Lessons Learned in Preparing 100 Teachers for the Urban Classroom

Rochonda L. Nenonene, Ph.D.
First Year Experience Coordinator
Program Director, Urban Teacher Academy
School of Education and Allied Professions
Department of Teacher Education
University of Dayton
300 College Park Drive
Dayton, Ohio 45469-0525
(937) 229-3084 - phone
(937) 229-2500 - fax
rnenonene1@udayton.edu

Pamela Cross Young, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Educational Leadership
& Director of Accreditation
School of Education and Allied Professions
University of Dayton
Dayton, Ohio 45469-0532
phone: 937-229-3323
fax: 937-229-1004
pyoung1@udayton.edu
As we enter the 21st century, the picture of urban schools and the plight of the nation’s urban students remains unchanged. The children continue to represent the growing population of ethnically diverse poor in our country, and those who teach them continue to be “White European-American females from middle class families who have little or no experience with minority groups, and who prefer to teach students with whom they identify racially and culturally” (Lowery, 2001, p.17).
U.D. is a Marianist institution that encourages service, community engagement, leadership and research.

Recruiting, hiring and retention of qualified teachers is necessary if society hopes to achieve the goal of providing ALL learners, including those in impoverished districts, with opportunities for academic success - a matter of social justice.
Urban Teacher Academy

- Designed in 2001, the Urban Teacher Academy (UTA) was developed by the University of Dayton School of Education and Allied Professions as a means of addressing the growing demand for quality urban classroom teachers.

- Ladson-Billings (2001) states that “one of the current concerns plaguing the nation’s schools is how to find teachers who are capable of teaching successfully in diverse classrooms” (p. 12).

- Working in collaboration with Dayton Public Schools, the Urban Teacher Academy’s goal is to “increase the number of highly effective, reliable teachers in the district by recruiting preservice teachers to the urban school setting, providing them with specialized training, and supporting them with mentors during their field experience and as they begin their careers” (UTA Memorandum of Agreement see appendix A).
UTA Grad – Veronica Valentino
Current teacher at DECA Prep
Collaboration with Lalanne Program

- Lalanne is committed to urban Catholic education. The collaboration between UTA and Lalanne is a natural alignment of programs designed to meet the needs of teachers seeking to teach in urban districts.

- Evolution of collaboration
  1. UTA grads identified as strong Lalanne applicants.
  2. Discussion forum on urban students, families and community resources.

Collaborations do work:
Several UTA Grads have been accepted into Lalanne. One UTA/Lalanne grad was recognized as an outstanding teacher in Cleveland, Ohio.
Core Competencies Expected of UTA Graduates

As a result of participating in the UTA, preservice teachers are expected to:

- Demonstrate the ability to present information in a clear, direct way that students can understand.
- Demonstrate behaviors like varied delivery, frequent demonstrative questions, varied, dramatic body movements, varied emotional facial expressions, animated acceptance of ideas, and selection of varied words, especially adjectives.
- Demonstrate the ability to see things from the student point of view, showing positive regard toward the student. (Exhibits caring "desk-side manner").
- Demonstrate cultural competencies, i.e., respect and understanding for students' cultural rituals, icons, and historical experience so that new learning can be effectively connected to students' experiences.
- Demonstrate the ability to improve life in the classroom through self-analysis and action research related to student outcomes and teacher behavior. (Asks the question: What can I do to insure better results for my students?)
- Demonstrate the ability to break down complex concepts or tasks and sequence them in order of difficulty.
- Demonstrate the ability to view students on a developmental continuum as opposed to viewing some children as inherently deficient due to race, class, gender or other factors beyond the student's control. (moving away from the deficit model of learning)
UTA Grad – David Recker
Current teacher at Dayton Early College Academy
Grad Data

- UTA grads are teaching all over the United States. Grads are in Ohio, New York, South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Colorado, Louisiana, Wisconsin, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Florida, Indiana, and Washington D.C.

- Currently 75% of UTA grads are teaching in urban school districts and an increasing number of grads have completed their Masters in Education.

- Currently 8 UTA grads are employed in roles other than classroom teacher but are still working in urban settings.
UTA Grad - Jasmine Roberts
Current Dayton Public Schools teacher
Lessons Learned

Program: Best Practices

Preservice Teachers

School Districts

Important Factors

UTA Graduates
Preservice Teachers

Selection
- Application
- Interview

Course Work
- Sophomore year (social justice & relationships)
- Junior year- EDT 318 (cultural competency)
- Senior year- EDT 414 (academic excellence – classroom management, data analysis and differentiated instruction and assessment.)

Field/Clinical Experiences
- Dayton Public Schools
- Local charter schools
- Local non-profits
School Districts

Partnerships

- Selection of schools and mentors
- Memo of understanding on procedures: timeline, interview and hire protocol.

Unions

- Memo of understanding on hiring procedures
- Support

Sharing Data

- Information on grad progress - frank conversations about grads ability to run a classroom.
- Access to teacher evaluation and test data.
UTA Graduates

Support
- Newsletter
- Monthly meetings for local grads
- Classroom observations with critical feedback

Evaluation
- Survey
UTA Grad Mtg
Administrative Factors

Funding
- University
- Grant

Sustainability
- Course sequence
- Urban Teacher Certificate
- Faculty tenure track devoted to urban ed.

Advisory Council
- Advice
- University
- Local school districts and charters
- Local non-profits
Best Practices

- Seminars
- Events

Coordination with Stakeholders

- Seminars
- Book Club
- Conference Support

Mentor Training

- Placements in nonprofits, afterschool programs and summer programs
- Conferences- Childrens’ Defense Fund

Going Beyond the Classroom
Governance and Leadership Considerations

- Administrator must know the staff and develop effective professional relationships.
- Build capacity in school teams.
- Tap (identify and develop) internal expertise of teacher leaders.
- Acknowledge the importance of building a balanced professional learning community.
- Establish school culture focused on students and student learning.
Questions and Discussion

- Through the lens of your current role in your community, school or district, what can and are you willing to do to bridge gaps and help all students become socially and academically successful?
- Questions for us?
UTA Grad - Haley Todd
On May 31 2012, Haley was named the KBCO Teacher of The Year!
Haley received a scholarship for the M.S. in Teaching and Learning program at Colorado State University Global Campus.
Selected Resources

Texts


