Chapter 4

Preparing Preservice Teacher Candidates for Educating Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners

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ABSTRACT

Over the past 30 years, the ethnic and racial representation of students in P-12 grades across the United States has shifted, with increasing number of students coming from households where a language other than English is used. Despite increase in the number of English language learners in recent years, many education stakeholders are of the position that the academic learning of culturally and linguistically diverse students has not been addressed effectively. Teacher preparation programs therefore are compelled to reimagine their curriculum for preparing teachers to educate diverse learners. This chapter describes a teacher preparation course focused on preparing preservice teachers to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students in secondary school grades. Culturally and linguistically relevant practices drawn from course assignments and clinical experience are described as approaches for preparing teachers to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students, specifically the English language learners.

INTRODUCTION

Culturally And Linguistically Diverse Learners

The ethnic and racial representation of students in the public schools across the United States has undergone notable change over the past several years. According to Musu-Gillette et al. (2016), although the overall enrollment in elementary and secondary schools increased from 48.2 million to 49.8 million between 2002 and 2012, enrollment of students who were White decreased from 59 to 51 percent and Black from 17 to 16 percent. In comparison, enrollment of students who were Hispanic increased from 18 to 24 percent and Asian/Pacific Islanders from 4 to 5 percent during this time period. Between 2012 and 2024, the percentages of students enrolled in public schools are projected to continue to decrease for students who are White (from 51 to 46 percent) and Black (from 16 to 15 percent). In contrast, the percentages of students enrolled in public schools are projected to increase over this period from 24 to 29 percent for students who are Hispanic and from 5 to 6 percent for Asian/Pacific Islanders. Thus, there is a major shift in the ethnic and racial representation of students in the public schools across the United States due to surging enrollment of students who are Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islanders.

The demographic shift enumerated above, specifically the increase in the number of P-12 students from ethnically and racially diverse backgrounds in the United States, can be attributed to immigration (Amthor & Roxas, 2016; Sharkey, 2018). Of the approximately one million immigrants who came to the United States each year between 1997 and 2006, majority of the newcomers were from Asia, Latin America, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean (Bonner, Warren, & Jiang, 2018). As a result, an increasing number of school-aged children, approximately 4.6 million students in 2014-2015, came from homes where a language other than English was used for communication (Linan-Thompson, Lara-Matinez, & Cavazos, 2018; Sharkey, 2018), and many of these school-aged children were English Language Learner students who were learning English as an additional language in the public schools (Garcia, Arias, Harris Murri, & Serna, 2010).

English Language Learners

In the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report, *The Condition of Education 2019,* McFarland et al. (2019) define the term English language learner (ELL) as:

an individual who, due to any of the reasons listed below, has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language to be denied the

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