

AUTHOR Bennett, Linda; Jay, Jordan  
 TITLE Elementary Teacher Preparation with Multicultural Requirements.  
 PUB DATE 97  
 NOTE 6p.  
 PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
 DESCRIPTORS \*Course Selection (Students); \*Cultural Awareness; Cultural Pluralism; Curriculum Development; Educational Quality; Education Courses; Elementary Education; Ethnic Groups; Higher Education; \*Multicultural Education; \*Preservice Teacher Education; \*Required Courses; \*Teacher Education Curriculum

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess the multicultural perspective of elementary teacher education programs nationally. There were three objectives: research the inclusion of multicultural education into elementary teacher preparation programs, identify institutions that incorporate multicultural education into general education coursework requirements, and identify institutions that incorporate multicultural education into professional teacher education coursework requirements. In the fall of 1994, data were collected from 42 institutions accredited by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) with elementary education programs and a multicultural course requirement. Results showed that 19 institutions had multicultural education in the general education requirements, 5 institutions required a specific course in multicultural education, and 14 had a list of multicultural offerings from which a student was required to select a course. These were usually offered as history, geography, sociology, or anthropology. Of surveyed institutions with elementary teacher preparation programs, 24 had a multicultural education course in the professional teacher education requirements. Twenty of these institutions required a specific course, and four allowed options. It was concluded that when students can select courses, less standardization in learning and content is likely. Therefore, more specific guidelines are needed for optional multicultural courses that preservice teachers take in general education. When professional teacher education requires a designated course, the institution can assure that the students are provided with similar multicultural content. (JLS)

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made \*  
 \* from the original document. \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND  
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL  
HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

L. Bennett

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION  
CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as  
received from the person or organization  
originating it.  
 Minor changes have been made to improve  
reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-  
ment do not necessarily represent official  
OERI position or policy.

## Elementary Teacher Preparation with Multicultural Requirements

Linda Bennett, Ed.D. and Jordan Jay, Ph.D.

### ABSTRACT

Of the 42 surveyed institutions with elementary teacher preparation programs, approximately half of the multicultural requirements were in general education and half were in professional teacher education. When the institutions required multicultural education in the general education component of the program the student had options on which course would met the multicultural requirement. The majority of the institutions with a multicultural education requirement in the professional teacher education, had a specific course devoted to meeting the multicultural education requirement.

## Elementary Teacher Preparation with Multicultural Requirements

What should teachers know and be able to do? The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (1994) requires teachers to be proficient with "skills in effectively teaching students from racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse backgrounds."

The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher (NCATE 1991) specifically states that the curriculum for professional education programs should provide instruction in the understanding and application of culturally diverse populations. The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS 1992) recommends that elementary teacher preparation programs should incorporate a multicultural perspective into the general education and professional teacher education requirements. The new curriculum standards for teaching social studies list culture as the first of ten teaching strands to be incorporated into the

elementary school curriculum. (National Council for the Social Studies Education 1994)

There is a national debate over to what extent the university or college curricula should be changed to reflect ethnic, cultural and gender diversity (NCSS 1992).

If an elementary teacher preparation program intends on incorporating multicultural education then it should "help the students comprehend and attend to the cultures, heritage's, and experiences of ethnic groups in the United States" (Gay 1983).

The Curriculum Guidelines for Multicultural Education has linked the principles, concepts, and issues of cultural groups and ethnic groups to the variables of gender, social class, and regions when defining multicultural education. (NCSS 1992) For this study, multicultural education is the study of various racial, ethnic, gender, and class groups in the United States (Gay 1983; Stone 1991).

The purpose of this study was to assess the multicultural perspective of elementary teacher education programs nationally. There were three objectives for the study.

1. Research the inclusion of multicultural education in elementary teacher preparation programs.
2. Identify institutions which incorporate multicultural education into general education course work requirements.
3. Identify institutions which incorporate multicultural education into professional teacher education course work requirements.

#### Method

During the fall of 1994, data were collected on 42 NCATE-accredited preservice elementary education programs in colleges and universities that have a multicultural course requirement. The institutions were identified during a previous investigation "Social Studies in the Preparation of Elementary School Teachers". (Bennett 1993).

The multicultural courses were reviewed and relevant information for this study was recorded. The institution, the course title, reference number, and the course credit hours for each required course were obtained. The courses were labeled and categorized as a general education requirement or professional teacher education requirement.

For consistency, the credit hours for the courses are presented in semester hours. If the data indicated courses could be taken for a variable range of credit hours, the minimum number of credit hours required was recorded.

Results and Discussion. Of the 139 originally sampled institutions which offered elementary teacher programs there were 42 institutions which have a course that was identified as multicultural education. Approximately half of the multicultural requirements were in general education and half were in professional teacher education.

General Education. Of the 42 surveyed institutions with elementary teacher preparation programs, there were 19 institutions with a multicultural education in the general education requirements. Only five institutions required a specific course in multicultural education and 14 (74%) had a list of multicultural education courses that the student was required to select a course from. The average semester credit hours for the multicultural education requirements in general education was 3.19.

If the institution allowed the students to select a course to meet the multicultural requirement, the courses were usually offered as history, geography, sociology, or anthropology courses. Sometimes the institutions would indicate the course options should include world culture, American minorities, cultural diversity, cross-culture or gender diversity. Two of the 19 courses designed as multicultural courses students could select from, had a focus on a selected cultural group: "Black" culture and Puerto Rican.

There were five institutions which designated a specific course in general education to meet the multicultural requirement. Four of the five institutions had a specific course that was labeled as human diversity, multicultural/multigroup relations, ethnic and cultural minorities. Dakota State College required a history course on Native Americans.

Professional Teacher Education. Of the 42 surveyed institutions with elementary teacher preparation programs, there were 24 institutions with a multicultural education course in the professional teacher education requirements. There were 20 institutions (83%) that required a specific course in multicultural education and 4 that had options. The average semester credit hours for these 24 courses was 2.54.

Over half of the courses were titled: Multicultural Education. In a few cases the focus was on a specific ethnic group, gender, or region. Two courses were listed with teaching as the focus in the title.

#### Conclusions.

When the institutions required multicultural education in the

general education component of the program the student had options on which course would met the requirement. Therefore, students from the one institution could be learning different multicultural content and a student form the institution may not take course which provides him/her with a well developed foundation in multiculturalism. The content of a single course in general education will not prepare students with the skills to teach children from diverse backgrounds. There needs to be more specific guidelines for which optional multicultural courses preservice teachers take in general education.

In the professional teacher education component of the program, there was usually a designated multicultural course. Since all students are required to take the course the institution can be assure that the students are being provided with similar multicultural content. The instructor of a multicultural course could design a content and instruction of the course to meet the needs of teachers and the racial, ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of the children they will teach. One course in multicultural education is one way teachers can be trained to meet the diverse needs of children in America's schools. It would be optimal if field experience in diverse setting was provided in conjunction with the multicultural course.

Further study needs to be done to investigate how institutions can provide knowledge in multicultural education and students with skills to work in a multicultural setting. Research on the content of the multicultural courses in professional teacher education of several institutions could provide insights into unique techniques on how to prepare students to teach in a diverse society. An investigation of course syllabi can determine if the focus of the course is on knowledge about cultural groups, skills to teach in culturally diverse setting, and/or resources for meeting the unique needs of the student. Models need to be designed that develop a relationship between the knowledge gained in course work and the application of that knowledge in the field.

#### REFERENCES

- Bennett, L. (1993) Social Studies in the Preparation of Elementary School Teachers. *The International Journal of Social Education* 7, 76-80.
- Gay, G. (1983). Why Multicultural Education in Teacher

Preparation Programs. *Contemporary Education.* 54, 79-85.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. (1994). *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able To Do.* Detroit, Michigan:

National Board. National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), (1991). *NCATE approved curriculum guidelines.* Washington D.C.: NCATE.

National Council for the Social Studies. (1992). *Curriculum Guidelines for Multicultural Education.* *Social Education.* 56, 274-294.

National Council for the Social Studies. (1994). *Expectations of Excellence Curriculum Standards for Social Studies. Bulletin 89.* Washington D.C.: National Council for the Social Studies.

Stone, L. (1991). *Intercultural and Multicultural Education.* In V. Atwood (ed.) *Elementary School Social Studies: Research As a Guide to Practice.* Washington D.C.: National Council for the Social Studies.

Linda Bennett, Ed.D.  
227 Townsend Hall  
University of Missouri-Columbia 65211  
573-882-1993/fax:573-884-7492  
<<cilinda@showme.missouri.edu>

SP#037151



U.S. Department of Education  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)  
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)



# REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

## I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: <i>Elementary Teacher Preparation with a Multicultural Requirement</i>	
Author(s):	
Corporate Source:	Publication Date:

## II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic/optical media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS) or other ERIC vendors. Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following two options and sign at the bottom of the page.



The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

*Sample*

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Level 1

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

*Sample*

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Level 2



Check here For Level 2 Release: Permitting reproduction in microfiche (4" x 6" film) or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic or optical), but *not* in paper copy.

Check here For Level 1 Release: Permitting reproduction in microfiche (4" x 6" film) or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic or optical) and paper copy.

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but neither box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

"I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic/optical media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries."

Sign here → please

Signature: <i>Linda Bennett</i>	Printed Name/Position/Title: <i>Linda Bennett, Ed.D.</i>	
Organization/Address: <i>University of Missouri - Columbia Columbia MO 65211</i>	Telephone: <i>573 882 1993</i>	FAX: <i>573-884-7492</i>
	E-Mail Address: <i>clinda@shawnee.missouri.edu</i>	Date: <i>2-25-97</i>



(over)

### III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

### IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

### V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse: **THE ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE ON TEACHING AND TEACHER EDUCATION**  
**ONE DUPONT CIRCLE, SUITE 610**  
**WASHINGTON, DC 20036-1186**  
**(202) 293-2450**

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

**ERIC Processing and Reference Facility**  
1100 West Street, 2d Floor  
Laurel, Maryland 20707-3598

Telephone: 301-497-4080  
Toll Free: 800-799-3742  
FAX: 301-953-0263

e-mail: [ericfac@inet.ed.gov](mailto:ericfac@inet.ed.gov)

WWW: <http://ericfac.piccard.csc.com>