

Diverse Learners and Teacher Education: A Sociocultural Approach

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Linfield College

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Key Terms

- Sociocultural: being aware of students' backgrounds, personal histories, and that each student is “a product of the social, cultural, political, and historical forces that are present in any given time and place” (Marsh, 2005, p. 339)
- Diverse Learners: often defined as English language learners, students in special education, students in poverty and students who are considered to be minorities

Research Questions

- What are the needs of diverse learners in Oregon?
- What are the hiring preferences of school district administrators in Oregon?
- How are colleges and universities in Oregon preparing teachers of diverse learners?
- How do current programs meet the needs of college/university students, in light of *The College of 2020* report and research on current college/university student demographics, preferences, learning styles, and other needs?
- How can a multicultural education course for preservice teachers be redesigned with a sociocultural approach that takes into account all of the above and engages college students in multiliteracies—in a way that is measurable?

Literature Reviews

- Sociocultural teaching (including culturally responsive teaching)
- English language learners
- Special education
- Students in poverty

Demographics

Examined demographics of PK-12 students in United States and Oregon:

- Nation of origin
- Socioeconomic status
- Immigration
- Achievement
- Attendance
- Post PK-12 education

Hiring Preferences and Programs

Examined hiring preferences in Oregon

- District job vacancies
- Surveyed all Yamhill County administrators

Examined OACTE teacher education programs

- Endorsements, practica
- Online, face-to-face, hybrid

Surveys

Surveys: How well prepared are new teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners?

- Yamhill County administrators
- Linfield graduates
- Current Linfield students
- Social service agencies

Student Benefits: Course Redesign

Redesign of EDUC 302 Multicultural Education

- Meaningful, purposeful service-learning component
- Student engagement with multiliteracies (which, in turn, will engage *their* students)
- More time and attention to special education and general differentiation strategies
- Informative pre and post surveys
- Technology syllabus: blogs, Webspiration, Wordle, Voicethread, two-minute videos, SMARTBoard

CBO Placements

- ELL and special education classrooms
- America Reads
- Kids on the Block in low SES schools
- Mentoring “at risk” youth at Duniway MS
- Mentoring at McMinnville HS with Public Health
- Creating curriculum and teaching life skills at YCAP Transitional Housing Shelter
- Parole picnic (research team)

Faculty Benefits: Teaching and Scholarship

- Data collection (summer 2010 and semester pre and post surveys) lead to ongoing, meaningful changes in course
- Connects future teachers with communities
- Course redesign means Linfield teachers will be better prepared to meet the needs of diverse learners
- Summer 2010 research serves as launch for 10-year research agenda
- Immediate next step: Interviews with community agencies about how well schools meet the needs of diverse learners (summer surveys showed large difference of opinion between school administrators and community agencies)