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WALKING THROUGH APPREHENSION: BEGINNING THE JOURNEY TO CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

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***Abstract:** Within urban universities, programs often require students to complete experiences via partnerships with P-12 schools, community centers, or social service agencies located in urban centers. These experiences provide rich opportunities for students to apply, in real-world settings, what they study on campus. These experiences also provide opportunities for students to confront their perceptions of the urban neighborhoods in which the experiences occur. However, when students' perceptions are based primarily on stereotypes or negative media portrayals, they may enter into the experiences with apprehension, even fear. This manuscript describes one attempt of a large teacher preparation program to address this issue and the results achieved.*

The future population growth of the United States continues to be in urban areas and continues to trend toward increasing cultural diversity. In fact, in many metropolitan areas those under the age of 18 have already reached a majority non-white status (Brookings Metropolitan Institution Policy Program, 2010). This results in a critical need for teachers who are prepared and willing to work in urban schools where student diversity is and will continue to be the norm. To meet this need, university teacher preparation programs must intentionally and systematically prepare pre-service teachers to recognize and build on the strengths of culturally diverse students and provide meaningful experiences for pre-service teachers to be immersed in diverse urban schools and communities.

Teacher preparation programs have attempted to do this using a variety of approaches including offering isolated course work or training focused on diversity. Other programs take a more integrated approach and infuse diversity training or culturally responsive teaching throughout multiple courses and opportunities. Still other programs look to forge partnerships with urban schools and communities through which pre-service teachers have meaningful experiences within urban communities and schools.

This article describes how two partnerships between a teacher preparation program and other urban institutions may provide viable models for preparing culturally responsive teachers for urban school settings. Both partnerships immersed teacher education faculty and pre-service teachers in highly diverse urban communities and schools where teachers will be in most demand. While the partnerships were developed independent of each other, they both represent the potential impact of the development and implementation of partnerships as a means to prepare culturally responsive teachers to work in urban school settings.

The first model relied heavily on establishing new partnerships with community agencies and leaders, utilizing these as resources to support one of the program's signature field experiences. The second model enhanced an existing partnership between a teacher education program and an urban school district by embedding university course work, classroom instruction, and a corresponding field experience all within K-12 urban school buildings. Qualitative and quantitative evidence of the outcomes of these models will be shared.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

With current teacher accountability and evaluation structures, teachers must be able to successfully impact the learning of our nation's diverse urban populations from the very first moment they begin their careers. To prepare them for these realities, teacher preparation programs must contextualize knowledge of both subject-area

content and teaching pedagogy by engaging pre-service teachers in critical reflection. This idea is firmly supported by the framework of culturally responsive teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1995; Gay, 2000). The three propositions of culturally responsive teaching include conception of self and others, social relations, and conceptions of knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 1994). The propositions of culturally responsive teaching ensure that educators engage students by teaching subject matter in meaningful ways by connecting it to students' lives (Villegas & Lucas, 2007).

In addition, culturally responsive teaching pedagogy recognizes that teachers' attitudes and expectations for their students impact the learning of their students. Given the diversity found in urban schools, culturally responsive teaching provides the scaffolding needed to understand the importance of addressing pre-service teachers' perceptions of urban schools and communities.

If pre-service teachers form attitudes and expectations based on uninformed perceptions of urban environments and bring those misperceptions with them to the classroom, it may negatively influence their ability to effectively teach their students. Within the context of culturally responsive teaching, diverse students are not seen as being socially or academically "needy or deficient" and in want of rescue by a well-intended teacher (Ladson-Billings, 2011). In fact, culturally responsive teaching theory rejects this deficit approach to working with diverse students. Rather, culturally responsive teaching thrives on the strengths, contributions, and possibilities of cultural diversity as opportunities to engage and motivate students and to construct meaningful learning experiences (Banks et al., 2005; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2011).

The same misperceptions may also contribute to the common pattern of inexperienced teachers accepting positions in diverse urban schools but only teaching in those settings until they secure a position elsewhere (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Jacob, 2007). This exacerbates the issue of resource inequity, in this case teacher experience, which exists between schools in affluent, predominantly white communities and those in low-income minority communities (Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust, & Shulman, 2005).

In urban districts, the annual teacher attrition rate has grown to 19-26% and, over the past decade, the five-year attrition rate has remained constant at 50% or higher, causing many urban districts to encounter a revolving door of inexperienced teachers that can impede student achievement and school reform (Waddell, 2010). A common explanation given for urban teacher attrition is the lack of adequate preparation (Darling-Hammond, 2003). One possible means to counteract this attrition rate is for academic institutions with teacher preparation programs to design approaches in which pre-service teachers are immersed in diverse urban settings while under the supervision of the program's faculty. This gives pre-service teachers not only the experiences needed to better prepare them to work in diverse classrooms but also the opportunities that will allow for critical reflection. In addition, both the experiences and reflections can be completed while still receiving guidance from the teacher education faculty.

Teacher preparation programs recognize the need to better prepare pre-service teachers to work in urban schools (Jacob, 2007). Programs use varied approaches to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of pre-service teachers including (a) increasing their sociocultural competence, (b) fostering their dispositions regarding high expectations of student learning, (c) building their collaborative skills, and (d) teaching them instructional strategies that promote the learning of diverse students (Voltz, Collins, Patterson, & Sims, 2008).

Despite teacher education programs' recognition of the need and the well-intended attempts to prepare culturally responsive teachers for urban schools, pre-service teachers often report feeling ill-prepared to teach in diverse urban settings (Burstein, Czech, Kretschmer, Lombardi, & Smith, 2009). This leaves teacher education programs struggling to identify additional approaches.

Although the approaches and the concept of culturally responsive teaching can be addressed in the context of a college classroom setting, many teacher educators believe the most effective way to develop these or any competency related to effective teaching is to couple university course work with field experiences (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). As a result, teacher preparation programs often rely on field experiences in urban settings as a means to better prepare pre-service teachers to work in these environments (Haberman, 1987; Foote & Cook-Cottone, 2004).

Field experiences, required in all accredited pre-service programs, provide the opportunities in which pre-service teachers come "face to face with their entering beliefs and assumptions" about schools, teachers, and the future students they will teach (Banks et al., 2005). Additionally, field experiences can offer opportunities for pre-service teachers to: 1) go beyond application of theory, 2) have authentic learning experiences, guided by university faculty, in which they can examine their current perceptions, and 3) develop effective teaching skills most likely to impact student learning (American Federation of Teachers [AFT], 2012; Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2012; National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], 2010; National Council on Teacher Quality [NCTQ], 2011; National Education Association [NEA], 2011; Olmedo, 1997; Singer, Catapano, & Huisman, 2010; Zeichner, 2010).

Despite the promise of using field experiences to prepare pre-service teachers for diverse urban schools, results of efforts to utilize field experiences to better prepare teachers for urban teaching are mixed (Catapano & Huisman, 2010; Mason, 1999; Sleeter, 2001). In some cases, simply placing a pre-service teacher in a diverse urban school without providing a community context may actually perpetuate misperceptions and stereotypes about the students and their families (Cochran-Smith, 1995; Gallego, 2001; Haberman & Post, 1992; & Zeichner, 1992). Under these circumstances the field experience could become counterproductive and actually inhibit teacher effectiveness (Zeichner, 1996). Zeichner (2010), however, found evidence of promising practices when teacher preparation programs incorporated community resources into their program.

Both the promise and the shortfalls of field experience have been the recent focus of several leading educational organizations. The AFT, CCSSO, NCATE, NCTQ, and NEA have each criticized the existing field experiences models currently in practice and called for substantive new approaches to field experiences (AFT, 2012; CCSSO, 2012; NCATE, 2010; NCTQ, 2011; & NEA, 2011).

Preparation Through Partnerships

The calls to both reform field experiences and to prepare teachers for urban settings may lead teacher preparation programs to consider forming partnerships with school districts and local community agencies. These partnerships may provide the teacher preparation programs with more capacity to be responsive to the needs of pre-service teachers and to contribute to the development of a high-quality pool of teachers who are well prepared to meet the opportunities and challenges of teaching in diverse urban schools.

One urban-based teacher preparation program developed two promising partnership models that extended the preparation of pre-service teachers well beyond the walls of the university. Findings from these partnerships provide evidence that the efforts are helping to create a pool of teachers who are more adequately prepared to teach in diverse, urban settings. In the first model, the teacher preparation program implemented partnerships in three distinct communities within its city. Known as Culture Walks, this model provided pre-service teachers and teacher education faculty the opportunities to experience the culture and history of minority populations in several urban settings and introduced them to the leaders within the various communities. Pre-service teachers participated in this experience immediately prior to beginning a 40-hour urban field experience. By being introduced to the physical surroundings of these communities and meeting community advocates and professionals who were currently working in the diverse urban communities, pre-service teachers came away from the Culture Walks with an increased awareness of the impact of culture on learning and childhood development. They also gained classroom skill sets that would help them to reach diverse populations with whom they would interact during the upcoming field experience.

In the second model, the teacher preparation program implemented partnerships with some of the city's most diverse urban schools. Referred to as the Urban Immersion program, these partnerships provided both the opportunities for the pre-service teacher to enroll in a teacher education course and the teacher education faculty to teach that course inside an urban school setting. The college classroom, per se, was situated and course content was delivered completely within the setting and context of urban K-12 public school buildings and during the K-12 school day. Corresponding field experiences were embedded in the schools in both formal structured opportunities as well as informal and authentically rich opportunities that resulted from the spontaneity of the K-12 setting and school day.

Resources used to deliver the programs were minimal. The Culture Walks were funded by a local foundation which provided resources for the lunches served to the pre-service teachers. Community agencies donated the meeting space and provided volunteer panelists. The Urban Immersion courses and field experiences required stipends for the teacher education faculty who taught the courses. Both partnership programs are described in detail below, and the findings related to both efforts are also shared.

Culture Walks: The Community Partnership

The teacher preparation program had a long-standing requirement that blocked two pedagogical courses and a 40-hour urban field experience. The field experiences took place in schools located in what many considered to be "inner-city" schools and were located in urban areas as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau (Howey, 2008). The schools were located in neighborhoods often associated with poverty, crime, and violence. A majority of the pre-service teachers enrolled in the program had few experiences in these neighborhoods and at times expressed reluctance and even fear of working in the schools located in these communities.

Culture Walks were systematically added to the existing courses and field experience structure and made a core requirement for every undergraduate in the teacher preparation program. Scheduled one week prior to the beginning of the field experience and based on their assigned school location, pre-service teachers attended a Culture Walk at one of three locations within the city. These specific areas and the K-12 schools within them were heavily populated by minority groups; African Americans in the site representing the northern section of the city, refugees in the site representing the central section of the city, and Latinos in the site representing the southern section of the city. Teacher education faculty from the corresponding courses also attended the event. The goal of the Culture Walks was to assist pre-service teachers in developing cultural competence through positive interactions with leaders and influential people of the communities and to dispel the misconceptions of these communities held by many of the pre-service teachers.

At each of the three sites, a panel of community leaders provided a neighborhood overview focused on strengths of the community rather than the often reported problems associated with inner-city communities. The panelists represented community advocacy groups, public and private social service agencies, churches and other religious organizations, cultural organizations such as museums, as well as urban school leaders. Panelists were often from ethnic groups that differed from the predominant ethnic group (white, middle-class) represented in the pre-service teachers attending the Culture Walk.

During the two hour-long discussion and over a shared lunch catered by a local business, panelists shared attributes, facts, and realities of their communities. Facilitated by teacher education faculty, the panel discussions were guided to address many of the preconceived perceptions of the pre-service teachers as well as address questions and concerns frequently voiced by pre-service teachers. After the panel discussion, the pre-service teachers "walked" through the community. In some locations, this was a literal walk through the streets, past the shops and homes located in the community. In other locations, the "walk" was figurative or virtual as community landmarks were shared via electronic presentations.

Culture Walk Findings

The qualitative data from the Culture Walks and discussion groups was analyzed using systematic qualitative methodology and inductive analysis. Glaser and Strauss' (1967) foundational work of constant comparative method was employed. Data analysis began with the first set of emerging categories (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Miles & Huberman, 1994) gathered from pre and post walk surveys that included open ended questions asking students to reflect on their walk in terms of their process of learning to teach, and continued as the initial categories were refined into consolidated themes with the added data sources of classroom discussions and reflection papers. The stages (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) of category coding, refinement of categories, exploration of the relationships across categories, and the understandings of the integrated data helped to identify the meanings from within the data sources.

Between fall 2009 and spring 2012 the teacher preparation program held 18 Culture Walk events, either as a series or as a stand-alone program. Over 70 university faculty and staff attended at least one Culture Walk event. Over 650 pre-service teachers attended a Culture Walk event and of those pre-service teachers, 493 completed both a pre- and post-walk survey to measure expectations prior to the walk, as well as impact after the experience. The pre- and post-walk surveys included demographic questions such as "How often have you been to this neighborhood?" as well as reflective questions such as "What stands out as the most important information you've considered during the walk?" and "What are two specific instructional implications for teaching in this community?" From these electronically collected surveys, two categories emerged: Teacher as Tourist and Teacher as Advocate.

Categories

The first category, the Teacher as Tourist, was embodied in comments such as, "I think this experience was helpful because it introduced me to a culture that I have not had a lot of interaction with" and "...Up until now, I did not even know we had a refugee population here. Thanks!" In analyzing the data at this level, surface level statements that talked more about the places or sounded as though they were written for the benefit of the researcher were coded as Tourist statements as they indicated only a surface level of commitment to the community or the students in the community. These general statements were reflective of this category of pre-service teacher thinking in that they were happy to listen to a new perspective of the neighborhood but stopped short of going beyond finding the walk informative as evidenced in statements such as, "I am appreciative that the culture walk showed me this part of our community." Although statements in this category outnumbered the Teacher as Advocate statements by nearly two to one with 297 identified as Teacher as Tourist and 196 having a more personal perspective of Teacher

as Advocate, even the 297 initial level comments suggested the pre-service teachers were more comfortable driving into their school placement neighborhood because of the Culture Walk experience.

The Teacher as Advocate category emerged initially as the "other" category to the surface level statements, as these ideas showed a personal commitment to meeting the needs of the K-12 students in the 40 hour field placement attached to the course that followed the Culture Walks. For example, one of the 196 comments coded in this category explained, "I had no idea there were so many resources in the community that we can look to in order to help our students and their families. I am grateful to know that I have so many options available to help me do my job." Another pre-service teacher explained her thinking this way: "I can use the student's cultural background as a tool of empowerment rather than a hindrance, by learning more about the student, I can help him or her learn more about whatever it is that we are working on." The examples in this category showed a specific and personal response to how culture impacts the classroom and what the pre-service teacher can do to tap into cultural strengths rather than a general statement that sounded much like a commercial selling the idea of diversity as something interesting to see. These categories of Tourist and Advocate that emerged from the first data set were an excellent lens for the next stage of analysis to help understand the thinking behind the categories.

Consolidated Themes

The initial categories provided a general view of how the pre-service teachers were thinking from and about the Culture Walks, but classroom discussion and reflective papers asking for clarification on the impact of the experience provided more insight into the various levels of response. The classroom discussions were an unscripted sharing time held during the next scheduled class. The walks were scheduled on a Friday and so in most cases the next class meeting was three or four days later. The discussions were an opportunity for the pre-service teachers to share what they had heard at their walk as there were three simultaneous walks occurring and pre-service teachers only attended the walk that was held in the neighborhood in which they were placed for their field experience. Therefore, the class discussion was an opportunity to hear about peers' reactions to all three walks. Following the discussions, the pre-service teachers were asked to complete one reflective response to the Culture Walk they attended. There were no additional details given for the assignment as it was considered an "exit slip" for the day's classes and given a participation grade rather than a scaled measurement. These reflections added to the survey data and provided a leveled student response that reflected perspectives such as interaction and ownership that provide the basis for pre-service teachers to develop relationships through professional dispositions of culturally responsive teaching (Edwards, 2011.)

Having the additional data from the reflective responses and reviewing the survey responses to look at the different approaches to the Teacher as Advocate brought the themes of interaction, ownership, and accommodation to light. Having the opportunity to interact with adults in the neighborhood prior to working with the neighborhood children had some pre-service teachers thinking about what they brought to the classroom interactions and reporting that, "I really have an appreciation of my life and all the many advantages that I have after attending my culture walk. To be introduced to the cultural nuances of the area we are working in is vital to understanding the job." Another example of how the pre-service teachers viewed interaction as necessary for culturally responsive teaching was in their reporting of specific strategies they learned in order to see individuals rather than making assumptions: "One strategy I gained was not to kick my student out if he acts up, but to take him aside and have a one-on-one conversation with him instead." This interaction perspective also included many examples of how the pre-service teachers viewed interacting with the students' community as a necessary element for the classroom: "We must try to work around the parents' schedules to get them involved and not force them to work around ours."

In addition to seeing a need for interacting with the students as individuals and as members of the community, many of the pre-service teachers identified their role in taking ownership of the upcoming classroom relationship, "Teachers not only need to explain the content, but also assist these students to become the young adults they want to be." This perspective also showed an understanding that including the community in the classroom would not be easy or as simply done as by inviting a parent to be a guest speaker for a one-time event. "Now the responsibility to learn is upon my shoulders," as one of the panelists said. "It's not about knowing all the answers, it's about getting them." Having walked the talk of the Culture Walks, the pre-service teachers who had this experience included in their field experience could articulate how it impacted their process of learning to teach.

Urban Immersion: Partnering with K-12 Schools

The second attempt of the program to use meaningful urban partnerships to prepare culturally responsive teachers was initiated independent of the Culture Walks described above. The Urban Immersion partnerships were instituted to create more intentionality, supervision, and authenticity in two required field experiences. Previously, through the traditional model, these two experiences placed the pre-service teachers for 10 to 15 hours in a variety of schools randomly scattered throughout the city. Individual pre-service teachers reported to their respective schools without peer or faculty support. The teaching pedagogy courses associated with these field experiences were taught on the campus of the higher education institution and had assignments which were loosely connected to the field experience.

Through the Urban Immersion approach, the pre-service teachers increased the time they were in schools to 30-40 hours. All of the time was in selected urban partnership schools located in urban areas as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau (Howey, 2008). School demographics for each of the settings indicated above average poverty and minority student representation (African American and Latino students) when compared to the averages for all schools within the state. Three of the four schools also had average poverty and minority student representation greater than the overall averages for the district. Each site reported average years of experience of their teachers as lower than the corresponding averages reported by the district and the state.

The intentionality, supervision, and authenticity were increased as the teaching pedagogy courses associated with the field experiences were delivered in the K-12 school setting, during the K-12 school day. The pre-service teachers were learning, and teacher education faculty were teaching at the same time and in the same hallways in which the K-12 students were learning and K-12 teachers were delivering instruction. Pre-service teachers and teacher education faculty were literally learning and teaching side-by-side with the K-12 teachers and students. This model allowed all the pre-service students enrolled in the course and the teacher education faculty to be in one school. This consolidation of students in one setting provided the opportunity for both peer and faculty support during the field experiences.

In addition to the course, the pre-service teachers were assigned field experience classrooms within these buildings. The classroom experiences afforded them opportunities to work directly with the K-12 school's teachers and students. Because the teacher education faculty delivered on-site course instruction, they had the opportunity to closely supervise the field experience of the pre-service teachers who were enrolled in their courses. This allowed faculty members to provide immediate and contextualized links between the theories discussed in the university courses and the practice and realities of the K-12 classroom.

As the pre-service teachers came "face-to-face" with their beliefs and assumptions (Banks, et al.2005) the faculty members were able to help them frame the field experience through the lens of culturally responsive teaching. First, the experience allowed pre-service teachers the opportunity to intentionally examine their perceptions of themselves and others. Within the setting, faculty had numerous and immediate opportunities to help pre-service teachers find evidence of the strengths and assets of the community and the K-12 students, as well as help the pre-service teachers to analyze how this evidence may be counter to the pre-service teachers' existing perceptions or deficit model thinking.

Second, by coupling the course and field experience in the same setting, the pre-service teachers had the extended time necessary to establish relationships with the K-12 students. Day-to-day interactions allowed pre-service teachers to build and foster rapport with K-12 students in ways that the sporadic placements of the previous model could not provide.

Finally, by spending more time in the community and building stronger relationships, the pre-service teachers had the opportunity to learn more about the K-12 students, their families, and their backgrounds. Using this expanded knowledge of the K-12 students and the guidance of the on-site faculty, the pre-service teachers became more skilled at connecting the K-12 curriculum to the existing experiences and background knowledge of the students in the particular school setting.

Urban Immersion: Findings

The participating pre-service teachers completed a pre-experience survey on the first day of their courses. The survey consisted of items which the pre-service teachers rated on a four-point Likert-scale: Strongly Agree (4) – Agree (3) – Disagree (2) – Strongly Disagree (1). Upon completion of both the field experience and courses, participants completed a post-experience survey, using the same instrument which had been given as the pre-survey.

A total of 77 pre-service teachers participated in the pre and post survey, urban immersion field experience, and related courses. Pre- and post-survey results collected from pre-service teachers participating in the Urban

Immersion partnerships indicated a statistically significant difference between the participants' pre and post survey scores.

All demographics among the participants were self-identified through the pre- and post-survey. The demographics included the pre-service teachers': grade level certification, gender, age, race/ethnicity, and community of origin. The results showed that 27% of participants would be certified to teach at the elementary level upon graduation, 65% would be certified to teach at a secondary level, and 8% would be certified to teach any grade from K-12. Participants were 47% male and 51% female. The majority of participants in the program (68%) were between the ages of 20-24, 14% were between the ages of 25-29, and 13% were between the ages of 30-35. Only 3% of participants were between the ages of 35-49.

In addition, 92% of participants indicated they were Caucasian, 4% were Hispanic, 1% were Native American/Alaskan Native, and 3% identified themselves as a combination of ethnicities. Prior to the field experience, participants self-selected their community of origin before attending the university: 8% attended school in a rural school setting, 31% attended school in a small town, 38% attended a suburban school setting, 19% attended an urban school, and 4% attended school in a combination of two of these types of communities.

Table 1 shows the survey, pre- and post-test data (means and standard deviations), the repeated-measure *t*-test value, and the significance of survey items related to the pre-service teachers' perceptions of urban schools. The data provides strong indication that the pre-service teachers were impacted by the program. Results indicate there was no significant difference in scores between pre- and post-test results of the individual demographic groups.

Questions Answered by Pre-service Teachers	n	Pre-test Mean	Pre-test Standard Deviation	Post-test mean	Post-test Standard Deviation	t	p
1. I feel comfortable in K-12 urban school settings.	77	3.09	.67	3.53	.50	5.71	<.01
2. I have an accurate perception of K-12 urban schools.	77	2.81	.59	3.43	.52	7.73	<.01
3. My perception of K-12 urban schools is most influenced by my own experiences.	76	2.92	.97	3.60	.67	5.97	<.01
4. My perception of K-12 urban schools is most influenced by the media.	76	2.56	.76	2.35	.83	2.28	.03
5. My perception of K-12 urban schools is most influenced by past college course work.	75	2.99	.67	3.19	.73	2.07	.04
6. I understand the opportunities for teachers in urban school settings.	77	2.75	.67	3.52	.53	11.12	<.01
7. I understand the challenges for teachers in urban school settings.	77	2.97	.73	3.63	.48	8.23	<.01
8. I understand the opportunities for K-12 students in urban school settings.	77	2.82	.72	3.41	.59	6.43	<.01
9. I understand the challenges for K-12 students in urban school settings.	77	2.94	.68	3.56	.55	7.29	<.01

Results for items 1-3 indicate that participants had changed their perceptions of urban K-12 schools with those changes being statistically significant (at the .01 alpha level). Responses to items 6-9 show significant changes (at the .01 alpha level) in the participants' understanding of both the challenges and opportunities facing teachers and students in diverse urban classrooms. These responses may be an indication that the pre-service teachers had shifted away from a perception heavily influenced by the deficit approach to a more culturally responsive approach that recognizes the opportunities of teaching and learning that are present in urban schools. Although there were changes regarding the influence of the media and previous coursework on the pre-service teachers' perceptions (items 4 and 5), these changes were statistically significant only at the .05 alpha level.

Table 2 shows the survey, pre- and post-test data (means and standard deviations), the repeated-measure t-test value, and the significance of survey items related to the pre-service teachers' reported level of preparedness to work in urban schools. Again, the data provide evidence of the impact of the Urban Immersion program.

Questions Answered by Pre-service Teachers	n	Pre-test Mean	Pre-test Standard Deviation	Post-test mean	Post-test Standard Deviation	t	p
1. If I student teach or teach in an urban school setting, I feel prepared to build effective rapport with my students.	77	3.12	.54	3.62	.51	6.72	<.01
2. If I student teach or teach in an urban school setting, I feel prepared to teach students from diverse cultural backgrounds.	77	3.08	.60	3.61	.49	6.35	<.01
3. If I student teach or teach in an urban school setting, I feel prepared to teach students from diverse linguistic backgrounds.	77	2.52	.72	3.09	.59	6.25	<.01
4. If I student teach or teach in an urban school setting, I feel prepared to teach students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.	77	3.10	.53	3.67	.47	7.63	<.01
5. If I student teach or teach in an urban school setting, I feel prepared to plan effective lessons.	77	3.02	.65	3.51	.55	6.36	<.01
6. If I student teach or teach in an urban school setting, I feel prepared to differentiate instruction.	77	3.05	.59	3.56	.55	6.19	<.01
7. If I student teach or teach in an urban school setting, I feel prepared to connect content to the daily lives of students.	77	3.04	.59	3.52	.58	5.59	<.01
8. If I student teach or teach in an urban school setting, I feel prepared to manage classroom behavior.	77	2.92	.72	3.34	.53	4.98	<.01
9. If I student teach or teach in an urban school setting, I feel prepared to positively impact student learning.	77	3.30	.51	3.66	.48	5.27	<.01
10. If I student teach or teach in an urban school setting, I feel prepared to communicate with parents.	77	3.01	.57	3.50	.55	6.38	<.01
11. If I student teach or teach in an urban school setting, I feel prepared to collaborate with colleagues.	77	3.29	.51	3.65	.51	4.78	<.01
12. I feel my teacher preparation program has prepared me to meet the needs of students in urban school settings.	76	2.88	.46	3.47	.53	7.63	<.01
13. I would like to student teach in an urban school setting.	77	2.87	.78	3.32	.63	5.90	<.01
14. I am likely to apply for a teaching position in an urban school district.	77	2.79	.82	3.27	.66	6.52	<.01

Items 1-11 related to the participants' sense of preparedness to teach in urban settings, and each item showed a statistically significant change from the pre to post-survey, again with no significant differences between demographic groups. Again, the changes reflected between the pre- and post-survey results provide indication that the pre-service teachers viewed themselves as more prepared to meet the needs of urban students after completing the Urban Immersion program. In terms of specific culturally responsive pedagogy, participants reported feeling more prepared in their ability to build rapport with students and to teach students from diverse cultural, linguistic, or socio-economic backgrounds.

Pre-service teachers reported feeling more prepared to deliver effective lessons, differentiate instruction, present relevant content, manage classroom behavior, and impact student learning should they student teach or teach in an urban setting. They also reported being more prepared to communicate with parents and collaborate with colleagues if they were to student teach or teach in an urban setting.

While the items 1-11 in Table 2 addressed participants' perception of urban schools and preparedness to teach diverse students, items 12-14 addressed the pre-service teachers' overall preparedness and interest in student teaching and/or teaching in urban schools. Respondents reported a statistically significant increase in their interest in student teaching in an urban school setting, which if they do so, would likely continue to increase their preparedness for teaching in urban settings. This increased preparedness may be a way to combat the attrition rate of teachers in urban settings.

Pre-service teachers also were allowed to submit comments regarding the Urban Immersion program. The comments provided by the pre-service teachers provide rich, descriptive support of the quantitative findings of the survey. Pre-service teachers' comments were grouped into three broad categories. The first category included remarks that focused on the opportunity the Urban Immersion program provided in regard to connecting theory and reality. Many pre-service teachers commented that the Urban Immersion program allowed them to "experience the reality" rather than "simply talking about it in class."

In the second category of comments, pre-service teachers voiced the recognition that the extended and sustained time in the setting was beneficial and was a value added component of the experience. Finally, in the third set of comments, the pre-service teachers substantiated the survey findings through statements that described their changing perceptions. For example, they identified gaining "new understanding" and "insight" into urban schools and the K-12 students who attend those schools.

Implications for Action

Just as relationships are a significant component of culturally responsive teaching, relationships are also a critical factor in teacher preparation. Both the Culture Walks and Urban Immersion models emerged from relationships. These relationships allowed for important discussions to occur. The discussions resulted in the Culture Walk and Urban Immersion partnerships.

The creation of the Culture Walks drew from discussions between faculty members and urban community partners that identified the need and opportunity for organizations outside the traditional educational systems to assist in strengthening teacher preparation programs. The Urban Immersion program drew from on-going professional relationships and discussions between the field experience coordinator of the university and the human resources administrators of the school district, all of whom had identified the desire to increase the number of pre-service teachers interested in student teaching and teaching in urban schools.

The Culture Walks and Urban Immersion models provide evidence that partnerships can contribute to the development of a pool of future teachers prepared to teach in a culturally responsive manner. By sharing the responsibility to prepare culturally responsive teachers with other institutions, teacher education programs may actually do better at meeting this responsibility. The models have already led to additional community and school collaborations, and perhaps more importantly, a new perspective of how the teacher education program might impact its pre-service teachers by working with the urban community rather than merely in that community. As an additional benefit, the two programs also serve as professional development for teacher preparation faculty who are often seeking authentic ways to partner with community agencies and public schools.

The partnership programs also offer models for teacher preparation programs to enrich their field experiences. Doing so allows them to make program improvements and to meet the increasing demands from organizations such as the AFT, CCSSO, NCATE, NCTQ and NEA. While the suggestions forwarded by these organizations call for "sweeping" changes in regard to field experiences, their reports acknowledge they will require additional resources. Rarely, particularly given the current economic issues facing higher education, are teacher education programs replete with financial or human resources. Approaches similar to the Culture Walk and Urban

Immersion programs are not costly endeavors for a teacher preparation program to implement. In fact, these partnerships may provide a means to synthesize the resources of higher education with those of the urban community and K-12 schools.

Ultimately, to be vibrant and thriving, urban communities need strong urban schools. To meet the demands and seize the opportunities presented in today's K-12 school districts, urban schools need culturally responsive teachers. As institutions of higher education design their teacher education programs to prepare culturally responsive teachers for urban settings, community and K-12 school partnerships have the potential to offer significant return on cost efficient investments.

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