

School of Education

Diversity Vision

The University of Rhode Island's Teacher Preparation Programs view the documented low achievement levels of students of color, language minority students, students from poverty backgrounds, and students with disabilities, and the marginalizing of diverse cultural groups as educational injustices. In response, we assume the moral responsibility of preparing all teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Informed by this knowledge base, we collaborated on a vision that defines diversity and identifies the dispositions, knowledge, and skills our teacher candidates must possess to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population.

Definition

Diversity is differences among groups of people and individuals including ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, learning and physical exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, and geographical area.

Dispositions

- High expectations for all students
- Assumption of responsibility and self-efficacy for high level student achievement
- A sense of equity characterized by equality of opportunity and achievement
- Respect and appreciation for diversity
- To seek world views different from one's own
- Advocacy for empowerment of diverse students
- A commitment to social justice and advocacy of diverse students

Knowledge

- Cultural and individual strengths of diverse learners
- Informed and nuanced view of cultural labels
- Informed knowledge of parents and primary caretakers of diverse students with emphasis on their strengths and commitment to children
- Structural roadblocks that impede success for diverse learners
- Impact of stigma associated with disability labels and segregated educational environments
- The significance and role of community groups to diverse cultural groups

Skills

- Use cultural and individual strengths as a basis for learning so as to operate from a "Strength" rather than a "Deficit" paradigm
- Engage diverse learners
- Implement differentiated instruction
- Support English language learners
- Convene parental, community, and other relevant personnel to support the diverse learner