Chapter 5
Demographic Imperativeness: Critical Issues in Preparing Minority Teacher Candidates in Teacher Education

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ABSTRACT
This chapter examines the demand, struggle, and recruitment of minority teacher candidates in teacher education. The main goals of this chapter are to: 1) survey the impact of teacher demographics on student learning processes and academic achievements; 2) identify the promise and pitfalls of diversifying teacher candidates in preparation programs; and 3) provide a scholarly basis for future developments. The literature review begins with an exploration of demographic profiles in educational environments, especially in relation to culturally and linguistically diverse populations. The discussion then addresses the mismatch of demographics between students and teachers. Next, the potential harm from demographic disparities is discussed. The benefits and hindrances of minority teacher candidates in teacher education, such as cultural competence, role models, recruitment, selection, and retention, are examined as well. Finally, the challenges of preparing qualified minority teacher candidates in teacher education are highlighted.

INTRODUCTION
In the United States, the educational sectors have experienced dramatic changes in the demographics of student bodies (Aung, Divatia, & Akiyama, 2013; Angus & De Oliveira, 2012; Ukpokodu, 2007; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Due to the increasing diversity of racial, ethnic, and economic groups in the country, the demand and quality of the teaching force in public schools have become more critical and complex. Although there are huge numbers of students from diverse backgrounds, the current teaching force tends to come from the mainstream population (Davis, 2009; Sleeter & Milner, 2011; Zumwalt & Craig, 2009). The disparity in the sociocultural backgrounds of teachers and the students they teach often results in deficit thinking, miscommunication, low expectations, inappropriate instructional strategies, and educational inequality (Ford, 2011, 2012, 2013; Gay & Howard, 2000; Gorski, 2013; Milner, DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-0897-7.ch005
Thus, these factors boost achievement gaps between white students and especially students of color on an academic, cultural, emotional, and social level (Goldenberg, 2013; Griner & Stewart, 2012).

In order to improve the quality of education and meet the needs of all students, teacher education should play a significant role in preparing highly qualified and effective teachers and equipping them with adequate knowledge and skills (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Gay, 2010; Villegas, 2009). Moreover, much research has indicated the urgency to recruit minority teacher candidates and provide them with educational support such as scholarship opportunities and student loans in order to diversify the teaching force and achieve the promotion of multicultural and social justice education (Aung, Divatia, & Akiyama, 2013; Haberman, 1995; Miller & Sylayeva, 2013).

BACKGROUND

Student Demographic Profiles in Public Education

U. S. public schools are on the verge of a new demographic era. The nation is becoming more racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, white students enrolled in public schools decreased from 63.4% to 52.4% between 1997 and 2010, and their levels are projected to be at 45.3% in 2022 (Hussar & Bailey, 2014). On the other hand, students of color had increasing enrollment from 36.6% to 47.6% and are estimated to represent 54.7% in 2022 (Hussar & Bailey, 2014). While students of color are largely concentrated in urban cities, their numbers have been rising in suburban and rural areas as well (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Villegas and Lucas (2002) pinpoint three reasons for this transformation. First, especially among Latinos and African Americans there have been continuously higher birth rates in the past, and projections confirm that trend. Second, higher fertility rates and lower death rates among people of color have been shown to exist in different ages. Finally, there has been a rapid growth of immigrants to the United States. The most dramatic transformation in relation to demographic shifts and public schooling in these places is usually associated with students who are English language learners (ELLs) (Holllins & Guzman, 2005; Selwyn, 2007). The numbers also are shown in some Midwest states where are usually with a homogenous population. For example, 2,776 ELL students enrolled in statewide public schools of Missouri in 1985 – the number accelerated to 28,832 in 2014 (DESE, 2014). As a further example, in the years 1997 to 2008 the growth of ELLs enrollment has increased by 409.3% in Indiana and by 174.2% in Ohio (Tormey, 2010).

Though culturally and linguistically, the K-12 student population has grown rapidly more diverse in the recent decades, racial and ethnic categories often do not account for the complexity and variation among the groups (Lee, 2005; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). For instance, many people from eastern countries are considered as Asians, but the people represent not only different cultural traditions but also speak vastly different languages. In addition, the stereotype depicting Asians as a successful minority group in the United States is simply based on the measurement of education, occupation, and income (Velasquez, 2015; Zhang, 2010). The misperception neglects the economic and educational disparities between different opportunity and hierarchical levels in the population and masks the problems happening in the lives of numerous Asian people (Lowe, 2015; Park & Lee, 2010; Zhang, 2010). Many immigrant students today are from Latin America, but increasing proportions of students are arriving from Eastern European and African countries as refugees. The students often have had little or no