CULTURAL PROFICIENT TEACHERS

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The purpose of this study was to discover how university teacher education programs are preparing teachers to be culturally proficient.
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How do educators define culturally proficient instruction?
- What professional development opportunities should professors engage in to gain an understanding of culturally proficient instruction?
- What culturally proficient teaching strategies/activities can professors model for students?
WHY???

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Unchanged demographics of teachers
2. Change in student demographics
3. Achievement gap
4. Development of diversity standards
5. Cultural proficient educators
6. The Cultural Proficiency Continuum
Defining what it means to be a culturally proficient educator:

- Selecting materials and resources that reflect multicultural perspectives
- build on prior knowledge and experiences of the learner.
- think beyond race or ethnicity
- how do personal assumptions influence how you communicate with people perceived to be different
- self reflect on personal bias, stereotypes, beliefs, and norms
- Teacher Efficacy

(Nuri-Robins, Lindsey, Lindsey, & Terrell, 2012, p. 87)
VARIABLES of MATRIX:
1. Pre-Field Experience
2. Number of Courses of Diversity Required Prior to Credential Program;
3. Prerequisite Courses. Understanding Given that Different Pathways May or May Not Require Prerequisites
4. TPA/PACT/FAST Support
5. # of Hours or Units Total of Field Experience Student/Teaching required During Credential Program
6. Seminars Required
7. Culture references and what were they
8. Number of Courses with Diversity Focus in Course Descriptions During Credential Program
9. Option 3 Authorizations
10. Program Options
CSU Teacher Preparation Programs

- Extensive fieldwork plus student teaching 100%
- Diversity in course name (5+) 78%
- Required Seminars (3 or more)
- CalTPA/PACT/FA ST embedded courses 91%
- Courses w/ diversity focus prior to cred. Program 61%
- Pre-field Experience 30-50 hours 87%
- CLAD Option 83%
Location: California

**AYP Data**
- Highest # of schools not making AYP

**Socioeconomic**
- Highest # of children under age of 5 in poverty
  - In 2009, 73% of students eligible for FRL
- Highest % of homelessness (1.0% compared to US at .30%)

**ELL**
- Highest percentage ELL at 46%

**SPED**
- Highest # of students served under IDEA

**Race**
- 3rd in the US for lowest % of Non-Hispanic White alone 27%

**CSU**
- Largest and most diverse university system
- 54% of CSU students are minorities
- CSU teacher education programs comprise 60% of graduated California teachers
Tradition of Inquiry:

*Interest in understanding the cultural responsive pedagogy that exists throughout pre-service methods courses at the university level, which improves the quality of education for diverse learners, and begins closing the achievement gap were the motivations for this study.*

**CASE STUDY**

*Creswell (2007) defines the unit of analysis concerning a case study as “studying an event, a program, an activity, involving more than one individual”.*

**PURPOSEFUL SAMPLING**

A total of four (n=4) public figures were chosen to participate in this study, they are known for their research, writing, and experience with preparing teachers to be culturally proficient.

**INTERVIEWS**

Case study body of customs will be guided through semi-structured interviews containing open-ended questions (Stake, 2010, p. 94).
Methodology: Procedures

Data Collection
- Review documentation
- Informed consent
- Semi-structured, audio-recorded interview with aid of interview protocol
- Transcribe recording
- Codes and themes
PARTICIPANT STORIES...

Participant #1

- Grew up in the 1930’s
- Taught during the civil rights movement
- Researched the slave trade in Barbados - moment of impact
- Desegregation work
- Written 17 books and multiple articles on cultural proficiency
- Consults across the country

• “to really internalize that it's about me and how I relate to other people becomes the important part”

Participant #2

- Grew up in a white community
- Began teaching in Louisiana during desegregation - working with and teaching a black population
- Went to graduate school at a black university - moment of impact
- Has influenced cultural change in schools and administration
- Co-authored many books and articles
- Consults/Presenter across the country

“Are we who we say we are?”
**Participant #3**

- Dream to be a pediatrician shattered - moment of impact
- Cancer researcher
- Life detour - GED teacher to ELL adults who have been marginalized
- Volunteer coordinator for abused and homeless women
- Wanted to widen her influence earned her PhD in Educational Leadership
- All positions include the transformation of culture within organizations and the development of teachers and administrators in education to become culturally proficient.

**Participant #4**

- Bilingual Education, instructional models, teacher recruitment, issues on faculty of color, and culturally proficient education programs.
- Born in Mexico, grew up in California wanted to be a police officer.
- California Mini-Corps - helping migrant children (moment of impact) 5yrs Changed his major to teaching w/ ELL
- Taught bilingual 5th and 6th grade
- To be an agent of change - he earned his masters and PhD in Educational Administration
- He has been a driving force in teacher education - infusing diversity, language acquisition, and cultural proficiency into programs.

"Our job as educators is to find the jewel and let it shine"

"Cultural proficiency has informed all the work that I do"
Themes

Agents of change
- Moments of Cultural Impact

Mission/Vision
- Transparency
- Sustainability
- Standards

Faculty
- Self Reflection
- Engagement & Expectations
- Beliefs & Values
- Relationships
- Teach Reflection
- Ethical Responsibilities

Implementation
- Weaving Diversity
- Curriculum/Pedagogy
- Action Research
- Evaluation of Students
- Evaluation of Faculty
Research Question 1 - Conclusions
How do educators define culturally proficient instruction?

SELF REFLECTION (faculty and school)
“Are we who we say are?”

ENGAGEMENT:
“internalizing that it’s about how I relate to other people and what is it about me that invites them in”

“members of a school need to realize that it is they who must adapt their practices to meet the needs of the students and the community they serve”

SUPPORT:
“recognizing what it means to build on student assets rather than deficits”
Research Question 2 - Conclusions

What professional development opportunities should professors engage in to gain an understanding of culturally proficient instruction?

- **Reflection and dialogue** - engage in as well as model

- **Tools of Cultural Proficiency as a framework for implementation**

- **Intentional collaboration among faculty** - identifying where cultural proficiency is evident & what supports are needed
Research Question 3 - Conclusions

What cultural proficient teaching strategies/activities can professors model for students?

Reflective Practice and Skills for Dialogue Fostered through Cognitive Coaching

Evidence in Syllabi, Curriculum, Course Assignments and Field Experiences that Reflect Cultural Proficient Practices

Assessing and Building on Students' Prior Knowledge
**Central Question:** How are university teacher education programs preparing teachers to be culturally proficient?

Like every best laid plan, the expected outcome was a direct answer with a clear path. Instead a dichotomy between the research on the CSU teacher preparation programs matrix and the experts’ responses on cultural proficiency in education emerged.

After compiling the research on the teacher education programs in the CSU system, which are being nationally recognized as being at the forefront of addressing cultural responsiveness, an implied realization occurred; the rapidly changing demographics of students, the fact the demographics of teachers are unchanged, the persistence of the education gap, and the changes in what defines a quality teacher in the 21st century according to new standards and expectations relating to a teacher’s ability to be culturally proficient; the answer is not as easily defined by the purposefully selected worldview culturally proficient experts as was expected as the study began.

Therefore the bridge that seemed so easily crossed is instead a maze of new terrain for teacher education programs to cross through the framework provided that is transparent in the categories in the matrix & the participants responses for creating a culturally proficient framework within a program.
Recommendations:

1. For faculty
   - Structured opportunities for professional development that includes both conference and research opportunities.
   - Time or training dedicated towards personal growth by identifying beliefs, values and assumptions.
   - Time or training allocated to reflection and dialogue.
   - Training in how to use the tools of cultural proficiency.

2. Build Support Systems
   - Time for department faculty to dig deep into their syllabi, standards, curriculum, readings, and practicum assignments for cultural alignment.
   - Develop transparency that directly links the university, college of education, and course goals/standards to the commitment to produce teachers who are able to teach students of the 21st century.
   - Establish a culture where all faculty are dedicated and expected to promote and embed cultural proficiency through all aspects of the program, courses and relationships.
Cultural Proficient Continuum:

**Incapacity**
- Trivializing other cultures

**Blindness**
- Ignore the culture or socio-economic status of others

**Pre-competence**
- Educating with an increasing awareness

**Competence**
- Seeing the difference that difference makes

**Proficiency**
- See the difference, respond positively, engage, adapt, commit, and take action for social justice

(Lindsey, Robins & Terrell, 2009)