

Faculty Teaching Perspectives about an Urban-Focused Teacher Education Program

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ABSTRACT: This qualitative study investigates the perspectives of faculty teaching engagement in a uniquely designed, collaborative urban-focused teacher education program. The study analyzes interviews conducted with seven participating faculty from both the School of Education and the College of Arts and Sciences in an urban university. The findings reveal critical perspectives including personal and professional transformation and purpose-driven teaching, awareness of the depth of substandard education in urban schools, learning to empathize, embracing culturally responsive and social justice teaching, valuing diverse teacher candidates' cultural assets, and appreciation of cross-unit collaboration. The paper concludes by discussing critical implications for rethinking teacher education for diversity.

Keywords: urban education, urban teacher education, faculty teaching, teacher diversification

The persistent underachievement of students of color and low-income students in urban schools remains a troubling concern (Haberman, 2008; Klein, Rice & Levy, 2012; National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). Reports continue to indict the U.S. educational system for inadequately preparing diverse urban students for effective citizenship development and warn that the failure to successfully educate diverse urban students poses a grave danger to the nation's security (Klein, Rice & Levy, 2012). Economic and national security are often implied in these reports as reasons for the urgency to better prepare diverse urban students. However, while these are important considerations, they are not the only motivation. In a democracy, all students regardless of their demographics, must have access to a quality, equitable, and humanizing education (Nieto, 2000). Sadly, research shows that diverse urban students continue to receive unequal and substandard education due to systemic inequities and institutionalized racism (Oakes, Lipton, Anderson, & Stillman, 2013; Orfield, 2014) that lead to their disenfranchisement, unfulfilled promise, and their ability to read the word and the world (Freire, 1970). The National Assessment of Educational Progress test scores show that minoritized students score far less than their white peers, with at least a 29-point gap in all subject areas (The National Center for Education Information [NCEI] (2011). This is unacceptable and immoral! Some teacher education programs have increasingly begun to respond by enacting programs that are urban-focused to prepare highly competent teachers for diverse urban students. This paper reports on the findings of a qualitative study that investigated teacher education faculty perspectives about their teaching engagement in an exclusive urban-focused teacher education program (UFTEP).

Conceptual Framework

This paper is conceptualized on the importance of teacher diversification and urban-focused teacher education that recruits and prepares highly competent diverse teachers for urban schools. A synthesis of research on urban schools and student achievement continues to raise concerns. Urban students' schooling experiences and academic achievement remain troubling

because of existing systemic inequities and substandard education (Delpit, 2012; Haycock, 2001; Kozol, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Noguera, 2003). The students lack access to adequate resources, particularly highly competent teachers, due to inadequate teacher preparation (Darling-Hammond, 2012; Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2010; Sleeter, 2008). They also lack access to teachers who look like them, understand their cultural and linguistic codes, connect and relate well to them and serve as role models (Nieto, 1995; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). The concern about the demographic disparity between teachers and students from minoritized communities of color and their academic challenges has called for teacher diversification (Duncan, 2009; National Education Association [NEA], 2004). Haberman (2008) has indicted teacher education programs for preparing teachers who are ineffective with diverse urban students. He writes that “traditional university-based teacher education has demonstrated for over half a century that it cannot provide teachers who will be effective and who will remain in these [urban] schools for longer than brief periods” (p. 1). Some scholars have also indicted teacher education programs for their complicity and culpability in maintaining a status quo program (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Sleeter (2008) notes that most teacher education programs lack coherent and sustained approaches to preparing candidates for diverse urban schools. Teachers have consistently reported that their teacher education programs have not adequately prepared them to teach in diverse settings (Futrell, Gomez, & Bedden, 2003; Levine, 2006; Hayes, 2009). Imperatively, colleges and schools of education have been challenged to rethink their programs and to find alternative and creative ways to recruit and prepare teacher candidates of color and with urban life experiences. The suggestion is to evolve an urban-focused teacher education that will prepare teachers who will be culturally responsive and socially responsible. Howey and Zimpher (1989) argue that urban teacher education programs [h]ave one or more frameworks grounded in theory and research as well as practice; frameworks that explicate, justify, and build consensus around such fundamental conceptions as the *role* of the teacher, the *nature* of teaching and learning and the *mission* of school in this democracy [...]. Programs reflect consideration of ethos and culture building and the critical socialization of the prospective teacher (p. 242).

The diversity gap between teachers and students in U.S. urban schools creates a disconnect that adversely impacts the learning and academic achievement of urban students (NEA, 2009). While 84% of the teaching force is European American (white), students of color make up 48% of the K-12 student population (Boser, 2014). The need to diversify the teaching force has intensified in the last few years (Duncan, 2009; NEA, 2009; Sleeter, Kumashiro & Neal, 2015; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Some institutions have exemplified efforts to diversify their programs. Sleeter, Kumashiro, and Neal (2015) cited and documented programs such as *Future Teacher Project* at Santa Clara University, *Project Future* in Texas, *Project Teach*, *Teach Tomorrow* in Oakland, *Institute for Urban Education* at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, and *Growing Your Own Teachers* in Illinois, among others.

Context and Methodology

UFTEP is a predominantly White institution, situated within a comprehensive research university located in a large urban community in the Midwest region of the United States. In an effort to respond to the needs of the urban community, and following much criticism of failing to live up to its urban mission, the university established an interdisciplinary, collaborative, partnership-based urban institute to prepare exemplar teachers who would be dedicated, competent, and committed to serving the urban community and its schools. Faculty were selected

from both the School of Education (SOE) and the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) to design the program and teach the courses. The program's conceptual framework is premised on culturally responsive and social justice teaching. It is cohort-based and targets teacher candidates of color and those with urban life and schooling experiences (Haberman, 2005). Students are recruited locally and nationally, although most come from local urban high schools. Students in the program are full-time students who receive financial assistance. As a cohort-based program, deliberate efforts are made to build, nurture, and sustain close personal and professional relationships among the students. Students take the same classes and function as a community of learners that lends to fostering a supportive "collective identity" or *fictive kinship* (Ogbu, 2004). Because most of the students are first-generation college students and from the local urban high schools with challenging conditions, the program provides a nurturing learning environment to support their success. Specialized courses are designed with an emphasis on culturally responsive and social justice teaching. Some specific courses include introduction to urban education and the urban education seminar, which focus on the sociopolitical context of teaching and learning, culture, diversity, and social justice. UFTEP collaborates with 9 partner urban school districts. Students are immersed in intense, extended field experiences in the schools that begin in the first semester in the program. They participate in a yearlong internship in their final year. One other unique course is the community immersion experience, an eight-week summer intensive course that immerses the students in the urban community. Students participate in various activities, including community excursions, field trips to community agencies, neighborhood walks, service learning, and facilitated reflection and dialogue (Waddell & Ukpokodu, 2012).

I was one of the SOE faculty who was intimately and actively involved in the conceptualization, design, and implementation of the program. I have been a multicultural teacher educator for more than two decades. Prior to the conception and institution of UFTEP, I had founded and instituted the Diversity Curriculum Infusion Program at the university. I facilitated the yearlong Diversity Curriculum Institute that assisted faculty in developing the tools for engaging in curriculum transformation and inclusive teaching. As a critical multicultural teacher educator and the only faculty of color who, for years, had struggled to disrupt the traditional status quo teacher education program, participating in the UFTEP initiative was a dream come true. I designed and taught courses in the program and interacted with the students. In this study, in the eyes of Connelly and Clandinin (2006), I am a researcher-participant. As such, this work reflects a "mutually constructed story created out of the lives of both researcher and participants" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 20), which may constitute a limitation of the study.

The overarching research question was: *What are faculty perspectives about their teaching engagement in an exclusive urban-focused teacher education?* Seven participants were selected through a purposeful, *criterion-based* sampling (deMarrais & Lapan, 2004). Participants were (1) regular university faculty, (2) had familiarity with the mission and conceptual framework of UFTEP, and (3) had developed and taught one course for at least two cohorts of UFTEP. Of the 7 participants, 5 were from the SOE and 2 were from CAS, 5 were females and were males. There were 6 Caucasians and 1 African American. Five participants associate professors and two were assistant professors. None of the participants had been prepared in multicultural education and culturally responsive/social justice pedagogy in their doctoral programs. Only one participant had been exposed to the works of Paulo Freire and bell hooks. Two participants had taught in an urban school district. Participants' college teaching experience

ranged from 2 years to 30 years. Table 1 shows each participant's profile.

Table 1: Demographic Profiles of the Participants

Name	Race/Ethn	Gender	Affiliation	Rank	Years Teaching	Content Taught	MCE Doctoral Prep?
Bobby	Caucasian	M	CAS	Assoc Prof	25	College Algebra	No
Freddy	Caucasian	M	CAS	Assoc Prof	20	English	Exposed
Lila	Caucasian	F	SOE	Assoc Prof	30	Integrated Arts	No
Maddy	Caucasian	F	SOE	Assist Prof	2	Methods Course	No
Nadine	African American	F	SOE	Assoc Prof	15	Urban Ed Seminar	No
Sally	Caucasian	F	SOE	Assist Prof	3	Literacy	No
Viola	Caucasian	F	SOE	Assoc Prof	30	Children's Literature	No

Although a majority of the participants had not been prepared in multicultural education in their doctoral programs, they quickly learned and came to embrace the philosophy. They participated in a series of professional development seminars and urban community forums on culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) and social justice teaching (SJT), which were facilitated by well-known critical multicultural national scholars. Some had participated in the campus yearlong Diversity Curriculum Infusion program that I facilitated, prior to the UFTEP initiative. Thus, they had become familiar with the theories and practices of multicultural education, CRP, and SJT. The participants' teaching areas were reading, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, English composition, and children's literature. Through the SOE collaborative partnerships with 9 local urban school districts that provided field experience sites for students, participants had opportunities to be involved with the schools. Some taught their classes in the schools.

Data Collection and Analysis

The primary data were semi-structured audiotaped interviews. Each interview lasted for about 90 minutes. Interview questions were open-ended. Demographic data were collected that included teaching experience at the university level, courses taught in the program, how they came to be involved with the program, their doctoral program preparation relative to multicultural education, culturally responsive and social justice teaching, and urban school teaching experience. Participants read and signed the consent form to participate. All interviews

were transcribed verbatim and generated a vast amount of data.

Data analysis involved an inductive approach of reading, sorting, and observing for patterns and themes (Patton, 2002). I used a two-stage process that involved initial coding and a focused coding (Charmaz, 2006). I followed LeCompte and Shensul's (1999) stages of (a) isolating specific items and working to label them, (b) looking for and articulating patterns and structures, and (c) clarifying meaning through "linking together or finding consistent relationships among patterns, components, constituents, and structures" (p. 177). Emerging themes were developed by comparing participants' responses both within and across interviews. Although validity is not essential in qualitative research, I established trustworthiness of data through member-checking (Creswell, 2007) and a thorough and prolonged examination.

Findings

Six themes emerged from my analysis of the data. These include experience of personal and praxis transformation and clarity of purpose-driven teaching, awareness of the depth of substandard education in urban schools, learning to empathize, embracing culturally responsive and social justice teaching, valuing teacher candidates' diverse cultural assets, and appreciation of cross-cultural unit collaboration. In the following, I discuss the six themes.

Personal and Praxis Transformation and Purpose-Driven Teaching

Transformative scholars contend that transformation occurs when individuals experience a new phenomenon that changes their perspectives about the way they look at and engage with the world (Dewey, 1933; Clark, 1993; Mezirow, 2000). All participants viewed their engagement with UFTEP as beneficial and transformative, both personally and professionally. Overwhelmingly, participants expressed experiencing personal growth and praxis transformation. Participants expressed that their engagement in the program provided them an opportunity to reflect on and develop a deeper understanding of what real teaching means and their purpose for teaching. They expressed that although they knew why they taught, they developed a renewed sense of a purpose-driven teaching. As Lila stated, "Although I knew why I teach, my teaching engagement with UFTEP really brought it to the fore." Freddy explains, "I was not just teaching a subject to students; I was teaching for a real purpose by preparing teachers for urban schools." Participants also felt their engagement in the program challenged their thinking about what was at stake as they became more aware of the critical need to prepare highly qualified and competent teachers for urban schools. Viola said, "I felt a heightened sense of personal stake given the university's commitment to the program and the local, state, and national sensationalization of the program." Sally elaborates:

I think my philosophy, pedagogy, and commitment changed because of UFTEP. I made more progress towards my own journey of understanding well what it does mean to teach, and how to prepare pre-service teachers for urban teaching. For the most part, teaching in this program has been an asset to the overall quality of my college teaching. I thank the students. It is a huge responsibility we are preparing them for and the desire to fulfill it is great, so as an instructor, you adjust your philosophy, disposition, and pedagogy.

Awareness of the Depth of Substandard Education in Urban Schools

Haberman (1991) describes teaching in urban schools as a "pedagogy of poverty" that is characterized by low expectations and worksheet curriculum that produces low-level knowledge. This became obvious to participants as they worked with the UFTEP teacher candidates who graduated from the local urban school districts. Participants learned firsthand the depth of the

educational challenges in urban schools, and how the substandard education the students receive is a disservice and that it shortchanges them. All participants lamented the academic weakness of some of the UFTEP students and its effect on their learning and performance. Participants felt a tremendous frustration and outrage that schools would graduate high school students without developing their critical thinking and literacy skills. Some participants described the experience as “a shock,” “an outrage,” and “eye-opening.” They expressed experiencing tremendous challenges and frustration teaching some of the UFTEP students. Most of the students came from the so-called “failing” local urban school districts. However, all participants perceived the students to be intellectually capable, motivated, committed, and with great potential. The following comments illuminate:

The students come from the urban core where the educational system and curricular experiences have not been rigorous. So you have students who have tremendous potential but poorly prepared. The writing is very weak. Oftentimes they have not been challenged. I remember that first group of students—they were such, I mean, they were like... it was like teaching high school students. I felt like I was teaching a group of students who really needed to learn to know what college was all about, so it was frustrating.

Says another,

Well, I think it goes back to their K-12 education. For some of them they really come out of schools where the teachers did not really teach them or try to help them learn how to learn and where academic discipline kind of things were not impressed upon them. And a lot of these young people are, they are, the first person in their family to go to college, which I am glad about. Many have good disposition toward the program but I think they don't come out from educational backgrounds where there was academic rigor. They have not been challenged and instilled the value of rigor in their studies.

Learning to Empathize

One key quality of a true educator is the ability to empathize with others upon knowing their plight or recognizing injustice. As participants deepened their awareness about the failure of the educational system and the schools to effectively provide a high-quality education for urban students, as well as observed that the UFTEP teacher candidates had potential and exhibited a high sense of determination, motivation, openness, and commitment to their preparation as urban teachers, they began to shift their mindset. All participants agreed and realized that it was not the students' faults that they had academic challenges; they blamed the schools and teachers for shortchanging them. They felt a sense of empathy not only for the UFTEP students but also for all students in urban schools. Participants felt the sense of empathy positively influenced their frame of mind and diminished their feelings of frustration. It sustained their ability and determination to commit genuinely to helping the students learn and succeed. Viola illuminates,

My engagement with UFTEP was a humbling experience. It forced me to reflect on my own education. While I feel gratitude for the quality education I received, I feel disheartened by the experience these [UFTEP] students have received and I feel their pain when they are challenged by the assignments they complete in my class. I just have to empathize with them. When you think of the interest of those least prepared students, it breaks your heart. In each of the UFTEP classes I taught, there have been some students who just were academically weak. A few of them were fine... I had to be genuinely compassionate toward them and determined to help them succeed.

Embracing Culturally Responsive and Social Justice Teaching

All participants expressed lacking preparation in multicultural teaching, as they were not

exposed to multicultural education during their doctoral programs even though some who were recent graduates acknowledged not having that preparation. Some participants earned their degrees in the 1960s and '70s prior to the popularity of multicultural education scholarship. Lila explains,

I went to school in the Midwest in late '60s and early '70s. There was no talk about multicultural education, cultural responsiveness and social justice. When I started teaching college in the early '70s, I just taught from a technical stance. As you know, the last few years we have focused on this program [UFTEP] and I am learning about culturally responsive teaching and social justice.

Only one participant had some readings on Paulo Freire and bell hooks from which he became knowledgeable and passionate about social justice education and pedagogy. However, while not all participants, especially those from the CAS, understood or believed in the theory of culturally responsive teaching most did reference making efforts to teach in a way that modeled elements of culturally responsive teaching in their courses. It is important to note that these participants were experts in their content areas and were already teaching courses in the regular teacher education program or general education program. The hope was that through the professional development workshops they would learn to embrace multicultural/culturally responsive teaching practices.

Valuing Teacher Candidates' Diverse Cultural Assets

All participants expressed valuing the diversity of the UFTEP students and felt stimulated and humbled in their presence. They felt the students' diverse cultural backgrounds and "funds of knowledge" (Moll & Gonzales, 2004) enriched and enhanced the teaching-learning process and found it refreshing as it was a rarity in other non-UFTEP courses they teach or have taught. Sally commented,

I liked and enjoyed the diversity of the students in the course. My other courses lack diversity so it was refreshing and exciting to teach the UFTEP students. The perspectives they shared were enlightening. They were open to diversity issues and readily engaged in dialogues and discussion about culture and social justice. The students took initiatives in raising issues about diversity and curriculum and teaching practices.

Maddy echoed,

Working with UFTEP students has given me more of a base to work from. The students come with critical consciousness and their voices have improved the dialogue in my class. Because of them I have more diversity in the room and that has been a great change in the past two years, and that is a good thing, and if I say something about the children's culture and who is represented in these books, they are able to talk about the relevance of the resources and what works best for diverse students. So you definitely see the leadership in them. They also have great attitude toward diversity and their desire to serve urban children is revealing. They bring liveliness, engagement, and confidence into the room.

Appreciation of Cross-Unit Collaboration

One key feature of UFTEP is its interdisciplinary, collaborative, and partnership-based structure. Collaboration involved CAS faculty who served as members of the writing and design teams of UFTEP. They also developed and taught innovative courses that integrated the "funds of knowledge" of the urban community. For example, English composition course assignments involved researching and analyzing the history of racial segregation and patterns of redlining. Integrated content and methods courses were designed and taught collaboratively. Team teaching

fostered co-learning between CAS and SOE faculty. Participants commented about valuing the collaboration between SOE and CAS faculty. Some CAS faculty felt they had learned so much about pedagogy from the collaboration with SOE faculty, reading literature they never would have read, and becoming deeply knowledgeable about teacher education language. Some even felt they were evolving as “teacher educators.” Consider this comment:

My engagement with UFTEP has been professionally enriching. Being able to collaborate with SOE faculty has given me much knowledge on teaching and learning. Participating in those writing and design team meetings, and being exposed to the teacher education literature was incredibly enlightening. I read Ladson-Billings’ articles on culturally responsive teaching and listened to my SOE colleagues talk about social justice teaching. Even though I am still learning about this, I find myself using some education language and so feel like a “teacher educator.”

SOE faculty also expressed valuing the collaboration with CAS faculty, learning about the CAS faculty’s experiences teaching their courses through the lens of culturally responsive and social justice teaching, and their experiences with UFTEP students compared to their traditional students. Lila illuminates:

Collaboration with CAS faculty was very good for this program. It was good learning about their discipline and courses and how they were encountering the program students. First, it was good to hear that they have the same experiences, like the frustration, we have with the students’ limited academic and college readiness. Second, it was good to see how they were structuring their courses and pedagogy to meet the needs of the program, you know, social justice teaching, how they make students explore and write about their neighborhood geo-histories. Third, I like the collaborative cross-curricular development that we have.

Nadine added,

It was great that we collaborated with CAS faculty. I liked the fact that CAS and SOE are beginning to be on the same page. You know that they are laying the foundation for a good liberal education and introducing issues of culture and social justice to the students so that they are not new to them when they come to our education courses.

Challenges of Program Teaching

Although the participants found their teaching engagement with UFTEP valuable and rewarding, it was not without challenges. One paradoxical challenge the participants faced was the culture of “them vs. me.” Although the students were culturally and racially diverse (Caucasians, African Americans), they had developed a “collective or fictive identity” (Ogbu, 2004) that created a “cliquish” culture in class. As a cohort-based program, UFTEP teacher candidates experience the same classes and extracurricular, cultural and social activities. They are socialized to function as a “family” who support each other and bond together. Given this support and connectedness, UFTEP teacher candidates develop a high sense of empowerment and “voice.” All faculty reported experiencing some frustrations because of the students’ overpowering “cliquish” culture that somewhat divided the class into “me” (faculty) versus “them” (UFTEP preservice teachers). Some participants felt threatened and even intimidated by the “cliquish” culture. Maddy, who was White, with just two years of teaching experience, felt particularly impacted. Her comment illuminates,

Honestly, there were times during the course when I felt intimidated by the students, you know, the way they bonded together and came to each other’s defense, especially if an issue came up between one of them and myself. I felt like the “outsider” and had trouble

connecting with them. At first, I thought it was a cultural or racial thing because I was the minority [white and non-UFTEP] in the class. I will not be way off if I say I was marginalized by the students especially the first group. It was much better the second time teaching in the program, because I devised new strategies to break through the “me” versus “them.” I have since learned to be proactive and to make clear to them the whole notion of professionalism, responsibility, and learning community. So it has gotten better!

Another major challenge participants noted was institutional constraint. The UFTEP program was promoted as a national model. There was so much riding on its success. It was the chancellor’s project and was monitored from the provost’s office. Participants felt pressured to deliver, to ensure that the teacher candidates were successful and retained. There was high expectation for both faculty and teacher candidates. One of the marketing points for UFTEP was the high academic performance and success of the teacher candidates. The grade point averages (GPAs) of all UFTEP teacher candidates were constantly reported as excellent and higher in comparison to the candidates in the traditional program. Participants felt pressured and challenged to make sure that teacher candidates in their classes received high grades even if they had to redo assignments multiple times, which added to their workload. A few participants reported being removed from teaching courses for UFTEP because they were “too hard” and gave low grades to students, which lowered the students’ GPAs.

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper has presented faculty perspectives about their teaching engagement in one institution’s urban-focused teacher-education program. The findings generate critical perspectives that have implications for educational practice at the K-12 level, as well as college and teacher education. First, the participants’ first-hand experience of the academic challenges UFTEP preservice teachers face gives insight into the problem of recruiting and retaining teachers of color. Teachers of color constitute about 17% of the teaching force (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). One reason for the low representation is lack of adequate college preparation (Neal, Sleeter & Kumashiro, 2015) and unwelcoming college culture (Harper, 2006). This study shows how faculty responded to the call to serve the local community and collaborated to design and enact a unique program that recruited and nurtured young adolescent teacher candidates for teaching responsibilities in urban schools.

Second, this study reveals the importance of faculty personal and praxis transformation needed to successfully prepare and retain students of color who enter our college classrooms, particularly in teacher education. Although participation in the UFTEP was a novel teaching terrain for most participants, they embraced the challenge and learned to navigate and negotiate the demands of teaching young adolescent students from marginalized urban school communities. They learned to adjust their dispositions toward teaching in new ways and for a new cadre of students. Traditionally, students entered the teacher education program after two years of liberal arts education. The UFTEP students entered the teacher education program in their freshman year—right out of high school. Most participants were not accustomed to teaching freshmen students in teacher education. They learned to be compassionate and patient, and cultivated a new mindset to navigate and negotiate interactions and relationships with students. They also learned to become “warm demanders” (Gay, 2010), scaffolding students’ experiential learning. Perhaps because of the high stakes of the program—the chancellor’s project—and the heightened awareness of the educational crisis in urban schools, all participants felt invested in the students and the program. Participants saw themselves as contributing to a larger cause:

preparing teachers for the urban community and changing lives. Participants were passionate in their description about the work with the students and they were genuine in their commitment to the students' success. Some were both teachers and mentors to students. They participated in social activities that were organized to nurture the students. When faculty begin to see the world from students' realities, they are more likely to see how the dominant educational system has affected their lives and education. All participants expressed "feeling with" the students and pledged to support their learning. Viola illuminates,

I really had to adjust my attitude and pedagogy. I had to be patient, compassionate, and caring. I now see the gross disservice done to urban students; this has challenged my desire to commit and ensure that these urban preservice teachers are adequately prepared. I think this is what college faculty should know so that they can better help these students, many of whom are first-generation college students.

Third, this study confirms the benefits of diversity on college campuses. Participants commented passionately and positively about valuing UFTEP preservice teachers' diverse backgrounds, which contributed to classroom liveliness, learning stimulation, energy, diverse perspectives, and increasing perspective consciousness of other education students. Finally, the participants' sense of humility, as they learned to embrace and negotiate the new terrain of culturally responsive and social justice pedagogy, is encouraging. Although most participants were not grounded in multicultural education and culturally responsive and social justice pedagogy prior to engaging with UFTEP, they soon realized the high stakes of the program and so challenged themselves to embrace and learn to teach in a culturally responsive way. This is what the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) has challenged faculty to do.

Fourth, the collaboration between CAS and SOE faculty is encouraging. Collaborating on designing creative and innovative courses and sharing ideas about teaching and students' learning are worthy outcomes for emulation in our institutions. This was a rare experience prior to the inception of UFTEP. However, while participants felt positive and humbled by their teaching engagement with UFTEP, it was not without challenges. Participants' expression of experiencing "them vs. me" culture in their classes exposes issues of racial/cultural identity that faculty must work through in order to be competent with students from marginalized backgrounds (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Nieto, 2005). Although the participants participated in professional development to learn about culturally responsive and social justice pedagogy, they may not have had opportunities to develop the multicultural competence needed to navigate and negotiate cross-cultural teaching (Irvine, 2003; Nieto, 2005). Faculty, especially teacher educators, must develop multicultural competence and unpack their racial/cultural identities in order to meaningfully engage diverse others and create and sustain a learning classroom community. More importantly, teacher educators must be grounded in critical multicultural education if they are to develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to effectively interact with diverse teacher candidates and prepare them for transformative practices. It is somehow disturbing that some participants who were recent graduates from their doctoral programs did not have preparation in multicultural education. Teacher education programs must disrupt this omission but also to ensure that they provide professional development for all faculty preparing teachers and teacher candidates. The findings will be valuable to urban-focused teacher education programs, as well as teacher education in general that seeks to diversify the recruitment and retention of teacher candidates.

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