ATTITUDES TOWARD MULTICULTURALISM AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY: THE EFFECTS OF MULTICULTURAL TRAINING

By

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A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Education Specialist
With a Major in

School Psychology

Approved: 6 Semester Credits

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The Graduate School
University of Wisconsin – Stout
May, 2003

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ABSTRACT

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Attitudes Toward Multiculturalism and Cultural Diversity: The Effects of Multicultural Training
(Title)

School Psychology Scott Orme May 2003   72
(Graduate Major) (Research Advisor) (Month/Year) (No. of Pages)

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association: Fifth Edition
(Name of Style Manual Used in this Study)

The schools in the United States are becoming increasingly diverse. This diversity makes it necessary for teachers to recognize the importance of students' heritage and the influence of this heritage on participation in school. A preservice class on multiculturalism can give future teachers knowledge about different cultures. This knowledge, combined with the use of multicultural techniques in the classroom, and positive attitudes may make them more effective teachers. Therefore, it is important to evaluate the effects a multiculturalism class has on preservice teachers' attitudes toward multiculturalism.

The current study is a continuation of previous research conducted by this author (Olson, 2001). The purpose of both studies was to examine preservice teachers' attitudes toward multiculturalism and the change that occurred in these attitudes after completion of multicultural training.

It was hypothesized that the preservice teachers would have a more positive attitude toward multiculturalism and cultural diversity at the end of the multiculturalism class than at the beginning of the class. In addition, the current research compared attitudes of students who took the semester long multiculturalism course versus students who took the course in a condensed format. It was hypothesized that students who were enrolled in the semester-long course would have more positive attitudes than those who were enrolled in a condensed version of the course. The current research also compared attitudes of students who had completed or were currently completing the cross-cultural field experience versus those who had not yet completed this requirement. It was hypothesized that individuals who gained experience working with diverse populations through the cross-cultural field experience would have a more positive attitude toward multiculturalism than those who had not completed the field experience.

In order to examine preservice teachers' attitudes toward multiculturalism the Multicultural Attitude Questionnaire was administered in the Multiculturalism: Issues and Perspectives courses at the University of Wisconsin – Stout in spring 2002. A total of 157 students, most of who were education majors, participated in the study. Results indicate that students had a more positive attitude toward multiculturalism after completing multicultural training than they did prior to completing the training. However, there were very few attitude differences between the attitudes of students who took the semester length course and those who completed the course in a condensed format. Lastly, the completion of the cross-cultural field experience appeared to have no effect on the multicultural attitudes of students.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The demographics of the United States' population are rapidly changing. The growth of African American, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian populations has diversified the racial and ethnic makeup of schools, workplaces and neighborhoods. This growing diversity affects the racial and ethnic composition of the current school-aged population. In 1992, minorities accounted for 32% of all children under the age of 18; in 2035 over half of all children under age 18 will be of a minority race (O'Hara, 1993).

While the United States' student population is growing increasingly diverse, the teacher population continues to be very homogenous. The majority of teachers continue to be Caucasian, middle-class females. Sing estimated that by the year 2050, 95% of the teachers would be white, middle-class females (cited in Kea & Utley, 1998). According to Neito (1994), this demographic trend in education has a significant impact on all children. When children do not get the perspective of a minority teacher all children will lose a possible perspective on life, and minority children loose possible role models. In addition, biases, racism, and stereotypes are more likely to continue in a school that does not offer its children a diverse staff (cited in Kea & Utley, 1998).

Because of the increasing racial and ethnic diversity of the United States' population it is important for school personnel to realize the influence of their own culture on the way they teach and interact with children. It is also important for school personnel to realize the influence children's culture and race has on the way they learn and interact with others.

Preservice teachers must be educated in a manner that not only allows them to recognize the effect racial and ethnic diversity has on students and the classroom, but also allows them to capitalize on the diversity of students and use this diversity as a resource in the classroom. By educating preservice teachers about multiculturalism these teachers can become advocates for multiculturalism.

Multicultural Education

Multiculturalism can be defined as, "A philosophical position and movement that deems that the gender, ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of a pluralistic society should be reflected in all of the institutionalized structures of educational institutions, including the staff, the norms, and values, the curriculum, and the student body" (Banks & Banks, 1997, p. 435). Multicultural education is the philosophical concept that all children should have an equal opportunity to learn in school, regardless of the children's race, social class, or gender. In other words, it "is the recognition that of our common humanity and of the truth that our differences just make us different, not better or worse than one another" (Elkind, 2000/2001). Along with being a philosophical concept, multicultural education is the reform movement and process through which this philosophical ideal can be achieved (Banks, 1997).

Multicultural education is a concept that is made up of four different components: content integration (the knowledge construction process), prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture and social structure. Each of these components must be addressed before multicultural education can be fully realized. 1) Content integration occurs when teachers use examples from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts.

When a variety of cultures are integrated into the classroom environment and subject matter, students have the opportunity to recognize, acknowledge, and address cultural biases and how these biases influence the way knowledge is constructed. 2) Prejudice reduction can occur through providing students lessons and other classroom activities that help them develop positive attitudes toward different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups. 3) An equity pedagogy can be established when teaching methods take into account the diverse learning style of all students. When the pedagogy takes into account the learning styles of all students, all students have the opportunity for academic success. 4) Lastly, an empowering school culture is one that promotes gender, racial and social class equity. An empowering school culture holds the expectation, for both students and staff, that all individuals will be treated with respect and dignity (Banks, 1997).

Each of these above components must be addressed when modifying the school environment. For multicultural education to be implemented successfully the total school environment must be modified; just modifying one or two areas will not be sufficient (Banks, 1997; Menkart, 1999; Pullen, 2000). For example, textbooks that respect and recognize a wide range of cultures will not be effective in the hands of a teacher who does not respect children's different cultural backgrounds. All elements of the school environment must reflect multicultural ideology for the reform to be successful.

The broad goals of multicultural education are to enhance understanding, build relationships and self-concepts, improve multicultural climates of schools, and implement curricula that encourage multicultural awareness (Solomon, 1996). Multicultural education allows students to see different points of view, gives minority students validation in the classroom, and decreases the amount of prejudice and misunderstanding that occurs between races (Erickson, 1987/1992).

Multicultural education not only educates children about the experiences and histories of students of color but it also encourages students to recognize the social injustices that racial and ethnic minorities face (De La Torre, 1996; Simonson, 1995; Bigelow, 1999). Multicultural education empowers students to change the social inequalities that exist within society (Sleeter & Grant, 1987).

Teachers do more than teach children basic reading, writing, and math skills. Teachers have the power to enhance or discourage a child's educational performance. They also have the responsibility to use children's cultures and experiences as vehicles for learning about academics, each other, and building respect for others. Teachers who value multiculturalism empower students to respect themselves, respect others, and become motivated to change social injustice.

Problem Statement

Students bring to school, not only differing racial and ethnic heritages, but also a wide range of histories, perspectives, experiences, expectations, and approaches to learning. All of these factors will influence children's educational experience (Hixson, 1991). The increasingly diverse student population requires that teachers have a broader range of skills and knowledge to meet these diverse needs of the student body (Bynoe, 1998). It is unacceptable for teachers to have little respect for their students, or to blame poor school performance on the fact that the student did not come prepared to adapt to the school environment (Hixson, 1991).

Teachers must recognize the impact that cultural differences can have on children and children's education. Teachers who are aware of the impacts of cultural differences are more likely to bring children's different cultures into the classroom (Gay, 1994), which offers minority ethnic and racial heritage students the same opportunity for scholastic success as their white

peers (Battistich, Solomon, Kim, Watson & Schaps, 1995). Not only do teachers have the responsibility to integrate all children's cultural and ethnic heritages into the classroom to benefit the minority students; but, through seeing diversity as a cultural resource teachers can use the differing experiences and knowledge of all students to further each child's education and multicultural knowledge and acceptance (Hixson, 1991).

Multicultural education is very important because it is the tool to change teacher thinking to maximize student learning (Bynoe, 1998). Multicultural education can alter preservice teachers' attitudes towards multiculturalism and the acceptance of diversity, which may encourage them to bring more multicultural experiences into the classroom (Hixson, 1991). The purpose of this study is to examine the multicultural attitudes of preservice teachers and the change that occurred in these attitudes after completion of multicultural training. The subjects were a cluster sample of college students who were enrolled in Multiculturalism: Issues and Perspectives classes during spring 2002. The students completed the Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire both at the beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester. It was hypothesized that the preservice teachers would have a more positive attitude toward multiculturalism and cultural diversity at the end of the multiculturalism class than at the beginning of the class. In addition, the current research compared attitudes of students who took the semester long multiculturalism course versus students who took the course in a condensed format. The current research also compared attitudes of students who had completed the cross-cultural field experience versus those who had not yet completed this requirement. It was hypothesized that individuals who gained experience working with diverse populations through the cross-cultural field experience would have a more positive attitude toward multiculturalism than those who had not completed the field experience.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The demographics of the United States are changing. Individuals from all areas of the world are populating every area of the United States. These individuals bring different cultures, values, religions, and languages that interact with and change the communities in which they live. As America continues to diversify, our youth must be taught how to interact with others who may be different from themselves. It has become the schools' responsibility to teach both minority and non-minority students the academics and social skills they will need to function in the ever-changing world. Unfortunately, the monocultural curriculum, currently used in the majority of schools, is not adequate (Hughes, 1996/1997). It focuses on Eurocentric ways of communicating, understanding, and interpreting the past and the present. Monocultural curriculums place little regard on the experiences of and interpretations made by children whose heritage is not of European decent. The inadequacy of the current curriculum can be seen by the high school failure rate of many minority youth (Burstein & Cabello, 1989), and through the small amount of educating done about communication, cultural appreciation, and the ability to value difference (Hughes, 1996/1997). It is only when schools educate students about cultural and ethnic differences that these differences between people will begin to be respected. It is important for schools and teachers to be knowledgeable about and to implement the principles of multicultural education, so that Caucasian and minority students can receive the education that will best prepare them to function in a diverse environment.

This chapter will define the term multiculturalism, discuss the history and legislation of multiculturalism, along with the differences between traditional and multicultural pedagogy.

The importance of multicultural teacher training and the effects of teachers' multicultural awareness on students' learning will be described. The influence of a multicultural school environment on the student body will be explained. Lastly, different methods of how a multicultural school environment can be created will be discussed.

Definition of Multiculturalism

First, the term "multiculturalism" will be defined, along with differentiation between "cultural diversity" and "multiculturalism." Some critics of multiculturalism argue that it focuses on only the needs of minority students and not the needs of students with European heritage; however, this accusation is false. Multiculturalism realizes the needs of all children in the classroom, not just the needs of students with ethnic and racial minority heritage (Simonson, 1995). Although multiculturalism *is* concerned about creating opportunities for ethnic minority youth, it is also concerned with empowering *all* youth through cross-cultural interaction and teaching all children to respect differences between cultures (Bernard, 1991).

Multiculturalism versus cultural diversity. There is confusion in the literature and among individuals about the difference between multiculturalism and cultural diversity. It is important to note that these concepts are not synonymous. Essentially, the difference between cultural diversity and multiculturalism is people's attitudes towards diversity. Multiculturalism not only respects differences between people, but also believes these differences are necessary for a healthy society. Cultural diversity, on the other hand, is the phenomenon of racially, culturally, and ethnically different people inhabiting the same geographic area. Cultural diversity occurs when differences between people are seen from a hierarchical perspective; one group of people is valued over another group of people based upon specific characteristics.

When cultural diversity without multiculturalism occurs, the children who are viewed to be at the bottom of the hierarchy are especially at risk. But when this viewpoint permeates the school environment none of the children's needs are being met (Robinson, 1992). When children are not taught to respect others' heritages, the educational system is not appropriately preparing them to function in the global environment.

Goals of Multiculturalism

The central goal of multicultural education is to provide equity and equality in education. Multicultural education looks at issues surrounding race, class, gender, sexuality, and disability and also recognizes the issues that come out of these cultures (Schofield, 1993). While some individuals believe that emphasizing differences in the curriculum will inflame division, research offers the opposite conclusion. If the schools' curriculum silences students' experiences, differences, and criticism against the way things are, resistance will be intensified (De La Torre, 1996). Helping children know, understand, and accept differences can create a more unified environment within the school (Elkind, 2000/2001).

Multiculturalism in the Educational Environment

There are a variety of reasons why a multicultural educational environment is becoming increasingly important. The diversifying population of the United States and the emergence of a global society make it inevitable that children will interact and work with individuals from a variety of cultures. Multicultural education prepares youth to work with people from diverse backgrounds. It also encourages the development and application of critical thinking skills. When children develop critical thinking it allows them to understand issues from a variety of perspectives and also gives them the insight needed to define and address social problems

(Rothenberg, 2000). Because multiculturalism is very important, schools must align themselves with the characteristics identified as inherent in multicultural schools.

According to Banks (cited in Gallagher, 1998) there are five characteristics that are inherent in schools with a multicultural environment. The characteristics include: content integration, knowledge construction, pedagogy, prejudice reduction, and an empowering school culture. Content integration is the expansion of the curriculum to acknowledge the experiences of diverse groups, not just the experiences and point of view of the dominant culture. Through content integration, knowledge construction takes place. Knowledge construction occurs when teachers take the responsibility to help students understand how individuals' beliefs are based upon their cultural and ethnic heritage and life experiences. Teachers who strive to implement a multicultural environment also understand that the pedagogy used in the classroom must include strategies that lead to higher achievement for minority students. Traditional instructional strategies often include concepts or methods of instruction that are not familiar to students whose heritage is not of European decent. Teachers who value multiculturalism also strive to reduce prejudice through helping students develop more positive attitudes about people of different races and ethnicities. Lastly, teachers need to strive to create an empowering school environment through examining the impact of school policies on students with different backgrounds and creating policies that help all students without hindering and unfairly discriminating against some students.

Discriminating school policies can create a large amount of conflict within the schools. School policies that discriminate between groups essentially create two or more separate groups. If individuals are divided into groups they tend to favor the in-group and discriminate against the out-group, even if these groups have not previously experienced conflict.

For example, teachers who create reading groups where each group is comprised of students of different ethnic heritages, even if ethnicity was not the basis for creation of the groups, may create discrimination between the two groups (Boutte, 2000).

Thus, if one creates racial or ethnically homogenous groups through school policies that resegregate students, already existing tendencies toward stereotyping and discrimination will be magnified. Great care should be taken to avoid institutional policies that lead to resegregation and an effort should be made to adopt policies that encourage interaction between all children (Schofield, 1993). A multicultural school environment assures all students are encouraged to respect the differences between people. Considering this country's history of racism it is important to understand the historical development and foundation of multicultural education.

History of Multicultural Education

The multicultural movement grew out of the civil rights movement during the 1960's. People of color demanded that schools reform so that the school curricula reflected their experience and history. The minority groups also demanded that the schools hire more teachers and administrators that were people of color so that minority children would have role models. In the 1960's and 1970's single group studies were implemented. Holidays, ethnic celebrations, and elective ethnic study courses were put into effect (Erickson, 1987/1992). These types of ethnic celebrations actually reinforce stereotypes and make minority cultures seem exotic or create the illusion that these groups only existed in the past (De La Torre, 1996; Menkart, 1999). In addition, by celebrating different cultures separately from the Anglo curriculum, the view of the dominant group is maintained and the knowledge of the other racial and ethnic groups was selectively passed on to the students (De La Torre, 1996).

While single group studies actually amplified the differences between groups, the goal of multicultural education is to amplify the similarities between groups. Multicultural education is not a one-day celebration of a single ethnic group, but it permeates the entire curriculum year-round. Children given a multicultural education should have the ability to recognize similarities between groups of people, while recognizing and respecting the differences between these same groups. The multicultural education movement's goal is to modify and enhance the school environment so that all children have an equitable opportunity for academic success, to educate students about social inequities, and give them the skills to challenge these inequities (Solomon, 1996). These goals of multiculturalism need to be achieved by the youth if they are to become successful adults in the increasingly diverse and global environment. Although the importance of multicultural education is recognized by individuals, it has received little legislative support. Legislation affecting the education of minority groups and the goals of multicultural education will be discussed in the following section.

Multiculturalism and Legislation

The need for multicultural education can be seen in classrooms across the United States. Unfortunately, government aid and legislation do not parallel the need for the implementation of multicultural education. Few types of federal legislation have increased the accessibility and quality of education available to minority individuals. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibited discrimination in schools although it did not ensure that the unique needs of students with various cultural and ethnic backgrounds would be met. Other types of federal legislation have been created, such as the Bilingual Education Act of 1968, the Emergency Immigrant Education Act of 1984, and the Indian Education Act of 1988.

A few federal laws have been enacted that deal with the rights of ethnic minorities to have a quality education; but, overall, most federal legislation does not promote multicultural education (Gollnick, 1995).

While federal legislation can address the issue of accessibility to public education, states have the ability to address a wider range of issues. States' legislative ability can have more far-reaching effects than the laws created by the federal government. A review of state legislation, policies, and guidelines indicates that all states follow federal mandates related to the education of low-income students, migrant students, and students with disabilities. In addition, Wisconsin is one of the only six states that singled out an ethnic group, Native Americans, to be studied in a K-12 curriculum. Wisconsin also requires teacher candidates to develop competencies in human relations. As part of the competency requirement, teacher candidates must understand contributions of and lifestyles of various racial, cultural, and economic groups, individuals with disabilities, and individuals of both genders, and to have 50 hours of experience working with diverse groups of people (Gollnick, 1995).

While many states do mandate that teachers gain experience in understanding and working with minority groups, it is important for teacher education programs to take the initiative to implement these mandates. In order for multiculturalism to truly become a part of America's schools, teacher education programs must emphasize the importance of multiculturalism to preservice teachers. Teachers are seen as important agents of change and, as a result, effective teacher training programs and multicultural strategies are essential to this change process (Hughes, 1996/1997). Thus, various types of teacher training programs and strategies will be described in the following section.

Teacher Training

Although teachers' job duties are broadening and diversifying, teachers are often unprepared to meet the expectations of their new and expanded roles (Hughes, 1996/1997). Teachers are expected to be aware of diversity and to use multicultural teaching strategies and practices in the classroom. However, teachers cannot share and use information they do not know (Le Roux, 2001). According to Haberman and Post (cited in Bradfield-Kreider, 2001) only eight percent of teachers are competent in multiculturalism. The types of teacher training strategies and programs used influence preservice teachers' abilities to appropriately bring multiculturalism into their future classrooms.

Preservice teachers are often educated about a variety of ethnic, cultural, and religious groups in a manner that makes these groups appear self-contained. Educating preservice teachers about different ethnic and cultural groups in isolation can lead teachers to believe that all children from a given ethnic minority group will behave in specific ways learned at home. Teaching about ethnic groups in isolation does not take into account how interactions with teachers and peers in school can influence children's thoughts and behaviors. In addition, by portraying different ethnic and cultural groups as self-contained, preservice teachers are not prepared to help children from different groups learn to interact and communicate with one another (Montecinos, 1995). Teachers must reflect upon their own assumptions about issues of racism and sexism before they are able to understand how students' differences affect perceptions of themselves. Preservice teachers who do not question their own race and class privileges or, perhaps have never had to "look at themselves" believe that issues of inequality cannot be overcome (De La Torre, 1996), and therefore are ill-prepared to deal with diversity and possible prejudice in their classroom.

In fact, a study by King found that many preservice teachers displayed dysconscious racism. Dysconscious racism is "the uncritical habit of mind, such as attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs, which justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given" (cited in De La Torre, 1996). Dysconscious racism may exist because of the struggle that preservice training programs face in defining multicultural education, changing preservice teachers' attitudes and beliefs, and developing competencies for a diverse classroom (Hughes, 1996/1997).

One method of combating dysconscious racism is to assist preservice teachers in examining their attitudes about whiteness. Whiteness, or white privilege, is a social construct that is supported and maintained by institutions and individuals (He & Phillion, 2002). It is "a system and ideology of white dominance and superiority that marginalizes and oppresses people of color, ensuring existing privileges for white people in the United States" (Mcintyre, 2002). Many times white privilege is not recognized by Caucasian individuals in society. Many white people see white privilege as the normal way society functions. Often, preservice teachers express resistance to the concept of white privilege, or they believe that it is not oppressive to other groups of people, or they do not hold themselves responsible for the continuation and support of white privilege. An example of whiteness can be seen by the "pull yourself up by your boot straps" mentality that white individuals apply to everyone, regardless of preexisting societal or financial limitations of some. It is important to help Caucasian teachers to recognize themselves as racial beings and see how their lives and experiences have been influenced by their race (Mcintyre, 2002). Preservice teachers must be educated about the existence and effects of white privilege. It is also important that they are educated about the effect of white privilege on those of other heritages.

"What is missing in the belief that individual merit and hard work will bring you 'success' is the fact that institutional, educational, and societal structures keep people of color 'so far behind the starting line (in so many areas of U.S. society) that most of the outcomes will be racially foreordained' (Hackner, 1995, p. 34)" (Mcintyre, 2002, p. 40).

   Teacher training strategies.   There are a variety of methods teacher training programs may use to teach students about multiculturalism: the neutrality approach, the similarity approach, the diversity approach, or the "diversimilarity" approach. The neutrality approach ignores the issues and topics of race and ethnicity. This approach does not consider how culture and ethnicity influences various societal issues. This approach eliminates the controversy and discussion that may be involved in discussing race. By not considering the effect of race and ethnicity on individuals and society, this approach minimizes the possibility of discussion and change within the classroom (Ofori-Dankwa & Lane, 2000).

   The similarity approach emphasizes how various cultures are alike and minimizes the discussion of cultural diversity and of racism. This approach allows the "melting pot" theory to dominate class discussions and explanations. On the other hand, the diversity approach emphasizes how various cultures differ from one another. The emphasis on difference does not promote understanding between groups nor does it recognize the vast number of similarities there are between people. The "diversimilarity" approach stresses cultural differences and similarities (Ofori-Dankwa & Lane, 2000). It recognizes the similarities between people along with the social inequalities of the past and present, and contributions made by individuals and groups of all backgrounds.

Preservice teacher training must be transformed if teachers are going to have the skills and abilities to meet the needs of student populations. The first step is to recognize that a multicultural approach to education is not an addition to core classes; it is a necessary and integral part of the educational process that will lead to effective teachers. It must also be recognized that multicultural awareness is important not only for educators who plan to teach in schools comprised of minority students, but it is also just as important for teachers who plan to or will work in a school whose student population is comprised almost completely of Caucasian students. These students must also understand and appreciate cultural diversity, and teachers must be prepared to illustrate the importance of cultural awareness to students who may have not had the opportunity to witness cultural differences firsthand. Lastly, preservice education must also incorporate diverse cultural experiences with all kinds of students and schools. All teachers must gain experience in working with diverse student bodies (Hixson, 1991). Preservice teachers are often unable to incorporate multiculturalism into the classroom and often feel unprepared to teach children from a minority background (Sleeter, 2001). Cross-cultural experiences will allow teachers to develop an understanding of various cultural groups, along with helping teachers understand and create instructional strategies that take into consideration the diverse learning styles of all students (Hixson, 1991).

Along with educating preservice teachers about learning styles of students, multicultural teacher education must also help preservice teachers recognize the inequalities that may exist in schools. Preservice teachers must have the ability to recognize when differences between individuals lead to differential treatment. They must also be instilled with the need to change these inequalities (Montecinos, 1995).

"Multicultural education of preservice teachers must make them aware of how all of their behaviors either aid in social transitions or maintain the status quo" (Montecinos, 1995). When teachers take social action against discrimination, they have the ability to change students' self-concepts and empower students to attempt to change their environment. On the other hand, teachers who maintain the status quo instill a sense of hopelessness in students. Teachers' multicultural attitudes have powerful effects on their students.

Current university policies often require multicultural education for those entering the field of education. However, many students enrolled in a multicultural course may be resistant to the concept of multiculturalism or training in this area. Resistance is seen in students who dismiss the course content, are silent, are absent from class, or who are hostile to the professor or other class members. At the center of resistance is the refusal to engage in discussion. Multicultural acceptance cannot be forced onto those who are resistant to learning and refuse to discuss their feelings and attitudes (Carpenter, 2000). How can teacher educators minimize the resistance to multiculturalism and make multiculturalism courses as effective as possible?

The relationship between professors and students influences the type and amount of resistance found in the classroom. The professor must establish a safe and trusting environment so students feel able to explore their attitudes and beliefs. One very important aspect of creating and maintaining a safe environment is having smaller class sizes. In this way students are able to get to know one another on a personal level. In addition, smaller class sizes help everyone get an opportunity to participate in class discussions and encourages quieter students to take part in these discussions (Carpenter, 2000; Peterson, Cross, Johnson, & Howell, 2000).

While maintaining a safe environment, the professor must also push students beyond their comfort zones and help them realize that multiculturalism is more than just being nice to everyone and being open minded. If students believe multiculturalism is just being nice and open minded, they will not challenge their beliefs or attitudes (Carpenter, 2000). Teacher training programs must promote self-awareness and awareness of the influence of culture and racial heritage, sensitivity to the diversity of students, understanding of other cultures, and understanding communication across cultures (Le Roux, 2001).

Professors must also be knowledgeable about the topic of multiculturalism and tolerant of others' views and opinions. In a study conducted by Anderson, MacPhee, and Govan (2000) students who indicated that, they felt the multiculturalism course was a waste of time and those who indicated an increase in negative or stereotypic attitudes felt that the professors were not tolerant of their viewpoints and that professors were not adequately informed about multicultural issues.

Research shows that varieties of interactive teaching strategies are effective in raising multicultural awareness (Sleeter, 2001). Active participation in the class and in learning resulted in students with the greatest increase in self-awareness (Anderson, MacPhee, & Govan, 2000). A combination of strategies, such as lecture, guest speakers, class discussion, and experiential learning gives students a variety of methods and opportunities for learning. However, lectures only about specific cultural groups may actually increase stereotypes about these groups (Sleeter, 2001).

Multicultural classes should discuss current controversies in education and hear multiple points of view on these issues so that they can make an informed decision or opinion regarding these issues.

It is also important to invite guest speakers so preservice educators can gain ideas and information from those who incorporate multicultural information and perspectives into their curriculum (Carpenter, 2000).

Successful multicultural training also includes supervising cross-cultural field experiences and emersions into other cultures (Bradfield-Kreider, 2001). Field experiences in combination with classroom training have had mixed research results. Some research, however, shows that a multiculturalism class in combination with a field experience leads to a positive attitude change and a greater willingness to seek employment in areas of high cultural diversity. However, if the actual field experience, issues brought to the fore through this field experience, and institutional racism are not addressed in a classroom environment, a field experience may lead to an increase in stereotypical thinking. If students' misconceptions and preconceptions are not addressed at the classroom level, the field experience will be interpreted based upon preconceptions and misconceptions and these will be strengthened (Sleeter, 2001).

Cultural emersions foster a greater understanding of what it is like to be a minority and also a greater understanding of other cultures (Bradfield-Kreider, 2001). Emersion experiences increase preservice teachers' self-confidence and also lead to a change in attitudes regarding working with minority students. These experiences allow preservice teachers to learn from the community as well as their teaching experiences (Sleeter, 2001). The type and quality of preservice teachers' training influence how they bring multiculturalism into their classroom.

Types of Multicultural Education

There are several approaches to integrating ethnic and racial content into a school curriculum. The different approaches include: Contributions Approach, Additive Approach, Transformation Approach, and the Decision-Making and Social Action Approach.

The different approaches are occasionally used as steps when beginning to integrate a multicultural environment in a school (Banks, 1988). According to Banks, the school may begin by implementing the Contributions Approach and gradually modify the structure of the environment to move through the approaches, eventually reaching the Decision-Making and Social Action Approach. One should be warned against implementing one of the three lower-level approaches without the intention of modifying the environment to eventually reach the higher order approach. The lower-level approaches have flaws, which may eventually lead to further discrimination toward groups.

The Contributions Approach is one of the most frequently used approaches. In this approach ethnic heroes and special days are inserted into the mainstream curriculum, while the central part of the curriculum remains unchanged. While this approach is the easiest to integrate into the curriculum, it does not allow students to obtain a global view of ethnic and cultural groups because different groups are viewed as just an addition to the regular curriculum. In addition, the Contributions Approach does not address issues such as victimization, oppression, racism or poverty. Because of its failure to address issues of discrimination and inequality, the Contributions Approach trivializes different cultures and reinforces stereotypes and misconceptions (Bank, 1988).

The Additive Approach is implemented when various ethnic heritage themes and perspectives are added to the basic curriculum without changing the curriculum in a significant way. This approach shares the disadvantages of the Contributions Approach; it also fails to help students view society from diverse ethnic perspectives (Banks, 1988). In addition, the Additive Approach and Contribution Approach focus on adding information about many cultural groups to the curriculum.

These approaches either focus on the differences between groups so students are prepared to accept those who are different from themselves, or they teach students that even though people are different on the outside they are the same on the inside (Rothenberg, 2000). Adding information about many cultures does not allow students to gain the critical thinking skills needed to challenge the inequalities and discrimination that exists in society. Teachers who revise their curriculum by including literature and histories of women and peoples of color do not validate these people's voices; the basic assumptions and values of the dominant group remain unchallenged and unchanged despite the ethnic content (De La Torre, 1996). As one can see, multicultural education is more than a class, teaching style, or curriculum. Its goal is attitudinal change. Thus, it is something that must penetrate every aspect of the educational environment (Marulis, 2000). True multicultural education teaches people to think critically and identify the various perspectives that form knowledge (Rothenberg, 2000).

While the Contribution and Additive Approaches recognize and teach about diverse groups of people, the Transformation and Decision-Making and Social Action Approaches teach individuals to critically think about how differences between groups have been socially constructed and interpreted (Rothenberg, 2000). The Transformation Approach changes the basic assumptions of the curriculum and enables students to see concepts from several points of view. It also infuses perspectives and content from various groups, which help increase the students' understanding of society and different cultures. The highest-level approach, Decision-Making and Social Action Approach, includes all elements of the Transformation Approach but adds the requirement that students must make decisions and take action on issues related to the concepts that they have studied.

The major goals of the Decision-Making and Social Action Approach are to teach students thinking and decision making skills, which will empower them to think critically about white privilege, society, and racism and prepare them to initiate and support social change (Banks, 1988). The Decision-Making and Social Action Approach not only teaches children to respect differences between people, but also prepares them to recognize inequality and discrimination in the school and work place and empowers them to take action against the discrimination. The goals and strategies of multicultural education are very different from the traditional approach to education as will be seen below.

Traditional Pedagogy Compared to Multicultural Pedagogy

Traditional, reductionistic pedagogy is currently the dominant pedagogy used in schools (Rivera & Poplin, 1995). In traditional pedagogy the role of the teacher is to dispense knowledge (Hixson, 1991) that has previously been constructed by others. Students are rewarded or punished based upon the quantity of information learned (Rivera & Poplin, 1995). The learning process, in traditional pedagogy, is not a process commonly used in any other part of a child's life. Traditional pedagogy organizes lessons around a recitation script, in which teachers ask "known information questions," students answer these questions, and then are praised or punished by the teacher based upon their responses. Conversations between students and teachers are created through teachers quizzing students about the information they have learned (Mehan, Lintz, Okamoto, & Wills, 1995).

As you can see, practices in place in the classrooms are usually not parallel to the communication practices used in family structures or any other institution. Thus, children's ways of learning and doing that have been taught to them at home often conflict with the ways of learning and doing that are practiced in the typical American classroom.

Cultural mismatches in schools create significant barriers to student success (Hixson, 1991; Boutte, 2000) because schools are created to serve a homogenous, Caucasian student population and not students from a wide variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Hixson, 1991). A multicultural approach to instruction requires that teachers learn how to assess and build on the personal, cultural and social strengths and skills that students bring to the classrooms, that they help students build on those strengths, and that they help students see connections between curricular content, their current realities, and their future possibilities (Hixson, 1991). Teachers must become sensitive to and knowledgeable about different teaching and learning styles, the interaction between these, and how to fairly assess children who differ on these factors (Le Roux, 2001).

Multicultural instruction means teachers must understand that student diversity is a resource and it should be the foundation around which instruction should be organized. In order to best serve the student population, teachers need to create collaborative classroom environments, which allow students to become active participants in their own learning. Teachers no longer can assume the role of the dispenser of information, but need to act as coaches and resources that assist students in gathering their own knowledge (Hixson, 1991). The new role of teachers and new student body creates the need for standards to measure the academic success of the school environment.

Multiculturalism and educational standards. Currently the use of educational standards is a topic of debate within the educational community. One example of a controversial topic is the use of high stakes testing. High stake testing can be defined as the use of students' standardized test scores to make decisions regarding grade promotion and graduation.

Some believe high stakes testing is a good measure of students' learning and teachers' performance. Others believe that high stakes testing is biased against some students. How do strict standards fit into multicultural education? To effectively meet the needs of all students, standards and instruction must take into account the needs of all students (Kluth & Straut, 2001).

Kluth and Straut (2001) developed a set of conditions to ensure that standards are appropriate and relevant for all children. According to these authors, standards should be developmentally appropriate and flexible. Standards must be created to measure students' growth from their current abilities to their future accomplishments not strictly to compare them to their peers. Standards should also be composed of many assessment tools and children's performance should not be based upon a single test; a greater and more comprehensive amount of information can be gathered using a variety of assessments. These assessments may include items such as students' portfolios, journals, classroom observations, and student-teacher interviews.

It is also important to ensure that all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or disability, have access to challenging and stimulating educational material and that those standards are based upon this material. It is unfair to provide children with high needs or different needs material that is not interesting, relevant, or challenging to them. Lastly, the school community should work as a team when determining standards, how to measure the achievement of standards, and methods used to assist children in achieving standards. Having teachers, parents, and students involved in creating standards helps guarantee that they are fair and equitable. In addition, having students involved helps them remain motivated in meeting standards. Standards and the information obtained from them should not be considered only in relation to the student's performance.

The information gained from standards can be used to understand the current needs and weaknesses of the educational system so that strategies can be created to help meet these needs (Kluth & Straut, 2001). One method to ensure that children's education and social needs is being met is through the creation of a multicultural classroom.

   Creating a multicultural classroom. While the need for multicultural classrooms is high, there are actually relatively few of them in the United States. One must examine the reasons for the lack of truly multicultural classrooms to overcome the following barriers. First, the change from the well-known and dominating Eurocentric curriculum to a multicultural curriculum is slow. It takes time to educate teachers about the need for multiculturalism, the theory and practice of multiculturalism, and for it to be implemented in the classroom. Secondly, many educators do not believe that multicultural education is necessary in homogenous, Caucasian populations. Finally, many teachers do not understand what multicultural education is and how to implement it (Boutte, 2000). Therefore, the lack of multicultural classrooms in the United States is primarily due to a lack of understanding and knowledge by those expected to implement it. Teachers must be educated regarding the importance of multiculturalism for them to properly implement its ideology in their classrooms. There are many considerations teachers must make in order to create a multicultural environment for children's learning.

   Teachers must evaluate their classrooms to ensure that their curriculum and practices are in line with multicultural ideology. It is important that teachers examine their curriculum for things such as stereotypes, racism, discrimination, and bias. One must consider each resource and every classroom material for what it is saying to the students (Marulis, 2000). Often times children gain information from stereotypes contained within the curriculum or a lack of representation contained within the curriculum.

Teachers must note these discrepancies and bring information into the classroom that will give students of all backgrounds representation, familiarity, and understanding of the course content.

Teachers must also ensure that multicultural ideology is incorporated into every aspect of the curriculum. Multiculturalism is not a specific unit or class period for its ideas and ideology can not be separated from the rest of the school day (Marulis, 2000). For students to truly understand multiculturalism, its concepts and ideology must be present in every aspect of the classroom. In this way, students are presented with and encouraged to discuss past and current inequalities and unjust practices. It also prepares students to apply critical thinking and multicultural understanding to current and future debates.

Not only should the curriculum and the course content be commensurate with multicultural ideology, but so should the teacher's attitudes, beliefs, and actions. Teachers must present their students with an attitude of caring and openness so all students feel accepted and are able to learn to accept others (Marulis, 2000). It is also necessary for teachers to realize that because of different opportunities and differing home environments children need different types of stimuli and environments in which to learn. Treating all children equally does not meet their individual needs, but treating them equitably does. Children do not need equal treatment; they need equitable opportunities to learn (Boutte, 2000).

Cooperative learning groups in multicultural pedagogy. Cooperative learning groups are one technique, if implemented correctly, which will help meet the learning needs of all students. The method in which they are implemented also influences whether or not they will meet the goals and objectives of multicultural education. In fact, cooperative learning is used by both the traditional and multicultural pedagogies, but for different reasons. Depending on the reason cooperative learning is used, the strategy and the content, the practice may be very different.

Unfortunately, teachers are often taught methods of instruction with no theoretical reasoning attached. Teachers need to understand both theory and practices behind multicultural education for it to be successful in the classroom. Just implementing the strategies, without any reference to the theory will not change classroom dynamics nor will it empower students of all ethnic and cultural heritages to become active participants in their education (Rivera & Poplin, 1995).

Traditional, reductionistic educators use cooperative learning to teach cooperative behaviors (Rivera & Poplin, 1995). Traditional educational strategies place children into teams, and emphasize the completion of the task, require no interdependence between team members, and include no way to assess individual performance. Placing children into groups and telling them to cooperate does not ensure that they know how to cooperate with one another nor does it ensure that they will cooperate even if they know how (Siciliano, 2001).

On the other hand, multicultural educators use cooperative learning groups because they are more compatible with cultures that value cooperation, and thus assist the learning process of students from these cultures. The goals of cooperative learning in a multicultural environment are to have children work together in small groups to achieve positive interdependence, and individual accountability (Siciliano, 2001).

Cooperative learning has five principles: positive interdependence, face-to-face promotive interaction, individual accountability, social skills, and group processing. Positive interdependence is achieved when students have to rely on one another to achieve the desired outcome. Within group processes can be put in place that will help cooperative learning groups achieve positive interdependence: Cooperative learning groups can be given a team goal which requires them to agree on strategies used to solve problems; assigning each student a role within the group requires that the team members rely on one another for task completion; requiring the

individuals in the group to share resources requires cooperation among group members; and joint rewards encourages group members to help one another (Siciliano, 2001).

Face-to-face promotive interaction among students exists when they help and support each other's learning and success. Individual accountability is created when results of each individual's performance are given to the individual and the team; by giving the team the results of an individual's performance the team can better assess who needs help with the materials and assignments. Social skills are essential for cooperative learning. Social skills are used more often when teams are given bonus points each time a member uses specific social skills. Peer evaluations also help students recognize their place within the group and what social skills they need to work on. Lastly, group processing is used to determine if the goals were met, to look at the relationships among group members, and to evaluate the efficacy of the team's functioning (Siciliano, 2001). In order for cooperative learning groups, or any multicultural instructional strategy, to be implemented correctly teachers must be trained in the theory, necessity, and practices of multicultural education. Teachers must be trained so they have the ability to individualize learning programs to attempt to meet all children's needs.

Effects of Teachers' Level of Multicultural Awareness

Teachers' views of multicultural education. Teachers view multiculturalism in a variety of different ways. In a study conducted by Banister and Maher (1998) four themes were identified around teachers' conceptions of multicultural education: 1) Multiculturalism means diversity; 2) Multiculturalism is accepting difference and encouraging assimilation 3) We don't need "it" here, and 4) We lack the resources and the means. *Multiculturalism means diversity* was presented through teachers' descriptions of their student populations as culturally diverse and therefore multicultural.

When teachers understand multiculturalism as classroom diversity it is reduced to superficial elements and does not increase students awareness of one another or society. The attitudes that *multiculturalism is difference and the melting pot* occured when teachers spoke of their desire to value differences in conjunction with their description of how distinctions fade as cultures become integrated. This melting pot theory has maintained Western values in schools not allowing integration of ideas from other cultures. For these teachers, respect for other cultures meant learning about them with an underlying assumption that they eventually melt into the dominant culture.

Teachers who said they did not need multiculturalism at their school because their student population was homogenous expressed the *we don't need "it" here* view. This attitude increases Caucasian students' Eurocentric view by creating an in-group/out-group attitude and atmosphere within the school. Teachers who claimed that they lacked the resources and the means stated that they did not have time, materials, or support from administrators. It is important that teachers receive support for implementing multicultural curriculum through release time, wider availability of resources, and administrative support. By viewing multiculturalism as something that must take up space in the curriculum at the expense of more important agendas, teachers can dismiss the possibilities of the multicultural perspective.

The influence of teachers' multiculturalism on students' learning. The understanding of multiculturalism and use of multicultural curricula also have direct effect on youths' academic success. When students' different cultures, tools, language, and symbols are used in the classroom, learning is made easier and the students become competent at functioning in more than one culture. When the learning styles and needs of children are considered, they are more likely to be successful in the educational environment.

Recognition, acceptance, and sensitivity to cultural and ethnic factors lead to schools with lower rates of dropouts and problem behaviors (Tan, 2001).

Hillard (cited in Kea & Utley, 1998) asserted that the largest source of variation in school achievement among students is variation in the quality of teaching services. Many students of color view teachers (especially those from the dominant culture) as greater threats of racist attitudes than fellow students, because teachers have the authority and power to overrule them. In addition, when teachers allow racist attitudes to permeate the school, the safety of minority students is threatened (McLean-Donaldson, 1994).

A critical step in providing multicultural education involves the cultural awareness and sensitivity of teachers (Ponterotto, Baluch, Greig, & Rivera, 1998). Teachers interact with students on a daily basis, so their perceptions of multiculturalism are very important. A teacher's beliefs may influence that teacher's actions in ways he or she may not be aware of. A teacher's beliefs can be shown by whom the teacher calls on and whom he does not, and who is praised and for what (Kendall, 1996, pp. 5-6). In addition, teachers' unconscious nonverbal signals can significantly influence a child's self-concept and self-expectations (Robinson, 1992). Teachers' daily contact and interaction with students may have a long-term impact on students' beliefs and attitudes. Students internalize the subtle messages portrayed in the teachers' actions and statements (Boutte, 2000).

Gilbert and Gay found that teachers' attitudes and perceptions of students influence teachers' expectations and treatment of these students (cited in Larke, Wiseman, & Bradley, 1990). Race, along with sex and social class, are factors that can influence teachers' conscious and unconscious expectations of students (Larke et al., 1990; Le Roux, 2001).

Studies by Gay (1994) have found that both Mexican American students and African American students were not given as many opportunities to participate in classroom interactions with teachers. These students had fewer and easier questions asked of them, had less time to give a response to the questions, and were given less praise for a response than the Euro-American students. A study by Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell (1999) found that teachers' perceptions of students' academic track, attentiveness in class, completion of homework, and effort put into schoolwork was significantly lower for African American students than for white students. Research shows that teachers have lower expectations for ethnic minority youth. Teachers' low expectations get played out in interpersonal interactions, but also in instructional programs, such as allowing access to gifted programs to students who are already performing well academically and giving the watered down curriculum to students who are not performing well academically (Bernard, 1991).

Teachers' expectations can become a self-fulfilling prophecy for the student even when there is no real evidence for the teachers' expectations (Kendall, 1996, p.6). This can be seen through the increasingly poorer performance of minority children the longer that they stay in school. In the early grades the achievement of minority students is similar to the achievement of white students. The longer the minority students stay within the school system, the more their achievement lags behind the achievement of white students (Gay, 1994). Another way that the teacher's beliefs about the abilities of the students can influence the students' academic achievement is through the "Pygmalion effect." The Pygmalion effect describes the fact that people achieve at the level at which they are expected to achieve (Kendall, 1996, p. 6). If a teacher believes that children of color can only perform at a remedial level, these children will perform at this level because this is what is expected of them.

Teachers are in an influential position with respect to students and can communicate significant messages concerning expectations, evaluations, and performance. Children's social learning is influenced by modeling (Kendall, 1996, pp. 5-6). Teachers' multicultural attitudes can influence children's' school performances through teachers' modeling of correct or incorrect behaviors or through teachers' expectations of the abilities and achievements of the minority students. While teachers' multicultural attitudes can be influential on students' academic success; the influence of the overall school environment is also critical to students' academic and social success.

The Importance and Effects of a Multicultural School Environment

Because the school is the major institution of socialization, it is a critical arena in which inequality is perpetuated (Bernard, 1991). Until recently the school has acted as the melting pot, indoctrinating children to the white middle-class culture (Elkind, 2000/2001). However, schools have the ability to spread the ideology of multiculturalism and create an environment and student body that values acceptance or it can create an environment that breeds racism and discrimination. Children are aware of racial differences before entering school, but the school can influence a child's attitudes towards these differences.

Children come to school with preconceived ideas regarding the issue of diversity. In fact, six-month-old infants notice skin color differences and two-year-old children began to ask questions regarding skin color differences. Awareness of racial and ethnic differences develops until the age of nine years. After nine years of age, children's views on diversity tend to remain constant unless altered by life-changing events (Wham, Barnhart, & Cook, 1996). Therefore, it is important for schools to address racial differences early and effectively in the school curriculum, so children can be exposed to positive attitudes towards racial differences.

A study performed by Wham, Barnhart, and Cook (1996) found that without a diversity program children's appreciation of diversity might even decline over the course of a given school year.

Shirley investigated the effects of integrating multicultural activities into English, social studies, and reading curricula on the self-concept, racial attitudes, and achievement of students in racially integrated fifth-and sixth-grade classes. There were no statistically significant changes in the self-concept and achievement levels of African-American students in the experimental groups. However, the racial attitudes of the white students in the experimental groups became more positive than the racial attitudes of the white students in the control groups (as cited in Banks, 1991). It is not only important, but also necessary, to evaluate teachers and students' levels of multicultural awareness. Only through the proper implementation of multiculturalism can all students receive the education that is necessary for their success (Simonson, 1995). Many preservice teachers who value multiculturalism may be placed into environments where the ideology of multiculturalism is not in practice. Teachers must be knowledgeable about methods and strategies that can be used to increase the level of multiculturalism within school environments.

Creating a Multicultural School Environment

In schools, many plans for establishing multiculturalism use the teachers as vehicles of knowledge. Pullen (2000) suggests that a series of in-service workshops will assist in preparing teachers in creating multicultural school environments. The workshops consist of four phases: self-inventory, mini-lectures, a multicultural mentoring program, and a mandatory multicultural lesson. The self-inventory portion provides teacher a measure of their cultural awareness and tolerance. Mini-lectures are presented by individuals of a wide-range of ethnicities, which may include students, teachers, and professors of multicultural education.

A multicultural mentoring program will allow teachers of different ethnicities to share in question and answer sessions that may help lead to understanding and education. After teachers have completed the first three phases of the workshops, they are required to teach a multicultural lesson based upon the information that they received at the workshops.

For teachers to be effective in implementing a multicultural program in their classrooms and schools, they must have the ability to recognize their feelings and attitudes as part of their cultural norms and biases. Teachers must also recognize the value of ethnic and cultural diversity as a basis for societal enrichment, cohesiveness, and survival. They must also know in detail about experiences, viewpoints, and needs of various cultural groups so that they are able to teach their students about these different groups. Teachers need to acquire sensitivity to words and actions insulting or hurtful to minority groups so they can be aware of their own biases and discrimination towards different groups, and also discourage students' actions and words that may be hurtful to individuals. Teachers must use various classroom techniques to demonstrate how people of various cultures and backgrounds can communicate effectively and work cooperatively. Lastly, teachers must evaluate instructional materials to make sure that they are unbiased and factual and complete in describing the influence and contributions of individuals of minority race (Gallagher, 1998).

According to Gallagher (1998), the pre-packaged multicultural school environment plans are easy to implement, but often do not address all of the needs of a particular school and community environment. As in any change effort, the active involvement of the school community is necessary. Bernard (1991) advocates community involvement, which includes the establishment of a multicultural task force consisting of youth, teachers, parents, principal, school personnel, and community representatives from a wide variety of cultures and

backgrounds. The task force must create a mission statement/policy that embraces the philosophy that the school is committed to all students receiving an education that affirms human diversity and validates the history and culture of all ethnic groups, based on high expectations for academic success for all students, and encourages students' active participation in the school.

The school environment must be modified so that the community can be formed through communication and establishing bonds between individuals. It is important that the students take the opportunity to be open and honest with one another and learn from one another. Differences and similarities must be challenged and examined to create a stronger community (Shields, 2000). Bernard (1991) ascertains that when modifying the structure of the school environment, it is important to redistribute power and authority in the classroom in a manner that empowers ethnic minority children and allows all teachers and youth to work together. Redistribution of power in this manner leads to equality in the schools. In addition, teachers must hold high expectations for ethnic minority children because a teacher's expectations about a student have a very powerful effect on the student. In fact, teachers' expectations can influence a student even when students' hold negative attitudes towards the teacher. Lastly, multicultural content must be infused throughout the curriculum. This can be accomplished by placing value the primary language of minority children, not stereotyping learning styles of ethnic minority children, and hiring ethnic minority teachers, teachers with a second-language competency, and teachers with English as Second Language training.

The impact of teachers and school environments on students' academic and social development cannot be denied. Both minority and Caucasian children benefit greatly when attitudes, beliefs, and contributions of people from all walks of life are respected. A multicultural education best prepares our children for success both academically and socially.

It is important the preservice teachers are taught the theoretical basis and goals of multicultural education, and have an attitude that will create an environment conducive to the learning of all students from all walks of life.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The current research is a continuation of a study previously conducted by the author. The purpose of this study was to assess preservice teachers' attitudes toward multicultural education, and whether a change in attitude occurred as a result of the Multiculturalism: Issues and Perspectives class. In addition, this research also compared the amount of attitude change that occurred in individuals enrolled in a semester long multiculturalism course versus condensed multiculturalism courses. This section includes a description of sample selection, instrumentation, and research procedures.

Participants

The participants in the current study were 87 college students enrolled in a semester-long Multiculturalism: Issues and Perspectives course at the University of Wisconsin-Stout in the 2001-2002 Spring Semester. Two separate sections of the multiculturalism class were used. One class was a weekend class that met on the weekends of February 23, 2001 and March 7, 2001. From this class 31 students took the pretest and 30 students took the posttest. The second class was a two-week class that began on May 29, 2001 and ended on June 7, 2001. From the second class, 47 students took the pretest and 44 students took the posttest. The participants in the previous research group were 76 college students enrolled in Multiculturalism: Issues and Perspectives Class at the University of Wisconsin-Stout.

Instrument

The Multicultural Attitude Questionnaire, created by Barry and Lechner (1995) was administered for this study. This instrument measures attitudes about the awareness of multicultural teaching and learning. Items for Barry and Lechner's original questionnaire were created based upon a literature review, informal interview with preservice teachers, teachers, and teacher educators. Items on the questionnaire were grouped according to the six research questions in Barry and Lechner's (1995) study. The research questions and cluster reliabilities follow:

1) Are preservice teachers aware of multicultural issues in education ($r = .7582$, $p < .05$)?

2) Do preservice teachers believe that their professional courses are preparing them to deal with multicultural approaches to education ($r = .8874$, $p < .05$)?

3) Do preservice teachers express interest in receiving additional training in multicultural approaches to education ($r - .9286$, $p < .05$)?

4) Are preservice teachers' views of appropriate classroom practices for multicultural education consistent with current research and practice ($r = -.1322$, $p < .05$)?

5) Do preservice teachers anticipate addressing multicultural issues in their own classrooms ($r = .8389$, $p < .05$)?

6) Do preservice teachers have personal attitudes that may prevent them from making effective use of multicultural approaches ($r = .8050$, $p < .05$)?

For this present study, demographic information was also collected from the students. This information included gender, status in school (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, graduate, or other), major, race/ethnicity, age, and whether the students had received any prior multicultural training.

 In addition, the participants from the semester-long course also responded to whether they had completed the required 50 hour Cross-Cultural Field Experience (see appendix). This information was collected to determine whether working with minority populations as part of the field experience influenced the multicultural attitudes of preservice teachers.

Procedures

The Multicultural Attitude Questionnaire was given to a two-week course co-taught by a male and female instructor. This course lasted four hours a day, four days a week, for two consecutive weeks. The weekend courses were taught by the above-mentioned male professor, and took place during Friday evening and Saturday on two nonconsecutive weekends. The semester long courses were taught by the above-mentioned female instructor, and met twice a week for the length of a semester. The two professors have co-taught the course together for many years, and use similar curriculum and teaching styles when teaching the course independently as they do when co-teaching the course. All participants, regardless of the course they were enrolled in, took the same questionnaire.

The Multicultural Attitude Questionnaire was given as a pretest at the beginning of the course and as a posttest at the conclusion of the courses. On the first day of the multiculturalism courses, the experimenter attended the class, introduced herself, and explained the purpose of the study. The informed consent was read to the participants and the experimenter answered any questions the participants had regarding the study. The informed consent forms and questionnaire were handed out. The examiner explained if anyone chose not to participate in the study, he/she could place both forms in the appropriate envelopes blank. After all the forms were turned in, the examiner thanked the participants for their time and left.

The examiner returned on the last day of the classes and reminded the students of the pretest taken at the beginning of the class and asked the participants to fill out the same survey again. The researcher asked if there were any questions regarding the questionnaire, and passed out the instrument. After all instruments were completed and returned the examiner thanked the participants for their time and left.

Data Analysis

Analysis was performed on the two condensed classes to be sure that they were equal before data analyses based upon the research question began. The two classes differed on some pretest cluster scores, so therefore the scores of the two classes could not be combined. Analysis of variance (ANOVA), frequencies, and percentages were the types of data analysis used in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This chapter presents the survey findings of preservice teachers' attitudes toward

multicultural education along with the demographic information collected in the study. In

reporting the results of the study it is important to review the research questions. It was

hypothesized that the preservice teachers would have a more positive attitude toward

multiculturalism and cultural diversity at the end of the multiculturalism class than at the

beginning of the class. In addition, the attitudes of students who took the semester long

multiculturalism course were compared to those of students who took the course in a condensed

format. In this way, the influence of course format on multicultural attitudes and attitude change

could be examined. This study also compared attitudes of students who had completed the cross-

cultural field experience versus those who had not yet completed this requirement. It was

hypothesized that individuals who gained experience working with diverse populations through

the cross-cultural field experience would have a more positive attitude toward multiculturalism

than those who had not completed the field experience.

Demographic Information

Participants were college students enrolled in multiculturalism classes at the University

of Wisconsin-Stout in spring 2001 and fall 2002 (See Table 1). One-hundred sixty-nine students

took the pretest and 157 students participated in the posttest. Demographic data regarding the

participants' gender, status in school, major, race/ethnicity, age, and amount of multicultural

training was also collected and is illustrated in Table One.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Study Participants

	Pretest N	Pretest %	Posttest N	Posttest %
Gender				
Male	57	33.7	52	33.1
Female	112	66.3	105	66.9
Status				
Freshman	2	1.2	2	1.3
Sophomore	18	10.7	20	12.7
Junior	57	33.7	55	35.0
Senior	50	29.6	41	26.1
Graduate	34	20.1	33	21.0
Other	8	4.7	6	3.8
Major				
Education	132	78.1	122	77.7
Other	36	21.3	35	22.3
Ethnic Background				
Caucasian	160	94.7	146	95
African American	1	.6	1	1
Hispanic	1	.6	2	0
Asian Heritage	5	3.0	2	3
Native American	2	1.2	1	1
Other			5	3.2
Previous Multicultural Training				
Yes	109	64.5	105	66.9
No	60	35.5	52	33.1
Have Completed Field Experience				
Yes	____	____	67	80.7
No			16	19.3

The sample was fairly homogenous. The majority of the participants were female, with 112 females in the pretest group and 105 in the posttest group. The participant population was overwhelmingly Caucasian; 160 out of 169 of the pretest group and 146 out of 157 of the posttest group indicated that they were Caucasian. The remainder of the participants indicated that their ethnic heritage was African American, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, or "other."

There was a narrow range of ages in the classes surveyed: 70% were 24 years of age or younger, 11.7% were between 25 and 30 years of age, and only 12.4% of the sample were 31 years of age or older. The students' year in school was commensurate with their age.

In the pretest group, 12% were freshman and sophomores, 63.3% were juniors and seniors, 20.1% were graduate students, and 4.7% marked "other." The posttest group was similar to the pretest group in this respect. The posttest group was comprised of 14% freshman and sophomores, 61.1% juniors and seniors, 21% graduate students, while 3.8% marked "other." Students who marked "other" on the response form specified special student status, nontraditional status, or Education Specialist Degree status. In addition, the majority of the participants were education majors; 78.1% of the pretest group and 77.7% of the posttest group indicated that they were majoring in education. Participants who were not education majors indicated hospitality and tourism, business, industrial design, psychology, school guidance, or school psychology as their majors.

While the demographics of the sample are not representative of the United States population or even the population of the university at which the study was conducted, they are representative of the current trend within the teacher population. Currently the majority of the teachers are white females (refer back to Chapter One, p. 1). While it is important to encourage both males and individuals of other heritages to enter into the teaching profession, it is very important to conduct research and evaluate the multicultural knowledge and attitudes of those currently in the teaching profession. Individuals who are currently members of the teaching profession are influencing children's views of themselves and others every day, and are in the position to change their educational environments and styles of teaching to better coincide with multicultural principles.

The majority of the students had already received some multicultural training prior to taking the multiculturalism course. Sixty-seven percent of the posttest participants indicated that they had previously received multicultural training.

Participants indicated that previous multicultural training included training for a job or volunteer experience, other multicultural classes, classes dealing with specific populations (e.g., Native American Literature), armed services training, and other general classes that mentioned multiculturalism as part of the class. The fall 2002 posttest group was also asked whether they had completed the required Cross-Cultural Field Experience. Of the eighty-three students who were asked this question, 80.7% stated they had fulfilled this requirement (See Table 1).

The Six Key Questions of the Multicultural Attitude Questionnaire

In order to examine preservice teachers' attitudes toward multiculturalism the Multicultural Attitude Questionnaire asked the following six key questions: 1) Are preservice teachers aware of multicultural issues in education? 2) Do preservice teachers believe that their professional courses are preparing them to deal with multicultural approaches to education? 3) Do preservice teachers express interest in receiving additional training in multicultural approaches to education? 4) Are preservice teachers' views of appropriate classroom practices for multicultural education consistent with current research and practice? 5) Do preservice teachers anticipate addressing multicultural issues in their own classrooms? 6) Do preservice teachers have personal attitudes that may prevent them from making effective use of multicultural approaches? Participants' responses to these questions were then analyzed to determine significant differences between groups of students.

Pretest versus Posttest Group

The purpose of multiculturalism courses is to assist students in becoming aware of multicultural issues and to prepare them to implement the ideals of multiculturalism in their classrooms.

Therefore, it was hypothesized that students would have more positive attitudes toward multiculturalism and would be more aware of multicultural issues in education after completing a multiculturalism course than they were prior to the completion of the course. Overall, this hypothesis was supported by the current investigation (See Table 2). Students indicated that they were more aware of multicultural issues in education after completing the course than they were before taking the course ($F = 20.88$, $p < .05$). Another goal of this particular multiculturalism course is to prepare preservice educators to work in a multicultural environment. Students believed they were better prepared by their courses to deal with multicultural issues in education after completing the course than they did the first day of the course ($F = 39.20$, $p < .05$). In addition, students anticipated addressing multicultural issues in their classrooms more after completing the course than they did before completing the course ($F = 6.05$, $p < .05$). They also reported fewer personal attitudes that may prevent them from making use of multicultural approaches ($F = 7.64$, $p < .05$).

Overall, it appears that the multiculturalism courses at UW-Stout had a positive effect on preservice teachers' awareness level, preparedness, and attitudes regarding multiculturalism and multicultural education. However, there were no significant differences in participants' interest in additional multicultural training ($F = 2.53$, $p < .05$), in the consistency of their views and opinions with current research ($F = .92$, $p < .05$).

Table 2

Pretest versus Posttest Means: Six Key Questions

Key Questions	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean
1. Are preservice teachers aware of multicultural issues in education?	12.74*	13.64*
2. Do preservice teachers believe that their professional courses are preparing them to deal with multicultural issues in education?	35.92*	41.11*
3. Do preservice teachers express interest in receiving additional training in multicultural approaches to education?	16.31	16.83
4. Are preservice teachers' views of appropriate practice for multicultural education consistent with current research and practice?	12.97	12.76
5. Do preservice teachers anticipate addressing multicultural issues in their own classrooms?	24.34*	25.39*
6. Do preservice teachers have personal attitudes that may prevent them from making use of multicultural approaches?	38.37*	36.23*

*Significant differences between means

Comparison between Classes

Currently, universities are beginning to offer more and more courses in a condensed format. Is multicultural training offered in a weekend or two-week format as effective as training that occurs in a semester long course? This research question was evaluated by comparing the pretest and posttest responses of students who took the semester-long multiculturalism course to those of students who took the course in a condensed format. There were very few differences between the classes' responses to the key questions of the Multicultural Attitude Questionnaire (See Table 3). Therefore, it appears that in most areas the length of the course has no impact on preservice teachers' attitudes towards multiculturalism. However, there was a significant difference between the groups in one area; the two-week class and the semester long class reported feeling more prepared to deal with multicultural issues in their classrooms than students who participated in the weekend course ($F = 3.11$, $p < .05$). The feelings indicated by the students in the two-week course may be due to the extremely condensed format of the course and the two-week gap between the weekends that the course was held.

However, the different feelings of the students in the various courses may also have been influenced by the demographic differences between the students enrolled in the various courses. Students enrolled in the weekend course tended to be older ($r = -.389$, $p<.01$), have more multicultural training ($r = -.358$, $p<.01$), were more likely to be upper-classmen ($r = -.340$, $p<.01$), and were also more likely to be enrolled in a major other than an education ($r = -.126$, $p<.05$) in comparison to the students enrolled in the two-week course and the semester-long course.

Table 3

Posttest Means: A Comparison between Classes

Key Questions	Weekend Course	Two-Week Course	Semester Course
1. Are preservice teachers aware of multicultural issues in education?	13.17	14.00	13.61
2. Do preservice teachers believe that their professional courses are preparing them to deal with multicultural issues in education?	39.30*	41.14	41.76
3. Do preservice teachers express interest in receiving additional training in multicultural approaches to education?	15.93	18.00	16.53
4. Are preservice teachers' views of appropriate practice for multicultural education consistent with current research and practice?	12.63	12.37	13.00
5. Do preservice teachers anticipate addressing multicultural issues in their own classrooms?	23.97	25.95	25.61
6. Do preservice teachers have personal attitudes that may prevent them from making use of multicultural approaches?	38.24	35.18	36.08

*Significant difference between weekend course responses as compared to both the two-week course and semester course

Gender Differences

Further analysis of the data indicated there were significant gender differences in feelings and attitudes toward multiculturalism both prior to taking the course and after the course had been completed. Prior to taking the course there were significant differences in the genders' expressed interest in receiving additional training ($F = 25.63$, $p < .05$) and their anticipation in addressing multicultural issues in their classroom ($F = 43.34$, $p < .05$). Females indicated more interest in additional training and also anticipated addressing multicultural issues in comparison to males. It may be to their high level of anticipation in addressing cultural issues that they had higher interest in more multicultural training (See Table 4).

These differences remained constant after the individuals completed the course. Females still expressed more interest than males in receiving additional training in multiculturalism ($F = 13.127$, $p < .05$), and had more anticipation in addressing multicultural issues in the classroom ($F = 21.334$, $p < .05$). However, after completion of the course there was a significant difference in the reported negative attitudes held by the two groups. Females held fewer negative attitudes that would prevent them from making use of multicultural ideals in the classroom in comparison to males ($F = 10.273$, $p < .05$). Overall, the effectiveness of the multiculturalism course appeared to be more successful with females (See Table 5). Besides gender, other factors that were thought to influences attitudes towards multiculturalism were ethnicity, the amount of prior training in the area of multiculturalism, and the completion of the cross-cultural field experience. However, there were no differences in multicultural attitudes of students of various ethnic heritages (See Table 6). The lack of difference may be due to the lack of representation of ethnic minority students in the sample, rather than a true lack of difference in attitudes.

Table 4

Pretest Means: Comparison between Genders

Key Questions	Males	Females
1. Are preservice teachers aware of multicultural issues in education?	12.28	12.97
2. Do preservice teachers believe that their professional courses are preparing them to deal with multicultural issues in education?	36.19	35.78
3. Do preservice teachers express interest in receiving additional training in multicultural approaches to education?	14.79	17.08
4. Are preservice teachers' views of appropriate practice for multicultural education consistent with current research and practice?	12.82	13.05
5. Do preservice teachers anticipate addressing multicultural issues in their own classrooms?	21.84	25.57
6. Do preservice teachers have personal attitudes that may prevent them from making use of multicultural approaches?	41.73	36.66

Table 5

Posttest Means: Comparison between Genders

Key Questions	Males	Females
1. Are preservice teachers aware of multicultural issues in education?	13.33	13.79
2. Do preservice teachers believe that their professional courses are preparing them to deal with multicultural issues in education?	39.65	41.84
3. Do preservice teachers express interest in receiving additional training in multicultural approaches to education?	15.67	17.40
4. Are preservice teachers' views of appropriate practice for multicultural education consistent with current research and practice?	12.65	12.81
5. Do preservice teachers anticipate addressing multicultural issues in their own classrooms?	23.50	26.33
6. Do preservice teachers have personal attitudes that may prevent them from making use of multicultural approaches?	38.91	34.99

Table 6

Posttest Means: Comparison between Ethnicities

Key Questions	Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian American
1. Are preservice teachers aware of multicultural issues in education?	13.33	13.79	13.00	12.00	14.00
2. Do preservice teachers believe that their professional courses are preparing them to deal with multicultural issues in education?	39.65	41.84	39.00	34.00	35.86
3. Do preservice teachers express interest in receiving additional training in multicultural approaches to education?	15.67	17.40	16.33	13.00	18.29
4. Are preservice teachers' views of appropriate practice for multicultural education consistent with current research and practice?	12.65	12.81	13.00	12.00	13.86
5. Do preservice teachers anticipate addressing multicultural issues in their own classrooms?	23.50	26.33	23.50	18.00	26.29
6. Do preservice teachers have personal attitudes that may prevent them from making use of multicultural approaches?	38.91	34.99	32.33		18.00

In addition, prior training in the area of multiculturalism did not appear to affect students' attitudes toward multiculturalism (See Table 7). There was also no difference between the group who had completed the cross-cultural experience and those who had not completed the cross-cultural experience (See Table 8). Currently, the multiculturalism course and the cross-cultural field experience can be taken at separate times. However, research shows that a more positive change in attitudes occurs when youth can discuss issues that occur in their cross-cultural field experience with members of their multiculturalism class.

Age Differences

It also appears that age correlates with individuals' attitudes toward multiculturalism (See Table 9). As participants age increases so did the likelihood of them having more negative attitudes toward multiculturalism. Older individuals are less likely to believe that their courses prepare them to deal with issues of multiculturalism ($r = -.115$, $p<.05$), are less likely to have views of classroom practices that are consistent with current research and practice ($r = -.142$, $p<.05$), and are also less likely to anticipate in addressing multicultural issues in their own classes ($r = -.125$, $p<.05$).

Due to the different relationships between an individual's age and his/her view towards multiculturalism this may be an issue that should be taken into account when providing multicultural training. The relationship differences may be due to life experience differences, different societal expectations and attitudes, and different opportunities. The significant relationship between age and attitudes towards multiculturalism should be studied further.

Table 7

Posttest Means: Comparison between Groups' Previous Multicultural Training

Key Questions	Previous Training	No Previous Training
1. Are preservice teachers aware of multicultural issues in education?	13.11	13.30
2. Do preservice teachers believe that their professional courses are preparing them to deal with multicultural issues in education?	38.51	38.41
3. Do preservice teachers express interest in receiving additional training in multicultural approaches to education?	16.66	16.40
4. Are preservice teachers' views of appropriate practice for multicultural education consistent with current research and practice?	12.93	12.74
5. Do preservice teachers anticipate addressing multicultural issues in their own classrooms?	24.84	24.92
6. Do preservice teachers have personal attitudes that may prevent them from making use of multicultural approaches?	37.47	37.17

Table 8

Posttest Means: Comparison between Groups' Completion of Cross-Cultural Experience

Key Questions	Completed	Not Completed
1. Are preservice teachers aware of multicultural issues in education?	13.56	13.95
2. Do preservice teachers believe that their professional courses are preparing them to deal with multicultural issues in education?	41.75	42.5
3. Do preservice teachers express interest in receiving additional training in multicultural approaches to education?	16.46	17.06
4. Are preservice teachers' views of appropriate practice for multicultural education consistent with current research and practice?	13.01	12.81
5. Do preservice teachers anticipate addressing multicultural issues in their own classrooms?	25.54	26.19
6. Do preservice teachers have personal attitudes that may prevent them from making use of multicultural approaches?	36.09	36.13

Table 9

Posttest Means: Average Key Question Responses by Age

Age in Years	Six Key Questions					
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
18	12.00	42.00	16.00	12.00	24.00	37.00
19	12.68	40.95	15.16	13.53	23.84	38.74
20	13.49	40.71	16.27	13.02	25.45	37.43
21	13.00	38.84	16.58	12.96	24.82	38.55
22	12.78	37.55	16.44	13.49	24.89	36.90
23	13.68	38.46	17.63	12.80	26.12	36.76
24	12.70	37.65	16.40	12.10	23.95	37.15
25	12.58	41.00	17.17	12.58	25.25	37.36
26	12.40	37.00	16.60	12.40	23.90	34.33
27	13.89	38.78	17.78	12.78	27.00	35.00
28	13.20	33.00	17.00	12.20	24.75	34.60
29	13.33	38.00	17.00	14.00	26.83	36.33
30	14.33	44.33	17.67	11.78	25.22	35.67
31	11.50	34.00	18.00	11.50	27.00	31.50
32	13.20	35.00	17.00	12.80	23.80	37.80
33	13.50	36.00	17.50	12.50	23.25	40.50
34	15.00	36.33	17.33	10.22	27.00	42.33
35	12.00	22.00	16.00	1200	24.00	38.00
36	12.00	28.50	12.00	14.00	18.00	43.00
37	15.00	40.00	20.00	16.00	30.00	45.00
38						
39						
40	13.25	38.00	17.50	12.25	26.25	36.00
41	15.00	42.50	18.00	14.50	25.00	36.00
42	14.25	43.25	18.00	10.75	25.50	30.75
43						
44	14.25	27.75	12.50	11.50	20.25	41.25
45	13.25	35.25	15.50	12.75	24.00	37.00
46						
47						
48	12.80	36.00	17.20	12.40	23.00	37.40
49						
50						
51						
52	14.00	39.00	13.25	12.25	20.25	39.67

Within-Measure Correlations

A correlation matrix was created using the six key questions contained within the Multicultural Attitude Questionnaire to determine whether participants' responses on items of one cluster correlated with their responses to items of another cluster (See Table 10). Overall, the various clusters appeared to have appropriate correlations with one another. For example, participants who were aware of multicultural issues in education also indicated they felt prepared by their courses to deal with multicultural issues, expressed interest in further multicultural training, anticipated addressing multicultural issues in their classes, and had few attitudes that would prevent them from making use of multicultural approaches in their classrooms.

However, key question four, "Are preservice teachers views of appropriate practice for multicultural education consistent with current research and practice?" did not significantly correlate with any other key question. This may indicate that even after completion of the multiculturalism course preservice teachers may not be aware of current research in the area of multiculturalism and multicultural education.

Table 10

Correlation Matrix: Six Key Questions

	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5
Question 1					
Question 2	.146**				
Question 3	.319**	.182**			
Question 4	-.105	.100	-.051		
Question 5	.319**	.315**	.612**	.005	
Question 6	-.206**	-.056	-.407**	.374**	-.410**

* Significant at the .05 level   ** Significant at the .01 level

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study was conducted to examine preservice teachers' attitudes toward multiculturalism and the change that occurred in these attitudes after the completion of multicultural training. It was hypothesized that the preservice teachers would have a more positive attitude toward multiculturalism and cultural diversity at the end of the multiculturalism class than at the beginning of the class. It was also hypothesized that students who took the semester-length course would have more positive attitudes than students who took the course in a condensed format. Lastly, this study also compared attitudes of students who had completed or were in the process of completing the cross-cultural field experience versus those who had not yet completed this requirement. It was hypothesized that individuals who gained experience working with diverse populations through the cross-cultural field experience would have more positive attitudes toward multiculturalism than those who had not completed the field experience would.

These research questions were evaluated using Barry and Lechner's Multicultural Attitude Questionnaire. The questionnaire asked the following six key questions: 1) Are preservice teachers aware of multicultural issues in education? 2) Do preservice teachers believe that their professional courses are preparing them to deal with multicultural approaches to education? 3) Do preservice teachers express interest in receiving additional training in multicultural approaches to education? 4) Are preservice teachers' views of appropriate classroom practices for multicultural education consistent with current research and practice? 5) Do preservice teachers anticipate addressing multicultural issues in their own classrooms?

6) Do preservice teachers have personal attitudes that may prevent them from making effective use of multicultural approaches?

The research study consisted of a pretest and posttest that were given at the beginning and conclusion of the Multiculturalism: Issues and Perspectives course to evaluate whether or not a change in attitudes occurred. One hundred sixty-nine students who were enrolled in the class took the pretest and 157 students participated in the posttest.

Conclusions

Results of this study indicate that multicultural training does have an effect on preservice teachers' attitudes toward multiculturalism and cultural diversity. Students indicated that they were more aware of multicultural issues in education after completing the course than they were before taking the course. Students also anticipated addressing multicultural issues in their classrooms more after completing the course than they did before completing the course. They also reported fewer personal attitudes that may prevent them from making use of multicultural approaches within their classrooms. Lastly, students also believed that they were better prepared by their courses to deal with multicultural issues in education after completing the course than they did the first day of the course. This result may be interpreted in a variety of ways. The multiculturalism course itself could have made the participants feel more prepared to deal with multicultural approaches to education, the course could have helped them look at previously learned information from a multicultural perspective, or a combination of the two may have occurred.

Overall, it appears that the multiculturalism course had a positive effect on preservice teachers' awareness level, preparedness, and attitudes regarding multiculturalism and multicultural education.

However, there were no significant differences in participants' interest in additional multicultural training or in the consistency of their views and opinions with current research.

The second hypothesis of this study was that students who took the semester-long multiculturalism course would have more positive attitudes towards multiculturalism than those who took the course in either a weekend format or a two-week format. Overall this hypothesis was not supported by the current investigation. There were very few differences between the classes' responses to the key questions of the Multicultural Attitude Questionnaire. Therefore, it appears that in most areas the length of the course has no impact on preservice teachers' attitudes towards multiculturalism. There was a significant difference between the groups in one area that is very important and relevant to preservice teachers. Participants in the two-week class and the semester-long class reported feeling more prepared to deal with multicultural issues in their classrooms than students who participated in the weekend course. The feelings indicated by the students in the two-week course may be due to the extremely condensed format of the course and the two-week gap between the weekends that the course was held.

The third research question hypothesized that students who had completed the cross-cultural field experience would have more positive attitudes towards multiculturalism than those who had not taken the field experience requirement. This hypothesis was not supported by the research. The completion of the multicultural field experience did not influence attitudes toward multiculturalism. There was no difference between the group who had completed the cross-cultural experience and those who had not completed the cross-cultural experience.

Further analysis of the data indicated that there were significant gender differences in feelings and attitudes toward multiculturalism both prior to taking the course and after the course had been completed. Prior to taking the course females indicated more interest in additional training and also had increased anticipation toward addressing multicultural issues in comparison to males. These differences remained constant after the individuals completed the course. Females still expressed more interest than males in receiving additional training in multiculturalism, and had more anticipation in addressing multicultural issues in the classroom. However, after completion of the course there was a significant difference in the negative attitudes reported by the groups. Females held fewer negative attitudes that would prevent them from making use of multicultural ideals in the classroom in comparison to males. Overall the effectiveness of the multiculturalism course appeared to be more successful with females.

Other factors, besides gender, that were thought to influences attitudes towards multiculturalism were ethnicity and the amount of prior training in the area of multiculturalism. There were no differences, however, in multicultural attitudes of students of various ethnic heritages. The lack of difference may be due to the lack of representation of ethnic minority students in the sample, rather than a true lack of difference in attitudes. In addition, prior training in the area of multiculturalism did not appear to effect students' attitudes toward multiculturalism. However, the type and amount of training the students described varied, and the different experiences may influence the amount of attitude change that occurred as a result of this training.

Limitations of the Study

There are some limitations in relation to how representative the sample is to the population. The majority of the sample was composed of Caucasian females; this sample is not

representative of the population of the United States but is similar to that of the current teacher population. Because a convenience sampling technique was used the samples were not random, so they may contain sampling bias and may not be representative of the population. Although the extent of the generalizability of this research is questionable, it is hoped that to the extent that other populations are similar to this sample, the results may be applicable.

Recommendations

The results of this study raised some unanswered questions that should be addressed in future research. As indicated previously, there were few differences between attitudes of students who took the semester-long course and those of students who took the multiculturalism course in a two-week format. Students who took the course in either the two-week version or the semester-length version felt more prepared to deal with multicultural issues in their classrooms than did students who were in the weekend course. This may indicate that the timeframe and consistency in which the class meets is more important than the duration of the total course. Further research should be completed in relation to this finding, especially since condensed courses are becoming more popular in the university format.

In addition, the current study found no differences in the attitudes of students who had taken the cross-cultural field experience and those who had not taken the field experience. Research indicates a more positive change in attitudes occur when the cross-cultural field experience is an integral part of the multiculturalism class and that issues and experiences that come up during the field experience should be addressed in class. A comparison of attitudes should be done with students who complete the field experience independently of the multiculturalism course and those whose field experiences is treated and as an integral part of the multiculturalism course.

Furthermore, some age and gender differences were noted both prior to the multiculturalism training and after the training was complete. It is important to continue to research these differences so that information can be presented in the most effective manner for everyone. Lastly, although a change in attitude was seen immediately at the conclusion of the class it is important to know whether positive attitudes toward multiculturalism in education carry over to the classroom. Further research should be conducted to evaluate whether the change in attitude facilitated by multicultural training maintains throughout student teaching and employment experiences. It is important that preservice teachers be educated about various cultures and how to use multicultural principles in the classroom. In this way, all students have an equal opportunity for academic success. Just educating preservice teachers about multiculturalism and multicultural issues is not enough; they also must be instilled with attitude that envelops the principles of multiculturalism. The effect of multicultural training must not only be an increase of knowledge, but also result in positive attitudes toward multiculturalism and cultural diversity that can be carried into employment and life in the classroom.

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APPENDIX

MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS QUESTIONNAIRE

General Instructions: Read each item carefully and mark the appropriate space or write your response in the appropriate space. Please respond to all statements.

A. Demographic Information

Gender
___ Male
___ Female

Status
___ Freshman
___ Sophomore
___ Junior
___ Senior
___ Graduate
___ Other (specify)_____

Major
___ Education (please specify) _____

___ Other (please specify) _____

Race/Ethnicity
___ Caucasian
___ African American
___ Hispanic
___ Asian Heritage
___ Native American
___ Other (please specify) _____

Age:
___ Years old

Have you received any multicultural training other than the class you are currently enrolled in?
___ No
___ Yes (please describe)_____

_____

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the appropriate letter following the statement.

Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
SD	D	N	A	SA

1. Students with different ethnic backgrounds may respond to classroom activities differently.   **SD   D   N   A   SA**

2. Students with different cultural identities may respond to classroom activities differently.   **SD   D   N   A   SA**

3. Students with different religious beliefs may respond to classroom activities differently.   **SD   D   N   A   SA**

4. My professional education courses have presented me with techniques for bringing a variety of cultures into the classroom.   **SD   D   N   A   SA**

5. My professional education courses have made me more aware of cultural diversity in the U.S.A.   **SD   D   N   A   SA**

6. My professional education courses have made me more aware of the need for cultural diversity in education.   **SD   D   N   A   SA**

7. My professional education courses have presented me with techniques for effectively teaching children whose national and/or racial background differ from my own.   **SD   D   N   A   SA**

8. My professional education courses have presented me with techniques for effectively teaching children whose cultural identity differs from my own.   **SD   D   N   A   SA**

9. My professional education courses have presented me with techniques for effectively teaching children whose religious beliefs differ from my own.   **SD   D   N   A   SA**

10. My professional education courses have helped me communicate with students from diverse backgrounds.   **SD   D   N   A   SA**

11. My professional education courses have given me the knowledge to be able to locate and evaluate culturally diverse materials.   **SD   D   N   A   SA**

12. My professional education courses have helped me to communicate with the families of students from diverse backgrounds.   **SD   D   N   A   SA**

13. When I complete my training at this university, I will be sufficiently prepared to meet the educational needs of students from diverse ethnic and cultural heritage.   **SD   D   N   A   SA**

14. When I complete my training at this university, I will be sufficiently prepared to teach my students about different cultures.   **SD   D   N   A   SA**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
SD	D	N	A	SA

15. I would like to receive more training in ways to teach students with different cultural backgrounds.

SD   D   N   A   SA

16. I would like to receive more training in ways to bring other cultures into the classroom.

SD   D   N   A   SA

17. I would like to receive more training in evaluating the educational achievements of students from culturally diverse backgrounds.

SD   D   N   A   SA

18. I would like to receive more training in identifying and evaluating culturally diverse materials for use in the classroom.

SD   D   N   A   SA

19. Teaching children in their native languages along with English retards their reading development.

SD   D   N   A   SA

20. It is important for children to read/hear stories, songs, and information about their own ethnic/cultural backgrounds.

SD   D   N   A   SA

21. For non-English speaking children, a skills approach to reading is preferable to literature-based approach.

SD   D   N   A   SA

22. School curriculum throughout the U.S.A. reflects the cultural make-up of the larger society.

SD   D   N   A   SA

23. When I become a teacher, I will probably have students from different cultural/racial backgrounds.

SD   D   N   A   SA

24. When I become a teacher, I will probably have students from different religious backgrounds.

SD   D   N   A   SA

25. When I become a teacher, I probably have students from different cultural backgrounds.

SD   D   N   A   SA

26. When I become a teacher, I expect to teach my students about different cultures.

SD   D   N   A   SA

27. When I become a teacher, I expect to teach my students about different ethnic groups.

SD   D   N   A   SA

28. When I become a teacher, I expect to teach my students about other religions.

SD   D   N   A   SA

29. Foreign music makes me feel uncomfortable.

SD   D   N   A   SA

30. I dislike it when people change familiar stories or use different versions.

SD   D   N   A   SA

31. Stories from many cultures are too different or strange for children to understand.

SD   D   N   A   SA

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
SD	D	N	A	SA

32. Elementary school age children find stories and songs from diverse cultures boring. **SD D N A SA**

33. Children almost always prefer familiar stories and songs. **SD D N A SA**

34. Too much diversity lowers educational standards. **SD D N A SA**

35. Students should be exposed to a variety of cultures in and out of the classroom. **SD D N A SA**

36. Students need to know about cultures that differ from their own. **SD D N A SA**

37. The teacher should be more concerned with teaching about the cultures of his or her students than with teaching about other cultures. **SD D N A SA**

38. One of the goals of American education is to bring everyone into the cultural mainstream. **SD D N A SA**

39. Students with different language backgrounds should all be taught in English to assure rapid educational progress. **SD D N A SA**

40. Children should speak, read, and write Standard English at all times while in school. **SD D N A SA**

41. Exposing children to the "classics" best assures that they will learn the basics. **SD D N A SA**

42. If you have no minority students in your school, you don't need to be concerned with multicultural materials. **SD D N A SA**

43. I believe learning about different cultures is important, but there isn't time to fit all of that into the school day. **SD D N A SA**

Please write any comments that you may have about this class or this questionnaire here: