

inservice teacher University faculty often contrast preservice teachers with “inservice” teachers. The latter are regular classroom teachers—teachers legally responsible for the education of a group of K–12-level students. Inservice teachers are currently serving in their profession, whereas preservice teachers are enrolled in a formal program to become teachers.

supervising, cooperating, or mentor teacher The supervising, cooperating, or mentor teacher is the schoolteacher (inservice teacher) who formally acts as an adviser to a student teacher. The terms are interchangeable. If you have a student teacher in your classroom, then you are the supervising/cooperating/mentor teacher for that person.

Cooperating teachers often agree to work with a student teacher because they see it as a way to give back to the profession and influence the next generation of teachers. Some people view the experience as professional development—teaching another about how you teach almost forces you to become more reflective and aware of what you are doing and its impact on your students. In addition, many teachers like to have a student teacher in their classroom because they enjoy having another adult around; they may spend virtually all day with kids and enjoy the chance to talk about the

joys and frustrations of their job with someone else.

professional development schools are also known as “clinical schools” or “professional practice schools.” The terms are synonymous. A professional development school, or PDS, is meant to be the educational equivalent of a teaching hospital. Teaching hospitals bring together researchers, doctors, and doctors-in-training to offer cutting-edge medical developments to patients. Simultaneously they act as places where the next generation of health-care professionals is trained. As envisioned in the 1980s and 1990s, PDSs were to be similar—schools where K–12 teachers, university professors, and preservice teachers worked together. They would be doing educational research, teaching K–12 students, and training both new and experienced teachers. Researchers would have a laboratory for their work and K–12 teachers would have access to the latest research and all the resources a university has at its disposal. Meanwhile, university faculty and K–12 teachers would be training prospective teachers in real-life settings.

Another way to understand the PDS concept is to remember the idea of a lab school. Once found throughout the United States, today it’s rare to find a state with more than one or two lab schools.

Lab schools are K–12 schools, on or near college campuses, that provide “labs” for the latest research and teaching techniques and for student teachers to learn their craft. The reason for their gradual disappearance, critics of the schools contend, is that most of the students were children of professors and other highly educated people working on a campus. Thus, research results were not applicable to other kinds of students, and student teachers were not well prepared to teach a more varied or typical student population. One can think of a PDS as being like a lab school that is populated by “typical” students, located in a more “typical” community setting—not on a college campus—and funded like other public schools.

PDSs seemed to represent a win-win situation for everyone involved. In practice, though, rhetoric has not always matched reality. Universities and K–12 schools are very different institutions with different goals and ways of rewarding faculty members for their work. It is difficult to blend their two cultures. It also seems to be rare to find a single site effectively combining K–12 teaching, prospective teacher training, inservice teacher professional development, and research. (The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and the Educational Resources Information Clearinghouse have useful background information about PDSs on the Web, available at http://www.aacte.org/Eric/eric_digest.htm.)

Thus, readers must understand that operational definitions of PDSs don’t always match the previous explanation. In other words, you may visit or hear about settings referred to as professional development schools that don’t match what you just read. Usually, these PDSs have some of these elements but not all of them. For example, what’s called a PDS might feature multiple university students taking classes and having other school experiences at a single school. The school, however, may have little research going on, especially research actively involving K–12 teachers as participants or even co-researchers. Another setting might feature close collaboration between university and K–12 faculty, but comparatively little preservice teacher education. Settings that borrow some features from the real model of a PDS aren’t truly professional development schools. Nevertheless, participants might refer to these settings as professional development schools, which can cause confusion.

induction is the term university educators and K–12 administrators often use to refer to the time when a beginning teacher is making the transition from being a student teacher to being an experienced member of a school’s staff. Besides learning basic teaching and classroom management skills, beginning teachers are also learning the ways of a new culture. As every experienced teacher knows, the first year or two in the