

# Chapter 1

## Theory Across Rural and Urban Cultures:

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### ABSTRACT

*This opening chapter is designed to encourage readers to move into this book and to see the work of engaged scholars and scholar activists who will serve as role models for their work. For the experienced scholars, this chapter encourages them to see that they are not alone in the work and that networking on these important topics with scholars discussed in this chapter and throughout this book is possible. John C. Campbell and Michael Katz are prominent voices in this chapter. Urie Bronfenbrenner's systems theory is a constant theme throughout. This chapter introduces scholars such as Harkavy, Dryfoos, Taylor, and public health educator, Jeanita Richardson.*

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter is an admixture of some history of the Knoxville experience of starting a community school where a faculty member created and advocated for a community school that in 2000 was a full-service school (Dryfoos, 1994, Kronick, 2000, 2005) and has now evolved into a University Assisted Community School (UACS). Following the introductory section of the evolution and development of community schools, beginning in 2000 with four full-service schools and evolving into 20 schools, two fully based on a school-based model by the university with strong support from the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences at the University of Tennessee, and 18 using a school-linked model run by a private entity, The Great Schools Partnership (GSP). These organizations run programs for challenged students and show signs of sustainability into the future. The following report written by program coordinators, Karen Holst and Blaine Sample, illustrates what the UACS did fall semester, August–December, 2018.

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## **REPORT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELING ON POND GAP AND INSKIP COMMUNITY SCHOOLS REVIEWING THE 2017 – 2018 YEAR**

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### **Overview**

Pond Gap Elementary School (PGES) and Inskip Elementary School (IES) are both located in high-poverty, high-minority areas with 100% Title I students. Both are Knox County Community Schools (KCCS), which address student and familial needs through the provision or brokering of health services, mental health interventions, dental, basic needs, and other services that will minimize the distractions to learning in our students' lives. Through these key strategies, some new, and some enhancing our current efforts, PGES and IES provides a robust, personalized learning environment for each pupil that will enable and support academic success and eventual college and career readiness for all our students. The project design aligns to the community school adapted model and emphasizes five core improvement priorities: (1) academic learning, especially connections between in-school learning and learning during out-of-school time, (2) youth development, (3) parent/family engagement and support, (4) health and social services, and (5) community partnerships.

In recent years, we have seen an ever-increasing need and desire for after school activities, particularly around academics and unique physical activity and arts opportunities, for our students. Currently, through University of Tennessee's University Assisted Community Schools (UACS), UT students, faculty, and staff provide schoolchildren academic support services, physical education, music, and art programs after regular school hours from 2:30 – 6:00 pm daily at Pond Gap and 2:30 – 5:30 daily at Inskip. UACS is able to enhance the interpersonal skills, critical-thinking skills, and academic success of participating children. UACS creates challenging learning opportunities for students to excel by providing a nurturing environment supported by multiple sectors of both the Pond Gap and Inskip communities. These supports include families, community organizations, UACS staff, UT students, and UT faculty members. Collectively we are dedicated to increasing attendance and decreasing tardiness, increasing grades and academic performance, decreasing behavior referrals, and expanding community interdependence.

These community school sites are a positive center of influence that benefits students, families, and the surrounding community. Many unique programs are in place that uplift and enrich students' academic, social and emotional needs in order to help them become thriving and successful members of a healthy community. One of the initiatives is an after school-tutoring program. Current daily tutoring services are offered to targeted 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. Staff, administration and families recommend students based upon their academic, social, and emotional needs. These students receive tutoring services each afternoon in reading and math as well as homework assistance. After-school teachers plan lessons that correlate with the skills that students are working on during the regular school day. We are able to meet students' needs not only through traditional academic methods, but also through enrichment programming and community partnerships. The UACS program at Pond Gap originated in 2010 as a 5 day a week program serving 40 students. The program has grown to serving 107 students in 2017-2018, 5 days a week from the end of the school day to 6:30 pm. Inskip Elementary was added to UACS offering

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