

ADDRESSING CLASSROOM DIVERSITY COMPETENCY

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Introduction

Diversity

The concept includes: “(1) Individual differences (e.g., personality, interests, learning modalities, and life experiences), and (2) group differences (e.g., race, ethnicity, ability, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, nationality, language, religion, political affiliation, and socio-economic background)” (InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards, p. 21).

Classroom Diversity

Migration has changed communities throughout the world and has redefined the teaching profession (Philpott, Furey, & Penney, 2010).


Classrooms are increasingly diverse with unique characteristics that present challenges to teachers. Challenges include: multiple languages, different values, respect for individual and social differences regardless of sex, creed, race and nationality. Goodwin (2010)

Multicultural education

Gollnick & Chinn (2009) establish multicultural education as a strategy which incorporates cultural differences and provides equality and social justice in schools.

Banks and Banks (2004) defines multicultural education as “a field of study designed to increase educational equity for all students that incorporates, for this purpose, content, concepts, principles, theories, and paradigms from history, the social and behavioral sciences, and particularly from ethnic studies and women studies” (p. xii).

Objectives


- Analyze teacher candidates perceived competency level to:
 - address diversity issues that arise in the classroom
 - include diversity issues or topics in their teaching
 - Examine teacher candidates perception of how diversity topics are addressed in the teacher preparation program.
 - Provide recommendations on how to improve the teacher preparation program.
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Data Collection

Authorization

- Institutional Review Board
- School of Education
- Consent forms

Questionnaire Administration

- Paper and pencil administration
 - General Orientation for students enrolled in practicum (beginning of the semester; students at the end of the program)
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Reliability

George y Mallery (2003, in Gliem & Gliem, 2003, p. 87) provide the following guide to classify reliability coefficients:

- > 0.9 Excellent
- > 0.8 Good
- > 0.7 Acceptable
- > 0.6 Questionable
- > 0.5 Poor
- < 0.5 Not acceptable

Notes. CA = Cronbach's Alpha. A Fisher r-to-z transformation was used to assess the significance of the difference between pairs of coefficients. There were no significant differences between the coefficients of the two formal administrations (UPRRP1 & UPRRP2).

Pilot Study

- 1st Response scale changes
- 2nd Three items were eliminated

UPRRP (<i>n</i> = 66)			
Question	Items	Cases	CA
8	16	56	.933
9	11	65	.943
10	9	65	.883
11	10	64	.958
12	12	65	.965
13	6	65	.864
14	10	63	.944
15	12	65	.914
16	10	64	.913
19	6	63	.789

Administration

- UPRRP1 (*n* = 102 of 128)
- UPRRP2 (*n* = 56 of 68)

UPRRP1		UPRRP2	
Cases	CA	Cases	CA
91	.930	55	.952
97	.942	52	.954
101	.934	55	.924
102	.958	51	.967
99	.954	53	.940
98	.936	56	.932
99	.940	53	.933
99	.939	56	.930
101	.948	56	.932
97	.909	54	.880

Response rate. UPRRP1 = 79.69%; UPRRP2 = 82.35%

Factor Analysis

UPRRP1 ($n = 102$)			
Question	Items	Explained Variability	Factors
8	16	67.21%	1) Gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status 2) Race/ethnicity, 3) Language
9	11	60.15%	1) Race/ethnicity
10	9	61.83%	1) Language
11	10	69.89%	1) Socioeconomic aspects
12	12	72.24%	1) Rights/Discrimination, 2) Gender
13	6	71.64%	1) Religion/Spirituality
14	10	62.21%	1) Special Education Rights and Strategies
15	12	56.76%	1) Special Education Conditions
16	10	66.71%	1) Embracing Diversity in the Classroom
19	6	63.53%	1) Teacher Preparation Program Components

Demographic Data

Females

- UPRRP1 74.5%
- UPRRP2 75.0%

Age

- UPRRP1 21-25 87.2%
- UPRRP2 21-25 85.7%

Disability

- UPRRP1 7.8%
- UPRRP2 7.1%

Speak more than one language at home

- UPRRP1 82.4%
- UPRRP2 83.9%

First person to attend a post-secondary institution

- UPRRP1 10.8%
 - UPRRP2 10.7%
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Demographic Data

WHAT WAS THE MAIN REASON FOR CHOOSING EDUCATION AS A PROFESSION?	UPRRP1	UPRRP2
This is my calling.	32 (31.4)	19 (33.9)
I come from a family of educators.	2 (2.0)	5 (8.9)
The opportunity to develop citizens.	24 (23.5)	16 (28.6)
My teachers inspired me.	15 (14.7)	5 (8.9)
The need to join the workforce immediately after graduation.		1 (1.8)
This was <u>not</u> my first study option and I would like to change to another field.	13 (12.7)	8 (14.3)
Other; please specify	10 (9.8)	5 (10.4)

Note. The number outside the parenthesis is the frequency , while the number inside the parenthesis is the percentage.

Questionnaire Structure

- **SECTION I: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA (7 Items)**

- 1. Age
- 2. Gender
- 3. Disabilities
- 4. Spoken languages
- 5. First generation in post secondary institution
- 6. Reason for studying education
- 7. Program

- **SECTION II: COMPETENCE TO WORK WITH DIVERSE STUDENTS**

- 8. Indicate the level of competency that you have to work with diverse students (16 items). This section includes: Race and Ethnicity, Socioeconomic Aspects, Gender, and Language.
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- **SECTION III: COMPETENCY LEVELS TO INCORPORATE DIVERSITY ISSUES OR TOPICS IN THE TEACHING PROCESS**

- 9. Race and Ethnicity (11 items)
- 10. Language (9 items)
- 11. Socioeconomic (10 items)
- 12. Gender (12 items)
- 13. Religion and Spirituality (6 items)
- 14. Special Education (10 items)
- 15. Indicate your level of competency to work with Special Education students diagnosed with ... (12 items)
- 16. In general terms, indicate your competency level to ... (Diversity Spectrum; 10 items)

- **SECTION IV: PERCEPTION OF HOW DIVERSITY TOPICS ARE HANDLED IN THE TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM**
 - 17. How important do you think it is to address topics and issues related to diversity in the Teacher Preparation Program?
 - 18. Which of the following topics do you think should not be addressed in the classroom? Please explain the reason for your selection.
 - 19. Indicate to which degree diversity issues were addressed by the different Teacher Preparation Program components. (6 items)
 - **SECTION V: POST-GRADUATION PLANS**
 - 20. Do you plan to work as a teacher after graduating from the Teacher Preparation Program?
 - 21. Please explain the answer you provided in question #20 (even if the answer is “No”).
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Response Scale

PRE BASIC

I do not have the theoretical knowledge nor the practical skills necessary to approach this topic in school.

BASIC

I have some theoretical knowledge, but I do not have the practical skills to address this topic in school.

INTERMEDIATE

I have sufficient theoretical knowledge and some practical skills to address this topic in school.

ADVANCED

I have advanced theoretical knowledge and the necessary practical skills to address this topic in school.

Presentation of findings

Categories were collapsed:

1. Pre Basic + Basic
2. Intermediate + Advanced

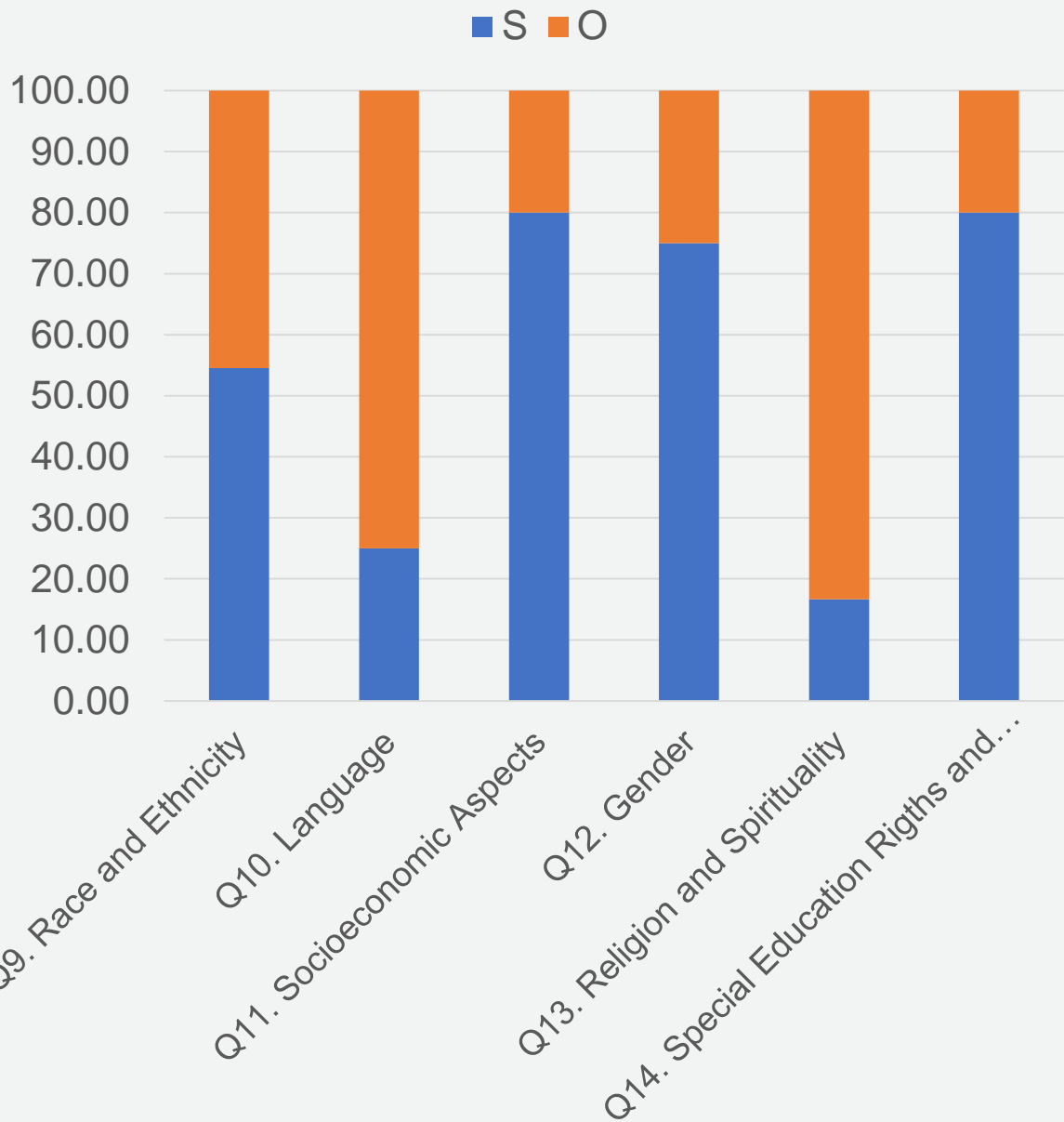
Results are presented as Strength or Opportunity areas instead of presenting individual frequencies and percentages:

1. Strength – Combined percentages of Intermediate and Advanced categories is equal or greater than 70%
2. Opportunity – Combined percentages of Pre Basic and Basic categories is greater than 30%

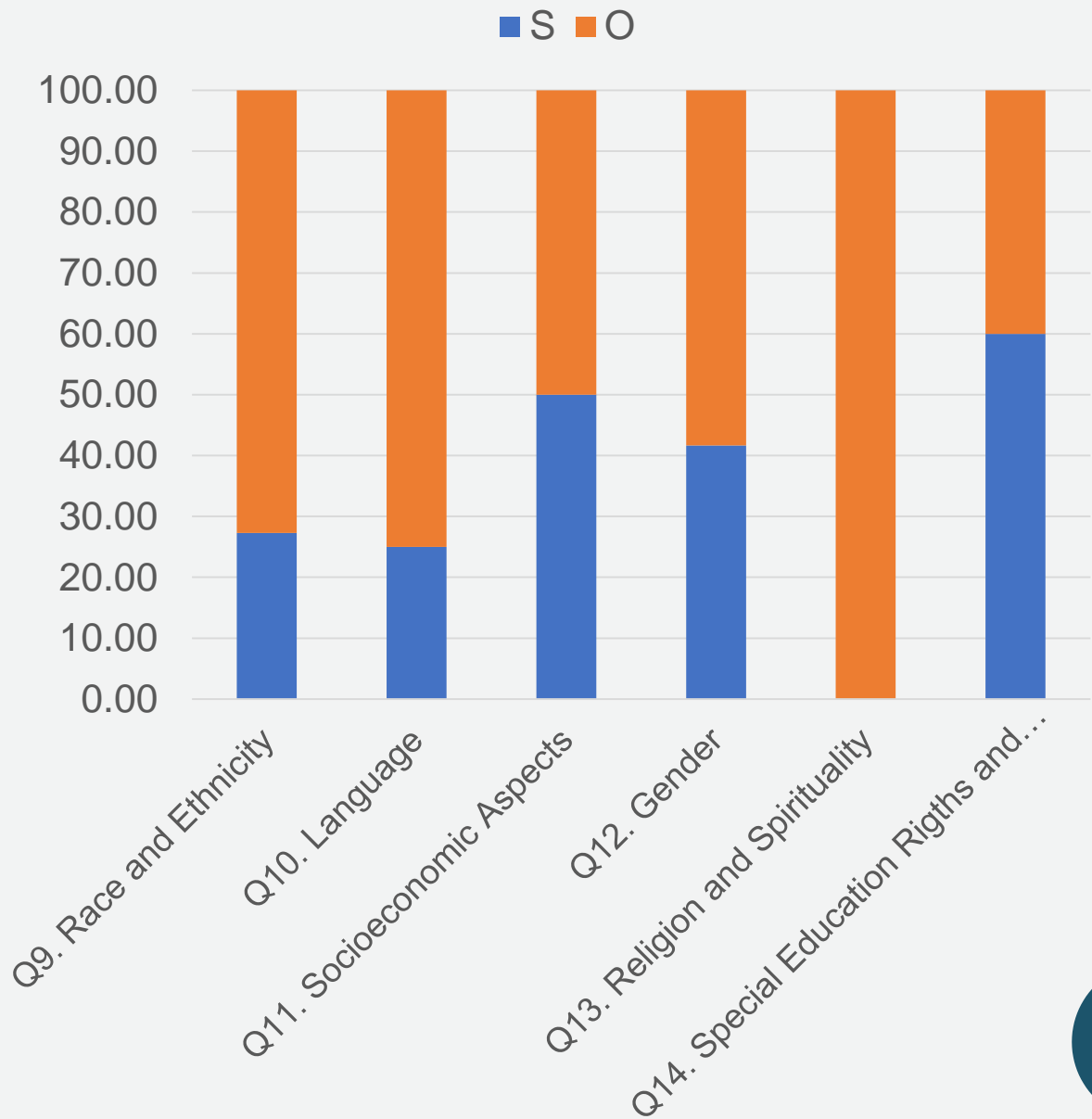
To construct graphs, we computed the percentage of items classified as a Strength and the percentage of items classified as an Opportunity. For example, question 9 has 11 items. Of these items, 6 were classified as Strength ($6 \div 11 \times 100 = 54.55\%$) and 5 as Opportunity (45.45%).

QUESTION 8: Indicate the level of competency that you have to work with students...	UPRRP1	UPRRP2
RACE AND ETHNICITY		
whose ethnic background differs from yours.	S	O
whose racial background differs from yours.	S	S
who come from interracial families.	S	S
who come from interethnic families.	O	O
SOCIOECONOMIC ASPECTS		
who are from a socio-economic level different from yours.	S	O
who are homeless.	O	O
GENDER		
whose sex is different from yours.	S	O
whose gender identity is different from yours.	S	S
whose beliefs regarding biological sex are different from yours.	S	O
whose beliefs regarding gender identity are different than yours.	S	S
who are raised by parents of the same gender.	S	O
who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or queer.	S	S
who identify as transgender, transsexual, or transvestite.	O	O
LANGUAGE		
who do not speak Spanish as a first language.	O	O
who speak Spanish* with linguistic limitations.	S	O
whose parents do not speak Spanish.	O	O

UPRRP1 Areas of Strength and Opportunity



UPRRP2 Areas of Strength and Opportunity



Note. Students were asked to indicate their competency level to include these topics or issues in the teaching process.

QUESTION 15: Indicate your level of competency to work with <u>Special Education</u> students diagnosed with...	UPRRP1	UPRRP2
Autism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hearing impairments, deafness, or hearing loss	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Low Vision or Legal Blindness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Behavioral and Emotional Disorders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cognitive Impairments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Orthopedic Impairments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning Disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Speech Impairments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attention Deficit and Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health conditions like Diabetes, Epilepsy, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Giftedness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multiple Disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

QUESTION 16: In general terms, indicate your competency level to ...	UPRRP1	UPRRP2
Include the history, narratives, and contributions of diverse groups into the curriculum.	S	O
Use students' strengths as a starting point when planning your teaching to promote their development.	S	S
Incorporate multiple perspectives in the content discussion, including personal, family and community experiences, and cultural norms.	S	S
Incorporate language development tools in planning and teaching.	S	S
Manage discrimination issues among students.	S	S
Manage discriminatory comments and bullying among students.	S	S
Manage harassment and bullying that you witness related to the diverse nature of groups.	S	O
Help students learn and understand the importance of tolerating people from diverse groups.	S	S
Make all students feel valued.	S	S
Make all students learn to value others.	S	S

QUESTION 17: How important do you think it is to address topics and issues related to diversity in the Teacher Preparation Program?

RESPONSE	UPRRP1	UPRRP2
Extremely important	91 (89.2)	48 (85.7)
Very important	6 (5.9)	6 (10.7)
Moderately important	3 (2.9)	2 (3.6)
Not that important	1 (1.0)	
Not important	1 (1.0)	

QUESTION 18: Which of the following topics do you think should not be addressed in the classroom?

TOPICS	SHOULD NOT BE ADDRESSED	
	UPRRP1	UPRRP2
Race		
Ethnicity		
Language	1 (1.0)	
Socioeconomic Status	1 (1.0)	2 (3.6)
Gender	4 (3.9)	1 (1.8)
Sexual Orientation	7 (6.9)	2 (3.6)
Religion and Spirituality	18 (17.6)	3 (5.4)
Special Needs	1 (1.0)	

Reasons for responses:

- All topics should be addressed: a) values should be included and discussed; b) we live in a diverse society; c) helps to eradicate violence; and d) learn to respect beliefs.
- Some topics should not be addressed: a) they are personal; b) should be discussed at home; and c) avoid conflict.

QUESTION 19: Indicate to which degree diversity issues were addressed by the different Teacher Preparation Program components.	UPRRP1	UPRRP2
Curriculum and teaching methodology courses	O	O
Foundation Courses *	S	S
Technology courses	O	O
Field Experiences	S	S
Clinical Experiences	S	S
Content Courses **	O	S

Notes. *Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy.

**Specialized content area courses. For example: Science, mathematics.

QUESTION 20: Do you plan to work as a teacher after graduating from the Teacher Preparation Program?

RESPONSE	UPRRP1	UPRRP2
Yes	79 (77.5)	43 (76.8)
No	21 (20.6)	12 (21.4)

For how many years?

UPRRP1

- 10 or more years (40.3%)
- 5 or less (12.8%)

UPRRP2

- 10 or more years (23.2%)
- 5 or less (19.6%)

Where?

RESPONSE	UPRRP1	UPRRP2
Puerto Rico	46 (45.1)	33 (58.9)
Abroad	10 (9.8)	4 (7.1)
Both	20 (19.6)	4 (7.1)

In what type of school?

RESPONSE	UPRRP1	UPRRP2
Public	31 (30.4)	16 (28.6)
Private	9 (8.8)	6 (10.7)
Both	32 (31.4)	7 (12.5)

Implications

- The instrument can provide valuable information for curriculum revision:
 - At the beginning of the program: can allow to assess and identify areas that will need more emphasis within the curriculum.
 - At the end of the program: can allow for the identification of areas that need to be addressed (improved) in the curriculum.
 - Both at the beginning and at the end of the program: can provide information regarding changes in teacher candidates' competency level perception.
 - Groups within the population can be compared. For example, special education teacher candidates versus candidates from other disciplines.
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Future studies

- Compare the results of a program that includes a course on multicultural education to those of a program that include the topics within different courses. The instrument must be administered at the same time in both institutions.
- In-depth study (qualitative) of the meaning teacher candidates assign to the vocabulary used to refer to different aspects of diversity. For example: what is classism?
- Administer the instrument to in-service teachers to identify areas that can be addressed through professional development.
- Can be adapted to be administered to other professionals. For example, the Response Scale can read “in the workplace” instead of “in school” and questions can read “with clients/people” instead of “with students”.

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