

## Review

# Re-thinking school-university collaboration: Agenda for the 21st century

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**Collaboration is a hard and challenging endeavor. It takes all the key players to make it happen. This paper discusses our current thinking about school-university collaboration. In it, we define what collaboration involves in the context of universities and schools. Next, we discuss what we believe are the essential benefits of effective collaboration to both universities and schools. Further, we explore the major areas of collaboration, principles of effective collaboration, and road blocks to and the necessary conditions for successful collaboration. Finally, we present a theoretical framework relating to school-university collaboration in the context of university and school partners which reflects the overall results in terms of student success. The paper concludes that collaboration is a shared endeavor by the partners involved to initiate and to sustain the partnership. This relationship must be built and nurtured on mutual trust.**

**Key words:** School, university, collaboration, teachers, partnerships.

## INTRODUCTION

Typically, collaboration partnerships have been discussed in the context of variety of arrangements, including links between public and private schools, universities and schools, or universities and business organizations.

No single institution can meet the needs of diverse and increasing number of children and youth with different education, social and medical problems. In this regard, there is a growing need for educational institutions, especially to collaborate with each other in addressing diverse concerns of the various individuals within these institutions. Porter (1987), Welch and Scheriden (1993) viewed collaboration as an important element in the survival and growth of educational institutions which can benefit the institutions as well as the individuals serving in those institutions. Schools and universities must work together to forge long-term relationships that can benefit both types of institutions and will lead to improvement that can come only from collaborative effort. Erlandson et

al. (1999), Robbins and Jo (1996), Russel and Smith (1992) observed that evidence of successful school-university collaboration is spotty and that survival qualities of school-university collaboration go beyond mere mechanical arrangement for student teachers in the schools, the most common form of the partnership in teachers education. Russell and Flynn (1992) asserted that school-university collaboration is more than a case of institutional friendliness of 'You scratch my back, I will scratch yours,' but, rather, it involves working together to address common concerns with specific agenda for action.

Getting representatives of diverse organizations, such as school and universities to collaborate suggests a complex process of establishing shared goals and values; methods for implementing project goals; establishing roles and responsibilities and meeting expectations of the workers from varied work cultures, the question remains: How do members of a partnership work together to reach their goal? And so, this study seeks information about how members of public school-university collaboration view and carry out their roles in the partnership process, including their level of awareness

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of process issues, their expectations, and assessment of member interactions and their sense of responsibility for establishing an agreed-upon partnership process.

Public schools and universities both acknowledge that they represent two communities that share a common purpose. Participants in both institutions are concerned with curriculum content; with instructional strategies; and with learning environments. All are committed to designing educational experiences that enable students to develop socially, emotionally and intellectually.

## DEFINING COLLABORATION

No consensus exists on either an operational definition of or rhetorical foundation of collaboration (Welch, 1998). According to Fullan (1993), "Collaboration is one of the most misunderstood concepts in the educational change business".

A review of the literature reveals varying definitions of collaborations as follows: (a) A relationship involving equal partners working on ongoing basis to achieve mutually beneficial goals (Russell and Flynn, 1992); (b) sharing resources to reach a common goal (Welch, 1998); (c) the ability to work cooperatively together on a task over time to mutually agreed-upon goals (Lafler and McFadhen, 2001); and (d) a partnership characterized by mutual or reciprocal benefit (Ponticell, 1990).

Therefore, collaboration is a relationship in which two or more partners work together by sharing resources to attain mutually agreed-upon goals. Viewed in this sense, collaboration cannot be mandated, it must be built within relationships in which collaborative partners are willing to share differences; to counter their typical forms of authority ascribed to their individual roles and relationships; to search for more inclusive ways to address their concerns, to accommodate multiple perspectives; and to talk through issues of trust, mutually; and equality (Johnston and Kirchner, 1996). As Haymore and Ellen (1998) citing Sirotnik and Goodlad (1988) noted, many school-university partnerships are based on the premised of equal partners working together in mutually beneficial relationship.

Critical to the partnerships, especially those between dissimilar institutions, such as schools, universities and colleges, are those people involved; how many they are, who they are and their individual positions within the organization (Teitel, 1994), collaboration between and among institutions can serve many goals and may take varied forms; they may be (a) informal, linking a few individual from each organization or (b) high-level agreements institutionalizing the linkages as part of job descriptions of individuals within the organization. And, to Darling-Hammond et al. (1995), collaboration between universities and schools has gained considerable attention as a way to create effective field-based teacher education programs.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The following major areas are addressed: (a) reasons for school-university collaboration; (b) areas of collaboration; (c) principles of effective collaboration; (d) roadblock to effective school university collaboration; and (e) conditions necessary for successful collaboration.

### Reasons for school-university collaboration

Many educators view collaboration as an important component in teacher education and have expressed the need for schools to collaborate, especially with universities while teaching students from various backgrounds with varying needs (Welch, 1998). McIntyre (1994) observed that the partnerships that evolve from the collaborative efforts between schools and universities can be highly rewarding. He points out that, collaboration and forming of partnerships between schools and universities is frequently viewed as a primary thrust in any program to improve education and ultimately, the education of students.

A literature review reveals the following major reasons for public school university collaboration (McIntyre, 1994; Richmond, 1996; Russell and Flynn, 1992; Welch, 1998): (a) Push for systematic educational reforms and restructuring by governments calls for the two types of institutions to merge forces; (b) individuals from universities and schools have common problems and concerns; (c) increasing societal problems combined with dwindling resources and heightened public expectations for accountability create pressures for educators from all levels to establish partnerships; (d) to improve the educational opportunities and outcomes for students (McIntyre, 1994); and (f) to provide opportunities for professionals from both types of institutions to develop collaborative skills.

Also, according to Russell and Flynn (1992), two reasons underlie the establishment of school-university partnerships. Firstly, for education to mature as a profession, practice must be increasingly based on research. Toward this end, they argued, there is a need to bridge the gap between research and practice by developing a collaborative structure that brings research based knowledge of university who conduct, synthesize and disseminate education research, to bear on the problems of the schools and that brings the practical experience of school personnel to guide the preparation of teachers and administrators. And, secondly, universities and colleges that prepare teachers and administrative tasks are familiar with the ever-changing student needs. The practitioners can bring a realistic view to the preparation in universities and colleges of education.

Furthermore, Goodlad (1988) and Lya (1994) noted, that through school-university collaboration, teachers can

benefit from professors' input in terms of up-to-date information on research findings often missing in schools. University professors can also benefit from this collaboration by increasing the relevance of their research as a result of the teachers' input about the nature and immediacy of practical school problems (Knight et al., 1992; Lya, 1994).

### ***Benefits to school***

Schools can derive the following major benefits from their collaboration with universities:

- i) Opportunities for involvement in joint research, evaluation, planning, and in-service efforts;
- ii) Unified voice in communicating with community decision makers, parents and other constituencies;
- iii) Better access to latest research findings on effective practices;
- iv) Improved problem-solving process;
- v) Increased potential for attracting outside grants;
- vi) Opportunities for having input into university's professional preparation programs;
- vii) Opportunities for involvement of school personnel as clinical or adjunct faculty at the universities;
- viii) Greater efficiency in using educational resources;
- ix) Access to the resources of the universities;
- x) Assistance in the school improvement process;
- xi) Collegial interaction with professionals who may have different perspectives regarding common problems;
- xii) Opportunities to influence university research efforts to focus on current school problems;
- xiii) Opportunities for teachers to assume new roles and to exhibit leadership; and
- xiv) Opportunities for involvement in ongoing staff development programs (Russell and Flynn, 1992).

Also, Porter (1987) indicate that teachers believe that their collaboration on research with university professors make them more receptive to new ideas and more analytic in assessing the value of those ideas. Further to this, having university professors available for consultation about the various issues at the schools often provide the needed impetus to move ahead.

### ***Benefits to university partners***

Universities can achieve the following major benefits from their partnerships with public schools:

- i) Access to the concerns and needs of students, teachers and administrators in public schools;
- ii) Input from experienced school practitioners for improving university's professional preparation program;
- iii) Opportunities to recruit high school students into teaching and to persuade practicing educators to pursue

- graduate/post-graduate work;
- iv) More opportunities for research and publication;
- v) Access to the knowledge base of teachers, counselors, coaches, administrators and others in the schools; and
- vi) Increase in academic professor's knowledge of the teacher education programs; this encourages the professors to recommend the programs to their undergraduate students (Russell and Flynn, 1992).

Also, school-university collaborative efforts (a) contributes to the quality of education available to the improvement of professional preparation programs at both the undergraduate, in-service and graduate levels; (b) provide universities with feedback from teachers and administrators about the progress of teacher education students and ability of the programs to meet the needs of the students (Byrd, 1990); and (c) offer powerful, more creative means to effective change (Partel and Young, 1993). As Verbeke and Richards (2001) observed, school-university collaboration presents a real opportunity to make systematic change and improvement, true education reform.

Similarly, increased exposure of university faculty to highly-qualified teachers strengthens the undergraduate teacher education and serves as a benefit to the faculty themselves as they meet and plan their instructional strategies. Further to this, as noted by Phillips and McCulloch (1990), through collaborative efforts between schools and universities, staff morale and cohesion, knowledge and skills in problem solving, in decision-making processes, and in implementing new and varied instructional strategies will increase.

In summary, school-university collaborative endeavors therefore: (a) provide involved institutions with opportunities to share resources and facilities and offer professors and teachers opportunities to remain current in their field, to address the problems facing these institutions, and develop shared visions for future; (b) enable universities to design effective professional preparation programs to improve the quality of education in schools and are the foundation for reform and change in schooling and teachers education; and (c) provide unique opportunities for the professional development of teachers that benefit not only the teacher and the university, but also, most importantly, the school.

### ***Areas of collaborative***

A review of the literature indicates the following major areas for public school-university collaboration (Button et al., 1996; Day, 1998; Di Sibio and Gamble, 1997; Krischner et al., 1996; McIntyre, 1994; Russell and Flynn, 1992; Verbeke and Richards, 2001): (a) mentoring programs for school teachers; (b) staff development programs and workshops for school teachers; (c) research and resources development; (d) job placements (for example, shared teaching); and (d) pre-service

teachers education programs.

According to Ponticell (1990), in concurring with Verbeke and Richards (2001), many universities have been involved in partnerships with schools whereby schools are limited to: (a) being studied by university researchers; (b) as field sites for teachers education placements; or (c) receiving one shot, “quick fit” in-service workshops from university consultants. McIntyre (1994), in synthesizing Stallings and Kowalski’s (1990) work, noted that collaborative arrangements for improving the preparation of teachers at the pre-service and staff development levels is perhaps the most common and oldest type of partnership between schools and universities; and that the most intensive type of collaboration between schools and universities is the professional development of schools which are the settings focused primarily on the professional development of teachers as well as the development of pedagogy.

### **Principles of effective collaboration**

The following fundamental principles underlie effective collaborative partnerships:

- i) For effective collaboration to occur between the staffs of two institutions, top-level administrative support and cooperation are essential;
- ii) Effective collaboration between or across institutions should focus on persistent and important institution-based programs;
- iii) Collaborators need to have realistic expectations;
- iv) For effective collaboration to occur, duties and responsibilities should be assigned the collaborators based on their knowledge and skills;
- v) Collaborators should work towards each other’s satisfaction and should appreciate what rewards are for each side;
- vi) Collaborators should avoid becoming involved in the internal politics of the other institution. Each institution must preserve the integrity of the other by remaining publicly objective and non-committal;
- vii) Collaborators should exhibit professional respect for those from the other institution. Where respect is lacking, cooperation cannot occur; and
- viii) Collaboration depends on a community of believers in which enthusiasm, flexibility, and shared language help break down traditional main obstacles, institutional barriers, including conflicting goals, different language, interest, cultures, types of expertise, and organizational conditions (DeBevoise, 1986; Ward and Pascarelli, 1987).

### **Roadblock to effective school-university collaboration**

A review of the literature indicates that numerous roadblocks

to effective collaboration between public schools and universities. The major impediments are those associated with the following major areas: (a) cultural gap; (b) administrative support; (c) resources; and (d) complexity of collaborative process.

### **Cultural gap**

One of the obstacles to public-university collaboration is that working together towards a shared vision often confronts the conflicting organizational values of both institutions (McIntyre, 1994). The cultural gap between schools and universities may be a hindrance to successful partnerships (Lya, 1994; Case et al., 1993; Smith, 1992, Tucker, 1991; Goodlad, 1988). As Goodlad (1988) and Lya (1994) noted, the potential conflict in school-university collaboration lie in the recognition that schools and universities differ with respect to purposes, goals, interests, cultures, types of expertise, organizational conditions, reward systems, rules and regulations, perceptions of faculty development and autonomy. Also, within these types of institutions, administrators, teachers, support staff, students and parents, among others, may each perceive and participate in different sub-culture or set of sub-cultures (Stenberg, 2000, as cited in Verbeke and Richards, 2001).

To Smith (1992), schools and universities have separate and sometimes conflicting goals. For example, he argued, whereas schools provide equal and comprehensive schooling for students, universities and colleges must offer intellectual training and stimulate inquiry, research and critical examination of knowledge, thought, and culture. According to Marlow (2000), public school teachers tend to want practical resourced and ideas that can be immediately used in their classrooms, whereas university faculty are typically more interested in deepening content knowledge and the underlying philosophical contexts. Cuban (1992) identified three competing cultural values: (a) reflections, analysis, and scientific research; (b) the professional school culture values application of knowledge to practical situations to prepare future teachers, administrators and researchers; and (c) the school culture values action and experience-based knowledge that can immediately be applied to local teaching and learning concerns.

Case et al. (1993) asserted that, because partnership represents an instance of cultural interaction and transformation, different cultural perspectives may hinder change and the breaking down of barriers of internalized values and beliefs. According to Lieberman (1988) cited in Cuban (1992), differences in school and university cultures strain partnerships’ trust in the workability of collaboration and present a formidable barrier to real collaboration.

McIntyre (1994) advised partners in school-university collaborative endeavors to be realistic in the clashes

between theoretical and idealistic notions of the university and be more realistic in practical orientations of the school and to recognize these potential pitfalls to facilitate their commitment to long-term relationship.

### ***Administrative support***

Lack of sufficient administrative support can constrain effective collaboration between schools and universities (Lya, 1994).

### ***Resources***

Lya (1994) and Verbeke and Richards (2001) observed that, because collaboration is a resource-intensive undertaking, effective school-university collaborative endeavors may be frustrated by lack of sufficient funds and that adequate resources, including funds, shared among the partners, must be provided. Haymore and Ellen (1998) noted that effective school-university collaboration process requires a considerable amount of time commitment; that the amount of time needed for this collaboration is grossly underestimated and that time is usually a scarce resource for educators in schools and universities.

### ***Complexity of collaborative process***

A final roadblock to effective school-university collaboration relates to the complexity of the collaborative process itself. Marlow (2000) and Verbeke and Richards (2001) noted that true collaboration, especially between diverse group of stakeholders, is complex, challenging and synergistic; and that, for many schools and universities, the process of collaboration can be daunting because collaborators themselves may have conflicting perspectives and agenda regarding collaborative process and the goals to be accomplished. As Marlow (2000) observed, most school-university collaborative efforts have been characterized by continuing records of tensions, detrimental outcomes and cultural clash.

Trubowitz and Longo (1997) pointed out that the task of collaboration is a difficult matter that calls for an ability to be open to different ideas and philosophies generated by the participants and that there usually exists a gap between ideas generation and idea implementation. To Vozzo and Bober (2001), it takes time and the right condition before a truly collaborative partnership between school and university personnel can take root and flourish.

Harris and Harris (1994 citing Kennedy, 1991) concluded that, because of the complexity of university-school collaboration and the relative newness of the partner schools model, little is known about their inner workings.

## **CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY COLLABORATION**

Understanding and practicing collaboration require insight into the various components and dynamics within the definitive framework of collaboration (Welch, 1998). A review of the literature indicates numerous conditions for achieving successful school-university collaboration. These include: (a) commitment; (b) benefits; (c) collegiality and mutual respect; (d) missions; (e) operational structure; (f) flexibility; (g) equal partnership; (h) communication; (i) roles and responsibilities; (j) administrative support; (k) resources; (l) voluntary participation; (m) focusing on student learning; (n) measuring the progress; and (o) context.

### **Commitment**

One of the conditions for successful public school-university collaboration concerns commitment on the part of the partners. As McIntyre (1994) noted, collaboration is a complex endeavor that requires a commitment of staff resources, funding and most of all, the soul. Borthwick (1995), in crediting the works of Intriligator (1986) and Maeroff (1983) asserted that partnerships must establish commitment at both the personal and institutional levels. Only with long-range commitment on the part of all the partners can the potential of collaboration be realized (Russell and Flynn, 1992). Commitment to collaboration implies that university faculty and school personnel all acknowledge that they learn together and that they are willing to take the actions needed to sustain the relationship (Sosin and Partiam, 2001). Commitment requires that people involved in collaboration step forward and defend the relationship from negative pressures.

Smith (1992) commented that a commitment to collaboration of an in-depth nature is an essential ingredient of coherent and comprehensive teacher education programs in which schools and universities are involved and that professor's willingness to forgo the prestige of publications because of commitment to work with teachers in the schools is particularly crucial for successful school-university collaboration. To Goodlad (1988), school and universities in collaboration for the improvement of schooling and education must maintain a commitment, especially to quality information and knowledge in context—that is, in terms of relevant historical, current and projected social, political and institutional levels.

### ***Time commitment***

Haymore and Ellen (1998), McIntyre (1994), and Russell and Flynn (1992), citing Mc Gowan (1990) observed that

the collaboration process requires a considerable amount of time, an already scarce resource for educators and that, because developing and sustaining collaboration takes time on both university and school personnel, the willingness to expend the necessary time is indicative of the commitment of each party to the effort. Consequently, each party involved in a collaborative partnership must provide ample time to facilitate the process.

To Verbeke and Richards (2001), time commitment should be established early in the process. This commitment, they argued, can be increased as the goals of collaborative efforts become complex. And, according to Smith and Anger (1985-1986), choosing the right time to initiate change that will mutually benefit collaborative partners is crucial.

### ***Benefits***

The collaborative endeavors between schools and universities must benefit both institutions. The benefits may be in terms of cultural values of the institutions, for example satisfaction with the practice of teaching for the benefit of students and professionalizing teaching (Goodlad, 1988). The individuals involved in the collaboration must see benefits for their institution and for themselves (Russell and Flynn, 1992, citing Mc Gowan, 1990).

Goodlad (1988) and Russell and Flynn, (1992) asserted that each partner in a collaboration must commit to the satisfaction of the interests of the other and that the collaboration will not work for long if one partner is always giving and the other partner is always receiving. Smith and Auger (1985-1986) observed that, in collaboration, the results need to be satisfying enough to make the partners willing to continue needs of the partnership. Also, Sosin and Partian (2001) suggested that, in generating successful school-university collaboration, it is important to focus on collaborative benefits for all the stakeholders, both at school and the university and that the partners need to focus on how the positive aspects of the relationship outweighs any negative aspects. When collaboration is based on mutual need, there is usually a sense of urgency that creates high motivation for all stakeholders to work together in a timely way with fewer resources (Verbeke and Richards, 2001).

### ***Collegiality and mutual respect***

A sense of collegiality and mutual respect are recognized by many authors as important components for sustaining successful collaboration. All the participants need to be open to learning from each other and must: (a) develop a feeling that each partner has valuable ideas to contribute; (b) respect the difference in other's culture and style; and (c) strive to apply the best of both worlds to achieve

established goals (Russell and Fynn, 1992, citing Mc Gowan, 1990; Grobe, 1993, citing Regional Educational Laboratory, 1986). As Marlow (2000) noted, the true collegiality requires recognition of what is important to each partner as well as a consideration of the need of individual partners in decision making.

Verbeke and Richards (2001) pointed out that it is out of mutual respect that the collaborative partners can begin to shape a shared vision and purpose and that an understanding of the values and orientation of each stakeholder is important because it is the foundation of mutual respect. According to De Bevoise (1986), collaboration depends on people on both sides being willing to make it work.

### ***Missions***

Collaborative partners must have direction in terms of mission statements. Whereas each organization in a collaborative effort may have its own mission, the institutional missions need to be shared early in the process to facilitate a common understanding of their initiative and the members must know why they are there and have a clear sense of what they would like to accomplish (Russell and Flynn, 1992; Mc Gowan, 1990; Verbeke and Richards, 2001). To Verbeke and Richards (2001), shared goals are critical to successful-university collaboration.

### ***Operational structure***

It is important that collaborative partners establish an operational structure that guides the partnership process. Russell and Flynn (1992), in acknowledging McGowan's (1990) work, pointed out that at some early point in the collaborative venture, the partners must set an operational structure that provides a process for decision making; for involving appropriate personnel; for obtaining proper approvals for action when needed; and for the necessary follow-up. Russell (2000) advocated a need to emphasize simplicity in organization as collaborative work begins, gradually allowing structure to emerge as needs change. According to Russell, paying attention to operational structure facilitates the accomplishment of partnership.

### ***Flexibility***

Another condition for successful collaboration is the willingness of the partners to be flexible to facilitate some understanding of each other's perspective and ways of doing things (Borthwick, 1995; McGowan, 1990, cited in Russell and Flynn, 1992).

### ***Equal partnership***

As observed by Robbins and Jo (1996), a collaborative endeavor must be viewed as an equal partnership in which the decision-making power is shared and the participants given a voice in the process. Shared decision making must have defined goals and purposes and follow a set of procedures that guide the partners (McNell and McNell, 1994; Spinks, 1990). Russell and Flynn (1992) suggested that a collaborative partnership must be equal and reciprocal if it is to be a healthy, long-term relationship and that there should be a win-win type of collaboration.

### ***Communication***

Robbins and Jo (1996), and Bradshaw et al. (1997) observed that communication is a critical element of collaborative partnerships; that time needs to be included in every schedule for the stakeholders to talk together about issues and concerns; and that communication should be an ongoing part of a collaborative process. According to Verbeke and Richards (2001), communication, including written agreement, and outcomes evaluation, must be systematic and should include opportunities for both formal and informal dialogues in which participants are engaged in honest discussion about pertinent issues.

According to Grobe (1993), concurring with Verbeke and Richards (2001), successful partnerships are characterized by an exchange of ideas and knowledge through systemic communication. Sosin and Partiam (2001) commented that in school-university collaboration, the parties need information about the goals of the alliance and the means by which those goals are to be achieved and that clarity around issues that arise need to be addressed on an ongoing basis by the school and university in partnerships. Speaking a shared language of collaboration helps to break down traditional barriers (Pnticell, 1990).

Furthermore, collaborations need to be aware of agendas – the explicit goals of the stakeholders – which can be hidden or covert, mandated or voluntary, external or internal (Verbeke and Richards, 2001). Through effective communication, they argued, the agendas can be generated, understood and clarified, especially at the beginning of collaborative process.

### ***Roles and responsibilities***

Successful collaboration is dependent upon the capabilities and dispositions of the individual partners. The roles of the various individuals and their institutions in collaboration must be negotiated in advance to facilitate the process, to enhance its outcomes and to

reduce the likelihood of misunderstanding based on the varying impressions of how things were meant to be done. As Borthwick (1995) suggested, the various individuals collaborating should understand their roles and responsibilities despite the changes that might occur during the early stages of the partnerships. According to Hasslen et al. (2001) keeping everyone informed and providing opportunities for input from all players are essential to collaboration.

### ***Administrative support***

Because institutional priorities are set by top administrators, gaining administrative support of all agencies or institutions is crucial for successful collaboration (McIntyre, 1994, citing McGowan, 1990; Welch, 1998). Collaborative partners must be valued, sanctioned and supported in the school. As Maloy (1985), De Bevoise (1986) and Lieberman (1986) noted, strong administrative support removes bureaucratic stumbling blocks, provides resources and recognizes collaborative efforts. Further to this, Russell (2001) observed that enduring new administrators as they assume their roles in the institution is the key to the success of school-university partnerships.

And Russell and Flynn (1992, citing McGowan, 1990) observed that, for collaboration to have an impact, the formal leadership of the involved institutions must be supportive and the support must be articulated publicly.

### ***Resources***

Successful school-university collaboration must be supported with the necessary resources. Resources in this sense include money, time, space and professional guidance and expertise (Borthwick, 1995, citing Harrington, 1989, 1990; Verbeke and Richard, 2001). As Verbeke and Richards recommended, because collaboration is a resource-intensive undertaking, there must be equitable resource sharing among partners. McIntyre (1994) observed that a true partnership should require sharing resources on an equal basis. For example, he argued, if the goal of collaboration is the improvement for all students, then both institutions must commit their resources towards endeavors in changing existing practices.

**Voluntary participation:** Participation in a school-university partnership must be voluntary (Russell, 2000). Verbeke and Richards (2001) observed that in voluntary collaboration; who makes the decision to collaborate plays an important role in the success or failure of the venture.

**Focusing on student learning:** School-university

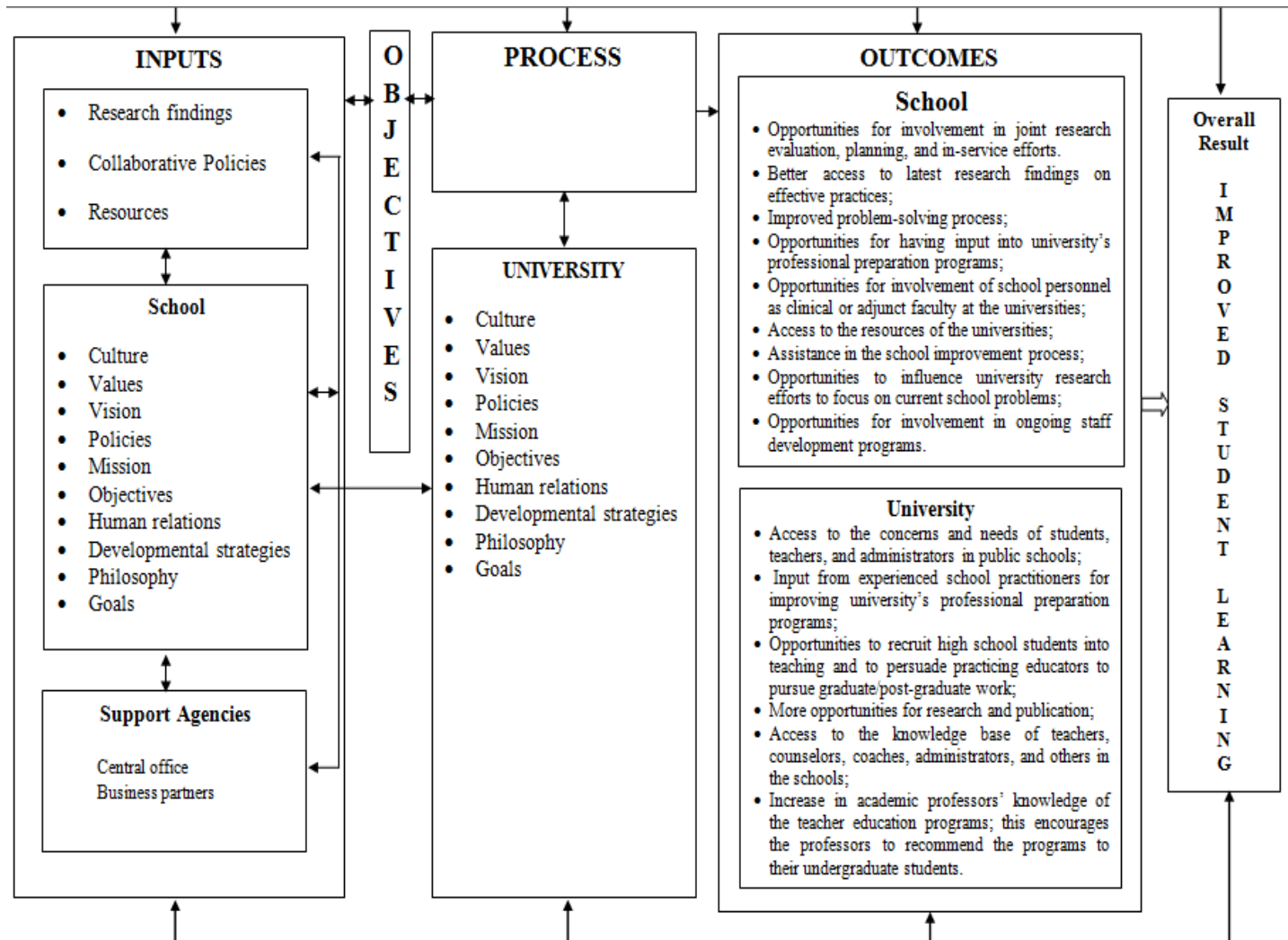


Figure 1. Theoretical framework of school-university.

endeavors must ensure that the goal of student learning is always at the centre in partnership work (Russell, 2000).

**Measuring the process:** Every school-university collaborative endeavor must constantly assess the extent to which agreed-upon goals are being realized, for example, by sponsoring leadership retreats in which partnership leaders come together to discuss the progress of their organizations (Russell, 2000). As Verbeke and Richards (2001) suggested, that participants collaborating should decide what process they will use to accomplish the stated outcomes. There is a need for careful situational assessment and analysis, generation of alternative solutions, designing and implementation of a chosen strategy, evaluation of programs and adaptation or modification of procedures, and re-evaluation of implemented strategies (Gutskin and Curtis, 1990; Zins et al., 1988).

### Context

The collaborative effort must be context-sensitive (Figure 1).

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Basic components

#### Purposes and goals

The purposes and goals for which schools and universities collaborate must be identified and negotiated by the partners involved and must be clear to everyone involved. These should be set by consensus.

#### Inputs

These may include standards for effective collaborations, findings from research and best practices, resources and



policies regarding collaborative links.

### Resources

Adequate funds and resources should be provided to establish and to sustain the activities associated with collaboration.

### Process

The ways in which individuals in school-university collaboration engage one another in constructive, problem solving behavior to address collaborative concerns must be identified. The partners must develop means for effective and efficient sharing of information and knowledge relative to their collaborative links.

### Contexts

School-university collaboration must be conceptualized in terms of distinct endeavors within the total contexts of school and university functions. Collaboration between schools and universities does not work in isolation; it is affected by other aspects or variable within these two types of institutions. The process should be considered in the context of the total school and university organizations. The organizational factors which must be considered include: (a) objectives; (b) development strategies; (c) human relations; (d) material resources; and (e) and policies. Similarly, individual factors, such as beliefs, philosophies and time available, must be considered.

### Outcomes

Exchanges in school-university collaboration should be reciprocal; each partner should gain something out of the collaborative links.

### Ongoing debate

Both informal and formal talks and continued sharing among the participants regarding joint concerns must be carried out.

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