

Chapter 38

Preparing Urban Educators to Address Diversity and Equity through Field-Based Teacher Education: Implications for Program Design and Implementation

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents a case for field-based teacher preparation through mutually beneficial community partnerships in diverse urban contexts. Such models are a response to calls for change in teacher education, as well as to current policies and research on the central role of field experiences. Extant research is shared on partnerships as a key context for developing programs with depth, effectiveness, and sustainability. Next, information is presented about the development and implementation of one field-based teacher education program designed around mutually beneficial partnerships to prepare effective urban educators. Key themes and practices are demonstrated through data-based vignettes of collaborative field experiences with urban educators. These cases involve unique preparation experiences, stakeholders, and roles, but also serve as illustrations of the ways in which partnerships aimed at achieving mutual benefit must undergo continuous evaluation and redesign. Recommendations for iterative design and implementation of field-based models are offered.

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INTRODUCTION

Intensified, carefully designed and continuously supervised field-based experiences have long been a cornerstone of teacher preparation. Not only do they provide opportunities for teacher candidates to develop essential knowledge and skills, but they are also aligned with current teacher preparation policy and viewed as both authentic and beneficial to schools and other types of community partners. Field-based teacher education presents one solution to the problem of preparing effective teachers in light of the culturally and linguistically diverse contexts of schools in the United States (U.S.). However, little is known about the necessary supports, design processes, or features of teacher education models which rely entirely on rich clinical experiences to prepare teachers. The objectives of this chapter are to:

- Describe the ways in which shifting policies and emerging research have informed the development and implementation of one field-based teacher education program, Teaching, Learning, and Leading with Schools and Communities (TLLSC), designed around mutually beneficial partnerships to prepare effective urban educators (Ryan et al., 2014).
- Illustrate key practices, themes, and outcomes through data-based vignettes of collaborative, field experiences with urban educators, particularly focused on those serving culturally and linguistically diverse children and children with special needs.
- Share recommendations to inform continuous evaluation and redesign of field-based community partnership models.

BACKGROUND

The field of teacher education in the U.S. faces complex and dynamic changes in both micro-level student demographics and macro-level policies, as well in our understanding of the links between theory, preparation, and practice. Over the past decades, the demographics of the U.S. population have changed dramatically. In 2012, enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools consisted of 51% White, 24% Hispanic, 16% Black, and 5% Asian/Pacific Islanders and smaller percentages of American Indian and multiracial students. The percentage of White students has continued to decline; by 2024, the number and percentage of White students enrolled in public schools is projected to reach 46%, with Hispanic students increasing to 29% and Asian/Pacific Islander students increasing to 6% (National Center for Education Statistics; NCES, 2015). These cultural shifts have been accompanied by increased linguistic diversity (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010). English Learners (ELs) comprise more than 10% of the Pre-Kindergarten-through-grade-12 (P-12) student population, with proportions varying significantly by state and region but continuing to rise. The states with highest EL enrollment serve from 5% to as many as 25% ELs; representation at the school district level is as high as 50% (Ruiz Soto, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015). Teacher diversity has not maintained the same trend. The majority of P-12 teachers remain White, middle-class women, and this majority continues to grow younger and less experienced as veteran teachers leave the field (National Center for Education Information, 2011).

These changes in student demographics have occurred during challenging political times, as the accountability movement in education has expanded its lens to include not only P-12 education, but teacher education as well. In P-12 schools, the accountability movement is characterized by standards and standardized testing, such as the Common Core Standards (CCS) and Partnership of Assessment

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