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Innovations and Collaboration to Influence Policy and Practice: Global Deans Speak

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Introduction

For the second consecutive year, education deans and other institutional leaders from around the globe gathered on the campus of East China Normal University (ECNU) for the Global Education Deans Forum (GEDF), October 24–25, 2019. Participants came from 10 countries/regions across 5 continents for 2 days of conversations, which included Australia (2), Canada (2), Chinese mainland (8), Hong Kong SAR (2), Ireland (1), Korea (1), Singapore (1), South Africa (1), Spain (2), the United Kingdom (3), and the United States (11). Based on suggestions from 2018 GEDF participants, the focus for conversations was: *Increasing the influence of university research on educational policy and practice.* Last year's participants also requested that deans have time to describe *promising innovations* from their institutions.

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Forum format

During the first day, after brief introductory comments and a framing presentation by ECNU Dean Zhenguo Yuan, a panel of five deans briefly described their strategies for making research results from their institutions as relevant and influential as possible for policymakers and practitioners. After a whole-group discussion of the panel's remarks, participants split into two smaller groups to facilitate more in-depth discussions of the topic. Subsequently, the groups reassembled and the facilitators for each group briefly summarized the conversations from their small groups. Across the day, several breaks enabled participants to follow up with colleagues on information and ideas that emerged in the formal settings.

The second day began with a discussion of the organization, purpose, and future of the GEDF. A notable outcome of this conversation was agreement to hold the 2020 GEDF at Boston College (BC) in Boston, MA, USA. Following this discussion, each of the deans made a 5-minute "TED Talk"-style presentations on promising innovations (see summaries below). Breaks between groups of talks allowed for informal conversations and follow-up as had happened during the first day as well. In the afternoon, teams of doctoral students from some of the participating institutions made brief presentations based on research they had conducted during the prior week under the supervision of faculty at GEDF institutions.

Influencing policy and practice: Cross-cutting challenges and strategies

Rather than report the contributions of each individual dean to the conversation, we have identified commonalities in the challenges and the strategies employed to increase the influence of research on policy and practice. (The order in which these appear is not intended to suggest a particular priority.)

Challenges

- Practitioners and policymakers often distrust and dismiss researchers because of a perceived failure to understand the realities of the worlds of practice and policy. Some policymakers believe that university researchers do not understand that policymakers live in a world of "limited resources to address limitless needs"—to quote Dr. James Gallagher, renowned child development scholar and policy expert. Practitioners often complain that university faculty live in an "ivory tower" and trade in theoretical rather than practical knowledge.
- University reward systems are geared to value grant funding and publications in research journals over engagement in the policy and practice arenas. Not-yet-tenured faculty are often discouraged from engaging in work in schools because it detracts from the time they have for the scholarship needed for promotion and tenure.

- Because of the value assigned to research-based knowledge and researchers in higher education, faculty who choose to work with policymakers and practitioners are usually regarded as lower status than are those who regularly publish in academic journals. This further disincentivizes collaboration with those in the world of practice.
- Even language usage differs between researchers and practitioners. As one dean observed, "Researchers work in world in which we are constantly hedging our claims. On the one hand this . . . but on the other hand that." Policymakers and practitioners live in worlds of action that typically demands decision-making and action in the absence of adequate information. They need information that is more definitive than that generated by most research. In addition, findings from research studies of the same problem or question frequently disagree, leaving practitioners unsure what to believe.
- To secure funding for research, researchers typically must address the priorities of the funder. These priorities may or may not align with the needs and concerns of local policymakers and practitioners.
- The language, formats, and communication channels common in the worlds of research are unfamiliar or inaccessible to those in the world of practice. Policymakers and practitioners rarely read academic journals or attend academic conferences. Thus, getting research findings into the hands of practitioners and policymakers in ways that inform their decisions and actions is a challenge.
- In several countries, institutions of higher education (IHEs) are required to demonstrate the impact of their research on the world of practice to satisfy oversight authorities. Being able to track the impact of research on specific policies or practices is, typically, difficult as other information and consideration shape practical results.

Strategies and initiatives

- Several deans reported codesigning with policymakers research studies, policy "experiments," school curricula, and instructional materials. In some cases, schools or agencies have approached IHEs to ask for help and in others IHEs have reached out to schools and agencies to offer support.
- Similarly, some institutions are partnering with educators, schools, and governmental agencies to help them organize and use data to improve both policy and practice. Funding cuts have handicapped the ability of government agencies in some countries to analyze data on schools, educators, and students. In addition, agencies and school authorities often lack the technical knowledge required for sophisticated statistical analyses.
- Several deans cited the importance of IHEs' "power of convening." IHEs are positioned to invite key players from the worlds of policy and practice to share information and discuss

topics and questions of mutual interest. An advantage of such convenings for IHEs is learning about the problems and issues that those in the world of practice are facing to inform their research and instructional programs.

- One of the Chinese deans described cocreating "think tanks" with local and national policymakers that include both researchers and policymakers and focus on addressing specific issues or problems.
- Several deans described efforts to coach researchers on speaking with practitioners and policymakers in their languages. Faculty are cautioned against using academic buzz words and "insider language." This is not to be confused with "dumbing down" research but rather recognizing that technical language in any field can create barriers to understanding for nonspecialists.
- Deans also discussed the imperative to establish trust with those in the world of practice. This may involve demonstrating that researchers are sincere in their claim to wanting to improve practice rather than merely criticize. Focusing research on the problems and issues of foremost concern to practitioners is another way to help establish trust.
- Creating formal agreements and MOUs with schools and agencies makes clear to everyone the expectations and commitments for all parties. These are also invaluable in sustaining collaborative projects, given the predictable turnover in key personnel.
- Regular and frequent communication with partners was another essential strategy mentioned by several deans. This typically requires establishing channels for information sharing and status updates.
- Several deans also described creating incentives and rewards for university faculty to produce scholarship that furthers the institutional mission of collaboration with policymakers and practitioners. These deans see this as a critical counterweight to the formal university reward systems that typically undervalue work with practitioners of all stripes.
- Similarly, a few deans note that they required or incentivized university faculty to spend time in schools to gain first-hand knowledge of the issues practitioners face. They see such engagement as essential to ensure that faculty are studying issues of importance to schools and practicing educators.
- Another common practice is to increase accessibility of research findings through open-access channels and ensuring that versions of research are written in user-friendly language. More than one of the IHEs represented at the Forum employ part- or full-time editors to edit or rewrite research reports to make them accessible to a broad audience.

- At one institution, faculty created case studies to demonstrate the impact of their research. These studies show how specific research findings have found their way into particular policies and practices.
- Several deans reported on offering professional development opportunities for practitioners, both face-to-face and online, to communicate recent research discoveries.
- At least one institution offers teachers internships to work on research projects relevant to their practice. These enable practitioners to become more familiar with the research process and the lives of researchers.

Promising innovations: Global deans' TED talks

Deans were asked to provide a 5-minute description of a promising innovation at their institution. Below, we provided brief summaries of their talks. We have grouped the talks into rough categories in an effort to make connections across similar innovations. We acknowledge that several—if not most—of the innovations could be categorized differently or span across more than one category (e.g., almost all involve digital technologies in some form). We apologize in advance for miscategorizing any given innovation. We relied primarily on notes taken during the Forum and, when possible, attempted to add additional information from handouts and websites. We also aimed, in the interest of space, to limit the summaries to no more than 200 words. This likely means we have not done justice to particular innovations. We encourage readers who wish to know more about any of the innovations to use the links provided in the text.

Mental health and special needs students

Center for Safe and Healthy Schools, School of Education, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, USA. Dean Christopher Morphew.

Focus: Many schools do not overtly integrate into the curriculum information on safety and health. The goal is to change conversations about safety and health and introduce a holistic vision.

Implementation: The program is currently being piloted in Baltimore, MD (USA) and takes a community resiliency approach. The presumption is that communities have existing resources and strengths and that the program should enhance and capitalize on these. This requires engaging the community in addressing the question, "If we want to create safer, healthier schools, what are the key components?"

The Center offers a digital certificate to educational professionals and requires 10 hours of online work. (https://education.jhu.edu/cshs/)

Swallowing Disorders App, Faculty of Education, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR, China. Dean Anne Lin Goodwin.

Focus: Swallowing disorders affect 16% to 23% of the population and is higher among the elderly who are becoming a larger proportion of the population than ever before. Not enough therapists are available to meet the need. To address the issue, Director of the UHK Swallowing Research Lab, Dr. Karen Chan organized a collaboration that included the Lab, a local foundation, and education, medicine, and dentistry faculty and students.

Implementation: The group, led by Dr. Chan, developed an app—"Keep Talking and Eating Out (KOTE)"—that provides essential information on swallowing disorders as well as swallowing and communication exercises. The Lab website describes the app as, "a self-help platform for people who have or are at risk of developing progressive neurological and/or radiation-induced swallowing and communication difficulties" (https://swallow.edu.hku.hk/kote/). The app has been used to train family members and the young to work with the frail elderly. This has helped to mitigate the shortage of speech therapists.

Learn Mental Health Literacy (LEARN), Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada. Dean Blye Frank.

Focus: Youth suicide has been a growing tragic phenomenon in Canada and globally. This led the faculty at UBC to collaborate with colleagues at three other universities, the Ministry of Health, and school districts to develop a curriculum to increase the mental health literacy of both preservice and practicing teachers.

Implementation: The goal was not to prepare teachers as mental health diagnostician. Rather, the intent was to help preservice teachers (PTs) and practicing teachers become more aware of their own mental health and self-care. Teachers need to be able to "read the room" and the students whom they teach. Ideally, if they sensed that a student might be suffering from a mental health issue, they would make appropriate referrals to trained professionals.

A key to implementation was the collaboration that brought together mental health experts and educators to ensure a curriculum that is grounded in best practice and research-based knowledge and that teachers find manageable and relevant. The curriculum is now woven throughout the preservice program. The 7-module (8–10 hours) course is also available for free online via UBCx Online. Several districts also fund their teachers to attend summer institutes designed around the curriculum. The attendant research project will provide the data needed to continually improve the curriculum. (https://pdce.educ.ubc.ca/learn-mental-health-literacy/)

Autism and Intellectual Disabilities Initiative, College of Education, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, USA. Dean Robert Floden.

Focus: This university-wide, multidisciplinary initiative is intended to address a shortage of services for students with autism or other intellectual disabilities. New state legislation requires insurance providers to cover services to children with autism. This created an opportunity for Michigan State University to follow through on its mission-based commitment to serving these special needs students.

Implementation: On the social-science dimension of the initiative, College of Education (COE) faculty have taken the lead. The interdisciplinary group working on the initiative chose to focus on critical transition points for students on the autism spectrum. The first transition point is entering preschool. A COE faculty member has developed an applied behavioral analysis approach that has been used with small groups of students in three schools. Then, the faculty member works with the teachers to use the approach in the preschool classroom. To fund expansion of this model to other schools, the COE is attempting to franchise this approach and to work with school districts.

The next transition is to life after high school. COE faculty have collaborated with others around the campus to establish internships for high school students on the autism spectrum. A faculty member works with a group of 12 students to help them learn life skills needed for independent learning. The third transition is to college. To ease this transition, faculty work with a small group of students who live in a dorm and audit a few classes. (https://raind.msu.edu/)

Formative Education, Boston College, Boston, MA, USA. Dean Stanton Wortham.

Focus: This initiative developed in response to the wide-spread phenomenon of increasing burnout among youth. The focus on academic performance has obscured the need to address the social and emotional needs of young people. As youth are developing intellectually, they are also developing spiritually and emotionally. BC conceptualizes attention to holistic youth development as "formative education," the goal of which is a meaningful and purposeful life.

Implementation: The Dean has provided seed-funding for faculty who choose to focus on "formative education" as well as organizing lunches for faculty to gather to discuss the idea. In addition, retreats for students and faculty are intended to encourage reflection on questions such as: What brings you joy? What are you good at? What does the world need you to do? The ultimate goal is to align teaching, research, professional development, and community building to focus on "formative education." (https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/lynch-school/about/FormativeEducation.html)

Email Policy, Faculty of Education, University of Bristol, Bristol, UK. Dean Bruce Macfarlane.

Focus: The policy grew out of concerns for the mental health and well-being of the faculty and administration. Constant emailing 24/7 seemed unhealthy both for staff themselves and their relationships with family and friends. The policy limits emailing to the hours between 7 AM and 7 PM during the work week. In addition, emailing is prohibited on weekends and holidays.

Implementation: This policy was one part of a larger effort to provide the healthiest possible working environment in the School. Since implemented, the policy has generated reactions from some faculty although the leadership consulted with faculty beforehand. The policy covers only emailing within the School. Faculty are free to email whomever they choose outside the School whenever they wish.

After 6 months, the policy appears relatively successful. Some faculty have announced in their email signatures that they are honoring the new policy. The Dean noted that he enjoyed waking up on Sunday morning to find "my inbox is a lot lighter than it used to be." (http://www.bristol.ac.uk/education/study/)

Digital technologies and STEM/STEAM

Digital Tracking and Training, Zhejiang Normal University, Jinhua, China. Dean Zha Ying.

Focus: The University has developed a new platform using the "Internet Plus" to both better track the performance of students and graduates and to offer support and training.

Implementation: The University is tracking the performance of graduates both to help them improve their practice and to improve the teacher education programs on campus. In addition, three new online platforms have been created: Smart Training, Smart Teaching, and Smart Management. University faculty as well as primary and secondary schools are currently using the platforms. These are available not only in Zhejiang Province but the University has also made these resources available to Hubei Province, demonstrating the potential of the innovation to help remote regions of China. (http://iso.zjnu.edu.cn/wntroductionwofwwwww/list.htm)

STEM/STEAM Secondary School, Peabody College of Education, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, USA. Dean Camila Benbow.

Focus: Responding to a request from the local schools district, Peabody College established middle and high schools on Vanderbilt campus for highly motivated students from metro Nashville schools. The program provides learning opportunities for school students, PTs, and

postdoctoral students. Teacher preparation students observe and teach classes, with supervision, in the program. In addition, postdoctoral students in mathematics and science are trained to work with teachers in schools throughout the area to help develop innovative lab activities.

Implementation: Students in the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades come to campus for 1 day a week to take all their required science courses. Students must make a 4-year commitment to the program and are required to make up any work in the classes they miss on the day they spend on campus. Participating students work in the labs of faculty members at Vanderbilt. The 30 diverse students who are participating in the program consistently win science competitions, both locally and nationally, and graduates attend highly selective universities. A new maker space nearby will offer additional learning opportunities for students and postdocs. (https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/)

Edventures, The Center for Engineering Education, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, USA. Dean Karen Gallagher.

Focus: Edventures is an incubator/accelerator for educational technology initiatives. Examples of initiatives include: medical students studying cancer surgery by watching a surgery occurring in real time from 3,000 miles away; a music teacher keeping tabs on students' practice sessions via a mobile App; and a mathematics teacher who can share an App with her students designed to preclude the need for them to buy a high-end calculator.

Implementation: Initiatives created by the first cohort of students attracted over US$13 million in startup funding. These startups have reached over 500,000 users and roughly a hundred institutions. So far, 16 companies have been created, 75% of which are being led by women and 30% by people of color. Students come from Africa, Eastern Europe, China, Indonesia, and Mexico as well as the U.S. (https://incubate.usc.edu/rossier-edventures-activities/)

STEM Teacher Enrichment Academy, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia. Dean Janette Bobis.

Focus: The donor-funded Academy is designed to reverse the decline of students who enroll in advanced studies of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The focus is on teachers around Australia in the hope that renewing their interest in STEM will help kindle enthusiasm in students.

Implementation: The academy combines the expertise from faculty from across the University—the school of education (SOE) and social work, the faculty of science, and the faculty

of engineering and information technology. Invitations are sent to schools across Australia, from remote areas to metropolitan centers.

Schools, who pay a fee to participate, are linked to the neighboring schools. The initial Academy session may begin with high schools followed by a second academy that includes nearby elementary schools. The goal is to create stronger connections between the high schools and other schools.

Participating teachers have designed lessons that combine science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. In addition to the initial Academy, mentors are assigned to each of the participating schools who follow up with the teachers across the year. Future plans include an STEM academy that combines elementary schools and secondary schools to collaborate on projects to better facilitate the transition for students moving into the high school. (https://sydney.edu.au/engage/schools/stem-teacher-enrichment-academy.html)

Technology Company Internships for Preservice Elementary Teachers, Faculty of Education, Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland. Dean Anne Looney.

Focus: The program provides paid summer internships in nearby technology companies for third-year preservice elementary teachers to experience workplaces where their students may work in the future. The experience is intended to increase PTs' ability to help their students connect the information taught in STEM classes to the skills and knowledge required in the high-tech companies that have congregated in and around Dublin.

Implementation: At the outset, the Dublin Faculty of Education reached out to several of the high-tech companies near to the University. The response to the idea was so positive that more companies have asked to participate than there have been PTs participating in the program. Whereas the program began with 20 PTs, 40 are expected to participate next year. Education faculty supervise the PTs, which has opened up the education faculty to companies that previously only engaged with the engineering or science faculties.

The education faculty is currently evaluating the program to ensure that the PTs get maximum benefit from the experience as they invest considerable time and energy. An unintended consequence has been that some of the participants are choosing to take jobs in the companies where they intern rather than entering the classroom. This is far from a complete loss as these students bring their knowledge of education to the work of companies that often have little understanding of education. (https://www.dcu.ie/news/news/2019/Apr/STEM-Teacher-Internship-programme-connects-teachers-and-industry-DCU.shtml)

Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI), Moray House School of Education and Sport, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK. Dean Richard Andrews.

Focus: EFI is a university-wide initiative intended to address global issues such as inequality, climate change, migration, the rise of AI, and big data in education. EFI collaborates with external agencies including the city of Edinburgh itself to "develop solutions to develop practical solutions to tackle real-world problems in the economy, cultural sector, and policy arena in a world that is increasingly affected by a revolution in how we use, store, and think about data" (https://www.ed.ac.uk/ppls/news/edinburgh-futures-institute-lecture-series). Moray House is the major partner in the education area—particularly, the Centre for Research in Digital Education (CRDE).

Implementation: CRDE is conducting research and disseminating its findings through knowledge exchanges and consultancies "in key areas including digital education pedagogy and policy, open education, children and technology, learning analytics, and museum learning" (https://www.de.ed.ac.uk/). To these ends, it partners with other universities and policy-makers, schools, museums, and those in the cultural heritage sector.

Building Online Infrastructure, College of Education, University of Florida, Tallahassee, FL, USA. Dean Glenn Good and Professor Tom Dana.

Forum: Data showed that registration for online courses was outpacing that for in-person courses. Because the University lacked support infrastructure for online courses, the COE undertook to build its own distance learning capacity. This also enabled the College to improve its communication in general and better serve partner schools.

Implementation: The COE invested in instructional design teams, graphics designers, video production specialist, post-video production specialists, and people who specialize in strategic communications and social media. These specialists supported online course development. This team also created and leveraged resources for marketing campaigns and for communicating to legislators and other constituencies. Recently, a faculty member has begun to study user experiences that will generate data to help improve all online resources. (https://education.ufl.edu/etc/)

Virtual Learning Network (VLN), School of Education, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, USA. Dean Rick Ginsberg.

Focus: The primary goal of the VLN was to make teaching feel less isolating for PTs and beginning teachers. In addition, the VLN is designed to provide leadership opportunities for practicing teachers in partner schools as well as to connect with KU SOE alumni through this network.

Implementation: The SOE conducted a needs assessment, collecting data from partner schools, recent graduates, and current students to identify their greatest needs. The SOE also invested time into identifying the technology infrastructure best suited to providing the supports and

resources needed, ultimately deciding to use slack. To make the network function, the SOE also trained a small number of facilitators.

Slack allows facilitators to open what they call "topical channels" that PTs can join as well as professional learning community. Based on the needs assessment, current channels include classroom technology, classroom management, creating safe school spaces, finding a teaching position, data-driven teaching, lesson planning based on student data, flipped and blended classes, language and literacy, and making the classroom more fun for students. The data generated from these channels provide opportunities for researchers to gauge their usage. (https://educationonline.ku.edu/online-student-experience/virtual-learning-resources)

Curricula

Child-Study Curriculum Innovation, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa. Dean Sara Gravett.

Focus: To bring theory and practice into closer alignment, first-year PTs begin child study of kindergarten students in the on-campus elementary school and follow the same group of students across 4 years. The on-campus school enrolls children from the surrounding township whose inhabitants are very poor. Local families value the school so highly that, to secure a place at the school for their children, many of them sleep in the street the night before registration day.

Implementation: Each PT follows a student from kindergarten through third grade. To do so, the PTs follow highly structured protocols to focus their observations. As a result, by the end of their 4-year preparation programs, the PTs have become experts in child development. The first-hand knowledge that the PTs develop enables them to critically assess and challenge the information they encounter in their university classes and textbooks and generate rich discussions. (https://www.uj.ac.za/faculties/facultyofeducation/DepartmentofChildhoodEducation)

Connected Curriculum (CC), Institute of Education, University College of London, London, UK. Pro-Vice-Provost of Education Norbert Pachler.

Focus: CC is a university-wide initiative grounded in learning through research and inquiry across students' programs of study, regardless of level of their study. The aim of every department is to engage students in some form of inquiry and/or research project. The CC consists of six related learning dimensions that constitute research-based education and reveal the potential for multiple connections to be made within and among programs.

Implementation: Initiated in 2015, CC was implemented through working groups that created strategies and developed materials for redesigning curricula. Themes that emerged included Liberating the Curriculum (questioning Eurocentric, male-dominated curricula not

representing the international student body), Assessment and Feedback (promoting sound methodologies to assess and evaluate connections), and Digital Education (use of appropriate tools for knowledge production).

The implementation of the CC has generated considerable scholarship. This includes case studies of how the CC concept has led to the redesign of curricula in Geography, Medical Science, Law, and other fields (https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/case-studies?collection=drupal-teaching-learning-case-studies&facetsort=alpha&) as well as other publications that take a broader view of the initiative (https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/connected-curriculum-framework-research-based-education).

Summer Learning Journey (SLJ), Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand. Dean Mark Barrow.

Focus: The program addresses the literacy slide for students in year 4–8 students across New Zealand during the summer break, particularly for students from disadvantaged home. An additional benefit has been that participating students have developed healthy online relationships that promote social–emotional health.

Implementation: A team of educational researchers in the UA's Woolf Fisher Research Centre created the program to address the wide-spread phenomenon of summer learning loss. A digital platform developed by UA staff offers participating students opportunities to read, write, and share their knowledge with their classmates, families, and teachers. Educators and PTs read the students' blogs and provide feedback. The Hugo Charitable Trust provides funding for the program and currently 68 schools are involved.

UA researchers have been studying the effects of the program, comparing participating students (more than 3,619) with a sample of those who have not participated. Participating students who wrote at least two substantial blogs weekly showed learning gains equivalent to 1.6 years of education, significantly more than nonparticipants. The program has captured the attention of the Shanghai Institute for Lifelong Learning that is interested in adapting the approach to the Chinese context. (https://developingindigitalworlds.blogs.auckland.ac.nz/tools/summer-learning-journey/)

Curriculum Reform, Korean Kongju National University (KKNU), Chungcheongnam-do, Korea. Dean Seung-Chul Kwak.

Focus: Teacher education at Korean universities is undergoing reforms with a view to how to educate teachers to prepare students for the knowledge-based, globalized 21st century (Seventh Curriculum). Specifically, the revised school curriculum is intended to promote individuality, creativity, and knowledge of Korean and other cultures.

Implementation: The KKNU Department of Education offers five degree programs: early childhood, primary, social work, pedagogy, and social education. All of the programs focus on social justice learning and practice. In addition, teachers are being prepared to teach the Seventh Curriculum and adaptation to changing society. Recently, the Department has also focused on community and regionally based education. (http://english.kongju.ac.kr/)

Immersion Bilingual Education, University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain. International Relations Office, Miquel Robert Ferrer.

Focus: After the fall of the Franco dictatorship that had suppressed Catalan language and culture, the potential for conflict existed because half the population of Catalonia was Catalan speakers. Because half the children entered school in Barcelona speaking Catalan, a challenge is helping them maintain their first language and home culture and also become fluent in Spanish.

Implementation: In the early grades, instruction is in Catalan. Gradually, Spanish is introduced in classes. By the end of primary education (when students are 12 years old), the goal is for every student to be fluent in both languages. Both secondary schools and universities offer classes in both Spanish and Catalan. Examinations are offered in both languages. As a result of this system of early emersion and bilingualism, 95% of the population speak Catalan and 99% also speak Spanish. Both languages are used in academic, social, and business settings. Teachers are prepared to work with at-risk students and teach in both languages. (https://doi.org/10.1080/0962021960060106)

New Teacher Education Curriculum, School of Education Science, Nanjing Normal University (NNU), Nanjing, China. Dean Jianjun Gu.

Focus: Innovations at NNU are grounded in the fact that success in education depends on teachers. NNU is intent on using its advantages and resources to innovate. For instance, NNU relied on the work of early childhood researchers to create the first research-based kindergarten in the Jiangsu Province.

Implementation: NNU faculty members have been engaged in team building that includes faculty from across campus. In addition, faculty have also been implementing a new "3D" curriculum for PTs that features increased course work including more instructional methods and creating greater connections among courses and with fieldwork in schools. In addition to coursework, PTs attend workshops, salons, and other learning environments. NNU is also involved in establishing more connections across disciples, the campus, and the region. (http://schools.njnu.edu.cn/edu/)

Communications, collaboration, and common spaces

International Academic Exchange Week, School of Education, East China Normal University (ECNU), Shanghai, China. Dean Zhenguo Yuan.

Focus: A core pillar of the SOE at ECNU is internationalization. To that end, it has created multiple partnerships with foreign universities including the University of Illinois, Champagne–Urbana, University College London, and the University of Toronto.

Implementation: Recent collaborative work has included an initiative on autism and technology and an International Academic Exchange Week. During the latter, ECNU faculty and students visit international partner universities and the partner sends its faculty and students to ECNU. This is an annual event. (http://www.ed.ecnu.edu.cn/en/?p=4168)

Educational Salons, Xiamen University, Xiamen, China. Professor Jianmin Gu.

Focus: Salons are created by teachers or students who share a particular research interest. They provide opportunities to hear from researchers with expert knowledge and to discuss research information.

Implementation: In addition to researchers, teachers, and students, government officials also attend salons of interest to them. The salons have served to inform articles that scholars have written and published. In addition, the salons have proved useful for master's and doctoral students to complete their dissertations. (https://en.xmu.edu.cn/)

Smith Learning Theater (SLT), Teachers College Columbia University, New York, NY, USA. Associate Dean Catherine Embree.

Focus: Rethinking the purpose and role of a library arose from increasing evidence that the current generation of students access and use information, ideas, and digital media in ways that differ from previous generations. Redesign of the fourth floor of the Teacher College's Gottesman Library started with identifying the learning goals for the renovation.

Implementation: The emphasis in SLT design was on flexible spaces that can be reconfigured as needs change in the future. The result is a space that is a combination of library, theater, classroom, and production studio. Also available to event planners is a set of tools and technologies (https://library.tc.columbia.edu/p/smith-learning-theater-toolset). Many of these are intended to maximize participant initiative and engagement with digital and other media.

Faculty and students who wish to use the space apply at least 6 months in advance. An advisory group evaluates that applications and identifies an "appropriate event producer" to

oversee the planning process (https://library.tc.columbia.edu/p/smith-learning-theater). Some recent events (2017–2018) included:

- Makers of the Deep: Exploration and Adventure
- Subway Summit on Cognition and Education Research
- Education Leadership Data Analytics Summit
- A Night in Celebration of Literature and Art
- Community College Research Center: Research Retreat
- Teachers in Conflict and Displacement
- TC Digital Learning Showcase

The library staff documents and archives events to make these available to a wider audience. (https://library.tc.columbia.edu/p/smith-learning-theater)

The University of Melbourne Network of Schools (UMNOS), Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia. Dean Jim Watterston.

Focus: The UMNOS is designed to offer schools access to and collaboration with researchers at UM. The Network schools share UM's commitment to evidence-based practices that promise to improve student learning and experience. In addition to providing research-based knowledge, the Network aims to help school expand their capacity to conduct their own research.

Implementation: Schools apply for membership in UMNOS and pay a fee. Selection depends on schools' leadership commitment to collaboration and to using empirical research to inform innovation. Membership is for 3 years, allowing for new schools to join the Network as other schools rotate out. Currently, the Network consists of 30 schools.

Focal areas for the Network change annually. For 2020, the four areas are formative assessment, developing student voice, micro-credentialing for students, and improving literacy learning. Researchers offer lectures and seminars on these topics. A consequence of UM researchers working closely with practitioners is that they have become more aware of the problems and issues that educators are facing. Practitioners, on their side, have become more knowledgeable about the University and all that it has to offer. Recently, a primary activity has been helping schools begin to carry out action research to address local problems of practice. (https://education.unimelb.edu.au/community/university-of-melbourne-network-of-schools)

Local Evidence Syntheses (LES), Nanyang Technological University/National Institute of Education (NIE), Singapore. Director Christine Goh.

Focus: NIE has developed several approaches to disseminate research findings to policymakers as well as to practitioners. The LES are a means to synthesize the results of multiple studies that focus on a similar problem or issue. These syntheses are written in language accessible to practitioners and others.

Implementation: NIE disseminates research findings in several ways. Researchers are required to communicate their findings to the Ministry of Education (MOE) to inform their policy making. NIE also organizes seminars and symposia that include teachers. This is done in collaboration with the Academy for Singapore Teachers. A third way involves engaging curriculum specialists in the MOE.

A recent innovation, LES are intended to be a series of publications that document the findings of research conducted by Office of Educational Research scholars focused on a particular theme. They are intended to answer the question often raised about research results—"So what?" They are written to be both succinct and accessible. To date, two syntheses have been published, the first on teacher learning and the second on school leadership. These have been shared with both policymakers and teachers. (https://www.nie.edu.sg/research/publication/local-evidence-syntheses)

EduTalks, College of Education, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, USA. Dean Mia Tuan.

Focus: Patterned on TED Talks, the purpose of the EduTalks is to better communicate the work of researchers to a generalist audience. The hope is to engage a wider swarth of people in conversations about critical educational issues. Talks are not about research methods or theories of action. Rather, speakers aim to coney why the work matters.

Implementation: Presenters come from COE faculty and partner organizations. Before their talk, presenters are encouraged to identify the two or three key concepts and the relevance of their work they hope to convey in their allotted 5 minutes. At each gathering, 9 or 10 speakers present. At the reception that follows the talks, audience members can ask questions and engage speakers in conversations. Attendance has varied between 100 and 260 attended.

The talks are also made available via "UW EduTalk" online (https://education.uw.edu/news/video/edutalks). Several of these have garnered as many as 3,000 views. The talks attracted press and other attention in the community and are relatively inexpensive to mount. In addition, some potential graduate students have reported that viewing the EduTalks online encouraged them to contact particular faculty and apply for admissions.

Innovative communication strategies, School of Education, University of Missouri (UM), Columbia, MO, USA. Dean Kathryn Chval.

Focus: Premised on the need for schools, faculties, and colleges of education to adopt a range of technologies to communicate more effectively and change the narrative about education schools, the UM COE at the UM has developed a number of communication strategies. The messages are designed with a specific audience in mind—students, staff and faculty, alumni, policymakers, and the public.

Implementation: Among the different communication strategies, the Dean identified the following:

- *Personalized video messages* to each college senior who has been accepted into the COE.
- *Facebook Live Chats* are used for recruiting both undergraduate and graduate students. The COE enrollment has increased while enrollment around campus has declined.
- *Media and social media monitoring* (via Melt Water Media) identify accomplishments of alumni. The Dean sends a follow-up congratulatory letter. This has resulted in alumni reengaging with the College.
- *Internal communication* via the "Scoop" to distribute information and reduce email inbox clutter.
- *Weekly press releases* via the campus news bureau describing faculty research and its impact. This reaches alumni, donors, and policymakers.
- *Using images on messages* to change the narrative.

(https://education.missouri.edu/outreach/)

Summary and conclusions

Several themes emerged from the conversations about increasing the impact of empirical research on policy and practice. Participants described numerous examples of educational researchers collaborating with both policymakers and practitioners. Participants also reported evidence of the impact these collaborations had both on policy and schools. In addition, participants noted that such collaborations were valuable, in part, because university faculty who were involved in collaborative work experienced, first-hand, the quotidian realities that PreK-12 educators and policymakers face. These experiences, in turn, informed and shaped their research foci.

Participants emphasized that collaborations require a high level of trust among all partners. Trust, in turn, develops from shared values and goals and mutual respect that arise from in-depth conversations. Participants also emphasized the need, at the outset of a project or program, to bring all partners to the table, develop clear written agreements that spell out expectations in detail, and establish frequent and regular communications. As several participants noted, deans can draw on their power of "convening" to bring together key players from other organizations and agencies.

Participants also identified obstacles to collaboration that include the faculty reward system common to research universities that values traditional scholarship over engagement with

practitioners. This system also tends to discourage early-career scholars from collaborative activities. Senior scholars often advised them to prioritize scholarship over work in schools and the policy arena if they hope to be tenured. In addition, the priorities of those who fund research may not align to the needs of practitioners. Finally, the language of researchers is itself frequently a barrier; practitioners typically find research literature opaque and prevaricating.

To address these obstacles, participants offered various strategies. These included providing faculty incentives to engage in the world of practice such as "extra credit" for merit-based raises and graduate student support for their research. Communication strategies included employing editors to craft research summaries and more user-friendly versions of research reports and offering faculty workshops on how to talk about their research with external audiences. Nearly all the institutions represented were taking advantage of social media and digital platforms to reach various constituents—students, graduates, partners, funders, and the public.

The picture of researcher engagement with policymakers and practitioners that emerged from the 2 days of conversation contravenes the portrayal of educational researchers as detached and unengaged, content to cogitate in their ivory towers. On the contrary, researchers in multiple countries are deeply involved with policymakers, schools, and PreK-12 educators and highly value these collaborations. In particular, the institutions from East Asia that were represented at the Forum appeared to have fewer obstacles to overcome in collaborating with governmental agencies and schools. These agencies often invite the involvement of university-based researchers at the outset of projects and some university-based research groups' semi-official status within the agencies. An empirical investigation could provide useful information on how these institutions develop and manage their relationships with external partners.

In addition, institutions are taking advantage of emerging technologies for instructional programs, innovations, and outreach. This runs counter to the false narrative that colleges, schools, and faculties of education are out of touch. On the contrary, several of the institutions, despite burdensome and restricting regulations, are substantively involved in innovative efforts to improve practice and policy that take advantage of the affordances of various digital technologies.

Although many of the GEDF institutions reported communicating, through multiple channels, the collaborative work underway to bring actionable research to bear on problems of policy and practice, as a field, we would be well served to invest more resources, thought, and energy into telling and disseminating stories of the impact of our work. More case studies of the type that some institutions have developed to demonstrate the impact of their research could verify the value and relevance of our work. As comforting as it may be to believe that good works speak for themselves, they often don't.

Authors' Note

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