

## **Adapting Partnership Work in Times of Uncertainty: A Case from a Rural School-University Partnership during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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**Abstract:** For school-university partnerships (SUPs) to be sustained, members need to understand the dynamics of change—how and why it occurs, how it is managed, and what it means for all involved. The purpose of this study was to understand from the perspective of participants how the SUP between Auburn University faculty and the schools in Loachapoka, Alabama, adapted to changing conditions during the first wave of the pandemic. The authors designed a participatory action research study using self-study methodology to analyze adaptations to community-embedded summer programming offered in 2019 before the pandemic and, later, in 2020 during the pandemic. The main research question was: *How do school and university partners adapt their work to meet the needs of students, teachers, teacher candidates, university faculty, and the community?* The authors also wanted to know: *What does partnership work in a context of change and adaptation mean to individual partners?* Analysis of written reflections and other qualitative data yielded insights about the nature and meaning of adaptations in the context of partnership work. Three superordinate themes emerged across the data sets: inspiration, interconnection, and innovation.

**Keywords:** community engagement, professional development school partnerships, summer programming

### **NAPDS Nine Essentials Addressed:**

- Essential 2: Clinical Preparation – A PDS embraces the preparation of educators through clinical practice.
- Essential 3: Professional Learning and Leading – A PDS is a context for continuous professional learning and leading for all participants, guided by need and a spirit and practice of inquiry.
- Essential 4: Reflection and Innovation – A PDS makes a shared commitment to reflective practice, responsive innovation, and generative knowledge.

## **Adapting Partnership Work in Times of Uncertainty: A Case from a Rural School-University Partnership during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Educational institutions and organizations are complex cultural systems influenced by political, social, and economic factors, and changing these systems is a notoriously slow, hard, nonlinear process (Fullan, 2016). Sometimes educational organizations implement change strategically through careful planning, while in other instances they are compelled to change in response to unplanned, external factors and crises. The COVID-19 pandemic that affected the entire world in 2020 is an example of the latter. By April, 2020, school closures around the world pushed more than 1.6 billion students out of their classrooms (UNESCO, 2020), including approximately 55 million students in the United States (Butcher, 2020). Since the pandemic began, school systems and individual teachers have confronted myriad challenges while finding creative ways to design and deliver instruction, strengthen school-university partnerships, and engage families (see, e.g., Hamilton et al., 2020; Hodges et al., 2020).

Successful school-university partnerships (SUPs) are complex systems that require collaboration among all actors as they adapt and change (Campoy, 2000; Walters & Pritchard, 1999). For partnerships to be sustained, members need to understand the dynamics of change—how and why it occurs, how it is managed, and what it means for all involved. The purpose of this study was to understand from the perspective of participants how the SUP between Auburn University faculty and the schools in Loachapoka, Alabama, adapted to changing conditions during the first wave of the pandemic. We designed a participatory action research study using self-study methodology to analyze adaptations to community-embedded summer programming offered in 2019 before the pandemic and, later, in 2020 during the pandemic. We aimed to use the findings from this participatory action research to inform future partnership work. Our main research question was: *How do school and university partners adapt their work to meet the needs of students, teachers, teacher candidates, university faculty, and the community?* We also wanted to know: *What does partnership work in a context of change and adaptation mean to individual partners?*

### **Context for the Study**

Loachapoka is a rural community in Lee County, Alabama, located approximately five miles west of Auburn University. Several entities at Auburn University have a history of engagement with the schools and community in Loachapoka, including the College of Engineering, the Office of University Outreach, and the School of Kinesiology; however, this article focuses on the SUP that has grown since 2017 between faculty in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching in the College of Education and faculty and administrators in the schools (Auburn University College of Education, 2019; McIlwain et al., 2020). The focus of this article is a SUP that differs from other university-led initiatives because of its intentional alignment with the nine essentials of a professional development school partnership (NAPDS, 2021). The adaptations we describe in this article were grounded in commitments to clinical preparation (Essential 2), professional learning and leading (Essential 3), and reflection and innovation (Essential 4).

A key feature of the work in our SUP has been a summer program designed to offer equitable opportunities for continuous learning throughout the year and to deepen community engagement. In 2019, we created two mini-camps for children in high-needs neighborhoods in

the school catchment area. These camps were offered outdoors under pop-up tents in the yards of volunteers and featured literacy and enrichment opportunities that were grounded in theories of funds of knowledge (González et al., 2005) and provocation pedagogy (Moss, 2016) and implemented by preservice teacher candidates.

Provocation pedagogy calls for teachers to set up the school environment in ways that encourage exploring, hypothesis testing, and explaining thinking to peers and teachers as they create within their existing world (Moss, 2016). Because the camps were embedded in the community, we were able to leverage community funds of knowledge to design provocations that enhanced student engagement and learning (González et al., 2005). The work allowed us to explore ways of extending the home visits used in the funds of knowledge studies to more sustained interactions with the parents and children in the community.

We had planned to extend the camps to four neighborhoods in 2020, and we already had volunteers ready to provide space in their yards. These changes would offer the program activities to more families, provide teachers and teacher candidates more opportunities for professional learning, and allow university faculty to deepen their understanding of how funds of knowledge can be tapped to enhance language and literacy achievement.

Though we had secured the necessary resources and had a clear trajectory for summer 2020, our plans once again required further adaptation. Because of university and school district COVID-19 protocols put in place in the spring of 2020, the summer program had to be offered at a distance. The partners worked collaboratively to revise the plan, which included work with both middle grades students and preschool children. The plan for middle grades students involved online reading enrichment groups and a unique oral history project. The oral histories helped to deepen family engagement with the partnership work, build vocabulary and literacy skills, and leverage and enrich students' capacities for storytelling. The plan for preschool children engaged preservice teacher candidates with six families of children ages four through six. The teacher candidates met with families and guided them through dialogic reading and provocation activities related to the interests of the families through "provocation boxes," adapting the early childhood provocation pedagogy to the rural issues of access by making it deliverable.

## **Methodology**

We designed a participatory action research study (Fraenkel et al., 2019) in which we used self-study methods to uncover the complexity of change in our partnership activities and to learn from our lived experiences so we could chart a course for the future (Ikpeze et al., 2012). Self-study is "an autobiographical process" (Fraenkel et al., 2019) characterized by collaborative inquiry that is situated in professional practice and oriented toward growth and improvement (Alan, 2016).

### **Participants and Positionality**

Our collaborative inquiry group included two teachers from the Loachapoka, three Auburn university faculty members, and two graduate students who were also practicing teachers at different schools. Each of the participants played a role in the planning and implementation of the summer programming described in the study. Krystal is a Hispanic woman who teaches high school Spanish and career education and has three years of teaching experience. Robbie is an African American woman who teaches special education in seventh and eighth grade and has 14

years of experience—11 as a homebound teacher and three as a classroom teacher at Loachapoka. David is a white male with six years of P-12 experience—three years teaching middle grades social studies and three years in support roles—and 18 years in higher education—seven as an administrator and 11 as a professor. Jamie is a white female with 20 years of experience teaching English as a second language and English language arts in public school settings and eight year of experience as a professor in ESOL education. Mary Jane is a white female with 20 years of experience teaching in the public schools—four years in elementary classrooms and 16 years as an elementary reading specialist—and seven years of experience as a reading education professor. Kathleen is a white female who is a Ph.D. student in early childhood education and has 12 years of experience teaching kindergarten and first grade in the public school. Chad is a white male Ph.D. student in secondary social science education who has 10 years of experience in teaching and administration in both private and public settings.

### **Data Sources**

Data were collected from oral and written reflective narratives as well as archived communications, visual records, and documents. Each of the participants completed two iterations of writing reflective narratives guided by prompts that asked about (a) their perceptions of the adaptations partners made to meet the needs of constituents and (b) their perceptions of the personal meaning they derived from partnership work. Following each writing session, the participants reviewed one another's responses and then met as a collaborative critical friends group via videoconference to code the data.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis involved an inductive process of manual open coding and memoing followed by subsequent iterations of axial coding during which we identified patterns in the data (Miles et al., 1994). For example, our initial coding process identified meaningful units in the data such as “in tandem” and “merging communities” which were subsumed under the superordinate theme “interconnection” during subsequent rounds of axial coding. We concluded the analysis with three superordinate themes: inspiration, interconnection, and innovation. Ultimately, we aimed to generate local, grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) about adaptations to our partnership work in the context of change.

### **Trustworthiness**

Like all research, participatory action research is vulnerable to threats to validity or “trustworthiness” (Lincoln, 1995), and because our study used self-study methods we had to attend carefully to potential bias in our analysis and reporting (Fraenkel et al., 2019). We used several strategies to enhance the trustworthiness of our study including triangulation of data types (e.g., narratives, documents, visual records), triangulation of data sources and perspectives (e.g., university faculty, school faculty, graduate students), and ongoing member checks.

### **Findings and Discussion**

Our analysis yielded specific insights from reflections of the graduate students, classroom teachers, and university faculty as well as overarching themes that cut across all sets of reflections. Three superordinate themes emerged across the data sets: inspiration, interconnection, and innovation.

## Inspiration

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the institutional and community contexts in which the partnership work occurred. Key factors that inspired the team members to move forward and adapt through these disruptions were commitments to ideas and values and the energizing effect of the successes they experienced.

Members of the team were inspired by commitments to assets-based conceptual and theoretical orientations to literacy teaching and partnership work. They aimed to leverage community funds of knowledge (González et al., 2005) as “a theoretically sound way to connect language and literacy through generationally charged reading, writing, speaking, and listening” (Mary Jane).

Chad explained that the summer outreach experiences showed “how important it is to use the community to extend learning opportunities for children.”

[The experience] opened my eyes to the importance of knowing students’ community and understanding their funds of knowledge. Thinking about community visitations like these coupled with provocation boxes really helps me think how educators can be asked to consider the individual and their context when making educational choices. – Chad

Kathleen described how this commitment evolved over the course of two iterations of implementation in the summers of 2019 and 2020.

Prior to my work in the summer of 2019, I would have never considered going out into neighborhoods, taking play experiences to the children. When I reflect on the children’s interests exhibited at the tents [in 2019], those interests were intertwined with their familial and communal interests; and it wasn’t until I was trying to help preservice teachers develop provocation boxes that were relevant to their family’s interests that the interconnectivity was made apparent. – Kathleen

David reflected on ways funds of knowledge might provide a conceptual lens for understanding how assets in each of the constituent groups in the partnership (e.g., P-12 teachers, university faculty, preservice teachers and graduate students) contribute to the organizational learning of the partnership as a whole.

For example, shifting to distance or remote learning due to COVID protocols was/has been daunting. Are there ways to leverage the technology skills and “cultural assets” of the university students who are “digital natives” and who may be able to make substantive contributions to the design and delivery of services based on those assets? We tend to think of the salience of the cultural assets in client communities, but in a PDS partnership, all of the partners are “clients” whose learning is important. – David

Constructivist (Vygotsky, 1978) and experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) theories inspired the way the team framed the summer partnership activities. For example, Mary Jane characterized the summer engagements as “constructivist play and exploration experiences” grounded in Vygotskian ideas about child learning and development. She also employed a constructivist lens as she reflected on adult learning—especially the need for “scaffolding the teachers, ... teacher candidates, and families” in doing the project work.

The team also drew inspiration from the “nine essentials” framework for professional development school partnerships (National Association for Professional Development Schools [NAPDS], 2021) and the “four pillars” of professional development schools articulated by the Holmes Partnership. The pillars are:

1. the improvement of P–12 student learning;
2. the joint engagement in teacher education activities;

3. the promotion of professional growth of all its participants; and
4. the construction of knowledge through intentional, synergistic research endeavors. (NAPDS, 2021, p. 6).

The pillars provided a multidimensional frame through which the team viewed and assessed the progress of the partnership work and enacted the essentials focused on clinical preparation for teacher candidates, professional learning and leading for teachers and faculty, and collective reflection. They served as a reminder to prioritize the learning and growth of all participants and to pursue knowledge construction to inform practice beyond the partnership.

The team was committed to justice and equity—key concepts that underpin PDS work (see NAPDS, 2021, pp. 10–14). A commitment to justice and equity inspired the team to persist through challenges during both pre- and post-pandemic implementation. For example, as the team implemented the pop-up summer camp in the Hispanic neighborhood in 2019, they learned that fear—fear of discrimination or possible deportation—was a major factor keeping families from participating. Chad described this as “the on-edge-ness about their lives.” The fact that members of the community lived in fear was an injustice that inspired the team to persist. As Mary Jane reflected: “I think the reality of it all pushed us—made us more determined to engage, especially because we had our undergrads with us on the journey.”

Finally, members of the team were inspired by the overall success of the program and the accomplishments of learners. The teachers expressed excitement as they discussed ways in which children developed as readers, writers, and storytellers. Krystal said, “It was great to see students grow in reading and comprehension in the target language using oral histories as the main reading technique.” She was especially inspired when a shy ESL student shared an oral history with the class.

All of the student’s oral histories were unique and very authentic, but the fact that she chose to share with us in her native language, I thought it was brave, it takes courage to do something like that. I believe that others sharing their stories encourage her to do the same; after weeks of her not participating, she then decided to tell her story and share her illustration with the class. I believe that the program helped [her] and the rest of the participants to build relationships because they were provided with a supportive environment. – Krystal

For Robbie, the summer partnership work during the pandemic “was a ray of sun in what seemed to be a place of doom and gloom at the moment.” The success of the projects in 2019 and during the pandemic in 2020 inspired her to look “optimistically” toward “this summer and many summers to come as a way to continuously fill voids, bridge gaps and break barriers that have for so long been a hindrance to the connect of the home and academic setting.”

### **Interconnection**

Interconnection was a recurrent theme in the data evident in discussions about interpersonal relationships cultivated through the partnership work and about connections among communities. The shift to a virtual mode in 2020 posed challenges to relationship building, but the team experienced some unanticipated successes in this domain.

The cultivation of interpersonal relationships was an important aspect of the summer programs in both 2019 and 2020. Webs of relationships connected children, teachers, university faculty, and preservice teachers. David recalled “see[ing] little kids, college kids, and adults from the neighborhood, university, and school all together doing stuff—art, games, literacy—just

being together, using language, building trust.” Kathleen shared a poignant anecdote describing how interpersonal relationships formed in sometimes spontaneous ways.

We were noticing that the children were enjoying music so one of the practicum students brought out her guitar one morning. She sat down on a blanket and started playing/singing “Old Town Road.” Within a minute, all the children were gathered around her singing. The next thing I see, all the children had formed a line behind our practicum student, and all were marching around the yard. In that moment, we were all one, one line of happy faces, loving each other’s company and the experience the music had afforded. – Kathleen

A noteworthy development during the virtual programming in 2020 was the extension of the webs of relationships into the home, as caregivers were engaged in the oral histories and provocation boxes. Krystal observed the ways relationships formed among the teachers and students through “sharing their own family experiences.” She attributed this, in part, to the “benefits of the summer reading programs” and the “supportive environment” the team provided. Krystal also noted how sharing personal experiences and background knowledge in the virtual environment helped to strengthen peer-to-peer connections. Mary Jane shared an anecdote about a student in the virtual program who reflected on ways he could help his peers who struggled with English. She recalled him saying, “Maybe I can help some Spanish students that might not know how to speak English and I can translate for them.”

Jamie and Mary Jane both reflected on the way interpersonal connections were sustained from the academic year in the classroom to the summer work in the pop-up tents in 2019 and online in 2020. Reflecting on the virtual programming, Jamie recalled: “Some of the students who joined were ones we already knew to some extent so we could build off of that relationship already established.” Sustaining interpersonal relationships is a key to successful SUPs, and the team was encouraged that durable relationships seemed to form even through the disruptions posed by the pandemic. Jamie shared an anecdote about an encounter she had with a student from the virtual program.

After the summer session, I ran into one of the students at a restaurant. Even though we both had masks on, she recognized me and introduced herself to me. She seemed really happy to see me and acted like she knew me. I was surprised because I thought the online environment wouldn’t lead to that kind of response out in the world. – Jamie

The interpersonal relationships established through the partnership were nested in a web of interconnections among communities—institutions, neighborhoods, families, businesses. In 2019, communities were interconnected through “being out in the community” (Jamie), being able “to work side by side” (Robbie) in authentic ways, and “building trust” (David).

Robbie used a bridge-building metaphor to characterize the centrality of the interconnections among communities to the purpose of the SUP:

Not only are we here to help the children academically but we are here to merge the Auburn University and Loachapoka communities together. To build bridges and form relationships that not only last during the summer but carry over to the fall when they return to the traditional academic setting. – Robbie

Robbie stressed the importance of sustaining the community connections, and she believed the success of the program coupled with the close-knit community in Loachapoka could be a key to doing this work “on a grander scale” in the future. She predicted: “It is my belief that individuals who have previously participated will encourage others to come and be a part of the program.”

## Innovation

Innovative practice is a core tenet of professional development school partnerships (NAPDS, 2021), and innovation was clearly evident in the design of the 2019 summer program and the adaptations engendered by COVID-19 restrictions and protocols. Kathleen, a veteran schoolteacher and doctoral candidate, shared her first impressions of the innovative pop-up tent literacy camps during the first summer.

We were going out into the community, setting up opportunities to play in people's homes and in their neighborhoods. We were invited into their safe spaces and trusted with their children. It was unlike anything I had ever done before and something I had never seen. – Kathleen

David, who was serving as head of the Department of Curriculum and Teaching when the program was implemented, recalled thinking “the idea for pop-up tents in the community ... was very innovative—at least by department standards.” He saw the initiative as a way to marry two major emphases in the department: (a) a strong commitment to outreach in the community enacted by many members of the department and (b) outstanding summer programming that provides summer learning for P-12 students and preservice teachers on campus. “To my knowledge,” he reflected, “a program like this had not been done in this way.”

If “necessity is the mother of invention,” as the proverb states, then COVID-19 certainly provided the necessity in 2020. As Chad summarized, “What needed to happen [in summer 2020] was avoiding crowds while still educating children. University and district protocols kept us from interacting face-to-face, so really, everything was innovative!” Mary Jane alluded to “the damn struggle” confronting the team as the uncertainty of the pandemic jeopardized the summer 2020 work. “We had no direct way to involve the families and community resources and we certainly ran the risk of stalling the relationship, which would adversely impact the partnership with such a vulnerable area.” She continued, describing the inventive response:

We hit it two-fold through our collaborative planning. We included oral histories with our middle school work and engaged our early childhood teacher candidates with families (including adolescent siblings) via Zoom. We guided our students in the latter to construct provocation boxes focused on cultural relevance and hoping to build on the family's resources. Kathleen and I delivered these boxes each week. – Mary Jane

Krystal expressed her impression that “overall the [2020] program was innovative.” She detailed the impactful integration of multiple strategies and pedagogical approaches that occurred:

The way we helped students build background knowledge by reading a text, drawing illustrations about their stories, providing students with examples of personal experiences, showing videos, introducing new vocabulary, explaining the differences of meaning of words, and using the study of oral histories before and after reading helped students acquire a better comprehension. The use of word walls was also a great strategy to help ESL students in the challenge that they experience when reading in a second language. We also taught them unfamiliar vocabulary after reading, worked in break out rooms/small groups to learn more of a specific material. I think that the way we use oral histories was very original and creative, also the idea of the word clouds as I mentioned earlier.

David suggested that another innovative aspect of the partnership was the way it had been funded. The programs in 2019 and 2020 required the purchase of teaching materials, pop-up tents, and snacks and funds for summer salaries for faculty and paid student assistants.



The team applied for grants and received some internal [university] support. The department also underwrote costs for the program. The fiscal gymnastics involved connecting the program to a revenue stream, which for an academic unit like [the Department of Curriculum and Teaching] is tuition.

Because the programs in Loachapoka provided field sites for required practica that were connected to summer courses that generated tuition, summer tuition revenue could supplement resources from grants, district resources, and in-kind contributions.

## **Implications and Future Directions**

### **Implications for Rural Teacher Preparation**

Our study highlights the promise of assets-based approaches to pre-service teacher preparation that embrace community funds of knowledge (González, 2005). Rural school systems encounter many barriers to the recruitment and retention of high quality teachers (Fishman, 2015), which makes sustained reform in these areas difficult (Lowe, 2006). Moreover, while children receive educational and support services during the academic year, summers present opportunity gaps for rural children because they no longer have access to schools (Slates et al., 2012).

One way to prepare high quality teachers for rural settings is through intentional field placements in rural schools (Azano & Stewart, 2016; Barley, 2009; Blanks et al., 2013; Evans, 2019; Proffit et al., 2004); however, such placements require careful attention to culture and place. Azano and Stewart (2016) discussed the importance of guiding teacher candidates away from deficit-oriented thinking and toward a deeper understanding of culture and place in education:

It is simply not enough to encourage teachers to build relationships with students and make the curriculum “relevant.” Instead, teacher educators must make concerted efforts to dig deeply into the concepts of culture and place to explore how individual differences influence teaching and learning. (p. 119)

The pedagogies we are creating offer opportunities for all partners—including teacher candidates—to better understand family and community funds of knowledge. In addition, our approach extends this work into year-round, culturally relevant learning opportunities that may help deter summer learning loss.

### **Learning and the Four Pillars**

Learning is at the core of the “four pillars” that define PDS partnerships (NAPDS, 2021, p. 6)—P-12 student learning, teacher candidate learning, professional growth and learning of all partners, and learning that results from the synergistic construction of new knowledge in the field. This learning occurs in a hybrid “third space” in which “binaries of schools and universities, theory and practice, academic and practitioner knowledge, and so on are integrated in new ways” (NAPDS, 2021, p. 12). Our study helps to define the contours of PDS as a “third space” by highlighting the roles of family and community assets in the process. We learned that many academic standards can be taught by tapping the experiences of the families and children, and teacher candidates started to recognize text selection and multiple modes of self expression are necessary to create provocations that build on families’ funds of knowledge. University faculty and graduate students learned that the most empowering place within the partnership is the community.

### **Future Directions**

The most important finding in our study is that *we learned we have more to learn* as we plan for the future. We need to create more scaffolded opportunities for our teacher candidates, recruit more families and teachers, continue documenting our learning, and generate sustainability. Our plans for the summer of 2021 and the following academic year include four sets of adaptations.

First, we are continuing with provocation boxes and family engagement both from within the school building and within the neighborhoods. Teacher candidates will Zoom with participating families once a week during our traditional summer school month and, each Thursday, the children will take a provocation box home for the extended weekend. The candidates will involve children in provocations at school that connect to the families, as well.

Second, traditional summer school will be followed by three weeks of work in four neighborhoods. Azano and Stewart (2016) found teacher candidates recognized “close-knit” (p. 114) as a benefit of the rural community, and in our study Mary Jane noted that rural isolation seems to facilitate very close knit neighborhoods. Yet, it is difficult to develop a systemic hub that connects these neighborhoods due to a lack of resources. If the school is to be that hub, then the SUP must be a presence in the neighborhoods. To leverage the impact of this presence, we plan to invite other outreach initiatives across our campus to join us in the neighborhoods.

Third, family Zooms and provocation boxes will become a part of the field work during the school year. Each teacher candidate with early childhood placements will reach out to one family from the classroom of the placement. The teacher candidate, teacher, and professor will be guided to find ways to bring the child’s interests and families’ funds of knowledge into aspects of assessments, planning, instruction, and reflection.

Fourth, oral histories will be included as project-based learning for older students and as potential provocation activities for early childhood students. Both oral histories and home-based provocations invite family engagement that is multigenerational, personally meaningful, and interconnected with school.

All of these adaptations are grounded in commitments to assets-based pedagogy, community funds of knowledge (González, 2005), and the nine essentials of PDSs (NAPDS, 2021). As we continue working with children and families, teachers, teacher candidates, and faculty, we will guide all constituents in recognizing assumptions about the communities we serve and inviting them to join us in learning more about the ways families’ assets can support innovative pedagogy.

### **Conclusion**

Our participatory action research yielded important insights about adaptation to changing conditions in the context of our SUP work. We learned the importance of rooting our partnership work in strong theoretical and conceptual commitments to community funds of knowledge, social constructivism, the Nine Essentials framework for PDS partnerships, and social justice. Our analysis revealed how grounding our work in commitments to these ideas inspired partners to persist through challenges. We also saw how celebrating mutual success can serve as an inspiration for our work. Over and over our analysis highlighted the salience of interconnection. Indeed, trusting, reciprocal relationships are at the heart of partnership work, and our collaborative, inclusive approach to the challenges of the pandemic were a key to successful adaptation to ever-changing conditions. Finally, we described many facets of innovation that

were evident in the data, and we came to understand how our ability to innovate and be resourceful during the pandemic required trust and a safe environment for attempting new things.

While the changes we describe were precipitated by the response to COVID-19 in spring 2020, the lessons we learned are applicable to other situations requiring adaptation, innovations, and change. Our observations suggested that all constituents benefitted from the adapted summer program, and we yielded increased understanding of cultural assets, thus validating the implementation of literacy practices occurring naturally in the homes of the families. Certainly, these findings are relevant to a myriad of situations calling for change, particularly how members within PDS networks interact with the on-going lived experiences of the communities within which they are situated.

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