Chapter 6
Finding Good Governance: Collaboration Between the University of British Columbia and the Richmond School District

Kathyrn D'Angelo, Gail Krivel-Zacks, and Catherine Johnson

Introduction

In 1998 the teacher education program enrolment at the University of British Columbia (UBC) included 538 preservice teachers. 299 were in the 12-month program, 128 in the first year of the 2-year Bachelor of Education, and 111 in the second year of the Bachelor of Education. There were 11 elementary cohorts, and many of these were themed (e.g., Elementary French Specialist cohort that prepared teachers to work in French Immersion, Core French, and Intensive French as well as in Francophone schools; Middle years cohort which prepared teachers for teaching in Middle schools, generally, Grades 6 to 8). All cohorts were under the administration of the Teacher Education Office (TEO) in the Faculty of Education. While we knew that the ultimate responsibility for the problem based learning (PBL) cohort would remain with the TEO, it was clear to us that at the cohort level we needed a fresh approach to governance.

Research in a number of fields has identified the importance of good governance practices in effective organizational performance (Shipley and Kovacs 2008 p. 216). While the term governance can be rather *slippery* in that it may mean different things to different organizations, e.g., global governance, corporate governance, participatory governance, and so on (Gisselquist 2012), in general terms, it simply means a framework and/or a process for decision-making. The concept of "good" governance can be defined as the model of governance that leads to desired results

K. D'Angelo (✉)
Richmond School District, Richmond, BC, Canada
e-mail: kdangelo@sd38.bc.ca

G. Krivel-Zacks
Vancouver Island University, Nanaimo, BC, Canada

C. Johnson
Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC, Canada

through values of democracy and social justice (Shipley and Kovacs 2008, p. 216). Many characteristics of "good" governance have been identified in the literature including but not limited to: rule of law, integrity, participatory, respectful, responsive, accountable, collaborative, effective and efficient, equitable, and inclusive. While characteristics of "good" governance may differ from organization to organization, five characteristics were identified, which appear to underpin all models of "good" governance. Those characteristics are responsibility, participation, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. Additionally, we believe "good" governance is defined by good will and collaboration between partners.

By highlighting each of these characteristics or pillars of "good" governance, this chapter explores the roles, relationships, and principles of governance that were and continue to be the underpinning of the problem based learning cohort established in 1999 in the teacher education program at the University of British Columbia.

Roles, Responsibility, and Participation

Practice teaching is an important part of any teacher education program, yet the literature identifies that there is often a weak collaboration between the school and the university (Zeichner 2010). Ulvik and Smith (2011) write that the two sites of learning often function like two different worlds:

> The different kinds of knowledge, episteme (theoretical) and techne (practical), do not interact to enhance an in-depth reflection and the development of phronesis (practical wisdom). (p. 531)

From our perspective it was important that theory and practice complement each other, and this was only possible if the Richmond School District (the school district where the PBL teacher candidates would complete their school-based practicum) was to have a significant and equal role in the governance of the PBL cohort. A number of factors underscored the Richmond School District as an ideal partner: The school district is geographically well located close to the university; there had been a history of a significant number of schools and/or teachers requesting practica students from the teacher education program at UBC; in the past, several cohorts of preservice teachers had been successfully integrated into schools in the Richmond School District for their school-based practicum; and there were seconded teachers from the district working in or for the Teacher Education Office.

In order to gauge interest in offering a unique pilot program that would build on the existing relationship with Richmond School District and UBC, an initial meeting was held between the Associate Dean of Teacher Education Charles Ungerleider, Professor Linda Seigel, and Kathyrn D'Angelo a seconded instructor and Administrator in the Richmond School District. At this meeting the philosophy of problem based learning and how such a teaching and learning pedagogy could be translated from McMaster Medical School into a pilot teacher education program

was discussed. Specifically, discussion centered on establishing a cohort premised on the belief that learning is a social process and that the appropriate context for learning is in small groups. Until this time, the teacher education program at UBC had used a traditional model of teaching and learning that is premised on the instructor as the dispenser of knowledge and the student as the recipient – as opposed to the PBL approach where preservice teachers with the support of tutors are encouraged to share their understandings with both their peers and the tutors. The goal is to compare one's own way of thinking with those of others and to clarify, compare, and negotiate meanings and understanding of concepts. Within the small PBL tutorial group, learning becomes the activity, and teaching, or in this case tutoring, becomes the support for the activity of learning.

Once the basic premise for a PBL cohort in the teacher education program at UBC was hammered out, a meeting was held between the Teacher Education Office at UBC and the Executive Team of the Richmond School District. At this meeting the philosophy of problem based learning was shared as well as the possible design for a teacher education pilot program. Further discussion ensued around the joint financial contribution necessary to make this program a success for both the university and the school district. It was believed that both the university and the district invest equally in this project.

The joint funding of the PBL cohort was unique. Monies were spent to support the professional development of both the preservice teachers and practicing teachers involved in the PBL cohort. The belief of all the stakeholders was that professional development opportunities needed to be experienced by both the sponsoring teacher and the preservice teacher at the same time to model the attributes of a lifelong learner in and out of the classroom This meant that some of these funds were used to provide substitute teachers so that the sponsor teachers could be released to attend these important learning and relationship-building opportunities. Guidelines for the use of these funds were created collaboratively with the District Coordinator from PBL meeting with the school district representative and the representative from the teachers' union. The key hopes and dreams of the school district were that this type of collaboration would:

- Model lifelong learning
- Connect practicing teachers with the university
- Connect the university with the school district for their mutual benefit
- Establish a university presence in the school district to benefit both the staff and the students
- Expose district personnel to the notion of problem based learning and its methodology
- Allow student teachers to be woven into the culture of the school fabric from the beginning of the school year right through to the end of the school year

Part of the conversation also revolved around ongoing assessment of the teacher education pilot program, specifically that the teachers would be an ongoing part of the formative and summative assessment of the cases. To this end adjustments to the cases were based on teacher as well as faculty feedback.

Because the stakeholders in the PBL cohort wanted to uphold a collaborative approach, any schools interested in participating in the PBL pilot project first had to have school-wide agreement on participation in the project and then indicate their interest on an application form. The District Coordinator, district staff, and the district teacher's union president reviewed all the requests to participate and selected a number of schools to be involved. Selection was based upon the school's interest and ability to accommodate a significant number of preservice teachers. The program philosophy was to place the preservice teachers in schools in groups of six to eleven. We knew that small groups would promote promising practice and opportunities for both the preservice and the practicing teachers.

Roles and Relationships of the PBL Faculty

Teacher education programs traditionally consist of a program of studies and practica experiences. In traditional programs there is a separation between disciplines and also between the program of studies and practica experiences. The PBL teacher education program included not only changes to a program of studies but also changes to the practica. The aim of the PBL program in Teacher Education was to provide a closer connection within the study of teaching and the practice of teaching. In order to facilitate this, the typical role of professor was replaced by tutors and subject area resource specialists. The specific responsibilities of these roles are outlined below.

Roles and Responsibilities in the Field

1. *District Coordinator*: While the role of the District Coordinator was similar to a Field Coordinator, it was important that the role be defined as a District Coordinator to reflect the underlying collaborative and cooperative principles of the PBL philosophy. The District Coordinator and the PBL Coordinator worked in a collaborative manner to connect the university with the school district. As the position of Field Coordinator was a position that did not exist in either the school district or at the university, there were no existing job descriptions. This role and the expectations that went with this role were based on earlier projects that the university had conducted in lower mainland school districts. Anecdotal evidence showed that an important component for success was the ability to link the goals and objectives of the university program with the school district and its goals and objectives. Communication was also noted as being an important indicator of a successful program for both the preservice teachers and the school district. Therefore it was decided by the Associate Dean of Teacher Education Dr. Charles Ungerleider and by Dr. Linda Seigel to create a liaison position for the problem based learning cohort in the Richmond School District. It would be advantageous to both the university and the district to have an individual who

was experienced both with the university and one who had extensive experience working in the district. Dr. Ungerleider and Dr. Siegel approached Kathyrn D'Angelo to determine her interest and willingness to work in the PBL cohort and to assume this new role. Ms. D'Angelo had extensive experience working in teacher education at the university and, at that time, was working as a: school-based vice principal in Richmond. It was also noted that it would be advantageous to have an administrator in the role of Field Coordinator to handle any issues involving teachers. Since administrators (in this case a vice principal) are not members of the teacher's union, Ms D'Angelo would be able to problem solve any issues involving teachers without violating the teacher's union code of ethics. The Field Coordinator was expected to work with the school district office and the Richmond Teachers Association to coordinate funding from each of these sources to support the PBL cohort within the teacher education program, to plan for the recruitment of school sponsors, and the recruitment of a teacher coordinator at each school-based practicum site. The majority of meetings were called to discuss collaborations around the district and school involvements, to formalize the financial arrangements, and to strategize ways to recruit schools and teachers.

Another expectation of the District Coordinator was to work in collaboration with the tutors to cooperatively plan and deliver in-service opportunities that exposed the school-based personnel to the philosophy and structure of the PBL cohort. These were typically full-day sessions with the objective to understand the unique profile of problem based learning as delivered in this pilot project. It was also an expectation that the District Coordinator would connect the professional development occurring in the school district with the case study experiences of the preservice teachers at the university. Workshops were offered throughout the year for both the sponsor teachers and the preservice teachers. These co-learning opportunities were cocreated and delivered by all PBL team members: The workshops focused on three areas: assessment and evaluation, conflict resolution, and planning for instruction.

2. *School coordinator:* The role of the school coordinator was to liaise between the faculty advisor and the school advisors. Specifically, they were and are responsible for coordinating meetings at the school level. Since many schools have significant numbers of sponsor teachers, it was felt that in the interest of good communication between the school-based practicum sites and the Faculty of Education, a contact person at each school was needed.

3. *School advisor/sponsor teacher*: The school advisor or sponsor teacher was and is the classroom teachers who act as sponsors, advisors, and mentors to the preservice teachers. A unique feature of the PBL program in our teacher education program at UBC is the relationship between the faculty associate and school advisor: These two positions (one based in the school system, school advisor, and one based on the university campus, the faculty advisor) work collaboratively supervising and evaluating the practicum of the preservice teacher. This team approach is built through meetings to establish both the university expectations for preservice teacher's performance on practicum and the school advisor's expertise on classroom practice. Both the school advisors and the faculty advisors

used preservice teachers' reflections about their pedagogy as formative assessment tools.

Roles and Responsibilities on Campus

1. *PBL coordinator:* The role of the PBL coordinator is to work with the Teacher Education Office, Field Coordinator, and the tutors to guide, support, and maintain the integrity of the program.
2. *Subject area resource specialist:* The subject area resource specialists act as a "resource" during the case studies. Preservice teachers seek further clarification on case particulars during the meetings with the resource specialists. In the early years of the PBL cohort, the tutorial groups met regularly with five faculty members who were experts in the areas of social studies, mathematics, educational studies, reading, and science. Preservice teachers also attended physical education workshops on a regular basis that were led by resource specialists. The resource specialists were invited to the weekly faculty meetings where roles and responsibilities were discussed in an ongoing manner.
3. *Tutors*: The role of the tutors was and continues to be to facilitate learning: guiding preservice teachers through each case. In the early days, preservice teachers were organized in small groups of six to seven students. The groups were kept this size based on ongoing research and practice from the McMaster Medical School model. The tutorial experience needed to be open and safe in order to enhance the experiences of the students and to create an environment where ideas and problem solving could be encouraged without judgment. Each group worked with a tutor who was an experienced classroom teacher and who held a minimum of a master's degree in education. Three times per week each tutorial group met to discuss the case and to share information in a group research format. The role of the tutor was to facilitate student-led discussions through questioning techniques, Socratic dialogue, and probing questions that enabled students to connect prior knowledge and new learning to their lived experiences (Fig. 6.1).

Transparency and Responsiveness

Transparency

Transparency is a necessary aspect of good governance, and in relation to this chapter, we will be looking at transparency as closely connected to accountability, which requires the clear communication and access to up-to-date information. Transparency was and continues to be an important aspect of the governance of the PBL program
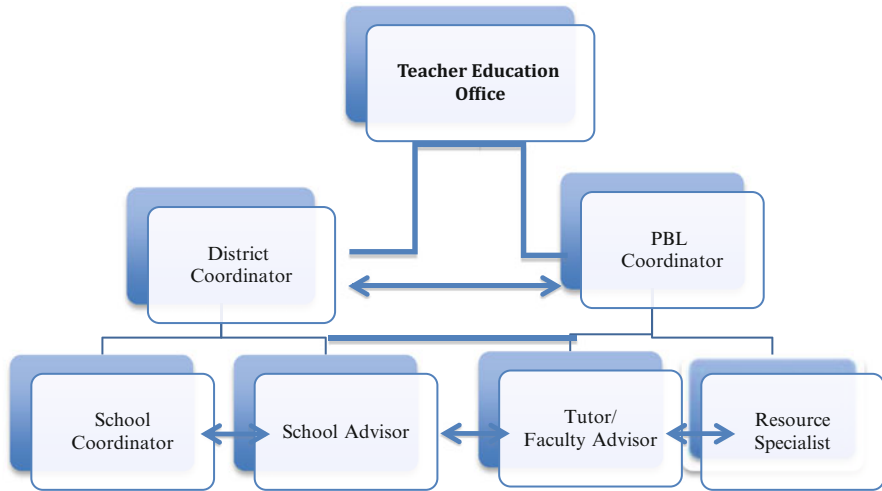
Fig. 6.1 Collaborative relationships between school district and the teacher education program at UBC

at UBC. Transparency between the school district and the university was a novel concept when the program first started. Historically there had been little connection between the campus-based course work preservice teachers were enrolled in and their school-based practica. In order for transparency between the school district and the university to be effective, it was necessary to establish communication channels to share information across the two entities. The roles of the District Coordinator and the PBL Coordinator were critical in establishing these two-way channels of information that linked the school district and the university.

In addition to the need for communication between the school district and the university, there was also the need for transparency at the university between the departments in the Faculty of Education[1] and between the departments and the PBL cohort. In her study, "Using Problem Based Learning in an Innovative Teacher Education Program," Krivel-Zacks (2001) investigated the subject area resource specialists overall satisfaction with teaching within a PBL program. Responses indicated that 100 % of the resource specialists would like to continue their role as the resource specialist for their subject area in the PBL cohort. These findings replicated previous research findings that indicate the faculty who are associated with PBL are satisfied with PBL (Krivel-Zacks 2001).

---

[1] In 1998 the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia was comprised of four departments: Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology and Special Education (EPSE), Department of Education Studies (EDST), Department of Curriculum and Instruction (EDCI), and the Department of Language and Literacy Education (LLED): In 2008 EDCI changed its title to the Department of Education Curriculum and Pedagogy (EDCP).

Since its inception in 1998/1999, the PBL program has been formally evaluated three times. In 1998/1999 an evaluation was conducted to provide both initial data to the faculty and the College of Teachers on the readiness to teach of PBL graduates and formative data to inform the development of the PBL program.

In 1999 a small comparative evaluation was conducted to compare the opinions and outcomes of PBL preservice teachers with preservice teachers in the regular teacher education program: The attitudes of 19 PBL elementary preservice teachers were compared with the attitudes of 12 elementary preservice teachers enrolled in the traditional course-based cohorts on their feelings regarding their perceptions of preparedness to teach (i.e., teacher efficacy) and attitudes toward inclusion. The measure of teacher efficacy was composed of two measures:

(1) Personal teacher efficacy: a teacher's belief that he or she has the skills or abilities to effect students learning
(2) Teaching efficacy: a teacher's belief that the practice of teaching can overcome the effects of negative home or family influences

All participants were group-administered measures before and after they had completed their final school-based practicum with each session taking 45 min. The results revealed that there were no significant differences between groups on their feelings of preparedness to teach. On the measures of attitudes toward inclusion, there were group differences in that traditional teacher education students were less likely to support inclusion. On the measure of teacher efficacy, there were no significant differences between groups with regard to personal efficacy. However, there was a significant group effect for teacher efficacy, indicating that PBL students believe that teaching itself can make a difference.

In 2000/2001 PBL at UBC was again the focus of a research study. The purpose of this doctoral research (Krivel-Zacks 2001) was to examine the effects of participation in a PBL teacher education program with respect to PBL preservice teachers and university- and school-based personnel. Krivel-Zacks (2001) examined changes in the PBL teacher education preservice teachers' feelings of efficacy and teacher preparedness and learning styles and strategies. She reported that the PBL preservice teachers showed significant increases in their feelings of personal teaching efficacy and teacher preparedness. The study also compared the opinions and attitudes of PBL preservice teachers with 40 non-PBL preservice teachers at the conclusion of their teacher education programs. The measures included their opinions and attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs, feelings of satisfaction with their programs, feelings of preparedness, and ratings of self-directed learning. The results indicated that proportionally more PBL than non-PBL preservice teachers felt more positive toward having students with special needs in their classrooms, felt the time they had spent in the classroom had the greatest influence on their changes in opinions, and felt well prepared to teach in the school system.

The results of this investigation (Krivel-Zacks 2001) also revealed that the majority of university- and school-based personnel agreed that a PBL curriculum did have

an effect on reasoning, interest, enthusiasm, and satisfaction of faculty and preservice teachers. The majority of participant groups were of the opinion that PBL and non-PBL curriculums provided equal knowledge of basic skills and principles and professional preparation.

Program Responsiveness

During the first 3 years of the PBL cohort, teacher education program regular meetings were held with all the stakeholders in the Richmond School District (coordinators and school advisors). At these meetings personnel from the Richmond School District and the university collaborated and reviewed the lived experiences. When the reviews indicated a need to adjust either the materials covered or the structure of the program, the university personnel conducted further conversations to determine if the change was warranted and/or possible. Three concerns in particular illustrate the cohort's responsiveness to issues raised across the cohort stakeholders:

1. Following the short 2-week practicum held in January, immediately after school resumed after the winter break, the school district faculty raised concerns that the teacher candidates did not have sufficient time to meet and plan with their school advisors in preparation for this practicum. The issue was taken forward to the Teacher Education Office, and following discussions with the Associate Dean of teacher education, the 2-week school-based practicum was extended to include a further week for planning.
2. While it was noted at the meetings that our PBL preservice teachers were growing in their ability to identify the nature and scope of problems/issues presented in the cases, concerns were raised by the school advisors, preservice teachers, and the resource specialists (subject area faculty) that teacher candidates were in need of more focused hands-on experiences with a variety of subjects including art, science, physical education, and music. A series of workshops were implemented in the areas of French as a second language, English as an additional language, classroom management, technology in the classroom, learning disabilities, Orff music, and art.
3. Meetings with on-campus resources specialists in the department of Educational Studies raised the concern that there was not enough content in the cases related to issues of social organization and social justice. The concern was addressed by having resources specialists in Educational Studies create a grid outlining issues and topics that were either represented in a case or that needed to be added to case(s).

Ensuring Organizational Responsiveness

By the academic year 2001–2002, a number of changes had been implemented. The "two-week" school experience had been changed to a 3-week school experience. Following on the lead of Educational Studies, it was noted that there was a need to coordinate cases, and to ensure that all areas were reflected in an equitable manner, a case grid was created outlining all issues in each case and connecting each issue with a subject area for resource specialists. It was also noted that the need for shared professional development for school advisors and preservice teachers was growing. Several opportunities for these teams to come together and focus on particular topics such as classroom management, supporting diverse learners in the classroom, and assessment and evaluation were provided.

Conclusions

While the problem based learning cohort remains vibrant, a number of changes have occurred both in the cohort itself and in the governance of the cohort. In 2012 a new B.Ed program was approved and implemented. At the same time the number of applications to the teacher education program dropped. In order for the PBL cohort to continue, it needed to reinvent itself and to that end two cohorts were integrated: Teaching English Language Learners through problem based learning (TELL through PBL). In Canada, children from families with linguistic minority backgrounds form a substantial and rapidly growing proportion of the school population. In the school district in the metropolitan area where our preservice teachers will work, more than 148 different language groups are represented in the schools. In some classrooms, more than a dozen different home languages are spoken; and in many classrooms, the majority of children speak a language other than English, the language of instruction, at home. The Canadian context in many ways reflects global trends. For according to UNESCO (2011), worldwide there are "214 million people now living outside their country of origin" (p. 75), and the movement of people is expected to increase. The TELL through PBL cohort has proved to be popular because it specifically prepares preservice teachers to teach in these linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms.

Over the years there have also been changes to the governance of the cohort. Specifically, with the dissolution of the District Coordinator position, administration of the cohort is now primarily concentrated in the Teacher Education Office at UBC. However, UBC and the Richmond School District still contribute financially to make the program a success for both the university and the school district. Together the university and the school district still plan and deliver in-service opportunities to expose the school-based personnel to the philosophy and structure of problem based learning and meeting the needs of all learners.

References

Gisselquist, R. (2012). *What does "good governance" mean?* Accessed at: http://unu.edu/publications/articles/what-does-good-governance-mean.html

Krivel-Zack, G. (2001). *Using problem-based learning in an innovative teacher education program.* Unpublished dissertation.

Shipley, R., & Kovacs, J. F. (2008). Good governance principles for the cultural heritage sector: Lessons from international experience. *Corporate Governance, 8*(2): 214–228. Accessed at: http://env-web2.uwaterloo.ca/hrcresearch/attachments/519fb740a129b0.53659657.pdf

Ulvik, M., & Smith, K. (2011). What characterizes a good practicum in teacher education? *Education Inquiry, 2*(3), 517–536.

UNESCO. (2011). *The state of world population*. Accessed at: http://foweb.unfpa.org/SWP2011/reports/EN-SWOP2011-FINAL.pdf

Zeichner, K. (2010). Rethinking the connections between campus courses and field experiences in college- and university-based teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 6*(1–2), 89–99.