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Original Articles

Preparing teachers for family–school partnerships: a Dutch and Belgian perspective

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Abstract

Family–school partnerships (FSP) are considered important for student's academic and social development. However, preparing preservice teachers for these partnerships is seen as a challenge. Most studies on preservice teachers' preparation for FSP have been conducted in North American contexts, and little knowledge exists from a European perspective. Therefore, a study was conducted to examine all teacher training programmes in Belgium (Flanders) and the Netherlands. Programme managers were asked to complete the Epstein and Sanders' survey on this topic. Findings show that in general, preparation for FSP is considered important and that this topic is integrated into different courses. Most respondents indicated that communication with parents received the most attention. However, a majority of programme managers feel that preservice teacher's preparation in this area is not sufficient. In some programmes, FSP is not included in the curriculum. A third of the managers argued that preparing teachers for FSP belongs in in-service training. This is remarkable given the fact that collaboration with parents is legally required for preservice teachers' graduation. Furthermore, this study shows that even a decade after Epstein and Sanders' study, preparing teachers for FSP is still a challenge.



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Keywords

teacher education, family–school partnerships, preservice teachers, programme managers