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Diverse Learners and Teacher Education: A Sociocultural Approach

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Diverse Learners and Teacher Education: A Sociocultural Approach

Genevieve Harris
Linfield College
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Key Terms

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

Research Questions

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

Step 1

Literature reviews

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

Step 2

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

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

Steps 3 & 4

Examined hiring preferences in Oregon

- District job vacancies
- Surveyed all Yamhill County administrators

Examined OACTE teacher education programs

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

Steps 5 & 6

Examined TSPC standards for endorsement programs

Reviewed *The College of 2020* report and conducted a literature review on current needs of college/university students

- Demographics, learning preferences/styles
- Multiliteracies

Step 7

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

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

Step 8

Redesign of EDUC 302 Multicultural Education

- Meaningful, purposeful service-learning component
- Student engagement with multiliteracies (which, in turn, will engage *their* students)
- More time and attention to special education and general differentiation strategies

CBO Placements

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

Project Launch

- Contribution to critical question in field
- Scholarship (strong base for longitudinal study at Linfield and among Oregon teacher education programs)
- Program review (data behind suggestions)
- Service (connection with community)
- More effective teaching and learning in EDUC 302
- More effective Linfield teachers (sociocultural)
- Higher achievement among PK-12 students