responded.(preservice teacher)

Less well defined in the pattern of preservice teachers – school teacher relationships was the contribution made by each school's partnership (student teacher) coordinator. In the Outer University partnerships, the school partnership coordinator had the responsibility for linking the preservice teachers to the priorities of the school and the school's expectations for them.

Preservice teachers and their peers

In many of the partnerships, preservice teachers were required to work cooperatively in meeting with mentor teachers, teacher educators and completing partnership tasks. When located within the university program, as in the Western University and Outer University partnerships, the preservice teachers found that they were working in groups or teams in meeting expectations for school-based work. At Western University, one partnership group worked to create

… a corner shop to be used in the kindergarten classrooms. This involved creating actual items to be placed in the shop, as well as developing several scenarios and worksheets that the students could use in the shop if it were being used for Structured Play. As a group we strove to incorporate as many different KLAs into the various scenarios the students would be able to act out in the shop (eg. English, Mathematics, P.D.H.P.E) in order to make the project more meaningful in the classrooms. In order to successfully complete the project we had to work in close conjunction with the teachers at the school, particularly the kindergarten teachers, who more than willingly guided us through the decision making process. (Western University preservice teacher)

In partnerships such as these, preservice teacher work takes on the character of the curriculum practices of teachers when they are introducing innovations in their classrooms. The challenge of satisfying expectations of school colleagues stimulates a sense of professional responsibility as the preservice teachers in the Western University partnership recognised that their work would result in a product which would make an enduring contribution to the learning of children

in the school. It was also important that the partnership products and activities connected with professional practice after graduation.

> *In science we actually did science experiments, practiced parent phone calls and interviews and went through various school protocols such as how to go about organising an excursion. We also developed a unit of work and actually delivered a session to the science club students. This was reviewed by our peers.*

> *I think the peer review was done by each student in the group observing and filling out and evaluation form at school. This was then collated by the mentor and handed back in a written form. I think it was useful as each person picked up different things. (Preservice teacher at Regional University)*

The partnership activity of preservice teacher teams can mirror teachers' professional activity in other ways. One of the preservice teachers at Forest Secondary College in the Outer University partnership found that she had become a group leader.

> *Due to the fact we had not decided on delegating responsibilities, our organisation of task was done on a voluntary basis. However, as time went on and our work load increased, our priorities shifted. This was when I found myself taking on Project Management responsibilities such as drafting up time-lines, delegating roles to other students, organisation of rooms; software, stationary and equipment, liaison with FSC partnership co-ordinator and staffs as well as OU Colleague and recording logs of meeting between preservice teachers and FSC students.*

Partnership spaces, when organised to meet important school priorities, create opportunities for preservice teachers to explore the broad curriculum and pedagogical scope of teachers' work in ways which may not be available within conventional practicum arrangements.

Preservice teachers and teacher educators

From the perspective of the practices of preservice teachers working in partnerships, unsurprisingly, the university program and the activities of teacher educators take on the task of setting the conditions of action for preservice teachers. Teacher educators 'switch on' preservice teachers to the expectations of the schools and the mentor teachers and provide opportunities for explicit reflection on practice by the preservice teachers. In those partnerships whose practices are formally written into university course practices (at Local, Outer, Western and Regional Universities), the teacher educators also figure in the assessing of preservice teachers' understanding.

If the institutional separations between university and school were not enough, the geographical spread of partnership settings and attendant travel time demands are substantial barriers to the formation of relationships between preservice teachers and teacher educators <u>within partnership settings.</u> Faced with limited time to work with preservice teachers, teacher educators opt to induct the preservice teachers into partnership goals and practices, and as much as possible, to maintain encouraging and reflection-prompting communication, but only sometimes face-to-face in the partnership settings. The Outer University partnership program was noteworthy for its highly organised support for preservice teachers in their practice settings. But even there, the kinds of discussions which occurred on about a three-weekly cycle were restricted by time as the teacher educators were responsible for multiple schools and had limited scope for partnership activity in their workload arrangements.

Course-based support was clearly a priority in some partnerships. The Western University partnership was distinctive for the systematic requirements for course participation by preservice teachers. An important consideration was that assessment tasks connect partnership activity to unit of study or course assessment criteria.   At Western University,

> *…lectures each week were coordinated to 'dovetail' with suggested activities listed in the partnership handbook for each of the 2 units. On campus tutorials/workshops in Semester weeks 1, 5, 9, 10, 11 and 12 were designed to supplement lecture material and school based learning. Within the Science and Technology unit the tutorials were mostly hands-on practical workshops to do with aspects of 'energy, matter and designing and making'. (Western University teacher educator)*

The partnership with the largest scale examined in the project was at Outer University. Partnership activity is contained within specific units of study at each year level in all courses, including its 4 year undergraduate degree programs. An important component of the Outer University partnerships is the Applied Curriculum Project, a school-defined and supported contribution by preservice teacher teams to a component of the school's curriculum and teaching priorities. With the support of some research funding, the partnership at Forest Secondary College engaged a team of preservice teachers and school mentors in multiliteracies innovation. The Outer University teacher educator – the 'university colleague' – was active in supporting the Applied Curriculum Project.

> *I visited the school at least once every 3 weeks. I kept in contact with the psts * and the SPC via email. I coordinated a guest speaker to attend one initial meeting in 2006 to talk about multiliteracies and how we could focus and build on what the students could do rather than what they could not do. I was also responsible for conducting debriefing sessions with the psts about their teaching and learning activities in classrooms. All but 2 of the 8 psts were from the Grad Dip in Sec Ed program and were in need of time to share and discuss issues related to lesson planning and classroom management in particular.*
>
> *During the first month of the project, I was in regular (weekly) contact with the psts and school personnel clarifying the planning of the project (email, phone and face to face meetings). I spent more time initially in 2006 than in 2007 supporting the project planning. This planning enabled the 2007 team to commence the project more quickly based on the experiences of the previous year* (University teacher educator). * pst = preservice teacher

Levels of interaction and communication on that scale were rarely evident in the partnerships studied in this research.   In a hint about the nature of effectiveness and sustainability in university-school partnerships, the most consistent and richest contributions made in partnerships by teacher educators were in funded research and development projects. With project funding for example, teacher educators were able to employ preservice teachers as co-teachers to support the River University partnership with remote indigenous communities.

Mentor teachers and teacher educators

All but one of the partnerships investigated in this project demanded, in varying degrees, that university and school colleagues generate justifications for partnerships as they worked together to explore how to put their partnerships into practice. The more intense the struggle to set up the partnership, the more explicit was the need, it seems, to articulate a reasoned basis for the

collaboration.   In partnerships, such as those at Regional and Western Universities, which had a segmented or complementary character, there was little evidence of collaboration between teachers in the school and teacher educators beyond discussions about agreements on the expectations for schools and school teachers. For example, a teacher at Regional University sought advice from a university teacher educator.

> *In the partnership I initially worked closely with the Science lecturer at the uni, to discuss what she thought I should do. Essentially we just made sure that I was aware of what she was covering so that I didn't double up and she then left me to devise my own program. We also had to discuss the type of assessment that I would give the students and its weighting within the course. This went quite smoothly and I give the students one assessment piece worth 30% of their mark for the science unit that they study. Now that I am doing the program for the third time I simply touch base with the lecturer at the beginning of the semester via email. She leaves me to my own devices and the things that we do with the students largely stand alone.*

In contrast, the partnerships at Outer University, Local University and the outdoor education specific partnership at Plains University with Lakeside High School had prompted teacher educators and school colleagues – including school principals, school partnership coordinators and mentor teachers – to participate in intense conversations over time on the reasons for the partnerships' existence and the practices to be encouraged in the partnerships. Notably, the research prompted the teacher educators and teachers to advance justifications for the partnerships using educational theories, such as experiential learning, which they regarded as being consistent with partnership practices. At Sheoak Primary School, the school's partnership coordinator defined the nature of the partnership with the teacher education program at Outer University as one where the partners will work flexibly

> *identifying what we wanted to achieve, looking at ideas from different perspectives, a willingness to try something new, persistence, willingness and ability to communicate, making the project a priority , establishing achievable goals, consistency, seeking the development of a learning community for all parties, agreement about how decisions will be made, strategic planning to continually guide and improve the project with the idea of doing the best for our students and assisting in the education of the preservice teachers.* (Sheoak Primary School teacher)

Her Outer University teacher education colleague in recalling the setting-up of the partnership arrangements at Sheoak Primary School noted the importance of conversations over a substantial period of time in the coming to agreement about the intentions and consequences of the university-school collaboration.

> *The meetings routinely involved members of the primary school team and the university colleagues. The communication followed the course of the agenda. Systematic groundwork for the partnership project was specific and considered.   Navigating through the workings of the project involved addressing various elements at many levels. The most strenuous mental activity however, came after the meeting in a general discussion. The movement from meeting to theoretical, intellectual and holistic discourse provided something of a new space. The bodies of thought and the 'group talk' evolved beyond the context of the partnership perspective. This reflective conversation appeared to have a momentum all of its own, whereby topics of authentic*

learning, experiential learning, accountability, cultural shift, and improving student learning were questioned and analysed.

Teachers and teacher educators recognised that partnerships were educationally significant for their own practices. In all of the partnerships, the participating teachers and teacher educators reported the benefits resulting from their working together.   In many cases, the opportunity to work together led to opportunities for teachers and teacher educators to reflect on their practices. For teachers, the partnership enabled them to craft explanations for decisions about classroom practice in their conversations with preservice teachers. Less clear was the form of benefit that teachers received in working with teacher educators. One reason for this uncertainty was that contacts between teachers and teacher educators were at best sporadic in most of the partnerships investigated.   For many teachers and teacher educators, partnership activity was additional work and opportunities for professional conversations were few. At Local University for example, the teacher educator in working with teachers in more 20 schools was able to make contact with teachers only by telephone and email means. The absence of deeper and more meaningful contacts was a matter regretted by the Local University Partnership participants.

One partnership stood out for the clarity of the purposeful relationship between teachers and teacher educators. The partnership at Beachside Primary School was distinctive. It was an enduring relationship, resulting from collaboration between the school principal and the City University teacher educator over many years. Its practices were akin to the US Professional Development School model, in which the school engages the teacher educator to work with teams of teachers on school-based research and innovation. Professional learning is the intent of the partnership. The City University teacher educator works with the classroom teachers for example *by modelling and reflecting on literacy pedagogies* (School Professional Development Coordinator).

> *With the teacher educator's guidance we have used action learning to drive educational programs. Much of our work has related to the use of quality texts and the creative arts, especially drama, to enhance student knowledge and understanding. In addition we have used action learning and the Quality Teaching Framework in projects related to Science & Maths. The teachers trust her (the teacher educator) and are able to confide their concerns about their own pedagogy in the knowledge that she will advise and assist them. As previously indicated, part of the reason that teachers are comfortable in discussing their professional needs is the fact that Robyn actually teaches in their classrooms, modelling the teaching and learning strategies embodied in the advice she gives them.*

Professional learning is mutual, however, at Beachside Primary School. The teacher educator was grateful too because

> *I have benefited greatly as the academic partner. The projects have kept me at the cutting edge re teacher concerns over curriculum change in the state. In addition I have regularly been involved in teaching primary children so my work with preservice and postgraduate teachers is always current – I feel this has made me a better teacher educator.*

A shadow over the Beachside Primary School – City University Partnership is that it has relied on the teacher educator and the school principal to nurture the relationship. While it has been

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successful in attracting specific program funds over the years, its reliance on two dedicated colleagues from the school and university led to some of the participants expressing uncertainty about the future of the partnership.

The institutional conditions encountered in partnerships

The methodology adopted in the research sought to describe and interpret each of the partnerships from the perspective of the principal agents in the partnership: the preservice teachers, school teachers and university teacher educators.   If partnerships were the '*determined efforts by inspired individuals*', then the work of those individuals needed to be the primary data collection interest. But as they presented their work, each of the participants referred to the organisational and institutional conditions, which at times supported partnership activity, but which for many got in the way.

By definition, the university and the school are the ever-present institutions in university-school partnerships.   What is disappointingly evident in the data, however, is the absence or at best the passivity of system involvement. Despite the assertions of parliamentary and system inquiries which have urged teacher education faculties to take up the possibility, school systems have not made many practical investments in partnership-based reform in teacher education.   It is difficult to see how the conditions needed to create enduring spaces spanning university and school borders might be formed without the direct participation of resourceful school/education system authorities.

Among the institutional conditions experienced within the university framework were:

- The extent to which partnership practice was a <u>formal component of university coursework</u>. The integration of partnership practice in an elective at Local University secured the participation of preservice teachers and their commitment to the learning programs of school students. On the other hand the outdoor education partnership at Plains University and Lakeside High School teacher was a voluntary activity and relied on a small number of preservice teachers being prepared to contribute to the partnership activity.
- <u>Assessment requirements</u> were important attributes of formal university coursework. They engaged preservice teachers and provided the basis for the discussions that they had with their teacher educators.   At Regional University, where the partnership was formed around mentor teachers in schools in formal curriculum-based activities, the assessment tasks associated with the partnership were prominent in discussions among all of the participants.
- University teacher educators were able to include university-school engagement activities in their acknowledged <u>workload</u> only when the partnership was formally integrated into university coursework.   In partnerships such as the Plains University and Lakeside High School case, the university teacher educator volunteered her time. This committed teacher educator was also only employed as a sessional member of staff at Plains University. Arguably, the case for partnerships in university teacher education needs to refer not only workload issues but also to explicit academic <u>position description</u> provisions.

The institutional conditions available at schools for partnerships while easily defined appeared to have uncertain availability. When the conditions were present, partnerships could be established and sustained.

- The <u>school principal</u> acts as partnership gatekeeper. That is not only a role as a kind of sentry ensuring that universities keep their promises. School principals also encourage teachers to take up partnership opportunities. The project research team was impressed by

the direct participation by four school principals in the research. In some cases, the principals welcomed the partnership because it supported school teachers' professional development. In other cases, the principal recognised that the partnership offered direct possibilities for students and teachers at the school.

- <u>Connection to an agreed school need</u> was critically important in securing teachers' participation in partnerships. It seemed that when the partnership activity was defined as much by the school and its teachers as by the university, that the partnership possibility was considered, if not always welcomed.   The high quality professional support by the senior teacher educator who worked with Beachside Primary School was greatly esteemed because the teachers recognised that her pedagogical insights contributed directly to the improvement of their teaching practices. Outer University's extensive partnerships with schools were formed to answer school priorities around the enhancement of school student learning.

- <u>Teachers' workload pressure</u> is an ever-present condition of partnership participation. The additional activity associated with partnerships at Western University was a source of teacher dissatisfaction. The potential for disengagement by teachers was also evident at Local University where the participating teachers made clear that their continuing participation in the partnership was conditional on preservice teachers demonstrating the commitment and skills needed to support the learning of students with special learning needs.

- In schools too, the <u>allocation of defined responsibilities</u> to at least one member of staff appeared to be important in the maintenance of partnership activity.   The partnership coordinator at Forest Secondary College in the Outer University partnership program was a powerful influence on the success of the partnership. His work in support of preservice teachers was a component of his assigned professional responsibilities in the school.

Uniquely the Regional University partnership relied directly on the local system authority for its initiation and its ongoing support. It was the only partnership with direct financial input into the university-school arrangements. The Plains University – Lakeside High School partnership had interactions with the local system authority too. The system interest related to the approval of the partnership, especially in its treatment of risk in outdoor education settings.

It is difficult to see partnerships between universities and schools becoming the common feature of teacher education in Australia without concerted and substantial education system contributions.   Only one case studied in the research – that at Outer University – was organised around whole of program partnership participation for preservice teachers. Its model might be replicable elsewhere, but the possibility must be faced that the historical and organisational conditions which led to its formation might render it as one of those examples that prove the rule that partnerships, under the current institutional conditions existing in Australia, generally are a large-scale impossibility. Small scale partnerships in which dedicated teachers and teacher educators can work on mutually agreed and narrowly defined projects might be the most sustainable possibility in many settings.

A radical shift in system support, with all of the system's inevitable accompanying accountability demands, may be the only way to generalise partnership-based teacher education. But those surveillance and accountability demands can easily put at risk the trust relationships which encourage teachers and teacher educators, in particular, to cross institutional dividing lines into the less institutionalised partnership spaces.

The underlying impediments to the establishment of effective partnerships are the industrial conditions in which teachers and teacher educators work. In even the most successful partnerships studied in this research, the contributions of teachers and teacher educators were truncated versions of what might have been. If partnerships are to be the condition of teacher education in Australia, then a way must be found to inscribe work in the border-spanning university-school partnership space into the formal work and job specifications of teachers and teacher educators.

Including partnership activity in teachers' work is a challenging demand for schools. One interpretation of a teacher spending valuable time in working with preservice teachers is that a highly skilled professional is not focussing attention of the learning of school students. Perhaps the commitment in the Local and Outer University partnerships to school students' learning may overcome likely objections by school principals and parents that some teachers are not devoting all of their attention and resources to students.

University teacher educators face another challenge in taking on partnership responsibilities. Reward and prestige in university settings accompanies formal research and teaching achievements. Spending time in schools supporting preservice teachers in their partnership activity, while professionally fulfilling, is not the basis for measurable advances in research output for example. Without the kind of targeted program and research support as proposed in 'Top of the Class', teacher educators are likely to restrict their partnership activity to the minimum. As a result, effective and sustainable university-school partnerships will continue to be curiosities explicable only by reference to the personalised and localised conditions which prompted their establishment.

Effects and Resources in University-School Partnerships

The discussion so far in this section has emphasised the participants' standpoints in partnership-based practices in preservice teacher education.   In the less institutionalised or more uncertainly structured partnership space, school students, preservice teachers, mentor teachers and teacher educators are encouraged to shift from habitual responses to each other to more open and negotiated relationships. The changes are not leaps in to the unknown but result from collective recognition that what partnerships offer are effects or outcomes which are worth working for. But the partners also recognise that they must contribute resources to the partnership if it is to be successful and if it is to endure.

Across the analytical pathway in this research consistent evidence, across multiple settings, has emerged on the nature of the effects and resources which sustain partnerships. In the words frequently cited in the roundtables, effective and sustainable partnerships are characterised by **clear benefits for all stakeholders** in teacher education: school students, mentor teachers, preservice teachers and teacher educators. These benefits also relate to the institutional interests of each stakeholder.

Partnership Effects

An effective partnership has **a focus on learning** for all stakeholders. School students' learning is the principal focus of the partnership, shown for example in the support that preservice teachers provide school students in classroom programs. The critically important contribution the partnership will make is that it will enable links to be made between school needs and priorities and preservice teachers' skills and interests. In coming together to support student learning, the mentor teachers, preservice teachers and teacher educators are challenged to enhance their curriculum and pedagogical understandings. Through their work in effective

partnerships, preservice teachers learn about young people's learning by recognising their learning characteristics and how teachers design educational programs for the students. They are also able to evaluate the effect of particular teaching practices on students' learning. Student learning is no longer a coursework abstraction but a personal and practical challenge for each preservice teacher. Currency and relevance in university coursework is highly valued by preservice teachers and confers substantial credibility on the teacher education program. An important characteristic of an effective partnership for the preservice teacher is that it is linked directly to either their coursework or their developing professional interests, for example via the inclusion of partnership activity formally in university coursework requirements.

The effective partnership engages all stakeholders in generating new knowledge and skills. In their support for the preservice teachers, teachers (mentors) are encouraged to reflect on their own understandings and to think through, consider the evidence about and articulate the justifications for their curriculum and pedagogical practices. Teacher educators who work in partnerships maintain current knowledge of the discourses and practices of school education. Teacher educators also find in the partnership a basis for exploring the possibilities and limitations of their educational assumptions and theoretical stances.

An effective partnership leads all stakeholders to take on **altered relationship practices**. The practical core of the effective partnership is the professional relationships which the partnership initiates. The relationships are exemplified by the presence of and provision for conversations among preservice teachers, mentor teachers and teacher educators. Working both individually and collectively in school-based collaborative learning teams leads preservice teachers to develop constructive collegial relationships with their mentors. Conversations in effective partnerships are focused on learning and teaching: and they will have the learning of school students at their core. As a result, preservice teachers will also build the kind of authentic learning relationships with school students that are required of classroom teachers. Preservice teacher, school teacher and university teacher learning will emerge from the evidence-based and critical inquiry resulting from the new partnership practices. Partnerships which expect preservice teachers to work in support of school student learning encourage discussions about the learning of young people, how preservice teachers learn and the educational theories which underpin the curriculum and pedagogical practices used in schools and universities. In effective partnerships, the professional communication between preservice teachers, mentor teachers and teacher educators leads participants to commitment to the partnership over an extended period of time, allowing for the development of deeper understandings, mutual agreements about practice and the potential for ongoing improvements in practice. The extended relationships which appear to develop in effective partnerships also present stakeholders with opportunities for collaborative research leading in some cases to funding for specific elements of partnerships. Success of this kind generates ongoing commitment to the partnership.

An effective partnership constructs **new enabling structures** which span the boundaries of school and university by rendering problematic the frequently contested interfaces between schools and universities. Effective partnerships provide the space for stakeholders to initiate new learning relationships by valuing the contributions made by each of the stakeholders to the partnership. A condition of this new enabling structure or space will be that it supports preservice teachers, school teachers and university teachers in forming relationships whose primary concern is the learning of school students. The altered practices initiated by effective partnerships weaken the neat assumptions about the authority levels, positions and work of the preservice teacher, classroom teacher and teacher educator, at least temporarily. At any time, each of these stakeholders can become learner, teacher, curriculum change agent or

researcher; and in each other's educational settings. In effective partnerships, the value of each stakeholder is acknowledged in the other institutional space(s). The institutional space of the partnership leads each of the participants to be public about their justifications for the practices they have adopted. Stakeholders experience effective partnerships as spaces where they are able express and work on personal interests with the respectful and collaborative support of colleagues from other settings. An important element of the new partnership space is that stakeholders draw on the highly valued and frequently the scarce resources available in the other partnership domains.

Partnership Resources

An effective partnership encourages each stakeholder to contribute **personal and professional resources**, in the form of passion, commitment and professional understanding and expertise. For preservice teachers, the primary resource is access to current practice in classrooms, with school students and with mentor teachers. Preservice teachers value opportunities to work directly with school students by supporting their learning. The time that mentor teachers spend in professional conversations, in planning and feedback about teaching, is a vital resource. Not all school teachers are prepared to be mentors. Those that do participate in the partnership's activities recognise that their contributions may involve additional workload. An important contribution that teachers and teacher educators make is the leadership needed to initiate partnerships and to sustain them, especially when things go wrong.

Because clear institutional supports are not present in many partnerships, the stakeholders in partnerships contribute their professional understandings in a **shared language** to the partnership relationships in rationalising the aims, outcomes and practices of the partnerships. For preservice teachers, the significant condition of this shared language will be that the mentor teacher and teacher educator are able to communicate across the division between school and university discourses about education and most importantly about the learning of school students.   Mentor teachers will be encouraged to articulate their professional knowledge and understanding in ways comprehensible to preservice teachers. The partnership location will mean that teachers' explanations will be enhanced convincingly for preservice teachers by being modelled in practice. Agreements about the definition and significance of teaching as practice lead teachers and teacher educators to present educational justifications which value the direct participation of preservice teachers in school-based support of school students, even if the preservice teachers' work is not formally recognised in coursework and assessment requirements. In fact, the less the formality of institutional supports, the greater is the demand on stakeholders to demonstrate leadership as they construct supportive discourses transcending the constraints which inevitably confront educators located in bureaucratically controlled institutions. Time to meet and engage in altered relational practices is clearly an essential resource which each stakeholder commits.

Institutional resources are evident in partnerships which endure over time. The formal integration of partnership activity in university course and assessment requirements provides considerable incentives for preservice teachers to become engaged in the partnership. Even where partnerships are not formally included in the university program, practical, intellectual and status 'goods' can be important resources contributing to the enduring commitment of stakeholders to the partnerships. What appears to be a critically important resource in partnerships is the extent to which schools and school teachers commit to the relationship, for example by providing the leadership needed to support a project which has within in it the opportunity that preservice teachers achieve a successful outcome of benefit to the school, its students and also for themselves. Sometimes, less tangible institutional resources are

insufficient to sustain the partnership. In those cases, financial support appears to secure the engagement of teachers and university lecturers. Funding can initiate partnerships, for example through system support where there are clear areas of teacher shortage. Partnerships may also provide the rationale for school and university colleagues to secure short-term project funding. Formal, informal or financial, the institutional resources applied by stakeholders lead them to find the time available to sustain the partnership. That is, a significant institutional resource is the extent to which partnership-based activity is accorded priority in position descriptions and workload calculations and is not just an after-normal hours and commitment draining add-on to existing responsibilities.

The inescapable conclusion of this analysis is that the commitments, expertise and resources of the partners in teacher education should be re-structured so that **the learning of school students becomes the unifying purpose of teacher education: for preservice teachers, teachers and teacher educators**.

Reconstructing teacher education around the interests of school students, teachers and teacher educators comes to grips with two requirements for university-school partnerships:

- the concern expressed in 'Top of the Class' and elsewhere that teachers with acknowledged understanding and expertise should have direct participation in teacher education. Teacher education reformed so that its partnership-based activity brings preservice teachers, teachers and teacher educators together around the interests of school students will lead to classroom mentors taking on leadership in the partnership. They will contribute to the decisions made about preservice teacher learning and competence and negotiate with the other stakeholders on what should be the form of preservice teacher activity in schools and curriculum content in university coursework. One long term consequence would be that in the long-term, mentor teachers would increasingly become actively involved in teaching in the university program.
- the objection that involvement in a university-school partnership would take the best and most knowledgeable teachers away from teaching school students. University-school partnerships will founder if they become additional work for teachers and deflect them from their primary interests. In the increasingly evidenced-based accountability and reward environments in schools and school systems, teachers need a good deal of convincing that the civic duty of participating in teacher education is worth the effort. An appropriately resourced re-direction of teacher education to the interests of school students would encourage teachers to see participation with preservice teacher learning as not tangential to their classroom responsibilities and practices.

Teacher education reformed around the interests of school students, teachers and schools will require a new and cooperative institutional space which spans the borders of university and school. This is not a far-fetched idea. The formation of new institutional arrangements is at the heart of 'Top of the Class' in its proposals for the national accreditation of teacher education courses and for new funding arrangements, including a new research funding body separate from the Australian Research Council, a $20 million per annum Diversity Fund and the three year $20 million per annum Partnership fund.

What better way would there be for justifying the new expenditure envisaged in 'Top of the Class' than for it to transform teacher education so that it becomes an activity that teachers in schools welcome!

Effective and Sustainable University School – Partnerships

That *all stakeholders benefit* from university-school relationship was the insistent theme in all of the research roundtables. The assertion points to a distinctive condition of the educational and professional space spanning the university-school-system borders which an effective partnership should establish. That space should be one in which not only do stakeholders benefit, but to which 'all stakeholders contribute'. The sharing in benefits need to be matched by investments of the resources available to each partnership participant.

The research has not concluded that there is a singular prescription for the nature of the effective and sustainable university-school partnership. 'Top of the Class' may have sought to impel all Australian faculties of education to take on partnerships. Intelligently, it eschewed specification in favour of research into possibilities. The Victoria University research team strongly supports this approach. Effective and sustainable partnerships will not be uniform and systematised objects. They may be whole-of-program practices in courses, or existing only within certain aspects of courses. But they may also be created to serve highly specialised interests in one school and with a small component of a university program. Partnership-based teacher education may embrace all three approaches.

'Top of the Class' evaluated existing partnerships as no more than '*determined efforts by inspired individuals'*. It does appear to be a kind of critique. But does anyone want any area of education, teacher education included, to be anything less than '*determined efforts by inspired individuals*'?

If university-school partnerships are to be the condition of teacher education in Australia then the resources need to be available for dedicated teachers and teacher educators to do inspired work. What is now the specific character of some university-school relationships needs to be the condition of all. The least desirable result is that the generalising of effective partnerships would lead to a rountinising of practice for preservice teachers, teachers and teacher educators.

For practitioners, inspiration in education comes from local and personalised challenges and not generalised and abstract interests. Finding ways for education systems, universities and schools to support preservice teachers, teachers and teacher educators in their construction of the altered relationship practices is the pathway to authentic and effective partnerships. On the one hand institutional resources will be needed to sustain effective partnerships; resources well beyond those currently being deployed. But institutional resources – increased funding for example - won't be sufficient for effectiveness. The essential condition for effective and sustainable university-school partnerships will be the focus they have on learning and most importantly, how they – the preservice teachers, teachers and teacher educators in collaboration - contribute to the learning of school students, and as a result how they learn from each other.

When defined as collaboration in the interests of school students by the other stakeholders, the partnership space is distinctly different from the conventional teacher education environment, including that in supervised teaching practice or the practicum. Intentional or not, teacher education as commonly experienced is perceived as sets of hierarchies: the university and the school; the teacher educator and the teacher; the teacher and the preservice teacher; and the teacher educator and the preservice teacher.   Partnerships weaken, if they don't completely dissolve, the power relationships which bedevil teacher education and which come to be represented all too frequently as pragmatic at best.

The effects and resources presented in the previous section summarise the practices of collaborative partnerships: effects bringing benefits to 'all stakeholders' resulting from the resources contributed by 'all stakeholders'. As an ideal teacher education space, the partnership requires that stakeholders acknowledge and value what others bring to the relationship and are careful to ensure that the each stakeholder takes from the partnership the effects or benefits which bring them esteem in their respective settings.

Arguably, the best formulation of a partnership is that it is a set of relations and practices characterised by trust, mutuality and reciprocity (Cox 1995). Trust, the capacity to recognise that others will act as they promise; mutuality, the acceptance that 'we' can achieve more than 'I'; and reciprocity, acknowledging that each partner is different, each partner has a distinctive contribution and that each partner should receive an authentic benefit from the relationship: these appear to be the qualities of an effective and sustainable partnership.

Extending the findings of this research to dense concepts like trust, mutuality and reciprocity may look like an attempt to shift the research vocabulary back to some kind of comforting (for the research team) academic 'speak'. That is not the intention. Certainly Eva Cox did not intend that. For Cox, trust, mutuality and reciprocity are the ingredients of social capital building. And social capital is the key to current attempts to transform Australian institutions so that they recognise their contributions to social division and shift their practices so that they become socially including.

Partnerships in teacher education can easily be defined as a technical solution to a perceived inability of universities to graduate high quality teachers. But partnerships in teacher education have significance beyond the training of practitioners. They should be seen as part of a generalised social movement which seeks to question taken-for-granted assumptions about practical possibilities and to dissolve entrenched expectations about what particular groups can contribute.

Partnerships into practice – the need for practical leadership

For nearly 20 years, the university-school partnership has been a discussion point in Australian education. Partnerships have also been practical achievements in some local settings. Only when supported by Government have partnerships been large-scale projects covering multiple universities and schools, nation-wide.   The VU research team fears that, without substantial investment by Governments and education system authorities, history will once again repeat itself.   Current emphases on university-school partnerships will be forgotten and at some time in the future will become yet more opportunities for university teacher education faculties to be criticised.   The time has arrived to move from political thought experiments to a national achievement based on the personalised and localised experiences of teachers and teacher educators who have come together around challenges which neither can meet without the contribution of the other.

The VU research team considers that 'Top of the Class' presents an unprecedented opportunity for teacher education in Australia. Its recommendation for the establishment of a National Teacher Education Partnership Fund is a unique starting point which recognises the need for teacher education faculties to do better, but also that they cannot do by themselves.

Taking of responsibility and leadership are needed now to shift university-school partnerships from possibility to practical achievement. Teaching Australia is well placed to take on the coordination of the development of a national approach to university-school partnerships.

CHAPTER 4
MARKING OUT THE PARTNERSHIP SPACE

5.46   …the time has come to move beyond research and pilot studies to concerted and systematic action to encourage the development of authentic, effective and sustainable partnerships.

5.47   The Australian Government should establish a National Teacher Education Partnership Fund controlled by a board representing all key stakeholders. Universities, schools and employing authorities would be invited to submit joint proposals for funding initiatives in delivering quality teacher education. While collaborative approaches to practicum arrangements should be a priority, the Fund could also support other partnership activities in research, induction and on-going professional development. The Board would establish guidelines and criteria under which applications would be assessed.

(Top of the Class 2007:79-80)

'Top of the Class' proposed the formation of a consortium through which the Australian Government would *invest significant financial resources into supporting partnerships* (ibid: 80). Participation in the consortium would demand that the stakeholders, comprising a teacher education program, schools and system authorities would research and evaluate their partnership activities. The final chapter of this investigation into Effective and Sustainable University-School Partnerships will use the imagined establishment of a National Teacher Education Partnership Fund as the context for the proposition of two practical outcomes through which Teaching Australia might take on the leadership of a partnership-based transformation of *the way in which teachers are prepared and supported in this country* (ibid: 80):

- a responsive and dynamic framework by which Teaching Australia will be able to support the development of new programs
- a methodology for the evaluation and strengthening of existing university-school partnerships.

Through the identification of the effects of partnerships and the resources needed to sustain them, the VU research team is in a position to define a framework of criteria for evaluating partnerships – or better, for the <u>self-evaluation</u> of university-school partnerships by the stakeholders in those partnerships. That same framework can also be used as a starting point for colleagues in schools and universities who seek to work more closely together in preservice teacher education.

The final chapter of this report of a study into Effective and Sustainable University-School Partnerships applies the findings of the research, set out in Chapter 3, to propose a practical way to move beyond the mostly inspired small-scale initiatives included in this investigation. The proposals attempt to present the outcomes of this research in a way which does not close off options for our dedicated colleagues in schools and universities.

In keeping with the data collection and collaborative analysis strategies applied in the research, Chapter 4 accords the greatest prominence in its proposals to the key stakeholders in

partnerships: school students, preservice teachers, teachers and teacher educators. This emphasis is not intended to dismiss the place of school system authorities. It does, however, point to the low level of system participation in the partnerships studied. 'Top of the Class' imagines school systems as active participants in partnerships. The VU team considers that school systems can move beyond simplistic funding/accountability conceptions of partnership involvement. The problem is that in none of the examples studied were school systems sharing in the educational leadership and activity of the partnerships. Their part in the university-school relationship is a matter of speculation – we hope informed speculation – and, in the long term, for the research which 'Top of the Class' has recommended.

For the vision in 'Top of the Class' to be realised, considerable impetus will be needed to bring school systems, schools and universities together in local consortia and within a national sponsoring collaboration. In the opinion of the VU team, Teaching Australia is well-positioned to take on this critically important leadership task.

Partnerships – not mandated but achieved by working in partnership

Partnerships are a social practice achieved through and characterised by trust, mutuality and reciprocity:

Trust: the commitment and expertise that each of the main stakeholders – preservice teachers, teachers, teacher educators – brings to the partnership in the expectation that it will provide them with the benefits each seeks.

Mutuality: the extent to which the stakeholders recognise that working together does lead to the benefits each esteems

Reciprocity: that each stakeholder recognises and values what the others bring to the partnership.

The condition for partnerships based on trust, mutuality and reciprocity is that the stakeholders – preservice teachers, teachers and teacher educators in particular – can come together in ways which do not tightly define their expectations for and contributions to the partnership. Partnerships are less institutionalised spaces and enable the stakeholders to work together in ways that are consistent with their interests and expertise. What this research has shown is that the partnerships which appear to be the most effective in bringing stakeholders together are those where the learning of school students is the direct focus of the partnership. Partnerships in which school students are active participants have produced the clearest and most vital representations of the possibility that reformed university-school relationships have for preservice teacher learning. A clear conclusion of this research is that successful partnerships bring the stakeholders together around personalised and localised interests in learning, and school student learning in particular.

Chapter 3 reported the main features of university-school partnership practices by focusing on the activity and contributions of each group of participants. Conceptualised as three key characteristics of effective partnerships and three characteristics of sustainability in partnerships, the findings of the research are that effective and sustainable partnerships are evidenced by:

- a focus on learning which is sustained by personal and professional contributions
- altered relationship practices which are sustained by communication about shared concerns
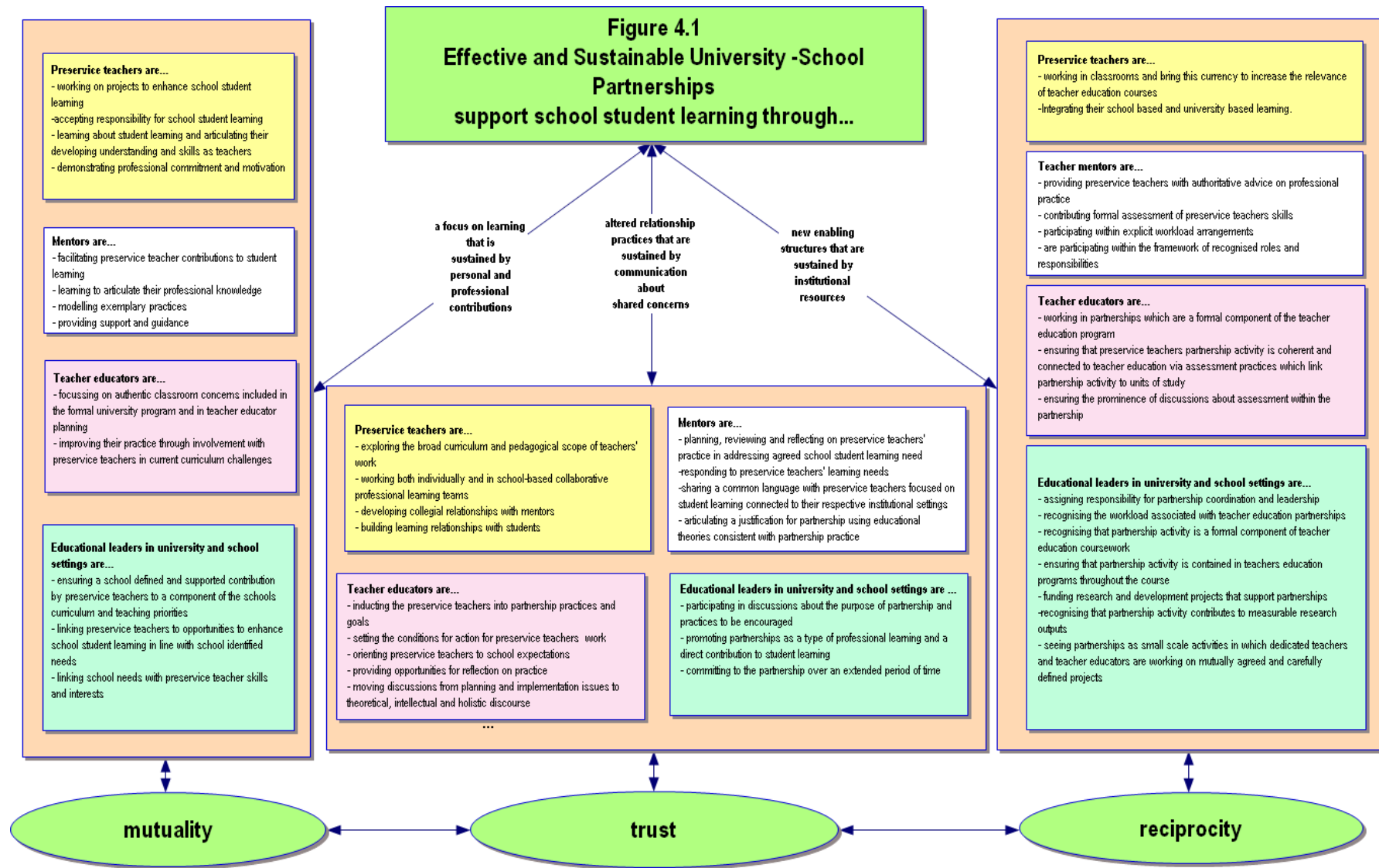- new enabling structures that are sustained by institutional resources.

Each of these dimensions can be seen in the combined efforts of preservice teachers, teacher mentors, teacher educators and the educational leaders as they work together in university – school partnerships. Figure 4.1 below depicts these three dimensions and shows how each dimension is created through the combined actions of the participants.

Figure 4.1 attempts to present a total view of partnerships, as seen from the standpoints of the stakeholders. None of the seven partnerships in this study included all of the dimensions in the Figure. But all demonstrated some.

The VU research team, at this point, interjects a caution. Figure 4.1 is not a checklist! It is conceived as an aid to thinking through partnership possibilities which might present themselves in the local circumstances which bring stakeholders together. The logic of the partnership is the principal intent of Figure 4.1: partnerships which form around shared interests in learning, and school student learning in particular, produce the conditions for trust, mutuality and reciprocity among stakeholders, which enabling structures are needed to sustain.

In a similar spirit, this report makes no attempt to set out how partnerships should be integrated into teacher education course curriculum and program organisation. Inquiry into partnership possibilities together with the provision of adequate institutional resources will be a sufficient basis for teacher educators and teachers to think through and propose new course arrangements.

The remainder of Chapter 4 turns to a possible application of Figure 4.1 in what 'Top of the Class' (p 80) termed 'concerted and systematic action to encourage the development of authentic, effective and sustainable partnerships'. Encouragement of rather than mandating partnerships will leave open the likelihood for inspired efforts by dedicated individuals to be one of the defining characteristics Australian teacher education.

Figure 4.1
Effective and Sustainable University -School Partnerships
support school student learning through...

a focus on learning that is sustained by personal and professional contributions

altered relationship practices that are sustained by communication about shared concerns

new enabling structures that are sustained by institutional resources

Preservice teachers are...
- working on projects to enhance school student learning
- accepting responsibility for school student learning
- learning about student learning and articulating their developing understanding and skills as teachers
- demonstrating professional commitment and motivation

Mentors are...
- facilitating preservice teacher contributions to student learning
- learning to articulate their professional knowledge
- modelling exemplary practices
- providing support and guidance

Teacher educators are...
- focussing on authentic classroom concerns included in the formal university program and in teacher educator planning
- improving their practice through involvement with preservice teachers in current curriculum challenges

Educational leaders in university and school settings are...
- ensuring a school defined and supported contribution by preservice teachers to a component of the schools curriculum and teaching priorities
- linking preservice teachers to opportunities to enhance school student learning in line with school identified needs
- linking school needs with preservice teacher skills and interests

Preservice teachers are...
- exploring the broad curriculum and pedagogical scope of teachers' work
- working both individually and in school-based collaborative professional learning teams
- developing collegial relationships with mentors
- building learning relationships with students

Mentors are...
- planning, reviewing and reflecting on preservice teachers' practice in addressing agreed school student learning need
- responding to preservice teachers' learning needs
- sharing a common language with preservice teachers focused on student learning connected to their respective institutional settings
- articulating a justification for partnership using educational theories consistent with partnership practice

Teacher educators are...
- inducting the preservice teachers into partnership practices and goals
- setting the conditions for action for preservice teachers work
- orienting preservice teachers to school expectations
- providing opportunities for reflection on practice
- moving discussions from planning and implementation issues to theoretical, intellectual and holistic discourse
...

Educational leaders in university and school settings are ...
- participating in discussions about the purpose of partnership and practices to be encouraged
- promoting partnerships as a type of professional learning and a direct contribution to student learning
- committing to the partnership over an extended period of time

Preservice teachers are...
- working in classrooms and bring this currency to increase the relevance of teacher education courses
- Integrating their school based and university based learning.

Teacher mentors are...
- providing preservice teachers with authoritative advice on professional practice
- contributing formal assessment of preservice teachers skills
- participating within explicit workload arrangements
- are participating within the framework of recognised roles and responsibilities

Teacher educators are...
- working in partnerships which are a formal component of the teacher education program
- ensuring that preservice teachers partnership activity is coherent and connected to teacher education via assessment practices which link partnership activity to units of study
- ensuring the prominence of discussions about assessment within the partnership

Educational leaders in university and school settings are...
- assigning responsibility for partnership coordination and leadership
- recognising the workload associated with teacher education partnerships
- recognising that partnership activity is a formal component of teacher education coursework
- ensuring that partnership activity is contained in teachers education programs throughout the course
- funding research and development projects that support partnerships
- recognising that partnership activity contributes to measurable research outputs
- seeing partnerships as small scale activities in which dedicated teachers and teacher educators are working on mutually agreed and carefully defined projects

mutuality

trust

reciprocity

The Education and Learning Collaborative: a Teaching Australia sponsored and coordinated partnership consortium

In imagining Teaching Australia as the sponsoring and coordinating body responsible for the National Teacher Education Partnership Fund, the VU research team makes the assumption that the form of partnerships to be supported by the Fund is that which this research has identified. Partnerships to be funded will be those which are characterised by trust, mutuality and reciprocity among the stakeholders, resulting from their commitment that the focus of their participation is the learning of all stakeholders, but most importantly school student learning.

An assumption that the VU team also makes is that Teaching Australia will recognise that the 'consortium' which manages the Fund will itself work as a partnership among the stakeholders. In the last twenty years, examples of Australian projects and networks can be used as starting points for thinking through the form of the consortium. Those examples provide some organisational structures and processes to be emulated but also others to be avoided.

In entitling the consortium to manage the National Teacher Education Partnership Fund the 'Education and Learning Collaborative', the VU research team is hoping to create the expectation the initiative is a bringing together of local stakeholders in partnerships within a flexible national coordinating framework. It is a distinctively Australian approach to partnerships.

Two initial enabling prompts appear to be essential if the local partnership / national coordination approach is to be developed. The first is that local partnerships should be accorded the authority to inquire into their own practices and achievements. The VU research team proposes that Figure 4.1 can be the basis for a loosely structured self-evaluation by local partnerships as they proceed to make a claim to be considered for inclusion in the Education and Learning Collaborative and to receive financial incentives from the Partnership Fund. That self-evaluation will be included in the second stimulus for the strengthening of partnerships in Australia: a methodology by which by which Teaching Australia can provide the conceptual resources to support partnerships.

Where to from here? A methodology for the evaluation and development of university-school partnerships

Figure 4.2 presents the methodology proposed for Teaching Australia to initiate the Education and Learning Collaborative and the National Teacher Education Partnership Fund. The methodology expresses the nature of effective and sustainable partnerships as established in this project. It defines the work of the Collaborative as supporting the self-evaluation and development of partnerships and emphasises that research, especially practitioner research, will be critically important in the work of the Collaborative. Finally the methodology will provide authentic and congenial 'tools' by which partnership stakeholders can work together to translate their local efforts into a credible and nationally significant claim for funding from the Partnership Fund.

Attachments to Chapter 4 accompanying Figure 4.2 present the partnership inquiry tools proposed by the VU team. The Chapter concludes with a speculative discussion on the ways in which school system authorities can become active participants in partnerships and directly share in their benefits.

Where to from here?

Effective and Sustainable partnerships are...

FOCUSED ON LEARNING
- School student learning is central
- Everyone is learning

Built through ALTERED RELATIONSHIPS
- preservice teachers and school students
- preservice teachers and their mentors
- preservice teachers and their peers
- preservice teachers and teacher educators
- mentor teachers and teacher educators

Supported by ENABLING STRUCTURES including the extent to which:
- the partnership is a formal component of university coursework
- preservice teachers assessment bridges the school- university
- participation is recognised in the workload of all partners
- partnership opportunities are identified, supported and coordinated by educational leaders both in schools and universities
- the focus of the partnership is connected to agreed school need

SUSTAINED by
- personal and professional contributions
- communication about shared concerns
- institutional resources

Effective and Sustainable partnerships are supported by and generate trust, mutuality and reciprocity to produce change.

given this new knowledge

Teaching Australia's responsibilities include...

establishing an
Education and Learning Collaborative
committed to

seeking funding to support
the development of existing university-school partnerships
and the establishment of new university-school partnerships

sponsoring ongoing research and development
related to
school students' learning,
preservice teachers' learning and
university-school partnerships

expanding the scope of research to include
a focus on learning for
beginning teachers
teacher mentors
principals
teacher educators

facilitating communication between
governments, universities and professional organisations
to develop policies and program initiatives

resulting in a significant commitment
over time to educational innovation

in the interests of improved outcomes for school students,
...

using new resources

Supporting a program for change and improvement in university-school partnerships

A summary
The summary will highlight the research findings and will contribute to multiple purposes including: briefing , press releases, publicity in professional publications and in future research projects.

A set of indicators of effective and sustainable partnership
These will be used to examine the nature of participation by looking at activities by role: preservice teacher, teacher mentor, teacher educator and educational leaders in schools and universities.

Questions for exploring the dimensions of practice in partnerships
These questions, grouped according to the three identified dimensions of partnership practice, begin with a set of key questions then move to questions that focus on the different kinds of partners. These questions might be used in a range of situations to evaluate existing partnerships or assess proposals for new partnerships initiatives.

Planning for partnership development
The findings of this study might also be used for shaping and planning for partnership development.

Action prompts
Having decided to work towards improving practice this resource provides practitioners with a set of prompts that might be useful to establish goals or find a focus or target for improvement.

Each of the resources would also be useful in planning for further research and working towards the development of new policies and programs.
...

Supporting a program for change and improvement in university school partnerships

The resources listed in Figure 4.2 for the strengthening of partnerships might be elaborated in the following set of useful inquiry aids. The resources draw on the extensive set of partnership characteristics set out in Figure 4.1. The attachments referred to in the summary below follow the conclusion of this chapter.

A summary highlighting the research findings

Attachment 1 provides a summary of research findings. This document might be used for a number of purposes:

- As a briefing paper for Teaching Australia, for government briefings, for professional organisations
- For press release
- For professional publications
- As a prompt for expressions of interest for funding
- As a foundation document for funding submissions

Indicators of partnership activity

The understandings about effective and sustainable university-school partnerships that have been gained from this study can be used in the process of assessing new or existing partnerships.

Attachment 2 provides a worksheet that is divided by dimension and includes a set of indicators for each person/role in the partnership. The worksheet might be used to examine the nature of participation by looking at partnership activities by position: preservice teacher, teacher mentor, teacher educator and educational leaders in schools and universities.

Questions for exploring the dimensions of practice in partnerships

Attachment 3 provides a series of questions grouped according to the three identified dimensions of partnership practice:

- a focus on learning which is sustained by personal and professional contributions
- altered relationship practices which are sustained by communication about shared concerns
- new enabling structures that are sustained by institutional resources.

Each of the three sections begins with a set of key or overarching questions followed by more questions that focus on the different partner types. Depending on the task at hand, one or more groups of questions might be used.

These questions might be used in a range of situations to evaluate existing partnerships or assess proposals for new partnerships initiatives.

Planning for partnership development

The findings of this study can also be used for shaping and planning for partnership development.

The first step would be to consider and assess the current practices. Attachment 2 or three might be useful at this stage.

The second step would be to identify local questions. Attachment 3 might be useful as a prompt during this stage.

Based on the assessment and identification steps the third step would be to consider possibilities for development. Attachment 4 provides a set of prompts that might be useful at this planning stage to establish goals or establish a focus or target for improvement.

The place of school systems in effective and sustainable university-school partnerships

Without concerted system and national support, university-school partnerships in Australia will continue to be what they are now: mostly localised with uncertain benefits and with problematic futures. While the National Teacher Education Partnership Fund will initiate substantial expansion of partnerships in preservice teacher education, it will be limited in its impact, even with a $20m per annum budget. Any national re-generation of teacher education will require the kind of finance and policy settings as proposed in 'Top of the Class': increases in the underlying funding of teacher education and an enabling national framework for the development and accreditation of teacher courses which takes into account local priorities. But these advances, too, will have limited effects without explicit and ongoing system involvement.

The university teacher education faculty appears in 'Top of the Class' and similar documents as the 'problem' in teacher education. This current research, however, has shown that the provision of conditions for active school and teacher participation is just as much a constraint on the formation of effective and sustainable partnerships. Finding a formal means for teachers to take on mentoring of preservice teachers and other kinds of partnership activity, within their assigned normal hours work duties, is a critical necessity in the positive reception of the partnership possibility by schools. Two consequences follow:

- that school systems provide schools with additional staffing allotments for teachers' formal partnership participation
- that schools and school systems discern a substantial benefit from this additional funding demand.

The near-to-complete absence of school systems in this research, together with the obvious need for their participation in partnerships, demands a speculation on the benefits that they might derive and the resources they would bring to the university-school educational relationship. Using the Chapter 3 framework for the characterisation of university-school partnerships, likely system related effects and resources are summarised in the following lists.

System related effects

Focus on learning
In addition to the entry of highly qualified graduates to the teaching profession, university-school partnerships have the potential to enhance school learning outcomes through the partnerships' focus on student learning. The mentoring of preservice teachers undertaken by school teachers has substantial professional development potential for teachers, too.

Altered relationship practices

Working in teams with preservice teachers and teacher educators on issues related to school learning priorities will encourage teachers to take on research and reflective inquiry into their classroom practices, contributing to practitioner-driven improvements in curriculum and pedagogical settings in schools.

Enabling structures

Effective and sustainable partnerships will lead school systems to have a direct relationship with teacher education faculties. The teacher education curriculum and pedagogical practices, caricatured often as expressing a theory-practice separation, would become connected to system and school priorities and strategies.

System resources and investments

Personal and professional resources

System curriculum leaders and developers are highly capable and many already will have deep and lasting involvement with university education faculties, including through joint research projects. The advanced professional understanding and expertise possessed by system curriculum leaders, as well as their awareness of system priorities, will confer great significance on their participation in university-school partnerships.

Shared language

Communication across school, system and university domains will contribute substantially to the dissolution of the most insidious critique of teacher education: that it is characterised by disconnections from authentic practice in schools and is staffed by out-of-touch academics. System contributions to the professional language of partnership practice, especially around the learning of school students, will be an important investment in the development of coherent school and university experiences for preservice teachers and the other stakeholders too.

Institutional resources

For university-school partnerships to be effective and sustainable, systems will need to make financial and equivalent investments in the workload provisions for participating teachers. The requirement may not need to be massive: equivalent to no more than one or two days per week for a senior teacher in each school, in addition to existing practicum payments. Inscribing the partnership with resourceful system authority would be an emphatic boost to partnership sustainability.

A less institutionalised space: final reflection

Proposals for direct system participation in university-school partnerships are likely to be contentious. As expressed in this research, the open negotiation which characterises university-school partnerships formed through collegial inquiry into and reflection on the personal and local challenges confronting stakeholders may be at odds with perceptions of system emphases on surveillance, control and accountability. University colleagues may also express concern about the weakening of the university teacher educators' independence and sense of academic freedom.

In response, the VU project team suggests that there have been many local, statewide and national partnerships in which systems have worked closely and productively with university and school teams. Those relationships were in evidence on a continuing basis in this research. The VU research team also notes that 'Top of the Class' recommended national approaches to

the accreditation of teacher education programs. Better, the VU team calculates, that systems be drawn into the formation of the partnerships which national accreditation expectations are likely to require, than to be outside the partnership space and neither contributing to nor benefiting from its opportunities.

Partnerships construct uncertainly structured and less institutionalised settings for preservice teachers, teachers and teacher educators to work together on matters of mutual interest as local communities of inquiry. The challenge for the imagined Education and Learning Collaborative is to ensure that national coordination and system involvement will encourage local initiative and participation. In this way, the Collaborative will not only be an instrument of educational policy. It will also be a model by which the national initiatives on social inclusion can be interactively informed by local practices.

Cross institutional agreement is one of the fundamental requirements for successful partnerships. Partnerships formed around collective dedication to learning, and school student learning in particular will encourage stakeholders to find ways to align their interests, expertise and resources in a spirit of trust, mutuality and reciprocity. Those characteristics are also essential ingredients in participants from different institutional settings in working together.

Effective and sustainable partnerships in teacher education are characterised by enabling institutional supports which inspire the determined commitment of the stakeholders to school students and their learning. Finding those supports will initiate substantial changes in university teacher education and in the relationships between preservice teachers, teachers and teacher educators. In the spirit of partnership, this report avoids specification of the form of any structural change which universities, schools and school systems might need to undertake if partnerships are to be generalised throughout Australian teacher education. But change there would be!

Attachment 1: Briefing notes

Achieving effective and sustainable university-school partnerships that support school student learning and preservice teacher education

Effective and Sustainable partnerships are...

Focused on LEARNING
- School student learning is central
- Everyone is learning

Built through ALTERED RELATIONSHIPS
- preservice teachers and school students
- preservice teachers and their mentors
- preservice teachers and their peers
- preservice teachers and teacher educators
- mentor teachers and teacher educators

Supported by ENABLING STRUCTURES including the extent to which
- the partnership is a formal component of university coursework
- preservice teacher assessment tasks bridge the school - university divide
- participation is recognised in the workload of all partners
- partnership opportunities are identified, supported and coordinated by educational leaders both in schools and universities
- the focus of the partnership is connected to an agreed school need

SUSTAINED by
- personal and professional contributions
- communication about shared concerns
- institutional resources

Effective and Sustainable partnerships are supported by and generate trust, mutuality and reciprocity to produce change.

Attachment 2: Indicators of partnership participation

Preservice teachers	Some indicators	Comments
Are focused on learning sustained by personal and professional contributions	working on projects to enhance school student learning accepting responsibility for school student learning learning about student learning and articulating their developing understanding and skills as teachers demonstrating professional commitment and motivation	
Are engaged in altered relationship practices that are sustained by communication about shared concerns	exploring the broad curriculum and pedagogical scope of teachers' work working both individually and in school-based collaborative professional learning teams developing collegial relationships with mentors building learning relationships with school students	
Are creating/participating in new enabling structures that are sustained by institutional resources	working in classrooms and then using this currency to increase the relevance of teacher education courses integrating their school-based and university based learning	

Mentor teachers	Some indicators	Comments
Are focused on learning sustained by personal and professional contributions	facilitating preservice teacher contributions to student learning learning to articulate their professional knowledge modelling exemplary practices providing support and guidance to preservice teachers	
Are engaged in altered relationship practices that are sustained by communication about shared concerns	planning, reviewing and reflecting on preservice teacher practice in addressing agreed school student learning need responding to preservice teacher learning needs developing a common language with preservice teachers focused on student learning and connected to their respective institutional settings articulating a justification for partnership using educational theories consistent with partnership practice	
Are relating/participating in new enabling structures that are sustained by institutional resources	providing preservice teachers with authoritative advice on professional practice contributing formal assessment of preservice teacher skills participating in partnership activity within explicit workload arrangements are participating in partnerships within the framework of recognised roles and responsibilities	

Teacher educators	Some indicators	Comments
Are focused on learning sustained by personal and professional contributions	incorporating authentic classroom concerns in the formal university program and in teacher educator planning improving their practice through involvement with teachers and preservice teachers in current curriculum challenges	
Are engaged in altered	collaboratively inducting the preservice teacher into	

relationship practices that are sustained by communication about shared concerns	partnership practices and goals collaboratively setting the conditions for action for preservice teacher work collaboratively orienting preservice teachers to school expectations providing opportunities for reflection on practice moving discussions from planning and implementation issues to theoretical, intellectual and holistic dialogue	
Are creating or participating in new enabling structures that are sustained by institutional resources	working in partnerships which are a formal component of the teacher education program ensuring that preservice teacher partnership activity is coherent and connected to teacher education via assessment practices which link partnership activity to units of study ensuring the prominence of discussions about assessment within the partnership	

Educational leaders in schools	Some indicators	Comments
Are focused on learning sustained by personal and professional contributions	linking preservice teachers' skills and interests with opportunities to enhance school student learning in line with school identified needs	
Are engaged in altered relationship practices that are sustained by communication about shared concerns	participating in discussions about the purpose of the partnership and the practices to be encouraged promoting partnerships as a type of professional learning and a direct contribution to student learning committing to the partnership for an extended period of time	
Are creating or participating in new enabling structures that are sustained by institutional resources	assigning responsibility for partnership coordination and leadership recognising the workload associated with teacher education partnerships seeking funding that supports partnerships recognising that partnership activity can contribute to measurable research outputs seeing partnerships as activities in which dedicated teachers and teacher educators are working on mutually agreed and carefully defined projects	

Educational leaders in universities	Some indicators	Comments
Are focused on learning sustained by personal and professional contributions	supporting the linking of preservice teachers' skills and interests to opportunities to enhance school student learning in line with school identified needs	
Are engaged in altered relationship practices	participating in discussions about the purpose of partnership and practices to be encouraged	

that are sustained by communication about shared concerns	promoting partnerships as a type of professional learning and a direct contribution to student learning committing to the partnership over an extended period of time	74
Are creating or participating in new enabling structures that are sustained by institutional resources	assigning responsibility for partnership coordination and leadership recognising the workload associated with teacher education partnerships recognising that partnership activity is a formal component of teacher education coursework ensuring that partnership activity is contained in teacher education programs throughout the course. funding research and development projects that support partnerships recognising that partnership activity can contribute to measurable research outputs seeing partnerships as activities in which dedicated teachers and teacher educators are working on mutually agreed and carefully defined projects	

Attachment 3: Considering partnerships

Assessing partnerships: A focus on learning?

Key questions

Is there a focus on school student learning?
Is there a focus on learning for all participants?
Is the partnership sustained by personal contributions?
Is the partnership sustained by professional contributions?
Is there evidence of trust, mutual benefit and reciprocity?

Questions that focus on preservice teacher activity

Are preservice teachers working on projects to enhance school student learning?
Are preservice teachers accepting responsibility for school student learning?
Are preservice teachers learning about student learning and articulating their developing understanding and skills as teachers?
Are preservice teachers demonstrating professional commitment and motivation?

Questions that focus on mentor teacher activity

Are mentor teachers facilitating preservice teacher contributions to student learning?
Are mentor teachers learning to articulate their professional knowledge?
Are mentor teachers modelling exemplary practices?
Are mentor teachers providing support and guidance to preservice teachers?

Questions that focus on teacher educator activity

Are teacher educators focussing on authentic classroom concerns included in the formal university program and in teacher educator planning?
Are teacher educators improving their practice through involvement with preservice teachers in current curriculum challenges?

Questions that focus on school leadership

Are school leaders ensuring a school defined and supported contribution by preservice teachers towards the school's curriculum and teaching priorities?
Are school leaders linking preservice teachers to opportunities that will enhance school student learning in line with school identified needs?
Are school leaders linking school needs with preservice teacher skills and interests?

Questions that focus on university leadership

Are university leaders ensuring a contribution by preservice teachers towards the school's curriculum and teaching priorities?
Are university leaders linking preservice teachers to opportunities that will enhance school student learning in line with school identified needs?
Are university leaders linking school needs with preservice teacher skills and interests?

Considering partnerships: Altered relationships?

Key questions

Is there a focus on school student learning?
Is there a focus on altered relationships?
Is the partnership sustained by communication about shared concerns?
Is there evidence of trust, mutual benefit and reciprocity?

Questions that focus on preservice teacher activity

Are preservice teachers building learning relationships with students?
Are preservice teachers exploring the broad curriculum and pedagogical scope of teachers' work?
Are preservice teachers working both individually and in school-based collaborative professional learning teams?
Are preservice teachers developing collegial relationships with mentors?

Questions that focus on mentor teacher activity

Are mentor teachers planning, reviewing and reflecting on preservice teacher practice in addressing agreed school student learning need?
Are mentor teachers responding to preservice teacher learning needs?
Are mentor teachers sharing a common language with preservice teachers focused on student learning and connected to their respective institutional settings?
Are mentor teachers articulating a justification for partnership using educational theories consistent with partnership practice?

Questions that focus on teacher educator activity

Are teacher educators inducting the preservice teacher into partnership practices and goals?
Are teacher educators setting the conditions for action for preservice teacher work?
Are teacher educators orienting preservice teachers to school expectations?
Are teacher educators providing opportunities for reflection on practice?
Are teacher educators moving discussions from planning and implementation issues to theoretical, intellectual and holistic dialogue?

Questions that focus on school leadership

Are school leaders promoting partnerships as a type of professional learning that makes a direct contribution to student learning?
Are school leaders participating in discussions about the purpose of partnerships and the practices to be encouraged?
Are school leaders committing to the partnership over an extended period of time?

Questions that focus on university leadership

Are university leaders participating in discussions about the purpose of partnerships and the practices to be encouraged?
Are university leaders promoting partnerships as a type of professional learning that makes a direct contribution to student learning?
Are university leaders committing to the partnership over an extended period of time?

Considering partnerships: Enabling structures?

Key questions

Is there a focus on school student learning?
Is there a focus on enabling structures?
Is the partnership sustained by institutional resources?
Is there evidence of trust, mutual benefit and reciprocity?

Questions that focus on preservice teacher activity

Are preservice teachers valuing mentors, teacher educators and all other people in the partnership?
Are preservice teachers working in classrooms and then bringing this currency into the university setting to increase the relevance of teacher education courses?

Questions that focus on mentor teacher activity

Are mentor teachers valuing preservice teachers, teacher educators and others?
Are mentor teachers providing preservice teachers with authoritative advice on practice?
Are mentor teachers contributing to the formal assessment of preservice teacher skills?
Are mentor teachers participating within explicit workload arrangements?
Are mentor teachers participating within a framework of recognised roles and responsibilities?

Questions that focus on teacher educator activity

Are teacher educators valuing preservice teachers, mentors and all others?
Are teacher educators working in partnerships which are a formal component of the teacher education program?
Are teacher educators ensuring that preservice teacher partnership activity is coherent and connected to teacher education via assessment practices which link partnership activity to units of study?
Are teacher educators ensuring the prominence of discussions about assessment within the partnership?

Questions that focus on school and university leaders

Are the school and university leaders valuing mentors, preservice teachers, teacher educators and all other people in the partnership?
Are the school and university leaders assigning responsibility for partnership coordination and leadership?
Are the school and university leaders recognising the workload associated with teacher education partnerships?
Are the school and university leaders recognising that partnership activity is a formal component of teacher education coursework?
Are the school and university leaders organising partnerships integrated into teacher education courses?
Are the school and university leaders ensuring that partnership activity is contained in teacher education programs throughout the course?
Are the school and university leaders funding research & development to support partnerships?
Are the school and university leaders recognising that partnership activity contributes to measurable research outputs?
Are the school and university leaders seeing partnerships as small scale activities in which dedicated teachers and teacher educators are working on mutually agreed projects?

Attachment 4: Action for partnership improvement

Taking action by focusing on learning

These prompts are based in a belief that effective and sustainable partnerships are focused on learning and sustained by personal and professional contributions.

Possibilities for focusing on learning	Notes
Working collaboratively ■ on projects to enhance school student learning Learning ■ about student learning and finding ways to articulate developing understanding and skills as teachers ■ to articulate professional knowledge Modelling ■ exemplary practices Finding ways to: ■ take responsibility for school student learning ■ demonstrate professional commitment and motivation Facilitating ■ preservice teacher contributions to student learning Providing ■ support and guidance Focusing ■ on authentic classroom concerns included in the formal university program improving ■ practice through involvement with preservice teachers in current curriculum challenges Ensuring ■ a school defined and supported contribution by preservice teachers to a component of the school's curriculum and teaching priorities ■ Linking ■ linking preservice teachers to school student learning in line with school identified needs ■ linking school needs with preservice teacher skills and interests	

Taking action by focusing on relationships

These prompts are based in a belief that effective and sustainable partnerships are built through and in altered relationship practices that are sustained by communication about shared concerns.

Possibilities for focusing on learning	Notes
Exploring - the broad curriculum and pedagogical scope of teachers' work - the conditions of action for preservice teacher work Working - individually and in school-based collaborative professional learning teams - through a process of planning, reviewing and reflecting on preservice teacher practice in addressing agreed school student learning need - to move discussions from planning and implementation issues to theoretical, intellectual and holistic dialogue Developing - collegial relationships with mentors - learning relationships with students Responding - responding to preservice teacher learning needs Sharing - sharing a common language with preservice teachers focused on student learning and connected to their respective institutional settings Articulating - articulating a justification for partnership using educational theories consistent with partnership practice Inducting - inducting the preservice teacher into partnership practices and goals Orienting - preservice teachers to school expectations Providing - opportunities for reflection on practice Participating - in discussions about the purpose and practices of partnership Promoting - partnerships as a type of professional learning and a direct contribution to student learning	

Taking action by focusing on enabling structures

These prompts are based in a belief that effective and sustainable partnerships involve creating and participating in new enabling structures that are sustained by institutional resources.

Possibilities for focusing on learning	Notes
Valuing ■ school students, preservice teachers, mentors, teacher educators, educational leaders and all other people in the partnership Working ■ in classrooms and then bringing this currency to increase the relevance of teacher education courses ■ in partnerships which are a formal component of the teacher education program Providing ■ preservice teachers with authoritative advice on professional practice Contributing ■ formal assessment of preservice teacher skills Participating ■ within explicit workload arrangements ■ within the framework of recognised roles and responsibilities Ensuring ■ that preservice teacher partnership activity is coherent and connected to teacher education via assessment practices which link partnership activity to units of study ■ the prominence of discussions about assessment within the partnership ■ that partnership activity is contained in teacher education programs at every year level ■ that partnership activity is formalised in electives Funding ■ funding research and development projects that support partnerships Assigning ■ responsibility for partnership coordination and leadership Recognising ■ the workload associated with teacher education partnerships ■ that partnership activity is a formal component of coursework ■ that partnership activity can contribute to measurable research outputs ■ partnerships are small scale activities in which dedicated teachers and teacher educators are working on mutually agreed and carefully defined projects Organising ■ partnership activity in teacher education programs throughout the course.	

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