

**The Evaluation of the UCLA/ Lynwood USD
Educational Relationship**

Eric Barela

Occasional Report #13

Outreach Evaluation

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Graduate School of Education & Information Studies
UCLA

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Introduction

Currently UCLA maintains a partnership with the Lynwood Unified School District (LUSD) for outreach purposes¹. This partnership was established due to a high “under represented” minority population coupled with low admission rates to the University of California system. The partnership focuses on helping to achieve systemic change at the school and district levels in a way that gives all students the opportunity to prepare for college. The goal of the partnership is to foster the six conditions that UCLA has deemed essential for achieving long-term systemic change. These conditions are: 1) creating a college-going culture; 2) creating a multicultural, college-going identity; 3) nurturing high-quality teaching; 4) creating a rigorous academic curriculum; 5) providing intensive academic and college-going support; and 6) fostering improved parent/community relations with schools and districts. A more detailed description of the six conditions can be found in Appendix A.

The purpose of this report is to examine and attempt to explain patterns of behavior, that have existed and continue to exist, in the partnership between UCLA and the Lynwood Unified School District. The partnership has been maintained in its current form since Fall 2000. Prior to its current incarnation, UCLA’s Center X and the UCLA Mathematics Project had maintained partnership relationships with the district from 1996. Since that time, there have been several

¹ Partnerships have also been maintained in the Inglewood Unified School District and in several schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

major changes to the staff and the goals of the partnership. Despite these changes, the partnership has continued to flourish.

This case study attempts to answer the following questions:

- *How were UCLA and Lynwood able to maintain the partnership over the years?*
- *What are the benefits of maintaining the partnership for both Lynwood and UCLA?*
- *What are some of the barriers to partnership implementation and how have UCLA and Lynwood staff handled them?*
- *In this time of budget cutbacks, what is the future of the UCLA/Lynwood partnership?*

These questions will be answered as they relate to three different time periods within the span of the partnership: (1) the UCLA/Lynwood partnership as run by Center X and the UCLA Mathematics Project; (2) the UCLA/Lynwood partnership as currently run by UCLA School-University Partnership (SUP) personnel; and (3) the future state of the UCLA/Lynwood partnership. While conducting this case study, it became necessary to divide the evolution of the partnership into these three blocks because within each block there were events that required the partnership to change both its staff and its goals.

Data Collection

Data was collected in this case study through observations of current SUP activities and meetings, as well as, interviews with key people involved in the formation of the partnership within each time frame. The following observations took place between April 25 and June 7, 2002:

- Lynwood Coordination of Partnership Activities (COPA) meeting at the LUSD district office with SUP staff, LUSD district staff, and LUSD principals
- A meeting to discuss summer school assignments at the LUSD district office with an SUP staff member and two LUSD district staff members
- An “Unpacking the Standards” meeting with an SUP staff member, four LUSD district staff members, and LUSD elementary school principals
 - The implementation of a “Focus Walk” at an LUSD school with an SUP staff member, three UCLA staff members and two subject matter coaches, two LUSD district staff, and three LUSD teachers
- The debriefing of a Focus Walk at a different LUSD school with a SUP staff member, two UCLA staff members and two subject matter coaches, two LUSD district staff, two LUSD principals, and eighteen LUSD teachers
- A “Learning Celebration” recognizing the achievements of the new (first and second-year) Lynwood High School teachers attended by three SUP staff members, three other UCLA staff members and subject matter coaches, four LUSD district staff members, five experienced Lynwood High School teachers, and twenty new Lynwood High School teachers

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These observations were of current SUP activities in Lynwood and are discussed in detail in the section of this report concerning the current shape of the partnership.

Four people were interviewed for each phase of the Lynwood partnership. For the Center X and UCLA Mathematics Project portion, four UCLA staff members intimately involved with

the formation of the partnership were interviewed. LUSD staff involved with the partnership at that time who were willing to be interviewed could not be found. For the current state of the partnership, four interviews were conducted. I interviewed both SUP partnership coordinators, the SUP staff member working in Lynwood on a daily basis, and the LUSD district staff member most responsible for the implementation of the SUP activities. The protocols for each type of interview can be found in Appendix B. The four interviewees, the individuals most responsible for the daily running of SUP activities, were interviewed with regards to the future of the partnership. Their information became valuable in determining the benefits and barriers of partnership implementation. Due to time constraints, it was necessary to limit interviews to four per each of the three noted time frames and to stop pursuing additional LUSD staff members who indicated that they were unavailable until a period beyond the timeline set for preparation of this report.

Center X Partnership

The prior history segment of this case study examines how the UCLA/Lynwood partnership was formed and how it was run by Center X and the UCLA Mathematics Project. Their work formed the foundation for current SUP work. Had it not been for the work done by these two groups prior to the formation of the SUP, the UCLA/Lynwood partnership may not have lasted as long as it has.

The partnership created in Lynwood through the UCLA Mathematics project, housed in Center X, was established in 1996. Funds were given to UCLA through the Elementary Mathematics Initiative (EMI) in order to improve elementary student math performance and the

teaching of mathematics. UCLA had been working with Lynwood before this and, with the help of the superintendent at the time, decided to use the noted funds in Lynwood. (The former superintendent was unavailable for an interview.) Lynwood was chosen to receive the funds and training because they had established a long term relationship with UCLA which started in the 1980's. However, it had been dormant until 1996. They had also demonstrated a willingness to accept professional development from outside sources. A UCLA staff member said, "You take a look at all the work we had done in Lynwood before the partnership money became available. Lynwood put up all their money; they paid for all the services."

The goal of the partnership headed by Center X was to provide professional development to the teachers in all subjects, but particularly in math and reading. A UCLA staff member said, "early on in the partnership, that focus really was on working with teachers around practice and a lot of the work we did was directly connected to teachers with the goal in mind that this is a place where the partnership was working as much on the long-term goal as the short-term." The long-term goal being referred to is systemic change at the district and school levels, while the short-term goal refers to making more students eligible for UC admission. While all informants stressed the importance of working towards increased student achievement, the professional development of teachers was the preferred way of heightening this achievement. Professional development occurred at the elementary and middle schools. UCLA staff had developed long-standing relationships with LUSD district staff and principals. On the other hand, it was difficult for UCLA to get into Lynwood High School due to personnel changes that had occurred. "We could not get in the front door at the high school, and we struggled. They had a series of

principals that didn't do well." Some of the new high school personnel either did not want to work with UCLA or were not aware that their predecessors had established relationships with Center X.

The main barrier for the partnership was personnel changes and high teacher turnover rates at all schools. UCLA staff would establish relationships with key district and school personnel, only to have them leave after a year. Most of the professional development given to the district came in the form of ongoing training. It was difficult to implement this training when typically most of the cohort of new teachers would leave the district after one year. One informant said, "We would work with a group of teachers that we thought were moving forward and we would look forward to seeing them again and they were usually gone. So every year it felt like we were trying to develop leadership and every year we were starting over with a new group."

Another major barrier for the UCLA/Lynwood partnership at this time was a specific personnel change that occurred at the district level. During the beginning of 1999, the former superintendent so committed to UCLA's efforts was fired. An interim superintendent was hired along with several new deputy superintendents. One of these deputy superintendents was responsible for coordinating partnership activities in LUSD. This individual wanted to make sure that the district always knew what UCLA was doing. This was both a benefit and a barrier for the implementation of partnership activities. For the first time, someone was requiring an indicator of success for the partnership. This deputy superintendent required monthly reports on student and teacher progress. One informant said, "And all of a sudden [the deputy

superintendent was] asking us really hard questions, which were right, about where is this indicator and where is your data and how do you know all this?” When this partnership was initially established, there were no indicators for partnership success. With the personnel change in 1999, there was then someone who required UCLA be held accountable.

This deputy superintendent also did not like UCLA’s activities and started to request schools to develop reform models based on programs other than those created by UCLA. Whether this was simply a case of a new administrator wanting to establish his or her own programs, or whether there were serious educational reservations about the program we do not know. During the summer of 1999, LUSD district personnel developed a new action plan for the district. UCLA staff members were not asked to provide input. However, UCLA was included in the budget for the plan. The partnership was expected to pay for part of the action plan. Until then, SUP staff members were involved in the planning of partnership activities. They sat on advisory boards responsible for overseeing the activities. After this personnel change, SUP staff was all but barred from that process. It became impossible for partnership staff to work with schools when going through district channels. Some staff tried to work directly with the schools. At the same time as the competing reform models were being developed, many teachers believed that UCLA was taking away their hard-earned money away from them, although the partnership was actually providing funds. One informant recalls, “There were times when teachers were picketing for raises and if we tried to walk into the campus they blamed us for not getting their raise because they thought that the district must be paying a whole lot of money to get UCLA people in here.”

During the Center X partnership, LUSD also had a relationship with The Education Trust. This organization provided professional development alongside UCLA. During the Center X partnership, UCLA initiated contact with The Education Trust and much of the money used to fund this relationship came from UCLA. Many school principals enjoyed the work done by The Education Trust. At the COPA meeting I observed, several principals asked that this particular relationship be revisited. Sometime during the Center X partnership, the ties with The Education Trust were severed when UCLA suggested that LUSD use its own money to sustain the relationship. This led to some resentment on the part of school personnel. UCLA was not seen as the sole provider of professional development. According to a principal who spoke with me after the COPA meeting, many school staff blamed UCLA for the dissolved relationship with The Education Trust. This is another reason why there was growing resentment between LUSD district staff, school staff, and UCLA staff.

The one bright spot for the Lynwood-based UCLA partnership staff was the support they received from UCLA personnel. One informant said, “When we mentioned we could use their help, they came to the district. It felt like we did have a place to at least get some support in terms of frustrations, in terms of problems.” When discussing how UCLA supported partnership work, another respondent said, “It’s like if they can’t come to us, we’ll come to them. And that was really a wonderful process to see because they really did care.” While LUSD personnel were restricting access to schools, UCLA staff members were providing partnership staff with a place to go for support and help.

In 1998, as a response to Proposition 209, funds were made available by the University of California Office of the President (UCOP) specifically for outreach purposes. Since the Center X partnership was already established in Lynwood where there was a superintendent who supported all of UCLA's efforts in the district, it became natural to create the first incarnation of the UCLA/Lynwood SUP. In its initial form, UCLA did not utilize the six conditions to develop partnership activities because they had not yet created. In its present form, the six conditions are being used as a guideline for activity development by UCLA and LUSD staff.

By the middle of 2000, UCLA was having trouble maintaining the partnership in Lynwood. While the main focus of partnership activities was still to improve professional development, district personnel were restricting access to schools. As one UCLA informant said, "we went from being loved to being in the way." When access was given, teachers and principals did not necessarily warmly welcome UCLA. Further, there were few indicators of success either from UCLA or from Lynwood. At this time, both the interim superintendent and deputy superintendent left the district, to be replaced by yet another new superintendent in 2000 and a new deputy superintendent in 2001. This was also the time that new UCLA personnel were hired. A new partnership coordinator was hired in 2000 and a coach who would work in Lynwood was hired in 2001. Center X no longer controlled the partnership which was now under the auspices of the Outreach Executive Board directed by the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies Dean, Aimee Dorr, and Associate Vice Chancellor, Winston Doby.

Currently under the guidance of the new partnership coordinator, the key objectives are the same as before: to increase student achievement and to improve teacher practice. However,

several informants also discussed an additional goal -- to correct some of the problems within the district that have hindered progress in the past. While this was an implied goal under the Center X partnership, it is now an explicit objective in the current SUP. Based on the problems between the LUSD and Center X partnership that have precipitated the reworking of the SUP, it became apparent that this objective needed to be explicit in order for UCLA to properly do its work.

We have the broader UC objectives which are to increase the number of UC eligible and UC competitive students. That's the long-term goal. But to get where we want to get to we have a number of both short- and long-term objectives. On the SUP side, we want to begin to develop a more systematic program that is focused on addressing some of the major impediments to student achievement in the district, some of the structural issues, professional development issues, creating a climate that's conducive to creating change in the district, aligning what the district does from the Board level down to what goes on in the classroom.

With the hiring of the new Associate Superintendent in 2001, LUSD has taken on a different role in the development of the SUP. When asked about how LUSD has helped in SUP development, the Associate Superintendent responded with:

Since I've come on board, what we've tried to do is really use the partnership as a vehicle to get into the classrooms, to begin to work with teachers, to work using a coaching model in order to develop leadership capacity amongst the teaching staff. If change is going to happen, it's going to happen at the school site. The district has the opportunity to facilitate that change, but the partnership should not stay at the district office. It really needs to get down into the classroom.

While this was the attitude of LUSD district staff at the very beginning of the Center X partnership, it was an attitude that had changed by the end of the Center X partnership (by the summer of 1999). By that time, UCLA staff was expected to function as a resource for district staff. They would ask UCLA for guidance about a particular activity and then district staff

would implement it. Thus, UCLA was effectively taken out of the schools. While I was unable to observe the Center X partnership, I was able to observe LUSD district staff participation in the current partnership. There was district staff present at every meeting or activity I observed and they were working in collaboration with SUP staff. The Associate Superintendent was herself often at these activities. District staff members are definitely taking an active role in the development of the partnership and the implementation of its activities alongside UCLA staff. At the end of the Center X partnership, there was a definite chain of command that had to be followed. UCLA was to consult with the district office and it became the responsibility of district staff to implement activities. The relationship was much more bureaucratic than it is under the direction of current SUP staff. In the current SUP, district staff plays an even more active role than previously in partnership activity implementation, but it is collaborative. The chain of command once present no longer exists. District staff and UCLA staff work alongside each other in the schools.

It is the district office's primary goal to take a proactive approach to the development of the partnership. The partnership coordinator and the SUP coach are becoming increasingly involved in district affairs. For instance, the SUP coach recently participated in a meeting with the Associate Superintendent regarding teacher assignments for summer school. Due to the sensitive nature of this meeting, I was not allowed to extend my observations to include the meeting. Nevertheless, the meeting is an example of SUP staff being integrated in district affairs. The partnership coordinator is a member of the current Superintendent's cabinet and she advises him on district-wide matters. LUSD has come to value the expertise of the partnership

coordinator and the SUP coach and this is displayed by their inclusion in deciding district matters.

The schools are not as proactive, but appear to go along with SUP activities. When asked about the role the schools are taking, the partnership coordinator said, “I think the principals understand the work. One of the broad goals is that there will be a knowledgeable instructional leader at each site. Just that alone says that the [schools are] beginning to understand the work that needs to happen. And each individual, whatever [their] position is, [must address] what role do [they] play in supporting student achievement? So I think the principals have embraced our work.”

There is an explicit way that district and school personnel communicate their needs to SUP staff. District personnel talk to the partnership coordinator while school personnel talk to the SUP coach. The partnership coordinator works with district staff and is familiar with their concerns. The SUP coach in turn spends most of her time at the schools and is familiar with their needs. The partnership coordinator and the SUP coach converse frequently to make sure they both know what is happening with all components of the partnership. The partnership coordinator and SUP coach work as a team. While they deal with different district personnel, they are aware of the range of issues. These explicit channels of communication, coupled with constant contact between UCLA staff members, is conducive to the successful maintenance of the SUP.

Both the partnership coordinator and the SUP coach noted that the key to the success of the partnership is maintaining a constant presence in the district. When asked how the

partnership has been successfully maintained at the school level, the SUP coach said, “because I am the partnership. In the minds of most people here I am UCLA, not even the partnership, I am UCLA, period. I think my presence all the time is necessary.” When asked a similar question about the success of the partnership at the district level, the partnership coordinator responded with, “The lesson learned was that you cannot have, in a partnership, you can’t have fragmentation. There has got to be a consistent message and a consistent collaborative group within the focus of the partnership.” Every observation and interview I conducted with the partnership coordinator and the SUP coach was in Lynwood. They are rarely present at UCLA – their work is in the district. Both of them told me about the late nights they attended basketball games, banquets and concerts to show support for district staff, teachers, and students. When they say that a constant presence is necessary for a successful partnership, they enforce this by ensuring they *are* a constant presence in Lynwood.

Through the observations, it has become apparent just how much of a presence both the partnership coordinator and SUP coach have in Lynwood. During one of the focus walks, a new teacher approached the SUP coach and asked about the timeline for reporting grades. This was a question for the school administration as the SUP coach pointed out. Despite this, the teacher continued to ask the SUP Coach questions about his concern. After the focus walk debriefing, several other teachers also spoke with the SUP coach. They voiced their professional development concerns and discussed their weekend plans for 90 minutes after the session had already concluded. At the Learning Celebration, the district staff members participated in the festivities which were actually run by SUP staff. At the “Unpacking the

Standards” seminar, several elementary school principals still wanted the SUP coach to come to their schools and individually work with their teachers. However, the seminar was originally intended to teach the principals how to develop curricula and assessments based on the standards which they themselves could teach to their teachers. One principal said, “I want you to come to my school because the teachers like you better than me and learn more from you than from me.”

There are several types of barriers that the current SUP faces. With the prior Center X partnership at the district level, there was a lack of understanding of what the partnership truly was. This lack of understanding that some district staff had continues today. Several informants said that there should be a mandatory training session with district staff regarding what the six conditions are and how they are used to guide partnership activities. Another informant said that some district staff members do not know why there is a partnership present in the first place; they are not aware of what the partnership does for the district. This is coupled with a lack of individual accountability at the district level that allows some district staff members to openly hinder partnership activities and goals. This barrier is being addressed in the current SUP which aims to ensure all district staff, at the very least, know what is occurring and that most of the staff are on board with what UCLA is trying to do.

A potential district-level barrier entails the changing demographics of Lynwood. The population has changed from predominantly African-American to predominantly Latino. The majority of those in power are African-American. This has created power struggles in the past, particularly under the Center X partnership. In the past several years, district staff and School Board members have come to reflect the changing demographics of the community.

More Latinos are being hired and elected to the school board. While ethnicity should not be a dominant element in terms of being able to effectively run a school district, it can create tensions. While the Center X informants raised this as an issue that needed to be addressed by the partnership, the SUP informants did not speak to this.

At the school level, a different barrier is encountered. The majority of the professional development goes to new teachers. Most established teachers do have the opportunity to participate in the programs, but there is a group of veteran teachers who steadfastly refuse to join in. An informant said, “we encounter resistance from [some] of the experienced teachers that have been here for years and seen [activities] come and go. Nothing is constant here except for groups coming and going so their attitude has been you too will pass, we’ve seen folks like you, you’ll go when you get tired of us, when you’re bored, when you find a better job, a different job, something else to do. I think that’s huge.” While the most important aspect of the professional development offered by SUP is to build the capacity of new teachers to retain their employment, *all* teachers need to be on board with professional development so all students can benefit from the work. The resistance of veteran teachers occurs at every school and the SUP is trying to demonstrate to them that UCLA is not going anywhere, but is in LUSD for the “long haul.”

At UCLA, the barrier encountered has been one of perception. The partnership coordinator and the SUP coach do not work at UCLA. They work in Lynwood. Some staff members who primarily work at UCLA have expressed the opinion that since the coordinator and coach do not work on campus, they must not be working. There appears to be a lack of

understanding on the part of some UCLA staff about what it means to work in the SUP. As one informant said, “People at UCLA do not understand [the situation] to a large enough degree; they need to spend time in the school district . . . There’s this perception that we don’t really work because we’re not there in the office.” This has not stopped the partnership coordinator and SUP coach from doing the necessary partnership work nor with addressing issues surrounding the future funding of the SUP. This may no longer be a concern starting next year.

Present School-University Partnership Activities

There are several activities I observed that focus on the professional development for new teachers – a primary goal of SUP. These activities involved SUP, district, and school staffs.

Focus Walk

Lauren Resnick from the University of Pittsburgh developed a procedure called “focus walk.” The focus walk procedure is intended to inform teacher practice based on observations of an entire group of teachers. Several staff members of UCLA’s School Management Program were trained in its implementation and they conducted the focus walk along with SUP staff at LUSD schools. A group of SUP staff, district staff, school administrators and new teachers developed a focus question prior to the activity. Participants attempted to answer this question by conducting spot observations in every new teacher’s classroom. Each participant observed a classroom for several minutes and joted down positive notes and potential changes as they related to the focus question. These comments had to be non-judgmental and had to address the question. Participants formed groups of three or four and traveled to each classroom together. After a spot observation, the group debriefed before going on to the next classroom.

After all classrooms were observed, participants met and determined common themes among the positive comments and the suggestions for change, remembering to be non-judgmental. At the end of the school day, all new teachers gathered to listen to the feedback provided by the participants. The new teachers were given time to respond to the comments and suggestions. The feedback was given to the teachers as a group. No individual teachers were singled out. This activity provided a way to address specific aspects of professional development in an environment free from punishment or humiliation. It was also a way for SUP and district staff to monitor teacher practices throughout the year. While the focus question changes for every focus walk, they are done throughout the year. New teachers are given consistent feedback throughout the year and are allowed to make progress as they see fit.

After viewing this activity, I was impressed with how well the teachers accepted the feedback and really tried to internalize it. They asked questions about how they can improve and if the focus walks would be done next year. Judging by the questions some of the teachers were asking, I was able to determine that quite a few of them plan to return to Lynwood next year.

“Unpacking the Standards” Workshop

This workshop targeted elementary school principals and was designed to teach them how to “unpack” curriculum standards. The unpacking process consisted of distilling the goals of the standard into a simple task and creating activities that specifically addressed the goals. From this unpacking, curricula and assessments could be designed. The SUP coach stressed the importance of letting the assessment drive the creation of the curriculum. A well-designed

assessment created from unpacking standards can lead to a well-designed curriculum with an assessment that tests what the curriculum ought to teach.

After the rationale was explained, participants were given the opportunity to practice what they learned. Due to time constraints, participants at the seminar I observed were unable to fully practice the unpacking process. Unpacking the standards is an important skill for principals and teachers to learn. While school staff could practice it on their own time, it would have been very beneficial for them to have been able to practice in front of an expert.

Particularly noted during the workshop was the extent to which meetings started late. Late-starting meetings were common in many other events as well. While all of my interviews started on time, none of my observations did. Several of my observations started at least 30 minutes late. This appears to be a problem in Lynwood and I do not know the extent to which it potentially hinders performance. Many people affiliated with the UCLA/Lynwood partnership have told me that “There’s the right way of doing something, the wrong way, and the Lynwood way.” The district should examine the issue of meeting start times to determine whether there are appropriate actions to be taken.

Learning Celebration

The final professional development session of the year for the new high school teachers was a banquet celebrating their success at completing their first or second year of teaching for Lynwood. SUP staff and district staff spoke to the accomplishments of the teachers and presented them with trophies, certificates, and books. At the beginning of the celebration, the partnership coordinator asked each person in attendance to give one word describing his or

her professional development experience in the past year. The following words were given out as responses:

pervasive, enjoyable, hungry, pride, satisfied demanding, cooperation, consistent, persistent, burdensome, happy, inspiring, friendship, support, respect, intense, fun, useful, practical, rewarding, exhaustive, appreciative, progressive, unity, grateful, productive, promiscuous, heartbreaking, trading, feastful, rich, active, discovery, heartening, joyous, passionate, continuity

These words speak to how new teachers, veteran teachers, district staff, and SUP staff viewed this past year's SUP professional development efforts. It also illustrates where most of the efforts have gone in terms of professional development.

Given Lynwood's problem with retaining teachers, one of the primary goals of the SUP is to keep new teachers and help them to build capacity. This will have a positive effect on the morale of teachers in the district as well as indirectly on the students they teach. Several of the veteran teachers spoke to the concern that these activities focused on new teachers. There were several different points of view. Some veteran teachers were unwilling to participate in UCLA-sponsored activities because they did not think the activities were worth their time. Others wanted to participate, but did not feel welcome since most of these professional development activities were for new teachers. The SUP staff addressed these concerns by calling on the district staff present to support them in expanding professional development efforts in the future to become more inclusive of all teachers.

In May 2002, the state of California asked the UC to cut \$162 million from its annual budget. Most of this cut was to come from outreach programs. The UCLA SUP activities (in Lynwood, Inglewood, and Los Angeles) are to receive no funding in 2002-2003. Starting as of next year, UCLA will no longer fund direct SUP work in Lynwood. Some supplementary support will be provided. However, the budget is not finalized and it is possible that some additional outreach funds could possibly be reinstated.

The reaction to the potential loss of UCLA funds for Lynwood, at both UCLA and in the LUSD district office, was shock. As one informant said, "I think everybody was expecting some kind of cut but the dramatic nature of the action, 100% of school-university partnership funds. And we knew that school-university partnership funds were not held in high regard by a lot of legislators, but we thought that we'd be able to continue some work." Even though this was the initial reaction, LUSD district staff did not see the need to let schools know about the budget cuts. The Associate Superintendent said, "We're trying to ensure that it doesn't impact kids. The teachers have everything they need to do their job and to do it well . . . I'm the chief warrior. You implement [and] let me worry about the money."

After this initial reaction, LUSD started asking what needed to be done to keep the partnership going. A UCLA SUP staff member said,

[LUSD is] pleased with the work that is going on and they want to maintain it. They feel they are making some movement. They really value [the partnership coordinator] and [the SUP coach] and all the other work that has been going on in the district. And so they pretty much committed to continue the work even without money from us.

Both the partnership coordinator and the SUP coach will be funded by LUSD for at least two more years and thus their work will temporarily be allowed to continue.

LUSD has decided to continue funding the SUP because they feel it is important. When asked about why Lynwood decided to take over funding of the partnership, the Associate Superintendent responded with:

We have momentum right now. I think we're moving in the direction that's really going to make a significant difference for students in the district and for how teaching and learning happen. I believe both personally and professionally that if we don't fund this partnership and we don't continue with the work that we've begun that we're going to take a giant step backwards. We're going to prove to the naysayers this too shall pass and we're not going to devastate those people who have put time and energy into really making the difference for kids. I could not look at myself in the mirror in the morning in my position as Associate Superintendent with major responsibilities for academic services knowing that I didn't do everything possible to ensure that each and every kid has a quality education in this district.

Other reasons given for LUSD's decision to pick up SUP funding were: a notion of respect for the process UCLA started and LUSD has continued in regard to student achievement and professional development; a positive political climate in Lynwood coupled with good work being done by SUP; and the constant presence of SUP staff showing that UCLA is a stable force.

UCLA also values the Lynwood relationship and to a certain extent will continue to provide some support for the partnership. The outreach evaluation team has made a proposal to the district to conduct evaluation activities related to coaching and other inservice activities, as well as, to conduct student, parent, and teacher surveys. These surveys will provide insights into the creation of a college-going culture, attitudes, and course-taking patterns. A small budget has been requested that will be supplemented by UCLA resources.

Discussion

The objectives of the UCLA/Lynwood partnership have not really changed in the past six years. While there have been the dual objectives of increasing student performance and improving teacher practice, the way the partnership has decided to achieve the former objective is by concentrating on the latter objective in hopes that this will indirectly cause an increase in student performance. All of the events I observed concerned professional development. One possible explanation for this is that the Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP) is primarily responsible for student-centered outreach. SUP work is intended to foster systemic change at the school level. Since EAOP is focusing directly on students, SUP can shift the concentration on teachers and administrators. This does not imply that EAOP and SUP work is kept separate. EAOP representatives are invited to contribute at COPA meetings and SUP staff maintains a regular dialogue with EAOP staff. The partnership coordinator believes that EAOP work is essential to SUP work being successful. “They do great work. They’re one-on-one with students . . . I think EAOP has to be part of the work, absolutely.”

The role of UCLA staff is now what it was at the beginning of the partnership. In the beginning, Center X staff led professional development sessions, as well as, advised and designed the activities. After the personnel changes of 1999, UCLA staff were relegated to leading some professional development sessions, but were not involved in planning. With the hiring of the new partnership coordinator, SUP coach, Superintendent, and Associate Superintendent, UCLA staff once again has a hand in both planning and professional development. SUP staff have been invited to participate in sessions with the district

administration and school board. The partnership coordinator is often thanked by the Superintendent for telling the cabinet “things we don’t want to hear but we need to hear even when we don’t want to hear them.” SUP staff are allowed to ask tough questions and help the District answer them for the benefit of all students and teachers.

From my observations, I noticed that teachers and administrators treat SUP staff members with respect. Teachers will ask SUP staff questions that they feel uncomfortable sharing with their administrators. They view SUP staff as advocates who will help them get through a problem. This is reinforced by their constant presence in the district. SUP staff members are treated as friends; nearly every teacher gave the SUP staff a hug during the Learning Celebration – one was even brought to tears. As for the new teachers in the district, they look to SUP staff for guidance and support. They are truly a part of the Lynwood community and it is understandable why the district has decided to fund the partnership since this will only increase the SUP staff’s presence in Lynwood.

The partnership has been successfully maintained over the years simply because LUSD believes in it. They believe that the work UCLA does is making a difference. There was a period in 1999-2000 when it looked like the partnership would not continue, but the new Superintendent hired at that time ensured the partnership would continue to flourish. This current Superintendent, the new Associate Superintendent, and the partnership coordinator all worked under Dr. Gene Tucker (a UCLA partnership coordinator) at some point during their careers. Several respondents discussed the success of the partnership in terms of alignment.

“The top levels are pretty much aligned to what they want to do and they see UCLA as being a critical partner in helping them move forward.”

“The political situation is pretty good right now in terms of support for the work and the focus is really aligned with what we want to do.”

“Their interests are very much aligned with [UCLA’s].”

While this alignment could probably have developed on its own, the fact that the most important people in the partnership share a bond with Dr. Tucker certainly must have aided the process.

When asked about the connection, Dr. Tucker had the following response:

I think my role here has been helping bring credibility based upon past relationships. So both [the Superintendent and the Associate Superintendent] thought very highly of me when I was in the position of Superintendent and so that established trust right away. And so my presence may have helped open doors but the people who followed and did the work developed their own credibility.

When examining the barriers identified by the informants, it becomes apparent that they do not affect the quality of the work provided by UCLA. Most of them, with the exception of lack of clarity of the partnership goals, concern what one informant calls “human garbage.” These most often take the form of personal conflicts arising from personnel changes or power struggles. This speaks more to district politics and culture than to anything else. Nobody has called the quality of UCLA’s services into question. When the Center X partnership was cut out of the planning, it was because of personal dislike between LUSD and UCLA staff. The biggest barrier at the school level are veteran teachers who do not want to interact with UCLA or any other reform group. Aside from explaining the six conditions and the goals of a partnership, most barriers need to be surmounted through personal interaction and negotiation. A partnership

expert who is not also a skilled diplomat will not get far in Lynwood. After observing and interviewing SUP staff, it is clear that the UCLA representatives are all excellent diplomats. If skilled diplomacy was not a factor, LUSD would not have continued its relationship with UCLA as long as it has.

Conclusion

I am reminded of the last thing the Superintendent said at the Learning Celebration. He stressed that “UCLA is just a partner. They’re not taking over the school.” Both of the times I heard the Superintendent speak in the course of this case study, he made it very clear that UCLA is a partner with Lynwood; not an entity trying to take over the district. By being included in the planning of the partnership, doing a good job, and deferring most decisions to the “powers that be” in Lynwood, the SUP staff members have secured funding for the next two years from LUSD. When problems between the partnership and the district arose, there was the perception that UCLA was trying to take over. However, by maintaining that respect over the years, UCLA has been able to sustain its partnership with Lynwood and make advances towards increased student performance and improved teacher practice. While the partnership still has a long way to go, LUSD believes enough in the work of the past six years to continue partnership work. And, UCLA believes that LUSD is a worthwhile place for partnering.