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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the beliefs about and sensitivity toward cultural diversity issues of teacher educators and preservice teachers. A group of 78 predominantly white preservice teachers and 45 predominantly white teacher educators completed the Beliefs About Diversity Scale, which assessed beliefs about race, gender, social class, ability, language/immigration, sexual orientation, and multicultural education. Results indicate that preservice teachers scored at culturally sensitive levels for all subgroup areas except sexual orientation. Teacher educators scored at culturally sensitive levels for all subgroup areas. Both groups were positively sensitive in their overall beliefs about diversity, though with statistically significant differences. Teachers educators scored higher than preservice teachers in all subgroups, but they scored higher with statistical significance in the areas of social class, language/ immigration, and sexual orientation. The diversity issues subgroup with the highest mean sensitivity level for preservice teachers and teacher educators was race. Preservice teachers scored lowest for issues related to sexual orientation. Teacher educators scored lowest for issues related to language/immigration. (Contains 53 references.) (SM)

Running Head: SENSITIVITY ABOUT CULTURAL DIVERSITY ISSUES

Preservice Teachers and Teacher Educators: Are they Sensitive About Cultural Diversity Issues

(Research Report)

by

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Preservice Teachers and Teacher Educators: Are they Sensitive About Cultural Diversity Issues

Introduction

Dramatic demographic shifts are occurring in the United States, wherein classrooms in America are rapidly changing ethnically, racially, culturally, and socioeconomically (Roberts, 1993). Hodgkinson (1985) stated, "The number of minority children in our schools is now so large that if they do not succeed, all Americans will have a diminished future" (p. 18). How American educators choose to address these issues of diversity will forever influence the success and failure of millions of students now and in the years to come.

Hodgkinson (1997) explained that the United States is the "first world nation in the history of the humanity" (p. 3), where every nation in the world has a resident in this country. At the same time, American "immigration has shifted from being 85% European American to 85% Latin American and Asian, with a rapidly increasing contingent from the Middle East" (p. 3). Roberts (1993) observed "During the past decade, the Asian population grew by 108 percent, the Hispanic by 53 percent, the black by 13 percent, and the white by only 6 percent" (p. 75). In 1990, every state in the United States had a higher percentage of students of color than in 1980—every state increased in racial and ethnic diversity (Hodgkinson & Outtz, 1992). With the arrival of a new immigrant population comes a corresponding group of immigrant children, and schools are the recipients of these immigrant children. Additionally, these children will be from backgrounds in which English is a second language and will bring a host of different languages to their classrooms. Summarily, as a result of immigration, the United States is becoming less white, both in and out of the classroom.

By the year 2000, Gollnick and Chinn (1998) predict, "one-third of the nation will be African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American. These groups will comprise 40% of the population by 2020, and 50% of the population by 2050" (p. 82). Asian Americans "come from more than 20 countries, speak more than two dozen different languages, and practice a variety of religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity" ("In Our Own Words," 1996, p. 50). Gollnick and Chinn (1998) forecasted that

> at the end of the twentieth century, African Americans will be the largest non-European groups, but by 2030 nearly one-fourth of the school-age children will be Latino. Although racial and ethnic diversity has long existed in schools, the next fifty years will be characterized by either greater conflict among groups, especially the declining white majority, or the sharing of education resources and power. (p. 82)

Hodgkinson (1997) reported that "educators need to be increasingly aware of the variety of ways in which people are diverse and recognize that diversity is an enormous advantage for the U.S." (p. 7). This requirement is a requisite for teachers, especially when larger percentages of students in many large and urban school districts come from ethnic and racial culture groups. America's diversification comes with many direct implications for the American educational system (Evans, Torrey, & Newton, 1997). With the twenty-first century pledging a reversal in the demographic makeup of America's classrooms (where children of various ethnic groups will be the majority), Evans, Torrey, and Newton (1997) recommend that teacher educators' priority should be to prepare teachers to work with students from culturally diverse backgrounds. Evans et al. also reported that the preference of teachers is "to teach students from their own cultural orientation, because they share common values, expectations, and experiences" (p. 9). But, Pohan (1995) offered the following reminder:

> With the nation's student population becoming increasingly more diverse, teachers must both be willing and prepared to work with students from backgrounds different from their own. For indeed, if ALL students don't succeed, we fail to meet their nation's democratic ideals and the very purpose of schooling itself. (p. 2)

Additionally, the research of Ladson-Billings (1991), Marshall (1993), and Moore and Reeves-Kazelskis (1992) suggest that most teachers have concerns about working with diverse student populations and need to examine their beliefs, broaden their knowledge, and develop abilities for relating to students from diverse cultures.

One implication of this shift is the challenge and charge to the academy that trains the teachers, to matriculate teachers who are both culturally sensitive and culturally literate. The issue of multicultural education is so important that accrediting organizations such as the National Council for Accreditation of

Teacher Education (NCATE) have encouraged its inclusion in studies for prospective teachers (Barry & Lechner, 1995). Even more important, institutions of higher learning should matriculate teachers who are prepared with a consciousness for diversity, and ready and willing to champion for cultural pluralism and multicultural education (Ladson-Billings, 1994a). Therefore, preservice teachers should become culturally literate and competent in the concepts of multicultural education. Moreover, new teachers should also be mindful that the expressed purpose of public education, according to Ladson-Billings (1992), is the development of citizens who are prepared to participate in a democracy.

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the beliefs about and sensitivity toward cultural diversity issues of teacher educators and preservice teachers. The *Beliefs About Diversity Scale* (BADS), (Pohan & Aguilar, 1995) was used to assess beliefs the following areas: (a) race, (b) gender, (c) social class, (d) ability, (e) language/immigration, (f) sexual orientation, and (g) multicultural education. It was assumed that these beliefs about diversity can be assessed and the results would be beneficial for helping to prepare teachers to serve diverse student groups. It was further assumed that prospective teachers with positive attitudes and beliefs are more prone to be culturally responsive and sensitive in actual teaching situations involving students of diverse cultures, ethnic groups, backgrounds, abilities, economic levels, etc., and generally in dealing with multicultural issues in the classroom. This assumption is supported by Larke (1990) who contends that studies show ". . .a high correlation exists among educators' sensitivity (attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward students of other cultures) knowledge and application of cultural awareness information and minority students' successful academic performance" (p. 24).

This study focused on the attitudes in general, and beliefs more specifically, about diversity. The following research questions were the focus of this study:

1. Do preservice teachers and teacher educators score at culturally sensitive level in the following areas: (a) race, (b) gender, (c) social class, (d) ability, (e) language/immigration, (f) sexual orientation, and (g) multicultural education as measured by the *BADS*?

2. Are there statistically significant differences between preservice teachers' and teacher educators' scores on the following subgroups: (a) race, (b) gender, (c) social class, (d) ability, (e)

language/immigration, (f) sexual orientation, and (g) multicultural education as measured by the *BADS*?

Review of Related Literature

One important development in recent years is how much attention schools are giving to the variety of cultures coexisting in American society. Cultural pluralism is the term generally used to describe this cultural diversity. As a society, we seek a sense of cultural pluralism; that is, a state in which people of diverse ethnic, racial, religious, and social groups recognize and appreciate the right to maintain their autonomous participation within a common civilization. Attention to cultural pluralism is only one component of multicultural education. This attention, however, has not been without criticism, because of its emphasis on what Shapiro, Sewell, and DuCette (1995) called "the three "F's": food, festivals, and fun. While none of these are inappropriate as aspects of a course on multicultural education, they do not constitute a curriculum for diversity. . . . a complete curriculum for diversity is logically impossible" (p. xxv).

In his review of research on teachers' attitudes and beliefs, Kagan (1992) presented common themes of beliefs about: (a) teaching and learning; (b) the role of the teacher; (c) teacher and student behavior; and (d) discipline and student control. However, none of the studies reviewed by Kagan considered beliefs about diversity. Law and Lane (1987) compared preservice teachers' social distance scores (tolerance toward other culture/ethnic groups) with those of the general population over a 60 year period, and concluded that preservice teachers' attitudes are no more accepting of various ethnic groups than those of the general population. Similarly, when Byrnes and Kiger (1989) investigated the differences in racial attitude scale scores between preservice teachers and the general student population, they found no statistically significant difference.

According to Pajares (1992) "teachers' attitudes about education—about schooling, teaching, learning, and students—have generally been referred to as teachers' beliefs" (p. 316); that is, the terms attitude and belief are often used interchangeably. Many studies have been reported which investigated teachers' attitudes and beliefs about issues related to educating diverse learners. We are reminded by Pajares (1992) that "all teachers hold beliefs, however defined and labeled, about their work, their

students, their subject matter and their roles and responsibilities . . . " (p. 314). Nespor (1987) argued that

> in spite of arguments that people's "beliefs" are important influences on the ways they conceptualize tasks and learn from experience . . . little attention has been accorded to the structure and functions of teachers' beliefs about their roles, their students, the subject matter areas they teach, and the schools they work in. (p. 317)

The value and importance of understanding teachers' beliefs is becoming apparent. As Tatto (1996) stated, "Not only do teacher beliefs influence their teaching practices, these beliefs are relatively stable and resistant to change" (p. 157). In order for preservice teachers' beliefs to be impacted by their training programs, Tatto recommended that

> if teacher educators are striving to help teachers learn practices teachers do not value, it is likely that teacher education will not have much effect. These findings, combined with studies of the content of teacher education, make it clear that an important goal of many teacher education programs ought to be to alter teachers' beliefs. (p. 157)

Teachers have preconceived ideas about issues of race, ethnicity, gender, and class. Like any other preconceptions, these beliefs and attitudes will play out in the actions and practices as teachers. It is, therefore, important to understand teacher's beliefs and their relation to classroom practices.

Empirical studies show that preservice teachers who have been provided cross-cultural experiences feel more comfortable discussing racial issues, maintain associations reflecting racial and ethnic openness, believe that they have the necessary training to teach in a culturally diverse setting, and are likely to encourage a variety of viewpoints among students than those who have no cross-cultural experience (Cooper, Beare & Thorman, 1990; Larke, 1990; Mahan & Stachowski, 1990). In another study it was surmised that preservice teachers with cross-cultural experiences are more likely to believe that minority students have capabilities and strengths on which teachers could build (Larke et al, 1990). It was assumed by Larke et al that "the more knowledgeable teachers are about the culture of their students and the more positive interactions between teachers and students of different racial/ethnic groups, the less threatened and acceptable teachers and students become of each other's cultural

differences" (p. 80). Teachers with cross-cultural experiences are more likely to use adjectives such as caring, responsible, polite, and creative in describing minority students than those who have no cross-cultural experiences. They are also more likely to perceive minority students from positions of strength rather than as being weak.

Cultural Sensitivity and Social Distance

Carl Rogers (1979) found that some of the behaviors and concepts that were developed in the fields of counseling and psychotherapy are also prevalent in of education. Primarily, what Rogers suggests for encounters in the classroom to be positive and beneficial is for the teacher to become involved with the learner in a number ways. One way, according to Rogers, is by "being with the student in a sensitive understanding of his or her own interests, desires, and directions. It involved being a real person in the teacher-student relationship, rather than playing a role" (p. vi) or establishing superficial relationships with the students. Cultural awareness and sensitivity can be a means for establishing such relationships. It is believed that "multicultural education increases the sensitivities of preservice teachers so that they understand the subtle cultural and educational differences that schools often perpetuate" (Larke, Wiseman, & Bradley, 1990, p. 71).

Delpit (1995) believed it is the responsibility of teacher educators to help preservice teachers become culturally literate and competent. One of the first steps in doing this is to help preservice teachers reach a level of awareness of themselves and their relationship with the world. They must come to a basic understanding of who we are and how we are connected to and disconnected from one another. Teachers should recognize that

> we all carry worlds in our heads, and those worlds are decidedly different. We educators set out to teach, but how can we reach the worlds of others when we don't even know they exist? Indeed, many of us don't even realize that our own worlds exist only in our heads and in the cultural institutions we have built to support them. (p. xiv)

It is further recommended by Delpit (1995) that, in addition to teachers exploring their own beliefs and attitudes about diverse cultures, they should also be exposed to models for success and successful teaching rather than prescriptions for failure. Research has indicated that students' performance and

achievement is directly related to teacher's beliefs. Low expectations of, and negative attitudes toward, students result in low achievement (Ladson-Billings, 1994a).

Role of Teacher Educators

Teacher educators play a vital role in the professional development of preservice teachers. Teacher education faculty are the heart of teacher education as they design, implement, and assess curricular programs. Teacher educators are responsible for "knowing what to teach (content) and how to teach it (pedagogy)" (Edwards, 1997, p. 44). If preservice teachers are to become culturally literate and sensitive, it will be because of the efforts of teacher educators. In essence it is encumbered upon teacher educators to take preservice teacher on what Edwards (1997) called "a cultural journey" (p. 44).

Barry and Lechner (1995) reported that "several studies in recent years concluded that preservice teachers are not being prepared to deal with the challenges of multicultural/cross-cultural education. Preservice teachers feel inadequate to deal with either cognitive or effective aspects of multicultural education" (p. 150). Likewise, Bell, Washington, Weinstein, and Love (1997) reported that faculty's professional training has not prepared them to "address emotional and socially charged issues in the classroom (p. 299). Weinstein and Obear (1992) found that university faculty colleagues from different disciplines, when asked to respond to the question "What makes you nervous about raising issues of racism in your classroom?" expressed several concerns. In their study, faculty expressed heightened awareness about their social identities that required them to be more conscious of their attitudes and assumptions, and raised feelings of guilt, shame, or embarrassment at behaviors and attitudes of their own social group(s). These faculty members, in the Weinstein and Obear study, were also fearful of being labeled racist, sexist, homophobic and so on, or discovering previously unrecognized prejudices within themselves. They also expressed anxiety about how ro respond to biased comments in the classroom and often worried about having to expose their own struggles with the issues, reveal uncertainty, or make mistakes. But, most importantly for the faculty members in the Weinstein and Obear study, they expressed fear related to institutional risks involved in departing from traditional teaching formats and content.

Multicultural education is not simply new content but often a radical change in process as well. "Among educators there has to be an acknowledgment that any effort to transform institutions so that they reflect a multicultural standpoint must take into consideration the fears teachers have when asked to shift their paradigms" (hooks, 1994, p. 36). Garcia and Pugh (1992) reported that, despite unequivocal mandates of NCATE, the majority of teacher education faculty see cultural pluralism, and consequently multicultural education as a minority or civil rights issue rather than an issue relevant to the whole of society. Further, many faculty feel unqualified to deal with the issues, and thus avoid them. Essentially, Melnick and Zeichner (1995) determined that "teacher educators . . . are limited in cross-cultural experiences and understandings—they are overwhelmingly Caucasian and monolingual and culturally encapsulated" (p. 2).

Tatto (1996) explored the "beliefs of both student teachers and their teacher educators regarding the teaching of diverse students and the conceptions of success and failure teachers hold toward diverse students" (p. 157). Tatto asked three questions in her paper:

> (1) to what extent do teacher educators themselves subscribe to a shared set of beliefs about student diversity and teaching? (2) to what extent do student teachers hold different beliefs than those of their professors? (3) to what extent do student teachers' views change in the direction of their faculty's views as students participate in teacher education programs? (p. 157)

Hence, it was one of Tatto's hypotheses that "to socialize student teachers effectively regarding student diversity, teacher education programs need to have a set of rules or norms of discourse within which teaching and learning occurs. . . " (p. 157).

It was further surmised by Tatto (1996) that teacher educators have formed their own subculture, wherein there are shared beliefs, views, and values about professional rules and norms, beliefs about issues about teaching diverse students, students' success and failure, and how teachers should respond to dilemmas of practice. The concern is not that this subculture may have its "own professional norms for teaching," (but, that they) "may try to inculcate these values in their students" (p. 158).

Methods and Procedures

For this study, a comparative research design was employed. Preservice teachers' and teacher educators' cultural sensitivity and responsiveness to diversity issues as measured by the *BADS* were compared.

Subjects

The subjects for this study consisted of 78 preservice teacher education students enrolled in three sections of a Social Foundations of Education course at a mid-sized southern university. These subjects represented a sample of convenience as they were intact classes when surveyed. The subjects completed the *BADS* during their first regularly scheduled class period. As a result, there was a 100% response rate to this study.

On the other hand, 86 teacher educators were identified as having either taught a course or supervised a field experience required for every preservice teacher at the same university. Each teacher educator was sent, by way of campus mail, a cover letter, Demographic Data Sheet, and *BADS* with a return self-addressed envelope. The total sample of teacher educators for this study was 45. An independent samples t-test was run to compare the scores of the initial respondents with those responding after the follow-up reminder. There was no statistically significant difference in the scores of the initial respondents versus those responding after a follow-up.

Instrumentation

Data for this study was collected using the *BADS* developed by Pohan and Aguilar (1994). The instrument was a 39-item self-administered scale. Sixteen items measured personal beliefs and 23 measured professional beliefs about diversity. The scale measured beliefs and attitudes in the following areas: (a) race, (b) ability, (c) social class, (d) gender, (e) sexual orientation, (f) language and immigration, and (g) multicultural education. The instrument followed a five-point Likert-type format (5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = undecided, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree).

Data Analysis

Demographic Data

Table 1 presents demographic information regarding the age, gender, race, and religion of subjects. The majority of preservice teachers were of traditional age, under 25 years old (56%), female (62%), White (79.5%, and Baptist (65.4%). The majority of teacher educators, on the other hand, were over 41 years old (68.8%), practically even by gender with 53.3% female and 46.7% male, and also predominately white (80%). For religion, teacher educators presented far more diversity across religious groups than preservice teachers. The diversity across religions provide for a wider range of experience and cultural awareness for teacher educators than for preservice teachers. The religious affiliations of preservice teachers were predominately Baptist and Methodist (combined 82%).

Insert Table 1 Here

Preservice teachers were almost evenly split between elementary (46.2%) and secondary education (46.2%) for majors, with the majority (64.1%) being seniors (see Table 2).

Insert Table 2 Here

Table 3 shows that 75.6% of the teacher educators hold doctorate degrees and the highest percentage have over 20 years teaching experience (44.4%). While at the same time, the greatest majority of teacher educators' tenure ranged from one to ten years.

Insert Table 3 Here

Statistical Analysis of Data

Do preservice teachers and teacher educators score at culturally sensitive levels in the following areas: (a) race, (b) gender, (c) social class, (d) ability, (e) language/immigration, (f) sexual orientation, and (g) multicultural education as measured by the *BADS*? Tables 4 and 5 describe the data found in each of the subgroups of the *BADS*.

The data for this question was analyzed with a one-sample t-test, with a test value of 3.00. The scores with statistical significance above 3.00 indicated a positive sensitivity, while a score showing statistical significance below 3.00 indicated a negative sensitivity. The data shown in Table 4 indicated that the preservice teachers in this study were positively sensitive in their "overall beliefs about diversity" issues (M = 3.48). Further analysis of the issues by subgroup indicated that the diversity issues subgroup with the highest mean sensitivity level was issues related to "race" (M = 3.76). The subgroup with the lowest mean and negative sensitivity level was "sexual orientation" (M = 2.80).

Insert Table 4 Here

The data shown in Table 5 indicate that the teacher educators in this study were positively sensitive in their "overall beliefs about diversity" issues (M = 3.67). Further analysis of the issues by subgroup indicated that the diversity issues subgroup with the highest level of sensitivity level was also issues related to "race" (M = 3.90). For teacher educators, the subgroup with the lowest mean sensitivity level was "language/immigration" (M = 3.49). For teacher educators, there was no subgroup with a score below 3.00.

Insert Table 5 Here

Are there statistically significant differences between preservice teachers' and teacher educators' scores on the following subgroups: (a) race, (b) gender, (c) social class, (d) ability, (e) language/immigration, (f) sexual orientation, and (g) multicultural education as measured by the *BADS*? Table 6 illustrates the data found with this comparison.

An independent samples t-test was conducted on the scale's scores for preservice teachers and teacher educators. There was a statistically significant difference between the two groups for their "overall beliefs about diversity" issues, $t(121) = 2.43$, SE = .80, $p < .05$. Although, teacher educators scored higher than preservice teachers in all subgroups, the issues where a statistically significant difference were indicated are: (a) social class, $t(121) = 2.64$, SE = 11, $p = .009$; (b) language/immigration, $t(121) = 2.17$, SE = 10, $p = .032$; and (c) sexual orientation, $t(121) = 5.23$, SE =

.17, p = .000. The subgroup with the greatest difference in mean scores was "sexual orientation", preservice teachers M = 2.80, SD = .90 and teacher educators M = 3.68, SD = .88. Conversely, the subgroup showing the least difference in mean scores was issues related to "multicultural education", preservice teachers M = 3.68, SD = .54 and teacher educators M = 3.74, SD = .66.

Insert Table 6 Here

Summary

The first research question asked if preservice teachers and teacher educators would score at culturally sensitive levels for the subgroup areas. A test value of 3.00 was used to compare the levels of sensitivity. In response to this question, preservice teachers scored at culturally sensitive levels for all subgroup areas except "sexual orientation" (M = 2.80). Teacher educators, on the other hand, scored at culturally sensitive levels for all subgroup areas.

The second research question asked if there would be a statistically significant difference between the scores of preservice teachers and teacher educators for each of the subgroup areas. A comparison of the mean scores revealed a statistically significant difference between the two groups for their "overall beliefs about diversity" issues, t(121) = 2.43, SE =.80, p < .05. Teacher educators scored higher than preservice teachers in all subgroups, but scored higher with statistical significance in four areas as follows: (a) social class, t(121) = 2.64, SE = 11, p = .009; (b) language/immigration, t(121) = 2.17, SE =10, p = .032; and (c) sexual orientation, t(121), 5.23, SE = .17, p = .000. The subgroup with the greatest difference in mean scores was "sexual orientation."

Conclusions and Discussions

In this study, preservice teachers were positively sensitive in their "overall beliefs about diversity" issues, as indicated by a mean score (M = 3.48). This finding is inconsistent with the idea that major reform is needed in teacher education (Larke, 1990; Moore & Reeves-Kazelskis, 1992; Gay, 1993; Marshall, 1993; Banks, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1994b; Darling-Hammond, 1996; Zeichner, Melnick, & Gomez, 1996; Banks, 1999). The diversity issues subgroup with the highest mean sensitivity level for preservice teachers was issues related to "race" (M = 3.76). This finding is encouraging, in that it

contradicts the findings of Law and Lane (1987) when they compared preservice teachers' multicultural attitudes with 60 years of data collected on attitudes of the general population, they concluded that preservice teachers ready to enter the workforce possess attitudes [beliefs] that are no more accepting of ethnic or racial diversity than those of the general population spanning 6 decades. Notwithstanding, Derman-Sparks and ABC Task Force (1989) explained that children become aware of gender, race, ethnicity, and disabilities between the ages of two and five. At the same time they become sensitive to the positive and negative biases associated with those groups. In addition, issues related to race have permeated all aspects of American society, especially since the civil rights movement.

Conversely, the diversity issues subgroup with the lowest mean score and negative sensitivity level, for preservice teachers, was issues related to "sexual orientation" ($\underline{M} = 2.80$). Heterosexism and homophobia are attitudes that contradict the tenets of multicultural education. In Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context for Multicultural Education, Nieto (1996) reminds us that multicultural education is for everyone, regardless of ethnicity, race, language, social class, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and any other difference. Sears (1992) explains that many people have little knowledge about homosexuality, but they know many myths about it. As a result, they often develop an irrational fear of lesbians and gay men. Individuals who harbor these negative feelings usually have had little or no personal contact with gay men and lesbians, have participated in little or no homosexual behavior themselves, hold a conservative religious ideology, and/or have little knowledge about social, medical, or legal issues related to homosexuality. In the past, many people viewed homosexuality as a sin, a sickness, or a crime (Harbeck, 1992).

Griffin and Harro (1997) explained that many conservative religious and political groups view the acceptance of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people as evidence of the moral breakdown of Western civilization and work against any attempt to provide lesbian, gay, and bisexual people with civil rights protection, to portray positive media images, or to include educational programs about them in schools. Thereby, most people approach openly lesbian, gay, and bisexual people or discussions about topics associated with them, with discomfort and uncertainty that reflect socialization into a society where lesbian, gay, and bisexual people have been stigmatized and made invisible. Black, Oles, and Moore

(1998) found that among social work students "the degree of religiosity and amount of contact with gay men and lesbians have been consistently found to correlate with homophobia." They also concluded that "conservative religious persons were more homophobic than liberal religious persons or persons with no religious affiliation, and people who attend religious services." (p. 169) Coupled with what is described by Griffin and Harro (1997) as active monitoring and opposition by well-organized right-wing religious groups of any efforts by schools to address issues related to homosexuality, many schools and their administrators are cautious in addressing sexuality issues. Educators have been particularly reluctant to acknowledge or address heterosexism and homophobia in schools (Sears, 1992). It was the recommendation of Sears (1992), therefore, that "there is a need for a healthy, frank, and honest depiction of the fluidity of sexual behavior and sexual identity." (p. 55) Because, in spite of the "strong relationship between attitudes toward gender issues and attitudes toward gay men and lesbians . . . these attitudes can change." (Black, Oles, & Moore, 1998, p. 173)

For teacher educators, they too were positively sensitive in their "overall beliefs about diversity" issues ($\underline{M} = 3.67$). This finding is consistent with a proposal by American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) (1989) that universities should hire faculty who possess cultural sensitivity, knowledge, and/or awareness. Also like preservice teachers, the diversity issues subgroup with the highest mean sensitivity level for teacher educators was issues related to "race" ($\underline{M} = 3.90$). In keeping with the demographic data, wherein 68.8% of teacher educators are over 41 years old, it would be safe to assume that they have been impacted the most by the civil rights movement and its attention to racial issues.

Even though teacher educators scored with a positive sensitivity level to issues related to "language/immigration" ($\underline{M} = 3.49$), this subgroup represented the area of lowest sensitivity. Because this area shows the least sensitivity for teacher educators, it is important to note an inconsistency in this regard. Nieto (1992) reported that bilingualism is usually highly regarded, especially among the highly educated and those with a high status in our society. However, at other times bilingualism is seen as a sign of low status. This is usually the case with those who are poor and powerless within their society, even if they happen to speak a multitude of languages. The admonishment comes when particular

languages are prohibited or denigrated, the voices of those who speak them are silenced and rejected as well.

Teacher educators scored at higher levels of sensitivity than preservice teachers for all subgroups. When the mean scores for sensitivity toward the diversity issues subgroups of preservice teachers and teacher educators were compared (see Table 6) the four areas that tested with statistical significance ($p < .05$) were: (a) social class, (b) language/immigration, (c) sexual orientation, and (d) overall beliefs about diversity issues.

Social class has to do with a person's position in society that is based on money, power, and access to resources and opportunities. Historically, teaching has provided members of the lower- and working-class entrance into middle-class status; many teachers have experienced working their way up by attaining education (Lortie, 1975). As a result, the life experiences of most teachers demonstrate their allegiance to the ethic of vertical mobility, self-improvement, hark work, deferred gratification, self-discipline, and personal achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986). The disagreement between preservice teachers and teacher educators about issues related to social class is understandable. Preservice teachers have not realized the same attainment of status as their teacher educators, thereby, it would be expected that they would be less sensitive ($M = 3.43$) than teacher educators ($M = 3.72$).

Even though preservice teachers ($M = 3.27$) like teacher educators ($M = 3.49$) scored at positively sensitive level, for issues related to language/immigration, there was a statistically significant difference between their scores. In addition to the previous stated conclusion regarding teacher educators' low level of sensitivity for "language/immigration" issues, the same conclusions could apply to this difference. Since teacher educators scored higher than preservice teachers, this is consistent with the suggestion of Nieto (1992) that bilingualism is more highly regarded by the highly educated and those with higher status in our society. Larke (1990) found that although 90% of the preservice teachers studies acknowledged the fact that they would teach students who did not share their cultural background, an alarming 68% stated they would feel uncomfortable teaching/working with people who did not share their values. It was also contended by Lucas, Henze, and Donato (1990) in their study of

achievement of Latino language minority students, that low expectation, along with a tendency to undervalue the students' languages and cultures, can adversely affect student achievement.

Additionally, it would be expected that teacher educators would have higher levels of sensitivity because the have had a wider range of experience from their foreign and domestic travels, cross-cultural experiences, and personal and professional experience with issues related to "language/immigration" issues. Tillema (1995) concluded that "through experience (the accumulation of professional knowledge in real-life situations), this available knowledge becomes more personalized, and through prolonged professional performance, it becomes more stabilized and less rule-based or "academic". Similarly, these same reasons could be why teacher educators' score ($\underline{M}$ = 3.67) for "overall beliefs about diversity" issues were significantly difference from preservice teachers ($\underline{M}$ = 3.48).

Summary

The United States is often called a nation of immigrants. As such, our American society is in the midst of a cultural revolution, wherein the demographic makeup is rapidly changing. With these changes come a cultural reversal, not only in our society, but also in the classrooms. It is projected that children of color will be the majority in the classroom, while on the other hand, there will more teachers of European American descent. With these changes will come a greater need for cultural awareness and sensitivity, for preservice and inservice teachers and their teacher educators.

Additionally, the role of teacher educators in addressing these needs has become more apparent. To confront the parochialism of preservice teachers, teacher educators will need to view cultural pluralism and the issues and tenets of multicultural education in a different light. But, first, teacher educators will need to assess their own attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge of this subject. Second, they will accept the need to make multicultural education a curricular priority. And finally, they commit to the challenge of meeting the needs of preservice teachers.

Summarily, the necessity of preparing all preservice teachers to work with culturally diverse students in culturally diverse settings should be clear. What may be less clear is how teacher educators will assume their role to this end. The imperative for teacher education is the inclusion of multicultural education in the curriculum. Further, the role of teacher educators in this process will require them to do

several things. They must examine their own beliefs about diversity issues, enhance their awareness of the tenets and concepts of cultural diversity, and become proactive in meeting the mandates established by NCATE.

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Table 1. **Demographic Frequency and Percentage of Preservice Teachers and Teacher Educators**

	Preservice Teachers[1]		Teacher Educators[2]	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Age				
< 25	56	73.8	0	0.0
25 - 30	12	16.4	3	6.7
31 - 35	7	9.0	5	11.1
36 - 40	2	2.6	6	13.3
41 - 49	1	1.3	20	44.4
50 +	0	0.0	11	24.4
Gender				
Female	62	79.5	24	53.3
Male	16	20.5	21	46.7
Race				
Black	15	19.2	7	15.6
White	62	79.5	36	80.0
Mixed/Bi-racial	1	1.3	1	2.2
Yellow			1	2.2
Religion				
Baptist	51	65.4	12	26.7
Catholic	2	2.6	8	17.8
Methodist	13	16.7	7	15.6
Other Christian	9	11.5	9	20.0
None specified	3	3.8	7	15.6
Atheist/Agnostic	0	0.0	1	2.2
Jewish	0	0.0	1	2.2

Note: [1] N = 78. [2] N = 45.

Table 2. **Frequency and Percentage of Preservice Teachers' Majors and Class Rank**

	Frequency[1]	Percent[2]
Major		
Elementary Education	36	46.2
Secondary Education	36	46.2
Special Education	5	6.4
None specified	1	1.3
Class Rank		
Senior	50	64.1
Junior	17	21.8
Sophomore	6	7.7
Freshman	3	3.8
None specified	2	2.6

Note: [1] N = 78. [2] Total = 100%.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage for Teacher Educators' Education and Professional Experience

	Frequency [1]	Percent [2]
Highest Degree Earned		
Doctorate	34	75.6
Masters	11	24.4
Years Teaching		
1 - 3	4	8.9
4 - 5	1	2.2
6 - 10	6	13.3
11 - 20	14	31.1
> 20	20	44.4
Years Teaching at MSU		
< one year	4	8.9
1 - 3	11	24.4
4 - 5	12	26.7
6 - 10	10	22.2
11 - 20	5	11.1
> 20	3	6.7

Note: [1] N = 45. [2] Total = 100%.

Table 4. Preservice Teachers' Sensitivity Levels for Diversity Issues

Diversity Issues	M	SD	SE	*t*-value	2-tail Prob.
Race	3.76	.58	6.52	11.61	.000+
Gender	3.42	.61	7.51	5.08	.000+
Social Class	3.43	.60	6.77	6.39	.000+
Ability	3.51	.44	4.98	10.21	.000+
Language/Immigration	3.27	.53	6.04	4.50	.000+
Sexual Orientation	2.80	.90	0.10	-1.94	.056-
Multicultural Education	3.68	.54	6.12	11.16	.000+
Overall Beliefs About Diversity	**3.48**	**.43**	**4.82**	**9.97**	**.000***

Note: One-sample t-test, test value = 3.00.
N = 78, df = 77.
* p < .05.
+ Positive sensitivity
- Negative sensitivity.

Table 5. Teacher Educators' Sensitivity Levels for Diversity Issues

Diversity Issues	M	SD	SE	t-value	2-tail Prob.
Race	3.90	.49	.07	12.11	.000+
Gender	3.63	.64	.10	6.48	.000+
Social Class	3.72	.56	.08	8.44	.000+
Ability	3.58	.43	.07	8.86	.000+
Language/Immigration	3.49	.54	.08	6.02	.000+
Sexual Orientation	3.68	.88	.13	5.16	.000+
Multicultural Education	3.74	.66	.10	7.46	.000+
Overall Beliefs About Diversity	**3.67**	**.42**	**.06**	**10.60**	**.000+**

Note: One-sample t-test, test value = 3.00.
N = 45, df = 44.
$p < .05$.
+ Positive sensitivity.

Table 6. Comparison of Preservice Teachers' and Teacher Educators' Beliefs About Diversity Scores as Measured by the Beliefs About Diversity Scale

	Preservice Teachers[1]		Teacher Educators[2]			
	M	SD	M	SD	t-value	2-tail Prob.
Race	3.76	.58	3.90	.49	1.36	.177
Gender	3.42	.61	3.63	.64	1.75	.083
Social Class	3.43	.60	3.72	.56	2.64	.009*
Ability	3.51	.44	3.58	.43	.81	.420
Language/immigration	3.27	.53	3.49	.54	2.17	.032*
Sexual Orientation	2.80	.90	3.68	.88	5.23	.000*
Multicultural Education	3.68	.54	3.74	.66	.53	.595
Overall Beliefs About Diversity	**3.48**	**.43**	**3.67**	**.42**	**2.43**	**.017***

Note: Independent samples t-test, df = 121.
[1] N = 78. [2] N = 45.
$p < .05$.

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