Multicultural Teaching Models to Educate Pre-Service Teachers: Reflections, Service-Learning, and Mentoring

Anni Krummel
Illinois State University

The population of pre-service teachers entering university education programs is becoming more diverse. University education departments have the responsibility to understand and prepare current pre-service teachers, especially regarding multicultural education. The purpose of this paper is to understand the different dynamics of white pre-service teachers and pre-service teachers of color who are entering education departments. It has been found that pre-service teachers have a fear and are silenced during discussions of race. Therefore, university programs and professors have the challenge of opening communication within his/her courses in order to prepare teachers who can have critical multicultural discussions with his/her students. The current trends of preparing pre-service teachers to understand his/her own background and viewpoints include reflecting, service-learning, and mentoring.

Keywords: pre-service teacher, multicultural education, service-learning, modeling mentoring, diversity

Elementary and secondary classrooms around the United States are becoming more diverse (NCES, 2010). The 2010 United States Census documented record-breaking increases in racial minority categories around the country (Apple, 2011; Census, 2010; Smith, 2009). The census datum demonstrates the increased racial diversity in the United States; however, the racial diversity among pre-service and in-service teachers is not increasing (Ford & Quinn, 2010). It has been projected that by 2020, fifty percent of the student population will be students of color without a projected increase in teachers of color (Gollick & Chinn, 2009). Therefore, education departments need to provide valuable experiences and pedagogy to their predominantly white pre-service teachers. With this goal in mind, education departments around the United States are taking steps to prepare their pre-service teachers to work with racially diverse populations of students and parents.

According to the National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), "diversity" is defined as the "differences among groups of people and individuals based on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, language, exceptionalities, religion, sexual orientation, and geographic region in which they live" (NCATE, 2010-2012). Each researcher also has his/her own definition of racial diversity, which may undermine research participants' ability to respond meaningfully to researchers' questions (Taylor & Sobel, 2001). Racial diversity may be defined differently in different research studies; however a commonality among studies is that racial diversity can be viewed as a range or variety of different racial categories, with other specifications depending on the researcher.

There is a need for pre-service teachers to understand how to work with students who are racially diverse. As outlined by Metcalf-Turner (2009), "One of

the recurring and most daunting (threats) is the continued slow or little progress that has occurred in student achievement, particularly for poor and minority students" (p. 464). Pre-service teachers appear to be ill prepared to work with minority students. Pre-service teachers also lack the skills to implement multiple instructional strategies in order to reach students from different types of students, especially students from different racial backgrounds and cultures (Metcalf-Turner, 2009). Therefore, researchers have investigated pre-service teachers' beliefs and attitudes regarding diversity. They have also looked at how teacher education programs are addressing multicultural experiences and content around the United States in order to prepare pre-service teachers. Overall, multicultural education has been found to be essential to education programs in order to prepare pre-service teachers to work in elementary and secondary school environments.

The purpose of this paper is to specifically focus on three multicultural models that have been implemented at universities around the country with a concentration on black and white pre-service teachers. The guiding research questions center on the three models, which are reflecting, service-learning, and mentoring. The first question is: how are the models being implemented? The second question is: how do the pre-service teachers feel about his/her experiences within their schools multicultural teaching model? The last question is: what are the pros and cons of each model for black and white pre-service teachers as a racial group?

Pre-service Teachers' Beliefs

The majority of pre-service teachers and in-service teachers in the United States are white, middle class, Christian females who come with little knowledge regarding diversity (Liggett & Finely, 2009; Silverman, 2010). However, non-white pre-service teachers are also entering education programs. Pre-service teachers of color have been found to "bring a commitment to multicultural teaching, social justice, and providing children of color with an academically challenging curriculum" (Amos, 2010, p. 31). Researchers studying education programs have analyzed the experiences and reflections of both white pre-service teachers and pre-service teachers of color. There are several studies that look at white pre-service teachers; however, there is a gap in literature regarding pre-service teachers of color.

One study, conducted by Silverman (2010), included eighty-eight graduate and undergraduate students in either an educational psychology course or an early childhood course. Silverman (2010) found, through data analysis, that "pre-service teachers do not feel personally responsible for multiculturalism and diversity to the extent that they feel teachers in general or the school and community are responsible" (p. 321). Teacher education programs also have the responsibility to build an understanding among pre-service teachers that it is his/her responsibility to build racial acceptance in classroom environments.

Researchers have also found that many teachers entering the field of education feel uncomfortable addressing the idea of diversity. They may express fear and anxiety in working with communities that are extremely different from his/her own upbringing and background (Ford & Quinn, 2010; He & Cooper, 2009). Mosley and Rogers (2011) conducted a qualitative study with three participants; two females and one male. Data was collected during two different semesters. The researchers also used different means to collect the data. They used audiotapes, field notes, and observations. This small study found that the three white teachers remained silent when the issue of multiculturalism and diversity arose in his/her classrooms (Mosley & Rogers, 2011). Silverman (2010) discussed this same silence as a mentality that someone else will take the responsibility to educate students on multicultural topics.

One study found pre-service teachers of color were ready and willing to learn about multicultural education, yet were in a state of fear. The pre-service teachers' state of fear was different than his/her white classmates, however. The fear was of retaliation and ostracism from his/her classmates who, in one particular study, were in denial of his/her whiteness. The denial by white pre-service teachers was forcing the pre-service teachers of color to become silent (Amos, 2010). The pre-service teachers of color did not feel part of the community, especially when his/her white classmates would not recognize his/her white privilege and were not open to discussing diversity in classroom settings. Both sides silenced themselves and each other.

Vetter and Reynolds (2012) researched pre-service teachers of color from a different lens. They conducted a case study on a pre-service teacher, James. James identified himself as a "mutt" with a black father, white mother, and Indian grandfather. As a multiracial individual, James did not know how to respond to questions regarding his race in the classroom environment with his students. James' race shaped his student teaching experience. James did not have foundational guidance or curriculum from his university to use as a way to communicate with students regarding race, especially his own. James' experience illustrates, on a small scale, the importance of multicultural education for non-white students also.

Three Models

The need for multicultural education for pre-service teachers began as a response to low-achieving poor and minority students (Metcalf-Turner, 2009). However, the need is expanding, and education departments are continually being pushed to better prepare their outgoing pre-service teachers in the area of multicultural education. Many education departments around the country are preparing their pre-service

teachers for diverse classroom settings. While some researchers and universities claim they are adequately educating pre-service teachers on the topic of multicultural education (Bleicher, 2011; Bodur, 2010; Davis, Beyerbach, & London, 2008; Kang, 2010), other professionals and researchers have found teacher program graduates are "without adequate knowledge, skills, and dispositions to teach diverse students" (Benton-Borghi & Cheng, 2011, p. 29). Several studies agree upon two essential factors education department programs need to adequately prepare pre-service teachers for diverse environments.

The two essential factors are self-reflection and service-learning (Chang, Anagnostopoulos, & Omae, 2011). Self-reflection is a common professional practice among teachers and teacher candidates as a way to reflect on experiences, thoughts, as well as challenging one's own views. Pre-service teachers reflect on his/her diverse experiences including articles and/or books, discussions in class, or actual experiences in diverse classrooms (Chang et al., 2011). Service-learning involves being immersed in the urban/diverse setting (Carter, 2009). He and Cooper (2009) found that combining these two aspects also led to favorable outcomes and dispositions regarding diversity among pre-service teachers.

Reflecting

Self-reflection is the process of meditating and carefully considering one's experiences and how it relates to, in this case, pre-service teachers' approach to diversity. Reflections can be structured or unstructured, as long as it is meaningful (Bleicher, 2011). One type of reflection process universities use to provide a bridge between theory and practice includes the use of narratives, biographies or autobiographies (Bleicher, 2011; He & Cooper, 2009; Kang & Hyatt, 2010). Through narratives, it was found that pre-service teachers were able to "develop a deeper understanding of and connection with multicultural and diversity issues" (Kang & Hyatt, 2010, p. 44). They are able to tell the story of his/her experiences through their own eyes.

Reflections are also a way for professors to understand the dispositions pre-service teachers have when they enter the program. This knowledge is used by professors to target the plan of study for pre-service teachers in the area of multicultural education (Ford & Quinn, 2010). One study, by Laughter (2011), used discussion groups to facilitate conversations regarding race and racism. From his study, at a very minute level, it showed that reflection and dialogue groups (discussion/reflections) help define race and racism for white pre-service teachers (Laughter, 2011). Overall, any type of reflection is helpful in the development of pre-service teachers' multicultural knowledge (Bell, Horn, & Roxas, 2007; Johnson & Alkins, 2009; Lowenstein, 2009; Zozakiewicsz, 2010).

Service-Learning

Teacher preparation courses also have the objective to educate teacher candidates in a way that seems applicable to real life; otherwise students become bored and disengaged (Liggett, 2011). Exposure to diverse classrooms settings is one response to combating this boredom or finding relevance to one's own life. Diverse classroom experiences in K-12 settings are often called "Multicultural Service Learning" (MSL) and are found to be essential in building multicultural knowledge among pre-service teachers (Chang et al., 2011). Research has shown that pre-service teachers can be placed in diverse school environments for as little as a week or a much as an entire school year and still build varying degrees of knowledge around diversity and multicultural education (Bleicher, 2011; Chang et al., 2011). A leading researcher in the field of service-learning and teacher education, Rahmia Wade (2006), stated, "Field experiences with a service-learning component offer pre-service teachers and community members exciting opportunities to work together on needs or goals important to the community" (p. 22).

Carter (2009) found that service learning has been found to be extremely beneficial for both white and African American pre-service teachers. Prior to the service-learning experience it was found that African Americans also had narrowed views of urban schools due to his/her own experiences and individual backgrounds. Most of the involved participants had grown up in urban settings, however they learned through the service-learning experience that urban can mean many different things. One of the strongest components of the service-learning experience for these African American teacher candidates was the implementation of self-reflection (Carter, 2009).

Mentoring

Some researchers describe the importance of service-learning for pre-service teachers as a way to develop an understanding of diversity. However, many researchers emphasize the importance of teacher educators and cooperating teachers supporting the pre-service teachers to ensure the experience is one of learning (Tellez, 2006). The teacher educators and cooperating teachers can support the pre-service teachers in multiple ways. Cooperating teachers and teacher educators can provide support through honest feedback, providing examples of quality teaching, and communicating consistently. This is important because, "stereotypes (can be) proven false by a single case" (Bell, Horn, & Roxas, 2007, p. 130), but they can also be validated by a single case. One researcher found that pre-service teachers who experienced students who were perceived to be more urban had negative expectations for his/her students. On the opposite side, those same pre-service teachers that had students who were perceived to

be less urban had more positive expectations in the classroom environment (Watson, 2011). This research solidifies the fact that mentoring and modeling are essential during service-learning and content courses in teacher education programs. With a quality model or mentor, perceptions can be changed or at least challenged.

Therefore, taking a step back from reflections and experiences, teacher educators also need to be able to model appropriate language and behavior within the coursework and through mentoring (Johnson & Alkins, 2009; Lowenstein, 2009; Zozakiewicsz, 2010). Pre-service teachers need appropriate models and mentors so they are able to confidently enter his/her classrooms. Cooperating teachers working in California, USA, reported pre-service teachers were most successful in working with diverse learners when using anchor models and mentors who encouraged and expected active participation in materials and strategies (Tellez, 2008). Involving pre-service teachers gives them ownership and acceptance of material they may fear because the materials address race.

Teacher educators should feel they are equipping pre-service teachers with knowledge they will be able to use in a school environment and "work effectively in our (United States) diverse society" (Leer, 2009, p. 53). Multicultural appropriate behavior utilizes language that is inclusive, qualifying, indirect/direct, and uses clarifying questions. Researchers agree that pre-service teachers observing mentor teachers and professors using multicultural appropriate practices is beneficial for pre-service teachers. After participating in these observations, pre-service teachers are then able to understand that engaging in appropriate multicultural practices may appear to go against what is currently done in their school buildings, but it will enact positive change (Liggett & Finley, 2009).

Recommendations

Education departments around the United States are actively attempting to educate their pre-service teachers regarding the idea of multicultural education. However, much of the research around multicultural education in education departments indicates these attempts are not working. In the few studies that indicated failures, the researchers identify negative and unchangeable mindsets of the teacher candidates as a hindrance to the teacher candidates' successful reflection in the courses and programs (Davis et al., 2008). The research also shows an inability to equally expose pre-service teachers to a variety of diverse settings (Chang et al., 2011). However, Anderson and Stillman (2011) found quality service-learning experiences help pre-service teachers understand "what's possible" in urban school settings.

Researchers who state universities are not fully preparing pre-service teachers to teach in diverse classroom settings do have suggestions on how to make the programs rigorous (Benton-Borghi & Cheng, 2011; Hopkins-Gillispie, 2009.) They suggest integrating multicultural knowledge throughout all courses with faculty that is knowledgeable on the subject (Metcalf-Turner, 2009; Smith, 2009). Researchers and critics recommend a "teacher education program unit" where reliable measures would be used to measure "candidates' efficacy to teach diverse students, which (would) provide effective data for teacher education programs to become proactive to improve programs" (Benton-Borghi & Cheng, 2011, p. 29). Through integration in all courses, pre-service teachers would be able to fully understand the "issues of diversity within the context of making pedagogical decisions that lead to increased academic achievement" (Metcalf-Turner, 2009, p. 464). This integration would also result in a "true understanding of diversity and multiculturalism specific methods and strategies" (Hopkins-Gillispie, 2009, p. 71).

Another researcher, Gorski (2009), suggests that although it appears that current courses do not prepare teachers for multicultural environments, they are following NCATE standards. He challenges that idea and suggests that universities should take ideas from each area described, scaffold a course, and help mold teachers who have a holistic multicultural mindset. However, he also cautions that just exposing pre-service teachers to diversity does not mean they have developed a disposition that is desired in multicultural education.

Recommendations for future research would expand the current literature regarding multicultural education in education departments around the United States. One recommendation for future research is to implement these three models at equivalent universities. Implementing the three described models of multicultural education will provide pre-service teachers with a solid and relevant foundation when entering their own classrooms. A second recommendation for future research is to include studies with larger sample sizes resulting in stronger generalizations. Finally, a recommendation for future research is to include closing the literature gap regarding experiences and feedback of pre-service teachers of color in multicultural education programs around the country. The lack of research mirrors the lack of diversity in education programs. However, after studying the experiences of pre-service teachers of color, universities may be able to more effectively educate their students.

Conclusion

One goal of multicultural education for pre-service teachers, as stated by Bleicher (2011), is to help candidates grow and challenge his/her ideas of racial diversity. Bodur (2010) found that "pre-service teachers who received more multicultural preparation held more positive attitudes and based their attitudes more on academic preparation than on personal experiences" (p. 41). As research has shown, there are limitations within

multicultural education around the United States. However, research has also shown that reflection and diverse experiences help build confidence and knowledge among pre-service teachers.

References

Amos, Y. T. (2010). "They don't want to get it!" Interactions between minority and white pre service teachers in a multicultural education class. *Multicultural Education, 12*(4), 31-37.

Anderson, L., & Stillman, J. (2011). Student teaching for a *specialized* view of professional practice? Opportunities to learn in and for urban, high-needs schools. *Journal of Teacher Education, 62*(5), 446-464. doi: 10.1177/0022487111412052

Apple, W. W. (2011). Global crises, social justice, and teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 62*(2), 222-234.

Bell, C. A., Horn, B. R., & Roxas, K. C. (2007). We know it's service, but what are they learning? Pre-service teachers' understanding of diversity. *Equity and Excellence in Education, 40*(2), 123-133.

Benton-Borghi, B. H., & Chang, Y. M. (2011). Critical examination of candidates' diversity competence: Rigorous and systematic assessment of candidates' efficacy to teach diverse student populations. *Teacher Education, 27*(1), 29-44. doi: 10.1080/08878730.2011.632472

Bleicher, E. (2011). Parsing the language of racism and relief: Effects of a short term urban field placement on teacher candidates' perceptions of culturally diverse classrooms. *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies, 27*(8), 1170-1178.

Bodur, Y. (2012). Impact of course and fieldwork on multicultural beliefs and attitudes. *Educational Forum, 76*(1), 41-56. doi: 10.1080/00131725/2011/627981

Carter, A. D. (2009). The hardest thing to turn from: The effects of service-learning on preparing urban educators. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 42*(3), 272-293.

Chang, S., Anagnostopoulos, D., & Omae, H. (2011). The multidimensionality of multicultural service-learning: The variable effects of social identity, context and pedagogy on pre service teachers' learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal on Research and Studies, 27*(7), 1078-1089.

Davis, D. R., Ramahlo, T., Beyerbach, B., & London, A. (2008). A culturally relevant teaching course: Reflecting pre-service teachers' thinking. *Teaching Education, 19*(3), 223-234.

Ford, T. N., & Quinn, L. (2010). First year teacher education candidates: What are their perceptions about multicultural education? *Multicultural Education, 17*(4), 18-24.

Gollnick, D. M., & Chinn, P. D. (2009). *Multicultural education in a pluralistic society* (8th Ed). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Gorski, P. C. (2009). What we're teaching teachers: An analysis of multicultural teacher education coursework syllabi. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25*(2), 309-318.

He, Y., & Copper, J. E. (2009). The ABCs for pre-service teacher cultural competency development. *Teaching Education, 20*(3), 205-322.

Hopkins-Gillispie, D. (2009). Preservice teachers: Teacher preparation multicultural curriculum and culturally relevant teaching. *AILACTE Journal, 6*, 71-91.

Johnson, H. L., & Alkins, K. F. (2009). Preparation for culturally competent teaching: Applying a developmental perspective. *Teacher Education and Practice, 22*(3), 224-250.

Kang, R., & Hyatt, C. W. (2010). Preparing pre-service teachers for diversity: The power of multicultural narratives. *SRATE Journal, 19*(10), 44-51.

Laughter, J. C. (2010). Rethinking assumptions of demographic privilege: Diversity among White pre-service teachers. *Multicultural Teacher Education, 27*, 43-50.

Leer, E. B. (2009). Preparing teachers for multicultural society: A model for teacher education. *AILACTE Journal, 6*, 53-69.

Liggett, T. (2011). Critical multicultural education and teacher sense of agency. *Teacher Education, 22*(2), 185-197.

Liggett, T., & Finley, S. (2009). "Upsetting the apple cart": Issues of diversity in pre-service teacher education. *Multicultural Education, 16*(4), 33-38.

Lowenstein, K. L. (2009). The work of multicultural teacher education: Reconceptualizing white teacher candidates as learners. *Review of Educational Research 79*(1), 163-196.

Metcalf-Turner, P. (2009). Realizing the democratic ideal: A call for an integrative approach to inclusion of multicultural course content in teacher education programs. *Teacher Education and Practice, 22*(4), 464-467.

Michael-Luna, S., & Marri, A. R. (2011). Rethinking diversity in resegregated schools: Lessons from a case study of urban K-8 pre-service teachers. *Urban Education, 46*(2), 178-201.

Mosley, M., & Rogers, R. (2011). Inhabiting the 'tragic gap': Pre-service teachers practicing racial literacy. *Teaching Education, 22*(3), 1, 303-324.

National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). (2010-2012). *Standard 4: Diversity.*

Smith, E. B. (2009). Approaches to multicultural education in pre-service teacher education: Philosophical frameworks and models for teaching. *Multicultural Education 16*(3), 45-50.

Silverman, S. (2010). What is diversity?: An inquiry into pre-service teacher beliefs. *American Educational Research Journal, 47*(2), 292.

Taylor S. V., & Sobel, D. S. (2001). Addressing the discontinuity of students' and teachers' diversity: A preliminary study of preservice teachers' beliefs and perceived skills. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17, 487–503.

Tellez, K. (2008). What student teachers learn about multicultural education from their cooperating teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 24,* 43-58.

U. S. Census Bureau. (2010). *Race and Hispanic origin of the foreign-born population in the United States*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau.

Vetters, A. M., & Reynolds, J. (2012). Lessons from a preservice teacher: Examining missed opportunities for multicultural education in English education program. *Networks, 14*(1).

Wade. R. (2006). Service-learning for multicultural teaching competency: Insights from the literature for teacher educators. *Equity & Excellence in Education 33*(3), 21-29.

Watson, D. (2011). "Urban, but not too urban": Unpacking teachers' desires to teach urban students. *Journal of Teacher Education, 62*(1), 23-34.

Zozakiewicz, C. (2010). Culturally responsible mentoring: Exploring the impact of an alternative approach for preparing student teachers for diversity. *Teacher Educator, 45*(2), 137-151.

Author Notes
Anni Krummel, MS. Ed.
Illinois State University
2716 W Overhill Rd.
Peoria, IL 61615
ackrumm@ilstu.edu

Anni is a doctoral student at Illinois State University in the School of Teaching and Learning (Curriculum and Instruction).
She received her MS. Ed at Dominican University in 2009. Anni is also full-time early elementary special education teacher
in central Illinois. She is passionate about educational equality and focuses her research on multicultural education and
multiracial/biracial students in school environments.

Current Issues in Education

Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College • Arizona State University
PO Box 37100, Phoenix, AZ 85069, USA