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EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATORS WITH  
CULTURALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the graduate faculty of The University of Alabama at Birmingham,  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

2008

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2008

# EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATORS WITH CULTURALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY

DANIELLE RAE WALDREP

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

## ABSTRACT

With the consistent growth in ethnic diversity in schools, teachers had to learn at the university level or in professional development course how to educate ethnically diverse students. This study explored the phenomenon of educating English Language Learners in a Southeastern United States elementary school. Specifically, this study explored what strategies teachers used the child's culture as a strength in learning. I defined cultural diversity as not just linguistic differences rather cultural diversity encompasses the learning style of the student, previous educational experiences, cultural and linguistic differences.

A case study was completed to answer the following research question: The central question guiding this study was: How do teachers teach to their students' cultural diversity? More specifically the researcher sought to answer three sub-questions:

1. How do teachers describe the training they received to work with diverse students?
2. What were the teachers' beliefs regarding the cultures of the students?

3. What strategies were teachers using to educate ethnically diverse students in their classrooms?

Seven participants were purposefully selected based on the gate-keeper's recommendation. All of the participants that were recommended typified the characteristics needed to fully explore the phenomenon of teachers who teach ethnically diverse students. There were five Caucasian participants (i.e., one male and four females) and two African Americans participants (i.e., one male and one female) who participated in this study. Interviews, observations and participants' journals were the primary sources of data collected. The data provided rich, thick information that allowed the researcher to fully explore the phenomenon.

Data were collected from October 2007 until May 2008. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Participants were asked to review the interview transcripts for authentication. All the data were coded and themes developed. The themes were described in a narrative format and the findings were then used to answer the central question and sub-questions.

Eight themes were developed during data analysis: ethnically diverse classrooms, ethnic stereotyping and assumptions, "Cultural-less" classroom and society, teacher preparation, teaching strategies, challenges, collaboration, and support systems.

## DEDICATION

This work was dedicated to my parents, Alton and Grace Waldrep,

who have always accepted my dreams,

encouraged me to pursue those dreams, and

praised me all the way.

I could not have done this without your love, support and prayers.

And to the participants who made this study possible.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Rosalyn Carter once said, “If you doubt you can accomplish something, then you can't accomplish it. You have to have confidence in your ability, and then be tough enough to follow through.” As I finished this program, I realized that although there were times I doubted myself, many people did not doubt me and without their strength I could not have obtained my Ph.D. I would like to acknowledge several people.

I would like to thank my parents and family who loved me even when I was not lovable; who saw me extremely stressed and lived with the tears. To my roommates, Jessica and Amanda who lived with the day-to-day and class-to-class person who lamented several times that I would not survive. Thank you for the chocolate and cokes. To my friends and co-workers who often took up the slack because they did not want to overwhelm me more, thank you. To all of my students who survived the Ph.D. process with me, thank you for still giving me positive evaluations.

Jerry, thank you for feeding me, the jokes and making me laugh even when I did not want to. To Lois, thank you for understanding my sense of humor and laughing at my stupid jokes. To my committee, Dr.'s Aldridge, Christensen, Kilgo, Kirkland, and Manning, thank you for your advice, edits and most of all for saying “yes” to being on my committee and then NOT changing your mind during

the writing and editing process. Dr. Ivankova even though I thought I would die taking your classes, thank you for all of your assistance and the “start” I needed to complete this study.

Allen thank you for loving me like you do; I do not always make it easy, but I always make it interesting. We were so lucky we met at the end of this process rather than at the beginning because you definitely came to me at the most “sane” time.

God, even though I railed at the injustice of having no life and about my minimal chance of survival, thank you for listening to my many prayers. I could not have done this without you.



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### Opening Vignette

*It's the beginning of the school year and all of the students were returning to school to begin another year. The students begin to enter the classroom. The classroom was colorfully painted blue and green with books on every shelf that the teacher thought the students may enjoy. On the board were the words "Welcome to third grade." This was her first year at this particular school. The school she previously taught was composed predominately of Caucasian students. She also had more students in her previous class as compared to this class, but she had no experience with teaching ethnically diverse students. As the students begin to find their seats in the desks with their names taped at the top, five students were hanging back looking lost. The teacher swallows nervously and thinks, "I have no idea how to help these students; I don't speak their languages and they don't speak mine. Take a deep breath and help them as best as I can." The students who were not in their seats, none of whom speak English, were Guatemalan, Mexican, Japanese, Taiwanese and Arabic.. She looks at these five students a little lost knowing that she has never been trained to work with ethnically diverse students. She and the five students were all thinking, "Now, what?"*

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Educators were required to complete high stakes assessments, make Adequate Yearly Progress, and educate an increasing number of English Language Learners (ELL). With the advent of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB, 2001), teachers were having to ensure that within two years an ELL student was proficient in English to pass state testing (NCLB, 2001). However, according to the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA), approximately 13% of teachers who were responsible for academic success of ELL students had received education on how to work with these students (NCELA, 2004). The question was not did teachers receive training but was the education adequate enough for the teachers who serve ELL students to feel comfortable teaching the 19.4% of students who speak a language other than English (Day, 1996; NCELA, 2004)? In fact, due to the teachers who did not receive any training, many ELL students were being labeled learning disabled (LD) and being referred to the speech language pathologists and/or for special education services (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, and Higareda 2005; Barrera 2006; O'Malley and Pierce, 1994; Roseberry-McKibbin, Brice, & O'Hanlon, 2005).

Teachers were now responsible for ensuring that all students were able to read and complete math and science testing at grade level by the year 2014 (NCLB,



2001); however, if all teachers do not receive appropriate training on how to work with ELL students, how can the government expect teachers to ensure academic success of the ELL students? In fact, according to the United States Census Bureau (2003), there were over 4.4 million culturally, linguistically diverse students receiving services in the public schools; also a fact, according to the U.S. census by the year 2050 it was probable that every teacher will have at least one ELL in his/her classroom (Day, 1996). Cultural diversity was not defined as only linguistic diversity but also diversity within and with various cultures. *No Child Left Behind Act* (2001) required that linguistically diverse students following their first year in U.S. Schools participate in national testing (Building partnerships to help English Language Learners, 2006).

#### Statement of Purpose

There was a lack of qualitative research that explores education of teachers with regards to English Language Learners. Prior research has focused primarily on students in education programs at the University rather than teachers currently in the field (Barnes, 2006; Watson, Miller, Driver, Rutledge, and McAllister, 2005). The purpose of this case study was to explore how teachers teach to the specific diverse cultures of children in their classroom. The significance of this study was to determine the knowledge that teachers have regarding the ELL students' past educational achievements (e.g., previous schooling), linguistic diversity, and learning styles of the ethnically diverse students in their classroom. For the purpose of this study, cultural diversity was defined as differences in students' beliefs, values, race, ethnicity, gender, and

language and learning styles. This study will contribute to the current need to determine the gaps in teacher's preparation for determining the educational and academic needs of ELL students. The target audience includes teachers, administrators and others who educate students entering the teaching profession.

### Central Research Question

The central question guiding this study was: How do teachers teach to their students' cultural diversity?

### Sub Questions

More specifically the sub-questions to explored in the interviews and research were the following:

1. How do teachers describe the training they received to work with diverse students?
2. What were the teachers' beliefs regarding the cultures of the students?
3. What strategies were teachers using to educate ethnically diverse students in their classrooms?

### Assumptions

Qualitative research was a process that allows participants knowledge, skills and voices to be understood (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Many believe that qualitative research and specifically case study was one of the weakest forms of research because of the reliance of the researcher on the participants' words rather than empirical data (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2005). However, I contend that because of the multiple forms of data in a case study approach allowed for a more authentic result from research. As Lincoln & Guba (1985) summarized that

qualitative research was not for idiots to complete rather qualitative research was for serious researchers who want to gain insight into the real life experiences of the participants. Qualitative research was subjective in nature because the data analysis and results rely on the participants' views and on the researcher's analysis rather than on numerical data. Therefore, the researcher made the following assumptions:

1. The participants chosen exemplified the necessary knowledge and experiences which allowed the researcher to fully describe and explore the central phenomenon.
2. The participants and the researcher easily established rapport.
3. I collected the most appropriate forms of data to ensure the accuracy and pertinence of the information gained to provide knowledge regarding the phenomenon.
4. I established and bracketed any bias and knowledge regarding the phenomenon.
5. All participants' views were shared authentically and truthfully with the researcher.

#### Definitions of Terms

Bounded System – According to Merriam (1998) and Creswell (2007) a characteristic of a case study was that it was bound by time and location. Also, a bounded system can be defined as an “activity, an event, a process or an individual” (Creswell, 2005, p. 589).

Case Study – A case study was a research tradition which attempts to answer the questions of “how” and “why” (Yin, 2005). This tradition was an in-depth exploration of a case based on multiple data sources (Creswell, 2005).

Central Phenomenon – The issue or the process researched and explored in qualitative studies (Creswell, 2005).

Culture—Banks (2008) defined culture as “the ideations, symbols, behaviors, values, and beliefs that were shared by a human group” (133).

English Language Learners (ELL) – ELL students were students who have been identified through assessment as having limited English proficiency in both speaking and understanding which precludes them from succeeding academically in English speaking schools (Gottlieb, 2006).

Ethnicity- According to the *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* (2008), ethnicity or ethnic refers to “of or relating to large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background.” Ethnicity refers to shared cultural views and similar cultural activities.

Gate Keeper – This was the person who allows the research access to the research site and participants (Creswell, 1998). For this study the gatekeeper was the principal and assistant principal.

Learning Disability (LD)—Learning disabilities include the processes involved in understanding and using language either spoken or written that affects overall academic skills and success (IDEA, 2004).

Member Checking – Member checking was a form of verification procedure in which the participants review their interview transcripts to ensure the accuracy of the transcription (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

No Child Left Behind – In 2001, the law No Child Left Behind or NCLB was reauthorized from Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. This law enacted standards for education to assess and teach according to outcome based reforms ([www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)).

Race—According to the *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* (2008) race refers to “a category of humankind that shares certain distinctive physical traits.” Race was generally biological rather than shared characteristics of a group of people.

Transferability – Transferability was the extent to which the reader can transfer that results of qualitative research to his/her environment (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Triangulation – According to Hatch (2002) triangulation of data in case studies were used to support evidence from different participants, types of data collected and methods of data collection.

Verification Procedures – Procedures were implemented to authenticate the findings of the research such as member checking and triangulation (Creswell, 2005; Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

#### Research Perspective

The research perspective chosen for this was a case study in which the researcher sought to explore, describe, and investigate a phenomenon little

understood or currently unrecognized in the research (Merriam, 1994; Yin, 2003). This construction of meaning involved the participants' explanations, experiences, activities, feelings, values, beliefs, motivations, and concerns regarding education of ELL students (Yin, 2003; Hatch, 2002). An instrumental focus was pursued in this qualitative inquiry to develop and describe an understanding of this issue (Jones, Torres, and Arminio, 2006). The characteristic bound system was utilized, under natural conditions, to distinguish this qualitative research as a case study (Jones et al., 2006; Yin, 2003). Specifically, the case was bounded and limited in scope. The case or unit of analysis was identified as teachers in central Southeastern United States, who studied through a comprehensive perspective and interpretation. Implicitly, this project reflected an in-depth description, understanding, and analysis of these participants' experiences with significance on this contemporary phenomenon within the daily, real-life context (Jones et al., 2006; Yin, 2003). The constructivist framework would consider these participants as the co-authors of the knowledge and experience explored and described in this study (Hatch, 2002).

#### Limitations and Delimitations

This particular study was limited due to the following:

1. I relied solely on the subjective nature of the participants' interviews, written data and the interpretation of the researcher and the participants.
2. The small number of cases being studied cannot easily offer reliability of the results.

3. There was limited diversity among within the teaching staff at this school which could influence the education of ethnically diverse students.
4. The study was limited to one school in an upper middle class suburb of Southeastern United States.
5. This particular study was not able to be generalized to the population as a whole; rather this study attempted to explore how teachers taught to the culture of each child in his/her classroom.
6. Only teachers and professional staff member (librarian) in an elementary school setting were interviewed; the researcher did not include parents or administration in the research.

#### Significance of the Study

Very few studies have been conducted to explore teachers who were currently teaching ethnically diverse students. With the implementation of NCLB (2001) teachers were required to educate all children regardless of native language and learning styles. This study would give voice to current needs of teachers educating ethnically diverse students in mainstream classrooms. This study also provided information for school teachers, administration, staff, parents and legislators' on the current trends in education and the real world perspective of the teachers' experiences. Finally, this study allowed teachers a chance to determine the support needed and gained throughout their educational system and the need for specific training to work with ethnically diverse students.

#### Feasibility of the Study

The main form of research that this researcher conducted was via classroom experiences and a pilot study completed for a research class in Fall 2007. This researcher additionally supported her learning by reading and studying current experts in the field of research including the chosen tradition of research-a case study. The pilot study completed included the current central phenomenon of teachers in the field who have received no or little training on working with ethnically diverse students. The pilot study sought to gain insight into the needs of teachers and staff working with these students especially as most teachers were unable to communicate using the child's native language and the children spoke little or no English. Expansion of the study was required to increase transferability of the study. Expansion of the pilot study was completed by increasing the number of participants. The findings and data collected during the pilot study included the findings described in chapters four and five of this particular expanded study.

### Organization of the Study

This study was organized into five chapters. The first chapter included the research problem, central phenomenon, purpose of the study, central questions and sub-questions, assumptions of qualitative research, terms and definitions, theoretical perspective, limitations and delimitations of the study, significance, feasibility, organization and summary. Chapter two provided a thorough review of current literature with regards to the central phenomenon being explored. Chapter three included the methodological aspects of the study including discussion of the tenets in qualitative research and specifically case study the



tradition chosen for this study, site and participants, data collection, analysis and verification procedures as well as ethical considerations for this study and the role of the research. Chapter four detailed the findings through analysis of data by utilizing rich, thick descriptions of the participants and site as required by qualitative research. Themes and sub-themes were developed from the data collected via analysis. The discussion of the findings including research limitations, implications of the research findings and the main significance of the study was described in chapter five.

### Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways in which educators currently teaching in a school setting used the children's particular culture in teaching him/her. This study also investigated the training the teachers received via their education at the university and through professional development and how they incorporated that training they received into teaching ethnically diverse students in their classroom. The statement of problem, central phenomenon, research question and sub-questions and the significance of this study were stated in Chapter I. Research assumptions, limitations and delimitations were also provided in Chapter I.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter two reviewed current literature in multicultural education. This chapter was divided into the following sections: definition of cultural and ethnic diversity, identification of educator's own beliefs, attitudes and values, educator's previous cultural educational preparation, educator's experience with ethnically diverse students, high stakes testing and cultural diversity, special education and the ethnically diverse student, litigation and laws, and strategies of working with ethnically diverse students. Cultural diversity for the purpose of this paper was not defined as just linguistic differences rather cultural diversity encompasses the learning style of the student, previous educational experiences, cultural and linguistic differences.

#### Definition of Cultural and Ethnic Diversity

Cultural diversity has several different definitions depending on the person one asks. Some define cultural diversity as linguistic difference or religious or gender differences; others refer to cultural diversity as differences in beliefs or customs (Banks, 2008). However, to understand what cultural diversity was one must understand the meaning of the two words: culture and diversity.

Culture has different connotations and meanings. At its most basic culture would refer to activities such as art, drama and music; at its most complex, culture could be used for "distinctive groups in society" (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2006, p.

232). There was no one definition that could fully define the meaning of culture. However, the word “culture” included the belief and value system, the language, learning style, race, ethnicity, gender, non-verbal and verbal styles of communication, and identification of one’s own culture (Banks, 2006; Banks, 2003; Cummins, 1981; Cummins, 2003; Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2006; Koppelman & Goodhart, 2005). Where as, according to Koppelman & Goodhart (2005), diversity referred to “the presence of human beings with perceived or actual differences based on a variety of human characteristics” (p. 12). Therefore, cultural diversity can be defined as differences that exist between people according to their specific way of life.

Ethnic diversity referred to a group of people that share common languages and communication styles, similar identities and considered themselves as apart from other cultural groups (Banks, 2008). Ethnic diversity related to the differences within cultural groups including values, beliefs as well as commonalities. For this study, cultural diversity was used in relation to the literature review but ethnic diversity will be used by the researcher rather than cultural diversity.

#### Identification of Educators’ Beliefs, Attitudes and Values

Looking at one’s own culture, beliefs and values regarding cultural diversity was a necessity when working with ethnically diverse students. Battle (2002) believed that there were certain aspects that one needed to review regarding his/her own beliefs about the definition of cultural diversity, the view of educating ethnically diverse students and possible biases regarding various

cultures. One should look at his/her personal definition of cultural diversity before educating multicultural children.

According to Clemons (2005), multicultural education “was not an ethnic or gender-specific movement” (p. 289) rather this movement was designed to empower all education students to become culturally competent. As stated by Clemons, there were very few teacher education programs that utilize class work in cultural diversity. Clemons conducted research on how teachers responded to learning about their own culture and how to teach multiculturally. According to Clemons, students researching their own beliefs and culture would better be able to understand and accept their students’ cultural diversity.

Continuing on how teachers should first view their own beliefs, Niehus (2005) researched how students viewed privileges given to whites. Often, according to Niehus, white students did not realize the inherent power of their color. In fact, Niehus proposed that white teachers and students in education programs were not even aware of their inherent biases against minorities. In this particular study, Niehus questioned the problem of how to help white students explore the phenomenon of white privilege outside of the classroom. The data collected were journals, interviews and group discussion. The researcher and the students discovered there were more privileges for whites than other minorities, specifically African Americans. Niehus suggested that “privilege was typically lived but not seen” (p. 482); in other words, although students were not taught about ‘white privilege’, it still exists. In fact, the results of this particular study indicated not only do education majors needed to be taught about cultural

diversity but should also examine their own beliefs regarding diversity of their future students.

One's own attitudes regarding racial, ethnicity and cultural differences were also explored. Reeves (2000) conducted a qualitative research study to determine what and how teacher's attitudes regarding mainstreaming ELL's affect: (a) the classroom, (b) the ELL students and (c) opinion of their professional development. Reeves explored teachers' attitudes regarding mainstreaming ELL students in regular classrooms. Reeves pointed out that roughly only 12.5% of U.S. teachers had received any significant amount of preparation on working with cultural diversity of their students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002, as stated by Reeves, 2006). One aspect of this research that Reeves spoke about was that often ELLs were quickly brought out of their self-contained ELL classrooms and placed into a mainstream classroom where teachers had never been educated on how to work with culturally more specifically linguistically diverse students causing a negative opinion about ELLs. There were many concerns stated by mainstream, regular education teachers regarding ELL students included in their classrooms including concerns regarding slowing down of class progression and disrupting the teaching activities and the students in the class.

Results indicated over half of the teachers demonstrated that they did not feel adequately prepared to work with ELL students (Reeves, 2006). This finding also supported the reason why the teachers often had negative attitudes regarding mainstreaming ELL students. One interesting note about this research that was

that, although teachers believed they were inadequately trained on how to work with diverse students, they were often ambivalent about receiving extra training. Most teachers who were working in public education will have at one time in their teaching careers at least one ELL student. This pointed to the saliency of working with ethnically diverse students. If the teacher did not receive training in educating ethnically diverse children, how can they appropriately educate them? Could they?

The studies reviewed ascertained the importance of determining the effect that teacher's attitudes, beliefs and values had on the ELL student's education. This study determined the effect the teachers' attitudes, personal beliefs and opinions have on the ethnically diverse student's learning.

#### Educator's Previous Cultural Educational Training

Echevarria, Powers, and Short (2006) discovered that many ELL children were being educated by teachers who were not knowledgeable about working with children from diverse backgrounds. Their research also discovered that educators did not implement a specific curriculum for the ELL students. The evidence of this research supported the supposition that teachers should be trained in how to work with and teach culturally different students.

With only 13% of teachers trained to work with ethnically diverse students, one study conducted by Barnes' (2006) explored how pre-service teachers were trained with regards on working with ethnically diverse students (NCELA, 2004). Barnes' hypothesized that teachers were not being taught how to work with culturally different students in an unbiased way, which affected the

academic success of the students served. The researcher completed training on working with ethnically diverse students before the pre-service teachers completed their externship. Barnes then examined the teachers' academic knowledge and lesson plans to determine the appropriateness of the activities they planned to complete in the classroom. The pre-service teaching students said they felt more prepared than not to work with diverse students and that training should be conducted in all teacher education programs. Watson, Miller, Driver, Rutledge, and McAllister (2005), however, found that cultural diversity in the texts used to educate pre-service teachers was considerably lacking. In fact, relatively no teacher education text thoroughly explained about or how to work with ethnically diverse students.

With the revelation that there were little if any studies conducted to determine teachers' previous educational experiences in college, this study determined the participant's previous education with regards to cultural diversity.

#### Educator's Experience with Culturally Diverse Students

In New York, there was a program in which dual-language students train teachers how to teach in a dual-language and ethnically diverse classroom. Lopez (2006) conducted a study to understand the integrated experiences of three student teachers in a bilingual school. The questions asked by Lopez were: what stages did student teachers go through in their student teaching experiences? And how can programs in bilingual/bicultural education be improved to aid student teachers in a more successful student-teaching experience? The researcher chose three student teachers; two had English as their native language; one, Spanish.

The author gathered data via interviews of the cooperating teacher/supervisor, the student teachers and gathered information via the student teachers' journals (written in Spanish), and formal observations. The teachers continued to participate in weekly seminars developed to aid in transitioning to a teaching situation.

There were three stages that Lopez (2006) determined the student teachers went through: stage one, "gaining entry" was when the student teachers were still unsure of what their participation level would be (p. 504). Stage two, "acquiring competence" the student teachers began to feel more comfortable and begin to implement theoretical knowledge into their teaching (p. 508). Stage three, "gaining acceptance", the student teachers was more comfortable in their roles as teachers and the students accepted their roles as teachers (p. 512). One suggestion that the research indicated was to pair the students who were not native speakers of the language in the school with a teacher who had more experience in the students' native culture. This pairing would allow the student teachers to go through the stages more easily.

There were few studies conducted that looked at teachers experience within the classroom following graduation. The texts that were written looking at educating teachers with regards to cultural diversity primarily look at in-services that were conducted with teachers while they were in the classroom. In fact, Banks (2006) stated that there were aspects in the school that need to be changed before the ELL students could succeed academically. These included integration of content within the classroom, reducing and educating other students with



regards to cultural diversity to decrease prejudice, and implementing one type of curriculum/theory (Banks, 2006). This study endeavors to research the teachers experience in the classroom with regards to the student's culture.

### High Stakes Testing and Cultural Diversity

With the implementation of NCLB (2001) teachers were required to prepare ELL students in as little as two years to take and pass a standardized test in English. As most ELL students were mainstreamed in regular classrooms, teacher education programs still do not have programs in place to teach regular education teachers on how to work with ethnically diverse students, utilize appropriate research or articulate the findings of the research in a useful manner (Bernhard, Diaz and Allgood, 2005). Using standardized English assessments of ELL students could be a way of ensuring the ELL student's failure.

Elizabeth Mahon (2006) conducted a study of 200 ELL students in fourth and fifth grades at four different schools in Colorado. Mahon's research focus was the degree that English proficiency influenced the performance on academic assessment. The findings of this study indicated that an ELL student's English proficiency continued to affect his/her performance on standardized tests. One suggestion was to allow ELL students more than one year to learn English before testing; another idea would be to use other testing to determine an ELL student's skill such as using portfolio assessments to determine when an ELL student's English was academically appropriate to be tested. Due to mainstream and many ELL teachers lack of knowledge regarding cultural diversity and background knowledge of the student, the teachers were unable to adequately prepare ELL

students to pass standardized English assessments. However, in-services were utilized in many of the studies and schools to shrink the gap in teachers' knowledge regarding multiculturalism. Not using any other resource or assessment measures to determine the skills of an ELL student may affect the outcome of data from testing which would increase the likelihood that an ELL student would be referred to special education.

As stated previously, multiculturalism includes linguistic diversity. One study conducted by Chalhoub-Deville and Wigglesworth (2005) investigated English speaking proficiency of ELL students. However, Chalhoub-Deville and Wigglesworth used a test developed by Educational Testing Service (ETS) called English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) to determine the proficiency of ELL students. Is hoped to gain information on the reliability and validity of ELL students and how the perceptions of various English speaking countries rate ELL students' performance. The question that Chalhoub-Deville and Wigglesworth was trying to answer was if there was a significant difference among different ELL teacher groups when evaluating 12 international test takers' performance on a portion of TOEFL, the Test of Spoken English. The purpose was to explore how various English speaking teachers from different English speaking countries would rate the tapes of the 12 participants. It was discovered that although there was remarkable inter-rater reliability (98%), the scores provided from the different countries were vast. For example, the United Kingdom was deemed as the harshest rater and U.S., the easiest. Also Chalhoub-Deville and Wigglesworth warned teachers about relying solely on one test performance to

decide on an educational program. Chalhoub-Deville and Wigglesworth stated that teachers should use other tools and not rely on one score of a test and neither should the government.

O'Malley and Pierce (1994) conducted a study to determine the assessment practices of 34 states and three districts on ELL students. The main research problem was that states at that time were not using uniform standards to determine if ELL students were assigned to appropriate classes or receiving appropriate instruction. O'Malley and Pierce discovered that according to various states' reporting that ELL students were not being monitored for their academic progress, participation in state-wide assessments nor was parental involvement occurring during assessments. Results indicated that there were no formal assessment procedures which were used consistently across states. In fact, they found that due to the inconsistency of each state's assessment procedures, ELL students could potentially be misidentified as Learning Disabled (LD). Without the knowledge and training for the teachers to educate and know the difference between dialectal and cultural differences and disorders many ELL students were being misclassified as Learning Disabled (LD).

This study researches the knowledge that a teacher has regarding the cultural diversity of the students as there were not many studies that determined the effect that a teacher's cultural knowledge has regarding the labeling of an ELL student as learning disabled.

### Misdiagnosis of Culturally Diverse Students

When diagnosing ELL children with a Learning Disability, the teacher or special education teacher were required to make a distinction between limited English proficiency and a learning disorder. Barrera (2006) stated that “[i]t was never clear [ELL students] being served in special education truly were in need of these services or whether some of the learners in general education or ELL/bilingual programs were poorly served with undiagnosed disabilities” (p. 143). Cummins (1981; 2003) stated that it could take upwards to five years for an ELL student to learn English to succeed academically; however, research conducted by Cummins (2003) revealed that ELL students could learn conversational English within one to two years due to verbal and non-verbal aspects of social English. One problem as stated by Barrera was that with the advent of NCLB (2001) and the “one size fits all” educational criteria that the ELL student was even more behind than his typically developing, English speaking peer.

Thirty-eight teachers from general and special education participated in the Barera’s study. Each of the teachers examined work completed by Mexican American students that were identified as either LD, typically developing or those classified as high academically. The work examined by the researcher and teachers was students’ written work. Data collection included: teachers’ perceptions of handwriting, difficulty of task, accuracy and number of vocabulary used and number of complete and incomplete sentences (qualitative) and the quantitative measures included the number of phrases or complete sentences.

Results of the collected data indicated that there was a difference in ratings of the work completed by the three groups of students. However, Barrera questioned whether ELL students classified as LD received the same amount of exposure to vocabulary as their typically developing ELL peers.

Another study conducted by Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, and Higareda (2005) found that often in schools that ELL students were misdiagnosed as having special needs and referred to special education. This misdiagnosis was due to the teacher's lack of knowledge regarding cultural diversity. This particular study was completed in California at a large urban school which educated a vast population of culturally and linguistically diverse students. The researchers gathered data from the State Department of Education in California and analyzed the data to determine if ELL students were overrepresented in special education courses. The questions that were developed were: what was the representation of ELL students in different grade levels? Which ELL students were receiving special education support with regards to language and grade levels? Did ELL student representation in various disability categories vary by social class and grade level? It was found that there were a disproportionate amount of ELL students classified as needing special services as compared to the white students especially in elementary and secondary grades. The important issue regarding these findings was that the teachers need to "know more about the specific characteristics and experiences of these students, including the processes that lead to their overrepresentation in special education" (p. 294).

Abed (2002) completed a study looking at the linguistic features of standardized tests given to ELL students. Abedi theorized that one problem with using standardized tests was that many tests actually inadvertently function as an English proficiency test rather than an assessment to measure a student's academic performance and skills. One of the major criticisms of using standardized test measurements such as those required by NCLB (2001) and schools to assess achievement was that these tests exclude culturally and linguistically diverse students from its normative groups. In fact, Abedi asked three questions during his study: "Could performance differences between ELL and non-ELL students be due to language differences?" "Could the linguistic complexity of the test skew the results of the data?" "Could the linguistic complexity of the test be a possible source of non reliability and influence the validity of the assessment results?"

Abedi (2002) analyzed four school sites that all had a large ELL population. He obtained the test results of ELL students and non-ELL students and compared and contrasted their backgrounds, cultural identity including languages used in the home, and other demographic information. The researcher found that there was a significant difference between ELL students' scores and non-ELL students' scores when the tests required much more language processing in English. However, the gap between the scores lessened when both students were assessed in math and science; two subjects that were not English heavy. Therefore, the higher the language complexity in the assessment tool the greater the performance gap. Many teachers not realizing the difference or how to

educate ethnically diverse students may miss the difference and misdiagnose or refer an ELL child to special education and/or speech therapy services.

Another study conducted by Ramirez and Shapiro (2006) pointed out that differentiating between learning English as another language and learning disabilities was hindered by the teachers' and assessors' lack of knowledge regarding normal language development and development of a second language. These researchers investigated the problem of reading with ELL students. The questions asked by the authors included: "Did non-ELL students have more opportunities to read than the ELL students in bilingual classrooms? Did the non-ELL students have significantly higher level of growth in reading abilities? How much growth in their native language with regards to reading did the ELL student demonstrate?" The researcher utilized 165 students in grades first through fifth in his study.

Each student's reading skills were assessed using standardized assessment procedures and data collected via testing three times during the school year (Ramirez & Shapiro, 2006). Results indicated that English speaking students did read more fluently than their ELL counterparts because they had more opportunities to read in class than ELL students. Another finding was that even when reading was tested in the ELL student's native language (e.g. Spanish), the students' skills were significantly low or as low as their acquisition of reading skills in English. There were two reasons suggested: that the ELL student began to lose their native language skills of reading while learning English and the Spanish stories used were generally longer in the number of syllables which

affected the student's ability to read fluently. One way in which the Ramirez and Shapiro (2006) suggested ensuring that an ELL student did not fall too far behind their English speaking cohorts was to use a curriculum based measurement (CMB); this type of assessment allowed for ongoing assessment to determine where a problem in acquisition of reading skills could occur.

According to Menken (2006), most high stakes testing has encouraged teachers and schools to teach to the test. However, teaching to a test that was created for English speaking students tended to significantly delay those ELL students from acquiring authentic academic skills. One question Menken asked was the fairness of the administration (i.e. government) to ultimately hold the ELL student accountable for passing a test that was not written for speakers of languages other than English. Menken's main supposition was policy has affected the type of education that students receive. The questions included: "In what ways has policy affected the practice and learning experiences of the ELL student?" and "what were the language policy implications of testing?" The data were collected using interviews, observation, written policies, standardized test scores and graduation/drop out rate of 128 participants including high school students, teachers (ELL and Bilingual), and administration and school counselors in New York. Findings indicated that all teachers that participated in this study taught to the test including the ELL and bilingual teachers. Therefore, high stakes testing shaped policy including the language (English) and the content of class work (teaching to the test). Also, instead of allowing instruction of those students



who did not have a basic grasp of English to learn English for academic purposes, the ELL student would fail the tests.

Very few research studies have analyzed the linguistic knowledge of teachers to determine the affect that a student's native language has on the student's academic accomplishments in the classroom. This study attempted to determine the teachers' knowledge regarding the cultural diversity of his/her students.

### Litigation and Laws

Throughout the years, there had been several court cases related to racism, segregation, and educational practices with regards to cultural diversity. For instance, *Brown versus the Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) was a landmark case that the Supreme Court held it was unlawful to have different educational facilities for blacks and white. In the court case of *Lee vs. Macon* (2007) in Vestavia Hills, Southeastern United States, the plaintiffs in the case stated that the school system refused to allow African American parents who did not have siblings in the school had to pay tuition for their other children to attend the school. In *Knight versus the State of Southeastern United States* (2006), the plaintiffs alleged that the state of Alabama colleges discriminated against ethnically diverse students specifically African American students in the ability for this particular race to enter college.

In the court cases of *Diana versus California Board of Education* (1970) and *Jose P. versus Ambach* (1979), the courts determined that standardized testing for ELL students were biased because the testing was conducted in English;

therefore, the question that arose was were they testing the student's English or actual academic skills? *Larry P. versus Riles (1972)* and *P.A.C.E. versus Hannon (1980)* also demonstrated that standardized testing potentially led to the misdiagnosis of an ELL student as needing special education services. This study determined the affect litigation specifically with regards to *IDEA (2004)* and *NCLB (2001)* had with regards to teacher strategies in educating an ELL student. The two laws that specifically affect education were *Individual's with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA, 2004)* and *No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001)*. Banks (2003) stated each law was suppose to encourage and promote the best education for all children, however, the laws directly contradict each other by allowing standardized testing to be modified to fit the student's needs. Although *IDEA (2004)* allows for modification of testing depending on students needs, *NCLB (2001)* does not easily allowing for modification of testing procedures based on students' needs.

### Strategies When Working With ELL Students

There were many ways found during research to work with ELL students in the classroom. Many teachers may be or were intimidated by the language barrier and lack of training in ethnically diverse education to determine the best possible avenue of working with an ELL student. Some strategies that were found in current research included working with the family, educating the family, trail and error, utilizing peers that were more proficient in English or mainstream English peers, flexibility in teaching and in the classroom, and utilizing the ELL student's strengths including cultural heritage.

There were several strategies that a teacher could use to work with ethnically diverse students in their classrooms. A study conducted by Dodd (1998) found that often parents have pre-conceived ideas about education. Dodd completed research on parental opinions about education in a small high school in Maine. Participants included 25 parents of the high school students. Dodd questioned how parents felt about current educational trends and how this affected their beliefs about education today. Dodd conducted interviews with the participants asking them to view various pictures of teachers educating students. For example, Dodd presented a picture of a teacher standing up and lecturing to students at the front of the room; another picture presented the teacher and students engaged in discussions with the desks in a circle. Often parents' views on education were colored by their own experiences and many times, the parents' conflicting view of education was due to changes being made in education of their children without their input. These findings indicated that the parents should also be a part of their child's education including decisions on the type of education and the needs of the children.

Another means of aiding in education of ethnically diverse students was a study conducted by Saenz, Fuchs, and Fuchs (2005). These authors found that using Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) with ELL students who were classified as LD was helpful. PALS was a program that involved reciprocal, class-wide peer-tutoring using different grade-level students in a school. The purpose of this research was to determine if there was a significant increase in performance in reading if using a peer-tutoring type of treatment with all ELL

students not just those with LD. The question that the researchers asked was what were the effects of PALS on ELL children who have LD?

The participants of this particular study were 12 general education classrooms third through sixth-grade in a transitional bilingual education classroom in Texas (Saenz et al., 2005). Both the control group and the treatment group were tested to determine levels of reading skills. Is randomly assigned the classrooms into two groups the treatment group and the control groups which did not participate in PALS; all of the students who participated in this study were ELL students. PALS enabled the students with LD to actively engage in learning. When either ELL student missed a question, the tutor would scaffold the student to problem solve until he determined the correct answer. Teachers in the treatment group gathered data using an observational checklist. Following the completion of the PALS program the ELL students were once again tested (post-testing). According to the researchers, the results indicated that utilizing a tutoring program of ELL students could in fact aid the ELL students with LD in increasing overall reading abilities.

Another means of increasing ELL students' ability to succeed academically was to allow flexibility in the classroom. Stodolsky and Grossman (2000) asked the question "The students were changing; was the teaching?" This was the central premise of their study. Stodolsky and Grossman (2000) explored the answers to the following research questions: "Did adaptations of work specifically math and English promote student learning? How did teachers' perceptions affect the adaptations of ELL students' work? Did teachers who

allowed adaptations to school work have different beliefs than those who did not adapt? What ways did the administration facilitate or hinder changes in teaching practices?” The participants were approximately 700 teachers in 13 public schools and three private schools in California and Michigan.

Stodolsky and Grossman (2000) gathered data via interviews, observations and surveys. It is determined that the teachers’ previous cultural knowledge affected the way in which the teacher adapted materials, willingness to adapt the classroom to the ELL student’s culture and the teachers’ perceptions of the ELL student. It is found that the more a teacher was flexible with regards to completion of work (i.e. increased time, different grading procedures), flexibility in teaching the material (i.e. adapting teaching style) and the support of administration affected the overall outcome of the teachers’ attitude and perception of diverse students. Stodolsky and Grossman (2000) stated that “preparing teachers to teach academic content to more diverse learners will require a broader vision that encompasses not only knowledge of diverse learners themselves, but beliefs and knowledge about subject matter and students” (p. 167). The main findings indicated that the teachers’ knowledge and perceptions of the culture of the student affected the way they taught.

One more way in which a teacher could aid in acquisition of English was to help students maintain their native heritage. Maintaining a student’s native language would allow the student to learn in a rich language environment and would continue to help the student maintain his ethnic identity. However, the question was, “Who will help the student maintain his heritage?” Lee and

Oxelson (2006) explored this question in their study. The questions asked by Lee and Oxelson were, “What role did teachers’ (regular education and ELL) have in maintaining the student’s cultural heritage?” “What role did the attitudes of the teachers have on ethnically diverse students?” Lee and Oxelson completed surveys on 69 teachers in California and 10 participants took part in an interview. The participants included those teachers who had ELL students in the classroom both regular education teachers and ELL teachers. Interestingly, the results indicated that the number of years teaching experience did not make a difference in the attitudes of the teachers rather “the nature of preparation for teachers that [made] a significant difference in teacher understanding and attitudes toward students’ heritage language maintenance” (p. 464).

The overall findings of Lee and Oxelson’s (2006) study included the knowledge that acceptance of ELL students in regular education was less likely than with bilingual education. Often teachers believed that due to the pressure of policies such as NCLB (2001) that they did not have the time to spend on the special needs of educating ELL students. Another finding was that most general education teachers believed that language and heritage maintenance should be conducted in the home; however, the parents and students should speak primarily English rather than their native language.

There were several books regarding the use of curriculum strategies and changes to incorporate in the classroom to aid in educating the ELL student. Many strategies include using the child’s primary, native culture and language (Banks, 2003; Battle, 2002). Other strategies included using a nativist approach

to education as well as hands on rather than transmission of information (Banks, 2003). Transmission of information according to Banks (2003, 2006) was teacher transmitting information or teacher lecturing with little to no input from the students. This did not allow for students especially ELL students to learn because the ELL student consistently had to play “catch up” with the students who spoke English as a first language. Including the ELL student’s language and culture as a strength would allow the ELL students to have a chance to catch up even faster to the native English speaker student (Banks, 2003; Tiedt & Tiedt, 2005). This study will look at the strategies that the teachers use the student’s culture as strength for him/her to succeed in an English only classroom.

#### Summary

With the movement to educate all ELL students and teach them English teachers were having to use more resources including the internet, hands-on and “trial by fire” to educate themselves enough to provide appropriate educational services to the ELL student. Much research has focused on the University practices of educating mainstream and ELL teachers but little was researched on teachers who had been teaching three years or more and that find they having to educate cultures and languages vastly different from their own. Table 2.1 summarized the major research reviewed for this study. This study will focus on the teachers that were currently in the field with English speaking students and students that speak a language other than English.

Table 2.1: Summary of studies reviewed

Authors	Year	Title	Study Type
Abedi, J	2002	Standardized achievement tests and English Language Learners: Psychometric issues	Quantitative
Artiles, A. J., Rueda, R. Salazar, J.J. & Higareda, I.	2005	Within-group diversity in minority disproportionate representation: English Language Learners in urban school districts	Quantitative
Barnes, J. B.	2006	Preparing pre-service teachers to teach in a culturally responsive way	Quantitative
Barrera, M.	2006	Roles of definitional and assessment models in the identification of new or second language learners of English for special education	Qualitative
Bernard, J. K., Diaz, C. F., & Allgood, I.	2005	Research-based teacher education for multicultural contexts	Qualitative
Clemons, S.	2005	Developing multicultural awareness through designs based on family cultural heritage: Application, impact, and implications	Qualitative
Develle, M.D. & Wigglesworth, G.	2005	Research report: Rater judgment and English language speaking proficiency.	Quantitative
Dodd, A. W.	1998	What can educators learn from parents who oppose curricular and classroom practices?	Qualitative
Eschevarria, J., Short., D. & Powers, K.	2006	School reform and standards-based education: A model for English Language Learners.	Quantitative
Lee, J. S. & Oxelson, E.	2006	“It’s not my job”: K-12 teacher attitudes toward students’ heritage language maintenance.	Quantitative
Lopez, T. I. M.	2006	Dual-language student teachers’ classroom-entry issues: Stages toward gaining acceptance.	Qualitative
Menken, K.	2006	Teaching to the test: How No Child Left Behind impacts language, policy, curriculum, and instruction for English Language Learners.	Quantitative



Niehuis, S.	2005	Helping white students explore white privilege outside the classroom.	Qualitative
O'Malley, J.M. & Pierce, L.V.	1994	State assessment policies, practices, and language minority students.	Quantitative
Ramirez, R. D. & Shapiro, E.S.	2006	Curriculum-based measurement and the evaluation of reading skills of Spanish-speaking English Language Learners in bilingual education classrooms.	Qualitative
Reeves, J. R.	2006	Secondary teacher attitudes toward including English-Language Learners in mainstream classrooms.	Qualitative
Roseberry-McKibbin, S., Brice, A., & O'Hanlon, L.	2005	Serving English Language Learners in public school settings: A national survey.	Quantitative
Saenz, L. M. Fuchs, L.S. & Fuchs, D.	2005	Peer-assisted learning strategies for English Language Learners with learning disabilities.	Qualitative
Stoldolsky, S. S. & Grossman, P. L.	2000	Changing students, changing teaching.	Qualitative
Watson, S., Miller, T. L., Driver, J. Rutledge, V. & McAllister, D.	2005	English Language Learner representation in teacher education textbooks: A null curriculum?	Quantitative

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### Rationale for Choosing a Qualitative Approach

According to Merriam (1998), qualitative research was conducted to gain insight or understand the experiences of the participants. Many believe that a qualitative researcher was often a *bricoleur* or maker of quilts because of the nature of piecing together the themes and codes that form through the data and subsequent analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). As with all forms of qualitative research the researcher attempts to explore and describe through the words of the participants the phenomenon being investigated (Yin, 2005). For this particular study, the most appropriate form of research determined was a case study.

A case study was chosen because the researcher sought to explore a phenomenon in the real life context of the participants. A case study was the most appropriate tradition of qualitative research because the researcher was unable to separate the context with the phenomenon (Yin, 2005). The research sought to explore a phenomenon that was currently affecting the teachers in the school system.

The central question was, “How do teachers teach to the students’ culture diversity?” This was the question the researcher used to guide the study. The specific sub-questions the research sought to answer were:

1. How do teachers describe the training they received to work with diverse students?
2. What were the teachers' beliefs regarding the cultures of the students?
3. What strategies were teachers using to educate ethnically diverse students in their classroom?

However, it should be noted that the fluidity and flexibility in the case study tradition allows for the researcher to gain insight and additional information and questions throughout the exploration of the participants' views (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2005).

Multiple forms of data were collected to fully explore and seek answers to the questions and sub-questions asked for guiding the study. According to Yin (2005) there were six forms of data that can be collected during a case study. I decided to collect three sources of data: interviews, direct observations, and journals. Utilizing multiple sources of data allowed the researcher to gain as much information needed to describe fully the participant's knowledge regarding cultural diversity within the classroom.

The participants were central to this particular tradition. The participants exemplified the central phenomenon being studied. Each participant was chosen because they had or have students who were ethnically diverse in his/her classroom. The participants' experiences, previous education and current trends in educating ethnically diverse students were central to gathering knowledge regarding practices that teachers presently teaching utilize in educating multicultural children.

### Philosophical Assumptions

According to Creswell (2007) and Lincoln and Guba (1985), there were many different philosophical assumptions that can be made regarding research. In this particular study, the researcher believed that there were multiple realities that can be observed through the researcher and the participants of the study (ontology) through interaction and collaboration with the participants in the environment which was being studied (epistemology). The theoretical perspective chosen for this case study was a constructivist approach, to explore, describe, and investigate a phenomenon little understood or currently unrecognized in the research. This construction of meaning involved the participants' explanations, experiences, activities, feelings, values, beliefs, motivations, and concerns regarding the education of ethnically diverse students (Hatch, 2002). This was a form of "slice of life" of the participants since they represented the central phenomenon.

An instrumental focus was pursued in this qualitative inquiry to develop and describe an understanding of this issue (Jones, Torres, and Arminio, 2006). The characteristic bound system of a case study was utilized, under natural conditions, to distinguish this qualitative research study (Jones et al., 2006). Specifically, the case was bound and limited in scope, with seven teachers selected in central Southeastern United States to participate in interviews, observations, and written data. All data were all collected within a particular time span. Implicitly, this research reflected an in-depth description, understanding, and analysis of these teachers' experiences with significance on this contemporary

phenomenon within the daily, real-life context (Jones et al., 2006). The constructivist framework would consider these teachers as the co-authors of the knowledge and experience explored and described in this study (Hatch, 2002).

As the primary researcher of course, there were biases that had to be viewed and acknowledged with regards to the topic being studied specifically cultural diversity (axiology) (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore the researcher purposefully selected participants that typified the central phenomenon being studied to ensure the transferability of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Creswell (2007) qualitative data analysis and findings cannot be generalized.

As with qualitative research, this study was not exploring causal linkages rather information regarding the teacher's views of working with ethnically diverse students. I utilized inductive logic to analyze or analyzed from the ground up to answer the research questions (Creswell, 2007).

### Setting

The setting chosen for this case study was an Elementary School in Southeastern United States that exemplified the type of setting needed to gather data for analysis. This particular school has classes from pre-school through fifth grade. According to the State Board of Education this school has always made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as required by NCLB (2001) (Alabama Department of Education, 2007). The school was nestled in a neighborhood that boasts of expensive houses. There were approximately 536 students in this school with roughly 40% of the students classified as other than white (Alabama

Department of Education, 2007). The ratio of teachers to students was 1:14. This particular school was situated in an upper middle to upper class city with many persons from lower socioeconomic backgrounds moving into the apartments so their children can attend this particular school. Many of the homes in the area appraised between \$500, 000 and \$1,000,000. Interestingly, many of the apartments that surround the setting appear to house many different ethnicities, cultures, races and socioeconomic backgrounds. However, less than 20% of the students qualify for free or reduced lunches (Alabama Department of Education, 2007).

The gatekeeper of this school for the research was the Assistant Principal. The recruitment procedure included teachers that gave permission to be observed and followed to collect data. The permission of the school administration and participants was obtained before beginning the research study.

#### Participants

Purposeful samplings of seven teachers, who demonstrated the necessary qualifications of the phenomenon being study, were chosen in a southeastern community. The basis of this purposeful sampling was to select individuals and site, to inform and contribute in understanding of this research problem which was the lack of qualitative inquiry into teachers of ethnically diverse students and the central phenomenon specifically teachers who teach ethnically diverse students (Creswell, 2007). The criteria for participation included participants who have experienced working and educating ethnically diverse students; this type of

purposeful sampling typified the characteristics of a case study (Creswell, 2007; Jones et al., 2006).

The recruitment procedure included teachers that gave permission to be observed and followed to collect data. The permission of the school administration and participants was obtained before beginning the research study. The participants were primarily selected based on the Assistant Principal's recommendation because each participant recommended had experience with ethnically diverse students. The Assistant Principal also selected the participants based on the willingness of each to participate. Each participant's experience included teaching linguistically diverse, religiously diverse and ethnically diverse children. In fact, at least one tenth of the children in the classroom were considered to be ethnically diverse.

For this study, the participants selected to participate had three or more years of teaching experience. The participants included those that were diverse in education (i.e., Master degrees, PhD's and Bachelor degrees), race (e.g., two African Americans and five Caucasian), gender (e.g., two males and five females) and years of teaching experience.

The first participant, Brad, was a Caucasian male who has been teaching for over 14 years. He holds a Ph.D. in early childhood education. He was a National Board Certified Teacher as a middle childhood generalist, sixth year teaching certification; he holds Reaching Specialist Certifications and has taught second, fourth, and fifth grades. The last few years have been spent at this particular school

teaching primarily second grade. During this study, He had 10 children out of 18 who were classified as being ethnically diverse.

The second participant was a Caucasian female who was the English Language Learner teacher or ELL teacher. Ann has been teaching full time at the particular school for the past four years. She has a master's degree in Early Childhood Education, certification in English as a Second Language, and an undergraduate degree in psychology. Ann enjoys working with the diverse population at this school, who come from countries as close as Mexico and as far as India. Previously, she was divided her time between two schools until a full time position became open and she began to work with ELL students at this school.

The third participant was an African American teacher who has taught at the same school for all but one year. It should be noted that teaching was not Star's first career. She attended college to receive her degree in education as a second career. Star taught one year in central city school located in Southeastern United States and then moved to this particular school. She has taught for approximately 11 years. Star was one of the few teachers who loop with her children. In other words, when her children were ready to move up from third to fourth grade she moves up with them and was now their fourth grade teacher, so she keeps the same class for two years.

The fourth participant was an African American male who had been teaching for three years. Wes taught in a middle school that was 100% composed of African American students with few if any ELL students. The last two years he had taught at the current school setting. He currently teaches third grade.



The fifth participant has been teaching for over 24 years. Cher's first teaching position was in an all African American inner city school. Interestingly, Cher speaks about this being one of the few times she was exposed to culturally and racially diverse students in her life. Cher has taught in various cities and another state before returning to her current home town. Cher wrote about herself:

I've been blessed to teacher for 24 years in various places and I've loved every minute and every grade. There was nothing in my life more rewarding than teaching; maybe because I never had children. I plan to teach until they run "me out." My heart was given a gift to teach and it goes way beyond teaching children. It's impacting and empowering lives both in the classroom and beyond. You can't truly tech within "4" walls it transcends-like wavers on water...to reach all those around them (e.g., family and friends) or so I hope.

The sixth participant Sally has been teaching for five years. Sally wrote about herself:

I attended the University from 1995-2000. I graduated in the Spring of 2000 with a B.S. in Elementary Education. My profession allows me to teach 1-6 grades. Once I graduated, I became a stay at home mom, as my husband worked to support us. After two years, he became interesting in working in the profession that he want to school for, so became a teacher at a middle school, also in this school district. I took an aide's position, where I worked with a P.E. teacher at an Elementary school in this district. Here I worked to help supervise students from kindergarten through fifth grade. I worked

there for a year, then decided I wanted my own classroom. At this point, finding a job in this district was rare.... Not many positions were opening up. I decided to take an aide's job again, at this school, where I worked one on one with a child who was diagnosed with Autism. I sat in his classroom and went to all specials with him, except P.E. At the end of the school year, I learned of a job opening on the looping team that I was involved. I was given this 4<sup>th</sup> grade job on the last day of the school year. I began working as a full-time teacher in August of 2004, in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. I have been at this school ever since, and this next year will be the beginning of my third loop.

The seventh and final participant, Carol, was the school's media center specialist (librarian). Carol moved from her home state in the North to this state five years ago. In her home state she was certified as an elementary and secondary educator. She was teaching high school math when she moved to this school district and went back to college to get a Master degree but the requirements were different for a teaching certificate and obtaining a Master degree. Her first Master degree was in Information Systems. In her current state, a Master degree was required for the subject she wanted to teach. She did take a few college classes in library sciences but decided not to pursue that degree at that time. She worked as a library aid in the school for a year and was encouraged to finish her library science degree. She obtained her Master Degree in Library Science in August 2007 and has worked as the media center specialist at this school for the past year. A summary of the specific demographics of the participants was found in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Participant Demographics

Participant	Race	Grade	Qualifications	Years of Experience
Ann	Caucasian	ELL teacher	Master's in Education for English as Second Language	4
Brad	Caucasian	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	PhD in Early Childhood Education	14
Cher	Caucasian	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	Masters of Education	24
Wes	African American	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	BS in Elementary and Secondary Education	3
Star	African American	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	BS in Elementary and Secondary Education	11
Sally	Caucasian	5 <sup>th</sup> grade	BS in Elementary and Secondary Education	5
Carol	Caucasian	Librarian	Masters of Library Sciences	1 as librarian

### Ethical Considerations

According to the American Psychological Association (APA), ethical standards should be followed to ensure the protection of the participants' rights. The APA requires that all researchers ensure the participants' rights to confidentiality, justice and benefits of the research study (American Psychological Association, 2002). All of the participants were provided a recruitment letter outlining the requirements of the study including the amount of time needed to complete the requirements of the study, their right to not participate or their right to voluntary withdrawal from the study without any repercussions, detailed descriptions of the study and the study's intent and purpose. All books and articles regarding research design state that ethical considerations of the participants were of the utmost concern. As with all research studies

confidentiality of the participants was assured verbally and in writing. According to Hatch (2002) confidentiality ensures the trust of the participants which aids in the gathering of genuine, detailed information. Confidentiality included allowing the participants to choose pseudonyms for themselves, storing of all data sources including tapes and all paper work in a locked, confidential locale, and ensuring that all specific personal information would be private. All interviews were conducted at a convenient time and location of the participant's choosing. The interviews were also conducted in a private area that ensured the confidentiality of the data collected and the privacy of the participants.

The participants were also provided information regarding the storage of the data. All data would be stored in a locked, metal container for three years at which time all data would be destroyed. IRB approval was obtained to complete all the research and to ensure the utilization of the APA standards (Appendices A and B). Permission of the Principal and Assistant Principal was gained before beginning the research in this school. Approval of the research title, approach and consent letter was also obtained by IRB.

#### Role of the Researcher

The primary role of the researcher was to collect and analyze the data collected. I obtained all data from a sample of participants who exemplified the central phenomenon, educators who teach ethnically diverse students. I implemented the type of data protocol that best fit the needs of the study. The data included were interviews, reflective journals completed by the teachers, collection of lesson plans, and field notes of observations completed by the researcher.

Acknowledgement of potential biases of the researcher included previous experiences with ethnically diverse students, knowledge regarding current laws (e.g., *No Child Left Behind 2001*), stereotyping of the specific culture based on previous research and the misconceptions of educating ethnically diverse students. Another potential biases was the researcher's lack of experience in the school setting and requirements of the teachers depending on the grade they teach.

#### Data Sets

Multiple forms of data were analyzed throughout this research study. The sets included interviews, observations of the class and reflective journals. The data were collected and transferred to the computer to form sets of data for analysis.

#### Data Collection

The qualitative data for this study included multiple sources of data, typical of a case study, with notes from interviews, transcriptions from interviews, and classroom observations, and reflective journals, to build an in-depth and complex picture of this case (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2003). Data in the form of interviews, observations, and reflective journals were collected over a two month period at different intervals depending on the availability of the participants. I met with the gatekeeper, the Assistant Principal, prior to conducting the research to explain the criteria for participation and other communication for selecting participants was conducted via email. The assistant principal set up participants who were willing to participate in this research study and those who had or has ethnically diverse student in their classroom. Following the selection of possible

participants' recruitment letters outlining the requirements of the study (e.g., interviews, observations and reflective journaling) and informed consent (Appendices C and D) including procedures for recording the interviews and transcription of the data verbatim were provided for potential participants. Seven participants were selected for this study. However, it should be noted that one participant at the beginning of the research provided consent but had to withdraw from the study before beginning due to personal reasons. A replacement based on the gatekeeper's recommendation as well as matching the criteria set up for participation was found.

Following consent of participation, I met with each participant personally to establish rapport before the interviews occurred. Upon meeting the participants, I left a folder with copies of the recruitment letter, consent form, interview questions and the reflective journals for their review. I also communicated via email with each participant as the participants stated that they respond to email much easier than to meeting personally with me due to time constraints. Each interview was set up at a time convenient to the teacher and the researcher. Most interviews were conducted either in another room or in the teacher's classroom but all were conducted at the school. An interview protocol utilizing open-ended questions was provided before the interview occurred so that each teacher could reflect on his/her answers (Appendix E). I met with each participant for at least one interview for approximately an hour and fifteen minutes or more and any follow up or addition of information was conducted with subsequent visits to the classroom or via email.

At the beginning of the interview, all of the participants were read an introduction outlining the purpose of the interview, confidentiality, and informed the participants that the interviews would be audio taped. Each interview recording was transcribed by the researcher verbatim. The interviews were conducted to provide the researcher with personal and professional demographics including teaching experience, education and years of teaching (see table 3.1); the interviews also included two ice breaker questions, and six open-ended questions regarding cultural background of students, training/education regarding teaching ethnically diverse students, teaching strategies used with ethnically diverse students, beliefs regarding cultural diversity in general and parental and administration support and the usefulness of the support systems; the last question (number seven) was for anything that may have been left out in the interview or that the participant wanted to add (see Appendix E). During the interviews, I asked multiple questions to clarify the answers when needed. The participants' provided more information and clarified their answers during the interview. The interviews were used to gain insight into the participants' beliefs, teaching strategies and explore and address the central research question and sub-questions (Creswell, 2007; Hatch, 2002; Jones et al., 2006). Each interview was transcribed on the computer. Then the transcriptions were uploaded into the QSR N6 computer application for systematic themes and codes (Appendices G and H). Transcripts were also offered to each participants to ensure authenticity of the data and content, enhancing validity and accuracy, and promoting trustworthiness and partnership with the participants.

Following the interviews, I arranged with each participant a time to observe him/her teaching in the classroom. Each observation was conducted at a time that the teacher believed would provide much information with regards to my research questions. Explicitly, each participant determined a time so that I could observe how the teacher implemented the strategies of teaching ethnically diverse students. Each observation was set up at a different time depending on the classroom instruction. I observed each teacher at least once during multiple times of the day to gain insight into how he/she implemented teaching strategies to increase the ethnically diverse student's learning. There were three occurrences where I observed a teacher on multiple days due to changes in the schedule that did not allow for observation of the teacher. For instance, one day one of the participants watched a television show to demonstrate a lesson; however, I asked permission to return to observe more active teaching. I did not seek to interact with the students or the teachers; rather I acted more as an inactive, unobtrusive observer. The observations were conducted on a general to specific basis. Data were gathered regarding the set up of the classrooms, desks, and student placement. Specifically, decorations were also noted as some classrooms were more heavily decorated with colorful paint and painted characters such as frogs on the wall in one classroom to items on all the walls and hanging from the ceiling. Each classroom utilized the students' work and/or art as a decorating tool. Interestingly, the younger the classroom such as first grade more of the student's artwork was displayed and the older grade such as fourth the student's academic work was displayed. The observations were utilized to gain



insight into the teaching strategies that the teachers alluded to in their personal interviews such as collaboration and extra help with ethnically diverse students especially those that spoke a language other than English as well as the teachers encouragement of collaboration between students.

Each teacher completed a reflective journal responding to specific questions regarding strategies they use to teach ethnically diverse students (Appendix H). The journals were completed by the teachers at least three times during the two months of data collection. Participant journals were collected from these participants to reflect upon their experiences teaching ELL students capturing participant's perspectives, insights, and voices. The teachers were requested to complete a journal to gather supplemental information on how their experiences and knowledge affected the education of ELL students. The journals were utilized as a direct path into the activities and experiences and insight of the participants, coupled with the additional benefit of flexibility in data collecting (Hatch, 2002). All data were secured, stored, and locked in a metal filing cabinet. The data will be destroyed in one year, from the initial study date.

Following collection of data and subsequent transcription of the interviews and data via the computer, I read and re-read the data to ensure accuracy and authenticity of the participants' responses. The reason for the multiple re-reads was to ensure that the data transcribed from the participants was a true representation of the participants' responses.

### Data Analysis

Analyzing the data collected allows the researcher to bring insight and meaning to the central phenomenon being studied specifically the teaching strategies that teacher's use to educate ethnically diverse children (Hatch, 2002; Jones et al, 2006). As suggested by Creswell (2005, 2007) and Hatch (2002), the initial steps of data analysis included organizing the data, transcription of the teacher interviews and development of codes and themes provided by the data. During the initial steps in organization and transcription the researcher begins to determine surfacing "insights, hunches, and tentative hypothesis refinement or reformulation of questions" (Merriam, 1998, p.151). The analysis was inductively completed from general to specific to develop initial codes. I read multiple times the transcripts of the interviews, observation notes and the journals to find patterns and words that the participants might have used during the data collection process.

Codes or assigning a label using short hand on all data sets were used for easy retrieval of specific pieces of data that were similar (Merriam, 1998). Codes were used as an organizational tool for those words that reoccurred multiple times in the data sets. The codes were then analyzed following multiple re-reads and developed into cohesive themes that utilized the participants' own words and reflected the central phenomenon being studied. The codes were compiled into several categories (e.g., teacher experience, education and training). Once the categories were completed, I combined those words or codes and narrowed the

pattern of similar words to form eight themes and twelve sub-themes, which were explained in detail in chapter four.

Themes were developed using the participants' own experiences and words to answer the central and sub-questions of this study. An interview of the teachers, the field notes of observations, and reflective journals outlining their ELL students' educational experiences were analyzed to determine specific themes or major ideas to deduce information that would assist the researcher in answering the central question and sub-questions. The analysis of the data collected provided rich, detailed experiences of the participants' views regarding educating ethnically diverse students. During data analysis the researcher consistently analyzed the data to determine reoccurring codes and themes that were consistent with participants' data.

Using the QSR N9 program the interviews were uploaded into the database and then each theme was labeled. I pasted the coded quotes into the themes organizing and centralizing the coded themes that were developed using the words of the participants. This organized all data for easy access to determine the commonalities of the themes which surfaced. The main themes developed were a combination of the coded or labeled patterns of words that best fit the participants' interviews and journals as well as the classroom observations. The themes were compiled to provide naturalistic transferability of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### Verification Procedures

According to Creswell and Miller (1995), “qualitative analysis must be useful, meaningful, and credible; useful in a clear, understandable presentation, meaningful in terms of answering the research questions, and credible in that the findings hold up under scrutiny” (p. 13). Therefore, to ensure that the data collected were a true representation, I employed six different types of verification procedures to ensure accuracy and the authenticity of the data collected including: inter-coder agreement, rich-thick descriptions, clarifying researcher biases, triangulation, member checking and peer debriefing (Creswell, 2005, 2007; Lincoln & Guba 1985; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1995).

I gathered information via in-depth, semi-structured interviews utilizing open ended questions. The open-ended questions used were broad questions that allowed the participants to provide as much detail as possible regarding their teaching strategies. Codes were developed from multiple readings of the collected data. Once codes were established, I asked another researcher to evaluate and analyze the data to verify consistency and reliability of the data (Creswell, 2005). Once inter-coder agreement was reached, the codes were collapsed into themes or major ideas that were then used for the second type of verification procedure-rich, thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973). Inter-coder agreement, the first verification procedure, was 88%.

During the interviews, I asked questions regarding the participants’ answers to gain more detailed description to explore the experiences of the participants. The open-ended interview, reflective journals and observations

provided rich, thick descriptions, the second verification procedure. The descriptions of the participants yielded information that allowed me to investigate the participant's views, beliefs and teaching methods. Rich, thick descriptions were used to ensure that readers would gain in-depth insight to the central phenomenon and the case being studied, which was consistent with a constructivist perspective establishing further credibility (Creswell and Miller, 1995).

The third verification procedure utilized was clarifying any biases and personal belief and values that I may bring to this study. According to Creswell (2003), Stake (1995), Lincoln and Guba (1985) clarification of researcher biases ensured that the narrative was honest and trustworthy. My personal biases and views include previous knowledge regarding the specific cultures and learning styles, personal knowledge of the school and teachers, knowledge regarding evidence based practice issues of teaching ethnically diverse children that the participants might not be aware and personal beliefs and attitudes regarding the way interaction between specific cultures should be conducted. Clarification of any biases was a validation procedure that ensures that the narrative was honest and trustworthy (Creswell, 2003; Stake, 1995).

Fourth, triangulation of the various data sources collected was employed to develop justification for specific themes (Creswell, 2005, 2007; Creswell & Miller, 1995; Hatch, 2002; Jones, et. al., 2006). The three sources of data used to triangulate were the participants' interviews, observation of the teacher during

class, and reflective journals that the participants completed. Each form of data was analyzed multiple times to determine commonalities and patterns in the data.

Fifth, member checking included the participants' review of their transcriptions and the themes described to ensure accuracy of the data and the authenticity of categories (Creswell & Miller, 1995). This form of validation procedure guarantees the credibility of the data (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen, 1993). Member checking was used to ensure accuracy of the data and authenticity of the themes and codes (Creswell & Miller, 1995). This verification procedure was used because this study was viewed in a constructivist lens allowing the participants to co-construct the data analysis.

Lastly, peer-debriefing or an external audit was utilized to ensure that the guidelines and clarity of the data collected and analyzed was reliable (Creswell, 2007). The person chosen to be a peer debriefer was the chair of a University Communication department who had an extensive research background. An external auditor was also used to ensure that the research study was viable and applicable. The external auditor was a member of IRB.

### Summary

In chapter three, the methodology that guided this research was described. Included in this section was the rationale for choosing qualitative research, philosophical assumptions, the setting, the site and participants, ethical considerations, role of the researcher, data sets and data collection, data analysis, and the verification procedures. Chapter four will describe the findings of the research study. Chapter four will be concerned with the findings of the study.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

This study was direct by the central research question as follows: How do teachers teach to their students' cultural diversity? In addition, the researcher specifically sought to answer the following sub-questions:

1. How do teachers describe the training they received to work with diverse students?
2. What were the teachers' beliefs regarding the cultures of the students?
3. What strategies were teachers using to educate ethnically diverse students in their classroom?

As explained in chapter three, data were collected and subsequently analyzed for major codes and themes. During data analysis, the data were coded and themes were developed to determine any patterns that were revealed. The data analysis revealed eight main themes:

1. Ethnically diverse classrooms
2. Ethnic stereotyping and assumptions
3. "Cultural-less" classroom and society
4. Teacher Preparation
5. Teaching strategies
6. Challenges
7. Collaboration
8. Support systems

During analysis there were twelve sub-themes developed. In the theme of ethnically diverse classroom two sub-themes were developed: manner of diversity and participants' definition of diversity. In the theme of teacher preparation the two sub-themes that were developed were university and academic preparation, professional development and "trial by fire." In the theme teaching strategies, three sub-themes became apparent: teaching basic skills, teaching academics, and beliefs regarding teaching ethnically diverse students. Under the theme of collaboration, the two sub-themes of collaboration between teachers and collaboration between students fostered by the participants were found. Finally, under support systems there were two sub-themes including administration support and family support; the findings section of this paper will identify and describe the themes and sub-themes.

### Themes

#### *Ethnically diverse classrooms*

*Manner of Diversity.* According to the teachers there were several countries represented throughout the school. In fact, Carol stated, "I was very surprised and we have a lot of different cultures here." The classrooms in this school had at least three students who were ethnically diverse. Each classroom where the participants taught had a variety of ethnicities, nationalities, and countries represented in the classroom including but not limited to Mexican, Pakistani, Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Taiwanese, Irish, Israeli, and Greek.

The different ethnic in each classroom appear to represent the school according to the participants. There was diversity among the students, parents and teachers. The previous librarian had ordered flags that were hanging in the front



hall of the school and flags “were purchased because we have a child from that country” (Carol) All of the participants welcomed the diversity within their classroom. As Star stated, “my family was always laughing and calls my class the UN.” The numbers of diverse children were significant and appeared represented in each classroom.

Linguistic diversity was apparent throughout the school and the classrooms. The children that spoke a different language would attempt to interact with each other and the teacher especially if they spoke the same language. For example, during on observation of the ELL small group the teacher used the child’s native language to engage the child in learning English vocabulary. For example, if Ann was teaching the word dog, she would use the Spanish word *perro*, and teach the English counterpart “dog.” Even though a child may have been born in the United States, he/she may come to school without knowing how to speak English. As Ann stated, “most of them were born in the United States; it’s uh interesting because they may have been born here but sometimes they come to the school not knowing English.” However, if the child had been in the public school system for a time then they may no longer qualify for ELL services. This happened in Wes’s class. As he stated,

two of the students who were Hispanic they started out in the [ELL] program now they’ve recently tested out of the program because they were reading and speaking on a level that gives them the opportunity to no longer qualify for those services.

Depending on the amount of time a non-English speaking child was in an English speaking school he/she may eventually no longer qualify for ELL services; however, this did not mean that ethnic diversity did not exist.

*Participants' definition of diversity.* Cultural diversity was not defined by the teachers as just linguistic diversity but diversity in race, ethnicity and in learning styles. For example, when speaking about ethnically diverse students, Wes stated, “we have in the classroom that also exposes the kids to other lifestyles...kids that were from different backgrounds...how they live, how they dress, how they eat.” In fact, most of the participants classified as being diverse children from lower Socioeconomic status (SES). Carol said, “we also have um you know the lower SES students and that brings in a whole different element.” This was regarding the differences in how the children who came from a lower SES environment interacted and took care of the books from the library.

The opportunities to read at home were decreased because parents did not want the responsibility of keeping up with the library books because they simply could not pay for lost books. Looking into the town for diversity was also important to one participant not just looking at children from different countries. Star said,

when we think cultural diversity we think about another country but I think we probably need to make sure we include the different diverse populations within our town....the different ways of bringing in the home, the learning styles so I have to work with that group the same I would work with any other language group.”

Diversity was not just to be defined only by the different countries that were represented in the classrooms but diversity within the students themselves.

Most of the participants classified cultural diversity as not just in terms of commonalities between students but rather individually based. For example, Ann, the ELL teacher had many children from Mexico but she did not believe that culture explained all of the differences. As she stated, “it’s more of an individual difference....all kids from area don’t learn a certain way, it’s more on an individual basis.” In fact, according to Cher even the administration “they look at individual children.” The children in the classrooms regardless of the culture viewed themselves as being the same. Sally said, “ the kids in the class see themselves as the same so there was something that I’ve said or done to them that let’s them believe that.”

Table 4.1: Culturally diverse classrooms

Participant	Quote
Brad	“I have a little boy from Pakistan, little boy who’s from Ireland, a little boy who’s from India, and probably my most interesting case was a little boy who was born in Japan... born in Japan to Taiwanese parents; he spent time in both countries. He spent time in Japan and spent time in Thailand....”
Carol	“I always have one child in every class...I do a lesson on Rashashana and Ramadan”  “Latino which was probably our biggest population”  “you know the lower SES students”

	“Urdu and Munjabi and Vietnamese”
Ann	“Um let’s see, I have uh I have lots of students that um were Hispanic mostly from Mexico, but not exclusively; we also have at least one student from Peru and I believe two from Argentina um we also have one Japanese student and um one from Israel and I’m looking to see oh and several from Pakistan and India that was our main group”
Cher	“they were from Pakistan...” “people from India, Hindu...” “our Hispanic population was moving....” “my little Pakistani child...”
Wes	“...well in all with us having 16 students now and nine girls and seven boys you have seven that were African American.”
Star	“...except that the African American population was more this year and uh (interruption in the background) um the white population was less than the usual year, and the Indian population, well not the Indian, I mean from India....”
Sally	“I have one Asian student, one African American/Caucasian student, one African American/Asian Student, 12 Caucasians, one of my students was from India and one was from...7 African American students...his race it’s a Spanish”

*Ethnic stereotyping and assumptions*

I was caught off guard when I realized that teachers utilized stereotyping as a starting point to label or identify a student. Stereotyping or as one participant classified this as “pigeonholing” allowed teachers to gain information and insight into the culture. Brad stated that “through stereotyp[ing] and pigeon hol[ing] you do expand your think you know.” Most of the time, I observed the teachers using general assumptions about a student’s ethnicity to identify him/her in the classroom. Most of the teachers’ assumptions come from already preconceived ideas about the child’s ethnicity, family, and environment and social class.

Many teachers used this form of mental identification for a foundation to working with the children in their classroom. In fact, most of these teachers appeared to have preconceived ideas regarding a culture until they were better able to know a particular student and his/her culture. At least three of the participants stated that the children that were of a different race or ethnicity did not participate in classroom activities. This lack of participation was attributed to the culture of a child. As Cher wrote in her journal, “often in Black America will not ‘take-part’ or listen to what other adults or teachers have to offer.” As in the case with Star, she had a student that was Arabic and as she taught numbers which many thought were universal they were not. The parents of this student had to explain that “numbers were totally different” in Arabic. However, each participant stressed that they view each student as an individual rather than a culture.

Individuality rather than the diversity of the students was stressed throughout many of the interviews and journals. Sally said, “just the fact we see

children as children not color, not size, not background, not language it's very evident we see them as individual students." Yet, there continues to be an erroneous supposition regarding mathematics and the Asian population. Although in one class this proved to be correct. In Cher's particular class there was a student and "she was so smart mathematically it just drove my child[ren] to want to know multiplication." There were also stereotyping occurrences between the students.

Often students, especially younger students, stereotyped ethnically diverse children. As Brad stated, in relation to his second graders, children were still "egocentric" in thought. Teachers use the child's culture to teach them about cultural identity and differences. The strategy to teach students about the differences allowed the students to recognize differences in their thinking when comparing their culture to what they had read, seen or heard about another culture. This fostered respect for each other. As Wes stated, "I don't believe that many of these kids would know anything about people from other countries; how they live, how they dress, how they eat." Sally and Cher also used this particular approach with their children. Cher attempted to educate about cultures that were in her classroom such as Native Americans or families that had to migrate due to employment needs. For instance, when teaching about the Plains Indians, Cher taught that the Plains Indians "had to move because of the food source like we have workers here and they move because of the jobs and just tie everything in to what we do so it will make sense." Another way to decrease stereotyping by the students was during observed group settings in the classroom and in the small groups with

the ELL teacher. Each teacher fostered a cohesive grouping that allowed all students to feel a part of the class and the unit.

Table 4.2: Cultural Stereotyping and Assumptions

Participant	Quote
Brad	“... mean you have to have something I mean you pigeon hole each other in a better, in a way to better understand I mean pigeon holing was bad yet it’s also part of how we you know figure each other out.”
Carol	“... the first time this year I’ve had students that noticed in the last three years who come from single parents I’m not 100% sure I think they’re single parents who don’t let them check out books because they don’t want to be responsible for them or they say they don’t have time to read them so that’s a whole new thing that I’m having to deal with.”
Ann	“...something else going on or a behavior we don’t understand that’s something we can go back to make sure that it’s not something culturally based.”
Cher	“She was so smart mathematically it just drove my child to want to know multiplication like she did probably the smartest first grade because we learned so much from her because it’s like the first time someone had given us the little doll and she taught us how to do origami.” (Japanese child)
Wes	“...you have to have considerable amount of conversation with the

	families to see things that they accept and things that they like within their cultural circle and try to implement that in class.”
Star	“...few mistakes like um well this was funny like one kid who’d just gotten here um and he I just assumed he could do math, surely he could do math....”
Sally	“...the lower end was going to be typical of having the diversity....”

### *Cultural-less classroom and society*

The most interesting theme to develop was the term “culture-less” coined by Brad. The idea that took shape that every participant stated in some form was that often ethnically diverse students did not know their own culture. For instance, many children who were born in the United States to parents that moved here from another country did not know their parents’ and their own culture. Often children would know their parents language (e.g., Spanish, Urdu) and not English, yet they would not know the specific customs of their family’s culture. In one case, Brad has a student born in Taiwan of Taiwanese parents, raised in Japan and moved to the United States. This child told an interpreter that he did not identify with either culture.

Other students did not know the specifics of their country such as a Spanish child not knowing what Cinco de Mayo was; as Brad stated, “it’s like me not knowing the fourth of July.” Ann also stated, “I’ll ask them what did you do in your country, what was your family like in your country sometimes they don’t



know.” In fact, Star found that with her Caucasian students they did not often know their ancestry. She stated, “they had no idea that their great, great, great grandparents were from another country.” This concept was stated many times throughout the interviews.

Table 4.3: “Culture-less” Classroom and Society

Participant	Quote
Brad	“I really think we were moving towards a culture-less society that we were all so wrapped up on stepping on each other’s toe that we were all losing what culture we have and I think that’s a huge mistake.”
Carol	“...it started mostly for those children who were ethnically diverse but now it has grown I think we had 70 entries out of a school that has 600 and that many entries I mean we had many different countries we had represented but each country....”
Ann	“I’m thinking that the more I’ve approached it the culture of the home because a lot of times when I’ll ask them what did you do you do in your country what was your family in your country they sometimes they don’t know....”
Cher	“... that’s one of those lost things that families use to do.”
Wes	“I don’t believe that many of these kids would know anything about people from other countries; how they lives,

	how they dress, how they eat so as a result instead of singling out one student we use the concept of family.”
Star	“It was a fair-uhuh and interestingly enough the white kids got way into it’ cause they would find out stuff like my great, great, great grandparents were from France or you know....”
Sally	“...the kids in the class see themselves as the same so there was something that I’ve said or done to them that let’s them believe that.”

### *Teacher preparation*

The participants reported that they either received training in the University programs they attended or more often than not received training from professional development courses that their employers offered. Another type of training that the participants mentioned was "trial by fire" or learning to educate ethnically diverse students when they were in the classroom through personal experience, rather than through academic or professional development courses. There were three sub-themes that were found within the teacher preparation theme; these included: University and Academic Preparation, Professional development and “Trial by Fire”.

*University and academic training.* Except for Ann, the ELL teacher, and opportunities that Wes and Carol had to take a course in multicultural education, none of the other four mainstream teachers had received any formal education regarding cultural differences. In fact, Brad stated that he “received NONE WHATSOEVER” at the University setting. However, Wes stated that he had received information “about developmentally appropriate practices and that was very key in working with all students especially those from differing cultures.” Carol reported that she had a course in multicultural literature in her Masters’ Program, which was beneficial. She said, “I did take a course though in multicultural literature and that was fascinating though that...opened my eyes to strong authors in different cultures.” Yet, most of the participants believed that one class about cultural diversity was not very helpful. Brad stated, “it would be best to embed it throughout the pre-service teacher’s study at the undergraduate and graduate level.”

Others such as Star believed university courses were not beneficial because they were so generic and did not cover the specifics of working with ethnically diverse children. Star pointed out that informing pre-service teachers about the amount of individual research necessary to work with ethnically diverse students could benefit not only them but also the students. Star said, “if I had known that it required so much out of school time research to help ethnically diverse children I think mentally I would have been better prepared,” in response to the interviewers question: “What would have helped you” at the university level?

*Professional development.* Star, Cher, Sally and Brad reported that they have only received professional development opportunities at the school and district levels. Wes stated, “they offer many personal development opportunities; I’ve had several personal development opportunities to work with ELL programs to learn how to effectively work with parents.” However, on the other side, Star stated that she had already been teaching these children and figured out how to work with them. As she said, “I had already figured out at that point what I needed to do culturally in my classroom.” This particular school implemented many professional development opportunities to aid in educating the many different cultures represented in the school. The school encouraged the ELL teacher, Ann, to provide many workshops after school. Sally said, “an ESL teacher that has a lot of trainings after school to go to and brings a lot of good information to the faculty meetings.” However, most of the participants felt that common sense and on the job training prepared them better for working with ethnically diverse students.

Most professional development opportunities that occurred were provided by the administration in response to the increase in cultural diversity in the schools. As with most of the participants, their classrooms included students who had different learning styles, religions, languages and beliefs and attitudes. The professional development opportunities included ideas regarding differentiation and the provision of ELL services by Ann. According to Sally, differentiation was “one size doesn’t fit all; one teaching one lesson doesn’t fit all; one lesson could be set up five different ways; there could be five different learning styles or 24 different learning styles in your class; differentiation was just a way to uh reach those kids

individually basically.” Each teacher has received some form of professional development on working with ethnically diverse children in the classroom. One teacher believed that training would be helpful and others believe that it would be pointless.

*“Trial by fire”*. Most information and knowledge regarding educating ethnically diverse students came from the participant’s own research and trial and error. Often teachers would have to research the culture on their own. As in the case of Star, she had to do “a lot of out of school time research to better mentally prepare” to meet the students’ needs. It was not uncommon for the teachers to have to investigate the cultures of the children and to discover what works with each student. Sally stated, “one teaching, one lesson doesn’t fit all; one lesson could be set up five different ways.” Cher’s training came from working with inner city school children more or less “trial by fire.”

However, all of the participants believe that formal training could only prepare a teacher up to a point regarding cultural differences but one could not be prepared for all of the differences and similarities of each individual culture. As with Ann, who received formal training through her ELL studies, her training only made her “aware that there will be cultural factors that we need to consider that were not the same for every student.” Utilizing the training could only be advantageous to a point simply because a class can only prepare you only so much. Wes believed, “you can read about it in a book and get the technical aspect of working with the parents but it’s not until you actually get out into the field and work with them first hand that you get real grounding on how to work with

families.” Two of the participants believed that learning how to work with ethnically diverse students was common sense as opposed to a skill you can learn through university classes or professional development opportunities.

Table 4.4: Teacher Preparation

Participant	Quote
Brad	“No, ESL training. NONE WHATSOEVER! NONE! (Laugh); I will say, what I know about cultures and diversity, I learned from Roberta Long who was the reigning queen of children’s literature.”
Carol	“But I did take a course though in multicultural literature.”
Ann	“Um when I was in the um add on certification program at UAB for ESL I took a class on basically working with students that were ethnically diverse um and a lot of the classes in that program you know, include material about that um and one specific class that was devoted to that um exclusively.”
Cher	“... a lot of opportunities to go to different training sessions and things that we gosh I’ve been in [the School] so long that we’ve had so many different things offered to us over the years so just in professional development because it’s just come at us in so many well every school I’ve been in.”
Wes	“...in undergraduate school at Miles we talked about developmentally appropriate practices and that was very key in working with all students especially those from differing cultures; very: guess primarily it’s been a first hand experience also.”

Star	“No formal training, none at the college level at all, um I had taught maybe probably 6 years before we had uh personal development....”
Sally	“I did not-- no specific training.”

### *Teaching strategies*

This particular theme revealed three sub-themes with regards to teaching an ethnically diverse student. The three sub-themes were teaching basic skills, teaching academics and teaching using the child’s native culture. Each participant especially the younger grade teacher and the ELL teacher spoke about having to teach basic skills and then academics. The two older grade teachers spoke more on teaching academics rather than basic skills.

*Teaching basic skills.* With students who were new to the United States or had no educational experience, Brad (second grade teacher) and Ann (ELL teacher) found they had to start from the beginning with appropriate behavior. Each teacher would have to teach the student how to stand in line, sit at the table, and eat with silverware, basically behavior that was appropriate in the classroom. As Brad said, “kids were coming with less stuff like that [knowing how to behave in a classroom] that I find myself spending more time every year doing that [teaching basic, appropriate classroom behavior].” Many times teachers discovered that at the beginning of the year their time was spent teaching basic everyday survival skills rather than academic skills and once these skills were learned, then the teachers shifted their focus to teaching academics.

*Teaching academics.* Every participant used some form of visual aids, as well as hands-on activities, to assist in teaching academic requirements such as reading, math, and science. The participants were of the opinion that visually representing the concepts and vocabulary allowed students to learn English and acquire skills needed to succeed academically. All participants observed used some form of pictures, line drawings or concrete representations of the target object or concept. For instance, Ann would use the picture of a dog to represent the English word, “dog.” Sally used written directions on the board to reinforce auditory directions given in class. Sally stated that she “gives a lot of directions written on the board; every time I give a set of directions I write them down.” All of the participants used visuals to conceptualize for the ethnically diverse student the activity.

With any activity, object or book, the main concern was the authenticity of the materials. The participant’s were concerned with utilizing materials that authentically represented the culture they studied. For instance, the books that were in each room were representative of different cultures. The books regarding the Jewish holiday of Kwanza were authenticated through the teacher’s research. As Carol stated, “you want your materials to be genuine um authentic you know politically correct.” Ann used her knowledge to make sure that the languages she incorporated such as Spanish was authentic according to the students. She utilized the students’ input to make sure that the words she used in the classroom were really representative of the Spanish words.



Some teachers used the child's native language to label the objects around the room. However, as Ann stated, "labeling helps if the student can read." Therefore, knowing if the child can read in his first language was a task that a teacher had to learn from the beginning. They utilized cultural fairs, geography, genealogy, and the differences in the cultures to educate about differences rather than ostracize. As Carol suggested the cultural fair was a way to introduce others to a child's culture plus it was recognized as an academic activity because of the amount of research involved. She said, "it first started four, five years ago to allow students who were from different cultures um to represent their culture". The fair grew to about 70 participants representing not just other countries but to highlight differences in the United States such as Southern and Northern cultures.

It should be noted that all of these participants were required to test all children including linguistically, ethnically diverse children in reading and math. According to *NCLB* (2001) students were required to be tested thereby ensuring that teachers were teaching the necessary reading skills to pass a standardized test. Star implemented a program that combined teaching these skills and embracing and teaching the child's culture. She stated, "I decided to teach geography and I allowed the kids because there were so many from different countries to research there background" because this allowed her to "get all our other testing done while we were doing it." Star also implemented a program called PATH, which allowed African American males to participate in a program that would decrease the gap in testing. This program was implemented that allowed African American males to have role models as she stated, "they have some positive examples successful males

because some of the may not have a male in their family.” This program was implemented with the consent of the school administration. There was a significant gap between ethnically diverse students as Sally stated, “we can close the gap of this diverse population” by implementing such programs.

As stated before, the teachers used a multitude of strategies to incorporate the child’s culture from using the students’ native language, to creating new strategies to give the extra help needed to an ethnically diverse student who may be struggling. Each participant referred to the library established by the Assistant principal in the apartments which houses most of the lower socioeconomic children. All of the teachers employ different strategies that they based on the students’ needs.

Table 4.5: Teaching Strategies

Participant	Quote
Brad	"I think that using a culture in the classroom was very beneficial if the children were aware of the culture they come from."
Carol	"...every book I read has pictures with k-2; I show them pictures as I read and everything I show to k-2 has pictures..."
Ann	"...with this particular student we started at the beginning we taught him how to walk in a line how to you know sit at the desk... you know at the very, very, very beginning."
Cher	"...just tie everything in to what we do so it will make sense."
Wes	"...it's important that you pull the kids out individually to reinforce the directions that was given so that they're really understand what's really going on."
Star	Over the years I've found that the best way to test was to pique the kids' interest which was hard to do when they're first given
Sally	"I give a lot of directions written on the board; every time I give a set of directions I write them down and most of the time I go back to that student and I'll say did you understand the directions"

*Beliefs regarding teaching culturally diverse students*

Most of the participants believed that using the child's native culture as a strength and interest only increased his/her learning potential. As Star so eloquently

stated, “my belief was that by embracing the child’s culture, you decrease their fears about being in an unfamiliar setting.” Most participants used texts and other books that allowed a child to introduce his/her native culture. The text allowed students an opportunity to learn about differences. Carol utilized various books in the library to introduce and allow a student to embrace his/her culture. As Wes stated, “many times we’re studying about other countries these kids have first hand experience.” However, there were some differences on whether to use the child’s native language. Star stated, “I believe English only was the right approach.” Other teachers believed that using the native language to teach English words was beneficial. Ann used Spanish words and English words to teach English vocabulary. Ann wrote in her journal, “The Spanish speakers in the group lit up when I mentioned the words I knew in Spanish.” There was a definite difference in belief regarding using the child’s native language during teaching or an English only approach.

### *Challenges*

The findings of the research indicated that there were several types of challenges to educating ethnically diverse child besides if the child could not speak English. The main challenge was the “home learning”. Many teachers reported that the parents could hinder the education of their children.

The children who come from families where the parents were uneducated often had more difficulty completing their work. Often the participants found that parents expected them to be the expert on all matters of education. The teachers were unable to send homework home with the idea that the parents could help their

child correctly complete the assignment. For instance, Sally wrote in her journal, “homework can be a nightmare. I only use homework as a way to discuss the day’s previous activity. Home work cannot ever be graded based on correction.” This was a common theme through this study.

Two of the participants believed that children were coming to school with less “home training.” Brad believed that “they were coming with less...home training...it’s just little stuff like you know mashed potatoes were not finger food; it doesn’t have anything to do with culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic status.” This concept of coming with less to school was often spoken in relation to ethnically diverse students in the sense that these children were coming to school without knowing how to interact with others; how to act in school and class and how to respect the privacy of each student. Three of the participants stated that the lack of parental education affect the way a child learned, completed homework and progressed academically.

Lack of parental education affected the children’s ability to read, learn science, math and comprehension. For instance, the lack of books or reading to a child impacted the child’s ability to learn the skills because the exposure to new vocabulary and concepts were not there. This also lead into the lack of experiences. Sally stated referring to reading, “The content of the book was what they have the hardest time with because they can’t understand it because they’ve never seen that or gone through that.” Children learn through example was a belief of most participants. If the children see their parents reading a book or interacting with them than the child’s academic skills would increase. Brad stated, “by their actions

you know that's the way their parents raise them.” Although lack of parental education was a significant challenge for teaching ethnically diverse students, Sally believed that all children can learn. She stated, “I believe that you teach kids no matter where, who they came from, what their parents were like, if they came from poverty stricken area or influential area.” However, according to the participants the children's parents' education could significantly impact their children's ability to succeed.

Table 4.6: Challenges

Participant	Quote
Brad	“...students were coming with less and less this was kind of what I've noticed in the years I've taught....”
Carol	[about parents and library books] “...because they don't want to be responsible for them or they say they don't have time to read to them....”
Ann	“...that the main thing they can do to support what we were doing here was just to promote that literacy at home aand so I try to make sure that they know it's ok if they don't read in English but that you know their first language reading was helpful too.”
Cher	“...bless her heart she couldn't read...you know families in the community and she doesn't drive...” [speaking about a student's mother]
Wes	“The parents have been very instrumental to the development of their kids.”

Star	“parents expect you to be experts when the come in; you know you’re not the expert.”
Sally	“I believe that you know you teach kids no matter where, who they came from, what their parents were like....”

### *Collaboration*

Two sub-themes became apparent during data analysis regarding collaboration: collaboration between teachers and collaboration between students fostered by the participants. Collaboration between teachers was especially important between the more experienced teachers and the less experienced teachers. Collaboration between students was used most often as a strategy by teachers to aid in transitioning between activities, translating unknown or unfamiliar languages and for peer tutoring.

*Collaboration between teachers.* Collaboration between teachers was very important. In the beginning of the school year the teachers would meet as a team and decide the placement of students according to numbers of the class and even the cultural identity of the student. If there was a student who spoke a language different from English and another teacher had a student who spoke a similar dialect or language the child maybe placed where he could receive the most aid? Ann, the ELL teacher, met with each teacher on an individual and team basis to help with curriculum and teaching strategies. Wes stated, “Ann works directly with the teachers.” Ann stated, “I work a lot with the teachers and so it’s interesting to see what they were doing in their classrooms and then to see what else we can do to

involve the students.” Carol and Ann collaborated on the types of books should be included in the “foreign” language section of the library.

Teacher collaboration was crucial to the student’s and teacher’s success. The ideas and information passed between teachers was important for the success of the students. Often the Ann would have to help a teacher with implementing an activity in a manner that the child could understand. As Ann stated, “if they were telling me about a particular were that they were having trouble in the classroom I’ll try to research and find a strategy...that they can apply in the classroom.” The teachers that loop or follow their children for two years use much communication for the next teacher. Most of the teachers who loop specifically Star, Sally and Cher felt that looping allowed them to gain more insight with the children whom they can communicate to the other teachers.

*Collaboration between students fostered by the participant.* Many of the students participated in different ELL programs that utilized the child’s native language, culture and collaboration between other students, the ELL teacher and mainstream teachers. The participants also found that allowing an ELL student to collaborate with children who spoke English and even those who spoke their native language or a dialectal variation aided in transitioning into the classroom and the educational system as a whole. Star stated, “I utilized the little boy that could speak some of his language but I got his mother’s permission.” This was a common strategy that was used to aid in the acquisition of English and academic skills. Another example, Ann spoke of an Arabic-American student who spoke a dialect



understood by a younger student who did not have much English. She utilized this student to increase the younger student's ability to complete educational tasks.

Using collaboration between students fostered a sense of cohesiveness and unity between the students. This also fostered respect for each other and his/her cultural differences. Sally stated, "I taught them from day one that the first thing that I would expect in class was respect"; not only for her as the teacher but also for each other in the classroom. As with Wes who used a family approach to his classroom. Each student was part of a classroom family. He stated that they "foster an environment of love and mutual respect and therefore we say hey we're all in one family and we're in this thing together." This also allowed students to learn from each other as many times students learn more from peers than from the teacher.

Table 4.7: Collaboration

Participant	Quote
Brad	"Collaboration between him and other students have been interesting..."
Carol	"...last summer Ann and I worked together to gather a group of books that were Urdu and Munjabi and Vietnamese there aren't many."
Ann	"I work a lot with the teachers and so it's interesting to see what they were doing in their classrooms."
Cher	"It's so neat that in this school everybody I mean even the custodians and the lunch people every body makes a difference to these

	students....”
Wes	“Our ELL teacher here, Ann, works directly with the teachers and constructing forms for parents who may be from different cultures to translate those forms from English to whatever their native tongue may be.”
Star	“We generally conference when they try to place the child and they try to place the child....”
Sally	“...just working together the communication I build with the parents all that plays a huge role in the way the play, interact and communicate in the classroom with other students.”

### *Support Systems*

In this particular school, there were two support systems that were found: family support and administration support. The amount of support from the parents was dependent upon their individual situations. However, the support systems of the school were very important to the overall success of ethnically diverse students.

*Administration support.* All of the participants stated that the administration was very supportive of innovative ideas and teaching strategies to aid in the education of an ethnically diverse student. Administration also aided in providing materials. As Ann stated, “we definitely have good support from the administration as far as the materials go.” As for the administration welcoming diversity within the faculty and students, this was very apparent during the interviews, observations and journaling. As Star stated, “administration was open to faculty of any color.”

According to the participants the amount of support they receive from the administration was extremely far above the other schools. In fact, Brad stated, “one of the top reasons that I love teaching where I teach was that I do have such support from administration.” The type of support that the participants referred to was access and acquisition of materials, visible support in that the Principal and Assistant Principal were always available, and the offer of professional development courses.

Administration has encouraged personal and professional development among the faculty including providing these services within the school and district. Wes said, “they put on, again, different personal development workshops and we can be more effective as teacher to handle the different clientele they have at the school.” One other avenue of support that administration implemented was to help students and parents without transportation to attend meetings and events that occur within the school. Sally stated, “one of the administrator support was trying to get the parents in here, you know, some of these parents have no transportation so can you go and pick up the child and bring them here.” According to each participant the amount of administrative support was significant; however, differences lie in the amount of family support.

*Family support.* Parental support was found to differ in the amount provided. Often parents were just trying to survive and stay in the United States which could attribute to the amount of support that parents were able to provide. Often parents believed that the school personnel especially the teachers were the experts and relied on the teachers to provide the educational support their children

needed. Star stated, “parents expect you to be experts when they come in.”

However, at the beginning of the school year the teachers met with the parents to find out their children’s needs. This too could present the problem of parents trying to take time off work. Ann replied, “most of my parents will try to come it’s difficult a lot of times for their work schedules to work with our schedules.” Parents were very supportive. In fact, in the library Carol stated that parents especially parents who speak a language other than English will come and read to the children. Cher asserted that “as far as supporting the teacher as far as they can I don’t think there isn’t a parent in this school that doesn’t support” the teachers.

Money and financial support often can be limited. Many of the teachers stated that the children who live in the apartments could live in a cheaper area but live in more expensive apartments due to the education that their child can get at this school. Cher stated, “they’re in the apartments here that were expensive but they could be in apartments that were a lot cheaper but they won’t because of the education.” Sally stated, “I had one parent who told me last year that they would do anything I needed them to do if it didn’t involve money. I can be there. I can sit with the kids. I can cut stuff out. I can laminate. I can do all this stuff but I can’t donate and stuff like that.” Support comes in many different forms and amount from the parents depending on the situation. It appeared that much of the family support shifted and decreased as the child aged. Many parents would come in to the younger grades (e.g. first and second) more often than the parents of a fourth or fifth grader. The reason for this was not determined via teacher report.

Table 4.8: Support Systems

Participant	Quote
Brad	“I saw the parents when they brought him the first day and I have not seen them since; in their defense I am sure they were busy earning a living...”
Carol	“I think with the administration was knowing that the support was always there the parents I right now I do not have much contact with parents of these children we have more with the lower SES than somebody that just came from Mexico or Pakistan or something because I think they’re trying to get themselves together too.”
Ann	“I find that most of my parents will you know try to come in.”
Cher	“a family...can give just overall support to help within the classroom and we have those that were right here in the neighborhood”
Wes	“...that’s amazing the parents were very involved, especially in this school district.”
Star	“...actually you know administration was open to faculty of any color”
Sally	“...if the parent was going to be able to help throughout the year be supportive of this you already know all of that.”

### Summary

Through data analysis eight themes and twelve sub-themes were found.

The ethnically diverse classroom incorporated the many different cultures found within the classrooms and the participants' definition of cultural diversity. Cultural stereotyping and assumptions occurred consistently throughout the classes to identify the student's background and the culture of the student itself. The new term that was coined and echoed by most of the participants was that many of the classrooms and society were becoming "cultural-less"; this term encompassed the belief that no specific culture was celebrated rather all cultures were mixed until it was difficult to determine each child's and the school's individual culture. Teacher training included academic classes and the professional development courses that the administration of the school incorporated as well as "trial by fire" that the participants learned through experiences. Teaching strategies incorporated three sub-themes: teaching basic skills, teaching academics and beliefs regarding teaching ethnically diverse children. The challenges that teachers face in teaching ethnically diverse children was the sixth theme. Collaboration was found to have two sub-themes including collaboration between teachers and collaboration between students fostered by the participants. The last theme found was support systems. There were two sub-themes determined regarding support systems: administrative and family support. The consistency of theme and sub- was revealed during the data analysis of every participant.

## CHAPTER V.

### DISCUSSION

In the United States, the motto was *e pluribus unum*, which means “out of many, one.” It was during data collection and analysis this motto appeared to also be the motto of the participants. Although many teachers viewed cultural diversity as differences within groups, they viewed all students as having the same educational needs. During the study many themes and sub-themes emerged that exemplified the current trends in multicultural education. The major themes included: ethnically diverse classrooms, support systems, cultural stereotyping and assumptions, culture-less classroom and society, teacher preparation, teaching strategies, challenges, collaboration and support systems. Although many differences were noted within the classroom, which may be due to the age of the students and the grade taught by the teacher, many beliefs and attitudes regarding education of ethnically diverse children were similar. However, the central question to be answered was, “How do teachers teach to their student’s cultural diversity?” This question as well as the sub-questions will be the focus of this chapter.

The first sub-question was “How do teachers describe the training they received to work with ethnically diverse students?” As mentioned in chapter four under the theme of “teacher preparation”, the data indicated that only three of the seven participants—including the ELL teacher-- actually received training through their university programs regarding multicultural education. However, all of the participants received professional development training. A few stated they

learned how to educate ethnically diverse students through “trial by fire.”

However, according to the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education or NCATE diversity issues and experiences were to be implemented throughout the pre-service teachers’ education if the teacher attends an NCATE accredited university education program (NCATE, 2008). This trend in implementing diversity issues in education into the university programs began in the 1960’s during the Civil Rights movement (NCATE, 2008). Included in the Standard IV of NCATE was the requirement that teaching candidates were also required to have field experience with teaching ethnically diverse students (NCATE, 2008). This brought up the question during the interviews if the teachers had formal training during their education and did not remember or actually how comprehensive their education regarding cultural diversity in the classroom was?

There were four knowledge components all teachers should incorporate into their teaching (Banks, 2008; Banks & Banks, 1989). These include knowledge of the different theories of multicultural education, knowledge of the definitions and specific of the cultures in their classroom, knowledge regarding the history of their students’ culture and curricular needs (Banks, 2008). However, according to much research there was a significant lack of comprehensive inclusion of ethnically diverse information incorporated in pre-service teacher preparation. In fact, a common misconception of multicultural education was that classes on multicultural education should be separate (Aldridge, Calhoun, & Aman, 2002; Aldridge & Goldman, 2007). This appeared



to be common according to Barnes (2006). In fact, very few textbooks incorporated cultural diversity in any definitive way that could aid a teacher in detail on how to work with ethnically diverse students (Watson, Miller, Driver, Rutledge, and McAllister, 2005). However, research has indicated that more university training on multicultural education was imperative for teachers and other school personnel to develop necessary skills to educated ELL students (MacSwan & Rolstad, 2006; Roseberry-McKibbin et al., 2005).

The participants in this study appeared to have formulated their own curriculum and definitions of culture and the needs of their students because of their lack of formal university training. Ann completed activities based on her training such as using more visual stimuli rather than auditory with her ethnically diverse students especially those students who did not speak English. As Ann stated, “one of the main things I do was I use a lot of visuals...we always use some kind of picture.” Yet, all of the participants spoke on attending professional development courses provided by the school. As Cher stated, “[the Principal] has given me a lot of opportunities to go to different training sessions...we’ve had so many different things offered to us over the years so just in professional development.” Although according to most of the participants they did not receive formal university training, one wonders if this was possible due to NCATE (2008) standards.

The current standards of NCATE (2008) required professional development courses to implement training in diversity. According to NCATE (2008) professional development courses had to analyze gaps in achievement among racial groups, collaboration between other institutions to determine curriculum

and instructional approaches to educating ethnically diverse students and to recruit diverse faculty and administration. In fact, Star was quick to point out that “the administration was open to faculty of any color.” The professional development courses according to the participants provided information regarding cultural diversity and strategies of working with diverse students. As Sally stated when speaking on ELL workshops, “a lot of good information was provided to the faculty, how can you help this child, specifically the ESL child; how can you help them improve in your classroom.” The participants spoke on administration providing speakers from various cultures and ethnicities including the parents of ethnically diverse students. Wes stated, “the parents bring in different artifacts from their country; they’ve come in and shared different folk tales, perspectives, viewpoints.” Parents were often used a resources to not only educate the students but the participants as well on cultural diversity issues.

According to the participants, most teaching strategies that were incorporated into their classrooms were determined through trial and error or “trial by fire.” Four of the seven participants stated that professional development courses and classes did not help them learn how to teach ethnically diverse students rather learning to teach was through experience. Often because teachers were not formally taught how to educate ELL students or the feeling of being lost in the classroom causes many teachers to change careers (Anhorn, 2008). In fact, new teachers often needed teachers with more experience to aid them in the classroom because of the perceived lack of formal training (Brownell, Adams, Sindelar, Waldron, & Vanhover, 2006). In fact, four of the participants alluded to using

previous experiences to determine how to teach similar students or students from the same ethnic group because of their lack of formal training. However, this too was a misconception of multicultural education, that because two or more children were from the same area did not mean they learned the same nor had the same values (Aldridge et al., 2002; Aldridge & Goldman, 2007). For instance, when teaching math, the assumption that numerals was universal was erroneous. There were several different types of numerals depending on the language one speaks.

According to Aldridge and Goldman (2007), there were three major challenges of being an educator today. These challenges include: determining the purpose of education, how to school current students including ethnically diverse students and differences should be celebrated and embraced in the curriculum. Yet, the participants did not appear to embrace other than superficially the diversity of the students. In fact, most of the participants stressed that they and the students were “color blind” or that the students were all the same and viewed themselves as being the same. Sally stated, “it’s almost like they’re color blind as to the color.... not seeing in black and white...I mean there’s no obvious differences in color.” Cher said, “I don’t believe that children see skin color differences until they get to probably be in maybe fifth grade or even middle school.” When asked the cultural make up of his class, Brad stated in relation to ethnically diverse students, “I’ll have to count; I don’t think of them as different or that way.” Instead of treating all the children the same, the teacher’s should take into consideration the differences of the students and use those differences as a

strength. The school has attempted this by implementing a program referred to as differentiation. As Sally pointed out, differentiation means that “one teaching, one lesson doesn’t fit all.” Asking the students about a picture or an activity often prompts different answers due to the differences in students’ families, experiences and culture.

The sub-question, “What were the teacher’s beliefs regarding the cultures of the students?” was answered by the theme of cultural stereotyping and assumptions. There was a general feeling by the participants that the students who were middle and upper middle class had a general feeling of superiority that was often perpetuated by the parents. As Brad stated, “there were those who do come that have no problem looking at another child and saying, ‘I *am* better than you.’” This was not uncommon. According to many of the participants, many of the children who come from affluent backgrounds and spoke English would often form cliques and have preconceived ideas about the different culture but so did the participants.

Teachers often have preconceived ideas about specific cultures. As with Brad who stated that often when a child who was Asian one may think “his parents have to be researchers.” Many research studies have found that there was a link between the culture of the teacher and the education student and the beliefs he/she holds regarding specific cultures (Niehus, 2005; Eschevarria, Powers, & Short, 2006; Reeves, 2006). In fact, these researchers found that looking into one’s own beliefs would aid in recognizing preconceived ideas regarding cultural identity of his students (Reeves, 2006; Eschevarria et al, 2006). Often the participants would label the child according to socioeconomic status (apartment children

versus children living in houses) and ethnicity. The basis for the labels was the participants' preconceived ideas regarding the culture or SES of the child.

Joan Wink (2004) believed that labels did not aid in any type of education. Labeling as one public service announcer stated were for boxes. Although the use of labels for educational purposes was widely used, the participants used labels such as "apartment children" versus "children that lived in houses" which separated the students. Even those students who were ethnically diverse were labeled according to their families, ethnicity, gender and beliefs. This often separated the students into different categories such as "those that can" and "those that can't" as well as "those that were like me" and "those that were different." Today, differences were not always seen positively rather differences were seen as having to be labeled and separated (Wink, 2004). There was definitely a difference observed in the strategies teachers used when educating students who did not speak English. There has been a long standing debate on whether schools should continue to teach only in English or incorporate the child's native language in the academic setting which could decrease these misconceptions and preconceived ideas about an ELL students ability to learn.

There were two schools of thought related to teaching linguistically diverse students: English only approach and Native language approach (Battle, 2002). The English only approach was using English only in the classroom rather than using the child's native language to teach concepts and vocabulary. Four of the participants believed in using the child's native language to teach English vocabulary. Star believed that the "English only approach was the best approach

to teaching children since they have to learn English anyway.” However, Ann believed in using words in the child’s native language to teach English vocabulary concepts. According to research conducted by Wright (2004) using an English only approach could result in weaker primary language skills and difficulty at home and with self-identity.

There was an overall general belief of the participants that the students’ views and attitudes need to change rather than their own and the schools. According to Banks (1997), there were two main theories of multicultural education: Cultural Deprivation theory and Cultural Difference theory. The two thoughts centered on which to change, the student or the school? At this site the teachers appeared to believe that the students needed to change. For instance, teaching ethnically diverse students how to behave in the class was a concern with at least three of the teachers (e.g., how to stand in line, how to eat with silver ware). As Ann stated, “those were the students that were the very, very, very beginning levels” of learning how to function in the public school. Cultural Deprivation theorists believe that the students come with deficits rather than differences (Banks, 1997). This belief was manifested in many of the participants’ interviews and actions in such words as “teaching basic skills” associated with American schools and the separation of children in houses versus “apartment children”.

Several times during this study, I was caught off guard with the participants’ views and words. For example, during the interviews, all of the participants separated the children on the basis of where they lived. The participants separated children into “apartment children” versus “children from houses”, the

students were made aware of the differences in their own status. If the children lived in the houses, then the teachers appeared to view them as having more opportunities for acquisition of books, educational resources and language. For instance, Brad stated “children who were raised and have no idea if they live in a \$700,000 house or a \$700 apartment.” Sally referred to apartment children as they “won’t know that these aren’t smart or those were the kids who live in the apartments in [city] or those were the kids who all live in \$500,000 homes.”

The children who lived in the apartments has less access to books, the library and other education resources due to the limited resources of the parents. This further separated the children into the “haves” and “have nots” and the “can” and “cannots” which ultimately manifested into how a teacher interacted with the students. For instance, during the observations, in one class the teacher appeared to interact and give more autonomy to make decisions about activities to complete to the children that appeared more capable rather than allowing those children who were ethnically diverse and those that could be construed as special needs or lower socioeconomic. In fact, Sally alluded to this by saying, “those kids that were advanced tend to know everything and sometimes they, sometimes it feels like they dominate the classroom conversations so the kids who were average or below average were intimidated to speak up.” This was not unusual to observe in the classrooms especially depending on the subject. As Cher stated, “they aren’t aware of differences until later.” The overall findings suggested that the participants were not aware of their inherent attitudes towards ethnically and economically diverse students. However, one has to wonder if the participants

verbally refer to children as young as first grade by these labels then would the children become aware much faster of their differences?

The Cultural Difference theory recognized that ethnically diverse children exhibited differences in learning and behavior rather than deficits (Banks, 1997). This theory indicated that schools and administration needed to change the way in which they educate children according to those differences rather than the students adapting to the school (Banks, 1997). One way this was exhibited was with Star's PATH program that targeted African American males that were lower in test scores in reading. This program was devised by an African American teacher, Star, due to her ability to recognize that African American males in this school exhibited difficulty reading and the manner this program was implemented targeted their strengths specifically oral story telling and more narrative and conversation than lecturing. Most research indicates that African American appear to learn more when education was based on a more oral, story-telling approach (Battle, 2002). I was able to observe one PATH activity. Interestingly during this day, the teacher was a white male. He read to the African American male students and allowed them to sit how they wanted (e.g., on the floor or in a chair) to make them feel comfortable; he read to these students out-loud a book that was recommended by several African American authors as authentic. The book outlined an African American male student who went to an all white school and how he was able to fit in. The teacher used an open, conversational format to engage the students. No students' question went unanswered.



Another example was the atmosphere of the school. It was the belief according to most teachers that the differences should be celebrated in what appeared as a superficial manner rather than in a profound meaningful way. For example, for the past few years, the library has sponsored a cultural fair that encouraged ethnically diverse students and any other student that wanted to participate to exhibit a poster regarding his/her culture. Carol spoke about the cultural fair as a two day/night event. She stated, “they were allowed to do a poster or tri-fold board about their cultures; they could bring in artifacts that they have and they bring in food, food items and it started mostly for those children who were ethnically diverse.” This did not teach of differences except in a superficial manner such as food items, mainstream customs, and the flags or more popular culture. This fair did not target traditions of the culture, language in a specific manner, or aspects of the culture such as educational values and beliefs. As Maya Angelou stated once that she hopes there would not be a need for Black History month. The belief of promoting cultural pluralism and equality of the educational and social structure system was an example of the Multicultural Social Justice Education (Sleeter & Grant, 2007). This should be the overall goal of education.

One other theme that emerged was the idea of a “culture-less” society which was coined by Brad, fell under the sub-question, “What were teacher’s beliefs regarding the specific cultures of the students?” It was found that if the teacher did not know or could not find out from research or the child his/her cultural beliefs, he/she did not attempt to continue to investigate. For example, Brad stated, “it’s important if you’re going to be here I would like you to come to this

country with what culture you already possess and be able to share that or if you don't have that then you need to be open to what you get." The theme of a culture-less society was echoed by many of the participants. Many of the participants stated that they would ask the student about their culture and beliefs and often they would not be able to answer.

Another finding was that the teachers would often assume that the students would celebrate a holiday or have a cultural identity associated with their ethnicity or race and the assumption would be erroneous. Therefore teachers relied on how the majority of the children who were from the United States learned. As stated before with the advent of *No Child Left Behind* (2001), students regardless of culture were being taught the same material in the same manner. I believe that Brad said it best when he stated, "we're leaving them all behind. We were so worried about not leaving them behind we were stepping on them as we left them behind." Taking into consideration the culture of the child not just the child's family or ethnicity or race was important as well as his culture.

This misconception that children identifies with one culture and that there was no need to study other cultures was pervasive throughout five of the seven participants' comments (Aldridge et al., 2002; Aldridge & Goldman, 2007). Instead of identifying each child's culture and teaching to that child's strengths, many of the participants demonstrated the negativity of misidentifying the child's culture as a deficit. For instance, because a child was Mexican and did not know what *Cinco de Mayo* meant did not mean that the child was no longer Mexican; this meant that the child has embraced his/her own culture to make it his/her own.

Brad stated, “I mean that truly in the rightness of the work, you know, *Cinco de Mayo* they have no idea; it’s like me not knowing the fourth of July.” However, it should be noted that in most Mexican towns and villages *Cinco de Mayo* was not as important as other holidays. *Cinco de Mayo* was often more celebrated in the United States than in Mexico. Most of the time people tend to associate cultures with trends that were viewed through movies, television or other mainstream popular types of culture rather than investigating in-depth the culture of the individual child (Scapp, 1993). The differences in popular culture and traditional culture of the family also affected where the child would assimilate or acculturate into the culture of the school and community.

Many children in today’s schools have acculturated into the United States. They may retain some of their own cultural heritage but adopt many of the characteristics of the host culture; where as, children who have assimilated have begun to deny their own native culture and become part of the host culture (Banks, 2008; Battle, 2002). These concepts were also dependent upon several aspects such as how long the children have been in the United States and attending public schools and how many generations they have been here and if the children have older siblings who were apart of the school system. As Ann highlighted, “Most of the time if they were little bit older second grade, third grade they usually have some knowledge of English...if there was a parent in the home or older sibling they’ll teach the child.” Instead of deeming the children culture-less, one should look at the history, environment, familial relationships

and the reason a child did not appear to have a specific culture. This was not a deficit rather a difference.

The last sub-question, “What strategies were teachers using to educate ethnically diverse students in their classroom?” was answered by five themes. These themes included: ethnically diverse classrooms, teaching strategies, challenges, collaboration and support systems. The participants used the previous knowledge of the student’s such as reading skills, native language and the particular learning style of the student to teach him the necessary educational skills. Although there differences in the teaching styles and grades of the teachers, there were commonalities on strategies of educating ethnically diverse students including hands-on activities, visual strategies and working in collaboration with other students and teachers. One could not determine a specific method or strategies without first determining the types of diverse students.

Each of the classrooms had at least one ethnically diverse student. However, as mentioned previously cultural diversity according to the participants was not defined as just race but also learning styles and ethnicities. For instance, Brad just stated, “just because we do not have just African American does not mean we don’t have ethnic diversity.” The teachers believed that meeting the needs of all children was very important. Sally stated, “we provide opportunities for all the students and meet the needs of all...of everyone was what our goal and our focus was.” However, one note was that focusing on just the needs of one child especially the linguistically diverse child was not a feasible goal for the

participants. As Brad pointed out, “I have 17 other students he’s (Japanese student) not the only one, you know, if he was the only one he’d learn a great deal but he’s not the only one.” The diversity of the students often determined the methods and strategies the teachers used to educate ethnically diverse children.

Another theme, teaching strategies, were the methods that teachers implemented to educate ethnically diverse students. The strategies that the participants appeared to use incorporated the differences of the students yet the strategies did not embrace the true differences of the cultures of the children except in a superficial way. For instance, when walking into the school there were several flags hanging in the front that represented different nations of the students. As Carol stated, “the media specialist before me...wanted to know about everybody’s culture; she ordered those flags.” However, the flags represented the countries the children were from but not the specific culture of the child. Yet, the curriculum and strategies that were used to teach exemplified the misconceptions of multicultural education determined by Aldridge, Calhoun, and Aman (2002) and Aldridge and Goldman (2007).

A misconception about multicultural education was that development and implementation of an education curriculum should be the same regardless of the culture of the students (Aldridge et al., 2002). Each participant used several types of strategies to incorporate multicultural children into the class; however, the strategies used were many times the same strategies to teach all the children in the classroom. One way that the teachers continue to support the current curricular of the school and government was to continue to teach in a “hit and run” manner.

The overview of different cultures and the history of America were based on the time of year. Native Americans were studied in November during Thanksgiving and the African Americans were studied during the month of February rather than celebrated everyday. The teachers taught curricular that had been taught for years such as Columbus discovering America. This was referred to as hidden curriculum (Aldridge & Goldman, 2007; Bishop, 1993). The participants did not appear to be aware that the teaching that this teaching was questionable.

Another misconception regarding multicultural education was that the “children’s books about another culture were usually authentic” (Aldridge et al., 2002, p. 14). In each classroom and in the library, there were books that depicted several ethnic and racial groups including Hispanic, African American and Arabic but the authenticity of the books were not referred by the teachers as being researched before choosing the books to be used by the students. However, Carol, the media center specialist, researched the foreign language and ethnically diverse books before exhibiting them in the library. She stated, “you don’t get a whole lot of books from certain cultures and in fact, you find out they didn’t do their research and misrepresenting the culture; that was invaluable to me...culturally authentic was what you want it to be.” In fact, the library has books such as Harry Potter in Spanish so that children who can read Spanish could check out the same popular books that were read by their English speaking peers. Carol indicated, “chapter books in different languages in Spanish, yes, we have the Harry Potter books because those children want to check out the same books as their peers.”

However, the linguistically diverse book section in the library was small; the librarian stated that she wanted to increase the number of books.

In the classrooms, the ELL teacher had the most linguistically diverse books but the classrooms did not appear to have many. Ann researched many types of books to determine the most authentic books. As Ann stated, “the children want to read what other children were reading.” The distinction between linguistically diverse books and ethnically diverse books was that the linguistically books were books written in English and the same books were written in another language that the children were free to check out of the library or from the ELL teacher. Yet, the books that could be classified as ethnically diverse, specifically gender, family, ethnic and racially diverse were few. The teachers should be aware of how to authenticate the material and ethnically diverse books rather than relying on the description of the book (Bishop, 1993).

The use of visual and hands-on activities was used often to incorporate learning of English. All participants used a form of labeling objects around the classroom or in books to aid in understanding of the English vocabulary. Ann would “translate different items in the classroom and then label those things in the first language.” The use of environmental print was not used in teaching reading or familiarizing the students with the English words and vocabulary (Aldridge, Kirkland, & Kuby, 1996). As research has demonstrated the use of visuals, graphic organizers, and hands-on experiences aid in the overall acquisition of vocabulary and academic skills needed to successfully perform in school (Weisman & Hanson, 2007; Wright, 2004).

A strategy that was common was for the participants to use other children who spoke the language to peer-tutor or translate (Saenz et al., 2005). Using peer-tutoring and other students to aid in communication assisted the teachers who did not speak another language to ensure the accuracy of the directions for the student. For example, when Star began to teach numerals she attempted to use another child who spoke the native language of the other child; Star stated, “the other little boy translated he couldn’t do it.” Lack of linguistic competence, parent education and cultural differences in the main stream classroom were seen as challenges to the ELL students’ education.

The challenges to implementing specific strategies included the language of the child. Each of the participants appeared to feel more comfortable with the students that were ethnically diverse than those that were linguistically diverse, which was understandable since the teacher’s did not speak another language competently to converse with the linguistically diverse student. The hands-on activities such as science allowed the students who were English competent and those that were not to interact and learn how to make the object but often the concept behind the activity was missed (Weisman & Hanson, 2007; Wright, 2004). This was observed during one class. The teacher was teaching about centrifugal force by making spinners. All the children could make the spinner but the questions regarding the science concept asked by the teacher were not understandable to all the children. As Sally stated, “I ask a bunch of questions; you’re going to get different answers based on their backgrounds.” Background and language affect overall academic success of an ELL student.



Solorzano (2008) researched different methods of testing and assessment instruments used today in schools. As with many schools, this particular school utilized the Stanford Achievement Test (10<sup>th</sup> ed.) or SAT-10. Most schools use English assessments with all children regardless of the child's native language. As reviewed in chapter two, politicians and administration do not take into consideration the language of the student when administering tests. Solorzano (2008) found that testing ELL students using English tests make retention and failure of grades possible as well as the loss of validity of test scores. Not only were ELL students affected by the tests that were administered but students who were lower SES were affected. For instance, in this school for the year 2006-2007, students who qualified for free and reduced lunch on average scored in the 26<sup>th</sup> percentile in reading on the SAT-10 as opposed to 64<sup>th</sup> percentile of general education students in third grade; on the language section students in fourth grade who qualified for free and reduced lunch placed in the 56<sup>th</sup> percentile as opposed to 79<sup>th</sup> percentile that general education children placed (Alabama Department of Education, 2007). According to Solorzano (2008), although the school was also responsible for the academic success of the students, the parents were also an important component in education of ELL students. However, another challenge determined during research to ELL students' education was their parents' own education.

The lack of parental education affected the ability of the students to complete homework and to understand class work. The participants often pointed out that the lower SES parents were too busy working to read to their children or even

encourage their children to bring home a library book for fear of being unable to replace the book if lost. Carol stated, “parents don’t want the responsibility of the book and say they don’t have time to read to their children.” One program called “baby steps” was a program that allowed lower SES parents to learn how to support their children’s education through community volunteers (Yates, 2004). Overall collaboration between families specifically parents as well as between teachers and students fostered by the teachers was important.

The theme of collaboration between teachers and between students fostered by the participants was observed throughout the day and information provided during the interview and journals. The teachers utilized the aid from the ELL teacher and from each other to gain new insights, ideas and strategies to ensure the academic success of the students. Wes stated, “our ELL teacher here, Ann, works directly with the teachers.” During the interview many of the participants spoke of collaborating with the ELL teacher. In fact, Ann stated, “I work a lot with the teachers and so it’s interesting to see what they were doing in their classrooms.” However, in Ann’s journal, she wrote, “It would be great if I could learn more about what students were learning in the regular classroom” and “I would really like to be seen as a member of my student’s educational team. I think greater collaboration between teachers would help the education of the students.” Interestingly, Ann was the only participant who wrote in her journal about collaborating with the teachers; none of the other participants wrote about working with Ann but mentioned working with Ann in their interviews. However, there were two participants who did not appear to appreciate the ELL

teacher's input which could be due to the amount of experience that these two teachers had as compared to the amount of experience the ELL teacher had (e.g., 14 and 24 years versus the three years of the ELL teacher). One quote that demonstrated that collaboration between everyone and each other was greatly needed was from Cher. Cher stated that, "I don't have an original thought in my head somebody else has said and I changed it and made it my own."

Collaboration between students was often found to be important for social and academic success. Research indicated using peer tutoring and group activities increased overall academic success especially in relation to ELL students (Carrier, 2005; Speck, 2003; Tasker, 2007). Each of the participants mentioned that they utilized peer tutoring and group activities. As Sally stated, "I mix them all up at the tables." She did this to help in the ELL or ethnically diverse students' success. All the participants used some form of collaboration between students to allow each ethnically diverse student to increase understanding and completion of the work.

Although this particular school had great administrative support, often schools that were in the lower socioeconomic schools do not. Kozol (1992) found that most administrations did not have the funding to provide even the most basic of materials-books. Where as, in this particular school, the teachers were provided with necessary support to implement education strategies to teach all students especially the ethnically diverse student. In fact, according to all the participants if the teachers needed some resources than the school was able to provide these. As Ann stated, "as the materials go...we were very well provided for." However,

one should take into consideration that the school system and school were wealthier than schools in other districts.

Both the Principal and Assistant Principal were a visible support in the classrooms. The Assistant Principal ate with the students and read with the students. Both the Principal and Assistant Principal were teachers before going into administration which allowed them to fully understand the workings and needs of the teachers in the classrooms. As Sally stated, “you just go to them and act like they were co-workers...they want us to treat them that way...as if I were the teacher next door.” The Assistant Principal was an African American woman with her Ph.D. and encouraged professional development in the area of cultural diversity issues. She also began a lending library at the apartments where many of the children did not have access to a public library or books in the home.

Parental support was great depending on parental resources. At the beginning of each semester the teachers would meet with the parents to determine their needs and their child’s needs. Most parents show up but some were unable to do to work issues. As Brad stated, “most were just trying to survive.” However, according the participants the parents just want the best education for their children and the teachers believe that the best education was at their school. As Cher stated, “they could live in cheaper apartments but don’t because they want their children to receive the best education.” Parents who worked to survive and to stay in the United States most often were unable to participate on an ongoing daily basis or financially. As Wes stated, “parents were crucial to their

child's development.” All of the participants believe that family support was crucial to their student's success especially the diverse students.

Research has indicated that parent involvement was important for the academic success of ethnically diverse students (Doherty, 2005; Giacchino-Baker & Piller, 2006; Petterson & Heywood, 2007). Yet, the teachers and participants found difficulty in getting many of the ethnically diverse parents to participate.

Findings indicated that often parents would support the teacher in many activities such as homework if they were able or with signing permission forms when needed but physical and financial support was often the last to be provided. Many times the barriers to family support were because parents were living in an affluent neighborhood and trying to make ends meet as well as overcoming the cultural barriers that inhibited their understanding of how to support their children's education (Smith, 2007). Without the support of the parents these children were often left feeling left out or behind their peers.

### *Limitations*

This study had seven participants: two African American teachers (one male and one female), four Caucasian teachers (one male and three females) and one Caucasian female librarian. The following were limitations of this study:

- There were no other ethnically diverse teachers included in the study.
- More in-depth data was needed to continue to authenticate the findings of the study.
- Materials used by the participants in educating an ELL student needed to be included in the study.

- An increase in the time period of the observations to include more classroom time and subjects was needed for better transferability of data.
- More time spent in the setting was needed to gain more insight and data.
- A more thorough investigation of the setting including administration and policies and mission of the school was needed.

### *Implications*

This research study demonstrated the gap between the educations of teachers' preparation in working with ethnically diverse students. Teachers had to use a combination of trial and error and what little professional development they received to utilize the ethnically diverse student's strengths in learning. With the increase in federal mandates for all children regardless of culture and language to pass English standardized testing, teachers were faced with the monumental task of educating all children within a mainstream environment. As Brad stated, "I have other children in the classroom besides them [linguistically and ethnically diverse students]".

The questions that have arisen in this study have increased throughout the research. There were several avenues of continued research needed before a clearer picture of teacher's preparation needs in educating ethnically diverse students was found. However, the driving force of all teachers was to provide the best education for all children in their classrooms. The need for continued training and implementation of programs at the level of the university was apparent. Although training and classes at the university will not completely fulfill the need of teachers to be educated regarding cultural differences, this

continued education and training allowed the teachers some comfort in knowing how to teach to a child's cultural strength. Yet, as many of the participants found that training including in-services provided by the school could only help so far before most of their learning to work with ethnically diverse students came from trial-and-error. More education on the requirements of the schools including legislation, teaching strategies and current practices was needed for pre-service teachers. Teachers should be given the opportunity to utilize the ethnically diverse student's culture rather than teaching them exactly the same because no one learns or was just like everyone else.

#### *Unanswered Questions*

The reason for the study was to determine how a teacher educated ethnically diverse students. There were several similarities between teacher beliefs and attitudes towards mainstream ELL students especially those students who were ethnically diverse. It was very apparent that all of the participants believed in providing the best possible education for all students. However, there were still unanswered questions remaining:

1. If the school viewed cultural diversity as an advantage rather than a disadvantage would the teaching strategies change? If so how?
2. If professional development courses targeted specific strategies would the teachers' beliefs regarding mainstream ELL students differ? If so how?
3. Could the school develop a more cohesive team approach incorporating administration, the teachers and the ELL teacher in determining the best educational method for ethnically diverse students?

4. What can teachers do to increase the parental involvement of those parents who work and were unable to actively support the school either through their presence or financially?
5. What do we call children who live in apartments without setting them apart?
6. How could the teachers foster a positive change in what they viewed as “apartment” children versus those that live in houses?

#### *Overall significance*

The study sought to be the voice of the teachers and school personnel who work with ethnically diverse students. The opinions, beliefs and attitudes of the teachers and other personnel were authentically represented through their own words. By allowing the words of the participants to be heard administration, other teachers and parents can view the needs of teachers who were currently serving in the school system including further education at the university level and professional development courses. There should be further investigation into this phenomenon to expand and clarify other findings.

#### *Recommendations for future research*

There were several avenues of future research that can be addressed including the following:

- Future research could include the administration as participants.



- Using teachers who teach the same grades as each other to determine the parallels of the findings.
- Another avenue for research was the idea of a culture-less society and classroom and how children learn about their cultural identity.
- More time in observing teacher behavior and implementation of strategies.
- Include observations of ethnically diverse students.
- Include teaching materials including lesson plans, books and other educational resources.
- Use more than one site.
- Use different schools and districts.
- Use different grades to determine the beliefs of many different ages.
- Include new teachers who have only taught for a year and those who have taught many years to gain insight into how their beliefs have shifted and changed regarding educating ethnically diverse students.
- Conduct a longitudinal study to follow pre-service teachers until their first three years of teaching.
- Use schools that have a higher percentage of ethnically diverse teachers.
- Use schools that have a higher percentage of ethnically diverse students.
- Use schools in lower, middle and upper middle class sections of the state.

*Recommendations for future practice*

There were several books and articles written that provide examples both specific and broad about educating ethnically diverse students. However, there

were few general strategies that should be implemented before educating all children especially ethnically diverse children. These include:

- Determine your own beliefs and attitudes regarding specific cultures in your class. This could decrease biases to cultural diversity.
- Research the culture of your children; however, ask before assuming that what you found was a true representation of *that* child's culture. Not all children from Mexico will celebrate *Cinco de Mayo*.
- Learn the composition of the child's family. If it was a patriarchal family, then the father will make the most decisions; if the grandparents were the primary caregiver you will have to communicate closely with them.
- Work as a team. Include all school personnel who will have contact with the child and include the parents in any educational decisions of the child.
- Realize that there were differences within ethnic groups. Not all children from Mexico will have the same customs. The traditions of the children not only depend on the country but the family's beliefs and the area they were from.
- Do not look at a difference as a deficit. For example, if the child does not know how to stand in line or eat with silverware does not mean that this was a deficit; rather this was a difference in their culture. Another example was language use. The way a child communicates may be a difference in language (e.g., lack of eye contact, not speaking up, different grammar), not a disorder.

- The best form of research was to ask. Ask the parents, the ELL teacher, other students, and the child if you were unsure how to interact in a culturally appropriate manner.
- Although NCLB (2001) requires testing such as the SAT-10, use other sources of authentic assessments to determine the capabilities of the students. Testing should inform not just punish. For instance, develop portfolios of the students' work over the year to track progress such as writing samples, books read, and other forms of work that the student has completed. This allows for a more comprehensive view of the child's abilities.

### Summary

There were seven themes and twelve sub-themes that were developed during data analysis. The theme of ethnically diverse classrooms incorporated the sub-themes manner of diversity and participants' definition of diversity. One cannot determine the answers to the questions without determining the make up of the cultures in the classrooms and what the participants' definition of diversity was. Cultural stereotyping and assumptions as well as cultural-less classroom and society were themes that were determine through data analysis. Teacher training developed into three sub-themes; the teachers that received course work on multicultural education at the university level and those that received information through personal development courses; those that received more of an education on working with ethnically diverse students through trial and error or "trial by fire." The teaching strategies were divided into three sub-themes: teaching basic skills, teaching academics, and beliefs regarding teaching ethnically diverse

students. The theme “Challenges” was found to be aspects the teachers had to overcome to teach an ELL student. The theme of collaboration was found to be an important tool; two sub-themes that were developed were collaboration between teachers and collaboration between students fostered by the participants. The last theme “Support systems” was divided into two sub-themes: administrative support and family support. All of the themes and sub-themes were supported through observations, interviews and journals of the participants. Limitations and future research were explained in detail in the next sections.

*Closing Vignette*

*It was the end of the year, FINALLY! The teacher put the last student on the bus and thought back over the year. With the new students, school and the new cultures and languages she encountered, she wondered how she made it through. She thought back to the first few months and how she felt as if she was leaving behind the English speaking students because of focusing on those that did not speak English. However, she had finally figured out that asking some of the parents and other teachers especially the ELL teacher's advice and help that she could survive and provide an education to these students or what she thought was a good education. She still feels unsure whether the students got everything from class that they could. She asked herself, "Was it enough? How do I make my teaching better for ethnically diverse students?" Oh well, she thought "it was the last day which meant two months 'off' before beginning again...a new year...a new class...new cultures."*

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## Appendix A: IRB Approval



Form 4: IRB Approval Form  
Identification and Certification of Research  
Projects Involving Human Subjects

UAB's Institutional Review Boards for Human Use (IRBs) have an approved Federalwide Assurance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). The UAB IRBs are also in compliance with 21 CFR Parts 50 and 56 and ICH GCP Guidelines. The Assurance became effective on November 24, 2003 and expires on September 19, 2010. The Assurance number is FWA00005960.

Principal Investigator: WALDREP, DANIELLE R

Co-Investigator(s):

Protocol Number: **X071023003**

Protocol Title: *A Case Study Exploring Teaching Practices of Teachers in an Alabama Elementary School with Multicultural Children in Their Classroom*

The IRB reviewed and approved the above named project on 11/12/07. The review was conducted in accordance with UAB's Assurance of Compliance approved by the Department of Health and Human Services. This Project will be subject to Annual continuing review as provided in that Assurance.

This project received EXPEDITED review.

IRB Approval Date: 11-12-07

Date IRB Approval Issued: 11/12/07

Marilyn Doss, M.A.  
Vice Chair of the Institutional Review  
Board for Human Use (IRB)

Investigators please note:

The IRB approved consent form used in the study must contain the IRB approval date and expiration date.

IRB approval is given for one year unless otherwise noted. For projects subject to annual review research activities may not continue past the one year anniversary of the IRB approval date.

Any modifications in the study methodology, protocol and/or consent form must be submitted for review and approval to the IRB prior to implementation.

Adverse Events and/or unanticipated risks to subjects or others at UAB or other participating institutions must be reported promptly to the IRB.

470 Administration Building  
701 20th Street South  
205.934.3789  
Fax 205.934.1301  
irb@uab.edu

The University of  
Alabama at Birmingham  
Mailing Address:  
AB 470  
1530 3RD AVE S  
BIRMINGHAM AL 35294-0104



## Appendix B: IRB Amendment

**U4B****Project Revision/Amendment Form****IRB**

(PLEASE TYPE: In MS Word, highlight the shaded, underlined box and replace with your text; double-click checkboxes to check/uncheck.)

- Federal regulations require IRB approval before implementing proposed changes.
- Change means any change, in content or form, to the protocol, consent form, or any supportive materials (such as the Investigator's Brochure, questionnaires, surveys, advertisements, etc.).
- Complete this form and attach the changed research documents.

MAR - 7 2008

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL  
REVIEW BOARDToday's Date: March 3, 2008**1. Contact Information**Principal Investigator's Name: Danielle R Waldrep BlazerID: 419886563 E-mail: waldrepdr@montevallo.eduContact Person's Name: Danielle Waldrep BlazerID: 419886563 E-mail: waldrepdr@montevallo.eduTelephone: (205) 665-6729 Fax: (205) 665-6721Campus Address: N/A**2. Protocol Identification**Protocol Title: A Case Study Exploring Teaching Practices of Teachers in an Elementary School with Multicultural Children in Their ClassroomIRB Protocol Number: X071023003**Current Status of Project (check only one):**

- ☒ Currently in Progress (Number of participants entered: 4)
- ☐ Study has not yet begun (No participants entered)
- ☐ Closed to participant enrollment (remains active)—  
Number of participants on therapy/intervention: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of participants in long-term follow-up only: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Closed to participant enrollment (data analysis only)—  
Total number of participants enrolled: \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED  
*Marilyn Doss* 3-11-08  
MARILYN DOSS, M.A.  
Vice Chair - IRB

**This submission changes the status of this study in the following manner (check all that apply):**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Protocol Revision   | <input type="checkbox"/> Revised Consent Form                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Protocol Amendment  | <input type="checkbox"/> Addendum (new) consent form                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Study Closed to participant entry   | <input type="checkbox"/> Enrollment temporarily suspended by sponsor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Study Closure   | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in protocol personnel                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other, (specify) <u>Increase the number of participants from four to seven</u> |  |

**3. Reason for change**

Briefly describe, and explain the reason for, the change. If normal, healthy controls are included, describe in detail how this change will affect those participants.

Include a copy of the protocol and any other documents affected by this change (e.g., consent form, questionnaire) with all the changes highlighted.

The reason to increase the number of participants from four to seven is to expand the sample size of the study to ensure accuracy of the data and findings and transferability of data.**4. Does this change revise or add a genetic or storage of samples component?**☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, please see the Guidebook to assist you in revising or preparing your submission, or call the IRB office at 934-3789.

**5. Does the change affect subject participation (e.g. procedures, risks, costs, etc.)?**☐ Yes ☒ No**6. Does the change affect the consent document(s)?**☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, briefly discuss the changes. \_\_\_\_\_

Include the revised consent document with the changes highlighted.

Will any participants need to be reconsented as a result of the changes? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, when will participants be reconsented? \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Principal Investigator *[Signature]*Date 3/3/08doba 11/20/07



## Appendix C: Teachers' Recruitment Letter

October 30, 2007

Dear Teacher,

I am conducting a study exploring the educational strategies that teachers use to instruct students in their classroom who were ethnically diverse. Cultural diversity includes children that were culturally different from mainstream American students including English Language Learners. Educational strategies include any approach you specifically use to teach ethnically diverse children the core curriculum (i.e., math, science and reading). With the advent of No Child Left Behind (2001) teachers were required to have students proficient in English to pass standardized tests. This study will reflect the current trends in this particular elementary school in educating ethnically diverse students in a regular education classroom and in an ELL classroom. As a teacher of ethnically diverse students, I am inviting you to participate in this study regarding your teaching practices and strategies in educating the ethnically diverse students.

The time frame for this study was November 2007. I am asking you to participate in an interview inquiring about your knowledge regarding multicultural issues, your beliefs and experiences with ethnically diverse students. This interview will be an in-depth face-to-face or phone interview at a mutually convenient time and place. Prior to this interview, select questions will be distributed for your review; however, during the interview the researcher may explore and/or clarify your responses further. During the interview process audio and/or video recording will be conducted to transcribe and ensure accuracy of all data collected. In addition, a reflective journal will be given to you at the time of your interview for your reflections following your teaching. Field notes and observations will be conducted as well as a review of your lesson plans to gain insight into your teaching practices. Your continued participation was requested for a four week period to list and journal about your experiences as a teacher exploring and educating the ethnically diverse students. All information completed on the journals, lesson plans, observations and during the interviews will be kept confidential. All of the participants will create a pseudonym for this case study to protect your anonymity.

The data from the research will be shared among students and the instructor in an University research class. If you were interested, I would be happy to share the findings of my project. There were no known threats or risks to the participants in this study. You have the option to withdraw from this study at any time without repercussions.

It was your right to have any questions regarding your participation answered. If you have were interested in participating in this research study, please contact me at 665-3611 (home) or 218-9799 (cell).

Respectfully yours,

Danielle Waldrep

## Appendix D: Principal and Assistant Principal's Recruitment Letter

October 12, 2007

Dear Dr. Principal and Dr. VP,

I am conducting a study exploring the teaching practices of teachers who have or work with ethnically diverse students in the classroom. With the advent of No Child Left Behind (2001) teachers were required to have students proficient in English to pass standardized tests. This study will reflect the current trends in this particular elementary school in educating ethnically diverse students in a regular education classroom and in an ELL classroom.

The time frame for this study was the end of October to November 2007 (approximately four weeks). I would like to explore via interviews (at least two), observations (at least two) and lesson plans about your teacher's knowledge regarding multicultural issues, their beliefs and experiences with ethnically diverse students. The interview will be an in-depth face-to-face or phone interview at a mutually convenient time and place. In addition, a reflective journal will be given to the teachers for their reflections following teaching; the journals will be filled out by the teachers twice weekly. Field notes and observations (at least two) will be conducted as well as a review of the teacher's lesson plans to gain insight into their teaching practices with ethnically diverse students. The teachers continued participation was requested for a four week period to list and journal about their experiences as a teacher educating the ethnically diverse students. All information completed on the journals, lesson plans, observations and during the interviews will be kept confidential. All of the participants will create a pseudonym for this case study to protect your anonymity.

The data from the research will be shared among students and the instructor in an University research class. If you were interested, I would be happy to share the findings of my project. There were no known threats or risks to the participants in this study. You have the option to withdraw from this study at any time without repercussions.

It was your right to have any questions regarding your participation answered. If you have any questions or want further information regarding the purpose of this study, please contact me at 665-3611 (home) or 218-9799 (cell) or via email [waldrepdr@montevallo.edu](mailto:waldrepdr@montevallo.edu).

Respectfully yours,  
Danielle Waldrep

## Appendix E: Interview Protocol

### Multicultural Education

Central Question: How do teachers teach to their students' cultural diversity?

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

#### **Introduction:**

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet and speak with me today. I just want to take a minute to go over what we will be doing during this interview. I will be writing and recording what you say during this interview to ensure the accuracy of the information you provide. The transcription of what you say will be written exactly as you responded to the questions I've asked. The purpose of transcribing verbatim your response was to include as much information as you can so that the answers you provide for my study was as correct as possible. I will also give you the opportunity to review the transcription of your answers for accuracy.

I also want to take the time to reassure that all information collected during the interview will be kept confidential. Although I provided you with the questions for this interview before meeting so that you may have time to think over and reflect on your responses, please feel free to discuss any answers or ask questions regarding the information already provided. I may ask you some additional questions throughout the interview to expand or clarify the information you provide to make sure of the accuracy of the information. Are you ready to start?

---

Icebreaker 1: Tell me about your class.

Icebreaker #2: Tell me about your teaching experience.

For this interview I want to focus on your children that were ethnically diverse.

Question 1:

Tell me what the cultural background of your students. (Clarification: What type of different cultures including countries and languages do you have in your classroom?).

Question 2:

What type of training did you receive to work with ethnically diverse students? How do you feel that this training has enabled you to work with ethnically diverse students?

Question 3:

Please explain to me any strategies that you use with your ethnically diverse students when teaching them the main subjects such as math, science and reading.

Question 4: What beliefs do you have regarding the specific cultures in your classroom (e.g. English only, using culture to teach, and having different cultures in the regular education classroom).

Question 5: What support systems internal (administration) and external (parents) do you use to aid in your teaching?

Question 6: How were these supports useful?

Question 7:

Is there anything you would like to add or have I left anything out?

Thank you again for taking time out of your busy schedule to speak with me. Once I have your answers transcribed I will be more than happy to send them to you for your review. If needed may I contact you again to clarify or add to the interview information you have provided. At this time I want to remind you of the confidentiality steps that I will take to ensure your privacy. At this time I would like you to choose a pseudonym that you would like to be used in the study.

---



## Appendix F: Reflective Journal

**Reflective Journal  
My Experiences**

**This was a reflective journal that was to be used to make notes regarding your experiences in the classroom with teaching ethnically diverse students. These reflections will be used to provide additional information to gain as much insight to your teaching practices.**

**Name of participant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Classroom:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please list any strategies used during teaching reading, math and science that utilized the culture of the child.**

**How did the strategies work? What were the strengths and weakness of the strategies?**

**What were some changes that you may make to ensure that a child will learn the material?**

**I wish I could? What were some ways that you can be more supported in your role as a teacher in the classroom?**

**Are there any changes or new awareness made by you regarding the specific cultures in your classroom during the week and if so, please elaborate on your thoughts, beliefs, values or experiences.**

## Appendix G: QSR N6 Transcript of Themes and Sub-Themes

SR N6 Full version, revision 6.0.

Licensee: Unregistered.

PROJECT: Pilot study Copy, User DW, 11:27 pm, Dec 12, 2007.

### REPORT ON NODES FROM Tree Nodes '~/'

Depth: ALL

Restriction on coding data: NONE

- (1) /Culturally Diverse Classrooms
- (2) /Cultural Stereotyping
- (3) /Culture-less Classroom and Society
- (4) /Teaching Strategies
- (4 1) /Teaching Strategies/Basic Skills
- (4 2) /Teaching Strategies/Academics
- (4 3) /Teaching Strategies/Using their culture or not
- (5) /Support Systems
- (5 1) /Support Systems/Family Support
- (5 2) /Support Systems/Administration Support
- (6) /Collaboration
- (6 1) /Collaboration/Collaboration between teachers
- (6 2) /Collaboration/Collaboration between students
- (7) /Teacher Training on ELL
- (A) //Document Annotations
- (F) //Free Nodes
- (T) //Text Searches
- (N) //Node Searches
- (C) //Node Clipboard.

# Appendix H: QSR N6 Example of Tree Nodes, Memos and Descriptions

QSR N6 Full version, revision 6.0.

Licensee: Unregistered.

PROJECT: Pilot study Copy, User DW, 11:29 pm, Dec 12, 2007.

REPORT ON NODE (3) '/Culture-less Classroom and Society'

Restriction to document: NONE

\*\*\*\*\*

(3) /Culture-less Classroom and Society

\*\*\* No Description

+++++

+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: Annfin1

+++ Retrieval for this document: 9 units out of 424, = 2.1%

++ Text units 386-394:

uh in our teaching and lesson plans I was thinking about my kids that were  
386

born here in the United States and I'm thinking that the more I've  
387

approached it the culture of the home because a lot of times when I'll  
388

ask them what did you do you do in your country what was your family like  
389

in your country they sometimes they don't know they were either very  
390

young when they left they don't remember it's been several years so we  
391

talk about what do you do in your home because the differences were  
392

usually there um and they can relate to that a little more readily than  
393

um you know what was present in your previous country so that's kind of  
394

+++++

+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: Brad

+++ Retrieval for this document: 55 units out of 725, = 7.6%

++ Text units 368-399:

laugh) I really think we were moving towards a culture-less society that  
368

we were all so wrapped up on stepping on each other's toe that we were  
all 369

losing what culture we have and I think that's a huge mistake my prime  
370

example was...um, you know, I've taught many children from Mexico they know, 371  
this was again a broad sweeping generalization Professor's head would spin if 372  
he heard me say this in the three or four Mexican children that I 373  
have..that I have taught-Mexican American children whatever the technical 374  
term was children from Mexico, um my experience has been that when you do 375  
try to incorporate their culture they know nothing has happened; they 376  
know NOTHING about the culture from which they've come; they know 377  
nothing; and I'll be honest with you, as a school teacher here in middle 378  
America and you know what I said previously about the socioeconomic our 379  
society was reflected in our classroom first and the middle class was 380  
disappearing; you know, it's going away huge discrepancy between the have 381  
and have nots, you know, I just wanted to throw that in, anyway but to me 382  
if you come to this country and bring your culture with you then the only 383  
other alternative was guess what you're going to learn the culture of this 384  
country and I'll be honest with you not a holiday passes that we don't 385  
celebrate, you know and it's like I explain to them in second grade it's 386  
part of our curriculum and blahblahblah I'm not saying you base 387  
curriculum on a holiday but you can't teach second grade and not have 388  
Valentine's day; you can't teach second grade and not talk about 389  
Halloween you know. And I do think the children in this room and in any 390  
other room I've taught do understand at times not everybody believes in 391  
this but as Americans in general we pretty much all believe this you know 392  
and you can believe it to the degree that you were comfortable with your 393

mother and your father I saw a little girl last year that went to the Islamic academy before coming to School-Hope it's not a secret where my location was; I mean when she came in I thought "oh, boy, she's in for a shock"; I mean even the classroom itself was such a shock to her because you know, because at the Islamic academy they don't have quite the color; I think having a man as a teacher was a big difference

++ Text units 415-416:  
and I don't remember what it was specifically now, but I'm very there's a lot of research that could be done about us being culture-less.

++ Text units 422-427:  
culture because it's not the culture that YOU'RE familiar with? And I would welcome Professor or anybody to just come and welcome these kids I don't mean it as THESE kids, I mean that truly in the rightness of the word, um you know, Cinco De Mayo they have no idea; it's like me not knowing the fourth of July; you know, I don't know much about Cinco De mayo but I'm not from Mexico you know; I know a lot about the fourth of

++ Text units 580-582:  
think I said last time that the children come and they aren't even aware of the cultural identity that they have I don't know if they even have cultural identity, I think that's the problem. Um, I uh Japanese Student being the

++ Text units 606-617:  
that's it's...life in general was so hard. That learning the cookie recipe that your grandmother baked you was just getting lost and I think it's getting lost across the socioeconomic groups you know our school has great diversity and socioeconomic status between high and low and I think that children who come from the high socioeconomic those things were

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that children who come from the high socioeconomic those things were



getting lost because they're too busy downloading music from the  
 611  
 internet, they're too busy getting to ballet; they're too busy going on  
 612  
 vacations, they're too busy just to you know, all the day to day stuff was  
 613  
 getting lost and I think that the people from lower socioeconomic  
 614  
 background were working you know, they were jus...just struggling to  
 survive 615  
 to worry about some of those nuances. And that Professor would be proud  
 you 616  
 know that's that whole modern-postmodern twist 617  
 ++++++  
 +++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: Star  
 +++ Retrieval for this document: 12 units out of 487, = 2.5%  
 ++ Text units 128-131:  
 Star: It was a fair-uhuh and interestingly enough the white kids got way  
 128  
 into it' cause they would find out stuff like my great, great, great 129  
 grandparents were from France or you know, uh, Cajun and where did the  
 130  
 Cajuns come from so it turn...turned out to be a really good thing um it  
 131  
 ++ Text units 138-145:  
 I: I had another interviewee that talked about that we were getting into  
 138  
 almost a culture-less society and that a lot of kids don't know what  
 139  
 culture they're from 140  
 Star: Mmhmm (no) 141  
 I: Do you find that a lot 142  
 Star: That's exactly what came out with my white students; they had no  
 143  
 idea that their great, great, great grandparents were from another  
 144  
 country I don't think their parents just didn't tell them; I just don't 145  
 ++++++  
 ++++++  
 +++ Total number of text units retrieved = 76  
 +++ Retrievals in 3 out of 4 documents, = 75%.  
 +++ The documents with retrievals have a total of 1636 text units,  
 so text units retrieved in these documents = 4.6%.  
 +++ All documents have a total of 1884 text units,  
 so text units found in these documents = 4.0%.

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### Appendix I: Interview Transcript

I: I'm just going to read you the first part

Brad: Ok

I: I want to thank you for taking the time to meet and speak with me today. I just want to take a minute to go over what we will be doing during this interview. I will be writing and recording what you say during this interview to ensure the accuracy of the information you provide. The transcription of what you say will be written exactly as you responded to the questions I've asked. The purpose of transcribing verbatim your response was to include as much as you can information as you can so that the answers you provide for my study was as correct as possible. I will also give you the opportunity to review the transcription of your answers for accuracy. This was what I'll provide for you afterwards and I'll provide the study for you when I finish that in case you want to read it. I also want to take the time to reassure that all information collected during the interview will be kept confidential. **\*\*Interruption\*\*** Also want to take the time to reassure that all information collected during the interview will be kept confidential. Although I provided you with the questions for this interview before meeting so that you may have time to think over and reflect on your responses, please feel free to discuss any answers or ask questions regarding the information already provided. I may ask you some additional questions throughout the interview to expand or clarify the information you provide to make sure of the accuracy of the information. Are you ready to start?

Brad: Sure

I: Ok, tell me about your class

Brad: Um briefly, I had 17 now I have 18 as of today, I got a new student um after our field trip um 17 and prior to that **\*\*Interruption\*\*** That's the mom in fact calling to check; we had 2 to 1 boys and girls so many more boys than girls

I: Uhuhh

Brad: So we're glad to have another girl join us today; um really probably par for the course compared to the other second grades I've had um one thing in general I've notices not just with this class but teaching in general was that I think students were coming with less and less um this was kind of what I've noticed in the years I've taught I think this was my fourteenth year; and I was talking to a friend about it last night, um you know just little, and it's just little stuff like you know mashed potatoes were not finger food you know this requires a fork or a spoon and it doesn't have anything

to do with culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic status it just kids were coming you know with less stuff like that I find myself spending more time every year doing that um and that's true of this class pretty much

I: Overall if you were to compare your last few years you said you've been teaching 14 years that's kind of hard to believe BRAD: Laugh, I know if you were to compare your first class fourteen years ago with the class now and you were talking about less were you talking about manners or talking about schooling or their abilities coming in

Brad: I think in particular when I say they were coming with less my friend who's not an educator refers to it as home training they were coming with less and less home training. Um and I guess that's reflective of our society in general you know Like I say that knows no bounds

I: Right

Brad: Economic, race, gender, I mean it's across the board.

I: So um as far as your teaching experience have you only taught first grade or has there been other grades?

Brad: I've taught second, fourth and fifth

I: which one's your favorite?

Brad: I've loved second grade and I think I'd have to stop and think really carefully I've now taught second grade for the most years than the others and I was also for two years way back it's probably been four five years now uh when School system had just one what they called back then a reading specialist; I was the reading specialist for School system

I: The system?

Brad: Yes, that was before they had one at every school and that just did not work well because all I did was drive from school to school and when I was at one elementary school the other elementary school wondered why I wasn't at their school you know, I tried it, I tried it for a year and uh didn't really feel like I had a handle on it all and didn't enjoy but thought let me try it a second year and see if things get better half way through the second year I spoke to the superintendent and just said you told me when you came and begged me to do this because I told them "no" three times (both laugh) they kept coming back and they told me when I said yes finally when I was done I could come talk to you and tell you I was done and I said I'm done you know I want to be in a school next year and that's when I came to Trace

I: How long have you been at Trace?

Brad: This was my fourth year, I think, let's see (counts the pictures of classes on his wall) 1, 2, 3, it's either my fourth or fifth year this was the first year 2003-2004 was the first one let's see 03-04, 04-05, 05-06, 07-08, its my fifth year

I: Ok, have you been primarily in the School system system?

Brad: only yes, I've been in Green Valley before here

I: Ok

Brad: Green Valley and did fifth and fourth and then moved down to second and then did the reading coach thing for two years and then came here

I: so in your experience if you taught two, second, fifth and fourth grades now second grade they're teaching children much younger to read we're talking about kindergarten (BRAD: mmmm, right) they were starting to read, so give me an example of the curriculum that you teach in second grade I know obviously with No Child Left Behind you have reading and of course the math and science were coming

Brad: Right, exactly, um with all that we were not departmentalizing in any stretch of the imagination um because that not what's developmentally appropriate that's a whole 'nother dissertation right there (both laugh) with regards to reading I have I still have children that have come from the first grade that were like at a primer or preprimer level according to the QRI because children kind of get that magic reading gene um you know it just happens at different times for different children um with the reading in general you know just a more broad statement um second grade was almost easier to refine and hone their reading skills because they can finally do it and it's about sitting down and finding the time to do it without it being such a struggle (I: Alright) so chapter books become big because they think they can just sit down and do it, like an adolescent with a driver's license (both laugh) no fear

I: That's great so you definitely encourage your children...

Brad: Oh yeah, definitely, definitely

I: I don't think you can go to University through that whole program without encouraging them to read

Brad: Exactly

I: Especially with Professor; you were the best thing next to slice bread according to her!

Brad: Please, love her, love her (laugh)

I: For this interview I want to focus on the children that were ethnically diverse

Brad: Right

I: Can you tell me a little about the make up of your class?

Brad: I have, our school was much more diverse than people expect, people think all School system schools were full of Caucasian children who walk out of half million dollar houses and that was not the case; um

we have great you know just because we do not have just African American does not mean we don't have ethnic diversity

I: Right

Brad: um I have a little boy from Pakistan, he's Pakistani I guess was the correct thing to say I have a little boy who's from Ireland he goes back to visit every summer; he may actually have been born in the United States I mean if you hear him talk and look at him you'd think Oh you're from Ireland um a little boy who's from India and probably my most interesting case was a little boy who was born in Japan...you'll have to back up and rewind this one awhile to get this one right; born in Japan to Taiwanese parents

I: Ok

Brad: And from what I can gather because he speaks no English mom speaks non and dad speaks very little um born in Japan to Taiwanese parents and mother speaks no English dad speaks very little and from what I can gather I had Hiko come and talk to him you know I just had to know something about you know he spent time in both countries he spent time in Japan and spent time in Thailand

I: Does he speak Japanese?

Brad: He speaks Japanese

I: And Thai?

Brad: Some Thai from what I understand I mean all of this was kind of hmmm (hands circle as in confusion) you know because

I: Figure out as you go

Brad: Right you know, Hiko was such a blessing you know and of course when he first came I thought oh you know he came about a week after school started and has been here since April but had not gone to school last year had been just kind of left free which was not the best probably um we studied Japan a little bit and studied origami you know Hiko came back and told me he did not consider himself Japanese you know if you do all of this it will be as foreign to him as all the other kids in your class so that when I thought you can't do that (laugh)

I: Does he associate himself with Thai

Brad: From what Hiko said and that's what's based on what the boy told him-I don't know if you want names or not um from what he said that he does not consider himself from either place see he hasn't I'm being very judgmental from my very Caucasian middle class upbringing he hasn't spent long enough in any place to HAVE a cultural identity that's what I really want to talk to you about (laugh)

I: That would be great; so he's actually been here since the beginning of school?

Brad: Yes, pretty much

I: OK

Brad: He maybe missed the first five days

I: Does he have any siblings

Brad: Not in school not school age there's like a baby at home

I: The little boy that's Pakistani and the little boy that's Indian, do they speak English?

Brad: Yes

I: What about the little boy, I don't even know what to call him he's Asian?

Brad: Definitely

I: what about the little boy, how do you work with children that were so diverse teaching them reading, math all the core curriculum that you have teach

Brad: It has been a very big challenge with the little boy from Japan um here again from Japan and Thailand I mean you know who I'm talking about; um if anything we consider him from Japan; I mean if you ask any of the other kids in the class they would say, oh yeah he's from Japan you know whether he feels that way or not you know just to be part of the group I mean you have to have something I mean you pigeon hole each other in a better, in a way to better understand I mean pigeon holing was bad yet it's also part of how we you know figure each other out (I: Mhmm) children do the same thing um it's a great challenge with him because I don't think he's had many formal school experiences: I know he didn't have any in this country and I don't think he's had a whole lot in Japan or Thailand I think he just kind of went back and forth; I mean this was all based on what a seven year old has said but I have no way of not knowing, I don't think he would make it up, you know

I: What about the parents? Have you been able to communicate with the parents?

Brad: I saw the parents when they brought him the first day and I have not seen them since in their defense I am sure they were busy earning a living

I: Right

Brad: and coming to, they did-did they come to a conference or not (thinking out loud) I don't think they came

I: What about the other three boys

Brad: Um...just to kind of put them on a continuum probably the little boy from Pakistan um would be the next as far as well as far as school goes they were night and day the biggest challenge was the little boy from

Japan I mean because he speaks no English, I mean he spoke not one word of English when he came I mean I..the first day he was here to figure out what bus to send him home on just I was in a panic almost I mean we did figure it out because his father wasn't able to fill out the information very correctly it's just...in some ways and I hesitate to even have this on a tape but in some ways I feel like he was just dropped on our door step (I: ok) you know like you read about those babies in the fifties who were dropped on the doorway of the hospitals I feel like that's what happened with him and I'm not insinuating that his parents don't care I'm just saying Oh my gosh and I will say and I'm happy it's on tape I have 17 other students he's not the only one you know if he was the only one he learn great deal but he's not the only one you know

I: what about the collaboration between the other students?

Brad: Collaboration between the other students and him has been interesting; they've been very patient with him um very welcoming but to a degree even children have their limits their patience wears thin and sometimes he's boy one whole day he was sad about something you could see it on his face we all asked him we all tried to figure it out and finally about 1:00 I said y'all we were never going to know you know, I'm sorry that you were upset that he's upset but we'll just have to hope that tomorrows a better day you know

I: Wow, tell me a little more about

Brad: Laugh-it's been interesting the whole thing has been interesting

I: You don't have a lot of information to go on at all

Brad; Yeah, we had a cell phone number and a name

I; Ok,

Brad; Now of course he had proof of residency to be enrolled (I: right) but some of that doesn't help you know when you're trying to figure out what bus to send him home on so

I: And you said he had a younger sibling

Brad: I'm almost sure that there was a two or three year old

I: OK, and the child that was Pakistani he speaks English you said

Brad: Yeah

I: OK, he was probably the next one as far as....

Brad: the next one as far as as like on the continuum of parental involvement with the least

I: OK

Brad: Like some; I mean the permission slip he brought it this morning; I sent it home two weeks ago, I sent home more and it came this morning that was after me saying you can't go tomorrow if you don't bring this

signed you know stuff like that you know it always comes the last second you know

I: And the little boy from India

Brad: The little boy from India was....all American like you and I were

I: OK

Brad: He visits every summer...I mean it's all about Halloween all about Christmas you know he was as inculturated as you and I were

I: Ok, we've gone over the cultural background of your students

Brad: I'm probably rambling

I: NO, I'm ok with that as much information as you can give me would be great

Brad: Good, good, good

I: This was definitely a qualitative study, so I might not have a question on here that you

Brad: yeah, that's what I thought

I: So any information you were able to give me I am more than willing to take and we talked about actually how many American children do you have in your classroom?

Brad: it's so funny because I don't see them that way, I literally have to scroll down and look um I have a little girl from China (laugh) I forgot about her She's adopted from China

I: Do you know how old?

Brad: I assume two or three when she was adopted

I: And she's um she speaks English

Brad: Oh yeah she's as American as you and I were has every outfit from limited too that's been out knows more about Zach Effron in fact just celebrated his birthday in October I mean it's crazy; we have one, two,

I: And Corben Blue

Brad: God bless Corben this was not hard, one two three four African American children

I: Ok

Brad: That's another thing I kind of want to say was that you know people were so quick to talk about race and culture and try to make it out to be a black white thing it goes so far beyond the black white thing so far beyond you know open your eyes was what I want to say to people, white people and black people it's beyond a and b you've got myriad cultures represented now in our country



I: True you have the five who were ethnically diverse and you have the ten even the little girl adopted from China who were Caucasian

Brad: right and 10 that would be Caucasian; was that 18?

I: Mhmm (yes); you have a nice mix

Brad: I must say that it's representative of our school; I would say, VP would know more about that

I: I was going to say that when I talked to VP that how many cultures, races and ethnicities that were represented in School was amazing; most people earlier don't

Brad: I was going to say that Professor Aldridge a couple of years ago in a faculty meeting of ours I don't know how found this out he knew, you know he always has things right we also have one of the greatest percentages in the state our difference between the have and have nots that percentage was one of the highest in the state meaning we have wealthy children and very very poor children

I: And then everything in between

Brad: And then everything in between. That we have a very wide range. He was fascinated by that. Of course, I told him you need to get out more, you know (both laugh) but it's very true; I mean literally in every classroom in this building there were children who walk out of 700 thousand houses and people who walk out of \$700 a month apartments which was another layer of

I: Culture?

Brad: Yeah, just another layer of diversity; it's interesting

I: Do you really find that there was a difference between really high socioeconomic and low socioeconomic?

Brad: I think it's all in how they were raised because there were children in this room that you know if you came in as a casual observer which you were welcome to any time you know you'd be able to tell "oh he doesn't come with much" but if you sat down with their family and said "what's missing in your life; what's something you need"; they'll say oh we've got more than...we have a lot to be thankful for; we don't need anything and you know, they're being raised that you know we were doing the best we can and that they have what's important, um and then I've taught children who were from low socioeconomic group and I hate to say it but history was repeating itself; it's all about what can I get; how can it be handed to me. What can I do to get it; even if it means stealing; I will get it; I had a little girl last year who plain flat stole that's all there was to it; she stole; I hate to be an adult and say that about a child but she learned by example, you know; um and then kids from high socioeconomic group there were those who were raised to you know that money was not discussed of course; they were not raised with a feeling of entitlement or a feeling of

privilege and then there were those who do come that have no problem looking at another child and saying "I *am* better than you." We have a \$10,000 golf cart do you?

I: And these were little kids?

Brad: Oh yeah, I'm being dramatic; they don't articulate it but by their actions you know that they were being...that's the way their parents raise them. You can tell. To me it's all about parenting...it can...it can cut both ways at either end of the spectrum. And of course what I like...exactly...children who were raised and have no idea if they live in a \$700,000 house or a \$700 apartment; that's being raised, you know. That's being raised. It's interesting. And of course, and I...I always preface all of this with that I am throwing stones from my childless glass house. You know, I do not have children of my own

I: Right

Brad: And it's always easy to say what you would do when you don't have them, you know; my goddaughter was never going to own a Barbie or watch a video. Well, (sighs rolls his eyes and shrugs)... (both laugh)... you know, that idea (motions hands behind him). Kissed away. That's K-i-s-s not the other word that it might sounds like (laugh); that idea was gone by the time she was like two, you know and now she's whatever 10 or 11, you know.

I: Yeah, yeah, I have a dog

Brad: (laugh) right. exactly love it. I love it.

I: So as far as ethnically diverse; did you receive any training to work with culturing...cultural diverse students?

Brad: No, ESL training. NONE WHATSOEVER! NONE! (Laugh); I will say, what I know about cultures and diversity, I learned from Roberta Long who was the reigning queen of children's literature at University; and I've learned it through children's literature.

I: OK

Brad: It's when my eyes were...not opened because you know, I've always been aware of other peoples feelings you know beliefs ever since I was a child because I'm a caring person you know, um but she helped me understand it a little bit better; then with my graduate work with Professor. You know, by the time I got to Professor, I was a little jaded; you know.

I: What do you mean?

Brad: Um...I'm trying to watch my time because I don't want to start my spill and then run out of time. I really feel and this will be good fodder for five or six pages um that I really feel like and I even wrote it down on my cheat sheet in so many ways we were moving towards, I've meant to talk about this with Professor and I'm glad I never shot him an email because I

was going to email him this whole idea and say there has got to be a student somewhere who's got to do a dissertation make someone write about this; cause I'm not writing about this because I'm done (both laugh) and about that time you came along and I'm like SWEET! (both laugh) I really think we were moving towards a culture-less society that we were all so wrapped up on stepping on each other's toe that we were all losing what culture we have and I think that's a huge mistake my prime example was...um, you know, I've taught many children from Mexico they know, this was again a broad sweeping generalization Professor's head would spin if he heard me say this in the three or four Mexican children that I have..that I have taught-Mexican American children whatever the technical term was children from Mexico, um my experience has been that when you do try to incorporate their culture they know nothing has happened; they know NOTHING about the culture from which they've come; they know nothing; and I'll be honest with you, as a school teacher here in middle America and you know what I said previously about the socioeconomic our society was reflected in our classroom first and the middle class was disappearing; you know, it's going away huge discrepancy between the have and have nots, you know, I just wanted to throw that in, anyway but to me if you come to this country and bring your culture with you then the only other alternative was guess what you're going to learn the culture of this country and I'll be honest with you not a holiday passes that we don't celebrate, you know and it's like I explain to them in second grade it's part of our curriculum and blahblahblah I'm not saying you base curriculum on a holiday but you can't teach second grade and not have Valentine's day; you can't teach second grade and not talk about Halloween you know. And I do think the children in this room and in any other room I've taught do understand at times not everybody believes in this but as Americans in general we pretty much all believe this you know and you can believe it to the degree that you were comfortable with your mother and your father I saw a little girl last year that went to the Islamic academy before coming to School-Hope it's not a secret where my location was; I mean when she came in I thought "oh, boy, she's in for a shock"; I mean even the classroom itself was such a shock to her because you know, because at the Islamic academy they don't have quite the color; I think having a man as a teacher was a big difference

I: I can imagine

Brad: I mean, I'm not sure; I don't know Islam as well to know these things but the whole experience itself was a big shock. Let me tell you, she loved every holiday we celebrated and at any time if her parents had said, "we wish for her to not participate or you know," "we're not comfortable with this"; I would have had no trouble doing something, you know, changing what we were doing...not..not sacrificing the whole group but you know, I could have come up with alternative ways to handle it, um there was only one time that her mother said anything. It was in the journal that they keep with their parents every week and her mother wrote

something about...I think...I think it was about Valentine's day and yet was kind of this was not part of our culture, yet it was also part of almost kind of endearing because her mother was sharing with her this was what we believe as a family, you know. It was not chastising towards me or anger or animosity or anything like that just you know this was what we believe and I don't remember what it was specifically now, but I'm very there's a lot of research that could be done about us being culture-less.

I: Do think that affects the children that were born in the United States versus the children that were born in other countries and come over with their parents?

Brad: I think it's either group and...If Professor were sitting here, Professor would say oh but Brad were you sure you aren't just discrediting their culture because it's not the culture that YOU'RE familiar with? And I would welcome Professor or anybody to just come and welcome these kids I don't mean it as THESE kids, I mean that truly in the rightness of the word, um you know, Cinco De Mayo they have no idea; it's like me not knowing the fourth of July; you know, I don't know much about Cinco De mayo but I'm not from Mexico you know; I know a lot about the fourth of July because I'm from the United States of America; you know, and to me you have to believe in something and to make it as a country we have to have something that holds us together you know our classroom was called community we have these shared ideas and thoughts we may not have 100% of the same beliefs but we have to have something that brings us together and uh I think the 90's will be remembered as the overly sensitive, politically correct era where we were all too worried to say what we were proud of

I: Do you find that

Brad: I think that will do detriment to us in the long run

I: I was about to say, do you find that continuing

Brad: I don't know it's hard to you know, people like Professor and Maryann who travel and speak to groups of teachers all over the country have a better handle on what's happening on a you know nationwide scale; where I don't have that at all but you know, it would be my hope that you know as a country we would continue to celebrate you know the things that makes us us. You know, Veterans day was coming up and I'm gearing up already; you know, it's important if you're going to be here I would like you to come to this country with what culture you already possess and be able to share that or if you don't have that then you need to be open to what you get, you know.

I: I find that a lot

Brad: I know I'm rambling

I: You're not; you were providing great information. I find that a lot that students I teach in a multicultural class, I find that this was becoming more a school of thought with students in college now a days

Brad: I agree; I'll give you an example...a perfect example of multiculturalism of political correctness cutting the wrong direction; I have a friend of mine who was African American her son takes music lessons well a mutual friend of ours was just amazed that her son takes music lessons

I: Because they're African American

Brad: Because they're African American, now my friend or our mutual friend you know very liberal minded you know as politically correct as they can come but to me that's almost a reverse you know that's almost a reverse and I ask my friends about it and I said "well, isn't that almost a reverse?"; not racism, but almost a backhanded slap and she said "yeah" pretty much; it's basically saying how wonderful for you no one else in your race does this you do so I celebrate you; you do you know; another friend of mine we were talking about—um, um you know, a speaker coming to be recognized for contributions to multiculturalism and um another friend said well I think a Jewish person needs to receive that; and I just said isn't that kind of you know, isn't that really not...isn't that just another slap in the face; aren't we choosing people because of their work and their merit not because of what isolated subgroup of what they represent? I find that all very interesting

I: It was very interesting

Brad: you know and these were good people; I mean these were good, good, good people; so anyway, it's just a thought very interesting

I: So; with what we were talking about going with a cultural-less society

Brad: Right

I: Is that how you gear your class? You were talking about how you celebrate holidays, etc.

Brad: Right, but I don't want people to think that we were writing on pumpkin shaped pieces of paper because Maryann will kill me if she hears that; I don't gear it; I'll be honest with you, I gear my class to meet the needs of the children in this classroom; those needs were always different every year.

I: Even within the individual, unique student

Brad: Oh yeah

I: Do you think that training would help?

Brad: No

I: no?

Brad: I don't think there was training...I mean you mentioned the multicultural class that you were teaching that to me itself was almost laughable; it's almost like preparing for a crisis drill; you can sit and "what if" a crisis drill a 100 times; if the children were sitting on the floor and someone comes in with battery acid or what if we have the children sitting on their tables and someone comes in with a machete; you can't...there comes a point when it has to be common sense in your life; I think with multiculturalism, I mean I think you can maybe, I don't know to me it would be best to embedded it throughout the pre-service teacher's study at the undergraduate and graduate level that you know there were other ways to view the world, you know, but I don't think you could...I mean an isolated course would just be you know cause who knows what's going to cross your path and see I could get all touchy feel and all Oprah on you and just say that you know it's all about accepting human beings and that you respect what I believe the least I can do was respect what you believe, you know.

I: That's interesting to me; you talked about home learning, home training do you think that was taught to children? Being able to respect others? Or do you think they can learn to respect others in a classroom?

Brad: I hope that that's something they can take from crossing paths with me. Some kids come with it to a degree but kids this age were still so egocentric with the thought of you know we do it this way duhduhduh you know even things that we do, I love the example you know, they always tell what they do for their birthday; well everybody does something for their birthday but everybody does really different things you know, was one of those better than the other? No. You know, they were all special unique to that individual. So anyway, apples, apples; we can talk three more minutes then I've got to (motions out towards the door).

I: Explain to me the strategies that you use with your ethnically diverse students in teaching them the core curriculum.

Brad: really with the exception of the little boy from Japan and Thailand um it's just meeting their individual needs; it's no different um; with him the biggest challenge has been him not speaking any English; um he has probably been the most challenging ESL student that I have ever crossed paths with. Because with Spanish I can fake it because with Spanish you can communicate; I know no Japanese-none, you know, with him knowing no English you know there were...those first few days were rough

I: So what...how much English was he learning now?

Brad: I really would have thought he would have learned more by now; um but then I have to stop and step back and think well if he's not ever really had formal schooling it's been a big time of learning taking turns you know, to being in a group, you know he's had to learn all that; um...it's coming pretty fast but I wish it would come faster;

I: Do you think it's more difficult because he's had no previous schooling?

Brad: Absolutely and I think his mom and dad were working to stay here I don't think that they were working on English at home; I mean I wish they would you know there's no little cutesy plastic packet that I can send home that will ever get done; there's no cutesy anything that's ever gonna to happen; you know it's the reality of them of having to work however much they have to work and then you know make a living. And what amazes me was I think of Japan as being leaps and years ahead of us you know it's like, I can understand sometimes when people come to our country because it does offer a better...better way of life. But with him I'm just like, you know, you left a pretty good place; you know it's kind of

I: Why?

Brad: yeah, why? Why here? Southeastern United States? I ask that question often. His parents, you know it's easy to think because he's Asian his parents have to be researchers: I think they work in a nail shop; I mean they were service industry folks. I have nothing against that....I'm not Susan Sugarbaker (both laugh)

I: Do you find an overall stereotype of Asians just like you said people think of Asians as researchers, doctors, that kind of thing? Do you find that a lot of people have to fight stereotypes?

Brad: I think we all do; I mean regardless of what color your skin was or who you were we all do. And really that's a good place to end because like I said at the beginning that stereotyping and pigeon holing although it's negative it's our effort to try to understand each other and you know, when we meet someone we were pulling up those file cabinets in our brains looking for a file like "oh, teacher" I can open choose a teacher; here's what I know about teachers and what you might know about teachers was that they wear frumpy apple jumpers and talk in sing songy voices and well then you might look at that person and go "oh she's kind of cool" and then you add that to your teacher file, that hey teachers can be cool too you know and that through that stereotype and pigeon hole you do expand your thinking you know. Anyway, babble, babble, and babble.

Brad: Interview completed Day 2

I: Ok, I'm going ahead and continuing; question number four basically was what beliefs do you have regarding the specific cultures in your classroom? English only? Using culture, their specific culture to teach them? Before you were talking about us moving towards a culture-less society

Brad: Right

I: so what do you think about using their culture to teach them? You've even talked about how some of the kids that were coming in don't even know their own culture.

Brad: I think that using a culture in the classroom was very beneficial if the children were aware of the culture they come from; um, you know, I think I said last time that the children come and they aren't even aware of the cultural identity that they have I don't know if they even have cultural identity, I think that's the problem. Um, I uh Japanese Student being the example even though he was born of Taiwanese parents and was raised in Japan, you know, when I did have a Japanese person speak with him about his time in Japan and his time in Taiwan you know he just doesn't feel like he's from either place you know it's my understanding, um you know the Hispanic student on the first day of school I pronounced his name as Jimenez and she looks at me and says oh no its Jimenez (J was pronounced); then the culture could be eroding away; so I guess it's hard to teach; it sounds real and good to support culture and to teach um even the culture that the children have to have some identity with it; my last name was Scandinavian; my last name was—give it away who I am with anyone who knows me—um you know my last name was of Norwegian descent and what I know of Norway I have learned on my own; I mean, I've learned a little bit from my father but not a great deal because I was not born there and for me to come for me to step foot in the classroom and say that I am of Norwegian heritage should be blahblahblah you know but when children know their cultural background it makes your classroom so rich because they do learn different points of view but what I'm finding now was that they're just not coming with that richness

I: do you think that was because between the assimilation of the parents into the culture or was it more of the kids assimilating? How do you think that

Brad: I think it was just off the top of my head you know it's just in the children I've taught recently I think that their parents get here and that's it's...life in general was so hard. That learning the cookie recipe that your grandmother baked you was just getting lost and I think it's getting lost across the socioeconomic groups you know our school has great diversity and socioeconomic status between high and low and I think that children who come from the high socioeconomic those things were getting lost because they're too busy downloading music from the internet, they're too busy getting to ballet; they're too busy going on vacations, they're too busy just to you know, all the day to day stuff was getting lost and I think that the people from lower socioeconomic background were working you know, they were jus...just struggling to survive to worry about some of those nuances. And that Professor would be proud you know that's that whole modern-postmodern twist

I: Right



Brad: That in itself was how Martha Stewart has made millions because we were all losing that cookie recipe losing that how to braid hair and she was the one who was at the forefront for so many people who still want it; I would think of that kind of analogy

I: you know that was

Brad: It's that whole postmodern twist

I: That was so true and Professor talks a lot about in fact we just did a conference this past week in Chicago and we did one on cultural diversity and working with students and he mentioned using the child's culture and I repeated what you said about the culture-less

Brad: I would love to know what he said

I: he um I brought up the culture-less society and that many kids were coming in without, you were the second person I've heard that from so far

Brad: Good

I: And that many kids were coming in today without knowing about their culture; they may know their first language but they don't know their culture so it's very difficult to use one culture to teach

Brad: Right

I: so he said, he was interested in that; he said, "I find that if we most of the time use whatever culture the child has will help"; but I said, "which culture does the child have?" so there was no comment on that one

Brad: Right

I: I thought that was interesting; I'd never really thought about it because if you look at a child, like one of your kids that has been here

Brad: Yeah

I: She's adopted from another country but she's very American

Brad: Exactly

I: And I was looking at the photograph of her; the picture she drew of herself and it's always amazed me how kids view themselves

Brad: Uhhh it was

I: And she views herself as being white

Brad: Very

I: I thought that was interesting

Brad: yep,

I: I was curious to know what your thoughts on that; what about the support within your administration; do you feel like you have a lot of support and time?

Brad: I...one of the top reasons that I love teaching where I teach was that I do have such support from administration; um so yeah great support, great support

I: What kind of support do they...

Brad: I know that I can get from our administration anything I need I think that will help me to work with any child; any child I need help with regardless of their culture

I: Do you believe that's common in most areas or do you believe it's common

Brad: In my Pollyanna in my rose tinted world that it would be um surely it was but I'm not so naïve I'm sure it's not you know

I: What about parents? Do you have a lot of family support?

Brad: In what regard?

I: Do you have a lot of kids, parents that come in and help; if they were able because I know a lot of them work

Brad: Exactly, um I would say that for the most part no simply because um you know that struggle to keep making it; I will say that I have one parent in the school who was the parent of a child I taught a couple of years ago and she has been very supportive of um not only of her own children education but you know of other children education as well kind of spear headed you know the apartment complex you know has been entrusted with the responsibility that has in turn kind of instilled within her some self-esteem so I'm not, I can't I refuse to sit here and you know be male Caucasian middle age and you know there were people out there who don't want to help themselves all along. We simply want to all help ourselves but I just think we all you know different level of being able to do so and to be honest with you they were coming with such limited backgrounds or not limited backgrounds if Professor were sitting here he would say that we all come with prior knowledge we just have different prior knowledge which was very true; Japanese Student's mom showed up; she speak no English, his father limited English, you know; what kind of support would there be, you know? Um he gets permission slips signed to go on a field trip do they get the field trip money here, yeah. Japanese Student last week was the closest to the estimation jar; did they send the estimation jar back for us to do this week so I think that they were doing what they can. But that kind of Beaver Cleaver coming in and working with flash cards don't think that's a reality for anybody you know.

I: sure; I just have to bring this up because I can; No Child Left Behind, give me your thoughts of that

Brad: We're leaving them all behind. We were so worried about not leaving them behind we were stepping on them as we leave them behind

I: Because according to No Child Left Behind you basically have two years to get a child like Japanese Student, you have two years to get him ready because his first year basically doesn't count but the second year he's suppose to be passing all those tests; what do you think about that?

Brad: It's absolutely, it's, I mean it's the lament of classroom teachers everywhere it's people who were not in classrooms who make the decisions (I: Right); it's people who have not met Japanese Student who were making the decisions or met anyone like him

I: Margaret Spellings was a political scientist;

Brad: And it's at every level of education

I: Yes,

Brad: Local, State and Federal; it's at every level.

I: Do you dibble?

Brad: Oh yeah;

I: How's that going?

Brad: Oh, good (sarcastically): Japanese Student gives me the three or four words he knows

I: Is there anything you would like to add or have I left out anything?

Brad: Um, I don't think so; ummm

I: Thank you again for taking time out of your busy schedule to speak with me. Once I have your answers transcribed I will be more than happy to send them to you for your review. If needed may I contact you again to clarify or add to the interview information you have provided. At this time I want to remind you of the confidentiality steps that I will take to ensure your privacy. At this time I would like you to choose a pseudonym that you would like to be used in the study. Brad: I like Brad.

I: Thanks