2008

Special and General Education Teachers' Preparation and Attitudes Toward Cultural Responsive Teaching of Black Students

Robert Morris Jr.

SPECIAL AND GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' PREPARATION AND

ATTITUDES TOWARD CULTURAL RESPONSIVE TEACHING OF BLACK

STUDENTS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in

Leadership and Education in

the Adrian Dominican School of Education of

Barry University

by

Robert Morris Jr., MAT, MBA

*****

Barry University

2008

Area of Specialization: Exceptional Student Education

SPECIAL AND GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' PREPARATION AND

ATTITUDES TOWARD CULTURAL RESPONSIVE TEACHING OF BLACK

STUDENTS

DISSERTATION

by

Robert Morris Jr., MAT, MBA

2008

APPROVED BY:

Clara Wolman, Ph.D.
Chairperson, Dissertation Committee

Catherine Roberts, Ph.D.
Member, Dissertation Committee

Judy Harris-Looby, Ph.D.
Member, Dissertation Committee

Terry Piper, Ph.D.
Dean, Adrian Dominican School of Education

ABSTRACT

SPECIAL AND GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' PREPARATION AND

ATTITUDES TOWARD CULTURAL RESPONSIVE TEACHING OF BLACK

STUDENTS

Robert Morris, MAT, MBA

Barry University, 2008

Dissertation Chairperson: Dr. Clara Wolman

This descriptive study employed a survey design to investigate whether special

and general education teachers differ in their preparation and attitudes toward Culturally

Responsive Teaching (CRT), particularly as it pertains to the instruction of Black

students. Teachers from four high schools were distributed the questionnaire developed

for this study. Of the 400 teachers who received the questionnaire, about 23% ($N = 90$)

completed and returned the questionnaire. Most of the participants were females from

diverse ethnic groups and various educational backgrounds. The study utilized the

Teachers' Questionnaire (TQ), designed to measure teachers' preparation and attitudes

toward culturally responsive teaching. ANOVAs were conducted to test the given

hypotheses. Cronbach's alpha reliability of the TQ (0.90) indicated high internal

reliability of the items assessing preparation for CRT. However, the Cronbach's alpha

was 0.64 for the variable cultural responsiveness, indicating borderline reliability for this

measure. The study findings show that special education and general education teachers'

preparation for culturally responsive teaching was not significantly different. In addition,

the two groups of teachers did not differ in their attitudes. Teachers seemed to have an

equal ability to respond to diverse learners. Regardless of the type of position (special or

general education), teachers were sufficiently culturally prepared and had, overall, a

positive attitude toward cultural responsiveness.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated in the memory of my loving and caring grandparents John H. and Lue E. Randle. My grandparents inspired me to accept all challenges and keep God in the forefront. Thanks to them for their undying love and giving me the most important book in my life--- the Bible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTERS

I.   PROBLEM STATEMENT

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

III. METHODOLOGY

IV. RESULTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Background and Significance

Education is such a powerful tool for both subordination and freedom. Education is subordinating when it is unconnected to students' own experiences...and when it demands that students accept other people's interpretations of the world. Education is freeing when it helps students think about their own lives, when it gives them skills and conceptual frameworks that help them pursue their own concerns, and when it helps them examine the barriers that keep them from success and attainment of the good life (Sleeter & Grant, 1988, p. 299).

In the United States and most western countries, schools play an important role in educating our youth. School attendance is compulsory from the age of six to the age of sixteen. Many families believe the school system provides their children the basic skills needed to be successful in an ever-changing environment. Education supposedly gives students the skills necessary to acquire the so-called 'American dream' advertised daily on television, bulletin boards, and radios. It states, "If you work and study hard in school, windows of opportunities will be open to you" (National Education Association, 2002). Education is seen by many as a tool for freedom, but also as a tool for subordination (Fine, 1991; Freire, 1970). Many educators argue that education is used to control certain groups in our population (Fine; Freire), but it can also be used as a tool to resist oppression (McLaren, 2000). For instance, American schools seem to be designed to educate white students and all others must conform (Delpit, 2002). On the other hand, some educators believe that education is essential to attain financial freedom and change.

1

They believe that education is key to the social change needed in our society. According to Freire, if students are taught to think critically in our schools, they will then critically examine the environment in which they live and become agents for change. They will hopefully change our society to benefit all Americans (Delpit, 1995; Kozol, 1991; McCarthy, 1990).

Although educators have tried to reform education to deal with the issue of freedom and change, it still perpetuates subordination among its students of color (Delpit, 1995; Kozol, 1991; McCarthy, 1990). One example of racial discrimination is the disproportionate representation of minority students in special education programs, which continues to be a serious challenge for educators (Patton, 1998; Artiles & Trent, 1994). The overrepresentation of minority students is reflected in the high number of special education referrals for testing, and the number of minority students found eligible for special education services and placed in special education settings. This pattern is seen again when reviewing statistics on discipline action such as outdoor suspensions or expulsions. The National Center for Education Statistics [NCES] (2000) states that, in 1998, Black students were subject to harsh discipline practices at a disproportionate rate, including suspensions (21%) and expulsions (23%). Salend, Duhaney and Montgomery (2002) state that "Disproportionate representation relates to the extent to which students with particular characteristics (e.g., race, ethnicity, language background, socioeconomic status, gender, age, etc.) are placed in specific types of specialized programs…" (p. 213). Yates (1998), as well as many other authors (Delpit, 1995; Kunjufu, 1995), argues that Black boys are overrepresented in special education programs. These boys are overclassified in three types of disabilities: learning disabilities (45.2%), mental

2

retardation (18.9%), and emotional disturbance (10.7%) (NCES, 2000). Their overrepresentation in special education makes it difficult for these students to demonstrate academic success, and limits their access to the general education curriculum. Also, in many schools, the climate toward cultural diversity is often overlooked, which results in students not receiving the appropriate services (Artiles, Harry, Reschly, & Chin, 2002). According to Artiles and colleagues, the cultural background of teachers and students are divergently opposed and leads to misunderstanding.

Overall, in the nation, educators are primarily from middle class homes and White families (Chamberlain, 2005). It is estimated that 87% of teachers in schools across the United States are White middle class women. In Florida, the demographic of teachers includes 73.9% White non-Hispanic; 14.2% Black non-Hispanic; 10.6% Hispanic and 9% Asian. However, in Southeast Florida, one of the most diverse areas in the United States, the composition of the teacher force is different. Miami Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) is the fourth largest school district in the United States. There are 54,861 employees in MDCPS. Among them, 18,608 employees are instructional staff members, which includes 32.87% White non-Hispanic; 26.3% Black non-Hispanic; 39.4% Hispanic; and 1.5% Asian (Miami-Dade County Public Schools, 2008). In most schools across the United States, students are from varying backgrounds. Artiles and colleagues (2002) and others refer to this population as students of color. As of December 2007, the demographics for students in MDCPS is 60% Hispanic, 28% Black, 10% White, and 2% other non-White minorities (NCES, 2004).

In response to the growing number of students from diverse backgrounds, several states, particularly the border states (e.g. California, Texas, and Florida), have mandated that teacher preparation must include multicultural courses that address all aspects of diversity in the classroom (Texas Department of Education, 1998; California Department of Education, 1999). In 1990, the Florida State Board of Education and a coalition of eight groups representing by Multicultural Education Training and Advocacy (META) signed a consent decree. The intent of the decree was to address the large percentage of language minority students entering Florida schools. META and the state negotiated an agreement (1) identifying, assessing, and monitoring the progress of language minority students; (2) providing Limited English Proficient (LEP) students with access to teachers trained to meet their needs; (3) requiring teachers to obtain appropriate training and certification; and (4) evaluating program effectiveness. In practical terms, the META consent decree requires all teachers working with any LEP student to participate in courses related to teaching English to speakers of other languages (ESOL) and, in some cases, to earn formal bilingual or ESOL credentials (Rahilly, 2003).

Despite the META consent decree and the preponderance of teachers from multicultural backgrounds in Miami Dade County, some teachers may still have negative attitudes toward students of color and may perceive young Black students as less willing to put forth effort to succeed academically, consequently discouraging their achievement because of racial and cultural biases (Chamberlain, 2005; Delpit, 1995; Kozol, 1991; McCarthy, 1990).   This may hinder the personal and intellectual growth of many minority students, including Black students.

One phenomenon common among minority students is their increasing dropout rate from school; this phenomenon, a cause of great concern is particularly, prevalent among Black students (Bracey, 1994; Chamberlain, 2005; Delpit, 1995; Fine, 1991; Kozol, 1991; McCarthy, 1990). In fact, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2004), Blacks are the second largest group in the United States to drop out of school. The highest drop out rate is found among American Indians (NCES). Black students make up 11.8% of the total student population and 5.7% of these students are dropping out of high school. It is predicted that the number will continue to rise. However, in the state of Florida Blacks are the largest group of students to drop out of school at 4.7% with Hispanics at 3.9% (Florida Deparment of Education, 2007). In MDCPS, 7.8% Black students drop out of school, the highest rate if any in the district in the state (Florida Department of Education, 2007). Factors that are impacting drop out rates include single parent homes among Black children, poverty, and poor neighborhoods (Hill, 1998; Kent & O'Hare, 1991). Similarly, Artiles and colleagues (2002), who focus mostly on trends in Hispanic population, found that a majority of Hispanic dropouts also live in poverty and come from low socioeconomic status (SES). Poverty is associated with low academic achievement, which in turn exacerbates the chances of special education placement. Research shows that the overwhelming numbers of special education students are poor, male, and classified in one of several minority groups: American Indians, Hispanics, Black and/or Mixed (Kunjufu, 1995).

These alarming statistics further reinforce that teachers need to be trained in cultural or diversity practices (Irvine-Jordan, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1990; Salend et. al., 2002). Historically, Black students have been reluctant to seek assistance from their

teachers because of their fears of stigmatization and rejection (Bracey, 1994; Fine, 1991).

Teachers need a greater awareness of their own personal attitudes and biases towards

Black students to become a better source of support (Delpit, 1995, 2002; McCarthy,

1990; Steele, 1997). Teachers with prejudicial attitudes towards these students need

professional development trainings in order to change their attitudes (Chamberlain, 2005;

Haberman, 1991; McCarthy, 1990; Slade & Conoley, 1989). If a teacher is

uncomfortable integrating multicultural strategies and a congenial environment for

learning, that teacher should be directed to available support staff and/or workshop

resources. Administrators also need to monitor their school's climate toward minority

students, in particular, but not exclusively, toward Black students (Delpit, 1995).

<center>General Education and Special Education Teachers</center>

Multicultural education can increase teachers' awareness of their attitudes toward

Black students. This would help teachers address cultural diversity and help them

understand the learning needs of their students. Teachers need to create a classroom free

of stigmatization, fear, and biased attitudes in order to promote a class of understanding

and respect for all students. Research indicates that it is a teacher's responsibility to

promote a climate of sensitivity and acceptability in his/her classroom (Chamberlain,

2005; Haberman, 1991; McCarthy, 1990; Slade & Conoley, 1989). However, the

literature suggests that this has not always been the case for Black students in the

classroom. The notion of providing training and programs in urban education and

multiculturalism is not emphasized enough in college education programs. The exception

is in MDCPS, where META is mandated. This study was conducted in MDCPS.

The goal of this study was to investigate teachers' attitudes toward culturally responsive teaching, including Black culture and education, which may assist in their teaching of Black students in the classroom. The study examined teacher preparation and ability to respond to culturally diverse students, specifically Black students. In addition, the study investigated the attitudes of special and general educators toward cultural responsive teaching, particularly instruction geared toward Black students. Special education teachers work with overrepresented students and general education teachers are those who refer students to receive special education services (Ysseldyke, 2005). With the recent reauthorization of the Individual with Disability Education Act (2004), general education teachers must address the growing number of special education students in inclusion settings. If both groups of teachers are culturally responsive and become Freire's agents of change, this will help to decrease the number of students referred to special education, and change the life of many Black students.

Theoretical Model

The theoretical model that guided this study was based on the works of Paulo Freire. Freire was a Brazilian educator and one of the most influential educational thinkers in the twenty and twenty-first centuries. In his writing, he argued for an educational system that would emphasize learning as an act of culture and freedom. In his works, he is known for the concepts such as "Banking" Education, in which passive learners have pre-selected knowledge deposited in their minds; "Conscientization," a process by which the learner advances towards critical consciousness; and the "Culture of Silence," in which dominated individuals lose the means by which to critically respond to the culture that is forced on them by a dominant culture (Freire, 1998). Most importantly,

Freire saw education as a tool for liberation and his philosophy perceives pedagogy as a potential tool to resist oppression.

Several authors (Delpit, 1995; Fine, 1991; Freire, 1978; Steele, 1997) posited similar theories to explain how schools impact their students. All of these theories view schools as the environment within which the academic and social components of the school impact students. Students enter school with their own personal characteristics (language, gender, race or ethnicity, learning differences, and socioeconomic status [SES]) and intermingle with other students and, most importantly, teachers. According to these authors, the most influential component of the school is the student's relationship with the teacher.

Black students in the classroom

Research indicates that teachers traditionally have not been trained in learning styles of Black students in the classroom. Valles (1998) states that the disproportionate representation of minority students in special education programs stems from teachers' limited knowledge of effective practices for diverse students. Additionally, Artiles and Trent (1994) and Valles, focusing mostly on Hispanic students, contend that schools need to incorporate multicultural education proponents to decrease the number of students of color in special education. Multicultural education is the most effective instruction for Black students (Bennett, 2003; Gay, 1994; Grant & Sleeter, 1988). The problem is: Would multicultural trainings/workshops and teacher education programs have a positive impact on the use of a culturally relevant curriculum, as well as on teacher attitudes toward minority students?

Minority students have proven to be at a disadvantage in our schools (Chamberlain, 2005; Delpit, 1995; Haberman, 1991; McCarthy, 1990; Slade & Conoley, 1989; Steele, 1997). Chamberlain and Hale (2002) claim that cultural differences between educators and students have negative effects on the education of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners. For decades, Black psychologists have done extensive research on Black students in schools and found they perform poorly (Bogat, Jordan, & Smith, 2001; Boykin, Wade, & Franklin, Yates, 1979). They continue to conclude that because their culture and identity are not an integral part of their education, Black students do not achieve the skills needed to attain the 'American dream' endorsed in our philosophy of education. Hence, Black students are often referred to special education programs by general education teachers (Artiles & Trent, 1994; Nielsen, Forness, & Serna, 1998; Patton, 1998; Salend et al., 2002; Valles, 1998).

The communal nature of Blacks stems from their African ancestry. An old African proverb states that, "It takes an entire community to raise a child". Upon arrival in America, Blacks have followed this type of tradition. They interact on a daily basis and work together as a group. Black culture states that success for one is success for all (Franklin, 2000; Hale-Benson, 1982; Hill, 1998; Mintz & Price, 1976; Myers & Taylor, 1998). In schools, students are taught to be individualistic, which is in conflict with Black students' traditions of working together and being a communal people. Therefore, as suggested by Obiakor and Obi (2001) and Bogat and others (2001), schools should allow Black students to work in groups. Boykin and associates (1979) and Delpit (1995) indicate that Black students need to work in cooperative groups to attain the skills for succeess. They also suggest that the culture and identity of Black students must be

9

incorporated within the schools. The educational system must reassess their goals and objectives to make sure that all students have an equal access to education. Artiles and Trent (1994), Chamberlain (2005), Slade and Conoley (1989), and Valles (1998) argue that if the system does not recognize and respond to cultural differences, these students will continue to be overrepresented in special education programs. However, the worst scenario for the schools will be students' dropping out of school, one of the greatest problems confronted by the educational system. As previously mentioned, Black students drop out of school at a higher rate than other students (Bracey, 1994; Fine, 1991; Garibaldi, 1993; Irvine-Jordan, 1992; Kunjufu, 1995; Markey, 1988; Richardson & Gerlach, 1980). Although all students are forced to attend school until they are sixteen, those who drop out of school will not be able to apply the skills needed to be successful. The educational system needs to improve the educational experience of minority students, particularly Black students. A review of the literature on the effects of education on Black students concludes that schools need to be reformed to decrease the number of Black students in special education programs (Nielsen et al., 1998; Patton, 1998; Salend et al., 2002; Valles, 1998). Research also supports that teachers must be culturally responsive to teach in the classroom. Culturally relevant teaching is a method of teaching and learning that values and promotes the experiences of all students, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds.

<div align="center">Statement of the Problem</div>

Many studies on schools focused on diversity in the curriculum in an attempt to improve the education of Black students. Some of this literature focused on the effect of teacher racial bias inside the classroom (Delpit, 1995, 2002), which found that while

nearly forty percent of students in classrooms are minority, most of the children's

teachers are white. Delpit argued that most of the academic problems in schools are the

result of miscommunication and inequality that plagues the schools. Other studies found

that the lack of diversity in the curriculum is one of the reasons that certain minority

groups are being classified as special education students and are dropping out of school

(Bracey, 1994; Fine, 1991; Garibaldi, 1993; Irvine-Jordan, 1992; Kunjufu, 1995; Markey,

1988; Richardson & Gerlach, 1980). This study compared special and general education

teachers' preparation and attitudes toward culturally responsive teaching, particularly

focusing on the Black population of students. The following overall question guided this

study:

    1.   Are there significant differences in special and general education teachers'

preparation for culturally responsive teaching and attitudes towards cultural

responsiveness, particularly focusing on Black students and Black culture?

    This research question suggested the investigation of the following Null

hypotheses:

    1. H_o1= There is no difference in the average level of preparation for culturally

responsive teaching of Black students between special education teachers and general

education teachers.

    2. H_o2 = There is no difference in the average level of cultural responsiveness to

Black students between special education teachers and general education teachers.

<div align="center">Impact of the Study</div>

    The results of this study could help to sensitize teachers to the needs of Black

students (Blake & Van Sickle, 2001; Corson, 1999; Delpit, 2002; Reagan, 1997). Based

on the results of the study, culturally responsive training for teachers could be introduced in other states requiring teachers to go beyond the traditional demands of the classroom (Bennett, 2003; Boykin et al., 1979; McCarthy, 1990). Multicultural trainings and workshops could help teachers to facilitate the success of students who are overrepresented in special education (Kendall, 1983; Ladson-Billings, 1990; Mark & Terrill, 2000; Reagan, 1997). Finally, culturally responsive teaching could decrease the number of minority students, in particular Black students, in special education.

Definition of Terms

Black. Students who can trace their origins to Africa (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000).

Multicultural education. Multicultural education is a popular term that educators increasingly use to describe education policies and practices that recognize, accept, and affirm human differences and similarities related to gender, race, disability, class and (increasingly) sexual preference (Sleeter & Grant, 1988).

Disproportionate representation. The presence of students from a specific group in an educational program being higher or lower than one would expect based on their representation in the general population of students (Salend et al., 2002).

Learning styles. Cognitive, affective, and physiological behaviors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment (Keefe, 1979).

Teaching styles. Methods teachers use to teach their students. The methods can include teacher-student interaction; student-student interaction; and hands on experiences (Bennett, 2003; Delpit, 1995; Gregorc, 1979; Ladson-Billings, 1990).

Culturally responsive teaching (CRT). A method of teaching and learning that builds on and values the cultural experiences and knowledge of all participants, regardless of whether they are from the dominant culture (Montgomery, 2001).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The term race in education often leads to constant debate of one kind or another in schools today. More than 44% of the nation's schools have no Black teachers on staff and many students will complete their K-12 schooling without being taught by at least one Black teacher. In addition, teacher education programs, nationally, have fewer Black teachers and 81% of teachers in the program are White middle class women (Ladson-Billings, 1990). This cultural and linguistic mismatch between teachers and students is a crucial issue for teacher education. Thus, racial inequality has persisted and has been perpetuated in our educational system (Kozol, 1991; McCarthy, 1990). Therefore, educational scholars are seeking ways to transform the curriculum and structure of the American educational system to encompass the diversity of students. McCarthy explains the American curriculum and its lack of representation of other cultures and races. McCarthy argues that, "schooling is thus fundamentally a site for the production of social identities" (p. 8). Perry (1990) in her article, "A Black student's reflection on public and private schools" in *Facing Racism in Education,* points out that as a result of this lack of representation, Black students' voices and identities are silenced in the classroom. This stance is strongly supported by Fine (1991). Schools and curricula are not designed to meet their needs (Crafter, Mupier, & Rodney, 1999; Delpit, 1995; Tatum, 2003). As a result, many Black students do poorly. These authors express that students' identities must be an integral part of their educational process. However, the educational system does not provide opportunities for minority students to articulate their identities.

Consequently, minority students' self-advocacy would force educators to reexamine the curriculum and make the needed changes. The increasing cultural diversity of the student population in the United States has led to a need for greater multipluralism and sensitivity training so teachers are better prepared to be culturally responsive.

<center>Teachers' Attitudes Toward Multicultural Teaching</center>

Many authors (e.g. Barry & Lechner, 1995; Morales, 2000; Olmedo, 1997) studied the attitudes and awareness of multicultural teaching and learning among preservice teachers. Most of these studies examined preservice teachers' attitudes before and after they had taken courses or had experience interacting with diverse students. The study of Barry and Lechner examined 73 preservice teachers' attitudes, of which more than 70% were White women. The teachers were provided background information and then responded to 43 statements about multicultural education. The results indicated that most teachers are aware of issues that relate to multicultural education and anticipated working with students from diverse cultures. However, teachers doubted their teacher preparation had increased their abilities to teach children from cultural and religious backgrounds that differ from their own. They also had reservations about their abilities to communicate with children and families from diverse backgrounds. In a different study, Olmedo studied an elementary teacher education course. The participants were given journals and essays to reflect on their experiences. The results indicated that prospective White teachers had changed their views positively about inner city Black children.

In another study, Morales (2000) invited 23 White university students to participate. Initially, students were given a questionnaire to address their understanding

<center>15</center>

of multicultural issues. The mean score for the majority of the students was two, which indicated 'some knowledge' about multicultural issues. However, after completion of the course, students were given the same questionnaire. The students' posttest scores increased to three, which indicated 'very knowledgeable.' The results indicated that multicultural teacher education programs (MTEP) increased teachers' attitudes towards understanding and teaching diverse students. In a similar study, Slade and Conoley (1988) studied 75 preservice White teachers' attitudes entering a teacher education program. The authors introduced a multicultural module to junior-level teacher education students preparing to teach students with mild handicaps in both inclusion and resource room placements. The module provided students the opportunity to see life through the eyes of individuals from other cultures. The participants' attitudes were assessed before the module was introduced and after its completion. The *Multicultural Self-Report Inventory* (MSRI) measured participants' perceptions about their cultural beliefs and its importance to teaching. Lower scores indicated less multicultural bias. The results of the pretest average score was 48.79 and the average posttest score was 32.13, indicating a significant change from pre to post-test scores.

Dee and Henkin (2003) studied 150 preservice teachers' attitudes toward cultural diversity prior to their entries into multicultural education courses at an urban university. The group was composed of 70.3% female, 28% White, 55.6% Hispanic and 13.4% Black pre-service teachers. Although these teachers were about to enter the multicultural education sequence at an urban university, none of the teachers had formal experience in multicultural education in a teacher education program. The focus of the study was the examination of preservice teachers' attitudes toward cultural diversity. The results

indicated that teachers specializing in special education reported less comfort with cultural diversity than those students specializing in regular elementary education. In addition, prospective elementary educators reported higher levels of assimilation toward diverse students than prospective special educators.

Terrill and Mark (2000) developed and distributed a questionnaire to 97 undergraduates enrolled in three sections of a required Foundations of Education course at Central Michigan University. Sixty-five percent of the respondents were female; 89% were White. There were no Black participants in the study. Two of the research questions studied were: Do our preservice teachers hold significantly different expectations for learners in school settings with diverse racial and linguistic backgrounds? and Do our preservice teachers hold significantly different expectations for Black students and second-language learners in urban schools than they hold for majority White, monolingual Anglo students in surburban schools? Results indicated that the preservice teachers held significantly different expectations for learners in different school settings with diverse racial and linguistic backgrounds. In addition, the preservice teachers expected a higher level of discipline problems, a lower level of parental support, fewer talented students, and a lower level of motivation in children of color. Furthermore, they indicated a lower level of comfort with Black and second language learners.

Schultz, Neyhart, and Reck (1996) surveyed 300 preservice teacher education students at Kutztown University regarding their attitudes and beliefs toward minority students as well as toward working in urban settings. More than 80% of the participants were White and female. A majority of them indicated that they believe urban students'

attitudes and behaviors to be different than their own. These prospective teachers used

adjectives such as lackadaisical, unmotivated, violent, rougher, and emotionally unstable

to describe children of color in urban schools. In a different study, Wolffe (1996) studied

education majors at a small liberal arts college in rural Indiana. The purpose of the study

was to reduce teacher expectations of urban students through field experience. Wolffe

had 18 juniors to complete a ten-question survey on two different occasions. The first

time was prior to the urban experience and the second time was four days after returning.

Eighteen sophomores were also given the survey to complete; however, they did not

complete the field experience. The results indicated that juniors showed a significant

change of attitudes if they went to the urban school. Most students who had the field

experience had a reduced level of lower expectations for urban schools. On the other

hand, the sophomores who remained on campus had no significant change in attitudes

toward urban schools.   Finally, Bakari (2003) studied 415 students enrolled in teacher

education programs at six universities. The purpose of the study was to assess the

attitudes of preservice teachers towards teaching Black students. There were three

subsamples of teachers that participated. Group 1 consisted of White teachers from a

public, predominately White university. Group 2 consisted of Black preservice teachers

from historically Black colleges and universities. Group 3 consisted of teachers from a

private, predominately White university. The results indicated that means for all groups

were lower on the *Cultural Sensitivity toward African American students* subscale than

the *Willingness to Teach students* subscale. The mean score for Group 2, the Black

preservice teachers, on the *Willingness to teach African American students* subscale was

higher than the means for the other two groups.

Teachers' Preparation for Multicultural Teaching

In a qualitative study, Milner (2006) studied 14 preservice teachers' knowledge and understanding of cultural and racial diversity at a private institution in the southeastern part of the US. The sample was composed of thirteen White, one Asian, and all but two were female. The fourteen participants did not feel prepared to teach in an urban school. Milner's results imply that teacher education courses that concentrate and focus on urban education are crucial to the understanding and knowledge of preservice teachers. Furthermore, teacher education programs play a key role in helping preservice teachers develop the "pedagogical and content knowledge" to meet the needs of diverse students in the classroom. LeCompte and McCray (2002) studied seventeen elementary education teacher candidates enrolled in instructional methods course. The participants were White middle to upper class women. The study investigated the responses and reflections of these teachers' perspectives of whiteness and culturally responsive teaching. The results indicated that teachers were not conscious of their biases and thus, teacher education programs must prepare them to teach diverse student populations.

McNeal (2005) studied the influence of multicultural teacher education programs on classroom teachers' multicultural practices. This qualitative study examined the multicultural classroom practices of two novice secondary English teachers, one Black and one White. These teachers graduated from a nationally certified urban education MTEP located in the Southeast region. Each completed a Masters of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program with a content area focus in English language arts. Research experts suggest that teachers prepared in multicultural teacher education program (MTEP) are more able to teach diverse student populations than teachers who do not have the

preparation (Cwick, Woolbridge, & Petch-Hogan, 2001; Gonzalez & Picciano, 1993; Grant, 1981). McNeal states that teachers in these types of programs are more knowledgeable about multicultural principles and can provide significant assistance to students from diverse cultures and backgrounds. This study was based on the Merriam model. This model attempted to "probe interactions and activities that took place inside two secondary English classrooms and to describe and analyze thoroughly these classroom events as they related to multicultural education". The results indicated that teachers that are in MTEP introduced multicultural practices in their classroom.

Ford (1992) studied the perceptions of special education administrators regarding multicultural education inservice training for special education teachers working with Black students and their experiences in multicultural education. The administrators were selected from various locations in Ohio. The sample was composed of 66.7% White, 23.8% Black and 9.5% Native American; 71.4% were male. More than 80% believed that special education teachers should participate in multicultural inservice training programs that have special emphasis on Black learners. One-third of the administrators reported that conducted or planned district wide training should focus on Black students. Next, about half of them believed teachers adjust their instructional materials to accommodate learning styles and interests of Black learners. Finally, some of the respondents believed that the failure of Black students' is due to teachers' failure to adapt teaching style and expectations to the cultural experiences of students. Ford concluded that special educators have to participate in multicultural education training that focuses directly on issues relevant to Black students.

Erskine-Cullen and Sinclair (1996) investigated how well teacher education programs prepared teachers to be better teachers in urban schools. Two elementary schools and one secondary school in Ontario, Canada were selected to participate in this study. The teachers were given a detailed questionnaire to complete and participated in focus group discussions. The group was composed of 22 teachers and 5 administrators from various grade levels and positions within the school. These participants were asked how well their preservice preparation programs prepared them to teach in urban settings on a scale from 1 (not prepared at all) to 5 (well prepared); 68% of the respondents gave a rating of three or below. Teachers suggested that the best preparation for teaching in urban schools is to have a practicum in an urban school. Finally, preservice programs must have a greater focus on skills such as anti-racist training, conflict resolution, classroom management, and most importantly modification of the curriculum to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Melser (2006) studied junior level students in an immersion Urban Semester Program at Ball State University. The goal of the study was to debunk the myth about teaching in urban schools and promote positive attitudes about teaching in such a setting. The population of preservice teachers was mostly White (95%) and they taught students in the Indianapolis school system. In the program, the preservice teachers were expected to keep a daily journal for reflections. Second, they were taught to use culturally responsive materials in their lessons and bulletin boards. Next, teachers were trained to manage a classroom of diverse learners. At the end of the program, preservice teachers who completed this program felt better prepared to teach diverse learners in urban school settings. Wegner and Dinsmore (2005) examined preservice teachers assumptions about

student diversity in rural schools they planned to teach in. This 2-year evaluative self-study of a cohort teacher preparation program explored preservice teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to teach diverse students in Oregon. Thirty-one preservice teachers and their two professors participated in the study. Group interviews focused on teacher perception of program efficacy related to preparing them to teach diverse learners. The results indicated that teachers did not believe reading theories on multicultural education was helpful. In addition, placing teachers in school with minority students was also not helpful in preparing them to teach minority students. However, preservice teachers believed that their own experiences with minority students and sustained contact with minority children and families was helpful. The final findings indicated that the program helped preservice teachers become sensitive to issues in teaching linguistically and culturally diverse students in rural schools.

Learning Styles of Black Students

Black psychologists and other Black educators have found that a majority of Black students are abstract random learners (Blake & Van Sickle, 2001; Bogat et al., 2001; Boykin et al., 1979; Delpit, 2002; Hale, 2002). Butler (1984) illustrates that abstract random learners work best when they: 1) can work and share with others; 2) have open communication with others; 3) have a noncompetitive atmosphere; 4) have a personally satisfying environment; 5) have social activities to balance work; and 6) have freedom from control by others. Black psychologists concur with Butler's findings that Black students fit into this mode of learning. The students are like pieces; they bring their own unique abilities to the group to complete the puzzle. Similar to Freire's ideas, education becomes a tool of liberation and not oppression. The students are also engaged

22

in a discussion free of constraints and to some extent, teacher involvement. They become critical thinkers and take an active role in their learning process. When teachers become facilitators, the responsibility for learning is put it in the hands of the students (Freire, 1970). It gives students a sense of self-worth and pride in their efforts to educate themselves. It also allows them to build relationships among students and gain invaluable interpersonal skills. In an ever-changing environment, these skills of collaboration are required to work with others and be successful.

Most secondary schools in the United States are 'traditional', and students are unable to master group cohesiveness. Like Freire, Butler (1984) states that Black students face difficulty in classrooms where teachers have authoritarian personalities. Black students are not armed with an education to break down those barriers, keeping them from achieving, because they are not acquiring the skills necessary to be successful (Bracey, 1994; Crafter et al., 1999; Freedman, Flaherty, Paskewitz, Proescher, & Weist, 1995; Perez, 1994; Tatum, 2003). According to these authors, Black students' style of learning is often overlooked in schools and requires a restructuring of classroom instruction.

Ladson-Billings (1990) in her *Culturally relevant teaching: Effective instruction for Black students* states that Black parents want their children to be successful but not at the price of losing their culture. Hale-Benson (1982) states that "Black children need an educational system that first recognizes their abilities and their culture, that draws upon these strengths, and that incorporates them into their learning process" (p. 4). According to Hale-Benson, the culture of the students plays an important role in their learning process and their socialization. Therefore, the Black culture is often incompatible with

traditional schools and causes Black students to face unnecessary challenges (Boykin et al., 1979; Crafter et al., 1999; Fine, 1991; Tatum, 2003).

Hale-Benson (1982) explains the cultural style of Black students. She argues that the schools must be able to understand the Black culture in order to relate to them. For example, she states that Black people tend to prefer novelty, freedom, and personal distinctiveness. Hale-Benson's examination of secondary schools showed that this key element of Black students' culture must be taken into account when addressing their needs. If this is excluded, many black students will face difficulty in achieving at a high level. In addition, Black students in most cases speak a different language or dialect called Black English (Ebonics). The language barrier in schools also makes it quite difficult for Black students to achieve and perform well on tests. To this end, Black students are seen as slow learners and tracked into the lower ability groups. Irvine-Jordan (1990) argues that this happens to a greater extent in the secondary schools. The teachers' failure to recognize the uniqueness of Black students' culture sends a message and perpetuates the stereotype that Blacks are intellectually inferior to Whites. It also reiterates the social and economic stratification that is already prevalent in society. According to Irvine-Jordan, many Black students realize this form of mistreatment in the schools and it contributes to their disruptive behaviors. Irvine-Jordan interviewed Black students and came to the conclusion that their experiences were similar in schools. Most of them were tracked into the lower classes because of their disruption in the classroom due to their unwillingness to conform to the educational system or just dropped out of school entirely Reagan (1997) argues that this belief system has often resulted in Black

students being misdiagnosed as having learning disabilities. As a result, a disproportionate number of Black students are present in Special Education programs.

Minorities in Special Education

Salend and others (2002) argued, consistent with many authors (Artiles & Trent, 1994; Donovan & Cross, 2002; Garcia & Ortiz, 2004; Kalyanpur & Harry, 1999) that there is a disproportionate number of minority students in special education programs. In particular, Black males are over-identified and placed in special education programs (e.g. Samuels, 2005; Watkins & Kurtz, 2001). Others have focused on the overrepresentation of Blacks in the Emotional and Behavior Disordered (EBD) category (Obiakor, 2007; Welner, 2004).

McCarthy (1990) argues that teachers construct race in their classrooms. Nationally, more than 87% of the teachers are White and are from middle class homes (Salend et al., 2002). In addition, the curriculum in schools is Eurocentric and forces all students to conform to the mainstream culture. However, many students in schools are minorities and are from low socioeconomic communities and do not share similar backgrounds as their teachers. As a result, teachers are unable to understand or appreciate the uniqueness of their students. For example, Black students are linguistically different from their White teachers. Most Black students speak and understand Black English, and are often categorized as second language learners (Delpit, 1995, 2002; Salend et al., 2002). This creates a cultural conflict in the classroom. The teachers' negative perceptions about the students' native tongue build a wall blocking learning. Teachers often label Black English as a defective language and reiterate that it has no place in the schools (Delpit, 2002; Smitherman, 2000). Thus, Black students

receive a conflicting message from schools that challenge their culture and identity. Those students who are able to adjust their speech are successful in schools, while the others may be perceived as defiant and for exhibiting a behavioral problem (Boykin et al., 1979; Delpit, 1995; Irvine-Jordan, 1990; Kunjufu, 1995; Ogbu, 1992). Thus, these students are placed in special education programs. Thus, special education becomes a dumping ground for students that teachers are not able to change, or for those not able to conform to the educational system (Fine, 1991; Hemmings, 1996).

Another issue of cultural conflict is intelligence testing in schools which have been shown to be culturally and linguistically biased (Patton, 1998; Salend et al., 2002). Although these tests have been improved over the years and more tests are available that are linguistically based, i.e. Kaufmann-Assessment Battery of Cognition (K-ABC), the results are still interpreted based on white middle class American standards. As indicated in the studies of Bakari (2003), LeCompte and McCray (2002), Olmedo (1997) and other attitudinal studies, these assessors fail to realize that most minority students attend schools where teacher preparation and attitudes about Black students is biased. In addition, research has proven that tests such as the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) do not truly test a student's abilities or potential. Testing students that are linguistically different is an injustice to them. Teachers misconstrue a student's inability to speak Standard English and label a student as having a learning disability and refer him/her for special education services (Louden, 2000; Perez, 1998; Salend & Salinas, 2003; Thomas & Collier, 1997). The assessors test the students for a learning disability or demonstration of frequent misbehaviors based on teachers' lack of knowledge of the various cultures. Ultimately, the student is referred for a psychological evaluation and

26

unfortunately many Black students have been placed in these programs. The overrepresentation of Black males in special education limits their chances of success and access to the general education curriculum (Patton, 1998). These students miss both essential general education academic and social curricula, thus creating a negative stigma and low self-esteem among these students.

<center>Dropping Out of School</center>

In recent years, the percentage of Black students in secondary schools has changed. Yet, Black students continue to be the second highest ethnic group to drop out of school, following American Indians (NCES, 2004). In 1980, Black students were 16.0% of the student drop out population. According to the U. S. Census Bureau (2004), Blacks from the age of sixteen to twenty-two years of age were the highest of any group to drop out of school at 24%. In 1991, the percentage of Black students dropping out was 16.6% and in 1994 the percentage was 17.6%. The data suggest that the numbers are continuing to increase each year. The works of Fine (1991) and Irvine-Jordan (1990) critically analyzed the drop out rate of Black students in schools. They found the major reasons for Black students to drop out are silencing in schools, the lack of Black culture and identity in the curriculum, and teachers not utilizing different teaching styles.

The silencing of students in schools makes them bored and is a contributing factor to their dropping out. In the chapter, "Silencing and Nurturing Student voices," Fine (1991) analyzed the dropout rate of schools and found it alarming that many students dropped out because they were silenced in the classroom. Fine showed that teachers did not allow students to share their opinions, but required students to take their word as truth. Fine states that, "The price of academic 'success' may have been the muting of

one's voice" (p. 37). It seems that for students to be successful, they must sit in the classrooms and listen to the teachers without questioning. She also believes that silencing students in our schools has an effect on the dropout rate. In her data, she concluded that sixty to seventy percent of the students in urban schools are dropping out, and most of these schools are comprised of Black students. In 2000, the rate of black students dropping out of school continued to rise (NCES, 2004).

Fine (1991) states that the main reason these students drop out of school is because of teachers' silencing them as well as the lack of diversity in the curriculum. Perry's (1990) article describes an example of a young Black female struggling with the educational system and continued by stating that "students that questioned their teachers were punished for misbehaving." Perry argues that, "what well-behaved means is always taking the teacher's word as absolute truth and never questioning the teacher's authority" (p. 7). In order to remain in school, many minority students remain silent. One of the long-term effects of silencing students has led to the achievement gap between Black and white students.

The American educational system has not been effective in educating Black children. Black students are educationally at risk (Bracey; 1994; Crafter et al., 1999; Freedman et al., 1995; Perez, 1994; Tatum, 2003). There is an achievement gap between White and Black students in our school (NCES, 2000). The education of White students in comparison to Black students in schools is successful because the schools are designed for 'White education.' Hale-Benson (1982) states that "children from non-European lower socioeconomic cultural groups are at a disadvantage in the schools because the American education system has evolved out of a European philosophical, theoretical, and

pedagogical context" (p. 178). Therefore, all non-European groups are excluded from the educational system. Public schools serve children from various backgrounds. Therefore, culturally responsive curriculum was developed.

Schools' Structure

This study is guided by the theoretical framework of Freire (1970), who examined the structure of the educational system. He argued that the educational system silences students in the classroom. Students are unable to voice their concerns and take an active part in their learning processes. Like Bennett (1976), this author suggests that the current structure of schools is detrimental to the success of students. Students will not become critical thinkers as suggested by Bloom's Taxonomy, unable to grow intellectually, and most importantly, not attain the skills necessary to achieve. Students must comply with what the teacher says and must not challenge them. Freire states that teachers choose and enforce their choices and expect students to comply.

Freire (1970) argues that unless students are allowed to think critically, changes will not occur in our society. Teachers, who Freire calls 'the oppressors', are not allowing open communication with students. Many teachers force students to keep their ideas and opinions to themselves. This is clearly seen when Freire states, "The oppressors are the ones who act upon men to indoctrinate them to a reality which must remain untouched" (p. 83). Therefore, Black students tend to either conform to the conditions set before them or drop out of school (Ogbu, 1992; 1989).

Freire's proposal was to transform schools; never to eliminate or deny them (McLaren, 2000). Freire saw education as a tool of liberation to resist oppression. He practiced his philosophy of thinking in rural areas in Brazil teaching peasants to read and

write. Freire believed that an education can help those down-trodden to resist oppression.

He educated peasants to raise their consciousness, and hopefully increase their

participation in the social order. His work was about hope. In his opinion, education

used properly as a tool of resistance can liberate. His teachings argued that social change

would have to come from the masses and not individuals- educators and literacy workers.

These agents of change will reform education to teach students to become critical

thinkers. Education is important to the social change needed in society. Freire (1970)

introduced the problem-posing concept as a possible solution to the silencing and

inequity in schools. Teachers should accept that they do not know everything and

students should recognize they are not ignorant of everything. In this concept, students

should be allowed to speak freely in the classroom and question information for their own

intellectual growth. Freire explains that, "Teacher's thinking is authenticated only by the

authenticity of the students thinking" (p. 63-4). If not, they tend to drop out of school

(Bracey, 1994; Crafter et al., 1999; Delpit, 1995; Fine, 1991; Tatum, 2003).

<p style="text-align:center">Multicultural Education</p>

Educators have introduced the multicultural education model to help alleviate the

problems facing Black students as well as other students (Bennett, 2003).   This model

states that the schools must promote diversity in every aspect, and must have a diverse

curriculum to meet the ever-changing needs of students, as supported by Freire's model.

Freire believed that education was a tool for liberation and freedom. The curriculum

should include accurate and up-to-date information about the different groups of people

in America (Bennett; Kendall, 1983; Sleeter & Grant, 1994). It should also draw on the

experiences of all students in order to bridge the gap between school and home. These

modifications would help students acquire information that is beneficial for the school, home, and future job skills.

Aims of Multicultural Education: A Change in the Curriculum

In the late 1960s, the concept of multicultural education emerged during the civil rights and women's movements (Sleeter & Grant, 1988). These movements fought to change laws and institutions that oppressed specific groups. Therefore, educators were mandated to reform the school policies, in such a way that those policies represent the diversity of students, thereby liberating minority youth (McLaren, 2000). The authors state, "Multicultural education is a popular term that educators increasingly use to describe education policies and practices that recognize, accept, and affirm human differences and similarities related to gender, race, disability, class and (increasingly) sexual preference" (p. 167). Multicultural education was instituted to ensure equal representation of all students and implementation of a diverse curriculum (Bennett, 2003; McCarthy, 1990). The following are the goals of multicultural education:

1. To promote the strength and value of cultural diversity

2. To promote human rights and respect for those who are different from oneself

3. To promote alternative life choices for people

4. To promote social justice and equal opportunity for all people

5. To promote equity in the distribution of power among groups (Sleeter & Grant, p. 167)

The multicultural education approach has two components: cultural pluralism and equal opportunity. Cultural pluralism is defined as, "the maintenance of diversity, a respect for differences, and the right to participate actively in all aspects of society

without having to give up one's unique identity" (Sleeter & Grant, p. 170). According to this concept, students of different groups should not have to shed their identities to fit into the educational system (Bennett, 2003; Delpit, 1995; McCarthy, 1990). However, in the past, schools were used to mainstream students and assimilate them into the dominant culture (McCarthy, 1990). As a result, the concept of multicultural education is needed to help increase cultural sensitivity, knowledge, and social skills that lead to equal opportunity in education.

The second component, equal opportunity, is defined as laws passed to guarantee equal access to education for all students, regardless of race, class or gender. The laws are there to make sure that schools provide equal opportunity and a free appropriate public education (FAPE). With the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (1997; 2004), general education teachers must address the growing number of special education students in inclusion setting. The main focus of equal opportunity is that, "children should have an equal chance to achieve in school, choose and strive to a personally fulfilling future, and develop self-respect, regardless of home culture or language" (Sleeter & Grant, 1998, p. 175). Therefore, students should not be prevented from attending schools. Moreover, equal opportunities should eliminate the alienation and isolation that many students feel they face in the schools and be similar to Freire's pedagogy that education should be liberating. Students will feel good about themselves and will probably enjoy school better; they will be willing to learn and will become engaged in the lessons taught and as active participants. The classroom should support a curriculum that draws from different cultures and varies in learning styles

(Corson, 1999; Delpit, 2002; Garibaldi, 1992; Kendall, 1983; Ladson-Billings, 1990; Mark & Terrill, 2000).

Multicultural education aims to reform education to benefit all students. Advocates of multicultural education argue for reform in all areas of the school, but particularly in the curriculum, instruction, and home/school relationships. Sleeter and Grant (1994) indicate that, "Multicultural education advocates argue that the curriculum should be reformed so that it regularly presents diverse perspectives, experiences, and contributions, particularly those that tend to be omitted or misrepresented when schools conduct 'business as usual" (p. 185). Teachers should try to incorporate materials from different ethnic groups in their lesson plans. For example, according to the authors, if a teacher is teaching American history, he/she should select a text written by and about Black people. For Black students, these are the places where they develop their views and opinions, but most importantly are socialized. The schools and community must develop and maintain close ties with diverse population. Although the curriculum and home/school relationship are essential in a child's learning, instruction is also deemed necessary for students' success (Delpit, 1995, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1990; McCarthy, 1990).

According to Sleeter and Grant (1994), instruction must be linked to the multicultural curriculum in the schools. They outline instruction into seven general principles. However, the three primary principles are that students should be curious, have his/her own learning style, and teachers should build on these styles to introduce culturally responsive teaching.

Culturally Responsive Curriculum

Teachers find it difficult to incorporate diverse teaching strategies in their

classroom and are unclear how to do so. Not sure how to do so, they want to be given the

specific curriculum on how to effectively teach students of diverse ethnic backgrounds.

In *Complex conversations with teacher candidates*, LeCompte and McCray (2002) argue

"I mean if they would just teach us the different learning styles, and the different

cultures….," we would be prepared to teach culturally diverse students. Preservice

teachers understand that each student is unique; however, they can not relate to every

child (Haberman, 1994; Irvine-Jordan, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1990; McCarthy, 1990).

The cultural mismatch in the classroom has implications for diverse students, particularly

Black students, in schools across the United States. The introduction of cultural

responsive classrooms recognizes diverse students and their needs in the classroom, a

principle closely aligned to the philosophy of Freire (Gay, 2002; Kea & Utley, 1998;

Montgomery, 2001; Sobel & Taylor, 2006; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995).

Collaboration and communication with culturally diverse families and other professionals

are essential elements of culturally responsive classrooms. Irvine-Jordan (1992) in

Making teacher education culturally responsive, details the future of schools, colleges,

department of education (SCDE) and their need to reform to meet the needs of Black

students. The most pressing need is for teachers to be sensitive to students of different

cultures (Delpit, 1995; Gay; Montgomery). Irvine-Jordan argues that White teachers

have biases and negative attitudes towards others. She suggests that the teacher

education curricula must change to accommodate minority students. The teachers must

break away from the traditional cycle of teaching. These teachers are effective when they

are "competent in subject matter and have mastered standard usage of written and spoken language" (p. 81). They also must hold high expectations for their students. If the students do not understand what is being taught, it must be retaught. It is also important for teachers to use different methods, materials, and instructional strategies to teach minority students (Blake & Van Sickle, 2001; Delpit, 1995, 2002; Garibaldi, 1992; Hale, 2002; Kendall, 1983; Ladson-Billings, 1990; Mark & Terrill, 2000; Moote & Wodarski, 1997; Obiakor & Obi, 2001; Reagan, 1997).

Phuntsog (2001) identified the perceptions of 33 teachers toward the importance of culturally responsive teaching in elementary schools. The results indicated that 96% of the teachers considered culturally responsive teaching to be an important component of working with culturally diverse students. Vaughn (2004) examined the attitudes and awareness of prospective teachers toward culturally responsive teaching and learning. Seventy-one preservice teachers who completed a course in cultural diversity in educational settings participated in this study. The results indicated that these teachers were well aware of the issues and need for multicultural education. They anticipated having students in their classroom from diverse cultural backgrounds and felt they were prepared to work in diverse settings. More than half the teachers indicated positive attitudes toward culturally responsive teaching and learning. Daunic, Correa, and Reyes-Blanes (2004) studied performance based assessment to determine whether different levels of preservice teacher preparation in culturally responsive teaching (CRT) and preparation in special versus general education affected foundational CRT skills of 68 beginning teachers graduates of four traditional university programs. The participants

recollection of coursework and internship experiences determined preparation as high or low.

The study was composed of 33 special educators and 33 general educators first year public school teachers who graduated from one of four Florida state universities. Over 90 percent of the participants were female and White. The findings indicated that the mean scores of special educators exceeded those of general educators on becoming familiar with students background knowledge and experience and fairness in their interaction with students. Too, special education teachers had a greater awareness of the need to incorporate individual student needs reflecting a focus on individualizing instruction for a diversity of learners. In addition, the higher scores of special education teachers on fairness reflected a focus on individuals. Thus, special educators were better prepared in CRT and in teaching diverse students.

The culturally responsive curriculum addresses the growing diversity of students in schools. The curriculum would include accurate information about the different groups of people in America. It should also draw on the experiences of students to bridge the gap between home and school (Hill, 1998; Louden, 2000; Myers & Taylor, 1998; Sobel & Taylor, 2006; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). For example, teachers can introduce diversity in the classroom by inviting families and community leaders who represent diverse backgrounds. This will allow students to connect classroom instruction to the 'real world'. Next, teachers must be open to different vehicles of transforming classroom instruction. One of these vehicles is the students themselves. The students should be allowed to interact with each other through cooperative learning groups and group discussions, a liberating experience according to Freire. These innovative and

culturally inclusive teaching strategies have changed the process of educating culturally diverse students. The increasing number of Black students in classrooms alerts educators that culturally responsive teaching is imperative in the classroom due to the uniqueness of these students' culture. Unfortunately, in many states, unlike South Florida, the faces of teachers have remained unchanged—White, middle class female (Irvine-Jordan, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1990; LeCompte & McCray, 2002). Phuntsog (2001) argues that the current teachers in the classroom are not contributing to the 'colorful cultural mosaic'.

According to researchers, effective teachers of culturally diverse students use their students' everyday experiences in an effort to link new concepts to prior knowledge (Irvine-Jordan, 1990; Kea & Utley, 1998). Teachers must affirm students for their dynamic abilities, culture language, and background that they bring into the classroom (Gay, 2002; Haberman, 1991; Jackson, 1993; LeCompte & McCray, 2002; Kunjufu, 1995; Obiakor & Obi, 2001). In addition, creating a culturally responsive classroom is simple. Teachers need to recognize the classroom as a culturally diverse unit, and must instruct from a curriculum that encourages the sharing of diverse cultures. The majority of teachers must find a way of relating to the increasingly multicultural classroom environment. These teachers teaching in urban settings must prepare themselves in MTEP (Bakari, 2003; Barry & Lechner, 1995; Dee & Henkin, 2003; Milner, 2006; Morales, 2000; Olmedo, 1997). In Florida, teachers are required to be META certified or endorsed depending on primary teaching assignment. In *The Skin That We Speak*, Delpit (2002) argues that the alarming statistics concerning the lack of Black achievement and their large numbers of suspensions and drop out rates make it imperative for schools to use the culturally relevant teaching model (Bracey, 1994; Crafter et al., 1999; Freedman

et al., 1995; NCES, 2000; Perez, 1994; Tatum, 2003). Finally, Irvine-Jordan (1990) argues that "Black students are assumed to be relationally predisposed to a learning style characterized by freedom of movement, variation, creativity, divergent thinking approaches, inductive reasoning, and focus on people" (Gregorc, 1979; Keefe, 1979). Boykin et al. (1979), Delpit (1995), Hale (2002), Hale-Benson (1982), and Irvine-Jordan, (1992) also suggest that cooperative learning groups are helpful and beneficial in the education of Black students. Therefore, cooperative strategies and the conscious raising strategies reinforce Freire's philosophy that education as a tool of liberation.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

Minority students, particularly Black students, drop out of schools at a higher rate than other students and are overrepresented in special education. Many American youth in our schools continue to receive an inadequate education. These students are the generation of tomorrow, and only with an education will they be prepared to enter an obstacle-filled the world; this is a recurring theme advocated in our philosophy of education. Effective reforms must be implemented to meet the demands of effectively teaching culturally diverse students in our educational system. The teacher education programs in the United States should prepare teachers to enter schools with diverse student populations. Multicultural instructional practices taught in teaching education programs should give preservice teachers the skills to help all students reach their potential. The school is students' vehicle to success and the teachers are the agents to change a system that has failed to recognize the unique culture of diverse students. Teachers must ensure equity and excellence for all students in attaining academic success. Currently, Black students are not achieving at the same level as their White

counterparts; this fact is educationally and practically significant to our nation's continued global success.

The educational system requires drastic changes in its structure to meet the needs of Black students. The first change must take place in teacher education. Many teachers have limited knowledge of race and draw on their own experiences to understand race (Irvine-Jordan, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1990; McCarthy, 1990). This biased information sometimes distorts their views on race. Therefore, teachers should be required to take several courses on multicultural education and on ways to effectively deal with differences in the classroom. They need the proper skills and techniques to teach Black students because the same styles of learning and teaching do not work for all students. This will give future teachers some background to enter a diverse classroom. In addition, they must student teach in culturally diverse classrooms to receive first-hand experience of working with various groups of students. However, in Florida teachers have taken META training.

In summary, if teachers ignore the ethnicity and the culture of students in the classroom, students fail. Educators should embrace the students' strength and address the diverse learning needs of an increasing multicultural, multilingual student population. This requires a major transformation of current school practices. These areas put into practice can aid in establishing a learning environment that promotes a successful educational system benefiting all students, in particular Black students. In fact, a culturally responsive curriculum could decrease the overrepresentation of Black students in special education programs and the high incidence of Black students dropping out of school. Increased involvement in education provide students with the tools of liberation

to resist oppression; education will allow them entry into the promised 'American

Dream'.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This descriptive research study employed a survey design to investigate if there were differences in teachers' preparation and attitudes toward culturally responsive teaching, particularly as it pertains to the instruction of Black students. Data was collected from special education and general education high school teachers and analyzed to find out if there were differences between these groups of teachers.

Participants

The sample for this study was comprised of special education and general education high school teachers from Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS). Teachers from four high schools (convenience sample) in MDCPS were distributed the questionnaire developed for this study. About 400 teachers received the questionnaire; about 23 % ($N = 90$) teachers completed and returned the questionnaire. Most of the participants were female from diverse ethnic groups and varied educational backgrounds.

Selection and Validation of Instrument

The study utilized the Teachers' Questionnaire (TQ), developed by the researcher (2006). The TQ is an instrument designed to measure teachers' preparation and attitudes toward culturally responsive teaching (See Appendix A). Items in this instrument were developed based on the literature about teachers' multicultural preparation and attitudes of teachers toward cultural diversity. Several instruments, including the fifth edition of the Multicultural Self-Inventory Report (MSRI), developed by Slade and Conoley (1989), were examined prior to constructing the instrument. The MSRI was included in the fifth

edition of the book *Comprehensive Multicultural Education* (Bennett, 2003). This is a

fifteen (15) item, multicultural self-report, that specifically measures attitudes of teachers

and produces a total score. Participants were asked to rate items with respect to their

level of "open-mindedness" on a scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly

disagree". Higher scores indicated "open-mindedness" of the respondent on the MSRI.

Another instrument, the Pluralism and Diversity Attitude Assessment (PADAA) was

developed by Stanley in 1996 and used in Dee and Henkin's (2003) study about

preservice teachers' attitudes. The 19 item PADAA was designed to measure the extent

to which a respondent has an attitude supportive of cultural diversity and the extent to

which an individual is comfortable with diversity in the classroom. Higher scores on the

PADAA indicated respondents' comfortability and supportive attitudes towards diversity

in the classroom. However, these instruments did not have sufficient reliability and

validity information that measured attitudes toward culturally responsive teaching. Thus,

the researcher thought that developing an instrument that could measure the variables of

interest in this study, was more appropriate to assess development of cultural responsive

teaching, particularly as it pertains to Black students.

Background Section

The background section in the TQ instrument includes items that assess the

participants' gender, ethnic group, education, position and years of education. Other

items in this section assess the characteristics of the students (e.g. primary exceptionality,

students' culture and linguistic diversity).

Main Instrument

In addition to the above section, the TQ is a nineteen (19) items instrument consisting of statements pertaining to teachers' preparation and attitudes toward cultural responsive teaching in the classroom. Five (5) questions relate to the number of teacher preparation courses and workshops taken by the participants as well as familiarity on cultural responsive teaching, including Black history. Four (4) Likert scale items using a scale from 1 to 5 (1= very unprepared, 5= very prepared) assess teachers' perception about their preparation to teach students from diverse backgrounds. An additional group of items (i.e., six) present statements about different cultures, particularly Black culture (e.g. *use of Ebonics should be accepted; students from different cultures behave differently*). Participants had to indicate in a scale from 1 to 5 their degree of agreement with each one of those statements, where 1 signifies strongly disagree and 5 signifies strongly agree. At the end of the questionnaire, four (4) scenarios depicting children from different cultural backgrounds in different behavioral situations are presented. Teachers had to select from a list of choices the most appropriate responses, in their opinion, to those situations (e.g. *ignoring the child's behavior, talking with parents*).

<div align="center">Data Collection Procedures</div>

The survey packet had two sections. It contained a cover letter (Appendix B) describing the purpose of the study and the rights of the participants. The second section included the Teachers' Questionnaire (TQ) (Appendix A), composed of the background section and the main instrument.

The writer sought and obtained permission to conduct the study from Barry University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Miami-Dade County Public Schools

(MDCPS) IRB. Four high schools agreed to collaborate with this study. In each school, the questionnaires with a cover letter (i.e. survey packet) was given to a teacher (contact person), who distributed them to the other teachers in the teachers' mail room. Teachers willing to participate completed the questionnaire, and returned it to a designated locked drop box. Based on the procedure, the data collection was anonymous.

The entire package required about 8 to 10 minutes to complete. It should be noted here that participation in this study was strictly voluntary and anonymous, and this was stated in the cover letter for participants. Approximately 400 questionnaire packets were distributed across four high schools. The response rate was 23%; in other words, 90 teachers completed and returned the questionnaires.

Data Analysis

The researcher utilized the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 11.5 to analyze the data collected in this study. Descriptive information was gathered for all variables to measure preparation and attitudes. Analyses of Variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to test the given hypotheses. Cronbach's alpha reliability of the TQ for all teachers was calculated on the instrument developed for this study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

This study compared special and general education teachers' preparation for culturally responsive teaching and attitudes toward cultural responsiveness, particularly focusing on the Black population of students. This chapter describes the sample being studied and the data analysis used. The chapter also describes the data collected to examine the research hypotheses and presents the results of analyses pertaining to the study.

The results of the study are presented in the following three sections. First, a description of the sample is included to allow comparison to the population of high school teachers in major metropolitan areas. Second, data was screened for reliability and recoded as necessary. In addition, the data was examined to ensure that the needed assumptions were satisfied. Third, the hypotheses were tested. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the research findings.

All data used in the statistical analyses were obtained from the completed questionnaires. Teachers' responses were used to test two hypotheses:

Ho1: There is no difference in the average level of preparation for culturally responsive teaching of Black students between special education teachers and general education teachers.

Ho2: There is no difference in the average level of cultural responsiveness to Black students between special education teachers and general education teachers.

Description of the Sample

This section provides a description of the response rate and teachers' background information. A total of 90 teachers participated in this investigation. Those who participated in the study read the cover letter, completed the questionnaires, and placed the questionnaires in the locked box located in the teachers' mailroom. The participants were teachers at four high schools in Southeast Florida. The Teachers' Questionnaire (TQ) was used to measure the special education and general education teachers' preparation for culturally responsive teaching and attitudes toward cultural responsiveness of Black students.

The main interest of this investigation was to compare special and general education teachers' preparation for culturally responsive teaching and attitudes toward cultural responsiveness, particularly focusing on the Black population of students. As depicted in Table 1, respondents who participated in this study were disproportionately more general education teachers ($n = 63,$ 70.9%) than special education teachers ($n = 26,$ 28.9%).

Table 1

Sample Size for High School Special and General Education Teachers

Participants	*n*	%
Special Education	26	28.9
General Education	63	70.0
Unknown	1	1.1
Total	90	100.0

Response Rate

Approximately, one quarter of the teachers invited to participate participated in the study. The low response rate (23%) is due in part to the timing of the study (end of

June) and the close of the school year. Many teachers were busy with grading final examinations and students' work for the fourth grading period. Thus, it is possible that teachers' participation in the study added more paperwork to their already busy schedules. Thus, the researcher has some concerns about this low percentage of teacher participation, which may have affected the findings of this study.

As can be observed in Table 2, schools differed in their response rate, ranging from 11.1% (*n* = 10*) to* 55.6% *(n* = 50). The reason for the high response rate obtained in High School #2 (55.6%) is due, probably, to the researcher's previous work in that school and teachers' familiarity with his name.

Table 2

Response Rate by Participating High Schools

High School	n	%
High School #1	10	11.1
High School #2	50	55.6
High School #3	10	11.1
High School #4	20	22.2
Total	90	100.0

Background Information

Table 3 provides information regarding gender, ethnicity, education, and years of experience for participants in the study by type of teacher (Special or General Education). While in general education, there was an equal distribution between males and females (*n* = 32, 52.5%, and *n* = 29, 74.5% respectively), there was a higher proportion of female respondents than male respondents in the special education group (*n* = 16, 64% compared to *n* = 9, 36% respectively). Overall, the ethnic breakdown of teachers was as follows: Black (*n* = 32, 36.0%), Hispanic (*n* = 26, 29.2%) and White (*n* = 25, 28.1. The sample

47

for this study appears to be consistent with the population of teachers in other major metropolitan areas, since the majority of participants in this study are minority. The sample consisted primarily of teachers with Bachelor's ($n = 30$, 33.7%) and Masters ($n = 40$, 44.9%) degrees. Overall, teachers were between the ages of 35 to 45 ($n = 28$, 32.2%). Teachers with four years or more experience ($n = 49$, 58.3%) were more willing to participate in this research.

Participants' ethnicity are representative of the demographic composite of MDCPS instructional staff members where the minorities are the majority. Some states, particularly the border states (e.g. CA and TX) have a similar distribution of teachers in their respective states (Texas Department of Education, 2008; California Department of Education, 2008). Thus, results from this study can be applicable to some large major metropolitan areas with similar demographics. However, as noted in Table 3, there were some demographic differences between special education and general education teachers in the sample. More special education teachers were women; more general education teachers were Black; and special education teachers were older. Differences between special education and general education teachers may be attributed to demographic differences.

Table 3

Participants

	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Special Education		
Female	16	64.0
Male	9	36.0
Total (29.1%)	25	100.0

		Frequency	Percent
General Education			
	Female	29	47.5
	Male	32	52.5
	Total (70.9%)	61	100.0
Ethnicity			
Special Education			
	White	08	30.8
	Black	05	19.2
	Hispanic/Latino	09	34.6
	Other	04	15.4
	Total (29.2%)	26	100.0
General Education			
	White	17	27.0
	Black	27	42.9
	Hispanic/Latino	17	27.0
	Other	02	3.2
	Total (70.8%)	63	100.0
Age			
Special Education			
	25-35	6	23.1
	36-45	5	19.2
	46-55	7	26.9
	56+	8	30.8
	Total (29.9%)	26	100.0
General Education			
	25-35	16	26.2
	36-45	23	37.7
	46-55	17	27.9
	56+	5	8.2
	Total (70.1%)	61	100.0
Years of Experience			
Special Education			
	1-3	2	9.5
	4-7	7	33.3
	8-12	4	19.0
	13+	8	38.1
	Total (25%)	21	100.0

		Frequency	Percent
General Education			
	1-3	12	9.5
	4-7	14	33.3
	8-12	13	19.0
	13+	24	38.1
	Total (75%)	63	100.0
Highest Degree Earned			
Special Education			
	Bachelor's	8	30.8
	Masters	8	30.8
	Specialist	2	
	Doctorate	8	30.8
	Total (70.8%)	26	100.0
General Education			
	Bachelor's	22	34.9
	Masters	32	50.8
	Specialist	02	3.2
	Doctorate	07	11.1
	Total (70.8%)	63	100.0

Data Screening Procedures

As previously mentioned, the TQ was administered by placing them in teachers'
mailboxes in the mailroom of each high school; teachers then had to return the
questionnaires to a locked box. Items for the level of preparation of teachers for culturally
responsive teaching were scored so that the higher the score, the better prepared teachers
were for culturally responsive teaching of Black students. Items on the TQ for level of
cultural responsiveness were scored so that the higher the score, the higher the teachers'
level of cultural responsiveness to Black students.

The next step established the reliability of the TQ instrument that measured
preparation for culturally responsive teaching and that measured teachers' cultural

responsiveness. Preparations for CRT included 9 items that addressed how well prepared

teachers were to teach in a culturally responsive manner. Cultural responsiveness

consisted of a subdomain in the TQ including 6 items, which focused on teachers'

attitudes toward minority students' behavior, particularly toward the behavior of Black

students. Cronbach alpha was used to measure realibility of the responses from the

respondents. The Cronbach's alpha for preparation was 0.90, which means that the

measure for the variable preparation for culturally responsive teaching was reliable.

However, the Cronbach's alpha for the variable cultural responsiveness was 0.64, which

means that the measure was borderline reliable. Consequently, the hypothesis test for this

measure must be interpreted with caution since results may be partially attributed to poor

reliability. Some responses to questions 26-29 (scenarios in which teachers had to select

responses to specific situations) were recoded to eliminate the choices that had too few

respondents (3 or less). "*Ignore child's behavior*" and "*other*" were eliminated in

question 26. "*Expel him*" and "*other*" were eliminated in question 27. "*Refer to ESE

screening*" and "*refer for ESOL screening*" were recoded as "*refer to ESE and/or ESOL

screening*" and "*write referral to guidance counselor*" was eliminated in question 28.

"*Scream at the child*" and "*other*" were eliminated in question 29. Several respondents

skipped one question in the set of questions that measured preparation for culturally

responsive teaching. The missing values were replaced by the average of the responses to

the other eight questions.

The next step analyzed the data to assure that required assumptions were met.

Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) requires the assumption that the dependent variable is

normally distributed. The distribution of the level of preparation for culturally responsive

teaching was examined and satisfies the assumption of a normal distribution as shown in

Figure 1 below.

Level of preparation for culturally responsive teaching
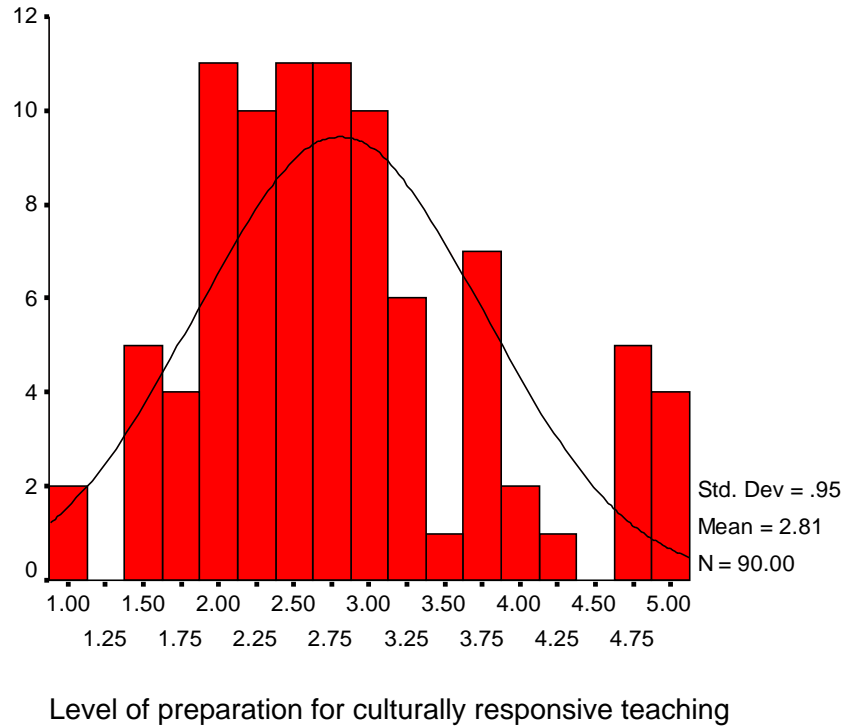
Figure 1. Histogram showing normal distribution of measure for level of preparation.

     The distribution of the level of culturally responsiveness was examined and

satisfies the assumption of a normal distribution as shown in Figure 2 below.
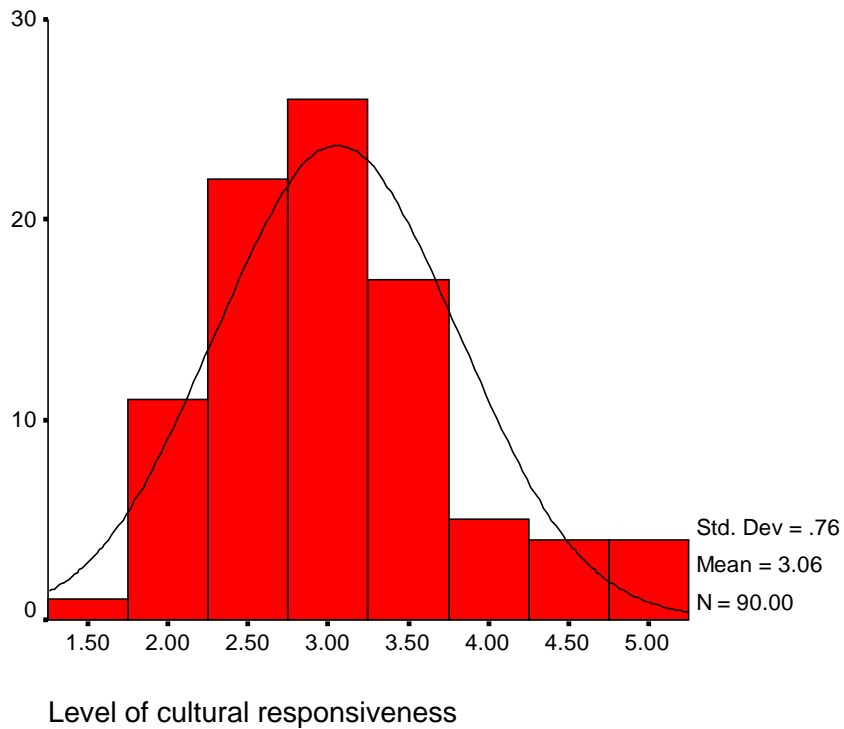
Figure 2. Histogram showing normal distribution of measure for cultural responsiveness

Males and females did not differ significantly in their level of preparation for culturally responsive teaching (*M*=2.869, *SD*= 1.02 and *M*=2.769, *SD*=.909, respectively), *t*(85) =-.484 , *p*=ns, or in their level of cultural responsiveness (*M*=2.939, *SD*= .685 and *M*=3.159, *SD*=.815, respectively), *t*(85) =-.179 , *p*=ns. Although no differences were found in teachers' level of cultural responsiveness by ethnicity (*M*=3.0933, S*D*= .587 for White, *M*=2.968, *SD*= .837 for Black, *M*=3.263, *SD*= .821 for Hispanic, and *M*=2.547, *SD*= .369 for "Other"), teachers who classified themselves in the "Other" ethnicity category, had a significantly higher level of preparation for culturally responsive teaching than White teachers (*M*=3.706, *SD*= 1.15 and *M*=2.431, *SD*=.708, respectively), *p*=.008. However, it should be noted that only seven teachers classified

themselves in the "Other" category and the researcher may never know who these teachers were, due to the anonymous nature of this study.

Testing of Hypotheses

The hypotheses were stated in the null form and were tested at the .05 alpha level. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 11.5) program was used for all data analysis.

Overall Research Question

Are there significant differences in special and general education teachers' preparation for culturally responsive teaching and attitudes toward cultural responsiveness, particularly focusing on the Black population of students?

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the average level of preparation for culturally responsive teaching of Black students between special education teachers and general education teachers.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the relationship between whether the teacher is a special educator or a general educator and the level of preparation for culturally responsive teaching of Black students. The independent variable, the teacher's position, included two levels: special education and general education. The dependent variable was the level of preparation for culturally responsive teaching of Black students. The ANOVA was not significant, F (1,87) = 1.152, p = .286.

Means and standard deviations for special education teachers and general education teachers' preparation for culturally responsive teaching of Black students are presented in Table 4. The results of the ANOVA hypothesis test are presented in Table 5.

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations for Preparation for Culturally Responsive Teaching of

Black Students

	Special Education		General Education	
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Preparation for culturally responsive teaching	2.96	0.84	2.73	0.99

Table 5

One-Way Analysis of Variance for Effects of Teacher Position on Preparation for

Culturally Responsive Teaching of Black Students

Variable and Source	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*
Preparation for culturally responsive teaching				
Between groups	1	1.034	1.034	1.152
Within groups	87	78.130	0.898	

Hypotheses Two

There is no significant difference in the average level of culturally responsiveness

to Black students between special education teachers and general education teachers.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the relationship between whether

the teacher is a special educator or a general educator and the level of attitudes of

culturally responsiveness to Black students. The independent variable, the teacher's

position, included two levels: special education and general education. The dependent

variable was the level of culturally responsiveness to Black students. The ANOVA was

not significant, $F(1,87) = 0.152$, $p = .698$.

Means and standard deviations for special education teachers and general education teachers for cultural responsiveness are presented in Table 6. Results of the ANOVA hypothesis test are presented in Table 7.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations for Cultural Responsiveness

	Special Education		General Education	
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Culturally responsive teaching	3.11	0.91	3.04	0.69

Table 7

One-Way Analysis of Variance for Effects of Teacher Position on Cultural Responsiveness to Black Students

Variable and Source	*df*	SS	MS	F
Cultural responsiveness				
Between groups	1	0.088	0.088	0.152
Within groups	87	50.648	0.582	

Differences between special education teachers and general education teachers in their cultural responsiveness was also tested by examining differences in their responses to four scenarios involving culturally diverse students' behaviors at school. Chi-square tests were used to measure the significance of special and general education teachers cultural responsiveness to students from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

First, a two-way contingency table analysis was conducted to evaluate whether special educators responded differently to a scenario involving a Black student behaving inappropriately in class (See Table 8). The two variables were teacher's position with two levels (special educator and general educator) and teacher response to student's behavior with four levels (send him to the office; write a referral; reprimand the child;

and ask student to explain). Teacher's position and teacher's response were found to be not significantly related, Pearson χ^2 (3, $N = 81$) = 2.08, $p = .56$.

Table 8

Responses of Special Educators and General Educators to Black Child's Behavior

Response	Special Educator	General Educator	Total
Send him to the office	4 (18%)	12 (20%)	16 (20%)
Write a referral	4 (18%)	17 (29%)	21 (26%)
Reprimand the child	5 (23%)	15 (25%)	20 (25%)
Ask student to explain	9 (41%)	15 (25%)	24 (30%)
Total	22 (100%)	59(100%)	81 (100%)

Second, a two-way contingency table analysis was conducted to evaluate whether special educators responded differently to a scenario involving a Hispanic student coming late to school (See Table 9). The two variables were teacher's position with two levels (special educator and general educator) and teacher response to student's behavior with four levels (send him to the office; talk with the child; talk with the parents; and write a referral to the guidance counselor). Teacher's position and teacher's response were found to be not significantly related, Pearson χ^2 (3, $N = 82$) = 3.99, $p = .26$.

Table 9

Responses of Special Educators and General Educators to Hispanic

Child's Behavior

Response	Special Educator	General Educator	Total
Send him to the office	0 (0%)	8(13%)	8 (10%)
Talk with the child	4 (18%)	14 (23%)	18 (22%)
Talk with the parents	11(50%)	22 (37%)	33 (40%)
Write a referral to the guidance counselor	7(32%)	16 (27%)	23(28%)
Total	22 (100%)	60(100%)	81 (100%)

Third, a two-way contingency table analysis was conducted to evaluate whether special educators responded differently to a scenario involving a Haitian student failing math and reading (See Table 10). The two variables were teacher's position with two levels (special educator and general educator) and teacher response to student's behavior with three levels (refer him to ESE and/or ESOL screening; talk to his parents; and try new reading strategies in the classroom). Teacher's position and teacher's response were found to be not significantly related, Pearson χ^2 (2, $N = 83$) = 1.52, $p = .47$.

Table 10

Responses of Special Educators and General Educators to Haitian Child's Behavior

Response	Special Educator	General Educator	Total
Refer him to ESE and/or ESOL screening	15 (65%)	34 (20%)	49 (59%)
Talk to his parents	5 (22%)	21 (29%)	26 (26%)
Try new reading strategies in the classroom	2 (13%)	5 (25%)	8 (8%)
Total	22 (100%)	60(100%)	83 (100%)

Finally, a two-way contingency table analysis was conducted to evaluate whether special educators responded differently to a scenario involving a White student out of her seat and talking to other students (See Table 11). The two variables were teacher's position with two levels (special educator and general educator) and teacher response to student's behavior with four levels (write a referral to the Assistant Principal; refer the child to ESE services; talk with the child about her behavior; and send her to the office). Teacher's position and teacher's response were found to be not significantly related, Pearson χ^2 (3, $N = 80$) = 0.59, $p = .90$.

Table 11

Responses of Special Educators and General Educators to White Child's Behavior

Response	Special Educator	General Educator	Total
Write a referral to the Assistant Prinicpal	4 (19%)	16 (26%)	20(25%)
Refer the child to ESE services	4 (19%)	9 (15%)	13 (16%)
Talk with the child about her behavior	10 (48%)	26 (44%)	20 (45%)
Send her to the office	3 (14%)	8 (14%)	11 (14%)
Total	21(100%)	59(100%)	80 (100%)

Summary

Both research hypotheses were supported. Descriptive analyses were conducted to summarize the characteristics of the overall sample and of each group (special education teachers and general education teachers). The special education and general education teachers' preparation responses for culturally responsive teaching were reliable. However, the special education and general education teachers' level of measure of cultural responsiveness was less reliable.

Based on the results of the testing of the hypotheses, special education and general education teachers did not differ in their preparation for culturally responsive teaching and in their attitudes toward culturally responsiveness of Black students. The special education and general education teachers' responses to student behavior were not different.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the purpose of the study and procedures followed by a summary/interpretation of the findings and discussion based on the analyses of the data and the literature review. The chapter closes with implications, limitations of the study, recommendations for research, and conclusion.

The purpose of the study was to compare special education and general education teachers' preparation for culturally responsive teaching and attitudes toward cultural responsiveness, particularly focusing on the Black population of students.

The data gathered for this research was obtained by asking special education and general education teachers to respond to demographic questions, a questionnaire judging teachers preparation for culturally responsive teaching and attitudes toward cultural responsiveness of Black students. The questionnaires were distributed to teachers' mailboxes in the mailroom of four convenience sample high schools and returned to a locked drop box. ANOVAs were used to compare special education and general education teachers' preparation for culturally responsive teaching and their attitudes toward cultural responsiveness. Finally, chi square tests were done to compare the teachers' responses to scenarios involving culturally diverse students' behavior at school.

Summary of Findings

Statistical analyses of the two hypotheses suggest that special education and general education teachers' preparation for culturally responsive teaching (F (1,87) = 1.152, p = .286) and attitudes toward cultural responsiveness (F (1,87) = 0.152, p = .698)

was not significantly different. Special education and general education teachers have been sufficiently prepared. This suggests that this sample of teachers seemed to have an equal ability to respond to diverse learners. Although differences in the teachers' scores were not significant, the need for culturally responsive teaching should not be dismissed. It would appear that with a larger and more homogenous sample, more accurate information about culturally responsive teaching could have been obtained.   Five studies in the literature (Daunic et al., 2004; Dee & Henkin, 2003; Erskine-Cullen & Sinclair, 1996; Phuntsog, 2001; Vaughn, 2004) compared the level of special education and general education teachers' preparation for culturally responsive teaching and attitudes toward cultural responsiveness; however they support different findings and differed from each other.

The results of Daunic and others (2004) indicated that special educators were better prepared for culturally responsive teaching and for teaching diverse students. In addition, special education teachers had a greater awareness of the need to incorporate individual students' needs in the classroom. In that study, performance based assessments were used to determine whether different levels of special education and general education teachers' preservice preparation in culturally responsive teaching differed. In a different study, Dee and Henkin (2003) reported that special education preservice teachers were less comfortable with cultural responsiveness than regular education preservice teachers. The focus of the study was the examination of preservice teachers' attitudes toward cultural diversity as they entered multicultural education courses at an urban university. However, the aforementioned studies were quite different from each other and used different measures to assess future teachers.

On the other hand, the results of Phuntsog (2001) indicated that ninety-six percent of the teachers considered culturally responsive teaching to be an important part of working with diverse students. Teachers felt prepared in culturally responsive teaching and in teaching diverse students.   In another study, Vaughn (2004) examined the attitudes and awareness of teachers toward cultural responsive teaching. The results indicated that teachers were well aware of the issues and the need for multicultural education. More than half of the teachers indicated positive attitudes towards cultural responsive teaching and learning. A study by Erskine-Cullen and Sinclair (1996) investigated preparing teachers to be better teachers for urban schools. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents felt their preservice preparation program sufficiently prepared them to teach in urban schools. The results of these studies were corroborated in the current study of special education and general education teachers' preparation for culturally responsive teaching and attitudes toward cultural responsiveness, since teachers, overall, showed an appropriate preparation (averages of 2.96 [$SD = 0.84$] and 2.73 [$SD = 0.99$] in a scale from 1 to 5). In addition, their cultural responsiveness was, overall, high, indicating sensitivity toward other cultures (averages of 3.11 [$SD = 0.91$] and 3.04 [$SD = 0.69$]).

For one response in one of the scenarios presented in the TQ, the Hispanic child's coming late to school, there was a conspicuous difference between the responses of special education and general education teachers. General education teachers (13%) believed that the student should be sent to the office for his behavior while special education teachers (0%) did not. In other words, the general education teachers showed a low level of tolerance for Hispanic students who came late to class. The literature

suggests students who exhibit inappropriate behaviors were perceived as more likely to be sent to the office and at times in need of special education services. This significant difference supports the findings of Terrill and Mark (2000), who concluded that general education teachers deemed students of color as behavioral problems in the classrooms. Thus, these students are often referred for testing, found eligible, and placed in special education settings.

The findings suggest that regardless of the ethnicity of the educator, the preparation for culturally responsive teaching and attitudes toward cultural responsiveness was similar. Data in this study were also analyzed to determine in what respects special education teachers and general education teachers differed based on their demographic backgrounds. Results indicated that no significant differences were found by participants' gender, or position (special education vs. general education) on participants' preparation for culturally responsive teaching and for attitudes toward cultural responsiveness. However, one subgroup of teachers who classified themselves as "other" in the ethnicity category, showed a significantly higher level of preparation in CRT. The limitation of this finding is that the author can not know which ethnicity this subgroup identified. Regardless of the type of position (special or general education teacher), teachers were sufficiently culturally prepared and had, overall, a positive attitude toward cultural responsiveness.

Discussion

This discussion and the limitation that follows aim to address many of the possibilities of why there were no significant findings. It was surprising to find that preparation for culturally responsive teaching and attitudes toward cultural

responsiveness did not differ between special education and general education teachers. One factor is that the TQ was administered during the last week of the school year. It is possible that administration of the questionnaire earlier in the year might have yield a greater response rate that might have shown significant differences between special and general education teachers. For example, if a teacher wanted to participate in the study he or she would have had more time to complete the questionnaire and return it to the locked drop box. Less than one-fourth of the questionnaires distributed to the four high schools were returned. This may have led to a bias in the sample of the participating population.

This cross-sectional survey may have not allowed teachers to demonstrate their knowledge or in depth attitudes toward students from other cultures and toward a curriculum focusing on the idiosyncratic characteristics of their culture. One major difference is found in considering a study by Wegner and Dinsmore (2005), which examined preservice teachers' perception of their preparedness to teach diverse students. The 2-year self-study measured teachers' assumptions about diverse students and their preparation. However, in the present study, teachers' preparation and attitudes was measured at a single point in time. A longitundinal study could have provided more in depth information about the participants' knowledge and development of attitudes. The data in this study revealed that participants did not differ in their perceptions of students having a behavior problem based on the students' ethnicity. The data revealed that the responses of special education and general education teachers did not differ. However, special and general education teachers did differ in their responses to the scenario of a Hispanic student coming late to school.

The make up of teachers in Miami Dade County Public Schools might have led to no significant difference between special education and general education teachers. MDCPS is the fourth largest school district in the United States. The demographic of teachers in MDCPS is different from the rest of the country. Eighty seven percent of the teachers across the United States are White middle class women (Chamberlain, 2005). However, the majority of teachers in MDCPS are minority (Miami Dade County Public School, 2008). Minority teachers tend to be more culturally responsiveness toward Black students. This difference supports the findings of Bakari (2003), who concluded minority teachers' attitude toward cultural responsiveness of Black students was higher than their white counterparts. Thus, these teachers are less likely to write referrals to the office, send a student for ESE and/or ESOL screening, and reprimand a child.

The META consent decree might be another possible reason for the findings in the study. Due to the growing number of students from diverse backgrounds, several border states, including Florida, have mandated teacher preparation to include multicultural courses that address all aspects of diversity in the classroom (Florida Department of Education, 2007). In 1990, the META decree was signed into law for public school teachers. The intent of the decree was to address the large percentage of language minority students entering Florida schools. Both are required to take META. The consent decree requires teachers to obtain appropriate training and certification to teach students from varying cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The elements of META encourage teachers to be aware about cultural responsive teaching. It is possible that teachers in MDCPS have been well prepared to teach students from diverse cultures and their attitudes towards other cultures, including Black students, is positive. Similar to

Freire's philosophy, META seems to have raised the consciousness of teachers in the MDCPS. Teachers have accepted that students in the classroom are different and enter schools with their own personal characteristics (language, gender, race or ethnicity, learning differences, and SES). Freire argued for an educational system that would emphasize learning as an act of culture and freedom, and the META consent decree in Florida has fostered this type of education reform.

To summarize, the results in this investigation showed that, overall, special education and general education teachers' preparation for culturally responsive teaching and attitudes toward cultural responsiveness were similar. Special education and general education teachers felt some level of comfort with cultural responsive teaching.

<div align="center">Limitations of the Current Study</div>

The current study has some limitations that impact the generalizability of the findings. The limitations of the study are as follows:

1. This study used an unrepresentative, non-random sample. Although the goal was to investigate special and general education teachers' preparation for culturally responsive teaching and attitudes toward cultural responsiveness, the sample size was limited to teachers at four public high schools. The sample size presented in this study may limit what can be said about the generalizability and validity of the results.

2. This study was conducted in South Florida, a large metropolitan area where the student population is very culturally diverse. South Florida is made up of a large percentage of Hispanics, Blacks, and other cultures from many countries. Thus, the white non-Hispanic population living in this area have been conditioned to greater acceptance given the region's multicultural nature. As a result, the findings presented here may not

generalize to more homogeneous, mostly European American areas of the country. This is an important point, since 87% of the teachers across the United States are White (Chamberlain, 2005).

3. The present study occurred at the end of the school year, while teachers were focusing on grading final examinations and student work from the fourth grading period.

4. The measure of attitudes about cultural responsiveness was marginally reliable and may not have been able to pick up differences between special education and general education teachers.

5. The questions on the TQ may not have been clear or valid for the teachers.

6. The results may have been biased given the low response rate. The teachers participating in this study were probably concerned about the issue and thought it was their responsibility to participate in the study.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Future Research</div>

On the basis of this research, the following recommendations are made for further research:

1. Research should continue assessing the effectiveness of university teaching programs to prepare professionals to work with culturally diverse populations. The results of this study encouraged the researcher to recommend infusing many classes in the curriculum of universities with issues specifically addressing cultural responsive teaching prior to educators entering the classroom. It is hoped that the amount of unrealistic and biased judgments regarding culturally diverse students will significantly reduce the number of Black students dropping out school and/or teacher referrals to special education.

<div align="center">68</div>

2. It is suggested that in follow up studies, the survey be administered in the middle of the school year. It would have been interesting to see whether the responses would have been different at another time of the year.

3. This study should be continued by following the progress of teachers through their teaching career. Revisiting these teachers in five year increments would allow the study to better determine whether teachers' preparation for culturally responsive teaching and their attitudes toward cultural responsive shows a significant change over time. This would provide a better picture of teachers' preparation and attitudes.

4. It is suggested that the teachers should be observed in the classroom to assess their use of culturally responsive teaching and their attitudes of cultural responsiveness toward Black students, rather than to assess their knowledge and attitudes based on their self-report only.

5. It is suggested that the recruitment of minority candidates for teaching in other parts of the country should increase. Minority teachers should be recruited from predominately minority colleges and universities across the United States.

6. Cross states studies could be conducted to investigate whether teachers are different in states that have similar decrees to META, compared to those that do not have this type of decree.

Implications for Special Education

Based on the numerous studies regarding the overrepresentation of Black males in EBD programs and the large percentage of Blacks dropping out of school, it was expected that a greater preparation for culturally responsive teaching and evidence of non-biased attitudes toward cultural responsiveness would be perceived as more likely to

happen with special education teachers, compared with general education teachers. However, as was previously mentioned, this study revealed that the preparation and attitudes of general education teachers were generally the same in a South Florida urban school district. Specifically, both special education and general education teachers felt some level of sensitivity and awareness of cultural diversity in the classroom.

Though there was no significance differences between special and general education teachers in this study, the literature states that to help solve the overrepresentation of minorities in special education programs and the large number of Black students who continue to drop out, schools should mandate annual culturally responsive workshops and trainings that focus on diverse groups of students to minimize the drop out rate. Although this study had special interest on cultural responsive teaching of Black students, there is not an assumption that other minority students (e.g. American Indians) are receiving a more positive attitude and a more culturally inclusive curriculum. Thus, workshops should be tailored to the many cultures represented in our nation, particularly focusing on those overrepresented in special education.

The results of this study indicated that both special and general education teachers were equally prepared to work with diverse populations of students. Another implication of this study is that in teacher education programs, based on these results and the literature, teachers should be required to take courses that deal with culturally relevant teaching. Furthermore, teacher-training programs should mandate that teachers complete their teaching practicums in urban schools, including the development and implementation of a multicultural curriculum. Finally, state and national educational departments throughout the nation should mandate the implementation of Culturally

70

Responsive Teaching (CRT) similar to Florida's META consent decree, which studies

indicate prepares teachers to teach in diverse classrooms (Montgomery, 2001).

REFERENCES

Aber , L., Seidman, E., Larue, A., & French, S. E. (1996). The impact of the transition to high school on the self-esteem and perceived social context of poor urban youth. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *24*(4), 489-515.

Artiles, A., & Trent, S. (1994). Overrepresentation of minority students in special education: A continuing debate. *The Journal of Special Education, 27*(4), 410-437.

Artiles, A. J., Harry, B., Reschly, D. J., & Chinn, P. C. (2002). Over-identification of students of color in special education: A critical overview. *Multicultural Perspectives, 4*(1), 3-10.

Bakari, R. (2003). Preservice teachers' attitudes toward teaching African American students. *Urban Education, 38*(6), 640-654.

Barry, N. H., & Lechner, J. V. (1995). Preservice teachers' attitudes about and awareness of multicultural teaching and learning. *Teaching & Teacher Education, 11*(2), 149-161.

Bennett, C. (2003). *Comprehensive multicultural education: Theory and practice*. MA: Pearson Education.

Bennett, N. (1976). *Teaching style and pupil progress*. MA: Harvard University Press.

Blake, M, & Van Sickle, M. (2001). Helping linguistically diverse students share what they know. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 44*(5), 468-481.

Bogat, A., Jordan, L., & Smith, G. (2001). Collaborating for social change: The Black psychologist and the Black community. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 29*(4), 599-620.

Boykin, A. W., Franklin, A. J., & Yates, J. F. (1979). *Research directions of Black psychologists*. NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Bracey, G. (1994). The dropping in on dropping out. *Phi Delta Kappan, 75*(9) 726-727.

Butler, K. (1984). *Learning and teaching style: In theory and practice.* CT: The Learner's Dimension.

Cauce, A., Gonzales, N., Friedman, R., & Mason, C. (1996). Family, peer, and neighborhood influences on academic achievement among African American adolescents: One-year prospective effects. *The American Journal of Community Psychology, 24*(3), 365-379.*

California Department of Education (2008). *Welcome to www.cde. ca.gov*. Retrieved April 16, 2008 from www.cde.ca.gov

Chamberlain, S. P. (2005). Recognizing and responding to cultural differences in the education of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 40*(4), 195-211.

Conoley, C. & Slade, J. (1989). Multicultural Experiences for Special Educators, In *Teaching Exceptional Children, 22*(1), 60-64.

Corson, D. (1999). *Language policy in schools: A resource for teachers and administrators*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Crafter, B., Mupier, B., & R., & Rodney, L. (1999). Variables contributing to grade retention among African American adolescent males. *The Journal of Educational Research, 92*(3), 185-195.

Cwick, S., Woolbridge, D., & Petch-Hogan, B. (2001). Field-based teacher education for greater cultural sensitivity. *Rural Educator, 23*(1), 14-18.

Daunic, A., Correa, V., & Reyes-Blanes, M. (2004). Teacher preparation for culturally diverse classrooms: Performance-based assessment of beginning teachers. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 27(2), 105-118.

Dee, J., & Henkin, A. (2003). Assessing dispositions toward cultural diversity among preservice teachers. *Urban Education, 37*(1), 22-40.

Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people's children: Cultural conflicts in the classroom*. NY: The New Press.

Delpit, L. (2002). *The skin that we speak: Thoughts on language and culture in the classroom.* NY: The New Press.

Donovan, M. S., & Cross, C. (Eds). (2002). *Minority students in special and gifted education.* Report of the National Research Council's Committee on Minority Representation in Special Education. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Eccles, J., Gutman, L., & Sameroff, A. (2002). The academic achievement of African American students during early adolescence: An examination of multiple risk, promotive, and protective factors. *American Journal of Community Psychology,. 30*(3), 367-390.

Erskine-Cullen, E., & Sinclair, A. (1996). Preparing teachers for urban school: A view from the field. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 6, 1-12.

Fine, M. (1991). *Framing dropouts: Notes on the politics of an urban public high school.* NY: State University of New York.

Florida Department of Education (2008). *Welcome to www.fldoe.org*. Retrieved April 16, 2008 from www.fldoe.org

Ford, B. (1992). Multicultural education training for special educators working with

    African American youth. *Exceptional Children*, 59(2), 107-113.

Franklin , H. J. (2000). *From slavery to freedom: A history of African Americans.* Boston:

    McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Freedman, A., Flaherty, L., Paskewitz, D., Proescher, E., & Weist, M. (1995). Urban

    youth under stress: Empirical identification of protective factors. *Journal of Youth*

    and Adolescence, 24(6), 705-716.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. NY: Continuum Publishing Company.

Freire, P. (1978). *Pedagogy in process*. NY: Seaburg Press.

Freire, P. (1998). *Teachers as cultural workers*. Oxford: Westview Press.

Garcia, S. B., & Ortiz, A. A. (2004). *Preventing disproportionate representation:*

    Culturally and linguistically responsive pre-referral interventions. TX: National

    Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems.

Garibaldi, A. (1992). Preparing teachers for culturally diverse classrooms. *Diversity in*

    Teacher Education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Garibaldi, A. (1993). Creating prescriptions for success in urban schools: Turning the

    corner on pathological explanations for academic failure. In T. Tomlinson (Ed.),

    Motivating students to learn: Overcoming barriers to high achievement (pp.23-

    39). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

Gay, G. (1994). *At the essence of learning: Multicultural education.* West Lafayette, IN:

    Kappa Delta Pi.

Gay, G. (2002). Culturally responsive teaching in special education for ethnically diverse

    students: Setting the stage. *Qualitative Studies in Education, 15*(6), 613-629.

Gonzalez, G., & Picciano, A. G. (1993). QUEST: Developing competence, commitment, and an understanding of community in a field-based, urban teacher education program. *Equity & Choice, 9*(2), 38-43.

Grant, C. A. (1981). Education that is multicultural and teacher preparation: An examination from the perspectives of preservice teachers. *Journal of Educational Research, 75*(2), 95-101.

Grant, C., & Sleeter, C. (1988). *Turning on learning: Five approaches for multicultural teaching plans for races, class, gender, and disability (2nd ed).* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Grant, C., & Sleeter, C. (1994). *Making a choice for multicultural education: five approaches to race, class and gender.* New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.

Gregorc, A. (1979). Learning/teaching styles: Their nature and effects. In *Student learning styles: diagnosing and prescribing programs.* Virginia: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Haberman, M. (1991) Can cultural awareness be taught in teacher education programs. *Teacher Education, 4*(1), 25-31.

Haberman, M. (1994). Preparing teachers for the real world of urban schools. *Educational Forum, 58*(2), 162-168.

Hale, J. (2002). *Learning while Black: Creating educational excellence for African American children.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Hale-Benson, J. (1982). *Black children: Their roots, culture and learning styles.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Hemmings, A. (1996). Conflicting images? Being Black and a model high school student. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 27*(1), 20-50.

Hill, R. (1998). Understanding Black family functioning. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 29*(1), 15-20.

Irvine-Jordan, J. (1990). *Black students and school failure: Policies, practices and prescriptions*. NY: Greenwood Press.

Irvine-Jordan, J. (1992). Making teacher education culturally responsive. In *Diversity in teacher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Jackson, F. (1993). Seven strategies to support a culturally responsive pedagogy. *Journal of Reading, 37*(4), 298-303.

Kalyanpur, M., & Harry, B. (1999). *Culture in special education.* Baltimore: Brookes Publishing Co.

Kea, C., & Utley, C. (1998). To teach me is to know me. *The Journal of Special Education, 32*(1), 44-47.

Keefe, J. (1979). Learning styles: An overview. In *Student learning styles: Diagnosing and prescribing programs.* VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Kendall, F. (1983). Preparing for a multicultural education in the classroom. In *Diversity in the Classroom: A multicultural approach to the education of young children.* NY: Teachers College Press.

Kendall, F. (1983). Planning a unit on affirming cultural diversity. In *Diversity in the classroom: Multicultural approach to the education of young children*. NY: Teachers College Press.

Kent, M., & O'Hare, W. (1991). African Americans in the 1990s. *Population Bulletin, 46*(1), 1-40.

Kozol, J. (1991). *Savage inequity*. NY: Crown Publishers.

Kunjufu, J. (1995). *Countering the conspiracy to destroy Black boys*. Chicago: African American Images.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1990). Culturally relevant teaching: Effective instruction for Black students. *The College Board Review, 155*(1), 20-25.

LeCompte, K., & McCray, A. (2002). Complex conversations with teacher candidates: Perspectives of whiteness and culturally responsive teaching. *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue, 4*(1), 25-35.

Louden, M. (2000). African Americans and minority language in the United States. *The Journal of Negro History, 85*(4), 223-247.

Mark, D., & Terrill, M. (2000). Preservice teachers' expectation for schools with children of color and second-language learners. *Journal of Teacher Education, 51*(2), 149-160.

Markey, J. (1988). The labor market problems of today's high school dropouts. *Monthly Labor Review, 111*(6), 36-45.

McCarthy, C. (1990). *Race and curriculum: Social inequality and the theories and politics of difference in contemporary research on schooling*. London: The Falmer Press.

McLaren, P. (2000). *Che Guevara, Paulo Freire, and the pedagogy of revolution*. Oxford: Roman & Littlefield Publishers.

McNeal, K. (2005). The influence of a multicultural teacher education program on

    teachers' multicultural practices. *Intercultural Education, 16*(4), 405-419.

Meslet, N. (2006). Ain't nothin' like the real thing: Preparing teachers in an urban

    environment. *Childhood Education*, *82(5)*, 279-283.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools. (2008). *Welcome to www.dadeschools.net*.

    Retrieved March 29, 2008 from www.dadeschools.net

Milner, H. (2006). Preservice teachers' learning about cultural and racial diversity:

    Implications for urban education. *Urban Education, 41*(4), 343-375.

Mintz, S., & Price, R. (1976). *The birth of African-American culture: An anthropological*

    perspective. Boston: Beacon Press.

Montgomery, W. (2001). Creating culturally responsive inclusive classrooms. *The*

    Council for Exceptional Children, 33(4), 4-9.

Moote, G., & Wodarski, J. (1997). The acquisition of life skills through adventure-based

    activities and programs. In *Adolescence, 32*(125), 143-162.

Morales, R. (2000). Effects of teacher preparation experiences and students' perceptions

    related to developmentally and culturally appropriate practices. *Action in Teacher*

    Education, 22(2), 67-75.

Myers, H., & Taylor, S. (1998). Family contributions to risk and resilience in African

    American children. *The Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 29*(1), 215-224.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2000). Dropout rates in the United States 1998.

    Washington, D. C.: U. S. Department of Education.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2004). Dropout rates in the United States 2000.

    Washington, D. C.: U. S. Department of Education.

National Education Association. (2002). *Welcome to NCES*. Retrieved October 27, 2007
from www.nces.ed.gov

Nielsen, M., Forness, S., & Serna, L. (1998). Intervention versus affirmation: Proposed
solutions to the problem of disproportionate minority representation in special
education. *The Journal of Special Education. 32*(1), 48-51.

Obiakor, F. (2007). Multicultural special education: Effective intervention for today's
Schools. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 42(3*), 148-155.

Obiakor, F., & Obi, S. (2001). Empowering African American exceptional learners:
Vision for the new millennium. *The Western Journal of Black Studies. 25*(2), 93-
107.

Ogbu, J. (1989). The individual in collective adaptation: A framework for focusing on
academic underperformance and dropping out among involuntary minorities. In
L. Weiss, E. Farrara and H. Petrie (Eds.), *Dropouts from schools: Issues
dilemmas, and solutions* (pp.181-204). Albany, NY: State of University of New
York Press.

Ogbu, J. (1992). Understanding cultural differences and school learning. *Education
Libraries. 16*(3), 7-11.

Olmedo, I. M. (1997). Challenging old assumptions: Preparing for preservice teachers for
inner city schools. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 13*(3), 245-258.

Patton, J. (1998). The disproportionate representation of African American in special
education. *The Journal of Special Education, 32*(1), 25-31.

Perez, B. (1998) *Sociocultural contexts of language and literacy*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence
Erlbaum Associates.

Perez, S. (1994). At the margins. *Spectrum: the Journal of State Government, 67*(3), 41-
50.

Perry, I. (1990). A Black student's reflection on public and private schools. In *Facing
Racism in Education.* MA: Harvard Educational Review Reprint Series No. 21.

Phuntsog, N. (2001). Culturally responsive teaching: What do selected United States
elementary school teachers think? *Intercultural Education, 12*(1), 51-64.

Rahilly, M. (2003, December). *META Decree*. Paper presented at the OLEA Summit at
Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL.

Reagan, T. (1997). The case for applied linguistics in teacher education. *Journal of
Teacher Education, 48*(3), 185-196.

Richardson, R., & Gerlach, C. (1980). Black dropouts: A study of significant factors
contributing to a Black student's decision. *Urban Education, 14*(4), 489-494.

Salend, S., Duhaney, L., & Montgomery, W. (2002). A comprehensive approach to
identifying and addressing issues of disproportionate representation. *Remedial
and Special Education*. *23*(5), 289-304.

Salend, S. J., & Salinas, A. (2003). Language differences or learning difficulties: The
work of the multidisciplinary team. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 35*(4), 36-43.

Samuels, C. (2005). Minority overrepresentation in special education targeted.
Education Week, *25*(7), 1-4.

Schultz, E., Neyhart, T., & Reck, U. (1996). Swimming against the tide: A study on
prospective teachers' attitudes regarding cultural diversity and urban teaching.
Western Journal of Black Studies, 20(1), 1-7.

Sleeter, C., & Grant, C. (1988). *Turning on learning: Five approaches for multicultural teaching plans for races, class, gender, and disability (2ⁿᵈ ed.).* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Sleeter, C., & Grant, C. (1994). *Making a choice for multicultural education: Five approaches to race, class, and gender*. NY: MacMillan Publishing Company.

Smitherman, G. (2000). *Black talk: Words and phrases from the hood to the amen corner*. NY: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Sobel, D., & Taylor, S. (2006). Blueprint for a responsive classroom. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 38*(5), 28-35.

Steele, C. (1997). A threat in the air: How stereotypes shape intellectual identity performance. *American Psychologist, 52(1)*, 613-629.

Tatum, A. (2003). All "degreed" up and nowhere to go: Black males and literacy education. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy. 46*(8), 620-623.

Texas Department of Education (2008). *Welcome to www.tea.state.tx.us*. Retrieved April 16, 2008 from www.tea.state.tx.us

Thomas, W. P., & Collier, V. P. (1997). *School effectiveness for language minority students.* Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.

U. S. Census Bureau. (2000). Statistical abstract of the United States. Retrieved June 5, 2007 from www.census.gov

U.S. Department of Education. (1997). IDEA. Retrieved March 5, 2006 from www.ed.gov

U.S. Department of Education. (2004). IDEA. Retrieved March 5, 2006 from www.ed.gov

Valles, E. C. (1998). The disproportionate representation of minority students in special

      education: Responding to the problem. *The Journal of Special Education, 32*(1),

      52-54.

Vaughn, W. (2004). Prospective teachers' attitudes and awareness toward culturally

      responsive teaching and learning. *Teacher Education and Practice*, *17*(1), 45-55.

Watkins, A.M. & Kurtz, P.D. (2001). Using solution focused intervention to address

      African-American male overrepresentation in special education. *Children &*

      Schools, *23*(4), 223-235.

Welner, K. G. (2004). *The overrepresentation of culturally and linguistically diverse students*

      in special education. CO: National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational

      Systems.

Wenger, K. & Dinsmore, J. (2005). Preparing rural preservice teachers for diversity.

      Journal of Research in Rural Education, 20(10), 1-15.

Wlodkowski, R. J., & Ginsberg, M. B. (September 1995). A framework for culturally

      responsive teaching. *Educational Leadership, 53*(1), 17-21.

Wolffe, R. (1996). Reducing preservice teachers' negative expecations of urban students

      through field experience. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 23(1), 99-106.

Yates, J. R. (1998, April). *The state of practices in the education of CLD students*.

      Presentation at the annual meeting of the Council for Exceptional Children,

      Minneapolis, MN.

Ysseldyke, J. (2005). Assessment and decision making for students with learning disabilities:

      What if this is as good as it gets? *Learning Disability Quarterly, 28(2)*, 125-128.

Teachers' Questionnaire

1. Gender: □ Female □Male

2. Ethnic Group: □White □Black □Hispanic/Latino □Other: _____

3. Age Group: □25-35 □36-45 □46-55 □56+

4. Highest degree earned: □Bachelor's □Master's □Specialist □Doctorate □Professional

5. Academic Position: □General Education Teacher □Special Education Teacher □Other: _____

6. Years of Experience as a Teacher: □1-3 □4-7 □8-12 □13+

7. Indicate the number of students you teach whose <u>primary</u> exceptionality fits the following classifications **AND** of those, how many are English Language Learners (ELL):

<u>Primary Exceptionality</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>
Autistic	_____
Educable Mentally Handicapped	_____
Emotional Behavioral Disabilities	_____
Gifted	_____
Specific Learning Disabled	_____
Speech Impaired	_____
Other _____	_____
(Specify)	
Not Sure	_____

8. How many students in your class have, in your opinion, ADD/ADHD (with or without any other disability)? ____

9. How culturally or linguistically diverse are, overall, the students in your class?

Not Diverse at all   Somewhat Diverse   Diverse   Very diverse
1-------------------------------2-----------------------3---------------------------4

10. How many cultural groups, do you think, are represented in your class? _____

11. How many multicultural instructional methods courses have you taken as part of your degree(s) at a college or university?   □none □1-3   □4-7 □8-12 □13+

12. How many courses about Black or African American history have you taken overall?
□none □1-3   □4-7 □8-12 □13+

13. How familiar are you with African American (Black) culture or identity issues?
Not Familiar at all   Somewhat Familiar   Familiar   Very familiar
1-------------------------------2--------------------------------3-----------------------------4

14. How many Multicultural Education Training and Advocacy (META) courses have you taken?
□none   □1-3   □4-7   □8-12 □13+

15. How many trainings, workshops, and/or seminars that address cross-cultural sensitivity have you attended after receiving your most advance degree?   □none   □1-3   □4-7   □8-12 □13+

Using a scale of 1 to 5, indicate your agreement with the following items:

16. In your opinion, how well prepared are you to teach students with disabilities from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds?

Very unprepared   Somewhat unprepared   Prepared   Somewhat prepared   Very
       Prepared
1----------------------------2----------------------------3------------------4----------------------------5

17. In your opinion, how well prepared are you to teach general education students from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds?

Very unprepared   Somewhat unprepared   Prepared   Somewhat prepared   Very
       Prepared
1--------------------------2----------------------------3--------------4--------------------------------5

18. In your opinion, how well prepared are you to teach students with or without disabilities, from African American descent?

Very unprepared   Somewhat unprepared   Prepared   Somewhat prepared   Very
       Prepared
1--------------------------2----------------------------3--------------4--------------------------------5

19. In your opinion, how well did the META course(s) prepare you to teach students from diverse cultural backgrounds?

Very unprepared   Somewhat unprepared   Prepared   Somewhat prepared   Very
       Prepared
1--------------------------2----------------------------3--------------4--------------------------------5

For the following statements, using a scale from 1 to 5, indicate your agreement:

20. Students from different cultures may behave differently in class.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree
1----------------------------------2------------------3--------------------4------------------------5

21. Certain behaviors of Black students are interpreted as aggressive by some teachers.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree
1----------------------------------2------------------3--------------------4------------------------5

22. Street behavior (including street language) should not be allowed in school.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree
1----------------------------------2------------------3--------------------4------------------------5

23. Written Ebonics should be accepted equally as Standard English.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

1--------------------------------2------------------3-------------------4-----------------------5

24. Overall, Black children are louder than other children.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree
1--------------------------------2------------------3-------------------4-----------------------5

25. Overall, Black children move around more than other children.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree
1--------------------------------2------------------3-------------------4-----------------------5

Please read the following scenarios involving children at school. Please select only <u>one</u> option for each scenario, indicating what you would do in each case. <u>There are no right or wrong answers.</u>

26. Rahkeem Jones is quietly working at his desk and suddenly Peter hits him on the head. Rahkeem screams the F.. word and he immediately apologizes. You would
    a. send him to the office
    b. write a referral
    c. reprimand child
    d. ignore the child's behavior
    e. ask the student to explain what happened
    f. other
    _____
    __

27. Pablo Menendez has been coming to school late everyday and appears to be concerned about his parents' recent divorce. If he continues to come late to school, you would
    a. send him to the office
    b. expel him
    c. talk with the child
    d. talk with the parents
    e. write a referral to the guidance counselor
    f. other _____

28. Michel Jean-Baptiste is a new student from Haiti and is failing in reading and math class. You would
    a. refer him to ESE screening
    b. write a referral to the guidance counselor
    c. talk to his parents
    d. refer him for ESOL screening
    e. try new reading strategies in the classroom
    f.
    other_____
    _____

29. Paula Harper is often out of her seat and talking to other students. She says to you that she is asking for assistance from another student about the classwork. You would
    a. write a referral to the Assistant Principal
    b. refer the child to ESE services
    c. talk with the child about her behavior
    d. scream at the child
    e. send her to the office
    f. other _____

Appendix B

Barry University Cover Letter

Dear Research Participant:

Your participation in a research project is requested. The title of the study is Special and General education teachers' preparation and attitudes toward culturally responsive teaching of Black students. The research study being conducted by Robert Morris, a student in the Adrian Dominican School of Education at Barry University, and seeking information that will be useful in the field of Special Education. The aims of the research are to look at teachers' preparation and attitudes toward culturally responsive teaching in the classroom to help decrease the number of Black students in special education programs. We anticipate the number of participants to be two hundred.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire and return it to a designated drop box. The questionnaire should take an average of eight to ten minutes to complete.

Your consent to be a research participant is strictly voluntary and should you decline to participate or should you choose to drop out at any time during the study, there will be no adverse effects to your employment.

There are no anticipated benefits or risks to participants, aside from helping us have a better understanding of teachers' preparation and attitudes toward instruction of Black students.

As a research participant, information you provide will be kept anonymous, that is, no names or other identifiers will be collected on any of the instruments used. Data will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's office. By completing and returning this survey you have shown your agreement to participate in the study.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study or your participation in the study, you can contact me at 954-549-6476, my supervisor Dr. Clara Wolman at 305-899-3737, or the Institutional Review Board point of contact, Ms. Barbara Cook, at 305-899-3020.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Robert Morris