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EDUCATION FOR DIVERSITY IN INITIAL TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMMES: A COMPARATIVE INTERNATIONAL STUDY

María-Cristina Cardona-Moltó¹
Renáta Tichá²
Brian H. Abery²

¹ University of Alicante, Alicante, Spain - cristina.cardona@ua.es

² University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, MN, USA
{tich0018; abery001}@umn.edu

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Despite the growing diversity in school population, many teacher educators fail incorporating diversity-related content into the courses they teach. As a result, numerous preservice teachers lack quality learning opportunities to become well versed on issues of diversity in meaningful ways. This article reports the results of an international study which explores preservice teacher perceptions of opportunity to learning to teach in diverse inclusive classrooms. A questionnaire was used to document the perceptions of a cohort of kindergarten and elementary student teachers from Spain and the US. Results indicated that strong international differences existed in the perceptions of respondents towards opportunity to learn theoretical aspects of teaching for diversity (*e.g.*, know intervention strategies to meet student diverse educational needs), opportunity to learning to teach inclusively (*e.g.*,

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learn how to develop an inclusive curriculum), and opportunity to observe and analyse practical aspects of diversity teaching (e.g., conduct diversity-related field-work), all these differences favouring US respondents. The results highlight the need for increased attention to teaching diversity in preservice teacher education programmes. Implications for ongoing development of initial teacher preparation are discussed within the context of improving educators and student teachers' training for diversity. Key words: Teacher education for diversity, opportunity to learning to teach, inclusive education, preservice teachers' perceptions, international higher education.

1 Introduction

Preparing teachers for diversity and inclusion is currently a global concern. Due to a number of socio-economic shifts, elementary and secondary classrooms around the world are becoming more diverse and it is expected that such diversity will increase. Acknowledgment of the changing school population demographics has resulted in a great deal of attention focused on how to best prepare preservice teachers to respond to the diverse educational needs of all students in the classrooms. Additionally, the inclusive school movement has also been an impetus for change, not only in curriculum and instruction but also in the roles of teachers and teacher educators. Current policy on inclusion (e.g., the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities [UN, 2006, art. 24], or the No Child Left Behind Act [NCLB, 2001]) call for highly qualified teacher educators and mandate that all learners, including those with disabilities, make adequate yearly progress. Also, in the conclusions and recommendations of the 48th session of the International Conference on Education held by UNESCO (2008), it is stated that policy makers should acknowledge the nature of inclusive education as "... an ongoing process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination." (UNESCO, 2008, p. 3). Such elevated expectations have a profound impact on preservice teacher preparation internationally, which makes teacher education issues high on the educational policy agenda not only across Europe but worldwide.

In the European context, the OECD report *Teachers Matter* (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2005) recognises that the demands on schools and teachers are becoming more complex as society now expects schools to deal effectively with different languages and student backgrounds, to be sensitive to culture and gender issues, and to promote tolerance and social cohesion to respond effectively to disadvantaged students and those with learning and behavioral difficulties. Recognising this increasing complexity, in May 2009, the European Council of Education Ministers agreed on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training for the period after 2010: *the Education and Training 2020 Agenda* (Council of the

European Union, 2009). In the context of this framework, the OECD Center for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) project, *Teacher Training for Diversity* (OECD, 2010), focused on how teachers were prepared for the increasing classroom diversity, and aimed to identify the common challenges which European countries are currently experiencing in their teacher education programmes. The study resulted in no clear answers to essential questions. National responses and the priority given to diversity issues in teacher education programmes seemed to depend to a large extent on history and tradition, and they were also determined by the scale of the challenge and the perceived relevance of the topic in specific contexts. For this reason, one of the difficulties encountered in reviewing the literature is that there are different ideas regarding what counts as “diversity training” and what the intended outcomes should be.

To equip all teachers to meet the challenges connected with an increasingly diverse student population, several countries have included some diversity training in initial teacher education. However, the OECD (2010) and other studies (e.g., Severiens *et al.*, 2014) emphasise the importance of core teacher education on diversity if teachers are to be effective as teachers and all children are to achieve. The OECD particularly insists on the fact that diversity training should be part of the core pedagogical training of all teachers and should be included in all teacher training subjects at all stages of teachers’ development.

Teaching diversity has also been a consistent theme in teacher education programmes across the United States (Miller *et al.*, 2000), yet most institutions of higher education have struggled to incorporate standards for implementing diversity coursework into their certification programmes. In the case of multicultural training, Evans, Torrey, and Newton (1997) found that 82% of states require some level of multicultural or diversity training for teacher preparation programmes. However, only 37% of these states have a specific requirement as part of gaining teacher certification. Most teacher education programmes infuse multicultural and diversity education into traditional coursework. Other attempt to improve social, cultural, and linguistically responsive teacher education appealing to university faculty to integrate diversity into their courses when, in reality, many faculty in content areas do not feel they are prepared to do that, leaving courses on diversity education as electives. Thus, specific requirements for diversity training vary greatly among states, with some having more rigorous or meaningful criteria than others.

In efforts to increase teacher quality, coursework related to teaching diversity has increased over recent years; nevertheless, the impact of this increase on teacher practices has received little attention. The majority of research in this area provides programme descriptions without empirical evidence regarding long-term effects on preservice teachers and student outcomes (Booker *et al.*, 2016; Mayhew & Grunwald, 2006; Milem, 2001; Sciame-Giesecke *et al.*,

2009).

A few studies have indicated that effective diversity education courses should also provide an opportunity for a close look at the educator's own cultural biases and attitudes as it relates to the individual's culture as well as those of all the children to be encountered. Howard's (2001) seminal research looking at students' perceptions of culturally-relevant teaching indicates that students can tell if a teacher is comfortable with cultures and diversity different from his or her own. Diversity comfort is demonstrated by the amount of individualized authentic experiences educators provide students to engage them in academic content. However, there is a growing concern that teachers are not prepared or able to apply the national standards of academic excellence in an equitable manner to all students (National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education, NCATE, 2010-2012; SMECS, 2007a; 2007b). In the US, a report from the National Center for Education Statistics (US Department of Education, 1999) found that only 20% of teachers expressed confidence in working with children from diverse backgrounds.

To understand the factors that contribute to teacher education resistance to incorporate diversity-related content into their course materials, a series of studies have investigated the effects of racial climate variables and faculty characteristics (Hurtado, 2001; Maruyama, & Moreno, 2000; Milem, 2001). Hurtado (2001) analyzed data from the 1989-1990 Faculty Survey administered by UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute of over 16,000 faculty at 159 selective predominantly White institutions across the US. Findings suggested that women were significantly more likely than men to require reading on racial/ethnic or gender issues in their courses. Additionally, African American faculty were the most likely to report having required readings on gender or race/ethnicity in their courses, while Asian American faculty were the least likely to have done so.

In another study, designed to assess university faculty views on the value of diversity on campus and in the classroom, Maruyama and Moreno (2000) administered the *Faculty Classroom Diversity Questionnaire* to a representative national sample of 1,500 college and university faculty. Results showed that the majority of faculty valued diversity in the classroom for its role in helping students to achieve the goals of a college education, and in helping faculty members to develop new perspectives on their own teaching and research. However, the majority of these faculty members also reported making no changes in their classroom practices. In fact, although faculty in this study reported being well-prepared and comfortable teaching diverse groups, only about one third of them actually raised issues of diversity in the classroom. These results differed as a function of the faculty's professional characteristics and demographics. Senior faculty members were less positive about the value

of diversity and less likely to address issues of diversity than faculty of lower Rank. Faculty of color and female faculty viewed the climate for diversity as less positive, reported the benefits of diversity as more positive, felt better prepared to deal with diversity, and were more likely to address issues of diversity than their White and male colleagues.

Milem (2001) conducted the most comprehensive study of factors that contributed to faculty's likelihood of incorporating diversity-related content in course materials. He examined how a series of demographic, professional, and perception-based factors affected faculty members' inclusion of readings on the experiences of racial and ethnic groups in the classroom. Results showed that only 14% of faculty reported incorporating diversity-related content into their courses. Overall, factors predicting curricular inclusion of diversity-related content included academic discipline, gender, race, perceived institutional commitment to diversity, and faculty interest in research and teaching. Similar to findings from studies by Hurtado (2001) and Maruyama and Moreno (2000), Milem's findings showed that faculty of color and women were more eager than men and White educators to report that they incorporate reading on racial issues in their classes.

In summary, although the issue of diversity is contained in standards for teaching (NCATE, 2010-2012; SMECS, 2007a; 2007b), in practice, it is inconsistently and often ineffectively addressed in teacher education programmes. Specific requirements for diversity preparation vary greatly among countries and within countries, with some having more rigorous or meaningful criteria than others (OECD, 2010). Clearly, institutions of higher education have had difficulty incorporating training for diversity in their teacher education programmes. While some researchers and universities claim that they are adequately educating preservice teachers for diversity (Bodur, 2010), other are not responding conveniently to the requirements of diversity issues (Ball & Tyson, 2011) with the consequence that programme graduates are entering the profession without adequate knowledge, attitudes, and skills to teach diverse students (Benton-Borghi & Chang, 2011).

The clear disconnection between teaching diversity and legislative mandates prompted us to explore the current practices of teacher educators for preparing preservice teachers for diversity at a comparative level. Because of the limited research on the effectiveness and impact of diversity training, the purpose of the current investigation was to ascertain to what extent teacher educators give opportunity to learning to teach sensitively and inclusively through the subjects they teach. For the purpose of this study, effectiveness was defined as student teachers self-perceptions on how much (*none, brief, in depth, extensive*) opportunity educators give them to develop knowledge, beliefs, and skills to become well versed to work with diverse learners. A survey methodology was

employed to address the following research questions:

1. How much opportunity student teachers have during course-work to learn diversity-related knowledge-based?
2. How much opportunity student teachers have to learning to teach inclusively?
3. How much opportunity student teachers have to observe and analyse practical aspects of diversity teaching?

The study also looked for differences in student teacher perceptions as a function of socio-cultural context.

2 Methodology

The study was intended as an initial investigation to shed light on what faculty members are actually teaching and doing in their classrooms to prepare student teachers to work in diverse educational settings.

2.1 *Participants and context*

The investigation took place in the context of two different teacher education institutions (one significantly more diverse than the other), located in Spain and in the US. The study was designed within the framework of a research project *Teacher Training for Diversity and Inclusion* led by the University of Alicante (UA), Alicante, Spain, in partnership with the College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota (UMN), Twin Cities.

The participants were college students enrolled in teacher education programmes at these two four-year institutions. Both institutions offer accredited teacher education programmes designed to prepare teacher candidates for K-12 setting. The UA Faculty of Education has a total student enrollment of 3,426 undergraduates (27% males and 73% females), 98% Spaniards majoring in Kindergarten, Elementary and Physical Education (UA, 2016). The UMN College of Education enrollment is of 2,437 undergraduate students (40% males and 60% females) majoring in Early Childhood, Elementary, and Special Education (UMN, 2016). According to data recorded in the Office of Institutional Research for Fall 2016, the demographic composition of UMN College of Education was 0.4% American-Indian, 13.1% Asian, 9.4% African-American, 4.8% Hispanic, 6.9% non-resident Alien, 64.7% White, 3.2% multi-ethnic, and 0.2% Unknown. This data is similar to that of the sample.

Students entering teacher education programmes at each of these universities are not required to enroll in a state-mandated course that focuses on issues relating to diversity and/or inclusive education, however, teacher education

programmes at both institutions are committed to providing teacher candidates appropriate and sufficient knowledge, abilities, and dispositions to enable them to understand, accept, and embrace diversity and equity in the learning processes, as indicated in the Conceptual Framework of Programme Plans in their respective institutional Websites.

The sample for this study was identified using the data available from the University of Alicante Office of Statistics (UA, 2016) and the University of Minnesota Office of Institutional Research (UMN, 2016). The sample included a two-stage sampling design: (1) identification of the number of potential preservice teachers in the survey; and (2) selection of respondents from each institution. Based on an analysis of the university catalogs and programme sample plans by degree, we looked for the courses in which we could survey all the cohort. In doing so, we contacted with department heads who helped in identifying the courses and facilitating instructors' contact details. All the students in the mentioned degrees of the 2016 academic year were selected and solicited for participation in the study. The total enrollment data by university included 707 student teachers at the UA and 125 at UMN. Therefore, the final sample included 832 students teachers. A total of 579 usable surveys were completed and returned, representing approximately a 70% return rate.

Table 1
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA BY SUBSAMPLE

	UA Sample					UMN Sample				
	Min.- Max.	M	SD	f	%	Min.- Max.	M	SD	F	%
Age	22-52	22.23	3.76			19-57	23.09	5.20		
Gender										
Female				378	79.6				91	87.5
Male				94	19.8				13	12.5
NA				3	0.6				0	0
Ethnicity										
Spaniard				466	98.1					
Other				9	1.9					
African-American									3	2.9
Asian									12	11.5
European-Americ.									68	65.4
Hispanic/Latino									4	3.8
Native American/PI									17	16.3
Degree										
Early Childhood				204	42.9				8	7.7
Elementary				271	57.1				52	50.0
Special Education				0	0				44	42.3

Table 1 summarises the demographics characteristics of respondents. As can be observed, respondents were pursuing a degree on Early Childhood (25%), Elementary (54%), and Special Education (21%). The sample of the UA was composed predominantly of Spaniards (98%), whereas the one of Minnesota of European-Americans (65.4%). The distribution of the entire sample was

81.40% female and 18.60 male ($n = 475$, 82% from UA sample, age range of 20-52, $M = 22.23$ and $SD = 3.76$); and $n = 104$, 18% from UMN sample, age range of 19-57, $M = 23.09$ and $SD = 5.20$).

2.2 Instrument

The *Survey on Opportunity to Learning to Teach in Diverse Inclusive Settings* (SOLTiDIS) was developed by the principal researchers in 2015 and was pilot tested with a select number of experts and preservice teachers from the same participating institutions during the 2015 academic year. The pilot test included reviewer comments regarding face, content and construct validity. Adjustments were made to the instrument based on feedback from the field and results of the pilot data.

The SOLTiDIS included three sections. Section I: About this Survey; Section II: Demographics; and Section III: the *Opportunity to Learning to Teach in Diverse Inclusive Settings Rating Scale* which include 16 items which assessed along a 4-point continuum (1 = *None*, 2 = *Brief*, 3 = *In depth*, 4 = *Extensive*) the extent to which educators give opportunity for preservice teachers through their course-work to learn strategies to deal with student diversity in inclusive classrooms. Section III of the survey measure a variety of different constructs relating to diversity (e.g., intervention strategies to work on issues of diversity in meaningful ways; specific philosophical, curricular and instructional issues and practices on learning to teach inclusively; and critical reflection on expert teaching to develop practical skills. The survey instrument has been tested again with the sample of this study for internal consistency and construct validity.

Factor analyses were conducted by subsamples to investigate the factorial structure and invariance of the scale in each setting. Principal Components Analysis was used, with a Varimax rotation using the criterion of eigenvalues > 1.0 and item loadings greater than .45. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were acceptable ($p < .000$) for both samples. A three-factor solution with 16 items was viewed as a better representation of the SOLTiDIS scale for both cohorts. The three factors explained 61.41% of the variance (55.34% and 59.91%, Spanish and US samples, respectively). The first factor, with seven items, focused on the theoretical aspects and intervention strategies for teaching in diverse classrooms and explained 45.42% of the variance (37.98% and 37.94% Spanish and US samples, respectively); the second, with six items, related to specific issues to learning to teach inclusively and explained 9.02% of the variance (9.40% and 12.77% Spanish and US samples, respectively); lastly, the third factor (three items) measured opportunities to observe and analyse practical aspects of teaching for diversity and explained 6.97% of the variance

(7.96% and 9.19% Spanish and US samples, respectively). As a result of the factor analysis, one item was eliminated because it failed to load in any factor or loaded in multiple factors simultaneously. The factor structure was found the same for both samples with similar factor loadings in each factor, which confirm the invariant nature of the construct. In addition, the full-scale showed good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha.917 for the whole sample, and.887 and.884, for the Spanish and US samples, respectively).

2.3 Procedure

Ethics approval in accordance with university requirements were obtained from both institutions prior the survey administration. The survey instrument was administered to several student teacher groups (in their second/third year of study) of each university cohort during class time at a time and date arranged by both researchers and instructors. Students who were present in the class on the day of survey anonymously and voluntarily completed the survey after the informed consent had been granted. Before the survey administration, information about the research project's goals and procedures was read to participants. People who did not wish to participate returned blank surveys or left the room. After completion, the surveys were returned to the researcher present in class during the survey administration. All data collected was aggregated and kept confidential.

2.4 Data analysis

We performed descriptive, exploratory, and comparative analyses using SPSS, version 22, following three steps. First, frequencies and percentages were used to report demographic data. Second, data reduction techniques (exploratory factor analysis) were used to identify the scale factor structure. Third, means, standard deviations, and inferential statistics (*t* tests for independent samples) were calculated for each item of the SOLTiDIS scale by factors to describe how the respondents perceived opportunity to learning to teach in diverse environments, and compare if their perceptions varied as a function of university context. In addition, Cohen's *d* for *t* test (independent samples) was also calculated to measure effect size. Data was segregated by institution to facilitate the analysis. All statistical analyses were computed with an *alpha* level of.05.

3 Results

Results are presented structured according to the research questions addressed in this study.

3.1 Opportunity to learn diversity-related knowledge-based for teaching in diverse classrooms

The overall respondents perceptions of opportunity to learn diversity-related knowledge and intervention strategies to work in meaningful ways in diverse classrooms were slightly below the neutral midpoint of the scale ($M = 2.49$, $SD = 0.73$) (see Table 2) for Spanish respondents, and clearly above the midpoint for US respondents ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 0.83$). Note that the scale ranged from 1 (*None opportunity*) to 4 (*Extensive opportunity*) indicating these results that while the Spanish student teachers perceived they had *brief* opportunities during course work to learn how to work with diverse learner in inclusive environments, US respondents believed that the opportunities they had were *intensive enough* to do so. In fact, 53% of the Spanish respondents reported none/brief opportunity to learn theoretical and intervention aspects of diversity while a 81% of the US respondents rated the opportunities for them as quite extensive.

Table 2
OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN KNOWLEDGE-BASED FOR TEACHING IN DIVERSE CLASSROOMS:
DESCRIPTIVES, FREQUENCIES, AND COMPARISON OF MEANS BY SUBSAMPLE

	M/SD	UA Sample				M/SD	UMN Sample				t	p
		NO	BR	ID	EX		NO	BR	ID	EX		
1. Know intervention strategies to meet student diverse educational needs.	2.6/0.7	2	45	45	8	3.2/0.7	0	13	54	33	-8.3	.000
2. Propose appropriate intervention strategies.	2.4/0.7	6	54	36	4	3.1/0.8	3	17	47	33	-9.6	.000
3. Acquire knowledge and use strategies to motivate students.	2.7/0.8	4	40	41	15	3.3/0.7	0	15	45	41	-7.2	.000
4. Know/manage analysis and behavior modification strategies.	2.7/0.8	4	37	45	13	3.2/0.7	1	14	53	32	-6.6	.000
5. Develop skills to collaborate with parents/professionals.	2.2/0.8	16	54	25	5	2.9/0.8	4	24	46	26	-9.0	.000
6. Gain a better understanding of schools, classrooms, and students' diverse needs.	2.4/0.8	12	46	33	4	3.2/0.8	3	15	46	36	-8.8	.000
7. Identify specific educational needs and make appropriate referrals.	2.5/0.7	5	41	48	6	2.9/0.8	4	22	51	23	-5.2	.000
<i>Total average</i>	2.5/0.7	7	16	39	8	3.1/0.83	2	17	49	32		

All responses are on a scale of 1 to 4. The anchors are 1 = *None*; 2 = *Brief*; 3 = *In depth*; 4 = *Extensive Opportunity*

Table 2 also shows respondents' scores on individual items. Spanish respondents reported that they had more opportunities to learn knowledge to manage behavior modification strategies ($M = 2.66$, $SD = 0.76$) or acquire techniques to motivate students ($M = 2.65$, $SD = 0.78$) than for developing

skills to collaborate with parents and professionals ($M = 2.19$, $SD = 0.76$). On the other hand, although US respondents indicated that their opportunities for learning knowledge on diversity were clearly sufficient in all aspects considered, they reported having had less opportunity for developing skills to collaborate with parents and professionals ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 0.81$) and for identifying specific learner educational needs and make appropriate referrals ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 0.78$) than for motivating students ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.70$) or learning intervention strategies to meet students' diverse educational needs ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.65$).

Comparisons of average ratings on knowledge-based on diversity by country revealed statistically significant differences in opportunities to learn this kind of knowledge between Spanish and US respondents at.001 (see Table 2). US respondents perceived that they had significantly more opportunities to learn diversity-related knowledge than did the Spanish preservice teacher participants, differences that can be considered strong (average Cohen's d effect size of.793).

3.2 Opportunity to learning to teach inclusively

Survey participants' ratings of the opportunities to learning to teach inclusively are presented in Table 3. Again, Spanish respondents had more neutral ratings (around the midpoint of the scale which is 2.50) in all the six items that measure opportunity to learning to teach inclusively ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 0.78$) than US respondents ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 0.75$). Particularly, Spanish student teachers tended to agree that they had below average opportunities to design and learn how to develop an inclusive curriculum ($M = 2.35$, $SD = 0.70$), while US respondents perceived slightly above the neutral midpoint the opportunity for analysing and discussing educational laws and policies with regard diversity and inclusion ($M = 2.83$, $SD = 0.82$). The opportunity to learning the other skills of this domain was rated by US respondents as sufficiently intensive. Note that only a half of the Spanish respondents (54%) rated the opportunity to learning to teach inclusively as *in depth* or *extensive* while the vast majority (80%) of the US counterparts did so. In all cases, Spanish respondents rated significantly lower the opportunity to learning to teach inclusively than did US respondents ($p < .01$), with strong effect sizes for Items 8, 9, 10 (average Cohen's d effect size of.946), and medium or small for Items 11, 12, and 13, respectively (average Cohen's d effect size of.470).

Table 3
OPPORTUNITY LEARNING TO TEACH INCLUSIVELY: DESCRIPTIVES, FREQUENCIES, AND
COMPARISON OF MEANS BY SUBSAMPLES

	M/SD	UA Sample				M/SD	UMN Sample				t	p
		NO	BR	ID	EX		NO	BR	ID	EX		
8. Design and learn how to develop an inclusive curriculum.	2.4/0.7	8	53	34	5	3.0/0.7	3	18	54	25	-8.3	.000
9. Encourage participation of all students.	2.8/0.8	4	26	53	17	3.5/0.6	0	5	42	53	-8.3	.000
10. Adapt curriculum and teaching.	2.5/0.7	5	44	44	7	3.2/0.8	3	12	46	39	-8.7	.000
11. Assess authentic learning.	2.7/0.7	2	37	53	8	3.0/0.8	3	22	49	26	-4.3	.000
12. Analyse and discuss educational laws and policies on diversity and inclusion.	2.6/1.1	6	45	41	8	2.8/0.8	5	28	45	22	-2.4	.017
13. Review/discuss issues of quality, justice, equal opport.	2.6/0.8	6	38	46	10	3.1/0.8	3	18	43	36	-6.4	.000
Total average	2.6/0.8	5	41	45	9	3.1/0.8	3	17	47	33		

All responses are on a scale of 1 to 4. The anchors are 1 = *None*; 2 = *Brief*; 3 = *In depth*; 4 = *Extensive Opportunity*

3.3 Opportunity to observe and analyse practical aspects of teaching diversity

The Spanish and US student teachers' overall perception of opportunity to analyse expert teaching and develop practical skills in regards to diversity was brief or at low level ($M = 2.28$ and $M = 2.84$, respectively). The respondents' average ratings on this domain varied significantly across the three items (see Table 4). Respondents' perceptions of opportunity for conducting field-work focused on diversity ($p < .01$), observing and analysing expert teachers' performance ($p < .05$), and observing and analysing examples of good practices ($p < .01$) were significantly lower for Spanish preservice teacher respondents than for the US respondents.

As can be observed in Table 4, 63% of Spanish respondents vs. 29% of the US respondents reported none or brief opportunities to conduct field-work during their training period; almost half of the subsamples (42% vs. 41%) indicated lower opportunities to analyse expert teachers' performance, and 36% vs. 71% of the Spanish and US respondents, respectively, considered that the opportunities they had to analyse examples of good practice with regards to diversity and inclusion were quite extensive.

Comparison of item ratings in this domain revealed again that student teachers from Spain rated the opportunity to observe and analyse the practical aspects of teaching for diversity significantly lower than their counterparts in the US (Cohen's d ranged in this domain from .243 to .775, small for Item 15 and strong for Items 14 and 16).

This has been a consistent trend throughout the analysis of responses to each of the scale's subfactors.

Table 4
OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE AND ANALYSE PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF TEACHING FOR DIVERSITY:
DESCRIPTIVES, FREQUENCIES, AND COMPARISON OF MEANS BY SUBSAMPLES

		M/SD	UA Sample				M/SD	UMN Sample				T	p
			NO	BR	ID	EX		NO	BR	ID	EX		
14.	Conduct diversity-related field-work.	2.2/0.9	23	40	30	7	2.9/1.1	17	12	33	38	-6.2	.000
15.	Observe and analyse expert teachers' performance.	2.5/0.9	16	36	32	16	2.7/0.9	12	29	36	23	-2.3	.023
16.	Observe and analyse diversity-related examples of good practices.	2.2/0.9	22	42	29	7	2.9/0.9	10	19	44	27	-6.3	.000
Total average		2.3/0.9	20	40	30	10	2.8/1.0	13	20	38	29		

All responses are on a scale of 1 to 4. The anchors are 1 = *None*; 2 = *Brief*; 3 = *In depth*; 4 = *Extensive Opportunity*

Discussion and conclusion

Our main goal was to explore student teachers' perceptions of opportunity to learning to teach in diverse inclusive classrooms. Initially, a factor analysis was undertaken which revealed three domains of the construct: (1) Opportunity to learn theoretical aspects and knowledge-based for teaching in diverse settings; (2) Opportunity to learning to teach inclusively; and (3) Opportunity to observe and analyse practical aspects of sensitive teaching for diversity. These three domains are in line with the key areas of any process of instruction that emphasises learning to teach in effective and meaningful ways, in this case, for diversity.

Our results showed evidence of strong international differences in student teachers' perceptions of opportunity to learning to teach in diverse inclusive settings, with preservice teachers in Spain consistently reporting lower perceptions of opportunity than did their counterparts in the US. In terms of perceptions of opportunity to learn knowledge-based for teaching in diverse settings, the US student teachers reported significantly higher ratings of opportunity than Spaniards. These differences are, however, perplexing but comprehensible. In a previous study conducted under similar conditions, Cardona-Moltó (2017) compared the institutional sensitivity on diversity and its impact on teaching of preservice teachers from the same two colleges of education participating in this study and found that although 49% vs. 96% (Spanish and US preservice teachers) agreed that their college of education welcomes diversity only a third of the Spanish respondents believed that university departments are really compromise to diversity (35% vs. 80%). Moreover, only one-third and one-quarter (UA and UMN samples, respectively)

agreed/strongly agreed that their instructors did not change the way they teach to integrate diversity in their courses. This findings further support that of Maruyama and Moreno (2000) study who explored university faculty views from the US on the value of diversity and found that the majority of participants valued this aspect of the human differences as positive, but reported making no changes in their classroom practices.

With respect to opportunity to learning to teach inclusively and opportunity to observe and analyse the practical aspects of good teaching for diversity, ratings were considered low in the Spanish sample compared to the US sample. These results support previous studies conducted in Spain and the US (*e.g.*, Cardona-Moltó *et al.*, 2017; Mayhew & Grunwald, 2006), which identified a lack of programme coherence with the standard of diversity, as well as a lack of instructors' compromise on integrating diversity content into teaching. The findings of another study conducted in the US on factors contributing to faculty incorporation of diversity-related course content (Mayhew & Grunwald, 2006) are congruent with the notion that many US faculty members still do not integrate diversity-related materials into their course content, fact that contribute to understand why student teachers report to have little opportunity to learning to teach in diverse settings.

Possible explanations for the identified differences in perceptions of opportunity to learning to teach in diverse settings of Spanish and US respondents in this study refer to socio-cultural factors and experience with diversity. The UA and UMN samples differ in socio-cultural context, one is European and the other North-American. In addition, the UMN has a stronger tradition of diversity than the UA that only recently has began to experienced it. But possible explanations of the results should not refer only to cultural or contextual variables. The findings of this study clearly shows that when it comes to teaching diversity, differences may well be much more subtle than the mentioned, and that the prevailing cultural context in each individual country, region, state, or institution might prove to be a better context in which to frame the results. Therefore, caution needs to be taken when making assumptions about cultural context as an explanation for research findings in this area.

The data reveal potential areas of need concerning articulation of diversity and inclusion previously identified in the literature (*e.g.*, Darling-Hammond, 2017; Sciamé-Giesecke *et al.*, 2009) The findings clearly show that there is a need to (a) increase the coherence of study plans with the standard of diversity, (b) coordinate course requirements on the mandates of diversity and inclusion, (c) provide more faculty awareness of diverse learners, and (d) offer real opportunities for faculty practical teaming experiences and innovation on how to integrate diversity-related course content into their teaching. Also the findings reported here bridge the gap between past research concerning teacher

training and current challenges articulated in UN (2006), OECD (2010), and country mandates on standards on diversity.

This research is not exempt from limitations. The study was carried out at only two predominantly White TE institutions, being the samples one significantly lower than the other, so the findings may not generalize to other teacher education environments and/or student teachers samples. Also, survey data are self-report in nature, so future studies should implement an observational component to see if what students claim is happening or occurring in the classroom setting. Asking faculty to allow for observations of course sessions could provide an additional layer of information from which administrators can plan for future diversity programming (Sciame-Giesecke *et al.*, 2009).

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