Multicultural Education for preservice teachers: An exploration of the effectiveness of multicultural education in preparing preservice teachers to teach in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms.

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Abstract

At a time when public school populations are becoming more diverse, teachers are becoming less diverse and often don’t have the multicultural education necessary to teach in diverse schools. This study examined the effectiveness of multicultural education at a university in the Pacific Northwest at preparing teachers to teach in culturally and linguistically diverse schools. The study utilized a two-phase design to collect data that will assist education programs to develop multicultural education components that better prepare preservice teachers to teach in diverse schools. The first phase of the study explored the effectiveness of the current education program by examining preservice teachers’ perceptions of their multicultural education. The second phase examined how new teachers’ perceptions of their multicultural education has changed as a result of their teaching experience, and what new teachers believe would better prepare preservice teachers to teach in racially and linguistically diverse classrooms. The results of the study showed that fifteen preservice teachers, 44% of preservice teachers enrolled in the program, overwhelmingly agreed that their teaching program had prepared them to teach in diverse classrooms. Whereas six new teachers, within their first three years of teaching and who had recently graduated from the same teaching program as the preservice teachers felt underprepared and believed the program should have done more to prepare them to teach in diverse classrooms.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The United States is experiencing the largest wave of immigration since the Industrial Revolution. Combined with escalating birth rates, our nation is creating a society without a distinct majority (Smith, 2009). Teachers in both low-income and affluent communities have diverse student populations; often equal mixes of White and students of color. From Hispanic to Pacific Islander, the language(s) students speak, their family’s beliefs on education and the role parents play in their child’s education influences how teachers design their lessons, differentiate instruction and how they communicate with each student and his or her family.

In 2005, the Population Reference Bureau estimated about 45% of children younger than five are children of color. Although trends are somewhat different from region to region and state to state, the national projections indicate that school aged children six to seventeen will become increasingly diverse in future years (Census Bureau, 2006), yet while student populations become more diverse, the population of educators is becoming less diverse. Eighty six percent of K-12 educators are white and the majority of these educators are female, middle-class and monolingual. Even with student populations changing drastically, many teacher education programs continue to operate within the traditional modernist model (Darling-Hammond, 2005), and researchers believe that students of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds do poorly in school because of the
failure to acknowledge the role of culture in the teaching and learning process (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Intercultural Communication

With almost half of students’ cultural backgrounds differing from that of their teacher, it is imperative that teachers have the communication skills and knowledge to create a learning environment for all students. According to Gudykunst and Kim (1995) “we communicate the way we do because we are raised in a particular culture and learn its language, rules and norms” (p.430). Each culture and subculture has its own unique rules and norms. The way one’s culture interacts with other cultures is intercultural communication.

Students at public schools spend on average six hours a day, 180 days per year, participating in continuous dialog with their teachers as well as classmates of varying cultures and native languages. Teachers of English language learners (ELL) use many communication theories, including the theory of Communication Accommodation (Kim & Gudykunst, 1988) in intercultural communication encounters with diverse students one on one and as a whole group everyday. Educators accommodate the rate and the language used with varying ages and ability levels of students. Just as communication is accommodated for age and ability levels, it’s important to accommodate for cultural and linguistic differences as well, in a way that supports students learning. Yet, according to Gallois, Franklyn-Stokes, Giles and Coupland (1996) teachers are often not educated on how to effectively communicate with students of culturally and linguistically different backgrounds and often under or over accommodate, sounding condescending and
frequently alienating students. For this reason, the study of intercultural communication and communication accommodation is a critical component of multicultural education for preservice teachers.

Research on multicultural education in colleges and universities has shown that the majority of higher education institutions teach multicultural education in a combination of three ways. The first model is a semester or quarter long multicultural class, where students participate in discussions on issues and topics related to multiculturalism. The second common form of multicultural education is through self-reflection, and the third model is through service learning.

The goal of this study is to learn how colleges and universities can improve their multicultural education components for preservice teachers. By improving future teachers’ understanding of different cultures and how to effectively communicate and educate students of culturally and linguistically different backgrounds, students of all races and ethnicities will have the opportunity to be successful and receive a quality education.

**Definition of Terms Used**

**Multicultural Education**: This study uses the definition of multicultural education used by Banks (1997), which seeks to create equal educational opportunities for all students, including those from different racial, ethnic and social-class groups.

**Intercultural Communication**: For the purpose of this study, the definition of intercultural communication is a combination of a Gudykunst (2002) and Samovar et al. (2012). This study will therefore use this as the definition, intercultural
communication occurs when one person from a cultural sends a message to be processed by a person of a different culture.

**Preservice Teachers:** This term refers to students in an education program at a college or university.

**New Teacher:** This refers to teachers with five or less years of teaching experience. The new teachers in this study had three or less years of classroom teaching experience.

**Organization of Remaining Chapters**

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter two is a literature review of the three most common forms of multicultural education for preservice teachers. It also discusses theory, and the changing demographic of public schools to provide information regarding the context into which this study was conducted. Chapter three is the scope and methodology of this qualitative study and details the reasons each method was used. Chapter four discusses the results of the study, a summary of themes that emerged from the data, and conclusions that can be drawn from this data. The fifth chapter includes the conclusion of the study and how they relate to current research being done in this field, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This literature review examines two primary areas of research relevant to the topic. First it examines intercultural communication and the theories of communication accommodation and intercultural transformation as a backdrop for the importance of intercultural communication in schools and the need for effective multicultural education for preservice teachers. Then it examines recent research on the changing student demographics in the United States, the evolution of multicultural education and the three primary forms of multicultural education for preservice teachers.

Theoretical Basis

Intercultural Communication

According to Kim (1996), Intercultural communication is the process of verbal and nonverbal communication patterns between individuals with differing cultural backgrounds. The term culture is used broadly and inclusively to refer to the collective life patterns of recognizable groups such as national, ethnic, or racial groups. However, culture can also be viewed more broadly, as members of any group whose life patterns influence individual behaviors. With this definition, all communication can be viewed to an extent as “intercultural”. The degree of “interculturalness” of a given communication encounter depends on differences between the backgrounds and experiences of the individuals involved (Kim & Gudykunst, 1996 pp. 11-20).
Communication Accommodation Theory

Gallois et al. (1996) state that communication accommodation theory (CAT) focuses on the communicative moves speakers make in interactions relative to the social context and each others’ communicative characteristics (pp. 157-185). In a classroom environment, teachers accommodate the way they communicate to the class as a whole depending on the age of students, and as they differentiate their instruction for individual learners and ELL students.

In 1973 Giles introduced the concepts of convergence and divergence as strategies that speakers could use to signal their attitudes toward each other. Convergence is when an individual adjusts his or her language, dialect, tone, rate, etc. to match that of the conversation partner. Whereas, divergence is the opposite, speakers emphasize the differences in their own and their partner’s speech (Gallois et al, 1996 pp. 157-185). While teachers accommodate the rate and language they uses with students of varying ages and ability levels, it’s important to remember to not diverge when working with students of different cultural backgrounds. The academic level of native English and non-native English speaking students is often very similar, and a teacher over accommodating, through changing the rate and tone of his or her voice, can sound condescending and can easily alienate students.

Intercultural Transformation Theory

With the majority of teachers being White and coming from middle class communities, their individual cultural parameters are often very different than their students, yet according to Kim and Ruben (1996) a gradual change occurs in the internal conditions of individuals as they participate in extensive intercultural
communication activities. Individuals inevitably endure difficulties as they experience communication patterns that challenge the assumptions they have of their own cultures and the cultures of others. Confronting assumptions and premises often acquired in childhood is not only difficult, it's also stressful; in these situations educators, students and parents must alter some of their existing cultural patterns of communication in order to make communication work as they intend (Kim & Ruben, 1996).

This intercultural transformation occurs as individuals participate in more intercultural communication activities. The individuals’ cognitive, affective and behavioral patterns gradually develop beyond their original culturally conditioned parameters (Kim, 1996). The more exposure teachers have to different cultures, and the more time they spend with students of culturally and linguistically different backgrounds the more comfortable teachers will be with different cultures, and the more effective their teaching will be. While this transformation is continuous for teachers as they’re exposed to more cultures, it begins before they enter a classroom. By educating preservice teachers on different cultures and preparing these teachers to teach in diverse schools, the teachers are better prepared to effectively teach all students when they first walk into a classroom.

The Literature

Changing demographics in education

The trend highlighting the increase of culturally and linguistically diverse students has been well documented. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) from 1993-2003 the percentage of students of color in K-12
schools in the United States increased from 34% to 41%. Hispanic students had the largest increase with six percentage points, Asian/Pacific Islander students increased by one percent, and African American and American Indian/Alaska Native students roughly stayed at the same enrollment (NCES, 2007).

The aforementioned statistics suggest incongruence between students’ and teachers’ racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This may contribute to the differences in student’s academic success. The cultural mismatch factor most negatively impacts the academic performance of African-American and Hispanic students, who represent the largest percentage of students of color (Banks, 2002).

Since the 1970’s, with the culturally changing student demographics, colleges and universities seeking accreditation of their professional programs had to demonstrate that their curricula addressed multiculturalism, by educating teacher candidates to work with students from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds (Goodwin, 1997).

Multicultural education emerged from its early focus on Black studies, ethnic studies and finally to multicultural education (Banks, 2002). Supporters of multicultural education claim that at the societal level, its major goals are to reduce prejudice and discrimination against oppressed groups, to work toward equal opportunity and social justice for all groups, and to effect an equitable distribution of power among members of different cultural groups (Banks, 2004; Sleeter & Grant, 2007). Within the field of education, Banks (2002) views the primary goal of multicultural education as transforming schools so that all students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function in an ethnically and racially
diverse nation and world. Thus multicultural education acknowledges that schools are essential to laying the foundation for transforming society and elimination of oppression and injustice.

Multicultural education is required in every education program throughout the United States; however, for many preservice teachers, the information provided in these courses, has not been discussed in general education courses or teacher preparation classes. Research indicates three prevalent strategies used to teach preservice teachers multicultural education. The strategies include: self-reflection, discussion and service learning. These methods are not used exclusively, but rather in combination with one another.

Self-reflection

Self-reflection is the process of reflective thinking and teaching that requires preservice teachers to consider the nature of their work and to use logical and rational analyses of their own teaching (Lin & Lucey, 2010). Milner (2005) claims that preservice teachers should reflect upon what they perceive, fear, hear, gain or confront. Thus reflection represents a learning process that, with guidance and practice, enables preservice teachers’ awareness of professional place and guides their processing of related emotional issues (Lin & Lucey, 2010).

With the majority of teachers being White, it is important for them to consider and understand their own racial identity development, particularly in multicultural contexts, before trying to understand individuals different from themselves. White identity formation is the assumption that many individuals who self identify as White do not see themselves in racial terms. In multicultural
education and diversity the focus is on “others” and they (Whites) do not take into account their own racial identity (Tatum, 1997).

In a research article by Wong, (2008) the author uses self-reflection journals to analyze the tutor/tutee relationship between preservice teachers and English language learners (ELL) in a 14-week university required multicultural education class. Tatum’s model of Whiteness was used as a theoretical framework of the study. The model consists of four levels of Whiteness: (1) the actively racist White (e.g. a White supremacist); (2) the uninformed White, an individual who does acknowledge their Whiteness and/or denies the idea of White privilege; (3) the guilty White, an individual who is aware of racism and feels shame for his/her Whiteness and feels powerless to do anything to counteract racism; and (4) the White ally, an individual who proactively combats racism (Tatum, 2007).

Wong (2008) coded the weekly journals and three dominant themes emerged regarding the relationship between the preservice teachers and the ELL: “transactional”, “transformational” and “transcendent” (2008). Of the 105 sets of journals analyzed, 31 were labeled “transactional”, 67 were labeled “transformational” and 17 were labeled “transcendent.”

In a “transactional” relationship the interactions between the tutor and the tutee are impersonal and display characteristics of fear of working with individuals culturally different from themselves. “Transformational” tutors exhibited traditional teacher-student relationships and viewed their tutees first and foremost as individuals. “Transcendent” relationships have the same characteristics as a “transformational” relationship, but more explicitly and deeply. They acknowledged
significant personal ideas, beliefs and biases with respect to diversity and they recognize how institutional and social structures impact ELL students in potentially negative ways (Wong, 2008).

The results of this study suggest that it is possible to identify the level of cultural responsiveness of preservice teachers and that education programs could develop criteria for defining a culturally responsive relationship between preservice teachers and culturally diverse students (Wong, 2008). The study also suggests that self-reflection journals in a service learning environment could be used as a pre and post assessment for assessing the potential change in cultural responsiveness among preservice teachers throughout an education program, and at the same time evaluate the effectiveness of the multicultural education component of the education program.

One goal of multicultural education courses is to provide a forum to discuss the experiences of those belonging to non-dominant groups based on race, ethnicity, language, class, gender, physical ability, religion and sexual orientation. However these experiences do not constitute the realities of most preservice teachers sitting in multicultural education classes. An overwhelming majority of White preservice teachers are unfamiliar with these realities, particularly those of people of color (Gay & Kirkland, 2003).

LaDuke, (2009) critically examined the classroom discussions and interactions between 26 preservice teachers and their instructor throughout a 15-week multicultural education course designed to explore the ways in which educational opportunities are impacted by sociocultural and sociopolitical factors.
The instructor constructed activities and discussions challenging prospective teachers to consider their own multiple identities, the lived realities of others and the education as a system of social reproduction.

After immersing herself in the community of the multicultural class, the author found that despite the instructor clearly explaining the required participation in class discussion, the majority of students remained silent during class discussions, allowing a small group of students to dominate the discussions with the instructor. When faced with issues of race, students remained quiet either out of lack of knowledge of multicultural issues or in an attempt to steer the discussion away from the topic of race. LaDuke (2009) observed that the White preservice teachers shifted the discussion from race to class or socioeconomic status, topics that were seemingly more comfortable for them to discuss.

In a similar research article, Amos (2010) the instructor of a university required multicultural education class, observed the behavior and class discussions of 30 preservice teachers. The research focused on four students of color, documenting their interactions and behavior in class and interviewing these students throughout the nine-week course. The author found that when issues of race, particularly Whiteness and White privilege were discussed, a group of White students became defensive, feeling they were being accused of racism and vigorously argued with the instructor. This hostile environment caused many White students in the class to remain silent during discussions and most importantly caused the students of color to remain silent out of fear and frustration.
While these articles represent two class experiences the authors had in multicultural education courses, they do not represent every multicultural education course. The experience in a multicultural education course varies from college to college and is strongly affected by the personalities and beliefs of the students enrolled in the class. With that said, the outcome of the two studies reviewed shows the importance of teacher education programs introducing preservice teachers to multicultural education early in their education programs, and sustaining it as a central component of teacher education preparation (LaDuke, 2009). With the majority of preservice teachers being White and having grown up in White environments where they were taught “colorblindness” to not see or discuss other races and cultures, the ideas and concepts of Whiteness and White privilege are foreign, uncomfortable and often unable to grasp in a 9-12 week course. Without preservice teachers having a clear understanding of their race and their racial identity in relationship to other races and cultures, it is difficult to prepare preservice teachers for the diversity and cultural they will see in the classrooms.

Service Learning

One of the most effective and challenging components of any K-12 teacher education program is providing pre-service teachers opportunities to work with students who are culturally and linguistically different from themselves. New teachers recently interviewed reported that their education programs did not prepare them for the diversity in their classrooms (Rochkind, J., Ott, Immerwahr, Doble, & Johnson, 2008).
Preparing future teachers for diverse classrooms is compounded when there is a lack of racial and economic diversity among both preservice teachers and K-12 students. Colleges and universities have a tendency to partner with K-12 schools that are closest to the school campus, and for many small town colleges and universities, the K-12 schools with populations most unlike the students on campus are not those next to the college or university (McClanahan & Buly, 2009).

Researchers and education professors McClanahan & Buly (2009) found creative ways to provide purposeful, multicultural partnerships for their teacher education candidates. McClanahan, a professor in secondary education, enrolled 10 preservice teachers to participate in an academic year-long practicum in a long-distance partnership with students in an isolated fishing village in Eek, Alaska. The Eek school houses 88 K-12 students, of which eight students, all White females, ranging in age from 9-13 volunteered to participate in the partnership.

Throughout the practicum the students of Eek were paired with a preservice teacher. With the use of e-mail and various writing assignments, both sets of students (from the university and the village school) got to know one another’s place and each other as individuals. “Exploring perceptions and learning to appreciate difference was exactly what the types of writing done during this practicum tried to accomplish” (McClanahan & Buly, 2009). This practicum could not have taken place in the small college town, where the university is located. But because of the collaboration, the preservice teachers had the opportunity to connect one-on-one with students who were culturally, racially and linguistically different and had much to learn from them as well.
At the same university, researcher and education professor Buly, seeks out high-needs schools with diverse populations to partner with for her K-8 literacy course. Twenty-miles south of the university is a school notorious for low-test scores on state required assessments, high poverty and high numbers of ELL. This literacy course is not only a requirement of the education program, but it’s also a multicultural practicum where K-8 teacher education students directly apply what they are learning about literacy and create a link between language, culture and literacy (McClanahan & Buly, 2009). During the 12-week academic quarter, the preservice teachers become an active part of the K-8 school’s community through getting to know students and their interests, planning the curriculum and finally teaching the lessons.

This article shows that it is possible to implement a racially and culturally diverse service learning practicum into any education program, regardless of the location and demographic of the college or university and give preservice teachers the experience and education they need to be prepared to teach in diverse schools.

Summary of literature

The findings of this review suggest that while all colleges and universities are required to have multicultural components to their education programs not all programs are effectively preparing preservice teachers to teach in diverse classrooms. With a racially and culturally changing student population and teacher population that is increasingly White and mono-cultural, colleges and universities preparing future educators need to ensure that preservice teachers are comfortable with and prepared to teach in diverse communities. By using a combination of self-
reflection, discussion and service learning opportunities throughout a teacher education program, not just one class, preservice teachers, specifically White preservice teachers, will have the time and opportunities to learn about and understand the importance of respecting cultural diversity in their future classrooms and how they as teachers can embrace this and use it to ensure that all students are receiving the best education possible.

Research Questions

This research leads to four primary research questions for this study that furthers the effectiveness of multicultural education in preparing preservice teachers to teach students of racially and linguistically different backgrounds.

1) How are multicultural education classes preparing preservice teachers to teach in racially and linguistically diverse schools?
2) What are preservice teacher’s perceptions of their multicultural education?
3) How have new teachers’ perception of their multicultural education changed as a result of their teaching experience?
4) What do new teachers believe would better preservice teacher’s multicultural education to more effectively prepare them to teach in diverse classrooms?
CHAPTER III
SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Scope of this Study

Multicultural education for teachers and preservice teachers is a topic that is heavily discussed among educators and people associated with education. With a rapidly diversifying student population, it is more important now than ever to ensure that all students have the opportunity and resources to learn at their highest level. The topic of multicultural education for preservice teachers is broad and the majority of research and reviews of multicultural education for preservice teachers has been on the various methods of teaching multicultural education. For this reason, the scope of this study is how effective the various multicultural education methods are at preparing preservice teachers to teach in culturally and linguistically diverse schools. The relationship context of this study focuses on preservice teachers and new teachers: How preservice teachers perceive their multicultural education, and the perceptions of new teachers’ multicultural education after teaching in diverse classrooms. With two different populations and instruments, it proved best to utilize a mixed methods approach in designing the research for this study, for the mixed methods design will allow the researcher to combine the strengths of both methods (Newman, 2006).

Data collection

Data for this study was collected through the use of an online survey and a focus group. The first phase of the study utilized an online-survey, emailed to preservice teachers, who are currently in their final year of the teacher education program at a university in the Pacific Northwest. The second phase consisted of a
face-to-face focus group of six new teachers. Consent forms to record and transcribe the group members’ responses were administered to each participant.

Study population

A purposive sampling of preservice teachers and new teachers were selected to participate in the study. A purposive sampling according to Patton (2002) is a group of subjects selected because of a common characteristic. This sampling method, along with the mixed method research approach was believed to maximize the richness of data collected. The multicultural education survey in phase one, only required two criteria of each sample member: (1) he or she must be currently enrolled in the education program, and (2) he or she must currently be teaching in a classroom as a teacher candidate. These criteria allowed the study participants to have an intimate knowledge of the multicultural component specific to the education program.

Methodology

The methodology for this qualitative study closely resembled that of Gilmore-Skepple (2011), as she utilized surveys, focus groups and semi-structured interviews to examine how a teacher education program impacts preservice teacher candidates’ knowledge of culturally responsive teaching and the implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices in the classroom. The mixed methods approach Gilmore-Skepple (2011) used proved valid as it provided the necessary date for determining the culturally responsiveness of preservice teachers.

In this study, two research methods were utilized to collect the data: an online survey and an informal focus group. Participants of the survey were asked to
mark their level of agreement with statements pertaining to their multicultural education. The 15-question instrument was divided into two sections. Section one collected demographic information, and section two collected preservice teachers’ perceptions of their preparedness to teach in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms on a five level scale- ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” (appendix B).

The participants of the focus group were asked opened ended questions, requesting they describe their multicultural education, diverse classrooms and recommendations for future multicultural education of preservice teachers. Upon completion of the research, 204 survey responses were collected with 55 comments, as well as 92 focus group responses.

Survey

The survey for this study was modeled after The Culturally Responsive Teaching Preparedness Scale (CRTPS) developed by Gillmore-Skepple (2011). The CRTPS measures preservice teachers’ perceptions of their professional preparedness to implement culturally responsive teaching practices in the classroom. The 21-question instrument asked participants to mark their level of agreement with their preparedness to implement culturally responsive teaching on a scale of 0-10, ranging from “not likely” to “exemplary” (Gillmore-Skepple, 2011). This survey for this study was modeled after the CRTPS and was modified to 14 questions and a scale of 1-5, focusing specifically on the multicultural education of preservice teachers and their preparedness to teach in culturally and linguistically classrooms. Example statements include, “I feel comfortable being with people who
are culturally different from me” and “Multicultural teaching methods are a necessary part of teacher training”.

The anonymous instrument (Appendix A) collected student demographics: age, gender, ethnicity, race and languages spoken. The purpose of collecting demographic information is to see if it plays a part in how the student perceives his or her multicultural education and the level of preparedness one feels toward teaching in a culturally and linguistically diverse classroom. The survey was administered online, through esurveypros.com. The use of a third party survey host, helps ensures security and confidentiality. The multicultural education survey was emailed to 40 preservice teachers. With the majority of preservice teachers being White and coming from middle class families, their exposure to multicultural communities and populations are often limited, and according to LaDuke (2009) White preservice teachers have a tendency to disengage or steer away from uncomfortable conversations of race and culture. In an effort to ensure the genuine beliefs and opinions of preservice teachers on multicultural education, a survey was viewed as the best method because it allowed individuals the opportunity to complete the instrument in private and at the same time ensured anonymity. However, the limitation of the survey method stemmed from the inability to ask follow up questions of the participants or ask for elaboration or further explanation of a specific response. To help prevent this, a comment box under each statement gave participants the opportunity to elaborate on his or her responses.
Focus Group

An email was sent to graduates of the same education program as the preservice teachers in phase one, requesting their assistance with this study. The focus group was made up of six teachers within the first three years of their teaching career, all having various levels of experience teaching students of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Similar to the Gillmore-Skepple (2011) study, the facilitator began the focus group explaining the purpose of the study, ensuring confidentiality and encouraged the participants to speak freely about their experiences and opinions while outlining the three themes of the focus group. According to Newman, (2006) an informal interview is facilitated to create open discussion by all members of the group. During the focus groups, the facilitator asked a set of predetermined questions (Appendix B) in an effort to encourage the new teachers to discuss and share their experiences and ideas on multicultural education. The focus groups allowed for the collection of rich data, for the teachers were able to comment and question each other- prompting deeper thinking and explanations of beliefs; as well as, the facilitator asking follow up questions or clarifying questions when needed.

A purposive sample was then used of new teachers who would participate in the focus group. Fontana and Frey (2000) wrote: “The group interview is essentially a qualitative data gathering technique that relies upon the systematic questioning of several individuals simultaneously in a formal or informal setting” (p.651). Six new teachers participated in the focus group based on meeting the following criteria: (1) currently in his or her first three years of teaching, and (2)
graduate of the same teaching program as the preservice teachers in phase one.

Prior to the focus group session, the researcher met with the facilitator to go over the semi-structured protocol (see Appendix B). The three main themes of the focus group interview protocol instrument were: (A) The multicultural education the teachers received in their teaching program and additional multicultural education they’ve received, (B) Experiences the teachers have had in and with diverse classroom populations (C) The future of multicultural education and how it could better preservice teachers to teach in diverse classrooms. The focus group was recorded with the facilitator guiding questions. The informal interview took approximately 60 minutes to complete. Following the group, the interviews were transcribed, analyzed and coded, looking for common themes and sub-themes (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007).

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research is an unconstrained approach to studying phenomena. There are a number of standard approaches to collecting and interpreting qualitative data (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative studies seek to recreate the contextual setting as a framework. By necessity, the researcher determines the type of data gathered and the methods used to analyze the data. For the purpose of understanding the relationship within a setting, qualitative researchers’ data often consists of detailed field notes, observations, interviews, written documents and recorded and video transcripts (Creswell, 2009).

Trustworthiness of the data comes through providing credibility through the procedures followed in data collection and analysis (Mertens, 1998). Credibility for
this study was established by utilizing research methods and questions that have been used by previous studies of similar topics. This study relied on the Gilmore-Skepple (2011) study for how to best collect data. Like this study, the Gilmore-Skepple (2011) study researched cultural responsiveness among preservice teachers and classroom teachers. The credibility is also established through keeping the research process transparent and by utilizing different data collection methods.

Confirmability was addressed through constant comparative analysis of the participant responses to accurately reflect the individual’s position, validating the participants’ voices as they’re presented in the data. The use of different collection processes (survey and focus group) along with new teacher participants from different schools with vastly different teaching experiences, helps to ensure the mixed methods approach in this study.

**Anonymity and Confidentiality**

The online survey was emailed to preservice teachers through the university, allowing for complete anonymity and confidentiality from the researcher, and the researcher was the only individual with access to the results. Each focus group was recorded and then transcribed. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, every member of the focus group was coded with a four character ID, consisting “R” for respondent and the number assigned to a given respondent during the focus group. For example R-2, would be respondent number two (Andenoro, 2010).
CHAPTER IV
THE STUDY

Data Analysis

Twenty one new and preservice teachers participated in this study. The completed surveys were reviewed and categorized by demographic and the level of agreement to statements regarding multicultural preparedness, just as Ford and Quinn (2010) had done in their study. The focus group questions were divided into three themes, similar to the Gilmore-Skepple (2011) study: multicultural education of teachers, diverse classrooms and multicultural education of future preservice teachers.

Survey

Forty two percent of preservice teachers currently enrolled in the education program at a university in the Pacific Northwest completed the survey. The respondents are all in their final year of the program and are either student teaching independently or co-teaching with a mentor teacher.

Results

From the 15 surveys collected, 85% of preservice teachers were female. Only two races were identified, 85% of respondents identified as Caucasian and 14% identified as Asian/Pacific Islander. 85% spoke one language, 14% spoke two languages and 0% spoke three or more languages. Of all the demographic questions, age was the most diverse. 35% of respondents were ages 20-29, 28% of
respondents were ages 30-39, 28% were ages 40-49, and 14% of preservice teachers were ages 50+.

The second section of the survey asked preservice teachers to mark their level of agreement with statements related to their multicultural education. The table below shows the percentage of frequency of all respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage frequency distribution of all respondents</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. I feel comfortable being with people who are culturally different from me.</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I chose my student teaching location because I wanted to teach in a diverse school.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I feel comfortable teaching students who are culturally different from myself.</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Multicultural teaching methods are a necessary part of teacher training.</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I am aware of my own culture and its values.</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Teachers have a responsibility to be aware of their students’ cultural backgrounds.</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Multicultural awareness is not needed for the subject areas I plan to teach.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I will be success teaching culturally diverse students because I have no cultural biases.</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of survey findings

The university selected for this study is unique in that it is set up in a cohort model. According to the university, the program progresses preservice teachers
through a series of classes and hands-on learning and teaching internships to enhance a greater learning community. This model is designed to give preservice teachers multiple opportunities to work with academically and culturally diverse learners. However when asked to “list the multicultural education classes, practicum and service learning opportunities that are part of your education program”, two preservice teacher said, “none”, five preservice teachers responded to the question by listing either “social studies” and/ or “social justice” classes, and four respondents said multicultural education was discussed and taught through out the whole program, but did not specify any course numbers or titles. Surprisingly not one preservice teacher listed any of the practicum, service learning or student teaching opportunities that make this program unique from other education programs in the region.

When asked to mark their level of agreement with the statement “I chose my student teaching location because I wanted to teach in a diverse school”, 64% of preservice teachers said “neutral”. Of the five comments provided for this question, three comments said the university provided their student teaching location for them and one comment said, “I wanted to teach close to home. The program I was in chose my location for me.” Another preservice teacher said, “I was assigned a school for my student teaching. It was not diverse, but that was not due to any choice on my part. I accepted the assignment”.

The preservice teachers in this cohort did not have the opportunity to select their student teaching locations and most of the teachers were placed in predominately White, middle-class schools located close to the university. Yet, when
asked their level of agreement with the statement "I feel comfortable teaching students who are culturally different from myself", an overwhelming almost 90% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. But the comments listed with the statement ranged from “cultural differences are irrelevant”, and “There might be a moment of being uncomfortable at the onset, but that goes away as soon as I adjust to class”, to “I don’t have the tools to best teach those from other cultures, including what their expectations are about school and learning”. These results show inconsistencies between the preservice teachers’ exposure to culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms and the preservice teachers’ perceptions of their preparedness to teach in diverse schools. While respondents were not asked about multicultural teaching experiences outside of the program, the majority of classroom teachers’ teaching experiences come from their teacher program, and these preservice teachers had very little, if any experience teaching and working with diverse students in their program.

One reason for this inconsistency, according to Ford and Quinn (2010) is in our society it’s politically incorrect for a teacher to say that he or she is uncomfortable teaching students of a different cultures because teachers are often held to a higher standard and are expected to feel and think the same way about every student, regardless of their differences. This false expectation often leads preservice teachers and classroom teachers to say they’re comfortable teaching students of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, when in fact they may not be, and may not reach out for help or support when working with diverse
learners out of fear and judgment of not treating all students the same (Gay & Kirkland, 2003).

While 90% of preservice teachers in the study agreed with the statement “I will be comfortable teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students”, 50%, of the preservice teachers marked “neutral” when presented with the statement “I will be successful teaching culturally diverse students because I have no cultural biases”. These results suggest that the respondents may not have a clear understanding of their own cultural biases and without recognizing that cultural biases exists teachers cannot actively work to overcome biases and create effective learning communities for all learners. However, 33% of respondents disagreed with the statement- recognizing that cultural biases exist among everyone regardless of your race, gender or socio-economic class. One preservice teacher commented, “all people have cultural biases… it is how we deal with these and put them into perspective that helps up to be successful or not successful”.

Sixty seven percent of preservice teachers agreed and 33% strongly agreed, “teachers have a responsibility to be aware of their students’ cultural backgrounds”. While only two of the 15 respondents identified as Asian/ Pacific Islander (the only race other than Caucasian identified by the survey respondents) both of these preservice “strongly agreed” with the statement. One of the Asian/ Pacific Islander respondents commented, “knowing your students is part of embracing the whole child”. In a classroom of 25 students the cultures and languages spoken both at home and school can vary greatly. The most efficient way for a teacher to get to know his/her students is to talk openly with them about their family’s culture. For
White teachers the topic of race and culture is often uncomfortable and one that many people desperately try to avoid (LaDuke, 2009). One preservice teacher who “strongly agreed” with the statement commented, “but it’s hard when you don’t want to ask specifically, then you are lead to make assumptions”. Asking students and teachers to talk openly about their cultures can be difficult, but with the correct communication tools people can talk openly about their differences, work through biases and embrace what makes them different.

Focus group

The focus group comprised of six new teachers within their first three years of teaching and graduates from the same teaching program as the preservice teachers in phase one. The informal focus group questions were written to encourage discussion on personal experiences of multicultural education. The teachers’ perception of their preparedness to teach in diverse classrooms; as well as, individual experiences of teaching in diverse classrooms, and what new teachers believe would better prepare future teachers to teach in racially and linguistically diverse classrooms.

All members of the focus group were White, female and ranged in age from 28-42. While this sample does not appear to be random, it is an accurate representation of the teaching population, with only 14% of teachers in the United States being educators of color (Cochran, Smith, Davis and Fry, 2004). Each response was coded for confidentiality and given a pseudonym to ensure anonymity. The questions were divided into three themes: multicultural education
of the new teachers, teaching in diverse classrooms and future multicultural education for preservice teachers. Each theme is detailed below.

Inconsistencies in multicultural education

According to the National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) teacher education programs’ conceptual framework should clearly articulate professional commitment to prepare teacher candidates to support learning for all students and provide a conceptual understating of how knowledge, dispositions, and skills related to diversity are integrated across the curriculum, instruction, field experience, clinical practice, assessments and evaluations (NCATE, 2008).

The focus group began by asking the new teachers to “describe the multicultural education components of their own teacher education program”. Each of the new teachers hesitated to recall their specific multicultural education, but all agreed when a participant finally said, “I felt like the multicultural education we had was mixed with our social studies class”. Another quickly added, “the multicultural education part of the social studies class was when had to plan a unit on a specific culture... and recognize and correct stereotypes or misunderstandings students might have about the culture”. Yet another recalls, “In one of the first classes of the program we did a lot of reading, and many of the readings were multicultural. There was the White privilege article about the backpack and the article about the native Hawaiian students maintaining their cultural in public school”.

In addition to multicultural education classes, a common form of multicultural education is service learning. When the new teachers were asked how they selected their service learning opportunities and locations, five out of the six participants said they selected their location based on proximity to their home and university. One participant said, “I actually put on my application that I wanted to be with a diverse student population, but when I saw the school districts the university worked with they were all mostly in White areas”. Another participant added, “when I started the program they [program coordinators] told us to pick our internship locations based on where we’d like to get hired, since you have a better chance of getting hired in schools where the principal knows you. I wanted to teach close to home, so I picked schools in mostly White areas.” After sitting quiet for a while, another adds to the discussion, “we very easily could have seen and worked with more diverse students be going 30 minutes south or east. If that was where they [the university] were holding the class then you’d have to go. You would make it happened”.

When asked, “how did your multicultural education prepare you to teach in a diverse classroom?” a respondent answered,

I don’t think I was prepared at all. Last year I taught sixth grade math in a rural, migrant community where the school’s population was 70% Hispanic, and the majority of my students were below grade-level. During parent-teacher conferences I had to communicate through a translator for almost every conference… That was something else I wasn’t prepared for, what to do when kids have no support at home.
From the participant’s perception, there appears to be a contrast between the multicultural education component of their teacher education program, and their preparedness to teach in racially and linguistically diverse classrooms. While the new teachers initially struggled to recall their multicultural education, they eventually were able to list several sporadic multicultural components of the program. This suggests, that had the university been more purposeful in the design of the classes and field experiences the preservice teachers might have been able to retain more of their multicultural education and been able to apply it to their classroom practices.

Teaching in diverse classrooms

The 2010 Census reported that fewer than half (49.9%) of three-year-olds, in this country are White (Frey, 2011). This statistic is momentous. In 2012 the majority of these three-year-olds entered kindergarten in public schools throughout the United States. While White students still have a sight majority (58%) over school age children as a whole, this statistic represents a permanent, diversifying trend in public education (Frey, 2011) and it ultimately falls upon the education system and classroom teachers to enable these students to become productive, assimilated citizens in a competitive global economy.

According to Siwatu (2007), culturally responsive teachers consciously apply their knowledge base of their students’ cultural background and home life to create a positive classroom environment through four processes: (a) create a culturally compatible learning environment that is warm and supportive, (b) minimize the
effects of the cultural mismatch, (c) effectively communicate with students, and (d) develop a community of learners.

In order for teachers to create classroom environments that are warm, supportive and culturally compatible for all learners, teachers need to have a firm understanding of the cultural make up of their classroom and recognize and embrace the cultural differences in their students. When the new teachers were asked to describe the cultural make-up of their classes. A participant shared, “My class is mostly White kids, I have a couple Indian and Hispanic students... but I don’t have any ELL students”. Another respondent added, “My classes this year and last year are about 50% students of color...There is a misconception that because I teach in an affluent community that I don’t have ELL students or students of color”.

When the new teachers were asked, “how do you incorporate various students’ cultures into your classroom community?” a participant answered, “Last year I did a winter celebration around the world and I asked parents if they’d like to share their family’s cultural traditions with the class. I had an Indian mom and a Mexican mom volunteer”. She also stated that while she had planned to teach the main winter celebrations on her own: Christmas, Hanukah, Kwanza, etc., but without parent help she wouldn’t have been able to focus on the smaller celebrations or teach them in a way someone who is part of the culture could. another mentioned,

I assign students to write book reviews that all the students in the school can see on the library website... ELL students have the option to read a book in their native language...and they can write the report in their native language,
such as Hindi or Spanish and then the ELL teacher will review the book report and they get scored based on the review, not on their use of the English language.

The new teachers were asked "how do you incorporate and communicate with families with culturally different backgrounds then your own? What has been your experience with family communication? A participant said,

I've learned that email doesn’t always work because of all the misinterpretations that can happen. When I’m communicating with a family whose native language or culture is different than my own I usually call or talk to them at pick-up.

During the interview a participant reflected on an experience from last year, “I thought about using Google Translator... to translate my newsletter, but I was told that...it won’t be correct, so instead the newsletter goes home in English and these families miss out on the weekly communication of our classroom”.

Based on the responses, it appears the new teachers would have liked more opportunities during their teacher preparation program to interact with students and teachers in racially and linguistically diverse schools. A participant mentioned, “the program didn’t really teach us anything about how to address and communicate with students and parents of different cultures, and I really didn’t know anything about how to address the language and cultural differences before I started teaching. I felt that there was a disconnect within the program”.

Although each teacher described an experience where she was actively working to create the classroom environment Siwatu (2007) described as culturally
responsive, the study’s format and questions did not allow for a deep enough analysis of the teachers’ classroom practices in creating culturally responsible environments. Nor did the questioning provide enough information to evaluate the education programs effectiveness of preparing culturally and linguistically diverse teachers.

Future multicultural education for preservice teachers

Through teacher education programs curricula and field experiences, preservice teacher candidates need to become more culturally aware and gain new perspective regarding pluralism (Banks, 2001). Across the nation teacher education programs strive to find effective methods to better prepare preservice teacher candidates to teach in diverse classrooms. Thus, the responsibility of developing effective multicultural education to prepare preservice teachers to teach in diverse schools lies with the education program.

When asked, “What additional classes or service learning opportunities do you think would better prepare preservice teachers to teach in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms?” A participant suggested, “Internships and service learning experiences that push preservice teachers out of their comfort zone.” Another participant added, “The University should partner with school districts in more diverse areas.” The facilitator asked the participants a follow up question. “Do you think an internship or service learning experience outside of the preservice teachers’ comfort zone should be required?” The group answered with a unanimous yes. A participant explained, “to me that is what the person who coordinates service learning programs and student teaching experiences should be doing.” Another
added, the program could “go on the OSPI [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction] website pull up any school district or any school itself to see the cultural make up of the school, so you could easily find where there is a lot diversity.”

When asked, “do you think it would be beneficial to have a multicultural education class as part of the curriculum, on top of the service learning experiences?” A participant answered, “I think it would beneficial if they could included some of the classes or training that ELL teachers go through, especially how they are prepared to work with the students and communicate with parents.” Another participant added, “I think the class would have to go along with a classroom experience. That way you can put into action what you’re learning”.

Teachers are required to teach high quality instruction to a student population that is becoming more and more diverse. Similar to current research, these initial findings indicate that the new teachers in the focus group were under-prepared to teach in racially and linguistically diverse schools and communicate with families with in their classrooms. Researchers have documented the need and importance of preparing highly qualified teachers who are culturally competent and efficacious (Siwatu, 2007). According to the NCATE (2008), culturally competent teachers are those who acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to help all students learn. What does this mean for the education program? The program’s course curriculum and field experiences should mirror the cultural diversity of the student populations that exist in today’s classrooms.
Discussion

Based on the findings, several implications can be drawn in relation to intercultural communication and multicultural education for preservice teachers. As Kim (1996) stated, intercultural communication occurs when two or more persons from differing cultural backgrounds communicate both verbally and nonverbally. With classrooms becoming more and more diverse, almost all communication encounters between teachers and students are considered intercultural. The results of this study have helped to operationalize this phenomenon and the understanding of the effectiveness of multicultural education of preservice teachers in preparing them to teach in racially and linguistically diverse classrooms. The next section will discuss some of the main implications that have resulted from the findings of this study.

Implications for Intercultural Transformation

The major implication from this study is the overwhelming difference in the perception of preparedness to teach in diverse classrooms between preservice teachers and new teachers. Preservice teachers overwhelmingly agreed their multicultural education would prepare them to teach in diverse classrooms. Whereas, new teachers unanimously agreed that their multicultural education had not fully prepared them to teach in racially and linguistically diverse classrooms. This change in perceptions can be explained as an intercultural transformation - the process of change in individuals beyond the cognitive, affective and behavioral limits of their original cultural (Kim & Ruben 1996). When the predominantly White new teachers left their teaching program, an environment of people with
similar cultural backgrounds, and entered diverse classrooms they experienced what Alder (1987) described as “culture shock... the profound learning experience that leads to a high degree of self-awareness and personal growth” (p. 29).

Human beings, like all living systems attempt to hold constant a variety of internal variables to achieve individual cultural order; when individuals receive messages that disrupt the cultural order he or she experiences “disequilibrium”- a state of stress as one struggles to regain internal equilibrium (Kim & Ruben, 1996). Regaining internal equilibrium is also known as the “stress-adaption-growth”, a cyclic and continual process where persons act to restore harmony by restructuring their internal communication system to accommodate challenges (Kim & Ruben, 1996).

While all new teachers experience the “stress-adaption-growth” cycle as they begin their first year of teaching, new teachers who are in racially and linguistically diverse schools experience greater “culture shock” (Alder, 1987) and have to work harder at regaining internal equilibrium (Kim & Rueben, 1996). One participant in the focus group taught her first year at a school in a migrant community with high teacher-turn-over and increasing gang violence. In addition to relocating to a new community and starting a new profession, this teacher began teaching in a school environment so different than anything she had ever experienced, she spent the entire year struggling to find the harmony within her internal communication system and ultimately left after one year. Had this new teacher been exposed to more diverse classroom experiences within her teaching program, the shock of a differing culture might not be as great, for her internal communication system
would have already began to accommodate for the new challenges (Kim & Rueben, 1996).

Implications for the university’s multicultural education

The University in this study, like many colleges and universities, partnered with neighboring school districts for service learning experiences. While partnering with these schools was convenient geographically for preservice teachers and university facility and staff, as McClanahan & Buly (2009) stated, the communities and school districts surrounding colleges and universities tend to be White and middle-class and often do not offer the necessary opportunities and experiences preservice teachers need to teach diverse learners.

The preservice teachers in the study were assigned their service learning placements; however the new teachers, who had graduated from the same program one or two years prior, selected three districts out of a list of neighboring districts and were assigned to one out of the three by the education program coordinator. Although several new teachers from the study requested being placed in racially and linguistically diverse school districts, ultimately they were placed in predominately White schools, like the majority of their peers.

One focus group respondent said “they [the program] could go on the OSPI [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction] website pull up any school district or any school itself to see the cultural make up of the school, so you could easily find where there is a lot diversity”. This comment raises the question, how are new teachers expected to be able to effectively educate multicultural students, when
their teaching program has only exposed them to schools that are predominately White?

In order for new teachers to be able to educate the rapidly diversifying student population, education programs must diversify as well. An education program can only effectively prepare preservice teachers to teach in racially and linguistically diverse classrooms when the university partners with schools and districts with diverse student populations and incorporates this service learning into their curriculum. To partner with more diverse schools and districts, the university has to expand outside their immediate neighboring communities and establish new relationships. One participant added in the focus group, “if we [preservice teachers] went 25 minutes south of the university we would have experienced a lot more diversity”. Through purposeful partnering with diverse public schools, preservice teachers will have the opportunity to observe and learn from current educators who effectively communicate with diverse students and families.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

Limitations of Study

Although this study was conducted with the effort to collect credible, trustworthy data, there were areas within the study that provided limitations. The first issue was time. The original plan was to allow seven weeks to collect and analyze data. However due to an incredibly long delays with getting approval from the university in phase one of the study, the research was delayed by five weeks resulting in a limited amount of time to collect and analyze the data.

Fourteen preservice teachers participated in the survey, but only a little over half of the respondents provided comments to their answers. While leaving comments to further explain a respondent’s believe or position with a statement was optional, this limited the overall survey data to analyze. The survey instructions could have requested respondents to elaborate on their responses in the comment sections to encourage more detailed responses.

Secondly, the study only focused on one university and on a small group of preservice teachers and recent graduates from the education program. Had time allowed, data could have been collected from a larger number of preservice teachers and graduates. The study also only included students and past students of the program. It may have been beneficial to include individual interviews with the professors and individuals within the department who designed the program and teach the classes that included multicultural components. The interviews could demonstrated the goals of the program from the university’s perspective, as well as,
how the multicultural education is officially implemented into classes, service learning and student teaching opportunities and how the university sees teachers using their multicultural education in diverse classrooms.

Third, only one person completed the comparative analysis in this study. While this study was completed with the utmost integrity and effort to present transparent research methods and data, a team of researchers can analyze the data, discuss implications and may provide more grounded, trustworthy results. When only one person designs, conducts and analyzes the data there is room for unintentional error.

Future research

Intercultural communication is the foundation of multicultural education for preservice teachers. This topic has been studied in previous research and provides many opportunities for future research. This study examined preservice teachers and new teachers’ perceptions of their multicultural education in one education program at one university in the Pacific Northwest. This study could easily be conducted at other universities or the same university over a period time, examining the effectiveness of the multicultural education program or programs and ultimately comparing preservice teachers and new teachers’ perceptions of their multicultural education in their teaching programs to other respondents in other graduating classes or differing education programs.

The analysis of the data from multiple graduating classes or universities could lead to future research in the development of a multicultural education component for an education program that incorporates the suggests, comments and
perceptions of preparedness from both the preservice teachers and the new
teachers in the studies.

This study focused entirely on preservice and new teachers’ perceptions of
multicultural education. Future research could study how university education
professors and field instructors prepare preservice teachers to teach in culturally
and linguistically diverse schools, and examine opinions, beliefs and perceptions of
the current education program and ways the program could better prepare
preservice teachers, similar to the Gilmore-Skepple (2010) study.

Conclusion

The results of the study provided two major findings (1) the preservice
teachers overwhelmingly agreed that their multicultural education prepared to
teach in culturally and linguistically diverse schools, even though they had very little
exposure to diverse students in their program, and (2) new teachers who graduated
from the same program as the preservice teachers in the study and have been
teaching for less then three years, unanimously disagreed that their multicultural
education prepared them to teach in culturally and linguistically diverse school.

Through an online survey and focus group, participants were either asked to mark
their level of agreement on a five level scale ranging from strongly-agree to strongly
disagree with statements regarding their multicultural education and their
preparedness to teach in diverse schools, or they were asked open ended questions
regarding their multicultural education, their experience teaching in diverse schools
and their suggestions to better prepare future preservice teachers to teach in
diverse schools. The responses from the two instruments allowed for in-depth
analysis of both preservice teachers and new teachers’ perceptions of the
effectiveness of their multicultural education and their preparedness to teach in
diverse classrooms.

The findings are beneficial to the study and development of effective
multicultural education for preservice teachers. In the past 20 years there has been
a focus on the different forms of multicultural education for preservice teachers, and
the findings from this study help further research in the field by seeing how
preservice teachers and new teachers perceive their multicultural education and
implement the skills learned from the program into diverse classrooms.
References


Ford, T.N., & Quinn, L. (2010) First year teacher candidates: What are their


Milner, H. R. (2000). Stability and change in U.S. prospective teachers’ beliefs and


Appendix A
Survey Cover Letter

Dear Participants,

My name is Janelle Penney, and I am a fellow graduate of the teaching certification program at UWB. I am now a graduate student at Gonzaga University. For my final project I am examining the effectiveness of multicultural education for preservice teachers in preparing them to teach in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. Because you are currently a preservice teacher, I am inviting you to participate in this research study by completing the attached survey.

The following questionnaire will take approximately five-ten minutes to complete. There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk. In order to ensure that all information remains confidential and anonymous, the survey is administered online through a third-party survey host. Copies of the study will be provided to my instructor at Gonzaga University and the Department of Communication and Leadership at Gonzaga University. If you choose to participate in this project, please click on the link and answer all the questions as honestly as possible. Participation is strictly voluntary and you may refuse to participate at any time.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors. The data collected will provide useful information regarding the effectiveness of multicultural education for preservice teachers, in preparing them to teach in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. If you would like a summary copy of this study please email a request for information to me at the email address below. Completion of this questionnaire will indicate your willingness to participate in this study. If you require additional information or have questions, please call or email me at the contact information below.

Sincerely,

Janelle Penney
206.852.3576
jpenney@gonzaga.edu

Instructor
Dr. Heather Crandall
crandallm@gonzaga.edu
Appendix B

Multicultural Education Survey

This survey is part of a research study that examines the effectiveness of multicultural education for perservice teachers. Carefully read each statement and mark the answer that BEST represents your opinion or belief. Please use the comment box following the question to further explain your response. Your participation in this survey is voluntary, and any information obtained is completely confidential. Thank you in advance for your participation in this study.

For question 1-5, please mark your response by checking the line next to the response that you most identify with.

1. Identify your gender:
   Female _____
   Male _____

2. Identify your ethnicity:
   Hispanic _____
   Non-Hispanic _____

3. Identify your race:
   Asian/ Pacific Islander _____
   Black, _____
   American Indian/ Native Alaskan _____
   White _____
   Biracial/ Multi-racial (Belonging to more than one racial group) _____
   Other _____

4. Identify your age range:
   20-24 _____
   25-29 _____
   30-39 _____
   40+ _____

5. Identify the number of languages you speak fluently, including English.
   one _____
   two _____
   three _____
   more than three _____

For question 6 list the multicultural education classes, practicum and service learning opportunities that are part of your education program.

6. ____________________  ____________________  ____________________
   ____________________  ____________________  ____________________
For questions 7-15 please circle the word or phrase that best corresponds to your agreement level with the statement.

7. I feel comfortable being with people who are culturally different from me.
   
   Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

   Comments:

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

8. I chose my student teaching location because I wanted to teach in a diverse school.
   
   Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

   Comments:

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

9. I feel comfortable teaching students who are culturally different from myself.
   
   Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

   Comments:

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

10. Multicultural teaching methods are a necessary part of teacher training.
    
    Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

    Comments:

    ____________________________________________________________

    ____________________________________________________________

    ____________________________________________________________

11. I am aware of my own culture and its values.
    
    Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

    Comments:

    ____________________________________________________________
12. Teachers have a responsibility to be aware of their students’ cultural backgrounds.

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

Comments:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

13. Multicultural awareness is not needed for the subject areas I plan to teach.

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

Comments:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

14. I will be successful teaching culturally diverse students because I have no cultural biases.

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

Comments:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

*Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. If you have any questions or would like further information on the study, please contact the researcher at jpenney@gonzaga.edu.*
Appendix C

Focus Group Consent Form

EXPLORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN PREPARING EDUCATORS TO TEACH IN CULTURALLY DIVERSE CLASSROOMS

I have been asked to participate in a research project examining the effectiveness of multicultural education in preparing preservice teachers to teach in racially and linguistically diverse classrooms. I was selected to participate in the study because of my experience and intimate knowledge of teaching in diverse classrooms. The purpose of this study is to:

1. Examine the effectiveness of multicultural education in preparing preservice teachers to teach in racially and linguistically diverse classrooms, through the following themes:
   a. Multicultural education for educators
   b. Teaching in diverse classrooms
   c. How to better prepare preservice teachers for diverse schools.

If I agree to be in this study, I will be asked to answer a variety of questions by the facilitator, via a face-to-face focus group. The focus group will last approximately 60 minutes. The focus group will be an informal discussion regarding the effectiveness of multicultural education in preparing teachers to teach in racially and linguistically diverse schools. After the conclusion of the conversation, I will have the opportunity to review the dialogue from the conversation and make suggestions or comments. There is no risks or benefits associated with participating in this study. This study is confidential and voluntary; any comments shared in the focus group will be coded to allow for confidentiality. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking me to the study will be included in any reports that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only Janelle Penney (the researcher) will have access to the records. If I decide to participate, I am free to refuse to answer any of the questions that may make me uncomfortable, and I can withdraw at anytime. I can contact Janelle Penney at jpenney@ Gonzaga.edu with any questions about this study.

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers to my satisfaction. I have been given a copy of this consent document for my records. By signing this document, I consent to participate in the study.

Signature: ________________________________ Date: ______________________

Signature of Investigator: ______________________ Date: ______________________
Appendix D

Multicultural Education Focus Group

Introduction by facilitator

- Good morning/afternoon!
- Thank you for taking the time to meet with me. I will honor your time by making sure that we start and stop on time.
- This discussion will be recorded for research purposes only and will remain completely anonymous. Please let me know if you are not OK with this.
- I am a graduate student at Gonzaga University, studying the effectiveness of multicultural education in teacher preparation programs.
- All information I collect is confidential. All comments made during the discussion will be coded for confidentiality. I will not disclose who participated in this focus group nor will the final study make any attributions for quotes. I hope this encourages you to speak freely.
- Any questions before we start?
- (Be sure that everyone signs and completes the consent form)

The questions for this focus group will be divided into three themes.

These are:
A) Teacher’s multicultural education
B) Diverse classroom populations
C) Future multicultural education for preservice teachers

Teacher’s multicultural education

1) Describe the multicultural education components of your teacher education program, i.e. classes taken and service learning opportunities?

2) How did you select your multicultural education classes and/or your service learning opportunity and location? Why?

3) How did your multicultural education prepare you to teach in a diverse classroom?

4) Has your perception of your multicultural education changed as a result of your teaching experience?

Diverse classroom population
5) Describe the cultural make-up of your classroom?

6) How do you incorporate various student cultures into your classroom community?

7) How does your diverse student population guide your instruction?

8) How do you incorporate and communicate with families with culturally different backgrounds then your own?

**Future multicultural education for preservice teachers**

9) What additional classes or service learning opportunities do you believe would better prepare preservice teachers to teach in culturally diverse classrooms?

10) Would it benefit perservice teachers for the university to require preservice teachers to complete their student teaching experience in a racially and linguistically diverse school? Why?

11) How could the university better prepare preservice teachers to teach in culturally diverse schools?

12) If you could change any aspect of your multicultural education, what would you change and why?

13) Is there any thing else you’d like to share?

Thank you for your time.