

FACTORS INFLUENCING PRESERVICE SPECIAL EDUCATION AND EARLY
CHILDHOOD GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD
CULTURALLY LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE FAMILIES

by

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(Under the Direction of CYNTHIA O. VAIL)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify preservice teachers' attitudes toward CLD families with limited English proficiency and the relationship between preservice teachers' attitudes and their cross-cultural experiences including speaking other languages, traveling and studying abroad, living in other countries, taking multicultural programs, and having other professional experiences. Sixty two preservice teachers at four universities completed Teachers Attitudes Survey Toward Culturally Linguistically Diverse Families (TAS-CLDF). Results revealed three findings: (a) preservice teachers had less positive attitudes toward CLD families with limited English proficiency (b) there was no influence of multicultural programs and professional experiences on attitudes, and (c) preservice teachers who spoke other languages or traveled abroad had more positive attitudes than those who did not. Utilizing qualified interpreters, recruiting more students and faculty members with CLD backgrounds, and providing comprehensive field experiences with CLD students and their families are discussed.

INDEX WORDS: CLD families, cultural diversity, immigrants, multicultural teacher education, preservice teachers' attitudes

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband Jungho Kim and my children Matthew and Jennifer. They gave me loving support throughout this process.

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CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The 21st century has ushered in new demographic realities for education in the U. S. - approximately one-third of U.S. students are African American, Hispanic, or Asian American. And by the year 2020, approximately half of the entire school population in the U.S. will be students from culturally linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics [FIFCFS], 2005). According to FIFCFS (2005), from 1994 to 2004, the percentage of all children living in the U.S. with at least one parent who was foreign born rose from 15 to 20 percent, 19 percent of school-age children spoke a language other than English at home, and five percent of school-age children had difficulty speaking English.

With the increasing linguistic diversity in the U.S., there has been a call for early childhood education services to be responsive and sensitive to CLD children and their families. Culturally linguistically responsive practice is particularly important for early childhood professionals because of the clear focus on family involvement and partnerships in providing appropriate early intervention and educational experiences for all young children (Banerjee & Guiberson, 2012). When families are involved in their children's learning, children do better in school and in life. In addition to the strong research about family involvement in education, current policy initiatives also dictate a strong role for family involvement in education. The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) has specific requirements for family involvement that require notification and participation of parents in their children's education. Yet, teachers in early

childhood education have been confronted with significant challenges of cultural dissonance and bias in their attempts to address educational needs of CLD students and their families, particularly when they have limited English proficiency (Lee, Butler, & Tippins, 2007; Obiakor & McCollin, 2010).

In special education, also, one of the major challenges for professionals who work with CLD students and their families is ensuring that evaluation practices are responsive to the children and families' backgrounds, both when evaluating the child as well as when collecting information about families' concerns, priorities, and resources (Obiakor & McCollin, 2010). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) requires that evaluation teams take into account a child's English language proficiency status as well as a child's experiences and cultural background. The Council for Exceptional Children (2001) also emphasizes the need for special educators to understand the effects that culture, language, and other variables have on the evaluation and assessment process to make the process culturally responsive. Moreover, teachers in U.S. classrooms are inclined to cling to stereotypical views of CLD students and their families, and the results are unpleasant teacher-student relationships, poor student achievement (Gao and Marger, 2011; Gibson, 2004) and a lack of confidence in teaching children with special needs in regular classroom (Frankel, 2004 ; Gao and Marger, 2011; McLeskey & Waldron, 2002; Sadler, 2005).

In terms of multicultural education, many challenges remain in the preparation of preservice teachers. The cultural and linguistic gap between preservice teachers and CLD students and their families present two major issues in teacher education. Banks and Banks (2001) insisted that the important goal of teacher education in 21st century is to help preservice teachers gain the knowledge, values, and behaviors in order to work efficiently with CLD

students. Nevertheless, many teacher education programs have not adequately prepared preservice teachers to understand and respond to the unique needs of CLD children and their families (Bradfield-Kreider, 2001; Gao and Marger, 2011; Irvine, 2003; Larke, 1990).

Researchers have been interested in inservice and preservice teacher beliefs for many decades. The examination of teacher beliefs is important because their beliefs influence student achievement as well as their own behaviors and classroom decisions. Even though they may seem harmless, the decisions of teachers in the classroom may have detrimental influences on their students (Graves, 2010). Many studies on teacher beliefs insist that beliefs originate from one's own personal experiences (Graves, 2010; Murphy, Delli, & Edwards, 2004; Nespor, 1987; Orton, 1996; Vartuli, 2005), thus preservice teachers' beliefs, values, and attitudes about CLD children and their families maybe biased by their own personal backgrounds. As the majority of inservice and preservice teachers are predominantly white, middle-class, and female, they may develop unfavorable views of CLD families, believing that these families lack the necessary skills and knowledge to support their children's education (Auerbach, 1989; Graves 2007) since these teachers likely grew up in families who had the financial resources and social support to invest in their education. Some researchers (Lareau, 2000; Nakagawa, 2000) argue that the construction of the ideal parent is directed toward non-mainstream parents who are believed to be unable to support their children's education.

Literature Review

The purpose of this research is to examine preservice teachers' attitudes toward CLD families and the factors that influence their responses. Specifically, I seek to examine the relation of pre-service teachers' attitudes about CLD families with limited English proficiency to their cross-cultural experiences. In the following sections, I will review relevant literature as it relates

to: (1) Inservice teachers' attitudes toward cultural linguistic diversity and CLD students and families, (2) preservice teachers' attitudes toward cultural linguistic diversity through multicultural education programs, and (3) preservice teachers' attitudes toward CLD families.

Process of Literature Review

The studies were identified by an electronic search utilizing both ERIC and PsycINFO and a follow-up from the references of identified literature from peer-reviewed journals from 2000-2013. The key words used in the electronic search were CLD family(ies), CLD students, cultural diversity, immigrant family(ies), multicultural teacher education, and preservice teachers attitudes. Only 10 articles related to attitudes toward diversity and CLD families of preservice teachers and three of inservice teachers were included in this study from 30 articles. I excluded 17 articles because the authors of those papers focused on CLD families' attitudes, the achievement of CLD students and English learners, or teacher educators' perceptions and practices rather than teachers' beliefs and attitudes toward CLD students and their families.

Inservice Teachers' Attitudes toward Cultural Linguistic Diversity and CLD Families

In order to gain information about the multicultural competences and actual teaching practices of general and special educators, Utley (2011) conducted a factor analysis of the Multicultural and Special Education Survey (MSES), an instrument that evaluates professional development training needs. The MSES which measures multicultural attitudes, knowledge base, and skills, was distributed to 403 general and special educators who teach CLD students with and without mild disabilities in the school districts of a Midwestern state. The results revealed seven common factors that accounted for 88% of the variability in teacher responses: cultural knowledge, teaching strategies, curriculum and materials, parental communication, monitoring and evaluation, IEP, and community relations.

Cultural knowledge was viewed as critical to teacher expectations, teachers' understanding of CLD students' verbal and nonverbal behaviors, and perceptions of time and space. The teaching strategies underscored teachers' concerns for the importance of devoting their time to preparing activities for CLD students to reach their academic goals. Curriculum and materials are highly correlated to the completion of assignments and enable general and special educators to provide accommodations in teaching and test-taking for CLD students. Parental communication involves effective communication between parents and teachers. This factor was also viewed as a positive influence and an essential element for assisting teachers to implement interventions and programs that facilitate the educational achievement of their child. The monitoring and evaluation procedures were viewed as essential when using assessment instruments, implementing classroom activities, and conducting annual evaluations. The IEP measured the perceptions of educators' beliefs about the inclusion of cultural and linguistic factors in the CLD student's educational plan, showed how to teach the core curriculum areas and presented effective instructional behavioral management strategies. Community relations reflects the goal to involve persons in the community (e.g., businesses, churches) to support the educational needs of CLD students. This element was viewed as important because a liaison between the school and community would provide educational resources and materials to schools in order to support the needs of CLD students.

Another study that related inservice teachers' attitudes toward CLD students and their families was conducted by Correa-Torres and Durando (2011). The purpose of this research was to identify and establish priorities among the training needs of educators in the field of visual impairment who work with students from CLD backgrounds. The study utilized an internet-based survey instrument that included demographic information questions, 5-point Likert rating

items, and open-ended questions. More than 90% of 204 participants agreed or strongly agreed with 10 areas of training needs such as strategies to enhance cross-cultural communication with CLD students, effective use of interpreters to communicate with CLD families, effective communication with CLD families, cultural perception of visual impairment, assessment of CLD students, knowledge to enhance cross-cultural communication with CLD students and their families, and an understanding of the cultures and traditions of CLD students. Interestingly, despite the importance of communication with CLD students and their families, most participants disagreed with items related to their knowledge of foreign languages. For instance, 23% disagreed or strongly disagreed that they needed training to increase their familiarity with language spoken by the students in their caseloads. Yet, 95% indicated a need for training in strategies to increase cross-cultural communication with their students. The results revealed six areas of training needs: culturally responsive teaching, resources, how to work with families, a methods course, how to work with interpreters, and more practicum opportunities. The authors suggested the need for training through distance education and field experiences that will increase understanding of cultures and traditions. Furthermore, teachers need to be instructed on specific strategies for enhancing cross-cultural communication and supportive learning environments, as well as effective strategies for collaborating with families and professionals that include the use of interpreters and cultural brokers. Moreover, the authors emphasized the need for the recruitment of educators with CLD backgrounds.

Finally, Shodavaram, Jones, Weaver, Marquez, and Ensle (2009) used the survey instrument, Beliefs of General Education Suburban Teachers Towards non-European Ancestry Immigrant Students (B-GEST) to examine teachers' beliefs and attitudes about CLD students and their families. Specifically, this study explored suburban teachers' beliefs regarding the

impact of the cultural backgrounds of non-European ancestry immigrant students' on academic performance. The B-GEST asked the participants about their personal beliefs regarding recognition of diversity, race relations, and national policies in conjunction with immigration, diversity as strength to the nation, and the importance of learning English. The survey likewise included professional beliefs about second language learning; recognition of diversity in schools; integrated classrooms; teacher expectations, needs, and methods; and multicultural education.

Shodavaram et al. (2009) determined that the majority of respondents believed in the recognition of diversity and relationships with people from other races, and strongly agreed that learning and speaking English was the most important adaptation to be successful in this culture and more important than maintaining their first language. Also, 64% of the participants agreed that parents should be counseled to speak English. The majority of inservice teachers understood the need to be aware of the challenges of being an immigrant, student integration of classrooms for racially isolated students, and in providing instruction according to the needs of immigrant students irrespective of the subject they teach.

Preservice Teachers' Attitudes toward Cultural Linguistic Diversity through Multicultural Education Program

Although the population of American students today is becoming more diverse, the racial/ethnic composition of teachers remains much less diverse (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). While the student population is expected to continue to diversify, it is predicted that the majority of preservice teachers are white, female, and middle class (Trent, Kea, & Oh, 2008). This prediction about the cultural mismatch of student and preservice teachers leads to serious questions for teacher education, such as how to adequately prepare preservice teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, and strategies needed to meet the needs of diverse students and their

families in their future classrooms. However, there has not been a significant increase in the level of research for decades, and this lack of research is partially due to marginalization of multicultural education in schools and college education as well as the lack of interest in the education of CLD students and their families (Grant, Elsbree & Foundrie, 2004; Sheets, 2003; Trent et al., 2008). Many researchers assert that despite great efforts to incorporate multicultural education in teacher education programs, the effort is limited by faculty's lack of experience and confidence in dealing with people from CLD backgrounds (Asher, 2007; Case & Hemmings, 2004; Phuong, 2000; Sheets, 2003; Trent et al., 2008). Researchers are also concerned that there are few faculty members who can teach multicultural programs from the perspective of the historically underserved. Even many professors from CLD backgrounds are reluctant to incorporate multicultural content into their programs because of student resistance and poor course evaluation (Asher, 2007; Laubscher & Powell, 2003; Stanley, 2007; Trent et al., 2008). Several studies evaluated the effectiveness of multicultural courses or programs in preservice teachers programs and examined teacher's attitudes toward cultural linguistic diversity.

Gao and Mager (2011) surveyed preservice teachers' sense of efficacy and attitudes toward school diversity after one inclusive teacher education program. The study was carried out in one four-year dual-certification inclusive teacher preparation program at a private university in the eastern United States. According to the program, preservice teachers have seven major phases of preparation: Phase 1: beginning in the first semester, taking fundamental courses in special education and general education, and conducting 20-hours of fieldwork, Phase 2: taking introductory special education courses with one 20-hour fieldwork experience in general classrooms, Phase 3: starting more fieldwork by taking one course on inclusive schooling and one 20-hour field practicum focused on children with disabilities, Phase 4: entering the first

professional practice, Phase 5: continuing the six-week second professional practice, Phase 6: engaging the special education practicum and working with children with severe disabilities, Phase 7: student teaching full-time with one weekly seminar on an university campus.

Two hundred sixteen preservice teachers in the program were asked to participate in the study, and 168 valid responses were received. The participants were divided into six cohorts such as introduction to education, introduction to special education, special education practicum I, professional practice I, professional practice II, special education practicum II, and student teaching. The survey was implemented three weeks before the end of the semester. Preservice teachers responded to four questionnaires related to demographics, sense of teacher efficacy, attitudes towards inclusive education, and beliefs about diversity. School diversity was measured from both inclusive and multicultural aspects, and the scale of beliefs about diversity focused particularly on preservice teachers' beliefs about multicultural diversity. The findings revealed that most participants' perceived sense of efficacy showed significant, positive associations with their attitudes towards inclusion and beliefs about socio-cultural diversity. However, regardless of their perceived levels of efficacy, participants were negative about teaching children with behavioral disabilities. Interestingly, although preservice teachers' professional beliefs about diversity demonstrated statistically significant changes from cohort 1 (introduction to education) to cohort 6 (student teaching), personal beliefs on diversity did not. The authors suggested that preservice teachers may uphold their personal beliefs about diversity through the course of their preparation, but their professional beliefs about diversity can be changed as a result of teacher education.

Kang and Hyatt (2009) investigated the outcomes of a potentially powerful multicultural pedagogy, the use of multicultural narratives in a required, semester-long course of teacher

education at a liberal arts university in Georgia. The data were collected from 22 preservice teachers' 115 written responses to 10 multicultural narratives selected from the book, *Voices of Diversity*. The authors coded two aspects of each narrative response: critique of the classroom conflict and how the solutions demonstrate a diversity/inclusiveness approach. The results showed that the analysis of multicultural narratives helped preservice teachers to understand multicultural and diversity issues more deeply. Many participants have experienced the transformation from rejecting the importance of multiculturalism to increased awareness and acceptance of its impact on teaching, learning, and curriculum. In general, preservice teachers were better at critiquing classroom conflicts than at providing solutions using a diversity and inclusiveness approach. Also, while most preservice teachers were comfortable with issues such as individual learning differences and linguistic diversity, they were not comfortable with issues such as institutional racism and religious diversity.

In addition, Gomez, Strage, Knutson-Miller, and Garcia-Nevarez (2009) explored preservice teachers' facility in a second language in teacher education programs. The researcher examined the impact of early field experiences on preservice teachers' career-goal orientations, the relationship between school classification and participant outcomes, and the relationship between preservice teachers' facility in a second language and their response to their placement. The authors used pre- to post-field experience surveys from 335 undergraduate students who completed field experiences in K-8 classroom at three state university campuses in California. Overall, the results revealed that early field experiences can positively affect career goal clarification. Regarding preservice teachers' facility in a second language affecting their career goals and commitment to teaching in diverse settings and with English learners, although most participants showed enthusiasm about a career working with culturally diverse learners, 63% of

the monolingual English preservice teachers appeared to have the lowest expectations in the pre-test survey and remained the least interested in the post-test survey compared other bilingual preservice teachers.

Another study about the impact of field experience in preservice teachers programs conducted by Lastrapers and Negishi (2012) surveyed 46 preservice teachers enrolled in nine sections of an introduction to diversity for teachers education course at a mid-sized university in the Southeast. The purpose of the study by was to examine preservice teachers' cultural consciousness and to assess their levels and sources of efficacy during an initial urban field experience while tutoring diverse learners. The course was completed in an 18-hour tutoring requirement in elementary and secondary schools. The investigators utilized a mixed methods research design with both quantitative data of surveys with pre- and post-tests and qualitative data using a structured electronic journal blog. The instruments used in this study were as follows; demographic background, questionnaire inventory of cross-cultural sensitivity, culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy scale, and reflective journal blog. The results demonstrated that although most preservice teachers perceived the importance of using multiple frameworks to understand the students from diverse backgrounds, only one-third associated these multiple frameworks with the need to use culturally responsive instruction. In addition, the majority did not connect the origin of this need to socially unfair policies and practices.

In a similar fashion, Waddell's (2011) research focused on one elementary teacher education program in Missouri. The population of the city school district was composed of 91.3% students of color and 80.3% students with free or reduced lunch. The author examined the impact of the project, Accessing Community Collaborations to Enhance Student Success (ACCESS), on 33 preservice teachers' perceptions of urban communities and urban teaching.

ACCESS was a three-part course sequence including “Summer Community Immersion,” “Working with Families and Communities,” and “Students Teaching Internship.” The participants kept journals and provided qualitative data from course reflections throughout the experience. The data were analyzed through inductive analysis with an open coding approach. Waddell (2011) found that the ACCESS had a positive impact on preteachers’ perceptions of urban communities and urban teaching. Many preservice teachers changed perception of families and communities including discovering their own biases and challenging their own assumptions. The participants discovered that the inequities were a result of instructional racism and segregation rather than a result of individual choice. Furthermore, preservice teachers began to see urban communities as places where they desire to serve and discovered the necessity for urban teachers to get to know their students and their families and communities.

Three studies explored the indicators that influence the outcomes of multicultural teacher education programs, preservice teachers’ perceptions about diversity, as well as the effectiveness of these programs. Reiter and Davis (2011) evaluated the effectiveness of a specific multicultural teacher education program at a southern, mid-sized university that consisted of weekly diversity seminars over the course of two semesters. The researchers examined the differences in attitudes, expectations, and biases of preservice teachers and their effects on student achievement according to student race, class, and other family background factors such as the father’s education level. They did this by contrasting pre-service teachers who received cultural sensitivity with diversity training seminars and those who did not. A total sample size of this survey was 133. Reiter & Davis’ (2011) findings revealed an insignificant relationship between the completion of the training program and the preservice teachers’ attitudes. Nevertheless, two personal characteristics are associated with respondents’ attitudes regarding the influence of

background characteristics on student learning: respondent gender and social class. Males (22% of total participants) and those from higher social class backgrounds (68% of total participants) were more likely to report that background characteristics would likely influence student learning.

To examine general and special education preservice teachers' responses to an early community-based first field experience in an unfamiliar community and the factors that influenced their responses, Adams, Bondy, and Kuhel (2005) examined three groups - junior, senior and master's students- in the teacher education program, the Bright Future Mentoring Project. The program is developed around themes of equity and social justice, in which pre-service teacher worked with African American children in local public housing neighborhoods. The 19 preservice teachers were all volunteers that they were willing to talk about their experiences in the program. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, and all interviews were audiotape recorded and transcribed for data analysis. Participants were asked to talk about the program experience in general terms such as their expectations and whether they were met, as well as how they would be different if they had not participated in the program. The authors used a descriptive and interpretive qualitative approach to explain not only how participants responded, but also why they responded as they did. The preservice teachers' responses to an early community-based first field experience and the factors that influenced their responses were characterized as follows: (1) resistance; (2) heightened awareness; (3) conscious openness; (4) knowing children as learners; (5) cultural responsiveness; (6) insights into oppression; and (7) passion and commitment (Adams et al, 2005). In the response of resistance, preservice teachers resented to going into an unfamiliar setting and voiced numerous concerns often focused on the students' own comfort and convenience. Preservice teachers who responded in

heightened awareness appeared to keep their eyes and minds open, but they did not change substantially. Although they had “Aha moments”, they did not go beyond amazement to examine their pre-existing beliefs about students and their families. In the response of conscious openness, pre-service teachers opened their minds, withheld their judgment, and challenged their previous stereotypes. However, this response was not sufficient enough for teachers to work with culturally diverse students and their communities. Knowing children as learners means preservice teachers knew individuals in order to meet their needs, but did so by assuming that knowing students’ personalities, interests, and academic needs were sufficient for helping them succeed, while viewing the students through a colorblind lens. Preservice teachers did not talk about the sociocultural influence in shaping identities of children and themselves. Preservice teachers who responded with cultural responsiveness recognized the connections between sociocultural factors and students’ priorities, expectations, and cultural capital, and the relationship among these sociocultural constructions, teaching, and learning. Preservice teachers who responded with insights into oppression recognized that the way society is structured can lead to marginalization and oppression. They realized ways in which low-income, minority students were being marginalized by the structure of the schooling and society. The response of passion and commitment means the teachers displayed intensely emotional expressions of commitment to the education of marginalized students and the cause of social activism and change, as well as the need for the restructuring and redesign of teacher education. Pre-service teachers with this response assumed responsibility for change.

Moreover, Adams et al. (2005) found that factors that influenced responses were not the length of time in a program but rather prior knowledge and experience with diverse populations, community volunteering, and/or activism as well as opportunities for scaffolding/mediating the

experience through program structures (thematic coherence/ the cohort structure) and instructor effort (class discussions/readings/assignments). Also, authors asserted that the pre-service teacher's personal history was an essential element in the relationship of experience and learning. Several recommendations related to content and pedagogy for the teacher education program were as follows: (1) enhance program structure (the cohort system, thematic coherence in the program, and team teaching); (2) promote awareness of racial identity insight into students' own identities; (3) promote multiple perspectives such as direct dialogue among students from diverse backgrounds using narratives and films; (4) monitor student resistance such as challenging ideas, sharing experiences, creating an environment in which pre-service teachers feel safe enough to analyze their beliefs, exploring different perspectives, and considering new ways of thinking; and (5) Facilitate discussion of experiences.

In the third study, Pohan, Ward, Kouzekanani, & Boatright (2009) detected no statistically significant relationship between preservice teachers' cross-cultural life experiences and their personal or professional beliefs about diversity. The researchers explored a comparative study of 96 middle school and high school preservice teachers participating in a 200-hour field experience within three schools: two urban schools where preservice teachers mostly served low-income students of color and one suburban school where they worked with white middle-class students. Pohan et al. (2009) administered pre- and post tests with three psychometric instruments: (1) cross-cultural life experiences checklist collecting demographic information, cross-cultural life and educational experience, (2) personal beliefs about diversity scale, and (3) professional beliefs about diversity scale. In addition, journal entries were used to investigate participants' changing personal and professional beliefs about teaching diverse students. The results showed that when compared to preservice teachers placed in suburban schools, preservice

teachers working in urban schools generally became more culturally responsive over the course of the semester. However, with respect to the cross-cultural life experiences and personal or professional beliefs about diversity, no statistically significant relationship was found between variables. In addition, regardless of the field experience setting, the analysis showed no statistically significant differences between pre- and post- tests that measured personal beliefs about diversity.

Preservice Teachers' Attitudes toward CLD Families

Although many colleges and schools adopt multicultural courses and programs in their teacher preparation programs, most preservice teachers feel unprepared to work collaboratively with families, especially when families are ethnically, culturally, or socioeconomically different from themselves (DeAcosta, 1996; Graves, 2010). Consequently, preservice and beginning teachers may rarely understand or be prepared for collaboration with CLD families.

The perception of preservice teachers about CLD families was the subject of a study by Kidd, Sanchez, and Thorp (2005). The purpose of the study was to examine preservice teachers' perceptions of how their understanding of CLD families shifted across time and what events they thought influenced their thinking throughout the 2-year teacher education program. This study involved 17 preservice teachers enrolled in a 2-year, full-time graduate program at a university in the Washington, DC metropolitan area that prepares teachers who were willing to work with culturally, linguistically, and ability-diverse young children and their families. Qualitative methodologies such as a modified "post-then-pre" retrospective approach were adopted to analyze the shift in teacher disposition. The researchers investigated shifts in dispositions about (a) building relationships with families, (b) feeling comfortable working with children and

families with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and (c) being willing to implement culturally responsive and relevant curriculum and instruction.

The results of the study indicated that preservice teachers perceived that their attitudes and beliefs about CLD families changed over the course of the program, and these changes were in part attributed to home visits and stories about families' backgrounds. Some preservice teachers who were initially excited discovered that forging relationships with families was not as easy or fun as they thought it would be. Others who expressed fear and panic were surprised to find that most families were welcoming and willing to share. Most preservice teachers recognized the importance of building relationships with families and engaging them in their children's education. The participants perceived that intimate knowledge of families helped them provide culturally responsive instruction and promoted cultural and linguistic continuity between home and school. Regarding linguistic diversity, some preservice teachers seemed to have a lack of knowledge of linguistic diversity or had strong feelings that English should be taught at home in the beginning of the program. One participant described that she did not understand the importance of maintaining the home language at all because she believed that everyone should speak English in America and parents were responsible for teaching their children English. By the end of the program, all preservice teachers perceived that they were more aware of the need for promoting multilingualism and the value of home languages in the classroom. One preservice teacher stated that she recognized the effects of discontinuity between home and school from the kindergarten through third grade internship. The preservice teacher also noted that teachers may have unintentionally sent the message that home languages were inferior languages by not specifically talking about cultural and linguistic differences with children.

Surprisingly, Kidd et al. (2005) discovered many preservice teachers did not discuss the impact of families on their comfort with linguistic diversity. The authors questioned the reasons for these responses and whether there was an impact that was not found in this program or there were other situations that had influence on their understanding of linguistic diversity.

Graves (2010) examined the relation of cooperating teachers' beliefs about family involvement and cultural diversity to preservice teachers' beliefs about family involvement and cultural diversity in an early childhood practicum. This collective case study employed multiple source including open-ended interviews, field observations, reflection, and dialogue journals for data collection. Data analysis included single case analyses followed by a cross-case analysis. The results revealed that preservice teachers' beliefs about family involvement and cultural diversity either changed somewhat, were reinforced, or remained stable. Influences on beliefs were attributed to cooperating teachers, the overall practicum experience, or both to some extent. However, cooperating teachers' and preservice teachers' beliefs, values, attitudes, and reported practices about family involvement and cultural diversity were similar in a number of ways. In general, they believed that ongoing communication was essential to the relationship between teachers and families and believed that it was necessary for teachers to address cultural diversity mainly because it serves as a valuable learning experience for young children. The relationship between cooperating teachers and preservice teachers was, in many ways, a mentoring relationship. With regard to the mentoring relationships, positive and negative experiences occurred regardless of gender. Furthermore, clear, explicit expectations and ongoing communication appeared to provide positive experiences.

The study by Cho and DeCastro-Ambrosetti (2005) revealed pre-service teachers' hesitation and resistance to CLD students and their families even though they participated in

multicultural courses. They investigated the effectiveness of multicultural courses on pre-service teachers' attitudes about the experiences, needs, and resources of CLD students by using pre- and post-test surveys. The participants for this pilot study were 25 secondary education pre-service teachers, 56% female and 44% male, enrolled in a multicultural education course at California State University. Their findings showed that the majority of pre-service teachers indicated that their attitudes toward working with diverse student populations were positively influenced by taking the multicultural education class. Yet, some pre-service teachers stated a fear of being rejected and felt ill equipped for teaching CLD students and collaborating with CLD parents due to ethnic differences and their limited cultural knowledge and teaching experience. Even though pre-service teachers reported that completion of a multicultural education course had a positive impact on their attitudes toward issues of diversity, their post-test survey results revealed resistance to the notion that multicultural education benefits all students and society.

State of the Problem

The literature review yields important implications for future study. First, the preparation of preservice teachers concerning CLD families has received little attention in most teacher education programs. Second, few studies examined preservice teachers' perception and attitudes about CLD families. Third, there is no research related to preservice teachers' perception about the lack of English proficiency of CLD families, which would be one of the main barriers that hinder collaboration of CLD families and school professionals. Fourth, although many multicultural teacher education programs had a positive effect on preservice teachers' beliefs about diversity and CLD families, the factors influencing preservice teachers' attitudes toward CLD families with limited English proficiency were rarely explored. Fifth, the relationship between pre-service teachers' personal backgrounds such as race, gender or a cross-cultural

experience and their attitudes toward CLD families with limited English proficiency has not been studied extensively in the field of teacher education. My thesis attempted to fill some of these gaps in the research on the attitudes of preservice teachers. Specifically, I examined the relationship between preservice teachers' attitudes about CLD families with limited English proficiency and cross-cultural experiences such as speaking other languages, traveling and studying abroad, living in other countries, taking multicultural programs/courses, and having other professional experiences.

CHAPTER 2

METHODS

Participants and Procedures

The target sample included all preservice teachers in early childhood education and special education programs at four universities from the western, south western, mid-eastern, and southern United States. The participants were junior and senior education students in the initial credential programs at the undergraduate level and candidates in initial certification graduate programs.

Participants were contacted through their programs listserv and invited to complete the survey. The survey was implemented for one and half months at the beginning of spring semester, 2014. The questionnaire was emailed to preservice teachers at each university through SurveyMonkey. A reminder message to encourage participation was emailed once a week for four weeks. Participation was voluntary, and monetary compensation was offered in order to improve the response rate. When the participants completed the survey, they had a chance to enter random drawing to win a \$25 amazon.com gift card. The number of prize winners was 5.

Instrument

The survey instrument used in this study was the Teachers Attitudes Survey Toward Culturally Linguistically Diverse Families (TAS-CLDF), which assesses preservice teachers' attitudes on CLD families. The TAS-CLDF contains Likert rating items and was divided into four sections: demographic information with five questions, cultural experiences with six questions, personal beliefs toward cultural linguistic diversity with five questions, and

professional beliefs toward cultural linguistic diversity with 11 questions. The section of personal beliefs and a portion of professional beliefs section were adapted from Beliefs of General Education Suburban Teachers Towards non-European Ancestry Immigrant Students (B-GEST) (Shodavaram et al, 2009). The remainder of professional beliefs section was developed by researchers based on peer-reviewed research (Correa-Torres & Durando, 2011; Hart, Cheatham, & Jimenez-Silva, 2012; Schoorman, Zainuddin, & Sena, 2011; Smiley, Howland, & Anderson, 2008; Sparapani, Seo, & Smith, 2011) related issues of CLD families with limited English proficiency. It took each participant approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS Version 21.0. The frequency distribution and the mean scores of all subscales were calculated. Computing variables were conducted to obtain the variable of beliefs toward CLD families with limited English proficiency by combining an item 5 from personal beliefs and items 1, 8, and 10 from professional beliefs. Lastly, Independent Samples t-test was performed to identify the differences in beliefs toward CLD families between preservice teachers who had cross-cultural experiences and those who had not. The cross-cultural experiences were the independent variables and included six categories; speaking other languages, traveling abroad, studying abroad, living in other countries, taking multicultural programs/courses, and having professional experiences (Table 2). Preservice teachers' beliefs toward CLD families with limited English proficiency were used as dependent variables (Table 5). Because only a small number of participants (27) responded to the questions about demographics (Table 1), I excluded demographics as an independent variable as the sample size was inadequate.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Demographics

A total of 367 from California (33), New Mexico (34), Indiana (130), and Georgia (200) students were contacted by email, and 62 completed the questionnaire in SurveyMonkey, with a response rate of 17%. Table 1 describes the demographic information of preservice teacher population that participated in this survey. An overwhelming 97% of the respondents were identified as female, while only 3% were male. The races represented in the sample included Caucasian/white (65%), African American (3%), Asian (7%), Hispanic/Latino (19%), and other (6%). Seventy-seven percent of the respondents were less than 30 years old, 16% were between 31 and 40 years old, and 7% were more than 41 years old. The respondents lived in Georgia (55%), California (19%), Indiana (13%), and New Mexico (10%). Over one-third (76%) of the preservice teachers were enrolled in undergraduate programs and the remaining participants (24%) were enrolled in graduate program.

Table1
Demographic Information

<u>Demographic</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>%Sample</u>
Gender	Male	3
	Female	97
Age	less than 30	77
	31 to 40	16
	41 or older	7
Race	Caucasian/White	65
	African American	3
	Native American	0
	Asian	7
	Hispanic/Latino	19
	Other	6
State	California	19
	Georgia	55
	Indiana	13
	New Mexico	10
	Texas	3
Program	Undergraduate Special Education - Junior	13
	Undergraduate Special Education - Senior	17
	Undergraduate Early Childhood Education - Junior	20
	Undergraduate Early Childhood Education - Senior	23
	Undergraduate Joint Special Education/Early Childhood Education - Junior	3
	Undergraduate Joint Special Education/Early Childhood Education - Senior	0
	Graduate Special Education	20
	Graduate Early Childhood Education	3
	Graduate Joint Special Education/Early Childhood Education	0

With respect to cross-cultural experiences of the preservice teachers, the majority (71%) of the participants indicated that they traveled abroad, while 37% spoke other languages, 18% studied abroad, and 15% lived in other countries (Table 2). Unsurprisingly, 89% of the respondents had taken multicultural programs or courses. Of the 62 preservice teachers, 61% had professional experience in a classroom such as paraprofessional.

Table 2
Cross-cultural Experiences

<u>Questions</u>	<u>%Yes</u>	<u>%No</u>
Do you speak other languages in addition to English?	37	63
Have you traveled abroad?	71	29
Have you studied abroad?	18	82
Have you lived in another country (ies)?	15	85
Have you had multicultural programs or courses?	89	11
Have you had professional experience in a classroom? (i.e. paraprofessional)	61	39

Personal and Professional Beliefs

The Likert scale items for personal (5 items) and professional (11 items) beliefs were ranked on the basis of the level of agreement indicated for each (tables 3 and 4). In personal beliefs, more than 95% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with three items: nothing wrong with raising children from different backgrounds, accepting different ways of life will strengthen America, and developing meaningful friendships with others from different racial/ethnic groups. Interestingly, nearly half (47%) respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the importance of learning English instead of maintaining immigrants' first languages, and only 56% had positive attitudes toward America's immigrant policy and 21% did not want to answer.

In regard to professional beliefs, despite the importance placed on cultural linguistic diversity in school for students and teachers, the items with which most participants disagreed were related to CLD families with limited English proficiency. For instance, 71% participants believed CLD families with limited English proficiency are detrimental to family/teacher collaboration, nearly half (48%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that they should learn to speak

the language of CLD families with limited English proficiency, and 41% disagreed or strongly disagreed that they felt prepared to communicate with CLD families with limited English proficiency.

Table 3
Personal Beliefs (Numbers are percentages)

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>N/A</u>
1. There is nothing wrong with having/raising children from different racial backgrounds.	2	2	19	77	0
2. America's immigrant and refugee policy has led to the deterioration of America.	23	33	16	0	21
3. In America, being able to accept different ways of life will strengthen us as a nation.	2	3	39	56	0
4. People should develop meaningful friendships with others from different racial/ethnic groups.	0	0	42	58	0
5. It is more important for all immigrants to learn English rather to maintain their first language.	10	30	33	14	12

Table 4
Professional Beliefs (Numbers are percentages)

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>N/A</u>
1. The limited English proficiency of some culturally linguistically diverse (CLD) families is detrimental to family/teacher collaboration.	4	20	53	18	5
2. When dealing with CLD students, their communication and behavioral styles often are interpreted as behavioral problems.	2	16	55	20	7
3. A teacher's job is more rewarding than ever because of the classroom diversity.	2	11	44	32	11
4. It is important even for students to be aware of diversity in the classroom.	0	2	34	60	4
5. In order to be effective with all students, teachers should be knowledgeable of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds of students and their families.	0	0	25	75	0
6. A large number of CLD students are improperly placed in special education classes.	0	2	54	36	9
7. In order to be effective with all students, teachers should have experience working with students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.	0	7	48	43	2
8. Teachers should learn to speak the languages of CLD families with limited English proficiency.	11	37	34	5	13
9. Respecting other cultures is something that students should learn as early as possible.	0	0	18	80	2
10. I feel prepared to communicate with CLD families with limited English proficiency.	5	36	38	18	3
11. I feel prepared to teach CLD students with limited English proficiency in my future classroom.	2	29	43	23	3

Beliefs toward CLD Families with Limited English Proficiency

Independent Samples t-test was conducted to examine the mean difference in beliefs toward CLD families with limited English proficiency between preservice teachers who had

cross-cultural experiences and preservice teachers who had not. The results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in preservice teachers' beliefs toward CLD families with limited English proficiency based on whether they had the experiences of studying abroad, living other countries, taking multicultural programs/courses, and having professional experiences as opposed to preservice teachers who had not.

However, there was a statistically significant difference in beliefs toward CLD families with limited English proficiency between preservice teachers who speak other languages ($n = 21$, $M = 2.54$, $SD = 0.59$) and preservice teachers who do not ($n = 35$, $M = 2.04$, $SD = 0.67$); $t(54) = 2.84$, $p = 0.01$ (Tables 7-1 and 7-2). The 95% confidence interval was 0.15 to 0.86, representing a large-sized effect, $d = 0.75$. These results indicate that preservice teachers who speak other languages besides English had much more positive attitudes toward CLD families with limited English proficiency than those who do not.

Also, there was a statistically significant difference in beliefs toward CLD families with limited English proficiency between preservice teachers who traveled abroad ($n = 39$, $M = 2.35$, $SD = 0.65$) and preservice teachers who did not ($n = 17$, $M = 1.94$, $SD = 0.67$); $t(54) = 2.14$, $p = 0.04$ (Tables 6-1 and 6-2). The 95% confidence interval was 0.03 to 0.79, representing a medium-sized effect, $d = 0.61$. As compared with respondents who did not travel to other countries, those who had travel experiences in other countries were more likely to report that they had positive attitudes toward CLD families with limited English proficiency.

Table 5
Beliefs toward CLD Families with Limited English Proficiency (Numbers are percentages)

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>N/A</u>
It is more important for all immigrants to learn English rather to maintain their first language.	10	30	33	14	12
The limited English proficiency of some culturally linguistically diverse (CLD) families is detrimental to family/teacher collaboration.	4	20	53	18	5
Teachers should learn to speak the languages of CLD families with limited English proficiency.	11	37	34	5	13
I feel prepared to communicate with CLD families with limited English proficiency.	5	36	38	18	3

Table 6-1
Group Statistics – Speaking Other Languages vs. Beliefs toward CLD Families with Limited English Proficiency

	<u>Speaking Other Languages</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>	<u>Std. Error Mean</u>
Beliefs toward CLD Families	Yes	21	2.54	.59	.13
	No	35	2.04	.67	.11

Table 6-2
Independent Samples Test – Speaking Other Languages vs. Beliefs toward CLD Families with Limited English Proficiency

		<u>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</u>		<u>t-test for Equality of Means</u>					
		<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Sig.(2-tailed)</u>	<u>Mean Difference</u>	<u>Std. Error Difference</u>	<u>95% CI Difference</u>
Beliefs toward CLD Families	Equal variances assumed	.58	.46	2.84	54	.01*	.50	.18	.15 .86
	Equal variances not assumed			2.93	46.23	.01	.50	.17	.16 .85

* $p < .05$.

Table 7-1

Group Statistics – Traveling Abroad vs. Beliefs toward CLD Families with Limited English Proficiency

	Traveling Abroad	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Beliefs toward CLD Families	Yes	39	2.35	.65	.10
	No	17	1.94	.67	.16

Table 7-2

Independent Samples Test – Traveling Abroad vs. Beliefs toward CLD Families with Limited English Proficiency

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-testt for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)*	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% CI Difference	
Beliefs toward CLD Families	Equal variances assumed	.22	.64	2.14	54	.04	.41	.19	.03	.79
	Equal variances not assumed			2.12	29.88	.04	.41	.19	.01	.803

* p < .05.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to identify preservice teachers' attitudes toward CLD families with limited English proficiency and the relationship between preservice teachers' attitudes and their cross-cultural experiences. The focus of this discussion is to examine the implications of these findings as they relate to existing research, discuss the limitations of this study, and suggest future research questions.

General Findings

From this study, three results are particularly noteworthy. First, preservice teachers had less positive attitudes toward CLD families with limited English proficiency, although they had highly positive attitudes about cultural diversity in school. Overall, 90% of participants agreed or strongly agreed to the statements regarding cultural diversity in both personal and professional beliefs about cultural diversity. Yet, less than half of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statements regarding immigrants maintaining their first language, teachers learning languages of CLD families with limited English proficiency, or preparation to communicate with CLD families with limited English proficiency. The majority of preservice teachers were uncomfortable with CLD families with limited English proficiency. These findings support a previous research demonstrating that most teachers disagree on the need for training to increase their familiarity with languages spoken by CLD students and their families, despite the fact that they agree with the importance of communication with CLD students and their families (Correa-Torres and Durano, 2011; Kidd et al., 2005; Shodavaram et al., 2009). In addition, with respect

to the preparation to communicate with CLD families, most preservice teachers felt frustration or hesitation to work collaboratively with CLD families with limited English proficiency (DeAcosta, 1996; Graves, 2007; Kidd et al, 2005).

Second, preservice teachers' attitudes about CLD families with limited English proficiency were not influenced by whether they had multicultural programs/courses and professional experience in a classroom or not. Even though nearly 90% of participants responded that they participated in multicultural programs/courses and 61% had professional experiences in classrooms, there was no statistically significant relationship between those factors and their attitudes about CLD families with limited English proficiency. These results support previous studies that preservice teachers' attitudes were not influenced by the amount of time spent in multicultural training programs, but rather by their own personal history and prior knowledge (Adams et al., 2005; Garmon, 2005; Reiter and Davis, 2011).

Third, preservice teachers who speak other languages in addition to English or traveled abroad had a more positive attitude toward CLD families with limited English proficiency than those who do not. The factor of speaking a foreign language, specifically, was very significantly related to preservice teachers' attitudes toward CLD families with limited English proficiency. These results are consistent with previous research demonstrating that monolingual English preservice teachers had the least interest in teaching in diverse settings with English learners compared other bilingual preservice teachers (Gomez et al., 2009). Also, several researchers have found that the preservice teachers or inservice teachers' success in working with CLD students and their families is related to their knowledge and understanding of the languages spoken by those students and families (Fillmore & Snow, 2002; Gandara et al., 2003; Gomez et al., 2009; Tellez & Waxman, 2004).

Implications

When examining these results, three implications are apparent. First, it was evident that preservice teachers did not perceive themselves to be adequately prepared to communicate with CLD families in future, particularly when the families have low levels of English proficiency. This is similar to the position of CLD families with limited English proficiency in terms of collaboration between family and school; they are less likely to have family-school contact or feel marginalized in the decision-making process (Jegatheesan, 2009; Hamilton, et al, 2010; Schoorman et al, 2011). Several studies suggested the need for improving those families and professional relationships by providing qualified and competent interpreters and cultural brokers (Jegatheesan, 2009; Correa-Torres and Durando, 2011; Jung, 2011).

Second, language plays a crucial role for preservice teachers' attitudes toward CLD families with limited English proficiency. Learning other languages is a direct method to understand other cultures and the way of thinking and behavior of other people (Elmes, 2013). In addition, preservice teachers that speak other languages may have more favorable attitudes about CLD families because many of them might be from a CLD family themselves and thus speak other languages. Therefore, it is important to recruit more students who have CLD backgrounds and speak other languages into teacher education programs. Garmon (2005) asserted that teacher candidates should be selected on the basis of whether or not they already possess certain dispositions and experiences toward diversity because multicultural programs are useful only for those with appropriate predispositions. The opportunities to interact with and learn from them would benefit the majority of students in teacher education programs, as most teacher education students come from non-CLD backgrounds (Garmon, 2005).

Third, it is important to recognize that multicultural education in preservice teacher education programs has mixed results. Some multicultural programs have apparently led to changes in preservice teachers' attitudes and beliefs about diversity and CLD families, while others have had little or no impact (Trent et al., 2008). As seen in this study, multicultural programs/courses did not influence respondents' attitudes toward CLD families with limited English proficiency. It might be because their multicultural programs/ courses did not include the topic of communication between teachers and CLD families with limited English programs at all or those programs were implemented in ineffective ways. Garmon (2005) suggested six key factors associated with changing preservice teachers' beliefs about diversity in multicultural education in teacher preparation programs: their dispositions including openness, self-awareness/self-reflectiveness, and commitment to social justice; and their cross-cultural experiences including intercultural, educational, and support group experiences. To be truly effective, the multicultural teacher education programs must be comprehensive and long term, providing appropriate information, field experiences with diverse students and families, and support for teacher candidates throughout their preparation programs (Garmon, 2005). It is also important to recognize that teacher education faculty members are still disproportionately white; therefore, most institutions need to recruit more faculties with CLD backgrounds.

Limitations and Future Research

There are several limitations to this study. First, the 17% response rate is problematic because we do not know if the respondents were truly representative of the participant pool. It is possible that the preservice teachers who chose to respond had an interest in the topic area and were perhaps biased. Furthermore, the sample may not be representative of all preservice teachers in Special Education and Early Childhood General Education. To minimize sampling

error, collecting samples from more extensive geographical areas in the U.S. with larger sample sizes is necessary. Second, the validity of the participants' responses must be scrutinized.

Inaccurate responses are possible due to participants inadvertently recalling information incorrectly, skipping some questions, misunderstanding a question, and responding to a question falsely to give a socially desirable response, or flaws in the survey design.

Future research is suggested on the relationships between demographic information (e.g. race, gender, age, and the program of study) and their attitudes toward CLD families with limited English proficiency. In addition, comparing preservice teachers' attitudes toward CLD families with limited English proficiency in special education with those in general education or preservice teachers in early childhood program with those in programs for grades k-12 should be examined. Lastly, future research is needed to work on the reason why studying abroad and living in other countries as a cross-cultural experience did not influence preservice teachers' attitudes toward CLD families with limited English proficiency in comparison with the cross-cultural experience of traveling abroad, which had a significant relationship with their attitudes.

In conclusion, the number of CLD students and families in the U.S. is increasing dramatically. Teachers face collaboration with CLD families with low English proficiency as well as in classrooms where many students are from CLD backgrounds. Teacher preparation programs have not adequately prepared these individuals for CLD families with limited English proficiency, regardless of the completion of multicultural programs/courses. Multicultural education in teacher preparation program must help preservice teachers to sincerely open their minds about those families and to learn other cultures and languages. In this way, preservice teachers will be prepared for the challenge of working with CLD families with limited English proficiency when they step into their classrooms.

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