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Cultural Diversity Awareness of Elementary School Teachers in Georgia Classrooms

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**CULTURAL DIVERSITY AWARENESS OF
ELEMENTARY TEACHERS IN GEORGIA CLASSROOMS**

by

SOHMER EVANS COLLINS

(Under the Direction of Linda M. Arthur)

ABSTRACT

This study determined the extent of cultural diversity awareness of in-service, elementary teachers in Georgia classrooms. The study also determined if different levels of cultural awareness existed between teacher groups in relation to their race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, number of years teaching experience, level of education, and exposure to or experience with multicultural education training. A group of 305 certified, in-service elementary school teachers completed the Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory, which assessed their beliefs about cultural diversity in five domains: general cultural awareness, culturally diverse families, cross-cultural communication, assessment, and creating a multicultural environment. Results indicated that elementary, in-service teachers are most culturally aware in domain one, general cultural awareness; they are least culturally aware in domain four, assessment. There was not a significant difference between teachers' extent of cultural diversity awareness in the five domains in regards to race, gender, level of education, years teaching experience, and exposure to or experience with multicultural education training.

In-service, elementary teachers in Georgia, who are primarily monocultural, realize that the children they serve have cultures different from their own. Teachers understand the importance of identifying the ethnic groups of their students and their

families, and they are comfortable in settings with people who exhibit values different from their own. Additionally, in-service, elementary teachers in Georgia classrooms believe in creating a multicultural learning environment in which family views are included in program planning, and they believe in making accommodations for different cultures and learning styles.

INDEX WORDS: Cultural diversity awareness, Multicultural education, Cultural awareness, Culturally diverse families, Cross-cultural communication, Assessment, Multicultural environment, Monocultural

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ELEMENTARY TEACHERS IN GEORGIA CLASSROOMS**

by

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M. Ed., Fort Valley State University, 2002

Ed. S., Lincoln Memorial University, 2006

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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2009

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SOHMER EVANS COLLINS

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Electronic Version Approved:
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family and friends, particularly my mother and father, Marie E. Evans and Larry L. Evans. Thank you for your support, I could not have done this without the two of you. You have made me who I am.

I am also dedicating this to my spiritual parents and leaders, Bishop B. F. and Mother Pauline McKibben. Thank you for instilling in me the right to believe that I am somebody and for teaching me to believe that I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.

To my babies, Romeez and Ramirra...I will forever love you! The two of you are my inspiration.

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I am eternally appreciative for wonderful parents who were able to help me when I fell short with expenses. A change in my marital status resulted in a big budget change for me. I was still able to move forward because of my parent’s love and belief in me...and their money. They are certain to continue proudly announcing that I am their daughter.

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that I would disappoint others, especially my parents, I did not disclose my fear of not being able to finish (“on time”) to anyone except Bernard. He pushed me to keep going.

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If we are to achieve a richer culture, rich in contrasting values, we must recognize the whole gamut of human potentialities, and so weave a less arbitrary social fabric, one in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place.

~ Margaret Mead

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Cultural diversity of student population in the United States continues to increase while the same kind of diversity within the teacher population continues to decrease (Snyder & Hoffman, 2002). In today's traditional, elementary, public schools, 83.5% of teachers are White; 42% of the student population is non-White, including Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004). The monocultural teaching force is accountable for the academic success of culturally diverse learners (Grant & Wiecek, 2000). However, according to Irvine (1990) and Ladson-Billings (2001), this cultural gap between teachers and students seems to have more profound academic and social implications for ethnically and culturally diverse students. Researchers have found that cultural diversity awareness has a bearing on the academic success of culturally diverse learners (Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2006; Bennett, 1999; Zeichner, 2003; Gollnick & Chinn, 2002).

The purpose of this study was to describe the cultural diversity awareness of practicing elementary teachers in terms of their race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, number of years teaching experience, and their experience with or exposure to multicultural educational training. Using a quantitative method, the extent of cultural diversity awareness of elementary teachers was examined. In-service, or practicing,

teachers completed a 33-item questionnaire to assess their awareness of cultural diversity. The goal of this descriptive study was to present basic information profiling the 305 respondents and describing the issues under study.

It is important that several terms or phrases used in this study are clearly understood, including culture, monocultural, multicultural, cultural diversity, multicultural education, and cultural discontinuity. Culture, as defined by Merriam-Webster Online, is the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group. Merriam-Webster Online defines monocultural as a culture dominated by a single element, a prevailing culture marked by homogeneity. Multicultural is defined by Merriam-Webster Online as relating to, reflecting, or adapted to diverse cultures. As defined by Sleeter (1992), cultural diversity is the differences in race, ethnicity, language, nationality, religion, etc. among various groups within a community. According to Banks (2007), multicultural education can be defined as a field of study and an emerging discipline whose major aim is to create equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, social-class, and cultural groups. Cultural discontinuity, also referred to as cultural mismatch, involves one's misinterpretations of cultural styles, communication styles, and behavior patterns different from their own (Downey & Pribesh, 2004).

Background of the Study

There continues to be a gap in the academic level of performance between White and non-White, or minority, students (Booker, 2007). The achievement gap is not a new problem, but one that has long plagued the field of education. In many states, minority students perform significantly lower than their White classmates on standardized tests

(Borman & Kimball, 2005). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has assessed student reading and mathematics performance since the early 1990s (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). Data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reveals that in 2007, at the 4th-grade level, Blacks scored, on average, 25 points lower than Whites in Reading. Hispanics, at the same grade level, performed 18 points lower than Whites in Reading. In Math, there was a 26 point gap between Black and White 4th-graders and a 21 point gap between Hispanic and White 4th-graders. Reports reveal that minority students are making gains, but despite those gains, they are still performing substantially lower than their White counterparts. For decades, researchers have attempted to pinpoint the main factors that influence the achievement gap between Whites and non-White students (Myers, Kim, & Mandala, 2004).

One debate about the low performance level of minority students is the issue of cultural discontinuity (Tyson, 2003). Scholars have argued that cultural discontinuity between teachers and their students is a significant factor in the underachievement and failure of minority students (Delpit, 1995; Irvine, 1990; Miron, 1996; Sleeter, 1992). Cultural discontinuity involves teachers' misinterpretations of cultural styles different from their own, teachers' lack of understanding about how cultural patterns influence learning, teachers' negative expectations in regards to behavior and academic progress among diverse students, and teachers' lack of providing multicultural learning experiences (Rower & Koontz, 1995; Downey & Pribesh, 2004; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2006; Allen & Boykin, 1992). Tyson (2003), states that schools are structured based on the cultural norms and standards of "mainstream" White middle-class society.

Elements of multiculturalism are often left out of learning tasks and contexts (Bailey & Boykin, 2001; Boykin & Cunningham, 2001).

According to Roach (2004), the role that culture plays in fostering or not fostering the intellectual development of minority children is emerging as an arena of considerable tension and disagreement. Discussions about genetic differences among racial groups have faded away in policy and research settings, yet the discussion about culture has become the “hot potato” of the racial learning gap debate (Roach, 2004). While the student population continues to become more culturally diverse, teaching positions are being increasingly filled with monocultural, White, middle-class females (Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004). The National Center for Education Information (2005) reported that eight out of ten public school teachers are female. In addition to that, Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries (2004), make known that 80-93% of students enrolled in collegiate education programs are White. Multicultural education scholars have consistently called for authentic integration of multicultural principles and practices into teacher education programs (Banks, 2007; Bennett, 1999).

Many prospective teachers have had very little experience with cultural diversity (Nieto, 2000). Irvine (1990), noted that a lack of cultural synchronization and negative teacher expectations result in hidden, often unintended, conflict between teachers and their students, a situation that ultimately leads to lower achievement. There is mounting evidence that when elements of multiculturalism are incorporated into learning tasks and contexts, minority students improve in performance, engagement, and motivation (Allen & Boykin, 1992; Allen & Butler, 1996; Bailey & Boykin, 2001; Boykin & Cunningham, 2001; Hurley 1999).

Statement of the Problem

While the student population continues to become more culturally diverse, educators are predominately monocultural, resulting in cultural mismatch in classrooms. In today's traditional, elementary, public schools, 83.5% of teachers are White, and 42% of students are non-White (NCES, 2004). In the nation's largest public school districts, one-third of the student population is racially and ethnically diverse (NCES, 2004). Multicultural educational practices needed to address diversity in the classroom are often minimal or nonexistent because of monocultural educational practices and teachers' lack of cultural awareness or cultural discontinuity. Cultural discontinuity includes misinterpretations of cultural styles, communication styles, and behavior patterns. Teachers often experience cultural discontinuity in the classroom because of their lack of background knowledge and minimal lived experiences with others having oppositional cultures.

Studies have been conducted to examine preservice teachers' sense of cultural awareness and their feelings towards teaching in culturally diverse classroom settings. Researchers argue that multicultural educational courses should be included in teacher education programs to prepare preservice teachers to meet the challenges of cultural diversity in the classroom. However, there is a lack of research exploring the extent of cultural diversity awareness among in-service or practicing elementary teachers. Furthermore, research does not reveal which groups of teachers, in terms of their race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, number of years teaching, and their experience with or exposure to multicultural education, have higher levels of cultural diversity

awareness. This information could be useful for school leaders when planning professional learning or staff development.

School leaders are accountable for their staff and for providing staff development opportunities for the purpose of improving student achievement and eliminating the achievement gap, as mandated by No Child Left Behind (Educational Research Association, 2001). It is worthwhile for school leaders to know the extent of cultural diversity awareness of teachers in their schools. School leaders can use the data to plan staff development accordingly, and to maintain a school where cultural identities are valued and multicultural educational practices are implemented. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to describe the cultural diversity awareness of practicing elementary teachers in terms of their race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, number of years teaching, and their experience with or exposure to multicultural educational training.

Research Questions

The overarching question for the research study was:

To what extent are elementary teachers in Georgia culturally aware?

The subquestions were these:

1. To what extent are elementary teachers culturally aware by these five domains?
 - A. General Cultural Awareness
 - B. Culturally Diverse Families
 - C. Cross-Cultural Communication
 - D. Assessment
 - E. Creating a Multicultural Environment

2. To what extent does elementary teachers' cultural diversity awareness vary by demographic variables of race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, number of years teaching experience, and experience with or exposure to multicultural educational training?

Significance of the Study

This study provides insight about elementary teachers' cultural diversity awareness. The study is relevant since the teacher population is more monocultural, while the student population is more culturally diverse.

There is limited research that reveals the cultural diversity awareness of practicing elementary teachers. This study contributes to the professional literature by becoming a resource that describes the extent of cultural diversity awareness among practicing elementary teachers by five domains. The study reveals the degree to which elementary teachers have differences in awareness by five domains including, general cultural diversity awareness, cultural diverse families, cross-cultural communication, assessment, and creating a multicultural learning environment. Furthermore, findings reveal whether or not there are differences in cultural diversity awareness among teachers in regards to their race, gender, level of education, years teaching experience, and their experience with multicultural education.

Participants in the study were afforded the opportunity to reflect upon their awareness of cultural diversity. It is likely that participants, after analyzing and reflecting upon their cultural awareness, will use the data to maintain and/or enhance culturally responsive practices. Gay (2002) categorizes culturally responsive practices as developing a culturally diverse knowledge base, designing culturally relevant curricula,

demonstrating cultural caring while building a learning community, building effective cross-cultural communications, and delivering culturally responsive instruction.

The researcher benefitted from this descriptive study; it will become the foundation of future explanatory research involving cultural diversity awareness and culturally responsive educators. As a school leader in an elementary school, the researcher has observed incidents in which the teachers' lack of cultural diversity awareness has caused conflict in the classroom setting, affecting the academic growth of minority students. Furthermore, the researcher is an elementary school assistant principal in a district with only three elementary schools. The three elementary schools have similar demographics. Teachers in all three elementary schools have participated in book studies and other staff development programs to extend their knowledge about teaching culturally diverse students, indicating that school administrators felt it necessary to educate teachers concerning the matter. The researcher led a book study, *Framework for Understanding Poverty* (Payne, 1996), in an elementary school setting in efforts to help teachers become more acquainted with the lifestyles and cultural patterns of students different from themselves. This study allows the researcher to provide more information to school leaders and elementary teachers about cultural diversity, with the endeavor to improve student achievement and close the achievement gap between White and non-White students.

Research Procedures

The researcher employed a quantitative method to conduct the study. As the purpose of this study was to describe the cultural diversity awareness of practicing elementary teachers in terms of their race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, number of

years teaching experience, and their experience with or exposure to multicultural education training, the quantitative method allowed the researcher to collect data and analyze the data to describe the extent of cultural diversity awareness of practicing, or in-service elementary teachers.

After receiving approval from the IRB, the researcher administered the Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory (CDAI) to practicing elementary teachers in three Middle Georgia school districts, totaling 305 respondents. The survey was administered at each elementary school during their regularly scheduled faculty meeting. Responses were collected upon participants' completion. The survey consisted of 28 items, categorized by five domains: (1) Cultural Awareness, (2) Culturally Diverse Family, (3) Cross-Cultural Communication, (4) Assessment, and (5) Creating a Multicultural Learning Environment Using Multicultural Methods. An additional five items requesting demographical information were added by the researcher for a total of 33 items.

The researcher collected the responses and analyzed the data using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The researcher carried out t-tests, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and Spearman's rho to compute means and to indicate sample differences for each of the five domains of cultural diversity awareness, as indicated by the CDAI, for each of the mediating variables. Mediating variables included race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, number of years teaching experience, and their (participants') experience with or exposure to multicultural education training.

This study was delimited to certified, practicing elementary teachers in Middle Georgia. Participants in the study were from three districts.

The research is based on self-reported data, which is a limitation of the study. Findings may not be reflective of school districts outside of Georgia.

Summary of the Study

While the student population continues to become more culturally diverse, the teaching force is becoming more monocultural (Villegas and Lucas, 2002). The purpose of this study was to describe the cultural diversity awareness of practicing elementary teachers in terms of their race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, number of years teaching experience, and their experience with or exposure to multicultural education training.

This study is relevant because the teacher population in today's public schools is becoming more monocultural, while the student population is becoming more culturally diverse (Villegas and Lucas, 2002). The study contributes to the professional literature as a resource that makes the extent of cultural diversity awareness of practicing elementary teachers in Georgia classrooms known.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Serious academic and social problems needing urgent and thoughtful attention are present in today's classrooms (Banks, 2000). According to Banks (2000), increased diversification in school population has caused critical problems. While the student population continues to become increasingly culturally diverse, the teaching force is predominately White, female, and monocultural (Villegas and Lucas, 2002). The monocultural teaching force is accountable for the academic success of culturally diverse learners (Grant & Wicczorek, 2002). However, according to Irvine (1990) and Ladson-Billings (2001), this cultural gap between students and teachers seems to have more profound academic and social implications for ethnically and culturally diverse students.

Brown (2007) concluded that non-White, or minority students may be performing substantially lower than their White classmates because of cultural discontinuity. Cultural discontinuity involves teachers' misinterpretations of cultural styles different from their own, teachers' lack of knowledge about how cultural patterns influence learning, teachers' negative expectations in regards to behavior and academic progress among diverse students, and teachers' exclusion of multicultural learning experiences (Rower & Koontz, 1995; Downey & Pribesh, 2004; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2006; Allen & Boykin, 1992; Boykin & Cunningham, 2001). It is important that teachers are conscious of the extent of their cultural diversity awareness in order to meet the challenges of teaching in culturally diverse settings.

The intention of the review of literature is to convey what the research states about elementary teachers' awareness of cultural diversity in five domains: cultural awareness, culturally diverse families, cross-cultural communication, assessment, and creating a multicultural learning environment. There is limited research about the extent of cultural diversity awareness among practicing elementary teachers; therefore, the review of literature will include information about preservice teachers' experiences with students having oppositional cultures. Cotton (2001) identified 55 studies that examined the impact of various schooling practices on the intercultural knowledge, attitudes, and/or behavior of teachers and students. However, only 4 of the 55 studies had practicing teachers as subjects. Furthermore, research that shows a correlation of cultural diversity awareness between teachers in regards to their race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, number of years teaching experience, and their experience with or exposure to multicultural educational is scarce.

General Cultural Awareness

Today's classrooms are microcosms of the larger society of the United States: a sea of faces representing a plurality of cultures, races, religions, and ethnicities (Stallworth, Gibbons, & Fauber, 2006). Teachers are born into a culture and through socialization processes learn about culture, which ultimately represents our reality and world view (Cruz-Janzen, 2000; Gollnik & Chinn, 2002). It is important to learn that not everyone is the same. Ladson-Billings (2001) maintains that teachers should possess high levels of cultural awareness in order to meet the needs of a diversely populated student body. Teachers in classrooms often receive training in multicultural issues to ensure that all students are respected for their own unique sets of differences. In order to facilitate the

successful academic instruction of a diverse student population, teachers must have a strong cultural awareness or multicultural orientation (Bennett, 1999). The development of multicultural understanding is measured by the teacher's depth of cultural self-awareness, affective response to difference, capacity for cross-cultural relations, and the degree to which his or her teaching style is multicultural as opposed to Eurocentric (McFadden, Merryfield, & Barron, 1997). Limited research is available about practicing teachers' thinking, beliefs, and understanding of cultural diversity.

Some authors have established the link between teacher's thoughts, beliefs, and corresponding behaviors in culturally diverse classrooms (Duff & Uchida, 1997; Ferguson, 2000; Gay, 2002; Skiba et al., 2000). For example, Duff and Uchida (1997) examined direct teaching behaviors versus expressed attitudes in a sample of teachers, finding incongruence. Though the teachers professed certain beliefs and understandings about cultural diversity, these beliefs were constantly being renegotiated, and in some cases ignored. According to Manning (2000), many teachers find cultural differences awkward, and they are uncomfortable discussing it.

Sleeter (1992) studied beliefs about cultural diversity with 30 practicing teachers, discerning four distinct groups. The first group minimized the relevance of cultural diversity because they believed all students had an equal opportunity to achieve. The second group believed multicultural education improved group relations and student achievement, while the third group saw it as enhancing minority students' self-esteem and coping skills necessary to their marginalized positions in society. Group four was most able to cope with change and more likely to incorporate culturally diverse practices in the curriculum, but as an additive. They had not restructured their teaching in any way.

Overall Sleeter (1992) concluded that teachers were more likely to assimilate knowledge about diversity issues rather than reconstruct it. The research of Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse (2006), Ladson-Billings (1994), Manning (2000), and Moore (2007) suggest that most teachers have concerns about working with diverse student populations and need to examine their beliefs, broaden their knowledge, and develop abilities for relating to students from diverse cultures.

Though numerous researchers have concluded that practicing teachers have negative thoughts about cultural diversity, in a study by Taylor (2000), teachers demonstrated having more positive beliefs. Taylor (2000) conducted a study in which 45 predominantly white teacher educators completed the Beliefs About Diversity Scale (BADs). The BADs assessed beliefs about diversity in regards to race, gender, social class, ability, language/immigration, sexual orientation, and multicultural education. Teacher educators scored at culturally sensitive levels for all subgroup areas; teachers were positively sensitive in their overall beliefs about diversity. In a similar study conducted by McNeal (2005), the multicultural beliefs and practices of two novice teachers revealed that the two teachers had high levels of consistency between their intended multicultural practices and their implemented practices. Based on classroom observations, both teachers illustrated having strong beliefs about the importance of cultural diversity by implementing the general multicultural practices of critical pedagogy, real life application, student choice, multicultural literature, individual student attention, cultural physical adaptation, active learning and cooperative grouping.

According to McNeal (2005), the factors supporting multicultural infusion were the teachers' previous experiences with diverse populations and the teachers' backgrounds that were similar to their students.

Culturally Diverse Families

For a long time, researchers have known that children's home environment contributes greatly to their academic, social, and emotional success in the school. As early as 1966, researchers (Coleman et al.) suggested that factors outside school are as influential, or even more, than school processes. Later research proves that, among other characteristics, effective schools have strong and positive home-school relationships (Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000). It is important that teachers maintain an understanding that children will bring the language, behavior, norms, values, and beliefs learned from their families and communities into the classroom (DiMartino, 1989). According to DiMartino (1989), teachers need to be aware of cultural differences and recognize that not everyone will share the same values and beliefs and that "different from" does not mean "less than." Dixon and Fraser (1986) suggested that teachers have an understanding of children's home life, such as: the language spoken in the home; who constitutes the family living in the home; and what beliefs and practices are important to the family. According to Walker-Dalhouse and Dalhouse (2006), culturally responsive teachers demonstrate their awareness of culturally diverse family by establishing parent interaction outside school activities, by seeking parent input in program planning, by addressing interaction in conferences with parents of different cultures, and by determining family preferences for ethnic identification.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) argued that the school's invitation for parental involvement is a key factor for determining parents' decisions to become involved in their children's education. Too often, teachers blame parents, particularly minority parents, when there are misunderstandings about attitude and conduct (Dixon & Fraser, 1986). As a result, teachers often neglect to invite parents to participate in shared educational decision making. In this case, minority parents feel that professionals discount their ideas, or they become reluctant to being involved (Dixon & Fraser, 1986). Dixon and Fraser (1986) stated, "When educators involve minority parents as partners in their children's education, parents appear to develop a sense of efficacy that communicates itself to children, with positive academic consequences."

In a study conducted by Walker-Dalhouse and Dalhouse (2006), the Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory (CDAI) was used to investigate White preservice teachers' beliefs about teaching in culturally diverse classroom settings. The instrument measured five categories, including culturally diverse family. The instrument was given to participants before and after their participation in a diversity seminar/practicum. The results revealed a substantial difference between pre and post test scores about preservice teachers' belief that teachers should establish parent interactions outside of school activities. The post test score was significantly higher than the pre test score. Results also revealed a significant difference between pre and post test scores, with higher mean scores shown for the post test, indicating that family views should be a part of program planning for students.

In another study, similar to Walker-Dalhouse and Dalhouse (2006), 637 preservice teachers who were enrolled in the student teaching phase of elementary

teacher education programs throughout the southeastern part of the USA were given the CDAI to determine their level of cultural sensitivity. Davis (1994) discussed the study that explored the concerns and perceptions of culturally diverse families and the attitudes of preservice teachers toward students from culturally diverse families. Findings disclosed that elementary preservice teachers were culturally sensitive in the area of the culturally diverse family with a mean score of 3.62. It was determined that the preservice teachers' multicultural education training contributed to their high levels of cultural sensitivity. Ongoing staff development and multicultural education training is needed to help teachers increase their awareness of culturally diverse families (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000). There is a need for teachers to understand parental perceptions and concerns and to involve parents in school affairs if students are going to be educated effectively (Davis, 1994).

Cross-Cultural Communication

A complex problem for American school concerns the education of students whose primary language is not English, and students who are learning English as a second language are clearly faced with more than learning the grammar of a new language (Fillmore, 1983). According to Goldenberg (1996), language-minority students, particularly those who are Spanish-speaking and from low-income backgrounds, generally do not do well in U. S. schools. Teachers of language-minority students face the daunting task of simultaneously building literacy, developing written expression ability, and enhancing English language growth (Gersten, 1996). Lee's (1998) study examined language-minority parents' views on bilingual education, and the majority of the parents supported bilingual education in U.S. schools.

By federal mandate, and in many places, by state law, schools are required to identify students from non-English-speaking homes who might have difficulty with English and determine, by formal assessment, whether the students need special linguistic or instructional help in school (Fillmore, 1983). Schools are required to provide services for students who do not know English well enough to profit from classroom instruction given in English. Despite pockets of success, Krashen and Biber (1988) believe that the overall picture for students' success is troubling. Krashen and Biber (1998) found that Spanish-speaking students, even when taught and tested in Spanish, still score at the thirty-seventh percentile. Eighty-five percent of Hispanic fourth and eighth graders read in English at a basic level or below, meaning they cannot demonstrate understanding of a text written at their grade level (Mullis, Campbell & Farstrup, 1993). This could be a result of low engagement in English. Arreaga-Mayer and Perdomo-Rivera's (1996) findings show low levels of oral engagement and academic talk among at-risk language-minority students in mainstream classes. Their data suggest that teachers' inordinate emphasis on whole-class instruction and individual seat-work severely limits these students' opportunities to talk, ask and answer questions, read aloud, and otherwise actively engage in learning language and content. Certainly, how teachers organize their classrooms has important consequences for students' learning opportunities and their achievement (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Teachers of language-minority students must simultaneously assist students to build literacy, develop written expression ability, and enhance English language growth (Gersten, 1996). Gersten (1996) asserts that this task can be increasingly complicated during the years that language-minority students make the transition from instruction that

has been provided primarily in their native language, to instruction that is provided primarily in English. The years when language-minority students make the transition from specialized bilingual programs to mainstream English language instruction are often extremely problematic for their teachers (Ramirez, 1992). According to Ramirez (1992) these are also the years when teachers most often refer students for help from the special education system or other compensatory programs.

In Walker-Dalhouse and Dalhouse's (2006) study, differences were found between preservice teachers' pre and post tests response to cross-cultural communication issues using the CDAI. Preservice teachers indicated that they were less uncomfortable with people who speak non-standard English after participating in a diversity seminar/practicum. The post test also revealed that preservice teachers were least likely to correct students without modeling or providing an explanation. More preservice teachers, as indicated by the CDAI, thought that regular curriculum should include ESL for non-English speaking students after participating in a diversity seminar/practicum. In another study by Davis (1993), preservice teachers revealed higher levels of sensitivity to cross-cultural communication after being involved in multicultural education training. The highest sensitivity score was "Regular curriculum should include ESL for non-English speaking children." It can be concluded that professional learning, including multicultural education training, can encourage cultural sensitivity or cultural awareness in terms of cross-cultural communication.

Assessment

Assessment systems afford teachers the opportunity to determine whether students have learned the intended content. Student assessments, according to the

Division of Instructional Innovation and Assessment (2007), allow the teacher to do more than assign a grade; student assessments assist teachers with exploring how to improve student learning and monitor student learning throughout the course of instruction.

According to the Division of Instructional Innovation and Assessment (2007), there are benefits of student assessment, such as: improves student learning; identifies instructional, course, and assignment challenges; improves instruction by identifying what instructional adjustments may be needed; ensures grading is reflective of students' learning towards objectives; and makes grading more systematic. Importantly, student assessment systems should be fair (Stobart, 2005). Stobart (2005) argues that fair assessment cannot be considered in isolation from both the curriculum and the educational opportunities of all students. According to Stobart (2005), fair assessment systems, unlike traditional standardized testing, refrain from testing or assessing students based on "mainstream" standards.

Although traditional standardized testing is typically used for measuring student progress, for accountability, classification purposes, and reporting procedures, the blanket use of traditional test measures needs to be reconsidered for use with the growing number of culturally diverse students and students who are English Language Learners (Spinelli, 2008). Walker-Dalhouse and Dalhouse (2006) contend that assessment systems in culturally responsive settings consider students' cultural and language differences.

Although attempts are made to accommodate cultural and linguistic differences, few of the standardized assessment instruments used to determine eligibility for classification are available in languages other than English (Spinelli, 2008). Additionally, Ortiz and Yates (2001) maintains that most assessment personnel (teachers) have little or no

training in test administration in any language other than English nor have they been trained how to understand or interpret the interaction of disabilities and linguistic, cultural, and other student characteristics.

In Walker-Dalhouse and Dalhouse's (2006) study, preservice teachers showed a significant difference in how they responded to questions about assessment on the CDAI. There was a significant difference found between pre and post test scores with the post test showing the lower score and suggesting that preservice teachers were less likely, after participating in multicultural education training, to refer students whose learning difficulties appeared to be cultural and language related.

In many cases, students with cultural differences or students with limited English proficiency perform poorly on traditional testing instruments and is subsequently misidentified as having a learning disability (Ortiz & Graves, 2001). Problems associated with inappropriate classification and placements include the following:

- being denied access to the general education curriculum;
- being placed in separate programs with more limited curriculum that may impact the student's access to post-secondary education and employment opportunities;
and
- being stigmatized as a misclassification may negatively impact students' self-perception and perceptions of others. (U.S. Department of Education, 1997)

Informal assessments, such as curriculum-based assessment, performance-based assessment, portfolio assessment and dynamic assessment, can provide important information about students with cultural and linguistic differences (Frisby, 2001).

Informal measures are more motivating than other types of assessment because they

engage students in realistic uses of literature and content-area concepts and promote transfer or generalizability of learning from facts and procedures to applications in meaningful contexts (Pierce, 2002). Curriculum-based procedures focus on measuring mastery of goals, objectives, and criteria embedded in school-adopted curriculum, and allow frequent collection of student performance data to assess instructional effectiveness (McConnell, 2000). Performance-based assessment is particularly appropriate for English language learners because it provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate a variety of language, literacy, cognitive, social, and motor skills (Frisby, 2001).

According to Farr and Trumbull (1997), portfolio assessments are tools used to facilitate communication between teachers and parents and have been successful among students with cultural and linguistic differences. With portfolio assessments, authentic samples of students' work are collected over time, and portfolios can focus on work products based on students' culture and native language. The use of dynamic assessment is beneficial for students with culturally and linguistically different backgrounds due to the fact that it is characterized by approaches using guided support or direct participation by the evaluator interacting with the student with the intent of determining students' learning potential, their responsiveness to instruction, and metacognitive processes (Bialystok, 2001). Teachers must be trained how to use these types of assessments to ensure academic success for all learners.

Creating a Multicultural Learning Environment

In a multicultural learning environment, the goal is to maximize multiculturalism. Too often teachers with multicultural classrooms still maintain that they do not need to include multicultural education in their instruction (Cruz-Janzen, 2000; Gollnik & Chinn,

2002). It is difficult for them to understand that multicultural education is really just about the lives of children and their families within and outside their classrooms. The goal of multiculturalism, or cultural diversity awareness in the classroom, is to create equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, social-class, and cultural groups (Banks, 2000). Banks (2000) maintains that the goal of multiculturalism also includes helping students to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function effectively in a pluralistic democratic society and to interact, negotiate, and communicate with people from diverse groups in order to create a civic and moral community that works for the common good. This goal, often considered a complex task, is most likely to be accomplished by culturally responsive teachers (Montgomery, 2001).

With high levels of multiculturalism, school leaders can hope for culturally responsive teachers who believe that culture deeply influences the way children learn (Cabello & Burstein, 1995); therefore, they make the effort to ensure that classroom instruction is conducted in a manner that is responsive to their students' home culture. According to Ladson-Billings (1994), culturally responsive teachers understand the notion of cultural relevance, which moves beyond language to include other aspects of student and school culture. Ladson-Billings (1994) ascertains that culturally relevant teaching is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Gay (2002) believes that culture encompasses many things, some of which are more important for teachers to know than others because they have direct implications for successful teaching and learning. Villegas and Lucas (2002) affirm that culturally responsive

teachers understand the importance of being in sync with all cultures and are able to plan and deliver culturally responsive instruction, meeting the needs of all students.

Researchers, Ladson-Billings (2001), Gay (2002), and Villegas and Lucas (2002) put forward the characteristics of culturally responsive teachers. Ladson-Billings (2001) identified three propositions relevant to culturally responsive teachers: culturally responsive teachers focus on individual student's academic achievement (e.g., clear goals, multiple forms of assessment), have attained cultural competence and help in developing student's cultural competence, and develop a sense of sociopolitical consciousness. Gay (2002) expanded on those frameworks of Ladson-Billings (2001) by identifying five essential elements of culturally responsive teaching, including the idea that culturally responsive teachers develop a cultural diversity knowledge base; design culturally relevant curricula; demonstrate cultural caring, and build a learning community; establish cross-cultural communications; and establish congruity in classroom instruction.

Villegas and Lucas (2002) expanded even further the works of Ladson-Billings (2001) and Gay (2002), and identified six characteristics that define culturally responsive teaching. Villegas and Lucas (2002) make known that cultural responsive teachers as those who are socio-culturally conscious, recognize that there are multiple ways of perceiving reality and that these ways are influenced by one's location in social order; have affirming views of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, see resources for learning in all students rather than viewing differences as problems to overcome; see themselves as both responsible for and capable of bringing about educational change that will make schools responsive to all students; understand how

learners construct knowledge and are capable of promoting learners' knowledge construction; know about the lives of their students; and use their knowledge about students' lives to design instruction that builds on what they already know while stretching them beyond the familiar.

According to Montgomery (2001), culturally responsive teachers examine and reflect upon their attitudes and practices. Culturally responsive teachers understand that separating one's own lived experiences from the act of teaching is an arduous, yet a sometimes necessary task (Palmer, 1998). Additionally, culturally responsive teachers seek to help students become more aware of their individual origins and those of others to appreciate the contributions of all groups to the richness of the classroom experience (Gay, 2000). In culturally responsive classrooms, students learn to accept themselves with all of their strengths and limitations, and they learn to see others as having equaled worth and dignity regardless of their differences (Brown, 2007).

According to Gay (2002), culturally responsive teachers build communities among learners in which the welfare of the group takes precedence over the individual, and the teacher creates reciprocity in the classroom, in which students and teachers become partners to improve student learning. Creating partnerships and a climate that establishes mutual support, helpfulness, and interdependence between students and teachers is created more easily when teachers use praise and affirmation in communicating with all students, are physically close to their students, and use student recommendations to facilitate cooperation (Kuykendall, 2004). Both Gay (2002) and Ladson-Billings (2001) explain how culturally responsive teachers use cultural scaffolding—that is, students' cultures and experiences—to expand their intellectual

horizons and academic achievement. Rather than making different types of learning (cognitive, physical, and emotional) discrete, Howard (2003) maintains that culturally responsive teachers deal with them simultaneously. Howard (2003) also asserts that culturally responsive teachers demonstrate cultural caring by matching instructional techniques to students' learning styles.

According to Ladson-Billings (2001), Gay (2002), and Villegas and Lucas (2002), culturally responsive teachers construct curricula that are culturally relevant and deliver culturally responsive instruction. These teachers are conscious of the power of curricula as an instrument of teaching and use it to help convey important information, values, and actions about ethnic and cultural diversity (Bigler, 1999). They also make changes as necessary to ensure that a culture-fair curriculum is implemented. According to the curriculum research by Anderson (1990) and Wilbur (1991), a culture-fair curriculum includes many facets. First, the culture-fair curriculum acknowledges and professes the contributions of many cultural groups. Second, a culture-fair curriculum affirms similarities and differences among and within groups of people. Anderson (1990) argues that teachers must value the varied perspectives that children bring with them into the classroom, and teachers must respect children's preferences to work autonomously or cooperatively. Third, students benefit when their experiences, needs, and interests are incorporated into learning activities. Ladson-Billings (2001) maintains that culturally responsive teachers understand that hands-on projects, student presentations, student demonstrations, and real-life applications of content are all vital in creating a multicultural learning environment.

Summary

The student population in the United States continues to become more culturally diverse (Zeichner, 2003). The monocultural teaching force, dominated by White females, is experiencing cultural mismatch between themselves and their students. Monocultural teachers are also dealing with the issue of cultural discontinuity, which involves misinterpretations of cultural styles, communication styles, and behavior patterns. According to Reed (1998), teachers are entering culturally diverse classrooms with negative beliefs, expecting low performance and underachievers, expecting little to no parental involvement, and expecting to refer many students for alternative educational programs. To promote positive beliefs and attitudes towards teaching in culturally diverse classrooms, teachers can benefit from knowing the extent of their cultural awareness in each of the five domains: (1) Cultural Awareness, (2) Culturally Diverse Family, (3) Cross-Cultural Communication, (4) Assessment, and (5) Creating a Multicultural Learning Environment. Preparing teachers for diverse classrooms and helping teachers reveal their assumptions and biases about diversity are responsibilities that must be taken into consideration (Moore, 2007).

One goal of multiculturalism is to increase cultural diversity awareness among teachers. School leaders can hope for teachers with high levels of multiculturalism because they are most likely to become culturally responsive practitioners. Culturally responsive teachers, according to Ladson-Billings (2001), Gay (2002), and Villegas and Lucas (2002) create learning atmospheres in which students and teachers feel respected by and connected to one another. Culturally responsive teachers understand the cultural characteristics and contributions of different ethnic groups. Culturally responsive teachers

construct curricula that are culturally relevant and deliver culturally responsive instruction (Ladson-Billings, 2001; Gay, 2002; Villegas and Lucas, 2002). For the most part, according to Ladson-Billings (2001), there are higher levels of academic success in culturally responsive classrooms.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

One way educators meet needs of diverse student population is through the implementation of culturally responsive practice in schools with diverse students. However, where teacher populations are largely monocultural and White, the educational system may be based upon primarily upon Eurocentric standards, values, and expectations (Howard, 1999). A monocultural teaching force is described as one in which the population of teachers is largely one race and one gender. For purposes of this study, a monocultural teaching staff was one that was largely White and female. Multicultural educational practices needed to address diversity in the classroom are often minimal or nonexistent because of monocultural educational practices and teachers' lack of cultural awareness (Grant & Wieczorek, 2002).

Because of gaps in subgroup performance of students on test tests, researchers have begun to focus on the teaching population. The No Child Left Behind Act requires schools and districts to focus their attention on the academic achievement of traditionally under-served groups of children, such as low-income students, students with disabilities, and students of "major racial and ethnic subgroups" (Educational Research Association, 2001). Focusing attention on underserved students often begins with a focus on instructional practices in schools where students are underperforming. Many researchers have considered multicultural educational practices as essential to address diversity in the classroom, because of richness and stimulation of possibilities in the education of all children (Howard, 1999). However, Gay (2002) states:

Instead there is a strong resistance to diversity. Individuals are socialized to devalue, suspect, and pretend to ignore differences, especially those that derive from class, race, ethnicity, and culture. Much of the socialization equates differences with deficiencies that should be eradicated. The ultimate goal seems to be to make everyone believe, value, and act the same. The standard of this sameness is mainstream, European-American cultural norms. (p. 614)

If teachers are socialized to differences in cultures, then their educational practice may not be reflective of multicultural educational practices needed to meet diverse student populations. Cultural discontinuity involves teachers' misinterpretations of cultural styles different from their own, teachers' lack of understanding about how cultural patterns influence learning, teachers' negative expectations in regards to behavior and academic progress among diverse students, and teachers' lack of providing multicultural learning experiences (Rower & Koontz, 1995; Downey & Pribesh, 2004; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2006; Allen Boykin, 1992). These issues may be addressed by increasing cultural diversity awareness of teachers. However, the degree of cultural awareness is often unknown. The scant literature on the extent of cultural diversity awareness of elementary school teachers was the motivation for this study.

The purpose of this study was to describe the cultural diversity awareness of practicing elementary teachers in terms of their race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, number of years teaching, and their experience with or exposure to multicultural educational training. Furthermore, this study identified culturally diversity awareness by demographics of teachers, including race, gender, and levels of experience. Literature reveals that when teachers are conscious of the extent of their cultural diversity

awareness, they are more apt to enhance their professional performance (when necessary) to include multicultural educational practices and are more inclined to ensure that diversity is recognized and valued in their classrooms and schools.

Research Questions

The overarching question for the research study was:

To what extent are elementary teachers in Georgia culturally aware?

The subquestions were these:

1. To what extent are elementary teachers culturally aware by these five domains?
 - A. General Cultural Awareness
 - B. Culturally Diverse Families
 - C. Cross-Cultural Communication
 - D. Assessment
 - E. Creating a Multicultural Environment
2. To what extent does elementary teachers' cultural diversity awareness vary by demographic variables of race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, number of years teaching experience, and experience with or exposure to multicultural educational training?

Research Design

The researcher employed a quantitative method to conduct the descriptive study. According to Creswell (1994), a quantitative approach is context free and the intent is to develop generalization, relying heavily upon statistical results represented with numbers and is done to determine relationships, effects, and causes. Additionally, Creswell (2009)

describes quantitative research as a method for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables can be measured on instruments so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures. As the purpose of this study was to describe the cultural diversity awareness of practicing elementary teachers in terms of their race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, number of years teaching experience, and their experience with or exposure to multicultural education training, it was determined that the quantitative method was best for the study. The quantitative method allowed the researcher to collect data, analyze the data, and present the data describing the extent of cultural diversity awareness of this group of elementary teachers. According to Nardi (2006), descriptive research is often the first step in most research projects and the primary objective for some. The primary objective of this study was to determine cultural diversity awareness of elementary teachers, which provided a descriptive portrayal of teachers' cultural awareness by their demographics.

In the process of conducting a descriptive analysis of the variables, the researcher was able to provide a profile of the respondents by the demographic items and descriptive data collected through the administration of the CDAI for the other behaviors and attitudes measured within each cultural awareness domain (Nardi, 2006). This study determined the cultural awareness of practicing elementary teachers and analyzed the awareness by mediating variables of demographics. Mean scores were computed by item and by aligning the respondents' mean score to the domains of cultural awareness. The mediating or control variables were race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, number of years teaching experience, and the experience of or exposure to multicultural education training and the dependent variable is the awareness of cultural diversity; therefore, the

use of t-tests, one-way analysis of variance, and Spearman's rho were used to describe how the extent of cultural diversity awareness is affected by demographics of teachers. The researcher understood the importance of objectivity in this study; for that reason, the researcher also considered the beliefs of Lichtman (2006), who concludes that the quantitative approach is the best way to collect data through the process of science.

Population

The population for this study included practicing elementary teachers who were members of a faculty that represented a primarily monocultural teaching group in a school with a diversely populated student group. In Georgia, there are 46,461 elementary teachers, Kindergarten through fifth grade. Of those teachers, 35,510 are White, 10,152 are Black, 222 are Asian, 432 are Hispanic, 53 are American Indian, and 92 are Multi-Racial. There are 776,152 students enrolled in Georgia schools, Kindergarten through fifth grade. There are 346,663 White students, 280,694 Black students, 24,506 Asian students, 91,738 Hispanic students, 1,224 American Indian students, and 31,357 Multi-Racial students. While the student population is diverse, 76% of the teaching population is White.

Sample

In order to conduct the investigation, the researcher identified primarily monocultural faculty in schools where the student population was diverse in three school districts in Middle Georgia. All of the elementary schools included from District A, District B, and District C were accredited by SACS and were Distinguished Title I Schools, having met Annual Yearly Progress for the past six years, at least.

A total of 107 teachers from three elementary schools in District A were included. Teachers from District B were from four elementary schools, for a total of 101 teachers. District C included 97 teachers from three elementary schools. All ten schools had similar demographics. The student population in each school was at least 40% Black and Other, while the teacher population was at least 90% White.

The researcher used a cluster sampling method to determine the sample size of 305. The cluster sampling method was combined with a stratified sampling method to ensure an equal proportionate representation of the population.

Instrumentation

The research questions were answered using an instrument, the Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory (CDAI), which was published by Gertrude B. Henry, from the Michigan Reading Association, in October of 1986. The questionnaire originally consisted of 28 items to which respondents indicated the extent of their agreement or disagreement to statements in each of the items. The purpose of the CDAI was to investigate the cultural diversity awareness level of in-service elementary teachers. The items of the instrument were aligned to five categories: (1) Cultural Awareness, (2) Culturally Diverse Family, (3) Cross-Cultural Communication, (4) Assessment, and (5) Creating a Multicultural Learning Environment Using Multicultural Methods, all of which contributed to identifying cultural diversity awareness.

Since 1986, the questionnaire, has been proven to be reliable and valid, and has been used by several researchers. The Cronbach's test of internal consistency evidenced an alpha coefficient of .90. The test-retest for reliability was established at .66. The CDAI was tested for content validity by a panel of experts. Based on their analysis, it was

revised and made available in 1995. Larke (1990) used the CDAI to assess the sensitivity of preservice teachers. The CDAI was used by researcher Davis (1993), to investigate the cultural sensitivity level of elementary preservice teachers. The CDAI has also been used by Deering (1997) to explore the influence of a 10-week field experience on the diversity sensitivity of middle school teacher education students; by Milner, Flowers, Moore, Moore, and Flowers (2003) to examine the extent to which teacher education programs were helping future teachers to become more multiculturally competent; by Brown (2004) to examine the effect of instructional methodology on changes in cultural diversity awareness; and by Walker-Dalhouse and Dalhouse (2006) to investigate elementary teachers' awareness of cultural diversity.

The researcher chose this instrument because it has been used for decades by many researchers, it has been tested and retested for reliability and validity, and it has been made available for use by researchers since 1995. It has proven reliability to measure cultural diversity awareness.

The instrument used a 5-point Likert-type scale (e.g.; 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 0 = neutral, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree) and reverse order intermittently. The items that used the order as represented above were one, two, six, seven, nine, ten, and twenty-three through twenty-seven. The items that used the reverse order were three, four, five, eight, eleven through twenty-two, and twenty-eight.

The researcher added a demographics section to the instrument consisting of five additional items. The added items asked respondents to identify their race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, and number of years teaching experience (fewer than 3 years, 3 to 9 years, 10 to 20 years, and more than 20 years). The demographic section also

included two items requiring respondents to answer with a 'yes' or 'no' response. The two questions were: (1) Did your teaching preparation include a course in Multicultural Education? and (2) Have you received other training in Multicultural Education?

Data Collection

After receiving approval from the IRB, the researcher began data collection. The researcher used the Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory (CDAI) as the primary source for data collection in this study. The researcher and/or a peer assistant, trained to administer the CDAI, visited ten elementary schools, on separate days, to administer the instrument. The researcher trained the peer assistant by modeling the administration of the instrument twice and discussing the procedure. The trainee was instructed to begin administration by stating the purpose of the study. The trainee was instructed to state that the completion of the survey was voluntarily, and responses would remain anonymous.

The participants were asked to complete the survey just before the start of their regularly scheduled, afternoon faculty meeting. The surveys were collected by the researcher and/or the peer assistant and sealed in an envelope until the data was analyzed. The researcher chose this procedure for administration because it yielded the best response rate of 100%. All certified staff was required to attend regularly scheduled faculty meetings.

In District A, School One, there were 36 certified teachers. Only 29 teachers were in attendance at the faculty meeting and agreed to complete the survey. The remaining seven were mailed to the researcher. In District A, School Two, all certified teachers, which totaled 33, were in attendance at the faculty meeting. All teachers agreed to complete the survey. In District A, School Three, there were a total of 38 certified

teachers. Only 30 were in attendance at the faculty meeting, and agreed to complete the survey. The remaining eight responses were sent to the researcher by the principals.

In District B, School One, there were 28 certified teachers. Only 27 were in attendance at the faculty meeting. All agreed to complete the survey. The researcher never received a response from the absent teacher. There were 26 certified teachers in School Two. The researcher received responses from 22 certified teachers at the faculty meeting, and three surveys were delivered to the researcher at a later date. In School Three, there were a total of 23 certified teachers. Eighteen surveys were collected at the faculty meeting, and the remaining five were delivered to the researcher by the principal. In School Four, there were a total of 26 teachers; all 26 attended the faculty meeting and completed the survey.

In District C, School One, there were a total of 29 certified teachers. All were in attendance at the faculty meeting and agreed to complete the survey, but only 28 surveys were collected.. In District C, School Two, there were 33 certified teachers. A total of 31 surveys were collected at the faculty meeting. The researcher returned to the school at a later date to collect the remaining 2 from the principal. In School Three, there were 36 certified teachers. Thirty teachers were in attendance at the faculty meeting, and they all agreed to complete the survey. The researcher returned to the school at a later date to collect the remaining six surveys.

Data Analysis

Statistical methods were used to analyze the data obtained from the thirty-three item instrument administered for the purpose of measuring the extent of cultural awareness of certified, in-service elementary teachers. The data from the thirty-three item

instrument was analyzed using the Statistical Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software program student version 16.0. The researcher hand-keyed the information into SPSS. Research question one, “To what extent are elementary teachers culturally aware by these five domains: A. General Cultural Awareness, B. Culturally Diverse Family, C. Cross-Cultural Communication, D. Assessment, E. Creating a Multicultural Environment?” was analyzed using central tendency measures to find the mean and standard deviation. The researcher reported the means by the five domains.

Research question two, “To what extent does elementary teachers’ cultural diversity awareness vary by demographic variables of race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, number of years teaching experience, and experience with or exposure to multicultural educational training?” was answered by conducting t-tests, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and Spearman’s rho. T-tests were carried out to determine sample differences among race/ethnicity, gender, and experience with or exposure to multicultural educational training, across the five domains. In other words to determine differences in race in domain one, general cultural awareness, the researcher hand-keyed the data into SPSS and ran a t-test to analyze the data. To determine differences in race in domain two, culturally diverse families, the researcher hand-keyed the data into SPSS and ran a t-test. This procedure was repeated for the remaining three domains. The same procedure was followed to determine differences in gender and differences in whether the teacher had experienced multicultural educational training. One-way ANOVA was utilized to determine the differences in responses in each domain by level of education. To determine differences related to years of teaching experience, Spearman’s rho was used.

The researcher determined that these procedures were most suitable for this research study based on the variables used in the analysis. This descriptive analysis afforded the researcher the opportunity to present more accurate information for separate variables. According to Creswell (2009), more accurate information for separate variables can be established when the information is not lost from collapsing variables into categories.

Delimitations of the Study

This study was delimited to certified, elementary teachers in Middle Georgia.

Delimitations were:

- The study is delimited to certified, elementary teachers only in Middle Georgia.
- The study is delimited to Distinguished Title I Schools.

Limitations of the Study

The researcher administered the Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory to participants.

Limitation was:

- The study includes a small sample size.
- Data is self-reported.
- Findings may not be reflective of school districts outside of Georgia.

Summary of the Research Design

The researcher employed a quantitative method to conduct the descriptive study. The Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory was the primary instrument used to describe the cultural diversity awareness of participants. Individuals who comprise the sample did have the researchers' commitment to anonymity. The sample included a total of 305 certified, practicing teachers from ten elementary schools in three separate districts in Middle Georgia. The researcher and/or peer assistant visited ten elementary schools, on separate occasions, to administer the survey. Participants responded to the 33-item questionnaire using a 5-point Likert-type scale. Responses were collected and analyzed using the SPSS program. The statistical tests, t-test, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and Spearman's rho was used in the data analysis. The study was delimited to certified, practicing elementary teachers in three, Middle Georgia school districts. Limitations of the study include the fact that the data is based on self-reported information from the respondents. Findings may not be reflective of school districts outside of Georgia.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe the cultural diversity awareness of practicing elementary teachers in terms of their race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, number of years teaching, and their experience with or exposure to multicultural educational training. The sample for this study included 305 certified, in-service elementary teachers from three separate school districts in Middle Georgia. Participants were asked to complete the Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory (CDAI), which is an instrument proven reliable and valid for measuring cultural diversity awareness categorized by five domains: (1) Cultural Awareness, (2) Culturally Diverse Family, (3) Cross-Cultural Communication, (4) Assessment, and (5) Creating a Multicultural Learning Environment Using Multicultural Methods. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The researcher presented descriptive responses to answer the questions this study sought to answer.

Research Questions

The overarching question for the research study was:

To what extent are elementary teachers in Georgia culturally aware?

The subquestions were these:

1. To what extent are elementary teachers culturally aware by these five domains?

A. General Cultural Awareness

B. Culturally Diverse Families

C. Cross-Cultural Communication

D. Assessment

E. Creating a Multicultural Environment

2. To what extent does elementary teachers' cultural diversity awareness vary by demographic variables of race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, number of years teaching experience, and experience with or exposure to multicultural educational training?

Research Design

The descriptive design of this study was quantitative as the data was collected utilizing an instrument, the CDAI . The data was analyzed to answer the research questions, using SPSS to conduct t-tests, one-way variances (ANOVA), and Spearman's rho correlation test. The survey design was determined to be the most appropriate method for this study. The CDAI was tested for content validity by a panel of experts and made available for social scientists in 1995. Several researchers, including Deering (1997), Brown (2004), and Walker-Dalhousie and Dalhousie (2006) have used the instrument to measure cultural diversity awareness in their studies. The researcher administered the instrument to (N = 305) certified, in-service elementary teachers.

Respondents

The respondents in this study were certified elementary teachers (N = 305) currently teaching in elementary schools. The schools are located in Middle Georgia, where the faculty represented a primarily monocultural teaching group in a school with a diversely populated student group. Respondents were from three separate districts (N=305).

In District A, School One the student population was 58% White, 35% Black, and 7% other. School Two had a student population of 49% White, 43% Black, and 8% other. The student population in School Three was 67% White, 28% Black, and 5% other. The teacher population in all schools in District A, collectively, was more than 90% White.

In District B, School One, the student population was 63% White, 36% Black, and 1% other. In School Two, the student population was 48% White, 43% Black, and 9% other. In School Three, the student population was 51% White, 39% Black, and 10% other. In School Four, the student population was 67% White, 31% Black, and 2% other. The teacher population in all schools in District B, collectively, was more than 90% White.

In District C, School One, the student population was 6% White, 86% Black, and 8% other. In School Two, the student population was 43% White, 45% Black, and 12% other. In School Three, the student population was 70% White, 26% Black and 4% other. The teacher population in all schools in District C, collectively, was more than 90% White, with the exception of School Three. The teacher population for School Three was 21% White, 78% Black, and 1% other.

There were 308 instruments personally distributed by the researcher and/or a peer assistant (trained to administer the survey) at a faculty meeting, at each school at the consent of the principal. Before administering the survey to the certified faculty, the researcher or peer assistant explained the purpose of the study and reminded participants that the completion of the survey was voluntary. Extra instruments were left with the principal or assistant principal for teachers who were not in attendance. Principals or assistant principals forwarded the completed surveys to the researcher. The researcher or

peer assistant collected 274 responses at the faculty meetings, and 31 completed surveys were either retrieved by the researcher at a later date or forwarded to the researcher through the mail.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

There were a total of 308 surveys distributed, and 305 certified, in-service elementary teachers responded. The response rate was 99%. There were 258 White respondents (85%) and 47 Black respondents (15%). There were 47 male respondents (10%) and 281 female respondents (90%). None of the respondents were Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, or American Indian/Alaska Native, which were other selections on the instrument.

Respondents' level of education ranged from Bachelor's degree to Doctorate's degree. A total of 131, or 43% of the respondents had a Bachelor's degree. A total of 151 of the respondents, or 49% had a Master's degree. A total of 20, or 7% of the respondents had a Specialist degree. The total number of respondents with a Doctorate's degree was three, or 1%.

The number of years teaching experience ranged between the respondents from fewer than three years to more than 20 years. Respondents with fewer than three years totaled 43, which was 14% of all respondents. Respondents with three to nine years of experience totaled 127, which was 42% of all respondents. A total of 95, or 31% of the respondents had ten to 20 years of teaching experience. Forty respondents had more than 20 years of teaching experience, which was 13% of the total respondents.

Of the total respondents, 242 indicated that they have had experience with or exposure to multicultural education courses or training; therefore, 79% of all respondents

have had some type of multicultural education. There were 63 respondents who indicated that they had no experience with or exposure to multicultural education courses or training. A total of 21% of all respondents had no type of multicultural education.

Summary of Respondents

All of the respondents (N = 305) in this study were certified elementary teachers currently teaching in elementary schools. Respondents teach in Middle Georgia School Districts where the faculty is a monocultural group, while the student group is diversely populated. More than three-fourths of the respondents were White and female. Ninety-two percent of the respondents had a Bachelor's or Master's degree, with eight percent of the total respondents having a Specialist or Doctorate's degree. Most of the respondents (seventy-three percent) had between three and 20 years of teaching experience. Eighty-six percent of the respondents had multicultural education; 21% percent of the respondents had no experience with multicultural education courses or training.

Findings

The Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory (CDAI), proven reliable and valid for measuring cultural diversity awareness, was administered to certified, in-service elementary teachers to assess their extent of cultural diversity awareness. The CDAI is a 28 item questionnaire, which is divided into five domains: general cultural awareness, culturally diverse families, cross-cultural communication, assessment, and creating a multicultural environment. Responses to the survey questions on the CDAI were in the form of a 5-point Likert scale with responses ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree (e.g.; 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 0 = neutral, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree) and reverse order intermittently.

Each survey question in each of the five domains of cultural diversity awareness had a possible rating of one to four. A rating of one denoted that the participant “strongly disagreed”, while a rating of four denoted that the participant “strongly agreed.” Reverse order was used, depending upon how the survey question was asked. In such cases, a rating of one denoted that the respondent “strongly agreed,” while a rating of four denoted that the respondent “strongly disagreed.” The items that used the reverse order were three, four, five, eight, eleven through twenty-two, and twenty- eight (see Appendix B).

A demographic section was added to the survey by the researcher to include race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, and number of years teaching experience (fewer than 3 years, 3 to 9 years, 10 to 20 years, and more than 20 years). The demographic section also included two questions: (1) Did your teaching preparation include a course in Multicultural Education? and (2) Have you received other training in Multicultural Education?

Data Analysis

Research Question 1

To what extent are elementary teachers culturally aware by these five domains: general cultural awareness, culturally diverse families, cross-cultural communication, assessment, and creating a multicultural environment?

To respond to research question one, the researcher hand-keyed data from the surveys into a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet. Microsoft Excel was used to compute mean scores and standard deviation. Next the researcher examined the scores and determined whether the respondents were culturally aware, according to the CDAI scales. In order to

be identified as being culturally aware in each of the five domains, respondents' mean score had to be at least half of the possible total.

Specifically, to be considered culturally aware in domain one, general cultural awareness, teachers must have had a mean score of 10 or greater. To be considered culturally aware in domains two and three, culturally diverse families and cross-cultural communication, teachers must have had a mean score of 12. To be considered culturally aware in domain four, assessment, teachers must have had a mean score of eight. To be considered culturally aware in domain five, creating a multicultural environment, teachers must have had a mean score of 14.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviation, and Ratio of Participants for CDAI Scale by Five Domains

Domains	M	SD	Ratio
General Cultural Awareness	12.33	3.60	62%
Culturally Diverse Families	13.18	3.78	55%
Cross-Cultural Communication	14.52	3.38	61%
Assessment	8.66	3.31	54%
Creating a Multicultural Environment	15.50	4.83	55%

When looking at the measurements by the five domains, respondents could have scored as high as 20 or as low as five in the area of "General Cultural Awareness." A score as high as 24 could have been attained in the area of "Culturally Diverse Families," or a score as low as six could have been attained. The highest score in the area of "Cross-

Cultural Communication” could have been 24, while the lowest score could have been six. Respondents could have scored as high as 16 or as low as four in the area of “Assessment.” The highest score attainable in the area of “Creating a Multicultural Environment” was 28, while the lowest score attainable was seven.

The researcher calculated the ratio of each domain by dividing the teachers’ mean score by the total possible points. This was done to determine in which domain teachers demonstrated having the most or least cultural diversity awareness. Certified, in-service elementary teachers were most culturally aware in domain one, which is general cultural awareness. There were five questions, one through five, included in the first domain of general cultural awareness (see Appendix B). The questions dealt with cultural differences between teachers and students and identifying students by ethnic groups. Out of a possible 20 points, respondents’ mean score was 12.33 points ($M = 12.33$, $SD = 3.60$). The ratio was 62 percent.

The second highest domain for which teachers responded being most culturally aware was domain three, cross-cultural communication. Questions 12 – 17 were in the third domain (see Appendix B). The six questions in domain three dealt with students’ spoken language and whether or not the use of non-standard English should be corrected or ignored. Out of a possible 24 points, respondents’ mean score was 14.52 points ($M = 14.52$, $SD = 3.38$). The ratio was 61 percent.

The third highest domain was domain two, culturally diverse families, and domain five, creating a multicultural environment. Six questions, six through eleven, were in domain two and they involved whether or not teachers should establish parent interactions outside of school activities. Seven questions (22 – 28) were included in

domain five. The seven questions focused on teachers' use of multicultural instructional methods and materials in a multicultural classroom environment (see Appendix B). Respondents scored within a 55% margin of the total possible points in both domains. In domain two, culturally diverse families, respondents' mean score was 13.18 out of a possible 24 points ($M = 13.18$, $SD = 3.78$). In domain five, creating a multicultural environment, respondents' mean score was 15.50 out of a possible 28 points ($M = 15.50$, $SD = 4.83$).

Certified, in-service teachers were least culturally aware in the fourth domain, which was assessment. There were four questions, numbers 18 – 21, in the fourth domain. The four questions dealt with making modifications for students to accommodate learning styles, or referring students for testing based on cultural or language differences (see Appendix B). Out of a possible 16 points, respondents' mean score was 8.66 points ($M = 8.66$, $SD = 3.31$). The ratio was 54 percent.

In response to research question one, the researcher found that certified, in-service elementary teachers are culturally aware as measured by the CDAI, categorized by five domains: general cultural awareness, culturally diverse family, cross-cultural communication, assessment, and creating a multicultural environment. The mean score in each domain was at least half of the total possible points, the score needed to be considered culturally aware. Teachers are aware of the importance of recognizing cultural diversity among students and their families. Teachers indicated that they believe that family views should be included in program planning, and adaptations should be made to accommodate different cultures, learning styles, and languages. Teachers do not believe

that racial statements should be ignored; neither should the use of non-standard English go uncorrected without an explanation or the modeling of correct usage.

Research Question 2

To what extent does teachers' cultural diversity awareness vary by demographic variables of race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, number of years teaching experience, and experience with or exposure to multicultural educational training?

The data for research question two was analyzed with three types of statistical tests, depending upon the variable being analyzed. Independent samples t-tests, with a degrees freedom of 303, were used to determine sample differences between race (Table 2.1), gender (Table 2.2), and experience with multicultural education (Table 2.5). A one-way ANOVA was used to determine if any significant differences existed between the respondents based on their level of education (Table 2.3). The one-way ANOVA included a descriptive analysis, Tukey HSD, and a between group analysis to test for significant differences at $p < .01$. Spearman's rho was the third statistical test used to determine differences in regards to years teaching experience (Table 2.4). Correlation was significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviation, and t-Test Values for CDAI Scale by Five Domains by Race

Domains	White		Black		t	P
	M	SD	M	SD		
General Cultural Awareness	12.11	3.6	13.55	3.4	-2.55	.011
Culturally Diverse Families	12.99	3.8	14.23	3.7	-2.08	.038
Cross-Cultural Communication	14.31	3.3	15.68	3.6	-2.59	.010
Assessment	8.70	3.4	8.43	2.5	.526	.600
Creating a Multicultural Environment	15.25	4.7	16.91	5.2	-2.20	.030

$p < .01$

An independent sample t-test was conducted on the scale's scores to determine statistical differences between White and Black teachers in each of the five domains, and race was not found to be a factor in cultural diversity awareness of elementary teachers. There was not a statistically significant difference between the two groups in domains one, general cultural awareness, $t(303) = -2.55$, $p = .011$. The data indicated that there was not a significant difference between the two groups in domain two, culturally diverse families, $t(303) = -2.08$, $p = .038$. There was not a significant difference between the two groups in domain three, cross-cultural communication, $t(303) = -2.59$, $p = .010$. There was not a significant difference between the two groups in domain four, assessment, $t(303) = .526$, $p = .600$. There was not a significant difference between the two groups in domain five, creating a multicultural environment, $t(303) = -2.20$, $p = .030$.

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviation, and t-Test Values for CDAI Scales by Five Domains by Gender

Domains	Male		Female		t	P
	M	SD	M	SD		
General Cultural Awareness	12.17	4.16	12.35	3.56	-.233	.816
Culturally Diverse Families	12.12	3.38	13.27	3.81	-1.43	.154
Cross-Cultural Communication	14.25	3.20	14.54	3.40	-.410	.682
Assessment	8.12	2.83	8.70	3.34	-.824	.410
Creating a Multicultural Environment	16.04	4.34	15.46	4.87	.567	.567

$p < .01$

An independent sample t-test was conducted on the scale's scores to determine statistical differences between male and female teachers in each of the five domains, and gender was not found to be a factor in cultural diversity awareness of elementary teachers. There was not a significant difference between the two groups in domain one, general cultural awareness, $t(303) = -2.33$, $p = .816$. There was not a significant difference between the two groups in domain two, culturally diverse families, $t(303) = -1.43$, $p = .154$. There was not a significant difference between the two groups in domain three, cross-cultural communication, $t(303) = -.410$, $p = .682$. There was not a significant difference between the two groups in domain four, assessment, $t(303) = -.824$, $p = .410$. There was not a significant difference between the two groups in domain five, creating a multicultural environment, $t(303) = .567$, $p = .567$.

Table 4

Means, Standard Deviation, and F-Values for CDAI Scale by Five Domains by Level of Education

Domains	Bachelors		Masters		Specialist		Doctorate		F	P
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
General Cultural Awareness	12.13	3.3	12.54	3.8	12.55	3.7	9.00	5.0	1.19	.31
Culturally Diverse Families	13.24	3.8	13.14	3.9	13.05	3.3	13.67	.58	.042	.99
Cross-Cultural Communication	14.36	3.1	14.56	3.7	15.65	2.4	12.33	2.1	1.28	.28
Assessment	8.89	3.3	8.70	3.4	7.20	2.3	6.67	.57	1.89	.13
Creating a Multicultural Environment	15.30	4.6	15.72	4.9	15.30	5.8	15.33	4.0	.188	.905

$p < .01$

A one-way ANOVA was used to determine significant differences between respondents in each of the five domains, based on their level of education. The data was then analyzed using the post-hoc Tukey HSD test to determine specific differences at $p < 0.1$. There was not a significant difference between the four groups in domain one, general cultural awareness, $F(3,301) = 1.19$, $p = .313$. There was not a significant difference between the two groups in domain two, culturally diverse families, $F(3,301) = .042$, $p = .988$. There was not a significant difference between the two groups in domain three, cross-cultural communication, $F(3,301) = 1.28$, $p = .283$. There was not a significant difference between the two groups in domain four, assessment, $F(3,301) = 1.89$, $p = .131$. There was not a significant difference between the two groups in domain five, $F(3,301) = .188$, $p = .905$.

Table 5

Spearman's rho Correlation of Years Teaching Experience of Participants for CDAI Scales by Five Domains

		Years Teaching Experience	General Cultural Awareness	Cultural Diverse Family	Cross-Cultural Communication	Assessment	Multicultural Learning Environment
N=305							
Spearman's rho	Years Teaching Experience	1.000	-.010	.032	-.015	-.056	.013
	Correlation Coefficient		.858	.575	.793	.327	.816
	General Cultural Awareness	-.010	1.000	.186**	.191**	.229**	.302**
	Correlation Coefficient	.858		.001	.001	.000	.000
	Cultural Diverse Family	.032	.186**	1.000	.331**	.190**	.354**
	Correlation Coefficient	.575	.001		.000	.001	.000
	Cross-Cultural Communication	-.015	.191**	.331**	1.000	.062	.252**
	Correlation Coefficient	.793	.001	.000		.283	.000
	Assessment	-.056	.229**	.190**	.062	1.000	.209**
	Correlation Coefficient	.327	.000	.001	.283		.000
	Multicultural Learning Environment	.013	.302**	.354**	.252**	.209**	1.000
	Correlation Coefficient	.816	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)						

The researcher conducted a Spearman's rho, a correlation bivariate analysis, to determine what extent the demographic characteristics of years teaching experience had on the five domains of cultural awareness. The data shown in Table 2.4 indicate no significant difference between respondents with less than three years, three to nine years, ten to twenty years, or more than 20 years of teaching experience in each of the five domains.

Table 6

Means, Standard Deviation, and t-Test Values for CDAI Scale by Five Domains by Multicultural Education Experience

Domains	Yes Multicultural Education		No Multicultural Education		t	P
	M	SD	M	SD		
General Cultural Awareness	12.39	3.70	12.10	3.21	.583	.560
Culturally Diverse Families	13.43	3.80	12.24	3.58	2.24	.026
Cross-Cultural Communication	14.65	3.36	14.03	3.41	1.23	.197
Assessment	8.77	3.23	8.24	3.58	1.14	.257
Creating a Multicultural Environ	15.66	4.8	14.90	5.00	1.12	.269

P < .01

An independent sample t-test was conducted on the scale's scores to determine statistical differences between teachers who have had experience with or exposure to multicultural education. The comparison was made for each of the five domains. There was not a significant difference between the two groups in domain one, general cultural awareness, $t(303) = -0.583$, $p = .560$). There was not a significant difference between the two groups in domain two, culturally diverse families, $t(303) = 2.24$, $p = .026$. There was

not a significant difference between the two groups in domain three, cross-cultural communication, $t(303) = 1.23$, $p = .197$. There was not a significant difference between the two groups in domain four, assessment, $t(303) = 1.14$, $p = .257$. There was not a significant difference between the two groups in domain five, creating a multicultural environment, $t(303) = 1.12$, $p = .269$.

Summary

The first research question inquired the extent of cultural diversity awareness of elementary teachers by the five domains (general cultural awareness, culturally diverse families, cross-cultural communication, assessment, and multicultural education training) of cultural diversity awareness determined by the Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory (CDAI). The means and standard deviation of participants for CDAI scale's scores revealed that teachers have acceptable levels of cultural diversity awareness, meaning that their mean score was at least half of the possible attainable score. Teachers are most culturally aware in the first domain, general cultural awareness ($M = 12.33$). It was determined that teachers are least culturally aware in domain four, assessment ($M = 8.66$).

The second research question sought to determine if there were differences in the extent of teachers' cultural awareness based on particular demographics: race, gender, level of education, number of years teaching experience, and experience with or exposure to multicultural education. A comparison of mean scores revealed that there is not a statistical significant difference between White and Black teachers in domain one, which is general cultural awareness. Neither was there a significant difference between White and Black teachers in the other four domains. There was not a significant difference

between males and females in the five domains. No significant difference was revealed in the five domains between teachers who have a Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, Specialist degree, or Doctorate degree. No significant difference was revealed in the five domains between teachers with less than nine years teaching experience, three to nine years, ten to twenty years, or more than 20 years experience. Teachers who have had experience with or exposure to multicultural education showed no significantly different scores than teachers who have not had experience with or exposure to multicultural education.

Summary of Findings

- Teachers were more culturally aware in the first domain: general cultural awareness.
- Teachers were second most culturally aware in domain three: cross-cultural communication.
- Teachers were third most culturally aware in domains two and five: culturally diverse families and creating a multicultural environment.
- Teachers were least culturally aware in the fourth domain: assessment.
- Demographics of monocultural teaching faculties, including race, gender, level of education, years of teaching experience, and multicultural training were not found statistically significant to cultural diversity awareness.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, RESEARCH FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Summary

The researcher's purpose for this study was to describe the cultural diversity awareness of certified, in-service teachers (N = 305). Specifically, the researcher's goal was to determine differences in the extent of cultural diversity awareness between teachers based on their race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, number of years teaching experience, and their experience with or exposure to multicultural education training. The first research question sought to determine the extent of cultural diversity awareness of practicing (certified, in-service) elementary teachers in Georgia classrooms. The second research question sought to determine statistically significant differences in the extent of cultural diversity awareness between teachers in regards to their race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, number of years teaching experience, and their experience with or exposure to multicultural education.

To answer research questions one and two, the researcher utilized a quantitative method. The data was collected utilizing a survey instrument, the Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory (CDAI). The CDAI measured cultural diversity awareness in five domains: general cultural awareness, culturally diverse families, cross-cultural communication, assessment, and creating a multicultural environment. The instrument was completed by certified elementary teachers (N = 305) from three Middle Georgia districts, from ten different elementary schools. After receiving consent from the

principals, the researcher and/or peer assistant went to the schools to administer the survey and collect the responses.

The data was analyzed using SPSS to run t-tests, a one-way ANOVA, and Spearman's rho correlation test. Data revealed that practicing elementary teachers have a satisfactory measure of cultural diversity awareness. Each mean score in each domain was at least half of the total possible attainable score, which indicates having cultural diversity awareness. There was not a significant difference found when comparing mean scores between teacher groups (race, gender, level of education, years teaching experience, and experience with multicultural education), in the five domains.

Research Findings

The researcher used the CDAI to measure the extent of cultural diversity awareness of certified, in-service elementary teachers in Georgia. Responses to the survey questions were in the form of a 5-point Likert scale with responses ranging from one to four, 1 = Strongly Disagree and 4 = Strongly Agree. A neutral response received a score of zero. The reverse order was used for some survey items depending upon the way the item was worded. A demographic section was added to the survey by the researcher to compare groups. The findings were as follows:

- Teachers were more culturally aware in the first domain: general cultural awareness.
- Teachers were second most culturally aware in domain three: cross-cultural communication.
- Teachers were third most culturally aware in domains two and five: culturally diverse families and creating a multicultural environment.

- Teachers were least culturally aware in the fourth domain: assessment.
- There was no significant difference between White and Black teachers in domains one, two, three, four, and five: general cultural awareness, culturally diverse families, cross-cultural communication, assessment, and creating a multicultural environment.
- There was no significant difference between male and female teachers in either domain one, two, three, four, or five: general cultural awareness, culturally diverse families, cross-cultural communication, assessment, and creating a multicultural environment.
- There was no significant difference between teachers in regards to their level of education in either domain one, two, three, four or five: general cultural awareness, culturally diverse families, cross-cultural communication, assessment, and creating a multicultural environment.
- There was no significant difference between teachers in regards to their years teaching experience in either domain one, two, three, four, or five: general cultural awareness, culturally diverse families, cross-cultural communication, assessment, and creating a multicultural environment.
- There was no significant difference between teachers who have had experience with or exposure to multicultural education and teachers who have not had experience with or exposure to multicultural education in either of the five domains: general cultural awareness, culturally diverse families, cross-cultural communication, assessment, and creating a multicultural environment.

Discussion

The teaching force in Georgia classrooms is becoming predominantly White, female, and monocultural, while the student population is becoming more culturally diverse (Villegas and Lucas, 2002). Brown (2007) concluded that non-White, or minority students perform substantially lower than their White classmates because of cultural discontinuity. Cultural discontinuity involves teachers' misinterpretations of cultural styles different from their own, teachers' lack of knowledge about how cultural patterns influence learning, teachers' negative expectations in regards to behavior and academic progress among diverse students, and teachers' exclusion of multicultural learning experiences (Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2006). It is important that teachers are conscious of their extent of cultural diversity awareness in order to meet the challenges of teaching in culturally diverse settings.

The majority of recent studies on the extent of cultural diversity awareness have investigated pre-service teachers. Cotton (2001) identified 55 studies that examined the impact of various schooling practices on the intercultural knowledge, attitudes, and/or behavior of teachers and students; however, only four of the 55 studies included in-service teachers as subjects.

The survey results of 305 certified, in-service teachers from ten schools in Middle Georgia were analyzed to ascertain their extent of cultural diversity awareness. The data was gathered using the responses to the Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory (CDAI), an instrument proven reliable and valid; it has been used by several researchers for more than twenty years. The analysis of this data provided descriptive information about the extent of cultural diversity awareness of elementary teachers in five domains: general

cultural awareness, culturally diverse families, cross-cultural communication, assessment, and creating a multicultural learning environment.

Discussion of Findings from Research Question 1

To what extent are elementary teachers culturally aware by these five domains: general cultural awareness, culturally diverse families, cross-cultural communication, assessment, and multicultural learning environment?

Certified, in-service elementary teachers from ten elementary schools in Middle Georgia completed the CDAI to determine their extent of cultural diversity awareness. Participants were predominately monocultural (White and female) teachers who teach in elementary schools where the student population is culturally diverse. Ladson-Billings (2001) maintains that teachers should possess high levels of cultural awareness in order to meet the needs of a diversely populated student body. The development of multicultural understanding is measured by the teacher's depth of cultural self-awareness, affective response to difference, capacity for cross-cultural relations, and the degree to which his or her teaching style is multicultural as opposed to Eurocentric (McFadden, Merryfield, & Barron, 1997). This study investigated the aforementioned, plus teachers' depth of providing diverse assessments based on students' needs.

The researcher found that elementary teachers have a satisfactory measure of multicultural awareness across five domains: general cultural awareness, cultural diverse families, cross-cultural communication, assessment, and creating a multicultural environment. Teachers revealed that their greatest extent of cultural diversity awareness is in domain one. Domain one of the CDAI measured teacher beliefs about the importance of recognizing cultural differences and maintaining a feeling of comfort when

interacting with people who have cultures or beliefs different from their own. The findings of this study differ from the research of Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse (2006), Ladson-Billings (1994), Manning (2000), and Moore (2007) who suggest that most teachers have concerns about working with diverse student populations and need to examine their beliefs, broaden their knowledge, and develop abilities for relating to students from diverse cultures.

Teachers are aware of many racial groups in the USA, and understand that in their profession, they are expected to interrelate with students and parents who have cultures and languages different from their own. Teachers of language-minority students face the daunting task of simultaneously building literacy, developing written expression ability, and enhancing English language growth (Gersten, 1996). The researcher found that teachers are second most culturally aware in domain three, which deals with cross-cultural communication. The data from this study confirmed that teachers believe in providing learning opportunities that promote the success of non-English speaking students and students who use non-standard English. On the contrary, data from Arreaga-Mayer and Perdomo-Rivera (1996) suggest that teachers' inordinate emphasis on whole-class instruction and individual seat-work severely limits non-English speakers' achievement. The literature states that eighty-five percent of Hispanic fourth and eighth graders read in English at a basic level or below, meaning that they cannot demonstrate understanding of text written at their grade level.

The researcher found that teachers are third most culturally aware in domains two and five. Domain two deals with teacher beliefs about interacting with diverse families in social events outside of school requirements, and considering parents' input in program

planning. Domain five deals with teacher beliefs about creating a learning environment that emphasizes different cultures and beliefs.

Having a high level of cultural diversity awareness in domain two supports the research of Teddlie and Reynolds (2000), who proved that effective schools have teachers who establish strong and positive home-school relationships. The results of teachers' responses also reveal that teachers are aware of the importance of welcoming parental involvement. The literature maintains that a school's invitation for parental involvement is key for determining parents' decisions to be involved in their children's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995).

Furthermore, in regards to domain five, teachers' responses indicated that they make adaptations in program planning to accommodate the different cultures between the students in their classrooms. Ladson-Billings (2001) and Gay (2002) argue that teachers who are culturally aware construct curricula that are culturally relevant and deliver culturally responsive instruction by modifying the curriculum to meet the needs of all learners. The data collected by the researcher proves that elementary teachers in Georgia classrooms demonstrate cultural responsiveness by matching instructional techniques to students' learning styles (Howard, 2003).

The researcher found that teachers are least culturally aware in domain four, assessment. Though the data disclosed that teachers have a considerable measure of cultural awareness in this domain, it was the least, meaning that teachers least believe that testing accommodations should be made to standardized assessments. The data also revealed that teachers are more apt to refer students to be evaluated for learning difficulties due to the students' cultural and/or language differences. This finding is

comparable to the study of Walker-Dalhouse and Dalhouse (2006), who concluded that teachers (pre-service) who do not participate in multicultural educational courses are very likely to refer students whose learning difficulties appear to be cultural or language related. The literature also states that in many cases, students with cultural differences or limited English proficiency perform poorly on traditional testing instruments, and as a result, they are misidentified as having learning disabilities (Ortiz & Graves, 2001). Data from this study reveals consistency with the findings of Walker-Dalhouse and Dalhouse (2006) and Ortiz and Graves (2001).

Discussion of Findings from Research Question 2

To what extent does elementary teachers' cultural diversity awareness vary by demographic variables of race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, number of years teaching experience, and experience with or exposure to multicultural educational training?

Certified, in-service teachers demonstrated having no area of significant difference in their extent of cultural diversity awareness in the five domains (general cultural awareness, culturally diverse families, cross-cultural communication, assessment, and creating a multicultural environment) of the CDAI, in regards to their race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, number of years teaching experience, and experience with or exposure to multicultural educational training.

Domain one involved teacher beliefs about having a culture different from some of the children they serve and preferring to work with children and parents with similar cultures. According to the literature, most prospective teachers have had little experience with cultural diversity (Nieto, 2000). The literature also suggest that most teachers have

concerns about working with diverse student populations and need to examine their beliefs, broaden their knowledge, and develop abilities for relating to students from diverse cultures (Manning, 2000; Moore, 2007; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2006).

The researcher found that there was no significant difference in the extent of cultural awareness between the teacher groups in domain two, culturally diverse families. Certified, in-service teachers had comparable levels of cultural awareness with respect to culturally diverse families. The data revealed that teacher participants believe in becoming acquainted with culturally diverse families at the beginning of their interaction and including family views of school and society in the school's yearly program planning. DiMartino (1989) ascertains that teachers need to be aware of cultural differences and recognize that not everyone will share the same values and beliefs. Teachers from this survey are in favor of DiMartino's (1989) beliefs. In addition to that, teachers believe that they should have an understanding of children's home life, such as: the language spoken in the home, who constitutes the family living in the home, and what beliefs and practices are important to the family (Dixon & Fraser, 1986).

In relation to domain three, there was not a significant difference in the extent of cultural diversity awareness between the teacher groups. White and Black teachers, male and female, had similar levels of cultural diversity awareness concerning their beliefs about the instructional practices for non-English speaking students, as well as those who use non-standard English. Likewise, teachers with different levels of education and various years teaching experience had similar levels of cultural diversity awareness in domain three. All teacher groups, whether with or without exposure to multicultural

education training, felt that English should be taught as a second language to non-English speaking students as part of the school's curriculum, which is a dimension of cultural diversity awareness. By federal mandate, schools are required to identify students from non-English-speaking homes and determine, by formal assessment, whether the students need special linguistic or instructional help in school (Fillmore, 1983). Teachers must assist non-English speaking students to build literacy, develop written expression ability, and enhance English language growth (Gersten, 1996). Teacher participants' responses indicated their support of and compliance to federal mandates; however, the literature contradicts their responses, reporting that non-English speaking students, even when taught and tested in their own language (Spanish), still score at the thirty-seventh percentile.

In relation to domain four, assessment, there was not a significant difference in the extent of cultural diversity awareness between teacher groups. All teacher groups, categorized by race, gender, level of education, number of years teaching experience, level of education, and exposure to or non-exposure to multicultural education training, had comparable levels of cultural diversity awareness in domain four. All teacher groups indicated having the lowest level of cultural diversity awareness in this domain, meaning that teachers have a lack of belief about providing fair assessment systems (Stobart, 2005). According to Stobart (2005), fair assessment systems, unlike traditional standardized testing, refrain from assessing students based on "mainstream" standards. Teachers in this study revealed that they are apt to refer students for testing based on cultural and/or language differences. Providing alternative assessment systems can allow these teachers, and others, to do more than assign grades, but assist with exploring how to

improve student learning and monitor student progress (Division of Instructional Innovation and Assessment, 2007). Teachers did not demonstrate understanding that traditional standardized testing is typically used for measuring student progress, for accountability, classification purposes, and reporting procedures; nevertheless, the blanket use of traditional test measures needs to be reconsidered for use with the growing number of culturally diverse students and students who are English Language Learners (Spinelli, 2008).

The researcher found that there was no significant difference in the extent of cultural diversity awareness between teacher groups in domain five, creating a multicultural environment. Teachers had high levels of cultural diversity awareness in this domain. Teachers believe that they should create equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, social-class, and cultural groups, which is critical in multicultural learning environments (Banks, 2000). Teacher participants also believe that culture deeply influences the way children learn (Cabello & Burstein, 1995); therefore, they make the effort to ensure that classroom instruction is conducted in a manner that is responsive to their students' home culture. Additionally, teacher beliefs are parallel to the beliefs of Villegas and Lucas (2002), who believe that teachers should plan and deliver culturally responsive instruction to meet the needs of all learners, and provide opportunities for students to share cultural differences in the learning environment.

Conclusions

The researcher analyzed the findings from this study to conclude:

1. Certified, in-service (practicing) elementary teachers are culturally aware in five domains: general cultural awareness, culturally diverse families, cross-

cultural communication, assessment, and creating a multicultural environment.

2. Practicing elementary teachers mostly believe it is important to identify the ethnic group of the children they serve, and they are not uncomfortable in settings with people with dissimilar cultures and beliefs.
3. Practicing elementary teachers believe that teaching English as a second language should be part of the school curriculum. Teachers also believe that children should be corrected, with explanations and models, when non-standard English is used.
4. Practicing elementary teachers believe least in making adaptations to standardized test to accommodate learning differences between students in fear that doing so does not allow adequate peer comparisons.
5. The extent of cultural diversity awareness is not related to gender, level of education, or number of years teaching experience.
6. Teachers who are exposed to multicultural education are no more culturally aware than teachers who are not exposed to multicultural education.
7. Teachers who teach in Distinguished Title I schools may have more cultural diversity awareness than teachers who teach in schools where students are underachieving and AYP is not met.

Implications

This study indicated that practicing (certified, in-service) elementary teachers in Georgia have cultural diversity awareness, as measured by the CDAI, in five domains: general cultural awareness, culturally diverse families, cross-cultural communication,

assessment, and creating a multicultural environment. However, in-service teacher participants demonstrated that their lowest level of cultural awareness is in domain four, assessment. This implies that there is a need for training teachers how to provide fair assessment systems that consider students' cultural and language differences.

Furthermore there is a need to train teachers how to accommodate students with cultural and linguistic differences to deescalate teachers' choosing to refer students for evaluations to determine learning difficulties based on their cultural or language differences alone.

The extent of cultural diversity awareness between the teacher groups did not vary by demographic variables including race, gender, level of education, number of years teaching, and experience with or no experience with multicultural education, in domains two through five of the CDAI. This indicates that certified, in-service teachers in Middle Georgia school districts have satisfactory measures of cultural diversity awareness in regards to being mindful of cultural diverse families, practicing cross-cultural communication skills, providing appropriate assessment systems, and creating multicultural learning environments. Practicing teachers in Middle Georgia are not in need of multicultural training aimed to establish cultural diversity, but should maintain and enhance their cultural diversity awareness throughout their professional practice. This can be done by participating in professional development activities that focus on creating and maintaining a multicultural learning environment. Teachers can participate in book studies, enroll in collegiate courses, or visit other classrooms to observe teachers who demonstrate cultural responsive practices.

Recommendations

A quantitative study afforded the researcher an opportunity to avoid subjectivity in the study. By employing a quantitative method, the researcher was able to collect data using a survey instrument and develop generalizations relying heavily upon statistical results. The researcher recommends that the design of future studies include a mixed method, in which both quantitative and qualitative approaches are conducted. The quantitative approach, according to method expert, Creswell (2003) incorporates interviews to experiments as a manipulation check and perhaps as a way to discuss directly the issues under investigation and tap into participants' perspectives. A researcher may observe teachers in their classrooms, and examine teacher-student interaction in order to compare teacher responses to their actual behavior. A qualitative design in a study such as this one can assist with substantiating validity.

The use of the Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory (CDAI) as a preliminary indicator for measuring the extent of cultural diversity awareness of certified, in-service elementary teachers was utilized by the researcher. Future studies need to consider using more than one reliable and valid instrument for data collection. A particular instrument to consider is the Beliefs about Diversity Scales (BADDS). The BADDS measures beliefs and attitudes in the following areas: (a) race, (b) ability, (c) social class, (d) gender, (e) sexual orientation, (f) language and immigration, and (g) multicultural education. This instrument allows for measuring teacher beliefs about more diverse factors among student populations. Additionally, the 39-item instrument includes 16 items that measure teachers' personal beliefs about diversity and 23 items that measure teachers' professional beliefs about diversity.

The literature supports that the teacher population is becoming more monocultural, White and female, while the student population is becoming more culturally diverse. The literature maintains that cultural discontinuity between White teachers and minority students affects student achievement; therefore the researcher targeted schools with monocultural (White, female) faculty and diverse student groups. During the study, the researcher discovered schools where the teacher population was majority Black, while the student population was majority White and Hispanic. An investigation into cultural discontinuity in this aspect is recommended for future studies.

This study was conducted in distinguished, Title I elementary schools, meaning that students in the selected schools are achieving and demonstrating success. I recommend that this study be conducted in elementary schools, with similar teacher-student populations, where students are underachieving. Furthermore, I recommend this study be conducted in secondary educational settings to determine the extent of cultural diversity awareness of secondary teachers in Georgia.

Concluding Thoughts

Based on the researcher's experiences, lived and read, the researcher began this process with some bias towards the subject under study. The researcher was made aware that the teaching force was becoming more monocultural while the student population continued to become more culturally diverse. Furthermore, the lack of student achievement among minority students had been linked to cultural mismatch or cultural discontinuity. Researchers indicated that a factor for the under achievement of culturally diverse students included monocultural teachers' lack of knowledge base, low levels of expectations, and misinterpretation of such students' cultural patterns. This concept

motivated the researcher to launch an investigation to determine the extent of cultural diversity awareness of certified, in-service teachers in Georgia classrooms.

During the study, the researcher began to shift paradigms as more studies were analyzed and data was collected for this particular study. The researcher had assumed, based on experience and previous literature, that teachers would demonstrate having low levels of cultural diversity awareness. As the data was collected and analyzed, the researcher began to think that a significant difference would be found between teachers based on their years experience and whether or not they had experience with or exposure to multicultural education courses and/or training. The researcher assumed that teachers with 20+ years experiences would have lower levels of cultural diversity awareness because more than likely, during their collegiate studies, multicultural education courses were not offered. Furthermore, the researcher presumed that teachers who had experienced multicultural education courses/training would have statistically significant higher levels of cultural diversity awareness. That was not determined by the researcher during this investigation.

Also, during the study, the researcher thought about the fact that the data collected was self-reported data from teachers in Distinguished Title I schools. Perhaps these teachers have been socialized to be culturally aware teachers, meaning that these teachers have learned from each other through collaboration about the importance of identifying different ethnic groups of the students they serve. It is possible that these teachers have been trained and/or molded to meet the needs of diverse learners by creating multicultural learning environments.

After conducting the study, the researcher realizes that there is no significant difference in the extent of cultural diversity awareness between teacher groups. The researcher believes that teachers should continue their professional practices with the idea that changes in the student population will continue; student groups will become more and more diverse. Teachers should maintain cultural diversity awareness and seek ways to enhance their awareness to meet the needs of all students. Teachers should be provided professional development opportunities that promote general cultural awareness, strategies for interacting with culturally diverse families, cross-cultural communication skills, implementing fair assessment systems and creating multicultural learning environments to ensure student success.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

IRB Approval Document

Georgia Southern University
Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs
Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Phone: 912-478-0843 Veazey Hall 2021

P.O. Box 8005

Fax: 912-478-0719 IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu Statesboro, GA 30460

To: Sohmer Evans Collins
650 St. Andrews Drive
Jackson, GA 30233

CC: Charles E. Patterson
Associate Vice President for Research

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Date: February 2, 2009

Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After a review of your proposed research project numbered: **H09179** and titled “**Cultural Diversity Awareness of Elementary Teachers in Georgia Classrooms**”, it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.

This IRB approval is in effect for one year from the date of this letter. If at the end of that time, there have been no changes to the research protocol; you may request an extension of the approval period for an additional year. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, **whether or not it is believed to be related to the study**, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator **prior** to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of

your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,
Eleanor Haynes
Compliance Officer

APPENDIX B

Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory

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

A. Demographic Information

Race/Ethnicity

- White
- Black
- Hispanic
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- American Indian/Alaska Native

Gender

- Male
- Female

Level of Education

- Bachelor's
- Master's
- Education Specialist
- Doctor's

Years Teaching Experience

- Less than 3 years
- 3 to 9 years
- 10 to 20 years
- Over 20 years

Did your collegiate program include a Multicultural Education course?

- Yes No

Have you had other training in Multicultural Education?

- Yes No

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

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	SD	D	N	A	SA
I Believe...					
1.					SD D N A SA
2.					SD D N A SA
3.					SD D N A SA
4.					SD D N A SA
5.					SD D N A SA
6.					SD D N A SA
7.					SD D N A SA
8.					SD D N A SA
9.					SD D N A SA
10.					SD D N A SA
11.					SD D N A SA
12.					SD D N A SA
13.					SD D N A SA
14.					SD D N A SA

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

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
SD	D	N	A	SA
I Believe...				
15.	that there are times when the use of non-standard English should be ignored.			SD D N A SA
16.	in a society with as many racial groups as the USA, I would expect and accept the use of ethnic jokes or phrases by some children.			SD D N A SA
17.	that there are times when racial statements should be ignored.			SD D N A SA
18.	a child should be referred for testing if learning difficulties appear to be due to cultural differences and/or language.			SD D N A SA
19.	adaptations in standardized assessments to be questionable since they alter reliability and validity.			SD D N A SA
20.	translating a standardized achievement or intelligence test to the child's dominant language gives the child an added advantage and does not allow for peer comparison.			SD D N A SA
21.	parents know little about assessing their own children.			SD D N A SA
22.	that the teaching of ethnic customs and traditions is NOT the responsibility of public school programs or personnel.			SD D N A SA
23.	it is my responsibility to provide opportunities for children to share cultural differences in foods, dress, family life, and/or beliefs.			SD D N A SA
24.	Individualized Education Program meetings or program planning should be scheduled for the convenience of the parent.			SD D N A SA
25.	I make adaptations in programming to accommodate the different cultures as my enrollment changes.			SD D N A SA
26.	the displays and frequently used materials within my setting show at least three different ethnic groups or customs.			SD D N A SA
27.	in a regular rotating schedule for job assignments which includes each child within my setting.			SD D N A SA
28.	one's knowledge of a particular culture should affect one's expectations of the children's performance.			SD D N A SA