

Chapter 2

Strategic Partnerships for Pre–K–12 Journalism Education: Higher Education for a Higher Purpose

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ABSTRACT

A deep and innovative partnership is being co-created between the Ohio University Scripps Schools of Journalism and its alumni in the Cincinnati area with the Community Learning Center Institute, and the teachers, partners, and students at the Oyler Community Learning Center. This chapter will provide insight and practical lessons for the engagement process and infrastructure that is necessary for the development and sustainability of genuine, lasting, and transformative university–school partnerships.

INTRODUCTION

A school in an urban Appalachian community in Cincinnati has partnered with the top-10 university journalism programs to offer an innovative pre-k-12 curriculum that includes critical thinking and writing skills needed by journalists and other communication professionals. The partnership integrates faculty and alumni from Ohio University's E.W. Scripps School of Journalism with Oyler's volunteer journalism instructor and other Oyler faculty. The relationship began when Oyler high school students started attending the Scripps School's High School Summer Journalism Workshop on scholarship. Oyler high school students have worked with Scripps' students at The Post, the university's independent student newspaper, to develop the Oyler Griffin website and social media strategy. The Scripps School and Oyler faculty continue to broaden collaboration to include Oyler's pre-k and middle school students. The two programs are exploring a specific college credit plus program to help Oyler students start their

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journalism studies at Ohio University. Several Scripps alumni who work in the Cincinnati market also volunteer as tutors and journalism mentors at Oyster.

Another unique element of this partnership is Oyster's community learning center infrastructure. Community agencies which are part of the Oyster hub of partners provide the connective tissue which makes the OU – Oyster partnership possible. From transportation and chaperones for the students attending OU during the summer when teachers are on break, to transportation, clothing, and all of the other details and logistics, the community learning center essential to the seamless connection between pre-k-12 and the university.

This partnership is a departure from decades of separation between pre-k-12 and higher education rooted in a century of differentiated education that expected only a small elite to go to college. Ohio University and Oyster are co-creating pre-k-16 education that is dedicated to the preparation of all students to be prepared for college, regardless of what life path they select.

HISTORY OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PUBLIC PRE-K-12 SCHOOLS AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Committee of Ten: 1894

The origin story of public high school in the United States began with the Latin Grammar School in 1635. Although referred in the history books as public, it was restricted to the wealthy and intended to prepare only their sons for college and future leadership. The real shift to free public education did not occur until the second half of the 19th century with most of the public schools went only through the 8th grade. Even as late as 1930, less than 10% of public schools in the United States were high schools.

While college enrollment in the United States grew from 1.7% of 18-21 year olds in 1870, to 3% by 1890, it may be reasonably presumed that these students were coming from private and elite public schools. (Mintz) Not surprisingly, the alignment between high schools and colleges was not part of the design of the early system of public education. There were no common curriculum requirements of the high schools to prepare students for college as there was no expectation that students graduating from public high schools would go on to college.

The Committee of Ten was the first commission on education to address the purpose and content of the public high school curriculum and to consider the extension of the educational continuum from high school to college. Appointed in 1892 by the U.S. Commissioner of Education and headed by Charles Eliot, President of Harvard University, the Committee of Ten recommended that, all students should receive rigorous classical academic instruction, “melding the objectives of liberal education (that is, a curriculum of rich content) and mental discipline (that is, the training of the mind)” (National Education Association, 1894) Eliot wrote on behalf of the Committee that “every subject which is taught at all in a secondary school should be taught in the same way and to the same extent to every pupil so long as he pursues it, no matter what the destination of the pupil may be, or at what point his education is to cease.” (Mirel, 2006)

The Committee also recognized that many of the teachers in the public schools were not college educated or knowledgeable about the content they were teaching. The report of the Committee recognized that to more effectively reach all students of varying backgrounds and aptitudes it would be necessary

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