

## University-Affiliated Lab Schools: A Collaborative Partnership Between the University of Pittsburgh's Falk School and the State University of Malang Lab Schools

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### Abstract

This article focuses on contemporary discussions about university-affiliated lab schools and their growing international networks. Topics include university-affiliated lab schools, the State University of Malang-University of Pittsburgh partnership created by a consortium of rectors in Indonesia, and the growing importance of international professional development networks for university-affiliated lab schools. The instructional leadership side of the partnership has shared ways: (a) to design a better aligned curriculum; (b) to make learning activities more active and student-oriented; (c) to trigger creativity, critical thinking, and independence; (d) to practice ongoing assessment; and (e) to enrich the cultural repertoire of students. The institutional management side has focused greater attention on: professionalism in management; use of technology; human resources issues of recruitment, induction, and continuing professional development; and more innovative, balanced, transparent and sustainable funding sources. The following recommendations are made. First, fostering international partnerships is a good way for already strong schools to make continuous improvements in both instruction and institutional leadership. Second, partnership sustainability is paramount, especially during transitions in senior university management. Careful and thoughtful construction of the universities' core memorandum of understanding is time well spent because it becomes embedded in institutional policy.

### Abstrak

Artikel ini menyoroti wacana terbaru tentang sekolah laboratorium (lab) yang berafiliasi dengan universitas dan jaringan internasional sekolah lab yang makin berkembang. Topik yang dibahas meliputi lab school afiliasi universitas, kemitraan Universitas Negeri Malang dengan University of Pittsburgh melalui Konsorsium Rektor Indonesia, dan pentingnya jaringan internasional pengembangan profesi pada sekolah lab universitas. Dari segi kepemimpinan akademis, kemitraan antar sekolah lab telah membuahkan manfaat bagi kedua belah pihak dalam hal: (a) mendesain kurikulum yang menunjang pembelajaran; (b) menciptakan aktivitas pembelajaran yang lebih aktif dan berorientasi siswa; (c) mendorong kreativitas, kemandirian dan daya pikir kritis; (d) menerapkan metode penilaian yang berkelanjutan; dan (e) memperkaya khasanah budaya siswa. Dari segi manajemen institusi, kemitraan ini lebih terfokus pada: profesionalisme pengelolaan; penggunaan teknologi; sumber daya manusia, terkait dengan rekrutmen, induksi dan pengembangan profesi berkelanjutan; dan sumber pembiayaan yang berkesinambungan, transparan, seimbang, dan lebih inovatif. Artikel ini menggarisbawahi beberapa rekomendasi. Pertama, pengembangan kemitraan internasional merupakan upaya positif bagi sekolah yang telah mapan dalam rangka terus meningkatkan kualitas kepemimpinan akademis dan institusional. Kedua, keberlanjutan kemitraan adalah hal yang utama, terlebih pada masa transisi manajemen dan kepemimpinan tingkat universitas. Perumusan kesepakatan dasar secara seksama dengan segenap pertimbangan merupakan momentum yang menentukan, karena kesepakatan ini sedianya menyatu dalam kebijakan tingkat institusi.

**Key Words:** University-Affiliated Lab Schools, International Partnerships, University Consortium

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## Introduction

This article focuses on contemporary discussions about the past and future of lab schools, in general, and specifically university-affiliated lab schools and their growing international networks. The topics include:

1. university-affiliated lab schools and why are they important;
2. the globally unique University of Malang-University of Pittsburgh partnership created through a consortium of rectors in Indonesia; and
3. the growing importance of international professional development networks for university-affiliated lab schools.

## The Classical University-Based Lab School

The idea for a lab school network was initially inspired by John Dewey's laboratory school at the University of Chicago, founded about 1896 (Hirsch 2009). Its purpose was to demonstrate that the principles of hands-on learning and exploration were more effective than the traditional model of rote learning and drills that were prevalent in education at the time (University of Pittsburgh 2009).

The classical lab school had two central characteristics. First, the school was commonly affiliated with an institution of higher learning in order to gain access to university-wide resources. Second, it served both as a teacher preparation site and/or educational research center (Cruickshank 1984; Friedman 1980; and Nielson as cited in Dishner and Boothby 1996). In addition, Dewey wanted laboratory schools to be model, university campus-based schools grounded in experiential education. This was a uniquely American "philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills and clarify values" (Association for Experiential Education 2009, para. 2).

Learning is centered on children, not instruction, because it is understood to be a cognitive and social process. This allows students to achieve deep mastery of both content and creative problem solving. Children develop a sense of responsibility for their own learning and that of the larger learning community. The curriculum is intended to be broad-based, including extra and co-curricular activities, such as arts, sports and music (University of Pittsburgh 2009). Those schools with a greater international focus can emphasize international networks and world language acquisition. Lab schools can be models of physical plant design as well, emphasizing cost saving, artistic design and eco-friendliness (University of Pittsburgh 2009).

Students in the rigorous university-affiliated programs are consistently among the top performers in local and national assessments (Cassidy and Sanders 2002). Students are frequently required to be involved in active learning by working in pairs or groups to solve problems or make projects. Students also learn how to reflect on what they are doing. These reflective activities are also used concurrently to increase knowledge, to develop skills, and to cope with values. Lab schools administer unique educational experiences as an innovative option to more traditional public or private school education (Falk School 2009).

As they developed in the US and internationally, not all lab schools became affiliated with a university. Many became elite private schools without either a demonstration school or a teacher-training mission. Some non university-affiliated lab schools in Indonesia commonly belonged to universities as separate facilities, basically renting campus space. They served neither as demonstration schools for best practices nor as centers for teacher training and professional development (University of Pittsburgh 2009).

University-based lab schools retained both of these capacities. They were designed as demonstration sites through which an exemplary process of teaching and learning might be modeled, observed and studied (Cruickshank 1984). Consequently their best practices were often adopted or adapted by other non-lab schools, both locally and beyond (Cassidy and Sanders 2002). Normally associated with a school or department of education, it was also a laboratory in which teachers and students explored the process of learning, testing theories and methods (Friedman 1980).

More recently, university-based lab schools have become an international movement. Teacher-producing universities are able not only to be on the cutting edge of research and practice, they are also able to help improve the quality of local schools. An international pioneer in this movement is the University of Pittsburgh's Falk Lab School. The lab school is affiliated with the University of Pittsburgh (UPitt), Pennsylvania, and is associated with the School of Education. It is the only university-based lab school with its own charter that establishes Falk as a school deeply integrated into the life of the university. It also demonstrates that excellence, while not cheap, does not necessarily need to be very expensive, if resources are invested wisely and for the longer term.

The history of university-affiliated lab schools has ebbed and flowed over the last century. Drawbacks to lab schools in the past have included an inability to meet heavy demands for access. Strong teacher training programs have helped to mitigate the problem as clinical faculty members teach both in the lab schools and directly in teacher training programs. Clinical faculty are distinguished from research faculty because they are master practitioners. They are often critical to professional schools that

need to rely on both high quality research and practice. More recently, lab schools have attracted regional teachers needing to comply with state-mandated, continuing professional development experiences with nearby lab schools that both have a demonstration function and permit visitors from outside of the university.

The Falk School at Pittsburgh has been near the center of lab schools' recent revival in the US. Its faculty members are hired as clinical faculty in the teacher preparation program in the School of Education. Currently they are working with other university-affiliated lab schools to develop an international professional network so that they and their students can benefit from greater international collaboration. Falk's partnerships with university-based lab schools in Indonesia are a good example of how serious professional partnerships can unfold.

### **Sustainable Partnerships through University-Based Lab Schools**

#### ***Origins: KPTIP***

The lab school network and movement developed in Indonesia as part of a sustainable development project that was a component of the Decentralized Basic Education Project (DBE2) funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The University of Pittsburgh was a member of the DBE2 team, along with Florida State University and the University of Massachusetts. In the fall of 2007, a group composed primarily of university rectors, visited the University of Pittsburgh. Together they formed the first peer-based professional development network for rectors in Indonesia. They called their own new network the Consortium of Indonesian Universities-Pittsburgh (KPTIP: *Konsorsium Perguruan Tinggi Indonesia-Pittsburgh*). Upon their return to Indonesia, they formalized their partnerships by creating a legal entity that all parties would work with. The group has since been meeting twice a year, and has expanded over time. KPTIP indicated that the revival of university-based lab schools in their institutions was a high priority for many of them.

In 2009, a group of lab school leaders, meeting in Malang, and supported by their rectors, decided to develop their own national professional network for classical lab schools with linkages to the international network in the United States. They wanted the network, at least initially, to include only those universities that were recognized as world campuses. Activities of this collaborative international network would include: (a) attending or conducting international conferences or workshops; (b) exchanging scholars, teachers, and students among the schools; and (c) engaging in joint research and publication. Within the network, the

lab schools could learn from one another by focusing on the following aspects: academic, managerial, funding, staffing and support.

One of the universities in Indonesia considered to have some of the best lab schools in Indonesia was the State University of Malang (UM), located in Malang, East Java. The university had an entire system of schools, ranging from preschool through secondary schools. In addition, they had the first school for autistic children in the country. These lab schools had previously been managed by a private foundation but, since 2009, they have been affiliated with the university as classical, university-based lab schools.

Due to this change in status, the lab schools required a lot of management improvement (Institute for Developing Laboratory of Education 2009). For this reason, UM, as a member of KPTIP, promoted a mutual partnership with the University of Pittsburgh's Falk Lab School by signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in the spring of 2009. Already engaged in collaborative work, these two universities with top-ranked lab schools nationally, agreed to learn from each other so they could both improve their respective international standing. In December 2009, professors from the University of Pittsburgh conducted a three-day workshop on lab school held by the UM and attended by participants from other universities throughout Indonesia (Syiah Kuala University Banda Aceh, State University of Medan, State University of Semarang, State University of Makassar, Sebelas Maret University, Brawijaya University, State University of Surabaya, Muhammadiyah University of Banda Aceh, and Muhammadiyah University of Makassar), all of which had strong interests in university-affiliated lab schools (Institute for Developing Laboratory of Education 2010c).

In October 2010, the Director of the University of Pittsburgh's Falk Lab School and a professor from East Tennessee State University paid a visit to the UM lab schools to observe and confer with lab school faculty and students, as well as other university faculty to discover the similarities and differences between UM's lab schools and UPitt's lab school. In collaborative follow up, the Vice Director of UM's Institute for Developing Laboratory of Education (*Badan Pengembangan Laboratorium Pendidikan*) came to the University of Pittsburgh as a Visiting Scholar in the School of Education's Institute for International Studies in Education (IISE) for three months, from November 2010 to January 2011. Her purpose was to have a direct experience of the Falk Lab School through observations and interviews with the director, faculty, and the students.

To maintain a sustainable partnership between the Malang and Pittsburgh lab schools, their directors worked with each other. This lowered their learning costs on several fronts. First, they described

the operations of their schools to each other in considerable detail. Second, they collaboratively examined the similarities and differences of their respective schools' philosophies in terms of their strategic vision and mission. Third, they compared programs and planned their next steps. By having multicultural knowledge and experiences, they expected their schools to learn to respect the best in each other's culture, and to encourage harmony in life. They both agreed that sometimes the simplest things, good professional friendships, were their most valuable assets.

The following is a brief description of UPitt lab school and UM lab schools from the point of view of academic, managerial, funding, staffing and support functions; a brief comparison of each school's strengths and comparative advantages; and, finally, a discussion of the expectations, challenges and opportunities presented by their collaborative network.

### *A Brief Description of the UPitt Lab School*

The history of the Falk Lab School commenced in 1931 with funds given to the University of Pittsburgh by Pittsburgh's Falk family in memory of Fanny Edel Falk. The university-affiliated school occupies a three-story renovated building and is located near the top of a hill with a panoramic view of the University and its Oakland neighborhood.

Established under a charter between the University and the donor, the school possesses a unique status among American lab schools, that is, it is the only one having a legal charter with the University, stating its purpose and functions. The original charter stipulated that the school was to be a progressive, experimental one for demonstration purposes. But, then in 1946, the charter was modified resulting in the inclusion of practice teaching as one of the school's functions. Later, the school added the development of new and innovative educational practices, the in-service education of experienced teachers, educational research, and most recently, the adoption of inquiry as the defining feature in its educational paradigm (Falk School 1997).

The University of Pittsburgh's Falk School's vision is to be excellent in education, teaching, the classroom, the faculty and other learning supports. The school, therefore, tries to offer an ideal learning environment for each child. In terms of curriculum, a flexible program is offered at every level of learning. There is an emphasis on basic educational skills, inquiry, character development, critical thinking, and creativity. In terms of teaching, learners of varying ages, social, ethnic, religious, cultural, and economic backgrounds come together to study, work, and play (McBride 1996). Together they construct a creative, diverse, and mutually respectful learning community that helps maximize each individual's potential development. The faculty are also engaged

in a nurturing atmosphere so children can discover and develop strengths that will be their lifelong assets. Additionally, in order to facilitate communication between school and home or public, the school publishes a newsletter and the Falk School directory.

The school accommodates children ages 5-13 with 12 classrooms which are streamed into three levels of learning: primary for ages 5-7, intermediate for ages 8-10, and middle for ages 11-13. To help each child be successful, the school attempts to balance the child's academic goals (i.e., all content areas) with their developmental needs. Thus, the content, process, and climate for learning are equally emphasized. The content of curriculum focuses on Language Arts, Humanities, Science, Social Studies, Mathematics (Math), Information Technology, Art, Physical Training, Library, and Spanish. Extra-curricular activities are also available (e.g., outdoor educational experiences, field trips, musical performances and sports).

With respect to management, a director is appointed with the support of the school's trustees, a separate governance structure not found in many other schools. The current director, Wendell McConnaha, has not only served as the director of the lab school at the University of Chicago, but has extensive international experience as well. Clinical faculty members, with advanced degrees and teaching appointments, serve as full-time specialists in art, music, physical education, foreign language, and library science. In managing the classroom, they are joined by teaching interns who are graduate students enrolled in an intensive one-year Master's of Arts in Teaching program within the School of Education. In other words, the interns also learn how to help teach children in real classroom settings. They are also observed for evaluation. Since the interns, too, come from diverse backgrounds and experiences, they enrich the school program as well.

In order to facilitate teaching and learning activities, the school is equipped with supportive things such as an excellent library with a collection of about 14,000 books, a student research facility, access to the University's library system, an after-school child care program, a multi-purpose convocation hall, a music room, a computer center, study halls, arts room, a 'room parents' program, a sports hall and teacher offices in each classroom. All of this has a lower tuition cost per pupil, about US\$13,000 per year, than the average cost of other private schools in the area, and at a substantially lower cost than the Pittsburgh public school district. Indeed, the Falk School tuition is about the same as the average per pupil cost of public schools in the state of Pennsylvania. In fairness, the University also provides ongoing support for the school like utilities, physical plant maintenance, and advisory services (Falk School 2009).

Now, what about the lab school system at the State University of Malang, better known as UM? To what extent are they similar

or different if viewed from the five functions used to describe the University of Pittsburgh's Falk School: (1) academic, (2) managerial, (3) funding, (4) staffing, and (5) support?

### ***A Brief Description of UM Lab Schools***

The lab school system is much more developed at UM than in Pittsburgh. The Falk School has classes from kindergarten through the eighth grade. UM's lab schools, on the other hand, include two secondary schools and a school for autistic children. This system is currently under an independent institute that is directly responsible to the president of the university. UM's laboratory school system was founded in 1984 under the management and funding of a private educational foundation. Since 1 July 2009, however, the laboratory schools have been integrated into the management of the university. This means that the schools have adopted UM's more rigorous reporting systems, making them more accountable and transparent. UM's tuition base, however, is kept separate and not integrated into the University's operational funds.

The overall system is called UM's Institute for Developing Laboratory of Education (BPLP: *Badan Pengembangan Laboratorium Pendidikan*). The Institute for Developing Laboratory of Education is under the leadership of a director and two vice directors. One vice director is in charge of academic affairs while the other is in charge of financial matters. This institute manages all of UM's laboratory schools in two locations. These schools include a pre-primary school (between the ages of 3 and 5); primary schools (between the ages of 6 and 11 or 12); both lower and upper secondary schools (between the ages of 12 and 17); and the national school for autistic children. Each school's daily operations are led by a principal whose duties are to lead and organize academic and administrative matters, as well as all other activities in school. The Institute for Developing Laboratory of Education works hand in hand with the school principals in order to realize their school's vision and mission. In total, UM lab schools have a teacher-student ratio of about 1 to 10. There are 205 teachers and 2085 students (75 in the school for autistic children, 150 in the pre-primary, 660 in the primary, 650 in the lower secondary and 650 for the upper secondary). While the scale is not large, the reach is national.

In managing its functions, the Institute for Developing Laboratory of Education sets the system-wide vision and mission so they align with the university's vision as well. This overarching vision, The Learning University, functions as a catalyst, helping to coordinate the study and development of the laboratory schools along the following goals for both the school and its students: (1) possessing an innovative and creative spirit; (2) being science-based, technology-based and environment-based; (3) having

educational relevance and being quality-oriented; (4) being colored by spiritual, cultural and physical life; (5) enhancing student-centered learning (inclusive learning); and (6) practicing accountable and discipline school management (Institute for Developing Laboratory of Education 2010a).

Since UM lab schools are under the Institute for Developing Laboratory of Education management, in designing its vision and mission, each school refers to the Institute's meaning of what the school intends to accomplish, making sure that it is in compliance with what the institute has set up for the ultimate outcome of the UM lab school graduate—being a competitive, competent graduate with strong Indonesian character in the global era. The Institute for Developing Laboratory of Education, together with each school, were encouraged to establish a five-year strategic plan along five functional areas: academic, financial, administrative, logistical, and human resources.

In the academic area, it was expected that students become independently competent in science, technology, and arts, as well as strong in character. These goals were aligned with national and international standards. Because they are university-based lab schools, the teaching and learning process is also research-based, making it different from other public and private schools. A number of different pedagogies, including natural acceleration, mastery learning and modular instruction are still practiced as students' active learning becomes integrated with the university's larger research agenda. From a financial point of view, so far the schools are self-supported. School income derives from several sources, including student tuition fees, development funds, parents' association contributions, government subsidies, business donations, and private sponsors. Currently, the schools do not have a separate board of directors.

As the schools have moved under the university system, their administrative affairs have had to be restructured in order to be congruent with the university's more sophisticated managerial regulations. Much, however, has not changed, as the salaries of the faculty and administrative staff of the schools have not changed. In terms of logistics, each school has the right to provide its own needs through its own budget, except for capital construction projects. New buildings are major renovations that need to be discussed and planned together with the Institute for Developing Laboratory of Education and the University. The lab schools now have better access to university facilities by making advance reservations. Last, but not least, is the development and improvement of human resources, both for the faculty and the administrators. As a major research and teaching university, continuing professional development is essential.

The Institute for Developing Laboratory of Education plays roles as both catalyst and coordinator in the running of the lab

schools' academic, managerial, financial, support as well as staffing functions. In practice it works collaboratively with the principal of each school. These schools will now be described.

### ***The School for Autistic Children***

The school for autistic children was founded in 2003 in response to parental concerns nationally about their disabled children. At that time autistic children could obtain only the most minimal therapy and almost no schooling. Because it was a national innovation, the school has developed its own curriculum based on: (a) the regular curriculum from the Department of National Education, (b) the National Curriculum for mentally disabled children, (c) children's parents' demands, (d) children's needs, and (e) national needs. Along with therapy, today students in the autistic school have the opportunity to learn mathematics, Indonesian, physical and biological (hard) sciences, and social sciences.

Students are grouped into small classes based on their ability and attitude, each consisting of two to five students. In addition to academics, students are provided with therapy in compliance with each individual's needs. The therapy may integrate sensory therapy, swimming therapy, learning how to shop for their own needs or school equipment, learning how to cook or do farming, etcetera. Thus, the ultimate goal is to make them be self-sufficient in their life ahead (i.e., life skills development).

At present, the school accommodates 75 autistic students and ten teachers and trainers. The ratio of the number of students and teacher/trainers averages about 3 or 4 to 1, depending on academic competence and degree of therapeutical treatment individual students require. Students with severe physical shortcomings may be under the constant supervision of one teacher. Teachers and trainers are not only required to have academic competence for such type of schooling, but they must also be equipped with insight into psychology and development as it relates to autism and communications with autistic children. Teacher recruitment, therefore, is conducted accordingly.

### ***Pre-Primary School***

This was the first school in the system. It was founded in 1967 with the intention of caring for faculty member's children during the day. Parents preferred the convenience and security of neighborhood schools close to home, and UM agreed to build one. In the beginning, the school was managed by a private foundation under university control. Gradually, the school grew and began to recruit children from parents outside the university. Eventually it

was expanded in another area, Blitar, about a two-hour drive away from the UM campus.

The school currently comprises two levels: pre-school and kindergarten. Each level has its own curriculum. According to the 2004 National Curriculum, the content of the two levels consists of developmental aspects: (1) behavior development which covers moral and religious values, socio-emotional values and independence; and (2) basic skills development which include physical and motor skills, cognitive competence, linguistic competence and arts/creativity.

It also has an international component. In addition to the regular classes in kindergarten, there is also bilingual-based instruction that draws on both Indonesian and English in the teaching and learning process. The curriculum provides the learners with other potentials like dancing, arithmetic, computer, drawing, painting, music, singing and swimming; and employs various and innovative teaching techniques such as playing games, storytelling, role play, and singing songs. For these young children, the basic learning methods applied are group-work activities and activity-based learning to promote children's growth in the socio-emotional domain.

### ***Primary School***

There are two primary schools in different locations. One is located in Malang and the other one in Blitar. Blitar follows the school curriculum of Malang.

The primary school in Malang was founded in 1969 under private management for the purpose of admitting the kindergarten graduates from the pre-primary school. In 1970, the school was designated as an accelerated five-year primary school, allowing students to graduate a year early. Since then it has developed into an eight-year school. Students can finish their nine-year compulsory education requirement (six years of primary school and three years of lower secondary school) in only eight years. At present, the schools have two programs: the regular program and the international class program (ICP). The students in the regular program adopt the 2003 National Curriculum. Teaching and learning in the regular program is conducted bilingually, employing two languages, Bahasa Indonesia and English. Those belonging to the ICP follow a blended curriculum, the 2003 National Curriculum plus adapted international content. English is the predominant medium of instruction.

The primary school in Blitar, opened in 2009, is located on Campus III of UM with one ICP class of 23 students. The school is run by an experienced principal and newly recruited teaching and administrative staff. Recruitment was managed by the Institute for Developing Laboratory of Education and staff training was

conducted at the Malang Lab Primary School. Prospective faculty and administrators were immersed in everyday problem solving of classrooms and offices (Institute for Developing Laboratory of Education 2009).

### **Secondary School**

The lab secondary schools consist of two levels: junior and senior. The junior secondary school was initiated in 1990 by university faculty members who wanted to have a secondary school that excelled in modular instruction, a learning system which encouraged students to learn at their own pace through self-learning materials called modules. The purpose was to provide opportunities for individual students to reach optimal academic and non-academic achievements.

Again, two kinds of programs were put into practice in this level. First, the regular program was taught in Bahasa Indonesia and English, and it adopted the 2007 National Curriculum. Second, the international standard used a blended curriculum, the National Curriculum and adapted international content, taught almost exclusively in English. Currently, in addition to the curricular subjects, there are also extra-curricular activities like English Conversation Club, scouting, marching band, religion-related activities, teenage Red Cross, dancing and some sports. This school also is equipped with supportive facilities like the availability of a computer lab center, hard sciences lab, library, football field, mosque, and school shop (Institute for Developing Laboratory of Education 2009).

The senior secondary school was established in 1994. It is also composed of two programs, the regular program with the implementation of the 2007 National Curriculum and the international standard one utilizing an adaptive curriculum. The ultimate goal of this school is to excel in academic and non-academic achievements, moral values, and social relationships.

In 2000 the school promoted a partnership with a Japanese foundation to implement "lesson study," a process in which teachers meet regularly to discuss how they could improve the quality of the teaching and learning experiences provided for their students (Yoshida 1999). Since then, the lesson study-based school approach become a school icon and was disseminated nationally. In addition, the faculty is intensely involved in action research to improve instruction.

Recently, the school has been renovated to create more rooms for instruction, a library, a school canteen and self-service shop, a sports hall, an administration office and school labs. What is unique about the canteen's shop is that the students serve themselves, picking out what they need and paying for it in a special saving box. There are no shop assistants. This supports the

school vision (Institute for Developing Laboratory of Education 2009) of students learning how to be responsible and trustworthy.

### **A Brief Comparison of Each School's Strengths and Comparative Advantages**

When the director for the UM lab schools, Sri Rachmajanti, served as a visiting scholar to the University of Pittsburgh, she conducted a one-month intensive observation, including interviews with the director, faculty and other support staff at the Falk Lab School, as well as scholars of the University of Pittsburgh. She learned that the two lab schools were very different, primarily due both to the historical context and to the underlying reasons for the initial establishment. Each has developed different types of strengths.

Both schools have been nationally recognized as top-rated university-affiliated lab schools. The Falk School is much older, and, because of its charter, has significantly longer experience working under university management. The University of Pittsburgh and Falk have clear and well-defined institutional policies relating to academic, managerial, funding, staffing and support issues. Its affiliation relationships are well established.

On the other hand, UM's lab schools are quite new to university management control. Consequently, they are still in a transition phase. University policies related to principals, faculty and administrative staff, now newly apply to the lab schools. The schools, therefore, are in the process of adaption. This will require a lot of trial and error prior to being settled.

Falk Lab School's charter and its much longer experience with university management is one of its unique strengths. The university cares for the facilities, building maintenance, and custodial services. It has also provided loans to the school for renovations, and did so in 2009. Another of Falk's strengths is that it situates itself near the center of university life. Scholars from across the disciplines both use it in their studies and volunteer to lecture and work with students on projects.

For example, the Falk School helped develop innovative use of a loop system of learning at the primary level. In it, teachers follow class cohorts for several years, then loop back to pick up a new cohort. It has also customized a multi-grade class system for the intermediate level, and a moving class for middle school students. The school's access to information is among the best in the world. The school library's collection is professionally managed with the application of the Dewey system for cataloging and updating the collection. Books are obtained from many sources, namely the University, parents and publishers. Sometimes students themselves create and exchange books. In addition, the school not only has access to the larger university library system,

but also has access to the libraries of the nearby Carnegie Mellon University.

In terms of access to professional development opportunities, the faculty can pursue further studies at the university at steeply discounted prices. Many of the faculty hold higher degrees in education—masters, doctorates, even a law degree. Clinical faculty members are used extensively in many US universities, but not as much in other countries. The system has worked well for the Falk School. Visiting senior ministry officials from other countries are sometimes surprised to learn that clinical faculty are masters of practice, acting not only as schoolteachers in Falk School classrooms, but also as lecturers and researchers. For example, clinical faculty not only design the reading curriculum, but they also adapt and revise it to keep up with shifting students' needs. Both the director and Institutional Review Board (IRB) review all research being conducted at the school prior to implementation, so educational studies are well monitored.

In terms of management, UM Lab Schools are struggling with the abrupt, new integration into the university. The goal is laudable; it will just take time. All of the schools have been running since the 1980s and there have been marked achievements. First, UM lab schools are nationally recognized for all levels of learning, ranging from preschool to the upper secondary school, and including the national school for autistic children. They now also have a "branch campus" in Blitar. Second, with the support of USAID through the DBE2 project, and the promotion of partnerships through the KPTIP, the schools via the Institute for Developing Laboratory of Education have opened channels for international networking, including the development of: (1) lab school partnerships with the University of Pittsburgh and East Tennessee State University, (2) action research with Florida State University, and (3) authentic assessment with the University of Massachusetts (Institute for Developing Laboratory of Education 2010c).

Third, many of the lab school alumni and their former teachers not only have done well, but many retain a strong sense of loyalty to the quality of education that they received. Currently, the idea of university-affiliated lab schools and their collaboration with others overseas is being promoted with the UM faculty conference under the university provost (consisting of all professors) in the hope that they will participate more in the life of the university lab schools and their affiliates. Fourth, of all instructional models that have been studied, one that has worked well over a long time is the natural acceleration system of learning. In it, students are given opportunities to learn at their own pace so that some individual students can finish primary and junior secondary school in less than nine years. So far, for instance, a number of primary schools

throughout Indonesia are in partnership with the UM Lab Primary School to adopt or adapt this approach.

Fifth, some of the teachers hold international certification, having studied in other countries. Sixth, the practice of lesson study for the improvement of instruction has been developed at UM and disseminated nationally to other schools. And as of July 2010, more parents are interested in sending their children to UM lab schools. Admission rates are up. For the 2009-2010 academic year, the secondary school admitted students for seven classes. By 2010-2011 admission rates were up 28.5 percent (Institute for Developing Laboratory of Education 2010c).

Despite the schools' existing strengths, improvement is always necessary. We expect that an international collaborative network of university-affiliated lab schools can help mitigate potential problems and lead all of us to even better quality schools.

### **Expectations, Opportunities, and Challenges of a Collaborative Network**

As has been understood, observed and learned so far, the role of university in the operation of lab schools on the basis of university affiliation is not simple. At UM, the university president, the top decision makers, and the administration of the Institute for Developing Laboratory of Education were encouraged first to set up comprehensive action plans to improve the quality of the lab schools, and then during implementation, work hand in hand with each school principal. This is one way of making the university's vision of "the learning university" come into being—as one of the university icons (UM 2009). It is expected that the lab schools will play a role as local and national demonstration schools to which other schools will refer as a valuable resource for learning. For example, the implementation of sustained silent reading and literature circles used at the Falk Lab School in the reading curriculum may be suitable for adoption not only for the lab schools, but also for Indonesian students generally as many of them need more reading time in classrooms.

Second, as both Falk and UM schools need more quality teaching in the sciences, a high tech device designed by Carnegie Mellon University faculty may help them. "GigaPan," is a simple device that enables a standard digital camera to produce high-resolution panoramic images for teaching and learning purposes. Students become engaged in documenting their local communities, and then share their gigapans with others throughout the world. UNESCO-International Bureau of Education (IBE) has already extended the network to Indonesia, so sharing it through the international network should not be difficult. In addition, as children share views of the world they want others to see, it helps to promote mutual cultural understanding. In a small way it can



contribute to children's helping each other learn how to avoid intolerance, violence and instability. By means of this tool, lab schools are engaged in dialogues to talk about different cultures, civilizations and peoples (UNESCO-BIE 2011).

### Exchanges

The lab school international collaborative network offers many opportunities to move ahead. At the top, the two universities will continue to share expertise on how to manage university-affiliated lab schools in terms of academic advancement, administrative affairs, financial support, staffing, and supportive facilities. One important way to support these goals is through administrator/scholar exchanges. In addition, the two schools can capitalize on encouraging teacher exchanges, or even student exchanges with university assistance for partial or full funding. The advantage of such a mission is to build up intercultural understanding in order to raise awareness in tolerance among nations of different races, religions and cultural values. Another crucial element is the setting up of rich collections of knowledge in books or online for the school library. Best will be network-based access to one another. The two schools can also foster book exchanges. Still another effort is to assist Indonesian lab schools in making more official their national association of lab schools so that it can formally join international organizations. Official national associations can make the lab schools more organized and solid, provided that the associations are well managed and sustained.

Out of the many aspects needed for success, funding usually is assumed to be the biggest constraint. This is partially true. The biggest constraint is institutional commitment. Once lab schools decide to make the effort, they often can become quite creative in their quest for suitable resources. Nevertheless, institutional commitment from the top is essential. As an example, UM committed resources to help send two or three lab school representatives to an international conference. Institutional support can also extend to support for government grants to exchange scholars or teachers.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

All in all, the partnership between the University of Pittsburgh and UM has been well worth the encouragement and sustainable support it has received. As observed, the University of Pittsburgh's Falk Lab Schools has a longer-term view of what a university-affiliated lab school is, whereas the ones at University Negeri Malang, have a much broader view because of their wider scope. The collaboration has successfully focused on both instructional

and institutional leadership issues, both in the classrooms and in the administration. On the instructional leadership side, they have shared ways to design a more continuous curriculum; to make learning activities more student-oriented; to trigger students' creativity, critical thinking and independence; and to practice ongoing assessment. On the part of both schools, the collaboration intends to enrich cultural repertoire for the students to learn more knowledge and art skills of diverse ethnic groups.

The institutional management side has focused on greater professionalism in management and the use of technology for more effective operations. Even more important has been greater attention to the human resources issues related to the recruitment, induction and continuing professional development of high quality faculty and administrators, including their inclusion in the university as clinical faculty members. Finally, the centrality of more innovative, balanced, transparent and sustainable funding sources has been addressed directly.

So the partnership remains fruitful over the long run, some recommendations are in order. First, fostering international partnerships is a good way for already strong schools to make continuous improvements in both instruction and institutional leadership. Second, partnership sustainability is paramount, especially because of turnover in senior university management. Careful and thoughtful construction of the universities' core memorandum of understanding (MOU) is time well spent because it becomes embedded in institutional policy, and not in the shorter-term promises of particular presidents. Without it, the partnership is a castle built on shifting sands.

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