ABSTRACT

The growing diversity of U.S. schools has created a growing concern on how to meet the needs of the culturally and linguistically diverse students considering their academic achievement. Achievement scores show a racial and income gap with them performing below average, or lower than their white and higher income peers (Education Trust, 2010; Noguera & Arell, 2000; Diller & Moote, 2005; Darder & Torres, 2004). Unfortunately, the current and incoming teaching force does not mirror the same linguistic, cultural, and ethnic diversity in classrooms. Service-learning opportunities in diverse, urban communities raises the interest amongst pre-service teachers in teaching communities that may be culturally and socioeconomically different that the ones they grew up in (Taylor & Sobel, 2001). Using photo narratives, pre-service teachers reflect on their growth as teachers and their cultural awareness. The process of creating this experience is explored as a tri-narrative engagement model that includes a non-academic unit, a faculty member, and community/school based partner.

Reciprocity and Mutual Benefit: Faculty and Student Affairs/Student Development

Courses using service-learning pedagogy, relationships with faculty increase the number of students engaged in service-learning and community engagement

ways to activate student learning in authentic environments increased opportunities to synchronize teaching and scholarship

Data for this case included:
(1) guided reflective interviews for each participant (Rossman & Rallis, 2012) and
(2) the researcher’s reflective journal.

This data is a subset of a larger data set from research associated with the coursework and reflections of the teaching. The reflective questions, were designed based on the databases used within the program and were aimed at exploring the relationships between the pre-service teachers’ personal notions of their own cultural competencies, dispositions (beliefs and behaviors), the environment (urban, diverse, and low-income), and teaching skills. Yin (2003) described how influences evolve from document analysis (p. 87).

In this study, the researcher collected and analyzed reflections lesson plans, and reviewed field notes. The purpose of engaging in document analysis was to corroborate the researcher’s daily observations, making the findings trustworthy. Documents were coded using inductive open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and then sorted into categories in order to create themes representing common insights (Stake, 1995). The innovative aspect of this data set was the use of photo-reflections. Students had to choose a photo as a means to illustrate their reflection. The photo had to come from the day and represent their learning, thinking, challenges, and growth. Using the narratives from students allowed for a different insight by using evidence from the site.

The interpretive nature of qualitative research often comes with limitations. As a result, the findings of this study may not be generalizable to all contexts. Merriam (2002) pointed out, generalizations as traditionally defined are not the goal of qualitative research but to allow readers to “determine how closely their situations match the research situation and hence, whether findings can be transferred” (p. 211).

Analysis of data, a systematic process to make sense out of what has been collected (Boigden & Bicklen, 1998), was conducted by reading through reflections, interpretations of photos, and additional documents. Field notes were gathered by the researcher in the field and analyzed by developing a set of codes along with documents and photos (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The multiple data sources allowed the researchers to triangulate the data as well as categorize the data according to groupings that were alike or similar. After categories were identified, the data was manually coded to visually denote the patterns and the contradictions.

Reciprocity and Mutual Benefit: Community Partner

Pairs teachers with college students Determines the needs of the students Offers orientation and co-teaches with the faculty member

METHODS

Data for this case included:
(1) guided reflective interviews for each participant (Rossman & Rallis, 2012) and
(2) the researcher’s reflective journal.

This data is a subset of a larger data set from research associated with the coursework and reflections of the teaching. The reflective questions, were designed based on the databases used within the program and were aimed at exploring the relationships between the pre-service teachers’ personal notions of their own cultural competencies, dispositions (beliefs and behaviors), the environment (urban, diverse, and low-income), and teaching skills. Yin (2003) described how influences evolve from document analysis (p. 87).

In this study, the researcher collected and analyzed reflections lesson plans, and reviewed field notes. The purpose of engaging in document analysis was to corroborate the researcher’s daily observations, making the findings trustworthy. Documents were coded using inductive open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and then sorted into categories in order to create themes representing common insights (Stake, 1995). The innovative aspect of this data set was the use of photo-reflections. Students had to choose a photo as a means to illustrate their reflection. The photo had to come from the day and represent their learning, thinking, challenges, and growth. Using the narratives from students allowed for a different insight by using evidence from the site.

The interpretive nature of qualitative research often comes with limitations. As a result, the findings of this study may not be generalizable to all contexts. Merriam (2002) pointed out, generalizations as traditionally defined are not the goal of qualitative research but to allow readers to “determine how closely their situations match the research situation and hence, whether findings can be transferred” (p. 211).

Analysis of data, a systematic process to make sense out of what has been collected (Boigden & Bicklen, 1998), was conducted by reading through reflections, interpretations of photos, and additional documents. Field notes were gathered by the researcher in the field and analyzed by developing a set of codes along with documents and photos (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The multiple data sources allowed the researchers to triangulate the data as well as categorize the data according to groupings that were alike or similar. After categories were identified, the data was manually coded to visually denote the patterns and the contradictions.

RESULTS

Findings suggest pre-service teachers realize the multiplicities of student needs in an authentic setting and the potential disconnect between what is learned during one’s teacher education undergraduate program and the realities of being a teacher once employed as a classroom teacher. From the analysis of the data obtained three key themes were extracted concerning how pre-service teachers viewed community service in relation to disposition development. The following themes emerged:

• High levels of dedication
• Unconscious judgment
• Open mindedness vs. locus of control
• Bystander vs. agent of change

These results suggest that community service is a way for students to develop desired teaching dispositions, particularly those most difficult to measure because they are not often observable in a college classroom or a field experience.

Intentional community engagement or service-learning may serve as an additional way to facilitate dispositional growth in pre-service teachers.

CONCLUSIONS

An individuals ability and willingness to learn is not only an incredibly complex and dynamic process, it is one that is in a cycle of contentious change and evolution. It is within this cycle that teachers are challenged to find ways to motivate and understand how students learn in order to truly become effective. Community engagement and academic service learning is common place in teacher education programs thus, continued research in pre-service teachers dispositions is necessary. Academic courses provide a variety of learning experiences however; it is imperative that the relationship is reciprocal.

REFERENCES


