A Preliminary Study of the Effects of a Cultural Immersion Program on Boosting Multicultural Teaching Competence

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Abstract
This mixed-methods study investigated the impact of the Philadelphia Urban Seminar on preservice teachers’ multicultural teaching competence. In the first phase, twenty-eight preservice teachers and ten teacher educators responded to the Program Evaluation Survey, the Multicultural Teaching Competencies Scale, and/or the Multicultural Attitude Scale. In the second phase, reflective essays and extensive journals from seven preservice teachers were analyzed. The results from the two phases supported the effectiveness of the seminar on nurturing preservice teachers’ capabilities in teaching diverse students. The study sheds light on how to strengthen the seminar and restructure teacher education programs to promote multicultural competence.

Key words: Multicultural teaching competence, urban education

Introduction
In the past thirty years, the demographics of the student body in the U.S. have become more diverse than ever before. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2010), between 1990 and 2010, the share of enrollment of non-white students in American public schools increased from 33% to 46%; it was also predicted that by 2050, children of color would take up 62% of the entire school population. In comparison with the increasing diversity in student populations, the teacher force has been overwhelmingly dominated by white females from middle-class backgrounds (National Center for Education Information, 2011). This demographic divide between teachers and students may result in undesirable interactions between teaching and learning. For instance, Delpit (2006) found out that teachers’ low expectations towards minority students could negatively impact students’ academic performance and achievement. Researchers, like Aragon, Culpepper, McKee, and Perkins (2014), voiced similar concerns on preservice teachers’ stereotypes and biased understandings about students from cultures that are different from their own. In this study, the term preservice teachers referred to student teachers, who are undergraduate students currently enrolled in teacher education programs. Furthermore, the existing literature (e.g. Webster & Valeo, 2011) informed us of the limited knowledge and skills some educational professionals possessed in working with culturally and linguistically diverse students. In particular, Durgunoglu and Hugh (2010) reported that even upon completion of the training
on educating English language learners, preservice teachers did not feel confident and fully prepared to teach this student population.

**Background**

To boost preservice teachers’ competence in teaching diverse students, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2008) and many teacher education programs have placed great emphasis on promoting diversity. Specifically, the NCATE, the leading accrediting body of teacher preparation programs in the United States, created the diversity standard in 2008, and highlighted the importance of nurturing preservice teachers’ dispositions, knowledge, and skills to teach in culturally diverse education environments. However, the coursework in teacher education often fails to help teacher candidates build connections between academic knowledge, and practitioner and community expertise in working with all students (Zeichner, 2010). Due to insufficient training in teacher education, many preservice teachers developed a superficial understanding about diverse learners, and their multicultural teaching competence has still remained unsatisfactory (Irvine, 2003; Sleeter, 2008). To enhance capabilities in working with all students, the Philadelphia Urban Seminar offers preservice teachers with invaluable opportunities to acquire academic knowledge and practice teaching skills in authentic multicultural educational settings.

**Overview of the Philadelphia Urban Seminar**

The Philadelphia Urban Seminar is an intensive cultural immersion program which has been in existence for twenty-three years. Each year, hundreds of preservice teachers from the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) universities spend two weeks in the inner city of Philadelphia and live in the dormitories of LaSalle University. There are five major components of the seminar, which were developed to enhance preservice teachers’ capabilities in working with diverse student populations. To begin, the preservice teachers are placed in urban classrooms during the seminar, and paired with a cooperating teacher. They observe teaching and learning in classrooms, assist with teaching activities, and teach some of the lessons. Second, they participate in a number of community service projects, including cleaning up the Norris Square and organizing a children’s festival. These projects enable the preservice teachers to interact with children, parents and local communities in the urban area. Third, the seminar is comprised of seven group meetings in which preservice teachers can discuss the reading assignments and other important issues on multicultural education with their peers and teacher educators, who are instructors in teacher education programs and responsible for supervising field experience during the seminar. Through reading relevant journal articles and active discussions, the preservice teachers familiarize themselves with literature and research in the realm. Fourth, there are four professional development seminars with urban in-service teachers and administrators, which enable preservice teachers to deepen understanding on urban education and share their ideas and concerns about teaching diverse students. Finally, the field trips to the Constitution Center and the Art Museum, and other self-directed educational field trips further immerse the preservice teachers in the city culture. The variety of activities provided by the seminar allow preservice teachers to actively interact with students, parents, in-service teachers, school administrators, and local communities in an urban setting under the guidance of their university instructors.
Theoretical Framework

To provide a solid theoretical framework, the current study adopted the tripartite model to conceptualize the construct of multicultural teaching competence. In 1982, Sue et al. proposed a tripartite model of analyzing multicultural competence, which includes multicultural awareness (beliefs and attitudes), knowledge, and skills. Although it was originally developed for counseling practitioners, this model has been widely used to study teachers’ multicultural competence in the realm of K-12 education, which comprises of primary and secondary education prior to college in the United States. For instance, Day-Vines (2000) applied the model as a conceptual framework to address ethical responsibilities for educators serving African American students with disabilities. Specifically, in the context of special education, Day-Vines defined and described each of the three dimensions. According to Day-Vines’ interpretations of the tripartite model, multicultural awareness should include the recognition of sociopolitical realities, oppression, racism, and power and privilege; multicultural knowledge should mainly refer to the acquisition of factual knowledge that involves demographic information, cultural values, and knowledge of social and educational experiences; and multicultural skills should encompass classroom strategies to teach diverse student populations, and abilities to actively involve students, parents and communities into teaching and learning.

More recently, Spanierman et al. (2011) conducted a comprehensive review of the literature and the NCATE performance indicators. Based on the tripartite model, they described multicultural competence as a dynamic process that includes complex interactions among various factors. In specific, the authors defined a multiculturally competent teacher as one who must (a) strive to understand multicultural issues; (b) accumulate knowledge on diverse populations; and (c) utilize this developed understanding and knowledge to improve teaching practices and interactions with students and their families. These definitions suggest that multicultural competence is a complex phenomenon that involves a variety of values, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and skills which an educator needs to possess in order to thrive in multicultural classrooms.

Grounded in the tripartite model, the purpose of the current study was to examine the impact of the Philadelphia Urban Seminar on nurturing preservice teachers’ multicultural teaching competence. Specifically, the current study was conducted around the following three research questions:

1. How effective was the seminar in cultivating preservice teachers’ cultural awareness?
2. How effective was the program in promoting preservice teachers’ knowledge in teaching diverse students?
3. How effective was the program in helping preservice teachers enhance their skills in teaching diverse students?

Methodology

The mixed-methods approach was employed to investigate the three research questions in two phases. According to Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2006), this approach intends to “build on
the synergy and strength that exists between quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to understand a phenomenon more fully than is possible using either quantitative or qualitative methods alone” (p. 490). In the first phase, preservice teachers and teacher educators, who participated in the 2015 Philadelphia Urban Seminar, were invited to respond to online surveys via Qualtrics. The two surveys were found to be highly valid and reliable instruments to multicultural teaching competence (Ponterotto, 1998; Spanierman et al., 2011). In the second phase, the reflection essays and journals of seven preservice teachers were garnered to explore the in-depth themes regarding multicultural teaching. In both phases, invitation emails were sent out to all the preservice teachers and teacher educators; however, participation or nonparticipation in the study was entirely voluntary, and would neither affect participants’ grades in any courses nor their relationships with their instructors. The quantitative and qualitative data collected from the two phases were analyzed by SPSS and NVivo software, respectively.

**Phase one**
The participants of phase one included twenty-eight preservice teachers and ten teacher educators who supervised field experience during the seminar. In detail, the preservice teachers were twenty-six females and two males, with twenty-five Caucasians, one Hispanic, and two other ethnicities. In addition, twenty-one of the participants were monolingual, and seven were proficient in a language other than English. They also varied in majors, including early childhood education, elementary education, secondary education, and special education. In terms of educational level, ten of the participants were seniors, followed by eight freshmen, five sophomores, four juniors, and one graduate student. The majority of the participants were from suburban, small town or rural areas, with only three of them having an urban background.

Upon completion of the seminar, the preservice teachers were prompted to complete the Program Evaluation Survey, and two well-established questionnaires to measure multicultural teaching competence. One of the questionnaires was the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey (TMAS) developed by Ponterotto (1998). The twenty survey items were employed to measure preservice teachers’ cultural awareness. Some of the items included “I find teaching a culturally diverse student group rewarding” and “Teaching methods need to be adapted to meet the needs of culturally diverse student group”. The other questionnaire was called the Multicultural Teaching Competencies Scale (MTCS), a 16-item instrument designed and validated by Spanierman et al. (2011). For this scale, items 2, 4, 7, 9, 11, and 14 were used to evaluate preservice teachers’ multicultural knowledge. Item 2, for instance, asked about participants’ knowledge on “various communication styles among different racial and ethnic minority students”. The rest ten items were aligned with preservice teachers’ multicultural skills. A sample item would be “I plan many activities to celebrated diverse cultural practices in my classroom”. Different from the preservice teachers, the teacher educators were only invited to respond to the Program Evaluation Survey, which sought their opinions regarding the effectiveness of the program.

**Phase two**
To elicit in-depth information regarding the three research questions, seven preservice teachers’ reflection papers and journals were collected to identify the underlying themes related to preservice teachers’ changes in their capabilities to teach diverse students.
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Typological analyses advocated by Hatch (2002) were used to code the qualitative data. In detail, three typologies were generated from the tripartite model, including multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. Then, the researchers analyzed the overall data set, and marked entries which were closely related to these three predetermined typologies. The last step was to look for patterns, themes, or relationships within typologies.

Results

In alignment with the mix-methods research design, the study results were reported around the three research questions in the two phases. Mainly quantitative data were reported in phase one and qualitative data were described in phase two. Through systematic examination of various data, the impact of the seminar was more accurately analyzed and identified.

Phase one

First of all, the results of the Program Evaluation Survey were reported to reveal the effectiveness of the seminar. Detailed descriptive data (i.e. means and standard deviations) on items 1-8 from twenty-eight preservice teachers and ten teacher educators were presented in Table 1 below. Analysis of the first three questions suggested that the seminar was most effective in cultivating preservice teachers’ cultural awareness and least effective in promoting teaching pedagogies, with multicultural knowledge in the middle. Responses to items 3-9 evidenced the positive influence of the five program components. Out of the five components, the educational field trips had the lowest mean and highest standard deviation. In other words, it contributed least to preservice teachers’ overall increase in multicultural competence. When asked to rank the five components in regard of their effectiveness, preservice teachers and faculties consistently reported that teaching and observation in the urban classroom as the top one, the community project as the fourth, and the educational trips as the fifth; however, the preservice teachers ranked the professional development seminars with in-service teachers as the second and the seminar meetings with professors as the third while the faculties reported the opposite rankings.
Table 1.
Comparison of Preservice Teachers’ and Teacher Educators’ Responses to the Program Evaluation Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The seminar effectively cultivated my awareness in teaching diverse students.</td>
<td>Preservice Teachers</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Educators</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The seminar effectively increased my knowledge in teaching diverse students.</td>
<td>Preservice Teachers</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Educators</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The seminar effectively promoted my pedagogical skills in teaching diverse students.</td>
<td>Preservice Teachers</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Educators</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My teaching and observation experience in the urban classroom helped increase my overall competence in working with diverse students.</td>
<td>Preservice Teachers</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Educators</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Participation in the community projects helped increase my overall competence in working with diverse students.</td>
<td>Preservice Teachers</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Educators</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The seminar meetings with the professors/instructors helped increase my overall competence in working with diverse students.</td>
<td>Preservice Teachers</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Educators</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Participation in the educational trips helped increase my overall competence in working with diverse students.</td>
<td>Preservice Teachers</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Educators</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The professional development seminars with in-service teachers who are working in urban schools helped increase my overall competence in teaching diverse students.</td>
<td>Preservice Teachers</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Educators</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then, the descriptive data from the TMAS and MTCS with a score range of 1-5 were reported to pinpoint the effect of the seminar on multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. The total mean score of twenty items in the TMAS (M=4.29) was used to assess the level of preservice teachers’ cultural awareness. The preservice teachers scored the highest in item 4 (Mean= 4.86, SD=.356), followed by item 11 (Mean = 4.70, SD=.47) and item 13 (Mean= 4.71, SD=.54). By contrast, they scored the lowest in item 16 (Mean = 3.21, SD =1.07), followed by item 3 (Mean = 3.89, SD=1.05) and item 7 (Mean = 3.89, SD =1.10). The score differences in individual items indicated variances within the domain of cultural awareness. In general, the preservice teachers strongly agreed that they can learn from diverse students and are conscious of cultural differences present in the classroom. However, they did not fully realize that teachers’ jobs are becoming increasingly challenging nowadays due to the dramatic change in students’ demographics; they also tended to underestimate the amount of multicultural training demanded to be an effective teacher working with all students.

In comparison to cultural awareness, the total mean scores of teaching knowledge (M=3.77) and skills (M=4.04) measured by the MTCS were less satisfactory. Among the 16 items of the scale, the participants gained the highest scores in three items related to multicultural
skills, which included using activities to celebrate cultural diversity (M=4.36, SD=.82),
promoting diversity through teachers’ behaviors (M=4.2, SD=.79), and establishing strong
supportive relationship with racial/ethnic minority parents (M=4.17, SD=.83). By contrast,
the participants scored the lowest in examining instructional materials for racial and ethnic bias (M= 3.37, SD=1.46), which was an item under multicultural teaching. Another two items
with the lowest scores were related to multicultural knowledge: knowledge on teaching
strategies that embrace all learners (M= 3.53, SD=1.05), and knowledge on racial and ethnic
identity theories (M= 3.6, SD=1.07).

**Phase two**
To corroborate and expand results generated in the first phase, the researchers analyzed the
journals and reaction papers collected from seven preservice teachers. The data
interpretations in the second phase confirmed the seminar’s positive influence on nurturing
multicultural teaching competence. In the following sections, the report of qualitative data
was organized around multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills, corresponding to the
three research questions.

**Multicultural awareness.** The preservice teachers’ increased multicultural awareness was
well reflected by how they acknowledged their own limitations, overcame stereotypes
towards urban education, and developed beliefs in advocating all children. To begin with,
the seminar was such a thought-provoking experience that it helped preservice teachers
realize their limited understanding and experience with diverse people. Rosie wrote about
how her previous educational experience negatively impacted her beliefs and attitudes
towards diversity.

> I find it almost funny that I was taught when I was younger to be “color blind” and can
even imagine posters around my own elementary school from when I was younger, saying
things like “we don’t see color”.

Not only did the participants recognize their insufficient exposure to cultural diversity, they
also examined their own bias and misunderstanding about people from other cultures than
their own. Before coming to Philadelphia, many preservice teachers held negative
perceptions about urban students, assuming that they were not motivated to learn, and had
all kinds of behavioral problems. One of the most common stereotypes was described by Ann
as follows:

> Honestly, my expectation was that the kids in Philadelphia wouldn’t give me much
attention. I thought they were going to be meaner kids than the ones that I’m used to. I hate
to admit that I assumed that the kids who live in a bad area were going to be bad kids…it
thought it would be so difficult to take reign of the students.

In spite of these prevailing biases among the preservice teachers before the seminar, it did
not take long for them to acknowledge that their presumptions about urban students were
wrong. Rosie vividly depicted how she successfully dealt with her bias and renewed her
understanding about children in urban schools as follows:
I was warned that the students were stupid, unmotivated, and trouble makers. I was told that they would be smoking weed down the block from the school or there was a strong chance that they would be carrying a gun, knife, or another weapon on their person. I was told that I had to be careful of what I did because if not there’s a chance I would be hunted down and severely hurt. The truth is urban students could possibly be the best students a teacher could ever teach in their lives…what I uncovered in my experience is these students are geared and driven to do well. They wanted to succeed. They want to become doctors, businessmen, artists and so much more.

In addition to developing impartial attitudes towards different cultures, the participants were able to form their new identity as advocates for fairness and teachers for all. In particular, Monica distinguished “equity” from “equality”, and highlighted her willingness to help all children to achieve their best potentials.

Fairness is essential in education. In order to give all students a fair chance to succeed it is important to use techniques of equity. This is when the students don’t all receive the same treatment, but different treatments to make them all on the same level…I would use equity over equality to give all students a fair chance at success.

**Multicultural knowledge.** The analysis also revealed the preservice teachers became more knowledgeable in how diverse family structures can impact students’ overall development, and how to involve families and communities in school through frequent communications and multicultural curriculum. First of all, the first-hand experiences in urban classrooms enabled the participants to deepen their understanding regarding different family structures, and the impact of family on children’s growth. The heart-breaking experiences witnessed by many preservice teachers in the field were best summarized by Amanda’s writing.

I was emotionally affected by many of the stories I was told and things I saw. One little girl’s story practically left me in tears. She was placed in foster care because of an abusive home situation. Her story hurt me so much. I cannot imagine having to move into an unfamiliar house with an unfamiliar family at just six years old. This child had severe behavioral issues which I think are probably caused by the dysfunction that she deals with in her life…There were many students that had similar stories to this. Many of them came from one parent homes or were raised by grandparents or other family members.

With this expanded knowledge on family diversity, the preservice teachers not only developed appreciation and respect of diverse families, but also would take initiative to reach and collaborate with all families to maximize students’ learning outcomes. The willingness of involving all parents in school was voiced by participants, such as Rachel.

It wasn’t that his parents didn’t care enough to come; it was just a matter of scheduling…In my classroom, I would make it a priority to discuss scheduling and availability with my students’ guardians. Communication is of utmost importance when working with caretakers. I would try my hardest to get all families involved.

Besides, the preservice teachers displayed increased knowledge on how schools worked closely with the community and parents to provide a multicultural curriculum to promote diversity and enrich students’ learning. Sara was one of the participants who described the exciting experience of a multicultural curriculum implemented in her field placement.
In many college courses, the benefits of having a multicultural curriculum have been emphasized but I have never had an opportunity, until today, to see diversity emphasized in a classroom. Today, each classroom in grades 5-8 selected a country to represent through presentations, posters, food, and various activities. The younger grades, K-4, got an opportunity to visit each classroom to get an experience similar to each represented country. It was a great opportunity to see the community get involved with the school and for the school to represent its diverse community. Many of the student’s parents even took the time to visit.

**Multicultural skills.** In comparison with multicultural awareness and knowledge, the preservice teachers demonstrated less improvement in pedagogical skills. Despite the limited amount of writings on multicultural teaching skills, the preservice teachers strengthened their classroom management skills, and employed multicultural materials and teaching skills to engage and connect with students. For example, Jenna reflected on several effective skills to maintain control of the classroom that she learned from her co-operating teacher.

I learned many effective strategies for managing a rowdy classroom. Many times my co-op used clapping and other body movements to control her class. I think these are great ways to get the attention of your students without yelling which in many times is not an effective approach.

Apart from increased competence in managing classrooms, a couple of preservice teachers wrote how they actively involved students in learning by using multicultural literature and building connections with students. Both of them realized that when teachers were able to relate to the students, the class was more attentive, and the learning more productive. Katie explicitly expressed thoughts on how she established rapport with students by asking questions related to their lives, and giving appropriate praises.

One positive change that I have been able to make is by talking to the various students during brief intervals to learn details about their lives including their favorite books, greatest weaknesses, past pets, and preferred daydreams. Whenever I do get a chance to walk around the room, I try to encourage them and appropriately praise the work they have been doing. The biggest lesson that I am learning is that, without praise and respect, you cannot have a classroom environment that promotes growth and a love for learning.

Different from Katie, Bryanna described using multicultural children literature to engage diverse learners, which turned out to be effective in filling the gap between students’ home and school cultures.

I would use texts and literature that were multicultural, reflecting the demographic that is in the classroom and beyond. I think this is a great thing to do in ELL classrooms and beyond, because not only will children learn from different cultures, it can make some students feel more at home and welcomed.
Conclusion and Implications

The data triangulation of the two phases supported that the Philadelphia Urban Seminar was highly effective in nurturing preservice teachers’ multicultural competence. Different from many existing studies (e.g., Cicchelli & Cho, 2007) whose sole focus was on studying preservice teachers’ cultural attitudes and beliefs, the current research uncovered changes in the different dimensions of the construct, including awareness, knowledge, and skills in working with diverse students. Specifically, the impact of the program on enhancing cultural awareness was more significant than that on multicultural knowledge and skills. In light of awareness, the vast majority of the preservice teachers reported that they became more conscious of the cultural blind attitudes and deficit views they held towards students whose backgrounds differ markedly from their own. In spite of this positive change in beliefs, the researchers found that many of them still had limited understanding on the importance of multicultural training, and challenges of teaching in diverse classrooms. With regard to multicultural knowledge, the preservice teachers became more knowledgeable in diverse populations, family structures, and local community; they developed further understanding on how to involve parents and community through multicultural curriculum and active communications. It is worthy to mention that a few preservice teachers also demonstrated improvement in using classroom management skills and methods to engage all students in learning. These variances in multicultural competence urged researchers to move from predominant emphasis on cultural beliefs and attitudes towards more comprehensive examination of the construct. As highlighted by Anderson and Stillman (2012), future studies should extend the knowledge base on preservice teachers’ development of actual knowledge and teaching practice in instructing diverse students.

Apart from the overall quality of the program, preservice teachers and teacher educators overwhelmingly supported the effectiveness of the individual components of the seminar. Based on preservice teachers’ changes in multicultural competence, improvement can be made to optimize the components of the seminar. The community project and educational field trips are the two components that were ranked lowest, and therefore deserved the most attention and efforts in enhancing the quality. To improve the Norris Square community project, a detailed explanation of the project background can be provided to help preservice teachers better understand the purpose and benefits of service learning. The project can also be strengthened by having preservice teachers spend more time in the school community to work closer with their students, and getting more children involved in the project, such as distributing handout flyers in the neighborhood schools. In respect of the educational field trips, stronger connections can be made between the trips and the lives of urban students. For instance, before visiting the art museum and the constitution center, professors can explain how these places relate to students in Philadelphia and the educational resources available at these places.

Finally, the study sheds light on how to restructure teacher education courses to boost preservice teachers’ multicultural teaching competence. The five components of the seminar effectively helped preservice teachers build connections between academic knowledge and practitioner and community expertise (see Figure 1). By immersing preservice teachers in Philadelphia for two weeks, it assisted them to develop more authentic understanding about diverse populations and urban education. Given the effectiveness of the program, the format
of the seminar can be employed as a model to enrich existing teacher education programs. Specifically, the preservice teachers should be provided with cross-cultural experiences that challenge their previous thinking and enable active interactions with diverse students. This echoed Zeichner’s (2010) idea of creating hybrid spaces where there is a nonhierarchical interplay “between academic and practitioner knowledge in support of student teacher learning” (p. 92). In spite of the enormous benefits of promoting equal relationships between school-based practitioners and university-based teacher educators, expanding the traditional mode of teacher education to integrate the urban community may encounter challenges at the institutional level, such as insufficient funding, and lack of support from faculties and administrators.

**Figure 1.** The Philadelphia Urban Seminar Model

**Limitations and Future Research**

As a preliminary analysis of the program, the current research can be improved in three primary areas. First of all, the sample size of the study was small which may confine the generalization level of the study. Secondly, limited types of statistical analysis were conducted due to the sample size. These two limitations demand researchers to enlarge the sample size and perform various statistical analyses to further analyze the effectiveness of the seminar. For instance, researchers of the current study attempted to improve this study by recruiting more preservice teachers from the Philly Urban Seminar to participate in the future research. It is also worth noting that the participants will be invited to respond a survey before the seminar, and a survey immediately after the seminar. A dependent-sample t-test will be performed to examine whether there would be a significant difference between the pre- and post-survey data. That is, a significant t-test result will be a good indicator of the effectiveness of the seminar on students’ overall teaching competence. Apart from the t-test, the researchers planned to conduct multiple regressions with a large enough sample to further explore the impact of different factors (e.g. ethnicity, educational experience, and interaction
with diverse students) on the three dimensions of the multicultural teaching competence (i.e. awareness, knowledge, and skills). Last but not least, only the short-term effect of the seminar was investigated by the current study. Thus, it would also be an interesting and meaningful research topic to probe the long-term impact of the program by tracking participants’ future teaching performance in classrooms through a longitudinal research design.

References


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