

CULTURAL PLURALISM AND DIVERSITY: ISSUES IMPORTANT TO FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES EDUCATION

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Student populations within family and consumer sciences education classrooms, like our nation, continue to grow increasingly diverse. Teachers' attitudes are critical to planning and implementing educational programs which meet the needs of learners from diverse backgrounds. This study used the Pluralism and Diversity Attitude Assessment (PADAA) to investigate family and consumer sciences teachers' attitudes toward issues related to multicultural education. The PADAA used four subscales (Appreciate Cultural Pluralism, Value Cultural Pluralism, Implement Cultural Pluralism, and Uncomfortable with Cultural Pluralism) to describe respondents' attitudes toward cultural pluralism and diversity. Family and consumer sciences teachers tended to reflect positive attitudes about the issues examined. However, they did express resistance toward classroom implementation of cultural pluralism as well as uncomfortable feelings about diversity. Results from this study will be useful to preservice and inservice career and technical educators, teacher educators, and school administrators attempting to understand and expand multicultural perspectives within career and technical education.

Since its earliest beginnings, the profession of family and consumer sciences (FCS) has been interested in helping others (Darling, Greenwood, & Hansen-Gandy, 1998). Family and consumer sciences professionals have a history of working to improve the quality of life for individuals and families. Since the 1990s cultural diversity has been noted in professional journals as an area of critical concern for our nation and youth (Darling et al.). Because of the growing diversity of the student population, FCS teachers must become more sensitive to a wide range of cultural backgrounds to effectively meet students' needs.

The increasingly diverse demographics of the U.S. population are causing educators across the nation, including family and consumer sciences teachers, to explore ways to reach and educate the changing student population's needs (Winchip, 1997). The Census Bureau predicts that racial and ethnic minorities will soon comprise one-half of all Americans (Sabo, 2000). The changing diversity of the population includes not only racial and ethnic minorities, but also people with disabilities (Brotherton, 2000). In the U.S. Department of Education's recent report, *Vocational Education in the Year 2000*, between 1982 and 1994 the percentage of students with disabilities enrolled in career and technical education increased (Brotherton). Their diverse backgrounds influence how students learn and succeed in the classroom (Brotherton).

These demographic shifts affect not only the classroom, but also the workforce (Winchip, 1997). It is becoming increasingly important that students entering the job market have the ability to acknowledge and appreciate individual differences (Sabo, 2000). It is important that FCS teachers assist students in understanding and appreciating multicultural perspectives when implementing programs to prepare students for life beyond the classroom (Winchip). To ensure that students are prepared to work and succeed in a multicultural world, FCS teacher preparation on addressing diversity and multicultural issues in the classroom is vital (Blassingame, 2000).

Several studies have been conducted focusing on multicultural education at the collegiate level (Darling et al., 1998; McClintock & Beck, 1998; Oltjenbruns & Love, 1998; Rehm, Allison, Darling, & Greenwood, 2002; Winchip, 1997). These studies focused on integrating multiculturalism throughout FCS coursework. Darling et al. conducted a study to determine the degree to which multiculturalism was reflected in FCS programs in higher education. The study reported “Approximately half of the respondents indicated their FCS department had specific objectives for including program content related to cultural diversity in the United States” (Darling et al., p. 43). Among the faculty respondents, 96.3% believed their FCS students should have an understanding of various culture groups (Darling et al.). Student teaching was one of the most frequently cited activities for providing an opportunity to meet goals related to cultural diversity.

McClintock and Beck (1998) report on an Urban-Based Field Study taught in Cornell University’s College of Human Ecology. The students enroll in a seminar program called *The Urban Semester*. The course explored diversity, multicultural education in a field-based learning context. The experiences were applicable to the curriculum in FCS (McClintock & Beck). According to Oltjenbruns and Love (1998), the *Multicultural Infusion Project* at Colorado State University provided professional development for faculty to help them to be more inclusive of all students by making changes in content and teaching methods.

Rehm, Allison, Darling, and Greenwood (2002) explored diversity through the personal and professional insights of four university-based educators considered successful in working with diverse audiences. They reported, “The profession is beginning to include multiple ways of viewing the world, highlighting the strengths of minority families, infusing cultural factors in academic courses, and celebrating both differences and common needs” (p. 49). Implications for FCS included university courses and professional development activities on critical theory, reflection on personal histories, work in multicultural settings whenever possible, and research on a wide variety of diversity issues.

On the secondary level, Burdette-Williamson's (1996) study focused on the intercultural sensitivity of vocational FCS and agricultural education teachers in Ohio. In her study, intercultural sensitivity was defined as the “degree to which an individual is sensitive to cultural difference; it represents variance in the degree of recognition, understanding, and acceptance of cultural differences” (Burdette-Williamson, p. 66). She found that the FCS and agricultural education teachers were at varying levels of intercultural sensitivity with the “average FCS teacher at a slightly higher position of acceptance as reflected by their mean score” (Burdette-Williamson, p. 81). According to the researcher, “Limited research is available that considers intercultural sensitivity and factors which may facilitate positive changes in teachers’ attitudes and behaviors” (Burdette-Williamson, p. 66).

Family and consumer sciences professionals often find themselves working with individual from the diverse cultures that comprise our multicultural society (Greenwood, Darling, & Hansen-Gandy, 1997). Support must be made available for FCS professionals to

acquire professional development in multicultural education. In one study, “Only 13.5% of the members had received any financial resources to assist them in learning to work with culturally diverse populations” (Greenwood et al., p. 37). In another study, a lack of financial resources followed by a lack of time to prepare new course materials and a lack of time in current courses were perceived as barriers to multicultural education (Darling et al., 1998). According to Greenwood et al., “If family and consumer sciences professionals are to carry out their roles effectively in a diverse society, they must receive training which addresses all ages within a wide spectrum of cultural groups” (p. 38).

There are a variety of ways to incorporate objectives that reflect diversity in the various FCS content areas. According to Winchip (1997), “Effective multicultural education must take place in a climate designed to respect and encourage differences of opinions and perspectives,” (p. 28). Sabo (2000) suggested incorporating diversity into the curriculum, emphasizing the importance of communication, assigning team-based projects, encouraging workplace experiences, and being a role model. Family and consumer sciences teachers, along with other educators have a responsibility to create challenging and equal learning environments for all students (Burdette-Williamson, 1996).

Theoretical Framework

During the 1960s, black civil rights movements in the United States inspired similar actions throughout the Western world. A major goal of these ethnically-motivated events was empowerment and liberation through education (Banks, 1987). A variety of educational and curricular programs, projects, and innovations have been employed to encourage the acceptance, inclusion, and growth of multiculturalism within the public schools (Banks). However, much of the educational reform that has been implemented in American education is superficial, fragmented, and tends to encourage racism through cultural misconceptions and stereotypes (Banks). Educational structures continue to focus on Anglo and European development (Banks). The ideologies of American schools and educational programs have remained mostly homogeneous while the student population has grown enormously diverse (Latham, 1997). Furthermore, despite the efforts of 40 years of desegregation in American schools, most students still attend schools that remain racially segregated (Gay & Howard, 2000).

Progress has been made in the multicultural preparation of teachers, with a significant number of today’s teachers having completed a required course in multicultural education when in college. A standard for multicultural education initially adopted in 1979 by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has been a major factor in stimulating the growth of multicultural education in teacher education programs. The original standard stated. “The institution gives evidence of planning for multicultural education in its teacher education curricula including both the general and professional studies components,” (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education {NCATE}, 1977, p. 4). Today, unit standards identified by NCATE include a *Diversity* category. The standard in this category states: “The unit designs, implements, and evaluates curriculum and experiences for candidates to acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn. These experiences include working with diverse higher education and school faculty, diverse candidates, and diverse students in P-12 schools,” (NCATE, 2001, p. 10). Even though NCATE remains committed to diversity preparation for teachers, Gay and Howard (2000) contend that preservice teacher education programs continue to fall short when “. . . preparing teachers to

meet the instructional challenges of ethnically, racially, socially, and linguistically diverse students in the 21st century” (p. 1).

Schools, or educational programs such as FCS, with a rich multicultural focus share a variety of foundational dimensions (Banks, 1993; Birkel, 2000). The first dimension, content integration, is the extent to which teachers use examples, data, and information from a variety of cultures to illustrate the key concepts, principles, generalizations, and theories in their subject area (Banks). It is the positive interaction and integration of cultures into school subjects (Birkel). Teachers who understand and respond within this dimension are able to extrapolate and infuse contributions from many cultures into their teaching.

The second dimension, knowledge construction process, encompasses the procedures by which social, behavioral, and natural scientists create knowledge in their disciplines. “A multicultural focus on knowledge construction includes discussion of the ways in which the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and biases within a discipline influence the construction of knowledge,” (Banks, 1993, p. 24). This dimension provides for discussions about the affects of stereotypes within our society.

The third dimension, prejudice reduction, focuses on the characteristics of children’s racial attitudes on strategies that can be used to help students develop more positive racial and ethnic attitudes. Cultural pluralism is accepted as the best model for the school and is applied through a democratic and equitable process (Birkel, 2000).

The fourth dimension, equity pedagogy, is evident when teachers use techniques and teaching methods that facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial and ethnic groups and from all social classes. It includes a variety of teaching strategies designed to encourage participation and achievement from all students (Birkel, 2000). An understanding and appreciation for cultural differences is infused throughout the curriculum.

Finally, the fifth dimension, an empowering school culture and social structure, requires the restructuring of the culture and organization of the school so students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups will experience education equity and a sense of empowerment. This dimension is the building of positive attitudes about the ideals of American democracy; the democratic process ensures equality and opportunity for all people (Birkel, 2000).

In this study, these dimensions were used to construct a theoretical framework for analyzing the attitudes of FCS teachers. The constructs (Appreciate Cultural Pluralism, Value Cultural Pluralism, Implement Cultural Pluralism, and Uncomfortable With Cultural Diversity) of the survey selected for this analysis emerged from multicultural literature (Stanley, 1996) and modeled the dimensions associated with schools or programs identified as having a rich multicultural focus. Statements posed in the construct, Appreciate Cultural Pluralism, dealt with issues related to equality of all students and respect for one’s self as well as different cultures. The Value Cultural Pluralism construct dealt with issues about integration and interaction of cultures. Implement Cultural Pluralism focused on the infusion of differing cultures into the curriculum and educational processes. Uncomfortable with Cultural Diversity was a construct that brought to surface prejudices and resistances that may impede a democratic and equitable school environment.

Purpose

Student populations in FCS education, like our nation, continue to grow increasingly diverse (Foxman & Easterling, 1995). Information about attitudes of FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES teachers towards cultural pluralism and diversity is essential in

developing an educational environment responsible and responsive to a culturally-diverse nation, its students, and its workforce. Therefore, an assessment of FCS teachers' attitudes toward issues related to cultural pluralism and diversity was warranted, especially since a majority (88.5%) of career and technical education (CTE) teachers, including FCS teachers, are Caucasian (U.S. Department of Education, 2000).

The purpose of this study was to examine family and consumer sciences teachers' attitudes toward issues related to cultural pluralism and diversity using the Pluralism and Diversity Attitude Assessment (PADAA). Specifically, the study sought answers to the five research questions.

1. How will family and consumer sciences teachers respond to statements about cultural pluralism and diversity?
2. Do family and consumer sciences teachers appreciate cultural pluralism?
3. Do family and consumer sciences teachers value cultural pluralism?
4. Are family and consumer sciences teachers willing to implement cultural pluralism into their classroom processes?
5. Are family and consumer sciences teachers comfortable with diversity?

Methodology

Participants

The target population for this study included 811 FCS teachers in a southern state. Five hundred surveys were mailed to randomly-selected FCS teachers. A total of 254 FCS teachers responded to the survey. Hence, a response rate of 51% was generated.

The research sample included 2 (.8%) male and 252 (99.2%) female participants. Of the FCS teachers represented in the research sample, 80 (31.5%) taught middle school, 169 (66.5%) taught high school, and 5 (2%) teachers did not indicate their teaching level.

Instrumentation

Stanley (1992, 1996) originally developed the PADAA survey instrument used in this study to assess the attitudes of preservice physical education teachers toward multicultural education. The PADAA includes 19 statements that can be separated into four subscales (Appreciate Cultural Pluralism, Value Cultural Pluralism, Implement Cultural Pluralism, and Uncomfortable with Cultural Diversity). Survey statements were modified to reflect CTE rather than physical education. For example, a statement that originally read, "Physical educators should help students develop respect for them selves and others" was altered to read, "Career and technical educators should help students develop respect for themselves and others" (refer to question #7 of the survey instrument). For the purpose of this study, FCS teachers were targeted even though the survey was revised so it could be completed by any CTE teacher. A 6-point Likert-type scale, as originally developed by Stanley (1992) was used as the response mechanism. Family and Consumer Sciences teachers were asked to select one reply for each statement: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = slightly agree, 5 = agree, and 6 = strongly agree.

Reliability measures computed by Stanley (1992, 1996) included tests of internal consistency and test-retest analysis. The complete instrument had an alpha reliability coefficient of .91. Stanley's data generated .84 when a test-retest reliability coefficient was calculated. Data collected for this study produced .86 as an alpha reliability coefficient.

Stanley (1992, 1996) assembled a panel of multicultural education experts to determine the definitions associated with the subcategories. Panel members also examined the validity of each statement presented on the PADAA. For the purpose of this study, a panel of CTE teachers determined that statements on the adapted PADAA were applicable to issues present in CTE.

Procedure

Each FCS teacher selected for the sample was mailed an informational letter and PADAA survey including two additional demographic questions (gender and teaching level). Family and Consumer Sciences teachers were asked to return the instrument within 2 weeks and were provided a postage-paid, self-addressed envelope for their convenience. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a sample size of 260 was required to be representative of the opinions of a population including 811 individuals. Therefore, the number of surveys returned was comparable to sample size standards described by Krejcie and Morgan. Since 254 surveys were returned within 4 weeks of the initial mailing, no survey follow-up was conducted. Furthermore, percentages of respondents' gender and teaching level closely approximated their percentage in the overall United States FCS teaching population as well as the state in which the study was conducted (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). Early respondents (those returned within 2 weeks) were compared to late respondents (those returned after the 2 week deadline) to evaluate inferred differences between respondents and non-respondents (Hill, 2001). No significant differences were found.

The reported attitudes of FCS teachers to the 19 statements included on the PADAA were analyzed using baseline frequencies and percentages. Means and standard deviations have been calculated for each statement provided on the survey instrument. Scores on the four subscales (Appreciate Cultural Pluralism, Value Cultural Pluralism, Implement Cultural Pluralism, and Uncomfortable With Cultural Diversity) have been calculated, adding the point values of the statements identified by Stanley (1992, 1996). Statement items 1, 5, 7, 11, and 15 were compiled to form the scores for the "Appreciate Cultural Pluralism" subscale. Scores recorded for statement 15 were reversed to perform the calculations. Statement items 2, 6, 12, 16, and 19 were compiled to generate the scores for the "Value Cultural Pluralism" subscale. Statement items 4, 8, 10, 13, and 17 were used to produce the scores calculated for the "Implement Cultural Pluralism" subscale. Statement 8 scores from this subscale were reversed to perform the calculations. Statement items 3, 9, 14, and 18 were assembled to form the "Uncomfortable With Cultural Diversity" subscale. Score interpretations established by Stanley (1992) were used to interpret the data.

Results

Family and Consumer Sciences education has been successful at responding to the needs of a changing American society and workforce. It is now necessary for FCS education to meet the needs of an increasingly-diverse student population (Foxman & Easterling). It was the purpose of this study to generate findings regarding FCS teachers' attitudes toward issues of cultural pluralism and diversity. Table 1 provides the means and standard deviations associated with each statement.

Table 1

Family and Consumer Sciences Teachers' Responses to the PADAA Survey (N = 254)

Survey Statements	Mean	SD
1. Each student should have an equal opportunity to learn and succeed in career and technical education.	5.79	0.54
2. Each minority culture has something positive to contribute to American society.	5.56	0.73
3. There is really nothing that educational systems can do for students who come from lower socioeconomic groups.	1.44	0.67
4. Career and technical educators should plan activities that meet the diverse needs and develop the unique abilities of students from different ethnic backgrounds.	5.01	1.12
5. Students should be taught to respect those who are different from themselves.	5.80	0.46
6. Students should feel pride in their heritage.	5.63	0.53
7. Career and technical educators should help students develop respect for themselves and others.	5.75	0.46
8. Minority individuals should adopt the values and lifestyles of the dominant culture.	3.33	1.50
9. Minority individuals are hard to work with in career and technical education.	2.40	1.35
10. The perspectives of a wide range of ethnic groups should be included in the curriculum.	4.56	1.20
11. In career and technical education, it does not matter if a student is rich or poor, everyone should have the same chance to succeed.	5.81	.47
12. I enjoy being around people who are different from me.	4.86	0.95
13. Career and technical educators are responsible for teaching students about the ways in which various cultures have influenced the various vocations in this country.	4.23	1.17
14. I am uncomfortable around the students whose ethnic heritage is different from my own.	2.22	1.43
15. Students should give up their cultural beliefs and practices to fit in with other students.	1.98	0.95
16. Cultural diversity is a valuable resource and should be preserved.	4.99	0.95
17. Career and technical education activities should be representative of a wide variety of cultures.	4.63	1.15
18. Cultural diversity is a negative force in the development of American society.	2.02	0.98
19. All students should learn about cultural differences.	5.09	0.94

Note. 6 = strongly agree, 5 = agree, 4 = slightly agree, 3 = slightly disagree, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree

According to Stanley (1992), score values obtained on the four subscales (Appreciate Cultural Pluralism, Value Cultural Pluralism, Implement Cultural Pluralism, and Uncomfortable with Cultural Diversity) of the PADAA can be evaluated. Table 2 summarizes the scale score interpretation for the PADAA subscales. Scores generated by FCS teacher participants were interpreted using Stanley's guidelines for the four subscales of the PADAA. The means and standard deviations associated with each subscale also were calculated.

Table 2
Scale Score Interpretation for PADAA Subscales

Subscale	Score Values
Appreciate Cultural Pluralism	
Strongly appreciates the ideals of cultural pluralism	25-30
Moderately appreciates the ideals of cultural pluralism	20-24
Not very appreciative of the ideals of cultural pluralism	10-19
Does not appreciate the ideals of cultural pluralism	5-9
Value Cultural Pluralism	
Strongly values the ideals of cultural pluralism	25-30
Moderately values the ideals of cultural pluralism	20-24
Does not value the ideals of cultural pluralism very much	10-19
Does not value the ideals of cultural pluralism	5-9
Implement Cultural Pluralism	
Would implement the ideals of cultural pluralism	25-30
Might implement the ideals of cultural pluralism	20-24
Would not likely implement the ideals of cultural pluralism	10-19
Would not implement the ideals of cultural pluralism	5-9
Uncomfortable with Cultural Diversity	
Very uncomfortable with diversity	20-24
Moderately uncomfortable with diversity	14-19
Not very uncomfortable with diversity	9-13
Comfortable with diversity	4-8

In the subscale, Appreciate Cultural Pluralism, 95% of respondents strongly appreciate the ideals of cultural pluralism, and 5% of respondents moderately appreciate the ideals of cultural pluralism. The maximum score obtained in this subscale was 30, and 22 was the minimum score obtained. Therefore, no FCS teachers generated scores in the last two categories of this subscale: Not very appreciative of the ideals of cultural pluralism and Does not appreciate the ideals of cultural pluralism. The mean score calculated for this subscale equaled 28.20 with a 1.86 standard deviation.

In the subscale, Value Cultural Pluralism, 77% of respondents strongly valued the ideals of cultural pluralism, 21% of respondents moderately valued the ideals of cultural pluralism, and 4% of respondents did not value the ideals of cultural pluralism very much. No FCS teachers generated scores in the last category of this subscale: Does not value the ideals of cultural pluralism. The maximum score obtained in this subscale was 30, and 11 was the minimum score obtained. The mean score calculated for this subscale equaled 26.44 with a 2.93 standard deviation.

In the subscale, Implement Cultural Pluralism, 48% of respondents indicated they would implement the ideals of cultural pluralism, 38% of respondents might implement the ideals of cultural pluralism, 20% of respondents would not likely implement the ideals of cultural pluralism, and 1% of respondents would not implement the ideals of cultural pluralism. The maximum score obtained in this subscale was 30, and 8 was the minimum score obtained. The mean score calculated for this subscale equaled 22.82 with a 4.21 standard deviation.

In the subscale, Uncomfortable with Diversity, 64% of respondents were comfortable with diversity, 32% of respondents were not very uncomfortable with diversity, and 4% of

respondents were moderately uncomfortable with diversity. The maximum score obtained in this subscale was 17, and 4 was the minimum score obtained. Therefore, no FCS teachers generated scores in the last category of this subscale: Very uncomfortable with diversity. The mean score calculated for this subscale equaled 8.16 with a 2.95 standard deviation.

Discussion

This study sought to provide an analysis of the attitudes of FCS sciences teachers toward cultural pluralism and diversity, components important to the multicultural education process. It sought to delve into issues that have been in the forefront of educational discussions for the last 40 years. It was determined from the baseline frequencies and percentages generated from the data that a majority of the FCS teachers responding to the survey had positive attitudes about cultural pluralism and diversity. However, as is the case with most research studies, caution should be applied when interpreting the findings and generalizing the findings to other populations.

The study revealed some issues (implementation of ideals associated with cultural pluralism and diversity comfort levels) where improvement, additional education, and enhanced preparation and development would be justified if FCS is to have a positive impact on the education of our children and our workforce during the 21st century. For example, FCS teachers will need to develop instructional strategies that include and encourage pluralistic cultures, views, and contributions. Family and consumer sciences teachers will need to undertake professional development strategies designed to enhance their abilities to effectively teach and prepare students from diverse cultures as well as lessen their feelings of discomfort when dealing with diverse student populations.

Family and consumer sciences teachers appreciate the ideals of cultural pluralism. Based on this positive finding, it was concluded that these teachers have the ability to respect diversity and individual student differences. Family and Consumer Sciences teachers appeared to understand that there might be more than one appropriate way to behave (Stanley, 1992). A teacher's appreciation score does not indicate or measure his or her willingness to discuss this attitude in the classroom environment. Therefore, this appreciation, while an excellent foundation for growth, does not necessarily indicate that these teachers practice what they believe.

A teacher's value score, according to Stanley (1992), explains the value given to cultural pluralism and individual expressions of cultural influences. This score illustrates a teacher's willingness to express value for cultural pluralism. However, it does not indicate a value for changing teaching methods. A majority of FCS teachers appeared to express a value for cultural pluralism. They were accepting of cultural differences, but may or may not be willing to alter their instructional strategies.

Implementation conveys the teacher's desire to adapt and use a variety of teaching methods applicable to the needs of individual learners (Stanley, 1992). Family and consumer sciences teachers showed some resistance to implementing educational strategies that would include methods conducive to cultural pluralism. Some possible reasons for this reluctance may include lack of appropriate educational preparation for dealing with a variety of cultures within one classroom, lack of useful materials and resources, and lack of administrative assistance and support.

Uncomfortable with Diversity illustrates a teacher's comfort level with students from culturally-different backgrounds and experiences. Family and consumer sciences teachers did

appear to experience some uncomfortable feelings regarding diversity. However, this study did not identify specific areas causing this discomfort.

The following conclusions and recommendations are made based on FCS teachers' PADAA responses in this study as well as their representative scores on the four subscales.

Conclusions

1. Family and consumer sciences teachers believe that all students should be provided equal opportunities for educational success.
2. Family and consumer sciences teachers believe that educational systems are able to assist diverse groups of students.
3. Family and consumer sciences teachers believe that diverse cultures make positive contributions in our society.
4. Family and consumer sciences teachers believe that cultural pluralism and diversity should be preserved and recognized as a positive educational resource.
5. Family and consumer sciences teachers believe it is appropriate for students to feel pride in their cultural heritage.
6. Family and consumer sciences teachers believe that students should learn to respect themselves and others.

Recommendations

1. Family and consumer sciences teachers may need to gain education and training in developing and infusing teaching strategies that emphasize the needs of diverse learners in their classes and programs.
2. Family and consumer sciences teachers may need assistance developing instructional practices that appeal to diverse student populations.
3. Family and consumer sciences teachers who feel uncomfortable when dealing with diverse student populations may need to obtain additional educational guidance, preparation, and sensitivity regarding multiculturalism and diversity.
4. Teacher educators need to emphasize multicultural education in their teacher preparation programs, increasing educational focus on the development and delivery of curriculum and activities appropriate and valuable for diverse student populations.

Implications

Cultural pluralism and diversity are elements important to the success of multicultural education, an ideology that seeks to encourage unity among a nation's people rather than separation (Birkel, 2000). Contemplating the diversity that now encompasses our nation and schools, FCS teachers will need to provide their students with the education resources and vitality essential to meeting the challenges incumbent of a multicultural society.

The findings of this study have important implications for teacher educators preparing future FCS teachers. There is a gap between how teacher education programs prepare preservice teachers about designing curriculum and instruction and the difficult and diverse "lived experiences" of learners (Breitborde, 1996). As Ladson-Billings (1991) noted, the challenge for teacher educators is not unlike the classroom teacher who "must meet the students where they are (*vis a vis* multicultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes) and help them to move to where they need to be" (p. 187). Taking students from where they are to where they need to be can be done

in various ways. Examples for teacher educators include modeling the kind of attitudes and social interactions they want to see preservice teachers develop, finding ways to integrate preservice teachers into the communities and schools where they will teach, and preparing preservice teachers to learn from and about the communities where they will work (Ladson-Billings). “This is a formidable but not insurmountable challenge. It requires a commitment to a society that is both democratic and multicultural and it requires us to look carefully at what knowledge, skills, and attitudes today’s teachers will need to teach tomorrow’s children,” (Ladson-Billings, p. 194).

Family and consumer sciences teachers will need increased preparation in preservice and inservice programs if they are to develop and deliver curriculum and educational activities conscious of a variety of multicultural perspectives and populations. Cultural barriers will need to be expelled in FCS education if it is to have an impact on the educational and workforce structures of the future.

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