

Teacher Recruitment Programs for K-12 Students: Implications for Teacher Education

**By Reyes L. Quezada, Joseph J. Galbo,
Pamela M. Russ, & Anthony T. Vang**

Reyes L. Quezada is a professor in the Department of Teacher Education at the University of Redlands, Redlands, California. Joseph J. Galbo was a professor in the Department of Teacher Education, California State University, Stanislaus, Turlock at the time of his death in 1995. Pamela M. Russ and Anthony T. Vang are professors in the Department of Teacher Education at California State University, Stanislaus, Turlock.

Introduction

At a time when the need for new teachers, particularly ones of color, is exceeding the supply, educators have been searching for more effective ways to meet future shortages (Boe & Gillford, 1992; Darling-Hammond & Hudson, 1989; Matcznski & Joseph, 1989). The greatest emphasis for meeting expected needs has been placed on the recruitment of teachers at the collegiate level (Weiner, 1993). However, there is limited information on the identification of potential teachers at an early age, specifically with regard to minority students. One potential source for earlier identification of new teachers within the public school setting is classes or clubs which provide students with the opportunity to explore the various dimensions of being a teacher. Yet, we know little about the extent or nature of these efforts (Florio, 1984; Haberman,

Teacher Recruitment Programs for K-12 Students

1989).

Until very recently, teacher recruitment practices have focused on measuring and evaluating students' interests based on supply and demand in order to predict future patterns in the teacher workforce (Lyday, 1990; Enger, 1993; Lindblad & Prieto, 1992). For example, minority teachers presently make up 10 to 15 percent of the nation's teachers, while minority students will comprise about 46 percent of America's students in K-12 public schools by the year 2020. Therefore, it would appear increasingly necessary to encourage and promote minority students to become teachers who could serve as role models for future generations (Mack & Jackson, 1990, 1993). Nonetheless, few concentrated efforts exist nationwide to promote the recruitment of K-12 students to become teachers (Rydell, 1986).

In general, programs have usually been developed at the secondary school level (Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., 1993), yet students often report that they became interested in becoming a teacher in elementary school due to a teacher who had a significant influence on them (Galbo, Demetrulius, & Crippen, 1990). The purpose of this study is to provide descriptive data about the quantity of recruitment programs across all grade levels, K-12. A more specific perspective on teacher recruitment programs that focus on K-6 students may, in fact, provide insight into a previously untapped potential resource for future teachers who have remained largely overlooked.

Programs to Recruit K-12 Students

Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. (1993) has completed the most comprehensive study of pre-collegiate teacher recruitment programs, identifying 236 middle and high school level programs with a current enrollment of 30,000 students annually. The findings of this study indicate that recruitment programs offer a wide range of experiences for those interested in becoming teachers. On the other hand, the authors state that "educational researchers and policy makers have often placed insufficient emphasis on early identification of potential teachers..." (p.10). Some of the characteristics of successful programs which were identified were: adequate support for the staff, sufficient resources for the programs, entry and participation requirements, and a focus on experimental learning.

The fact that recruitment programs focus primarily on students in secondary schools is reinforced by Linda Darling-Hammond and L. Hudson (1989) who indicate that these programs also tend to focus on the promotion of science and mathematics teachers. In addition, two larger scale programs which have received national attention are Future Educators of America and South Carolina's Teacher Cadet Project (Berry, Cook, & Kuhs, 1988). While the programs differ, both organizations seek to build the pool of potential teachers by involving classroom teachers, administrators, and university education faculty in mentoring students interested in the teaching profession.

Recruiting Students of Color

In a sample of 605 high school seniors, F.R.P. Mack and T.E. Jackson (1993) found that six percent of the sample were Hispanic, yet 30 percent of the Hispanic students identified teaching as a possible career. Mack and Jackson indicate that:

[t]he Hispanic student is an untapped resource for teacher preparation programs; that Hispanics are more likely to be future teachers for teaching positions in urban districts than non minority candidates; and that casual effects, such as financial support, career awareness, lack of positive role models, appear to be barriers in attracting Hispanic students into teacher education. (p. 2).

Mack and Jackson (1990), also, investigated the attitudes of high school seniors toward teaching as a career and their perceptions of the conditions associated with the teaching profession. Based on a 96 percent response to the survey, the results suggested that a pool of minority high school students is available to be recruited into teacher education programs. Afro-American students were more likely than Euro-American students to express an interest in becoming teachers. Few students noted encouragement from within the schools or communities, and minority students were more likely to be discouraged from becoming teachers than were Anglo students. Minority students were more likely to desire to teach in a large urban district than were Euro-American students, and they were interested in teaching at all levels of instruction and in the major secondary content levels. Consequently, results indicate that financial support, career awareness, lack of positive information about the teaching field, lack of encouragement from significant others, and the discouragement of teaching by the students' own teachers and other professionals were barriers in getting minority students into the teaching position.

Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. (1993) also reports that 38 percent of the students in the programs they studied were students of color, which is a high figure when compared to ten percent, the current figure of teachers of color presently in the workforce.

Teacher as a Role Model

The role of the teacher is critical for successfully promoting the teaching profession in K-12 schools. Recent research suggests that it is important to provide children with role models that reflect their cultural background and have shared similar experiences (Paige, 1987; Perkins, 1991; Simmons, 1990). As the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986) reported:

The race and background of their teachers tell them something about power and authority in contemporary America. These messages influence children's attitudes toward school, their academic accomplishments, and their views of their own and others' intrinsic worth. The views they form in school about justice and fairness also influence their future citizenship. (p. A-8)

Teacher Recruitment Programs for K-12 Students

The person who is most likely to influence another to become a classroom teacher is a classroom teacher (Galbo, Demetrulius, & Crippen, 1990). The relationship between teacher and student can be very influential and teachers have ample opportunity to promote the teaching profession to their students through their enthusiasm for teaching and a strong interest in the subject matter. In many respects the K-12 school setting may be an ideal location for positive teacher characteristics to deeply impact a student's eventual decision to become a teacher.

Research Procedures

The purpose of this survey was to identify the quantity and quality of teacher recruitment programs which were available for students in K-12 public schools. The research questions were: (1) Does the school have a program for students interested in becoming a teacher? (2) What are the characteristics of the program? (3) What are the characteristics of the participants including gender and ethnicity? (4) How is the program evaluated? (5) Are there any financial incentives provided to the students in the program?

The Survey Questionnaire

The sample consisted of 380 K-12 schools which constitute the entire population of public schools within the service area of a university in north central California. Within the sample were schools from rural, suburban, and urban environments, including one of California's largest cities. The region which was surveyed is within two hours of the San Francisco Bay Area and consequently serves increasingly as a bedroom community for this large urban region. The area covered by this survey has become increasingly diverse in the last decade and has one of the largest concentrations of Hmong in the state, with the largest single ethnic group being Hispanic.

All schools were asked to respond indicating if they did or did not have a teacher recruitment program available for students in the school. Two weeks after a follow-up letter was sent, and then all schools which did not respond were telephoned, and those which indicated they had a teacher recruitment program for their students were sent the questionnaire a second time. If the school did not have a program, that information was recorded. Additional programs were identified as a result of the telephone contacts and the follow-up interviews.

The questionnaire was a modified version of a national survey developed and conducted by Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. (1993) in behalf of The Pathways to Teaching Program of the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund. The questionnaire was modified to include other types of programs which might be used as a vehicle for teacher recruitment, such as cross-age tutoring, and to acquire additional data on the gender and ethnicity of the students who were in these programs. In addition, the survey was sent to all K-12 schools, whereas the national survey was sent primarily to middle and high schools. The inclusion of all K-12 schools

permitted an exploration of the extent to which these programs exist at the elementary school level.

The questionnaire consisted of five sections. Each section contained questions in which options were provided as well as an opportunity for open-ended responses. In Part One, general demographic information was requested about the school. Part Two addressed program characteristics. Subsequent questions focused on the specific qualities of the program, such as how the program was created or what type of program or class was in place. Part Three addressed program evaluation. Part Four requested specific information about program/class participants, including gender and ethnicity. Part Five addressed if there were any financial incentives available for students. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to strengthen the validity of the survey data, but did not explore the programs beyond the primary questions in the survey. All schools which indicated they had a program or class were interviewed.

Data Analysis

Does The School Have A Program?

A total of 295 usable responses (77%) were received as a result of the questionnaire or by telephoning the school. Of the total number of responses, 263 (89%) were K-6 schools, 11 (4%) were K-8 schools, 4 (1%) were 6-8 schools, and 17 (6%) were 9-12 schools. Thirteen (4%) programs were identified. Of the 13 schools which identified programs, five were at the K-6 grade level, two at the K-8 level, one at the 6-8 level, and five at the 9-12 level.

	<u>K-6</u>	<u>K-8</u>	<u>6-8</u>	<u>9-12</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Responses	263	11	4	17	295
Programs	5	2	1	5	13
Percent	2	18	25	29	4

What Are The Characteristics Of The Programs?

Ten of the programs in which students participated were a cross-age tutoring experience. Other more frequently mentioned types of programs were extracurricular clubs, career awareness activities, and summer programs. Seven respondents indicated that the programs were developed to create an awareness of the teaching profession and to encourage students to stay in school or to go on to college. Less frequently mentioned reasons for developing programs were to expand the pool of minority, bilingual, mathematics, and science teachers. Over half of the programs were developed within the last five years.

Eight schools designed their own programs while five used preexisting models, such as the model provided by Future Teachers of America. Just over half of the programs collaborated with another program, and these included public and private

Teacher Recruitment Programs for K-12 Students

universities or colleges and other public schools. There was no clear pattern in these partnerships, but rather the partnerships appeared to depend on what was the funding source of support for the program. If support was provided by a particular agency, such as the state, there may be specific requirements as to which institutions or agencies were to participate in the collaboration.

Administration of the programs was usually provided by paid part-time faculty. Nearly half of the programs were sponsored, developed, and implemented by an individual teacher volunteer who used other volunteers for assistance. Limited training in the form of retreats or workshops was provided for persons coordinating the programs. Other incentives for program coordinators were generally in the form of encouragement or special recognition awards.

Students participated in ten programs during the school day, with no academic credit being provided in about half of the cases. The duration of the program was usually from one quarter to one complete academic year. Students generally participated up to, but usually not more than, five hours per week. Extensive supervised tutoring experiences were available and the programs provided teacher mentors for the participants. Students taught most frequently in the elementary schools in cross-age relationships, but there were experiences provided at the secondary level and in special education settings as well. Opportunities to teach a whole class were very limited.

What Are the Characteristics of the Participants?

The responses to specific questions which were asked regarding the racial and ethnic diversity of students in the programs indicated a low number of participants who were students of color. The participation of students of color in programs which responded appeared to be largely the result of the diversity of the school rather than any special efforts being made to recruit students of color. The largest group represented after Caucasians was Hispanics. Female participants tended to outnumber males in most cases by more than a two to one ratio.

Students in future teacher programs generally provided their services to other students primarily in a school setting in a suburban environment in schools with less than 100 students. Programs served from as few as seven or eight students to as many as 1,200 in a given year. One program ceased to function even though it had served several hundred students during the 1992-1993 school year.

Most students learned about the programs within the school through an announcement in the classroom, in the schedule of classes, from a guidance counselor, or through the nomination of a teacher. Less than half the time there were minimum grade requirements and attendance expectations. When students' access to the programs was limited, the reasons included enrollment limits or specific requirements imposed by funding sources, as in the case of one program available for lower income students only. Three programs indicated an interest in expanding. Parents were not usually involved in the programs.

How Are The Programs Evaluated?

Over half of the programs used some form of internal or external evaluation conducted on a yearly basis. Most programs did not have follow up activities for students who attended college, nor was there knowledge if the students from the K-12 programs entered or completed teacher education programs.

The primary strengths of these programs which were identified were: the development of the self-esteem of participants, learning about the enjoyment of teaching, and providing work experience for participants. Critical needs were: more pre-training for participants, additional role models, and additional resources. Important obstacles which the programs faced were: a lack of recognition of persons who keep the programs active, a lack of resources including time to coordinate activities and funds to purchase materials.

Are There Financial Incentives For Students In The Programs?

In general financial incentives were not available. Three programs did provide financial incentives in the form of a minimum wage to students.

Discussion

Perhaps the most interesting finding is the absence of opportunities available for students at any grade level to learn about becoming a teacher in a formal, systematic manner. An overwhelming 96 percent of all schools responding did not have programs. Only 2 percent of the K-6 schools identified programs, and these tended to be cross-age tutoring programs some of which did provide students with formal teaching opportunities. At the 9-12 grade level, more programs were available (29%), but the numbers were not overwhelming. One possible reason for the lack of these programs, other than the more obvious financial considerations, might be the lack of information available regarding their effectiveness as a recruitment tool.

In addition, elementary school has not traditionally been a level associated with recruiting future teachers. Perhaps it is time to reconsider our notion of what age is the most worthwhile for students to learn about the world of teaching. Would the students who enter a university teacher education program be better prepared if they had participated in activities throughout their K-12 school experience which cultivated an interest in becoming a teacher? It seems unlikely that the numbers of future teachers, particularly teachers of color, can increase substantially without concerted efforts that tap K-12 schools as a primary resource. A variety of successful models has been identified by Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. (1993) to assist interested schools which might want to design teacher recruitment programs for their students. These success stories provide good insight into what is possible.

Teacher recruitment programs in K-12 settings will not increase as long as teachers are not appropriately compensated for their efforts. Many of the programs

Teacher Recruitment Programs for K-12 Students

which were identified continue to survive as a result of the good will of the volunteers who run them. These programs can not be expected to have much impact under such adverse conditions, and they certainly are not likely to proliferate. Appropriate financial support needs to be provided if we are to expect more of the potential of recruitment programs for K-12 students to be understood.

Comparison to National Study

Compared to the study conducted by Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. (1993), this study found similar results. For example, in order to participate in a program, the most prevalent expectations for students were grade point average or regular attendance. Financial incentives were not usually provided to students who participated. Both studies identified the predominance of female participants in the programs. There was a long list of program needs, including an increase in funding, as well as other resources.

With regard to students of color, the national study found a much more promising picture than was evident in this study. Nearly 40 percent of the students identified in the Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. study were students of color, while they were more notably absent in the regional study where we found few special efforts directed specifically to attract minority students. One explanation may be the fact that there was a greater likelihood of K-12 teacher recruitment programs from large urban areas such as Los Angeles reporting in the national study, while the regional study surveyed all schools, many of which were small and in suburban and rural areas. Also, parents were seldom involved in this study, while they were involved more than half the time in the national study.

Implications for Teacher Education

For the most part, the teacher recruitment process usually does not begin until the start of university education. Through collaborative efforts with K-12 schools, teacher educators can extend and redefine what teacher preparation is. If the intent is in developing a strong, diverse teaching force, perhaps the nurturing of future teachers should begin as early as the elementary grades. Also, teacher educators can be active agents in the support and development of these programs in K-12 schools by devising innovative ways to include student teachers in the expansion and enrichment of future teacher programs. More specifically:

1. For recruitment efforts to be successful, all educators at all levels need to promote the positive aspects of the teaching profession.
2. Teacher education programs can play an increasingly important part by incorporating teacher recruitment models for K-12 students into pre-service and inservice teacher education.
3. Student teachers are an untapped resource for becoming active role models in developing future teachers. Student teachers can develop

skills that encourage positive interaction and promote teaching as a career choice for students of color, which would likely increase the sensitivity of student teachers to the lack of role models in the teaching profession for diverse groups of students. Once the student teacher becomes a classroom teacher, this increased awareness might translate into active support for programs for K-12 students who want to explore teaching as a career.

One of the primary reasons for seeking ways to increase the number of teachers of color has been the recognized need for all children to have exposure in the classroom environment to teachers that represent a variety of languages and cultures. Conversely, there is also a critical need for the dominant group in society to be exposed to the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity within the society so that all may better understand the existence and the value of multiple perspectives. The involvement of teacher education in the development and maintenance of teacher recruitment programs for K-12 students could move us much closer toward these desirable ends.

References

- Berry, B., Cook, N., & Kuhs, T. (1988). *An appraisal of the Teacher Cadet Program: The 1987-88 cohort*. Columbia, SC: The South Carolina Educational Policy Center, The University of South California.
- Boe, E.E., & Gillford, D.M. (Eds.). (1992). *Teacher supply, demand and quality*. Proceedings of 1991 National Research Council Conference. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy. (1986). *A nation prepared: Teachers for the 21st century*. Washington, DC: Task Force on Teaching as a Profession.
- Darling-Hammond, L., & Hudson, L. (1989). *Precollege science and mathematics teachers: Supply, demand and quality*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corp.
- Enger, J.M. (1993). *Perceptions of teaching as a career by Bahamian grade 12 students in college-preparatory programs*. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association. ERIC ED 235 170.
- Florio, D.H. (1984). *Excellence in teacher education: Options for a federal partnership*. Washington, DC: National Commission on Excellence in Teacher Education.
- Galbo, J., Demetruilius, D.M., & Crippen, C.M. (Spring, 1990). Recollections of significant adults by preservice teachers and nonteaching students. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 17(2), 17-39.
- Haberman, M. (June, 1989). More minority teachers. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 70(10), 771-776.
- Lindblad, S., & Prieto, H.P. (October-December, 1992). School experiences and teacher socialization: A longitudinal study of pupils who grew up to be teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 8 (5-6), 465-70.
- Lyday, J.W. (1990). Rural high school students' interest in teaching as a profession. *Rural Educator*, 11(2), 17-19.
- Mack, F.R.P. & Jackson, T.E. (1993). *High schools student attitudes about teacher*

Teacher Recruitment Programs for K-12 Students

- education as a career choice: Comparison by ethnic/racial group.* Washington, DC: Association of Teacher Educators.
- Matcznski, T.J., & Joseph, E.A. (Summer, 1989). Minority teacher shortage: A proposal to counter lack of activity. *Action in Teacher Education*, 11(2), 42-46.
- Paige, R. (1987). The recruitment and retention of minorities in teacher education. In Middleton, E.J., *Conference Proceedings*. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky.
- Perkins, H. (1991). Cultural differences: Preparing students for the 21st century. In Middleton, E.J., *Conference Proceedings*. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky.
- Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. (1993). *Teaching's next generation: A national study of precollegiate teacher recruitment*. Belmont, MA: Recruiting Teachers, Inc.
- Rydell, L.H. (1986). Teacher recruitment and retention in Maine: An overview. *Rural Special Education Quarterly*, 7(2). 22-23.
- Simmons, E. (1990). *Plan to attract and prepare minority students for teaching*. A report of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. Frankfort, KY: Kentucky State University.
- Weiner, L. (1993). *Choosing teaching as a career: Comparing motivations of Harvard and urban college students*. Washington, DC: Conference of the Eastern Educational Research Association. ERIC ED 357 013.