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Anita Rao Mysore, Felicia Lincoln, Michael J. Wavering

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This study reports the attitudes of preservice teachers toward issues in multicultural education. Forty-eight respondents from the Master of Arts in Teaching program in the department of curriculum and instruction participated. The Multicultural Attitude Survey was administered to preservice teachers to determine their attitudes toward issues in multicultural education. The interventions of a seminar on multicultural issues and a teaching internship significantly affected preservice teacher attitudes. The analyses of the open-ended responses showed that some of the preservice teachers had included issues in multicultural education in teaching content, some increased their awareness about various cultural groups and also of their students, and a few had not incorporated issues in multicultural education in their teaching.

Introduction

The most important challenge that the United States faces in the field of education is one of providing high-quality education to those who are currently underserved by the educational system: students of color, students from low-income groups, students in rural and urban settings, and English Language Learners (Hollins & Guzman 2005). In addition, "although many factors influence educational outcomes in schools serving diverse student populations, there is increasing agreement among members of the educational community that teacher quality is a major factor" (478). The National Council for Accreditation of Teachers (NCATE 2002) states in its professional standards that the new professional teachers graduating from a professionally accredited school, college, or department of teacher education should possess knowledge, dispositions and skills to work with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Studies in teacher education point toward the limited knowledge, attitudes, and skills of preservice teachers for teaching students from diverse groups. For example, Ahlquist (1992) states that a majority of preservice teachers possess racist and sexist values and tend to either be unconscious of this fact or deny it. White preservice teachers may believe, "I am a White

student and multicultural education makes no sense to me," or "I am going to teach in an all-White community" (Garcia & Pugh 1992: 217); while those of color think that they fully understand multicultural education because they have experiences that make them more perceptive of issues in multicultural education than their White counterparts (Gallavan 1998).

The need for adequate preparation of teachers to work with diverse groups stems from the "demographic revolution" that has been occurring in the United States since the 21st Century (Diaz 2001: 1). The nation's demographics are changing in terms of race, gender, and poverty (e.g. Banks 2001; Hodgkinson 2002; U.S. Census 2000a). Changing school demographics (e.g. Digest of Education Statistics 2004; U.S. Census 2000b) show that though there is an increase in the diversity of the student population, there is less diversity among teachers (Garcia 2002: 34). This suggests that teachers now often have students whose backgrounds are unlike their own. It also supports the need for teachers to possess adequate knowledge, attitudes, and skills to be effective with learners from culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

According to NCATE (2002), teacher education programs must include coursework, field experiences, and clinical practice that help prospective teachers to "acquire the ability to develop meaningful learning experiences for all students" (31). The literature indicates that preservice teachers' attitudes toward issues in multicultural education can be changed positively with the interventions of coursework, field experiences, or both (e.g. Artiles & McClafferty 1998; Baker 1973, 1977; Bennett 1979; Bennett, Niggle, & Stage 1990; Tran, Young, & Di Lella 1994; Warring, Keim, & Rau 1998). Particularly using pre-, mid-, and post-test comparisons, Keim, Warring, and Rau (2001), Henington (1981) and Capella-Santana (2003) found that coursework and field experiences effected significant positive changes in preservice teacher attitudes toward issues in multicultural education.

Similar to the changing national demographics, those of Northwest Arkansas, a semi-urban area where this study was conducted, have also been changing (Lincoln 2003; Malan 2005). Therefore, teachers need to be prepared to effectively serve students from culturally and linguistically diverse groups. This study was conducted in the Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) program of a mid-sized, mid-south university. The purpose of the study was to examine the attitudes of entering preservice teachers toward issues in multicultural education and the effect of the seminar in multicultural education and teaching internship on their attitudes. As no similar studies had been done in this program before, there was a need for such a study. The following research questions guided our investigation:

- 1) What are the attitudes of preservice teachers toward issues in multicultural education as indicated by the Multicultural Attitude Score of the Multicultural Attitude Survey (MAS) on the Pretest (that is, before the

- intervention of the seminar and teaching internship), Posttest 1 (after the intervention of the seminar), and Posttest 2 (during teaching internship)?
- 2) Do the interventions affect preservice teacher attitudes toward issues in multicultural education as measured by Pretest and Posttests?
- 3) During their internship, specifically how did preservice teachers incorporate multicultural education in their classrooms?

Methodology

Participants

Three sections of elementary and one section of middle level preservice teachers in the M.A.T. program in the department of curriculum and instruction participated in the study. A cluster sampling technique was used in the research. The total sample, consisting of 48 preservice teachers, was comprised of 1 male and 47 females. Eleven of the preservice teachers were born between the years 1950-1979 and 37 preservice teachers between the years 1980-1989. Analysis of the data on race indicated that 45 participants were White. One preservice teacher indicated that she was Black or African American; and two reported more than one race, of which one reported White and Black and another White and Filipino.

The M.A.T. program is a fifth-year teacher licensure program. Students seeking their M.A.T. degree must first complete a core of education classes and receive a Bachelor of Science degree in their subject area of interest. M.A.T. students spend their entire fifth year teaching in partnership schools in the area as interns under the direct supervision of their university liaisons (professors and teacher educators) and public school mentor teachers.

Multicultural Attitude Survey (MAS)

Mysore (2004) developed the MAS with expert advice from her co-authors, based on Banks and McGee Banks' (2003) dimensions of multicultural education and hierarchical levels of integration of ethnic content into the curriculum. The culture-centered frameworks for the study are summarized as follows: Culturally responsive teachers possess the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to integrate content with pedagogy for equity to enable students to construct knowledge. They do not confine themselves to the use of contributions and additive approaches in the curriculum, but they will also infuse transformative and social action approaches in the curriculum. Mysore (2004) provides a detailed description of the MAS. The MAS (see Appendix A), consisting of three subscales, is briefly described below.

Subscale 1: The Contributions and Additive Approaches. The contributions approach refers to the contributions of cultural groups that vary on dimensions such as gender, language, and exceptionality. The additive approach refers to the addition of content, concepts, themes, and perspectives with-

out transforming the structure of the curriculum. A few survey examples for the contributions and additive approaches are: topics inserted in the curriculum such as non-American perspectives, writings by non-native English writers, contributions of women scientists, and contributions of persons with disabilities.

Subscale 2: The Transformation and Social Action Approaches. The transformation approach emphasizes transforming the structure of the curriculum to enable students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspective of diverse cultural groups that vary in terms of religion, language, ethnicity, exceptionalities, and gender. The social action approach in the curriculum calls for preservice teachers to make decisions on important social issues and to act upon them to find solutions. An example statement from the survey for this subscale is: "Students should be taught **both** standard American English and the influence of regional and ethnic groups on American English."

Subscale 3: General. General items include misconceptions and fallacies about cultural groups that are prevalent in society and education. An example item from the survey for this subscale is: "The approach of multiculturalism in teaching will foster ethnocentrism more than ever."

Preservice teachers responded to thirty statements using a five-point Likert scale. Posttest 2 of the MAS included an open-ended question: Specifically, how have you incorporated issues in multicultural education in your classroom?

Nineteen of the questions were reverse coded. The Multicultural Attitude Score was the mean of the scores of the three subscales. Higher values of the Multicultural Attitude Score indicate positive attitudes toward issues in multicultural education. The reliability coefficient, Cronbach alpha, for the MAS was .78 in the Pretest, .83 in Posttest 1, and .70 in Posttest 2.

Description of the Seminar

An associate professor taught "Multicultural Issues" to two sections of elementary preservice teachers. Two graduate assistants taught a section of elementary and middle level preservice teachers respectively. All the instructors used Bennett's *Comprehensive Multicultural Education: Theory and Practice* (5th ed.) as the textbook. The two instructors for elementary preservice teachers used in their teaching the film, "Stand and Deliver"; case studies; quick writes; small and large group discussions; and a research presentation. The instructor for middle-level preservice teachers used guest speakers from culturally and linguistically diverse groups in her teaching. She also included the film, "A Class Divided"; reflective journals; article readings; an article presentation; a philosophy paper; activities that required students to consider strategies in their respective subjects to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students; and interviews with a person from a culturally and linguistically diverse

group. The associate professor and the instructor for the middle level preservice teachers used a Multicultural Quiz and a Learning Styles inventory.

Data Collection

The MAS was administered to entering elementary and middle level preservice teachers at the beginning of the five-week summer seminar, Multicultural Issues (Pretest). The survey was again administered toward the end of the seminar (Posttest 1). The interval between administering the Pretest and Posttest 1 ranged from 27 to 29 days.

The teaching internship, which served as another intervention, began in the fall semester. The MAS was again administered to the preservice teachers between the 10th and 12th weeks of a year-long internship (Posttest 2). The days between administering the Pretest and Posttest 2 ranged from 109 to 146 days; and between Posttest 1 and Posttest 2 ranged from 81 to 112 days.

Data Analysis

For each test, the mean scores for the three subscales and the Multicultural Attitude Score were computed for each of the participants. Descriptive statistics and paired *t*-tests were used for data analysis. The open-ended responses in Posttest 2 were categorized according to the steps outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998): conceptualizing, defining categories, and developing categories in terms of their properties and dimensions. The authors define *conceptualizing* as:

The process of grouping similar items according to some defined properties and giving the items a name that stands for that common link.... Once we have some categories, we want to specify their properties. We also want to show how our concepts (categories) vary dimensionally along those properties. Through specification and dimensionalization, we begin to see patterns... (121)

Results

Research Question 1 was answered using descriptive statistics (see Table 1). The means on Posttests 1 and 2 were progressively higher than the means on the Pretest, indicating that teachers' attitudes became more favorable over the period of the interventions.

To answer Research Question 2, a paired *t*-test was used to analyze the data (see Table 2). Comparisons of the means between Pretest and Posttest 1, and Pretest and Posttest 2, indicated significant differences in the means at the .01 level. The findings suggest that the interventions of the seminar on Multicultural Issues and the teaching internship significantly affected preservice teacher attitudes toward issues in multicultural

education. However, there were no significant differences in the means between Posttest 1 and Posttest 2 at the .05 level.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Pretest, Posttest 1, and Posttest 2 for the Preservice Teachers

N = 48	M	SD
Pretest	3.56	.26
Posttest 1	3.68	.28
Posttest 2	3.73	.30

Table 2
t test for the Preservice Teachers for Pretest, Posttest 1, and Posttest 2

Test	M	SD	t	p
N = 48				
Pretest -	3.56	.26	3.62	.00*
Posttest 1	3.68	.28		
Pretest -	3.56	.26	3.15	(.00*)
Posttest 2	3.73	.30		
Posttest 1 -	3.68	.28	.96	.34
Posttest 2	3.73	.30		

*p<.01.

The researchers supplemented the results from the quantitative data with qualitative findings. The third research question asked: During their internship, specifically how did preservice teachers incorporate multicultural education in their classroom? In analyzing the responses to this question, the responses were categorized into two groups: 1) issues in multicultural education in the content and 2) cultural awareness.

Issues in Multicultural Education in the Content

Some preservice teachers infused the cultural component into the content logically, while some others did it in contrived contexts. A few

examples of the responses of preservice teachers that belong to this category are as follows: One preservice teacher wrote, "We have read and discussed books from various cultures." In terms of including content about race, a preservice teacher wrote, "I have brought in some Black history outside of the month of February in our lessons over government, the Declaration of Independence, and the Bill of Rights," [sic]. Another preservice teacher incorporated non-White perspectives into her classroom.

While one preservice teacher wrote that she had not incorporated issues in multicultural education in her class, another wrote that her mentor teacher had "stressed the importance of adhering to her [the in-service teacher's] curriculum, so she will be on schedule when I leave. I plan on implementing multicultural education in my own classroom."

Cultural Awareness

A few preservice teachers enhanced their own awareness of different cultural groups and of their students as well, and a few others were at the other end of the spectrum with limited cultural awareness in teaching for diversity. While some preservice teachers had taught multicultural issues at a superficial level, some others taught multicultural issues as in a civics class and tried to reduce the bias and prejudice of their students. Some examples in this category are provided in this section: A preservice teacher used posters in different languages, while another helped in the exchange of postcards with other kindergarteners from all over the world. One preservice teacher explained to her kindergarteners that people are different in appearances but that it did not change the fact that all were equal. Another preservice teacher stated that she made efforts to communicate with parents with other language backgrounds. None of the responses of middle level preservice teachers fell in this category.

Analysis of the responses also indicated that some preservice teachers had not incorporated issues in multicultural education into their teaching. Three elementary preservice teachers (6%) stated what they proposed to do in their classes; two of the elementary preservice teachers (4%) indicated that the question was "Not applicable;" and four of the elementary preservice teachers (8%) did not respond to the open-ended question.

Discussion

The preservice teachers entering the program appear to be culturally responsive. As shown by their responses, the preservice teachers maintained this attitude at the near conclusion of the five-week seminar and during the 10-12 week period of their teaching internship, when the MAS was administered to them. Our finding that the seminar and internship effect positive attitudinal changes is consistent with the findings of Capella-Santana (2003), Henington (1981), and Keim, Warring, and Rau

(2001) who also found significant positive changes in the attitudes of preservice teachers toward issues in multicultural education as a result of the interventions of coursework or both coursework and field experiences.

In the open-ended responses, the "Not Applicable" category and the nature of some responses of preservice teachers such as "avoiding topics that could be upsetting," however, are causes for concern. These seem to imply that multicultural education is seen as an exotic subject. In terms of content, some preservice teachers appeared to be waiting for an "opportunity" to teach a multicultural topic. Responses such as, "...If I had a student in my class that was a minority, I would research the culture to share that culture with the class..." appear to raise the question of whether preservice teachers equate cultural diversity only in terms of the "ethnoracial pentagon" (Ladson-Billings 2004: 51), and not with other diverse groups delineated by gender or poverty, for example. The responses also seem to point out that preservice teachers do not perceive the need to teach about cultural diversity to White students in their classrooms. This supports the myth that Banks (2002) states, "Multicultural education is for the others" (5).

The open-ended responses also indicated that most preservice teachers were teaching to cultural diversity. Some preservice teachers enhanced their own cultural awareness and that of their students by employing various activities. Some used the "Contributions and Additive" approaches to the curriculum such as displaying posters in different languages, having a fall party in class instead of Halloween, and using words to greet in different languages (Banks & McGee Banks 2003). Some of them had included issues in multicultural education in content-teaching. They had understood, interpreted, and taught concepts such as shared-culture, values, and perspectives of different ethnic groups. They had also applied the cultural difference theory.

In the university where we conducted the study, though there is only one seminar in the M.A.T. program, preservice teachers are taught about issues in cultural diversity throughout their preservice education core courses. Our study supports the idea that an intentional and comprehensive multicultural approach throughout the program will effect substantial attitudinal changes toward issues in multicultural education.

Limitations and Recommendations

One of the limitations of the study was the use of only a survey--an instrument for self-reporting of attitudes. Also, there is a likelihood of some respondents being "test-wise," since the same survey was administered three times. Another limitation of the study was the use of just one open-ended question, also self-reported, to triangulate the findings from the quantitative data. In addition, the survey was not designed to specifically test which approaches used by the instructors were effective or

ineffective. The intervention of the seminar could have possibly sensitized preservice teachers in reporting their attitudes (self-report), without actually affecting their classroom teaching. Also, the researchers were unable to field-test the MAS on a large sample representative of the population for whom the test was intended to determine the statistical properties of items and to eliminate those items that did not meet pre-established criteria.

We have these suggestions for further inquiry. Future studies could use more extensive qualitative approaches such as case studies, observations, and interviews. Cochran-Smith (2003) calls for research that maps back and forth from teacher preparation to K-12 classrooms and from successful classroom practice in diverse classrooms to teacher preparation. Thus, research should focus on the teaching performance of preservice teachers so that the theoretical background of teaching for cultural diversity provided in the teacher education programs can be improved. Zeichner (1996) is of the opinion that there is little evidence that attitudinal changes documented by teacher educators are long-lasting. Therefore, follow-up studies of student teachers as in-service teachers are also needed.

Conclusion and Implications

The attitudes of preservice teachers toward issues in multicultural education may be positively affected by suitable interventions in teacher education programs. However, there is no "quick fix." If teacher education programs must engender substantial attitudinal changes to prepare effective teachers in today's diverse classrooms, a comprehensive approach must be emphasized--beginning from preservice core education courses to content areas, and enhancing both the quantity and quality of multicultural experiences.

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Appendix A
Multicultural Attitude Survey (MAS)

On the following pages, please read each of the statements. Please indicate your response to each of the statements by using the scale below. Please fill in the bubble on the scantron provided.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

1. School entrances should display decorative posters in different languages.
2. Providing equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities means to pretend that the students' disabilities do not exist.
3. Teachers should incorporate **non**-White American perspectives in their teaching.
4. Teachers should intervene in incidents of harassment to girls that happen outside of classrooms and in the premises of the school.
5. Non-Christian holidays should be celebrated in classrooms.
6. Teachers can instruct students about misconceptions, if any, regarding different religions.
7. Teachers should address women's issues on one day such as the International Women's Day.
8. Students should be taught **both** standard American English and the influence of regional and ethnic groups on American English.
9. Textbooks should cover success stories of persons with disabilities rather than the means to their success.
10. Teachers should blend White American and non-White American views in their teaching.
11. Writings in English by non-native English writers should be added in textbooks.
12. Teachers can make changes in the curriculum to view concepts from the perspective of students with disabilities.
13. School curriculum should focus on how various cultural groups have contributed to American society.
14. Teachers should teach the contents in textbooks, even if they are gender-biased.
15. The theory of evolution should be included in the curriculum.
16. Students should be allowed to educate about different religions in the community.
17. The contributions of women scientists should be inserted in the curriculum.
18. Beginning English language learners should be taught by the method of total immersion in English.
19. Short narratives by students with disabilities should be supplemented in text-

books.

20. Curriculum should emphasize how American society emerged from a synthesis of diverse cultural groups.
21. Cultural awareness is relevant for the subject I teach.
22. Hispanics are solely from Mexico.
23. The approach of multiculturalism in teaching will foster ethnocentrism more than ever.
24. I can readily perceive whenever there are one-sided news reports about nations on television.
25. Multicultural education is relevant when there is more than one cultural group present in the classroom.
26. Muslims are Arabs.
27. Class discussions regarding racial issues cause discomfort to me.
28. There has been too much emphasis placed on teaching multicultural groups.
29. I believe I am adequately prepared to teach diverse cultures from the previous courses that I have already taken in education.
30. I believe that the course, "Multicultural Issues" in the MAT program is repetitive.
31. Specifically, how have you incorporated issues in multicultural education in your classroom?