PREPARING TEACHERS FOR MULITICULTURAL CLASSROOMS

Ines Marquez Chisholm

Note: Every attempt has been made to maintain the integrity of the printed text. In some cases, figures and tables have been reconstructed within the constraints of the electronic environment.

> "*White Americans increasingly reject racial injustice in principle, but remain reluctant to accept the measures necessary to eliminate the injustice.*"
> - T. F. Pettigrew, 1979

Despite much rhetoric and research, a fundamental question in preservice teacher education continues to elicit much debate: What do teacher candidates need to become effective teachers? The answer to this basic question is as varied as the myriad of philosophical and epistemological perspectives that span the history of pedagogy. Although there may be no definitive answer to this fundamental question, just as there is no one best teaching model or one kind of student, there is a professional area of knowledge and skill that should permeate all preservice education programs--multicultural education. This field which prepares teachers "for the social, political and economic realities that individuals experience in culturally diverse and complex human encounters" (Sims, 1983, p. 43) is as essential to teaching as nurturing is to human development.

This paper focuses on the need for the multicultural preparation of preservice teachers. The intent is neither to prescribe a uniform teacher education program for all institutions nor to encompass all aspects of a good teacher preparation program. Rather, this paper suggests institutional and programmatic practices that will prepare future teachers for classroom diversity.

National Diversity

The nature of our national composition demands the multicultural preparation of teachers. Our nation is not a melting pot wherein human diversity fuses into a uniform America. On the contrary, ours is a mosaic of vibrant, diverse colors in which a cultural medley forms a variegated whole called the American culture. Within this national mosaic, each component culture retains its uniqueness while adding to the composition of the whole.

This multicultural mosaic unequivocally pervades our American schools. Minority children are quickly becoming the majority in a world where a more powerful minority sets the rules. National and regional demographic changes and distribution shifts document an increasing minority student population (Hodgkinson, 1985; National Education Association, 1987). One in three youths served by schools in urban settings with populations greater than 500,000, is a person of color, lives in poverty, or has multiple learning

handicaps (Haberman, 1987). Between 1980 and 1990, the total foreign-born population grew by 40% (Waggoner, 1993), and most of our recent immigrants come from non-European, non-English-speaking countries (Croninger, 1991). Over 16 percent of all school children are African American (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1988), and 9 percent are Hispanic (NEA, 1987; OERI, 1987). As shown in Table I, minorities constitute between 24% and 96% of the total school enrollment in eighteen states and the District of Columbia (OERI, 1992). Furthermore, on a national level, the minority school-age population is expected to increase more than 30 percent within this decade (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1990).

Table 1. Public School Minority Enrollment in Selected States by Race or Ethnicity: Fall 1990

State	Black (Non Hispanic)	Hispanic	Asian or Pacific Islander	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	Total Minorities
Alabama	35.7	0.2	0.5	0.7	37.1
Alaska	4.4	2.1	3.7	22.3	32.5
Arizona	4.1	24.5	1.5	6.8	36.9
California	8.6	34.4	10.6	0.8	54.4
Colorado	5.2	16.3	2.3	0.9	24.7
Delaware	27.4	2.9	1.6	0.1	32.0
District of Columbia	89.8	5.2	1.1	>0.05	96.1
Florida	24.0	12.4	1.5	0.2	38.1
Illinois	21.6	9.8	2.7	0.1	34.2
Louisiana	44.4	1.0	1.1	0.4	46.9
Maryland	32.9	2.3	3.5	0.2	38.9
Mississippi	50.7	0.2	0.4	0.4	51.7
New Jersey	18.6	11.7	4.4	0.1	34.8
New Mexico	2.3	44.8	0.8	9.9	57.8
New York	16.6	12.9	4.1	0.3	33.9
N. Carolina	30.3	0.8	0.9	1.6	33.6
S. Carolina	41.1	0.4	0.6	0.1	42.2
Tennessee	22.5	0.3	0.8	0.1	23.7
Texas	14.4	33.8	2.0	0.2	50.4

Note: Data in columns 2, 3, 4, and 5 are from Digest of Education Statistics 1992 (p. 60) by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Washington, DC: US Department of Education.

Cultural diversity poses a pedagogical and social challenge to educators. Teaching effectively in culturally diverse classrooms means using culturally sensitive strategies and content to ensure equitable opportunities for academic success, personal development, and individual fulfillment for all students. Teachers need to be "knowledgeable about how minority children perceive the world, and process and organize information"

(Irvine, 1990). Culture and gender influence not only our values, beliefs, and social interactions, but also how we view the world, what we consider important, what we attend to, and how we learn and interpret information (Philips, 1983; Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1985; Huitt, 1988; Jacobs & Jacobs, 1988; Jacobs, 1990; Rhodes, 1990). Furthermore, the effect of ethnicity on cognitive and motivational styles within an ethnic group persists across social-class segments (Banks, 1988).

Homogeneity of Teachers

Although almost a third of all elementary and secondary school students are from minority populations (Gay, 1993), the racial and ethnic composition of American teachers remains essentially nonminority. Nationally, fewer than 15 percent of teachers and fewer than 12 percent of school administrators are members of ethnic minorities (Gay, 1993). Only 10.3 percent of teachers are African American, and projections from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education predict a decline to 5 percent by 1995 (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1988). Similarly, only 3 percent of teachers are Hispanic, and 0.9 percent are American Indians/Native Alaskans (Status of the American School Teacher, 1992). Although a growing number of students live in poverty, "increasing numbers of teachers are middle class and reside in small- to medium-size suburban communities" (Gay, 1993, p. 287).

The national preservice teacher population foreshadows little change in the future. Demographics reveal that 92 percent of teacher education students are white, and over 80 percent are female. Moreover, this figure rises to 90 percent female in elementary education programs. Only 9% of preservice teachers indicate they would prefer to teach in urban or multicultural contexts, and fewer than 3 percent are able to instruct in a language other than English (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1989). Yet, because of the rapidly increasing minority population, most teachers will have students from culturally diverse backgrounds in their classrooms. In short, teachers and students generally live in geographically and existentially different worlds (Gay, 1993). The result is greater social, cultural, and academic distance.

Despite the growing cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity in American classrooms, teacher educators continue "training future educators in the pedagogy of decades past and pretending that their graduates will teach in schools with white, highly motivated, achievement-oriented, suburban, middle-class students from two parent families" (Irvine, 1990, p. 18). Our schools urgently need teachers who serve as cultural translators and cultural brokers (Gentemann & Whitehead, 1983). Cultural brokers and cultural translators mediate between the majority and minority cultures. They help minority students understand, adapt, and thrive in the academic and majority culture. At the same time, the teacher as cultural broker helps the school understand, adapt to, and serve all students. In other words, the teacher as cultural broker bridges the cultural chasm and smooths the cultural mismatch, thereby empowering students to succeed both academically and socially in the larger society.

Lamentably, most preservice teachers lack the knowledge, skills, and experience that build the requisite professional assurance for working with minority children. Though preservice teachers generally feel confident in their ability to implement core teaching skills, many express reservations about their ability to teach students from a culture different from their own (Association of Teacher Educators, 1991; Hadaway, Florez, Larke, & Wiseman, 1992). This insecurity surely contributes to their aversion to teaching in culturally diverse schools and bars them from becoming cultural brokers and cultural translators. Thus the ultimate challenge for teacher educators is to prepare teachers who connect meaningfully with their students in an ethnically, culturally, and technologically complex world (Gay, 1993).

Teacher Preservice Needs

What, then, do preservice teachers need to become effective multicultural teachers in our pluralistic society? First, preservice teachers need to become reflective practitioners. Reflective teachers apply observational, empirical, and analytical skills to monitor, evaluate, and revise their own teaching practices (Irvine, 1990). They develop awareness of their own cultural perspective, thus gaining insight into the cultural assumptions underlying their expectations, beliefs, and behavior. They also need to realize that their cultural perspective is not a universal norm, nor is it the only right one. In short, teacher candidates need metacognitive strategies to gain awareness, not only of their own knowledge and skills in the classroom but also of the efficacy of their activities on students' learning (Cardelle-Elawar, 1992).

Second, preservice teachers must gain cultural competence, that is, the ability to function comfortably in cross-cultural settings and to interact harmoniously with people from cultures that differ from their own. Based on the research on effective intercultural communication, culturally competent individuals (a) cope effectively with the psychological and emotional stress of dealing with the unfamiliar, (b) quickly establish rapport with others, (c) sense other people's feelings, (d) communicate effectively with people from varying backgrounds, and (e) respond adequately to miscommunication (Giles, Coupland, Williams, & Leets, 1991). These complex skills require knowledge and the cultural understanding that evolve over time from cross-cultural interpersonal experiences.

Unfortunately, many education students have little or no exposure to people of other cultures. In a study of 125 preservice teachers, Hadaway et al. (1993) found that most of these education students reported few personal experiences in culturally diverse settings. Frequently, gender, ethnicity, and class influence the tendency to hold parochial attitudes, especially when these are linked to limited travel and the inability to communicate in a non-English language (Zimpher, 1989). Teachers' attitudes and perceptions about students from diverse cultures play a major role in their expectations of students (Gollnick & Chinn, 1986; Hernandez, 1989). Consequently, to be effective and equitable teachers, education students must understand and appreciate human diversity. Appreciation and understanding evolve from direct interpersonal contact and from knowledge of the history and culture of diverse groups, including their values, stories, myths, inventions, music, and art.

Third, our future teachers need to become effective cross-cultural communicators. Effective cross-cultural communication skills help teachers create a classroom environment that encourages good interpersonal relationships. This important interpersonal skill requires an understanding of the interrelationship between language and cultural meaning. Cultural context and personal experience mediate meaning. For example, the word wedding will convey a different meaning to an Arab, a Mexican, and a Native American because the gender and familial role expectations, ceremonial traditions, and shared values vary across these cultures. Understanding how culture shapes what can be communicated, how much is assumed to be known by the listener, and how much must be overly conveyed promotes effective cross-cultural communication (Hall, 1989; Bonvillain, 1993).

In addition, effective cross-cultural communication requires knowledge of nonverbal communication. Nonverbal cues set the stage for interpersonal communication (Barnlund, 1968; Hall, 1973; Curt, 1976; LaFrance & Mayo, 1978) and "are critical components of participants' messages" (Bonvillain, 1993, p. 37). Although there are some universal nonverbal messages, our interpretations of space, touch, appearance, body language, and time are largely mediated by culture (Hall, 1966; Hecht, Andersen, & Ribeau, 1989) and by context. For example, when chastised, Puerto Rican and Mexican children may avoid eye contact with adults as a sign of respect and shame. This behavior in American classrooms signals disrespect and inattention for most teachers. Similarly, in some cultures, looking away from the speaker indicates paying

attention to what is said (Corson, 1992). However, American teachers generally interpret this conduct as inattention or rudeness. According to Corson (1992), teachers' cultural misperceptions are more than mere misunderstandings; they reduce life chances and totally disregard the cultural interests of entire groups of students.

Fourth, preservice teachers should understand the interrelationship between language and culture. Language learning is "the means by which individuals become members of their primary speech communities" (Heath, 1986, p. 85) and, consequently, language promotes group identity and individual membership. Because language is a function of culture, it reflects the conventions and values of its speakers. For example, Philips (1983) observes that among adult Indians on the Warm Springs reservation, talk always accompanies their work and recreational activities. This behavior corresponds to their valuing of collectivity and cooperation.

Culture also provides schemas for acceptable stories, narratives, questions, and requests (Corson, 1992; Heath, 1986). Indeed, the ways of using known language largely determines academic success (Heath, 1986). For instance, in many cultures, story telling is an adult activity associated with the role of an elder (Corson, 1992). Among some Native Americans, speakers exhibit economy of speech and careful thought and planning (Philips, 1983), skills that require maturity and higher level thinking skills. Children from these cultures seldom engage in oral public demonstrations. Consequently, they find individual oral presentations, extensive recitations, and story telling in front of the class unnatural and uncomfortable.

Shirley Brice Heath (1986) notes that "Children learn how to recognize, anticipate, tell, read, and respond to narratives as part of their initial language socialization at home and in their primary communities" (p. 85). The natural progression of stories--beginning, sequence of events, resolution, ending--is not universal. Indeed, learning a language requires learning its organization of paragraphs and stories. For example, many Arabic paragraphs consist of a complex series of parallel constructions; some Oriental writings develop a topic by tangential, indirect statements, while French and Spanish may digress or introduce extraneous materials (Kaplan, 1977). It is not uncommon to begin a Spanish business letter to a known associate by inquiring about the recipient's family and to end with elaborate thanks for past and future assistance. Because cultures vary in the kinds and frequencies of discourse children encounter, teachers should not assume that children have within their language repertoire the narrative genres necessary for academic success (Heath, 1986). Unfortunately, school literacy activities sometimes threaten those things most valued by minority peoples and which bind the cultural group together (Corson, 1992).

Fifth, future teachers need to recognize the cultural roots of cognition and its close link to language. Logical reasoning and discourse styles evolve within a cultural context; consequently, they are culture-specific and not universal. Discussion, argumentation, explication, and persuasion follow the culturally accepted rules of behavior and reasoning. As children learn their culture and acquire language, they learn to use the symbols and meanings of a specific culture (Langer, 1987). From the complex "cultural meanings and models that are shared and assumed" there emerges a unique world view that makes sense of the world as it is perceived (Bonvillain, 1993, p. 52). This world view interprets the purpose of life, the nature of life, and the relation of humanity to the universe (Sarbaugh, 1979). Thus culture affects how people categorize and organize the world, as well as what they attend to and consider important (Bonvillain, 1993). Schlesinger (1991) believes this cultural influence on cognition probably manifests itself more strongly in children because they are still developing the language of thought.

Although culture, to some degree, influences thinking, schools expect students from a variety of cultural backgrounds to comprehend and learn many new and complex ideas even when exposed to language and values that differ from their own (Langer, 1987). Awareness of the cultural underpinnings of logic and

thought inclines multicultural teachers to make their thinking explicit to students, to be less judgmental of students' reasoning, and to look beyond learning disabilities to cultural and linguistic differences that may explain students' academic performance.

The cultural roots of cognition do not signify a dogmatic, changeless, culturally determined preference towards one culturally accepted interpretation of reality and of thinking about the world. Culture's influence on cognition does not rule out individual ways of thinking and perceiving. Nor does it imply an inability to think in ways that deviate from the pervading cultural perspective. After all, humans are capable of learning; consequently, people develop cognitive flexibility and see more than one perspective. Individuals within a cultural group are capable of creative, independent thinking. A teacher's respect for both individual and cultural interpretations of reality and recognition of cultural and personal thinking and learning preferences shows acceptance of individual children and their cultural heritage.

Above all, teachers need to know how to adapt the content of instruction and teaching style to students' cultural and individual preferences. Curriculum, methodology, and materials should invite students to identify with the educational process and enable them to function bicognitively (Cohen, 1969; Vogt, Jordan, & Tharp, 1987; Singh, 1988). If the content is incompatible with the students' values and cultural norms, misunderstanding and distrust are likely to ensue (Croninger, 1991). The disproportionate representation of culturally diverse students in programs for exceptional children (Epstein, Polloway, Foley, & Patton, 1990; Chinn & Hughes, 1987; Reschly, 1988) may be attributable to misdiagnosis resulting from differences between the students' cultural background and their teachers' teaching styles, culturally determined expectations, and structuring of curricular content.

Meeting Preservice Needs

The integration of multicultural education within a quality preservice program prepares preservice teachers for increasingly diverse classrooms. Through multicultural teacher education, future teachers begin to see themselves as active participants in the empowerment of students and as facilitators for academic success. A broad interdisciplinary foundation, varied practical experiences, and repeated opportunities to critically analyze ethnic, race, class, and gender issues are key ingredients in producing skilled, knowledgeable, reflective, competent teachers.

The Need for a Liberal Arts Education. Teacher preparation requires the breadth of a liberal arts education in the broadest sense of the term. From this perspective, a good liberal arts education is both liberal as well as liberating. It is liberal in so far as it is progressive, impartial, and comprehensive; it is liberating in that it emancipates us from restrictive, ethnocentric thinking. Herein lies its value for multicultural teacher preparation.

Though undergraduate liberal arts education should be comprehensive, it cannot possibly be all-inclusive given the constraints of time and the magnitude of the task. The purpose of a good liberal arts education is not an intensive study of every human group or field of endeavor, but, rather, an extensive, general framework from which the future teacher, as a continually developing professional, can continue to grow personally and professionally. Through integration of multicultural themes, the liberal arts lay the foundation for cultural competency and cross-cultural awareness. They furnish intercultural knowledge, erode ethnocentric perspectives, highlight human oneness, and validate diversity. Within a multicultural liberal arts framework, preservice teachers acquire the following:

1. Broad knowledge of the contributions to American history of the many people who comprise our nation.

Knowing how diverse people built, shaped, defended, and helped our nation increases respect for and valuing of our national diversity. Furthermore, to bring into the classroom a multicultural and multiethnic perspective that supports diversity, teachers must have the information so they can share it with their students.

2. Comprehensive knowledge of the history and contributions of many people to human society through a broad world history course which incorporates European and non-European history. Such a course expands students' awareness of our international interdependence, increases comprehension of the underlying causes and international conflicts, and illustrates the evolution of sociopolitical philosophies.

3. A global perspective of the arts through international music and art history courses that are broad in scope and comparative in nature. Such courses examine similarities, adaptations, and cross-cultural borrowings. They develop an increasing awareness of how culture mediates our personal interpretations and aesthetic values. Through these courses, future teachers become familiar with the musical traditions of several cultures, explore the variety of musical expression, and examine the meaning music has for its people.

4. Knowledge and understanding of the literary work of both men and women from a variety of cultural, racial, and ethnic groups through a world literature course. World literature recognizes our commonalities while exploring a diversity of literary forms and outward expressions of human emotions. It exposes the future teacher to the values, thinking, beliefs, customs, and behaviors of other people through the words and creative talent of some of the world's most gifted writers. By indirectly studying culture as expressed in literature, individuals clarify their own cultural perspective and world view.

5. Insight into human and cultural diversity through an introductory course on diversity. A diversity course develops intercultural, interethnic, and interracial appreciation and understanding through the exploration of social, cultural, ethnic, racial, gender, and linguistic similarities and differences. An emphasis on communication and interpersonal relationships within American society builds a foundation for classroom and parent-teacher interaction. It encourages students to explore their own cultural and ethnic heritage as a means to understanding how culture influences the way they see themselves and others. In addition, it nurtures appreciation of diversity as a valuable human resource.

6. Knowledge of the contributions of many peoples to mathematics and the sciences. A multicultural focus in these disciplines provides future teachers with different ways of looking at facts and deriving solutions. Understanding that there are many ways of looking at and thinking about our world helps us realize that Truth is multifaceted and that no one cultural perspective is the best.

7. Broad intercultural perspective of human social structures through anthropology and social studies. By studying the structure and organization of social groups, education majors become familiar with the variety of family, community, and civic institutions in urban and rural settings. They learn that the composition of social groups and group membership evolves within a cultural framework that reflects shared values and an accepted world view.

8. Experience in foreign language learning and knowledge of a foreign language through courses in modern languages. Learning a foreign language helps future teachers understand the difficulties, anxieties, and gratification of learning another language. This knowledge and understanding will help teachers better understand the feelings and challenges experienced by their second language learners.

The Need for Multicultural Education. Since knowledge precedes understanding, preservice teachers need to

expand upon the knowledge acquired through the liberal arts and focus on its classroom implications. A general course in multicultural education provides an opportunity for further reflection, self awareness, and development of a personal philosophy. An introductory multicultural education course serves as the mainstay for an integrated multicultural teacher education program. It frames learning, thinking, and behavior within a cultural context and invites preservice teachers to become aware of their own cultural perspective. In short, an initial course in multicultural education encourages the life-long process of developing the necessary cultural competency for bridging the gap between the majority culture and students' natal culture.

A sound introduction to multicultural education furnishes the following:

1. A rationale and philosophy of multicultural education to clarify its nature, premises, and aims. An introductory course explores the multiple interpretations and definitions of multicultural education so that preservice teachers discern the underlying beliefs, assumptions, and goals inherent in each perspective. Given a global view of multicultural education, future teachers can clarify their own perspective of multicultural education.

2. Opportunities for reflection on how culture and gender shape our behavior, beliefs, expectations, values, identity, and personal biases. An understanding of our own cultural heritage and world view invites better understanding and acceptance of other cultural groups. Cultural self-understanding evolves in an introductory multicultural education course through repeated intercultural experiences, reflection on personal feelings and expectations, exploration of one's own values and beliefs, and exposure to a variety of ideas, beliefs, and cultural perspectives.

3. Direct and meaningful experiences with people from diverse backgrounds, including ethnic and linguistic minorities, as well as the physically handicapped and learning impaired. To understand others, people must understand themselves; to understand themselves, people must interact with others. Personal experiences with a diversity of people can lead to better understanding of our own cultural identity through comparison and contrast with other cultural groups. Additionally, intercultural experiences help reduce the anxiety experienced in unfamiliar cross cultural encounters. The reduced anxiety boosts self-confidence, increases cultural competency, and improves cross-cultural communication.

4. An exploration of issues related to gender, age, ethnicity, family, language, and exceptionality within the multicultural school setting. An overview of the cultural underpinnings in people's attitudes towards females, males, ethnic groups, language differences, and exceptionality develops greater sensitivity and understanding of cross-cultural behaviors and attitudes. It encourages future teachers to examine their own feelings, attitudes, and beliefs about these important issues.

5. A cross-cultural examination of family roles and family values as they influence learning. Family involvement in and support of education invite academic success. Within-family learning modes, parental expectations, and family roles influence how children learn, what they attend to, how they behave, and what they expect from teachers.

6. Information on federal and state legislation that affects the education of diverse populations. By understanding the historical framework of existing legislation and knowing the legal mandates that impinge upon our schools, teachers are better prepared not only to comply with these laws but also to realize why such laws exist and what remains to be done.

7. Verbal and nonverbal communication strategies attuned to ethnic, racial, linguistic, and cultural differences. The acquisition of cross-cultural communicative strategies increases cultural competency. Through knowledge of key areas of cultural miscommunication and awareness of cross-cultural communicative strategies, teachers can approach cross-cultural communication with greater confidence, sensitivity, and awareness.

8. Knowledge of cultural and individual differences in learning styles and how to accommodate these differences in teaching. Subsequent methodology courses expand on this knowledge and offer practical applications. The result is greater professional confidence and, indirectly, an increased willingness to teach children from diverse backgrounds.

9. Identification of cultural bias in teaching materials towards age, gender, ethnic groups, language, and physical and mental handicaps. Lack of awareness and sensitivity in the selection and use of textbooks, pictures, videos, software, tests, and other materials perpetuate stereotypes and diminish minority students' opportunities for academic success. Through multicultural education, preservice teachers discern the covert messages, misrepresentations, omissions, and misinformation that are sometimes present in educational resources.

10. An understanding of equity in education and how to actively pursue equity in teaching. The distinction between equality and equity lies at the heart of multicultural education. Knowing the distinction between these two concepts, and the educational implications of each, helps preservice teachers to critically examine teaching practices.

11. An overview of cross-disciplinary teaching methods and strategies that meet the needs of diverse student populations. These methods include, but are not restricted to, peer tutoring, cross-age grouping, cooperative learning, discovery learning, thematic units, and sheltered English. An introductory course in multicultural education illustrates how specific methods and strategies, applicable across disciplines, respond to the cultural expectations, values, behaviors, and language needs of various groups. These strategies are then expanded upon and incorporated into the specific subject-area methods courses.

The Need for Multicultural Infusion. Several studies document the effectiveness of a multicultural infused teacher education program (Diez & Murrell, 1991; Maher, 1991; Noordhoff & Kleinfeld, 1991; Hadaway et al., 1993) in changing attitudes and developing cultural competence in preservice teachers. A multiculturally infused program prepares teachers to teach students who differ in gender, cognition, ethnicity, physical ability, primary language, cultural heritage, and socioeconomic level. Unquestionably, multicultural education must be an integral element of the teacher preparation program (Larke, 1990), not merely an added component addressed in one or two courses or by one or two instructors.

Cultural competency cannot be attained in an academic vacuum. Cultural competency develops through a combination of cultural knowledge, direct intercultural experiences, and reflection on those experiences. Cultural competency is both personal and interpersonal, as well as cognitive and affective. Consequently, a university environment that appreciates and promotes cultural diversity becomes essential to the promotion of cultural competency within the university community. A multicultural university climate emerges when the administration sincerely and actively strives towards diversity in its staff, faculty, programs, and curriculum. A university that values diversity, offers multiple opportunities for interpersonal cross-cultural communication, incorporates a diversity of opinions and ideas, and explicitly acknowledges the contributions many groups made to our nation, the sciences, the arts, and literature.

Culturally competent teachers have an awareness of their cultural, ethnic, and gender attitudes, expectations, learning preferences, teaching style, and personal biases. Critical reflection on personal experiences, classroom observations, cross-cultural encounters, research findings, documentaries, readings, demonstrations, and role playing, leads preservice teachers to scrutinize long held beliefs, values, misconceptions, and feelings that influence how we interact with others. By exploring the impact of culture in their own lives, preservice teachers begin to understand how culture influences teacher and student behaviors, as well as how it affects teaching and learning.

The development of cultural competency requires multiple and varied opportunities, within and beyond school settings, to interact with culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse communities over a prolonged period (Grant & Secada, 1990; Larke, 1990). Preservice teachers benefit from field experiences that place them in multicultural settings and engender sharing with a diversity of people. Direct opportunities to live and teach in another culture generate multicultural competency, nurture positive cross-cultural attitudes and skills, and produce a deeper understanding of the need for cross-cultural competencies (Cooper, Beare, & Thorman, 1990).

Although immersion in the cultural setting is ideal for developing sensitivity and first-hand understanding of the fears, anxieties, frustrations, joys, and wonder of living in an unfamiliar environment, it is not always practical. Nonetheless, preservice teachers can have a variety of direct, participatory cross cultural experiences within surrounding local communities. All education courses should offer direct and frequent contact with children and adults from a diversity of backgrounds. This contact may take many forms. For example, preservice teachers can: (a) observe classrooms in a variety of socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic community settings; (b) tutor at community centers or local schools with diverse populations; (c) volunteer at homeless shelters and soup kitchens; (d) participate in public community fairs and ethnic holiday celebrations; (e) visit parents during field experiences; (f) interview minority members about their experiences, values, or beliefs; (g) visit minority churches and social organizations; (h) spend a week with host families; (i) shop at stores within ethnically or culturally different communities; (j) visit flea markets within ethnically or culturally different communities; and (k) mentor minority high school students or university freshmen. Amount of time and the intensity of the cross-cultural training are significant variables in producing desirable outcomes (Baker, 1977). As Carl Grant (1992) found in his analysis of the literature, workshops or instruction within a short, concentrated period of time do not have a lasting effect on preservice teachers. Indeed, limited exposure to individuals from cultures different from one's own perpetuates stereotypes and negative attitudes (Garcia, 1982). The failure of single-shot, short-term approaches to produce desirable results may be attributable to the complexity and controversial nature of the concepts, issues, and attitudes encompassed within multicultural education.

Since a single course, regardless of its quality, is not enough to provide the knowledge and skills necessary to implement multicultural education and to teach children from diverse backgrounds (Sleeter, 1989; Larke, 1990; Grant, 1992), the preparation of culturally competent teachers calls for the infusion of multicultural philosophy, practice, and content across all preservice program areas (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education Commission on Multicultural Education, 1973; Grant, 1983; Sims, 1983; Dottin, 1984). Infusion, the interweaving of multicultural strands across the curriculum, ensures horizontal and vertical integration across the program. It also affords the additional exposure to multicultural concepts and teaching strategies necessary for the acquisition of multicultural skills and for personal growth. Furthermore, multicultural infusion affords elementary education students opportunities to observe effective teaching in multicultural classrooms across all disciplines and to try out methods and techniques in a nonthreatening environment. Ultimately, an effective multiculturally infused program imparts confidence in one's ability to teach in culturally diverse classrooms.

Foundation and methodology in a multiculturally infused program may address the following:

1. Teaching language arts to linguistically and culturally diverse populations. Prospective teachers need a repertoire of teaching methods and skills so they can adapt instruction to a wide range of students. They need to know about first and second language acquisition, familial and cultural differences in language use, and cultural variations in narrative styles.

2. Teaching subject matter to language minority children in a linguistically comprehensible manner. All teachers should be familiar with ESL teaching methods and strategies that endeavor to provide comprehensible ideas and lower student anxiety. Teachers also need alternative methods of assessing students' progress which avoid lowering academic expectations or penalizing students for lack of English language mastery.

3. Information on the contributions of diverse people to the various disciplines. This information expands on the knowledge gained through the liberal arts and helps preservice teachers interweave the information within their teaching.

4. Assessment of knowledge, strengths, and abilities of students. Preservice teachers need to acquire a broad knowledge of assessment, including test bias, alternative test methods, interpretation of test results, informal assessment, and ethnographic and observational techniques. Teachers should be able to identify cultural bias in standardized tests and to use valid, culturally sensitive classroom assessment. Knowing how to use a variety of assessment methods and understanding why some tests are unfair, biased, or inappropriate will help teachers attain a clearer picture of their students' knowledge and skills.

5. Distinguishing learning disabilities from linguistic or cultural differences. Knowing that certain culturally preferred behaviors such as not responding to direct questions or a need for mobility may be misinterpreted as learning disabilities helps teachers avoid erroneous conclusions.

6. Using technology in ways that are sensitive to cultural and individual differences. Technology is not culture-free since it reflects the cultural perspective of software developers. Teachers should be able to assess both the educational value of software as well as its cultural content. Evaluating the cultural content of software goes beyond looking for a variety of ethnic groups represented in computer graphics to such matters as cultural content accuracy and the software's organizational structure. In addition, how teachers organize time, space, tasks, and people should support a variety of learner preferences such as the need for privacy, mobility, or peer interaction. The adoption of such practices leads to greater equity in computer access and use.

7. Using technology with the physically handicapped and learning disabled. The use of computers, light pens, text enlargers, and even tape recorders can provide these students with alternative modes of acquiring knowledge and of expressing their thoughts and feelings.

8. Incorporating cultural and individual preferences in cognitive and learning styles into classroom instruction. Preservice teachers need a variety of strategies for introducing, reviewing, practicing, eliciting, responding, commending, encouraging, and guiding students. Flexibility and adaptability are central to culturally sensitive instruction.

The Need for Appropriate Field Experiences. Finally, field experiences and teacher supervisors must incorporate a multicultural focus. Preservice teachers should observe diversity in the classroom and how

effective classroom teachers apply multicultural teaching practices. Just as foundation and methodology instructors provide knowledge and techniques for teaching in culturally diverse classrooms, so should supervisors and cooperating teachers nurture and inspire students to apply culturally appropriate strategies. Carefully designed student teaching in a multicultural setting allows students to probe their own multicultural competency, to put into practice the culturally sensitive strategies that they have learned, and to reflect on the effectiveness of their own teaching on student learning.

Assessing Cultural Competency. Ultimately, teacher educators need to assess the cultural competency of their preservice teachers, that is, how effectively preservice teachers interact with diverse people, adopt behavior that respects and responds to cultural diversity, and integrate cultural diversity into their teaching. This task is not easy because, just as good teaching incorporates many factors, cultural competency encompasses numerous components. Furthermore, educational and personal philosophy determine which behaviors educators believe demonstrate cultural competency. Hence the selection of universally accepted identifiers of cultural competency is almost impossible and of limited value.

Although, as with good teaching, it is possible to develop observation lists and rubrics that reflect the research findings and current educational philosophy, such lists have moderate usefulness. Observation checklists evolve from an analytic, scientific perspective which assumes that behavior can be segmented into observable component parts. Such an analytical perspective provides a narrow, fragmented description of complex behavior. These lists give the evaluator an observational framework and an appearance of objectivity. Since they reflect the particular theoretical and philosophical standpoint of their creators, they are partial and imperfect. Because evaluators cannot nullify their cultural identify, the results are culturally tainted.

The assessment of cultural competency will always have an underlying subjective element because evaluators bring their own cultural lens to the assessment process. No degree of intentional objectivity can totally free individuals from their pervasive cultural identity. Consequently, reliable and equitable assessment of cultural competency requires multiple sampling of behavior throughout the preservice program by several culturally sensitive evaluators. Variety and frequency in assessment provide a multifaceted perspective of complex behavior, accommodate for individual and cultural differences, and ensure reliability and fairness. Multiple samplings offer a holistic, contextualized description of classroom effectiveness and complex teaching behaviors as they develop over time.

Assessment of students' cultural competency entails determination of knowledge, attitudes, perceptions, skills, and behavior (Pusch, 1979). Within a holistic framework, a global image of the preservice teacher emerges through such sources as student diaries, interviews of teacher candidates, portfolios, classroom observations by teacher supervisors and cooperating teachers, and information obtained from diverse people with whom students interact as part of their course work. Case studies of preservice teacher interaction with diverse students and parents also provide insight into teacher candidates' knowledge, beliefs, and level of cultural competency.

Cultural competency entails personal and interpersonal skills. Among the personal skills needed are (a) the capacity to become aware of one's own cultural perspective and interpersonal behaviors, and (b) the ability to interpret intercultural exchanges accurately. Interpersonal skills include withholding judgment until one knows others better and understands their culture and skillful interpretation of cross-cultural nonverbal communication. These skills are difficult to assess, but they can be sampled, probed, examined, and observed through simulations, discussion of plausible scenarios or critical incidents, role playing, diaries, videotapes of students engaged in intercultural communication or teaching, and direct observation in the

field.

Pedagogically, cultural competency includes the ability to discern bias in print and nonprint materials, the ability to plan for and provide instruction that accommodates for cultural differences, skill in cross-cultural classroom management, skill in providing for differences in English language competency, the flexibility to provide for cultural preferences in use of time, space, social interaction and physical contact, the capability to incorporate multicultural topics and issues within the content areas, and the creation of a culturally accepting and equitable classroom environment. Most of these skills are directly observable, especially during student teaching, small group discussions of critical incidents, and role-playing. Some, such as the ability to identify text bias, can be evaluated through pencil-and-paper tests, students' textbook evaluations, and lesson plans.

Perceptions and attitudes, like self-concept, are clearly difficult to assess because of their complex and rather covert nature. Though carefully constructed tests and questionnaires that call for rank ordering, sentence completion, and agreement or disagreement are helpful, they may merely reflect awareness of what is politically correct or expected. Case studies, diaries, journals, small group discussions, and deliberation of cross-cultural critical incidents provide some insight into preservice teachers' attitudes and perceptions. But, again, students may say what they believe others want to hear, not what they genuinely believe or feel. Ultimately, only in a safe, nonthreatening, nonjudgmental environment that truly respects diversity of thought and opinion will students frankly share their opinions, beliefs, and perceptions. When educators couple these informal, albeit subjective and superficial, insights with periodic observation of preservice teachers interacting with their fellow students, other professionals, young children, and parents, they achieve a clearer understanding of these elusive and emotional personal traits.

Conclusion

As teacher educators, we must prepare all teachers, majority or minority, to provide quality education for all students. Olstad, Foster, and Wyman (1983) indicated that teachers lacking multicultural education are inadequately prepared for the reality of a pluralistic society and tend to have low expectations for minority children. Teacher educators must ask themselves to what degree their teacher preparation programs (a) facilitate increased cultural self-awareness, (b) cultivate appreciation of diversity, (c) increase cultural competency, and (d) prepare teachers to work effectively with a variety of students and parents. To the extent that education programs achieve these ends, to that extent do they prepare culturally competent teachers.

Preservice multicultural education is a necessity. It is not a matter of individual preference, curricular appendage, or pedagogical whim. Neither should it be merely an added-on course after providing for the necessary knowledge and skills. Multicultural education is not simply an ethnic issue; it is everyone's issue, for teaching is a multicultural experience. The perspective of multicultural education as something good to have in the program, but not essential to effective, responsible teacher preparation is both hazardous to our health as a nation and oblivious to the current classroom reality and our future. By the turn of the century, this nation will rely on minorities, immigrants, and white women for 90 percent of its work force (Quality Education for Minorities Project, 1990). As a nation, we cannot afford the miseducation of such a large sector of the population.

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Ines Marquez Chisholm, PhD, is an assistant professor in Education and Human Services at Arizona State University in Phoenix, Arizona.

The University of Arizona is participating in the Training, Development, and Improvement (TDI) program, which assists schools and colleges of education to implement or enhance multicultural education programs through staff and program development, research, and enhanced communication through networking.

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