

Chapter 54

The Relationship Between Transformational Leadership Characteristics and Multicultural Education Practices in Teacher Educators

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the relationship of transformational leadership characteristics in teacher educators and their multicultural education practices as an avenue to prepare and produce more teachers for the increasingly diverse P-12 student population in the 21st century. The more transformational leadership characteristics teacher educators possess, the more multicultural education practices are carried out by them towards producing and transforming teachers to carry out the same characteristics and practices in their classroom. Examples in this study illustrate the importance of the relationship in the teacher educator/teacher-student cycle. Overall, the research findings support that there is a relationship between teacher educators' transformational leadership characteristics and multicultural education practices. Finally, this study highlights the need to provide professional development for teacher educators to enhance their transformational leadership characteristics as well as their multicultural education practices.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher educators often find themselves taking on an intentional leadership role by serving as models to prepare preservice teachers in providing successful student achievement outcomes for all children. Many teacher educators implement their own teaching characteristics and teaching styles from their P-12 teaching experiences into their own university classroom settings to prepare future teachers across America. Gay (2002) suggests teacher educators' knowledge, attitude, and skills may aid in the trans-

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-7305-0.ch054

formation of their practices in preservice teachers. These characteristics are transferred to preservice teachers' own knowledge, attitude, and skills which inevitably create a diverse impact in P-12 schools across the nation. This impact is worthy enough that it has created the need to begin examining what characteristics influence teacher educators.

Delpit (1992) suggests it is vital for teacher educators to explore their own practices and processes in multicultural education in order to gain insight and be able to prepare preservice teachers for diverse populations and issues within diversity. Scholars and governmental representatives suggest teacher education programs must acknowledge that their role must be tweaked and changed to increase the preparation of more and better teachers in order to address growing diverse student population (Bowles, 2010; Duncan, 2010; Wheelan, 2010). While Bandura (1986) states such factors as knowledge, attitude, and skills alone cannot determine one's behaviors towards an outcome, he suggests educators must also have a sense of efficacy. When teacher educators implement practices they find to be effective in their own university classroom setting, they are more likely to be effective in encouraging their preservice teachers to implement the same practices. In other words, practices that display the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of multicultural education can lead to the transformation of preservice teachers resulting in practicing similar knowledge, skills and attitudes for the better good.

The role of teacher educators in promoting advocacy and multicultural education among preservice teachers is critical. This study provides an examination and indication of the multicultural education practices implemented and influenced by transformational leadership through the role of teacher educators at a small university.

BACKGROUND

Theoretical Perspectives

The Role of Teacher Educators

Teacher educators is a term which refers to those who are employed as higher education faculty and teach a course(s) in a teacher education program to prepare preservice teachers (Ducharme, 1986). The Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) states there are nine standards in which teacher educators need to accomplish to develop preservice teachers to impact student learning. These standards include: Teaching, Cultural Competence, Scholarship, Professional Development, Program Development, Collaboration, Public Advocacy, Teacher Education Professions and Vision (ATE, 2015).

As interpreted throughout the ATE standards, teacher educators are accountable and held responsible for transforming preservice teachers through theory and practice for engagement imperative to multicultural teaching (Chubbuck, 2010). The standards address teacher educators' linkage of multicultural education practices to the mandatory curriculum to assist in preparing preservice teachers in contemporary issues of diversity as they affect student outcomes. Gay and Howard (2000) state that connecting multiple forms of differences and oppressions are complicated, and teachers are not often sure how to do it. They also discuss the strong resistance to multicultural education and implementation of pedagogical skills in this area due to having negative attitudes, concerns, and assumptions about the needs and modes of their students. This provides cause for teacher educators to develop pedagogy in such a way that these perceptions are decreased.

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