

Public Abstract

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Title:A PHENOMENOLOGICAL CASE STUDY OF A GRADUATE COMPREHENSIVE DEAF EDUCATION TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM: IMPLICATIONS FOR COLLABORATIVE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN DIVERSE CONTEXTS

Although a shortage of teachers of students who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing exists in U.S. public schools, deaf education teacher preparation programs are on the decline. It is imperative that the remaining programs help to fill the need for deaf educators in U.S. public schools. Yet little is known about the function of deaf education teacher preparation programs, especially those espousing a comprehensive philosophy. Less is known about how these programs function while simultaneously providing on-site services to children who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing. A phenomenological case study of a comprehensive, graduate, Midwest deaf education teacher preparation program was conducted. The researcher explored the empowered and enabled learning of graduate teacher candidates centered on the three educator pillars deemed essential to quality teachers within the state: commitment to the profession, proficiency in practice, and learning impact. Embracing diversity of d/Deafness and differentiated instruction were the two strongest themes that emerged from the data supporting that the program's comprehensive philosophy was practiced. Teacher candidates' most notable strengths were in commitment followed by proficiency in practice, then learning impact. The most prominent program improvement theme centered on better preparing teacher candidates to navigate the public school system. Seventy-five percent of the public school classrooms and a School for the Deaf connected with this study, across five different states, included students who were d/Deaf or hard of hearing who represented two, and equally often, three different modes of communication. Possible implications for practice were explored.