

Preservice Special Education Service Providers' Attitudes on Diversity

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Abstract

This survey design study involved preservice special education service providers who were in degree seeking programs in the departments of special education, physical therapy, and occupational therapy. Participants provided views and belief structures on diversity issues identified through a review of literature, including (a) English language issues, (b) ability to have success with diverse groups, (c) service provider roles with diverse populations, and (d) the role of institutions of higher education in preparing service providers to work with diverse populations. One of the groups of participants was part of the Service Learning Mexico Project (SLMP) course and the other was a matched group of on-campus traditional students who did not participate in service learning. Our results suggest differences between the two groups which may link to future practices with students from diverse backgrounds.

Key Terms: *Service Learning; Cultural Diversity; Teacher Beliefs and Attitudes*

Service learning as a movement to engage higher education students in relating theory to practice has been thoroughly documented in scholarly literature as a way to provide active learning opportunities while promoting interdisciplinary work among students to further civic goals (Bringle, Games, & Malloy, 1999; Driscoll, 2000). The extensive legislative account of the importance of service learning throughout American history is also well established and was expertly reported by Brown (2005) who traced service learning to the 1862 Homestead and Morrill Acts, the 1897 Hatch Act and the Smith-Lever Act of 1914. It was further presented that a number of colleges and universities were founded on principles of work, service, and learning and that by the 1930's the experiential learning theory of Dewey (1938/1951) was supporting academia to use the constructs of service and learning to connect the higher education classroom to community. The service learning movement further evolved through the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s with an expanded focus on not only experiential based service but also to include an active and reflective civic engagement agenda to promote civic responsibility in student participants.

The term service learning as a legitimate methodology was originally coined in 1969 by the Southern Regional Education Board in Tennessee and was later more formally established by The National and Community Service Act of 1990 and the Clinton administration's National Service Trust Act of 1993 (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000; O'Grady, 2000). Bringle and Hatcher (1999) have operationally defined the term service learning as a course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in organized service that meets community needs while reflecting on the service to gain further understanding of (a) course content, (b) a broader appreciation of the discipline, and (c) enhanced sense of civic responsibility. More recently, service learning has been advanced and institutionalized in higher education programs by the Campus Compact a coalition of 950 colleges and universities, representing more than a quarter of all higher education institutions (Campus Compact, 2006).

Even with this prestigious history it is important to note that the movement of service learning is experiencing a need to produce research evidence that will increase confidence among higher education scholars to support further expansion of the use of the method in higher education classroom programming. Only a solid body of research that supports the use of service learning as a

best practice tool in higher education can properly establish it as a viable teaching method (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000). Service learning at present is used in many higher education classrooms to address important, and sometimes urgent societal problems that arise out of daily local and global community life (Checkoway, 2001; Saltmarsh, 2005).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the statistical impact that a service learning course with an international focus might have on individual higher education students' beliefs concerning diversity issues of culturally linguistically diverse (CLD) students and their families. Key faculty members in a large urban research institution from the departments of Special Education (SP ED), Physical Therapy (PT) and Occupational Therapy (OT) created the Service Learning Mexico Project (SLMP) course.

The Mexican Focus

In the National Center for Education Statistics (2003) report on trends in the education of Hispanics in the year 2000 Hispanic youth were the largest minority group among children. In 2002 there were 37.4 million Hispanics in the United States more than one person in eight is of Hispanic origin. Of this group, the largest percentage 66.9 designated themselves as having a Mexican origin, they were born in Mexico or claimed Mexican heritage (Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2003). Just under half of the total or 15 million of the Hispanics in the United States are foreign born. Of this group 52.1% entered the country between 1990 and 2002, 25.6% came in the 1980's and 22.3% entered before 1980. Living in poverty is also a reality for many Hispanics in the United States, 21.4% live in poverty as compared to non-Hispanic Whites at a 78% level. While Hispanic children represent only 17.4% of all children under the age of 18 in the United States they unfortunately constitute 30.4% of the children living in poverty (Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2003).

The Hispanic population is also growing at a significantly faster rate than the population as a whole. The Hispanic group has a growth rate of 13% over the 39 month interval for the reporting period which was almost four times that of the total population. Bernstein (2004) and Gomez (2003) point out that within the growing group of Hispanic population preschoolers under the age of 5 account for about 10% or 4.2 million children. It was due to the likelihood that preservice special education service providers would likely have need to work with Mexican children with disabilities and their families as they enter their respective fields of work that the SLMP faculty members embarked on a course of study with a focus on this population.

In direct contrast to the growth of diverse students in American classrooms is the homogeneous numbers of teachers completing higher education teacher training programs which in relation to gender and race has varied very little since 1971. In 1971, of the 2,055,000 of public elementary and secondary school teachers, 88.3% were White, 8.1% were Black and 3.6% were reported in the race area. In 1996 of the total number of 2,164,000 public elementary and secondary school teachers 90.7% were reported as White, 7.3% as Black and 2.3% as other (National Education Association, 1997). This data shows a decrease in the diversity among public elementary and secondary school teachers in the United States. Howard (1999) points out that for the foreseeable future, the vast majority of teachers will be White while the student population will grow increasingly diverse. Teachers in disproportionate numbers come from predominantly White middle class neighborhoods and are educated in predominantly White colleges of teacher education programs (Artiles, Trent, Hoffman-Kipp, & López-Torres, 2000; Nieto, 2004; Swartz, 2003). At present there is a growing amount of scholarly literature and research that support the idea that student failure issues for diverse populations are related to the fact that the language and culture of students differs from the expected and valued ones of service providers in the educational settings

(Bourne, 2001; Dee, 2001; Foster, 1992; Hill, 2001; Howard, 1999; McIntyre, Rosebery, & González, 2001; Phillips, 2001; Tyler, Yzquierdo, Lopez-Reyna, & Flippin, 2004; Swartz, 2003).

The focus in teacher education programs must be on preparing White teacher education college graduates to work with increasingly diverse exceptional populations. Special education service providers in higher education participate in experiences in their training programs to gain positive perspectives, effective skills, and an appreciation for the fast growing diverse student population and their families (Boyer, 2004; Wasonga & Piveral, 2004).

There have been problems historically with approaches used to educate service providers to work with diverse students in America (McAllister & Irvine, 2000; Milner, Flowers, Moore, Moore & Flowers, 2003). One classic example, which garnered attention by sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists, was the scholarly writing of Jensen (1969) who argued that black children were intellectually inferior to white children because of genetic differences. This theory attributed the failure of minority students in schools to cognitive and linguistic deficits. Baugh (1999) carefully outlines the danger of scholars who develop theories that promote these types of racist ideologies; these faulty theories according to Baugh create social division of dialects along racial lines. Educators can and do erroneously use these indefensible racist ideologies to explain why their minority students do not respond appropriately to their official discourse of pedagogy.

Researchers have also documented problems occurring in schools because of service provider's beliefs concerning native language use and/or culture differences among diverse student populations and negative school personnel perceptions. Researchers such as Jensen (1969) gave credibility over 40 years ago to genetic inferiority theories among diverse populations which likely contributed to service providers today still having faulty underlying belief issues, which may negatively affect educational success of diverse students. There are a reported disproportionate number of learners from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in special education in the United States (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002; Hosp & Reschly, 2004; Harry & Klingner, 2006; Losen, & Orfield, 2002). Hosp and Reschly (2004) carefully point out through a summary of the research by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) reports, that it has been a constant and significant occurrence over the past four decades. This problem could be partly a result of service provider's faulty belief structures when working with diverse populations. Nieto (1996) cautioned that teachers are products of educational systems that have a past history of racism, exclusion, and debilitating pedagogy. The contention is that these teachers practice what is reflective of their experiences, and that they may unknowingly perpetuate harmful practices with their diverse students.

Higher education instructors involved in construction of the SLMP course design organized activities to introduce and familiarize students with various ways to create positive learning environments for language and culture different exceptional Mexican students. Through an international cross-collaboration with special education service providers from the border area of Mexico, higher education preservice students under the supervision of special education professionals from both countries had the opportunity to directly work with exceptional Mexican students and their families in classrooms within their traditional Mexican community. Higher education instructors carefully designed the academic course with meaningful learning activities so connections between course subject matter and Mexican community experiences could be realized. An important factor in this approach was the requirement of preservice students to be continually engaged in critical reflective writing around key diversity focus issues. Faculty members were on hand during the entire service learning experience to support preservice students understanding of their service learning experiences in relation to four diversity issue areas formally addressed through course readings and activities. The SLMP included the important service learning methodology

components of both small group reflective discussion and critical reflective writing in journals (Mayhew & Welch, 2001) around four specific diversity areas.

Method

The four diversity areas addressed were found to be the key areas focused on in scholarly literature through an extensive review and included the following (a) language, (b) service provider's perceptions of ability to have success with diverse groups', (c) service provider roles with diverse populations, and (d) the role of institutions of higher education in preparing service providers to work with diverse populations. These areas also became the central focus of the survey questions (see Appendix) used in the research study. SLMP faculty worked diligently to actively engage preservice students within the course material and service learning activities to enrich their understanding of the culture and learning needs of exceptional members of the Mexican population and positively affect their future working relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse populations in their local American schools and communities. The specific research question in the SLMP study was: Is there a difference in beliefs and attitudes of preservice special education service providers towards diversity who participate in an international service learning project compared to students who participate in a traditional on-campus program?

Participants and Setting

Participants in this study who completed the survey and went to the Mexico site from the area of special education consisted of three special education students, one mild/moderate bachelor level, one mild/moderate master's level and one doctoral level in a severe program. There were also four master level physical therapy students and one master level occupational student who went to Mexico. Students in the on-campus survey group who did not go to Mexico were chosen by department faculty members in each of the three program areas and were matched as closely as possible for being within the same point of their program of study as students in the Mexico group. In the occupational area, two on-campus students matched the program of study of the Mexico student and since both submitted surveys they were included in the data analysis process resulting in total returned surveys of both groups of 17.

The border area school in Mexico where the SLMP was done has a special education program that served about 90 students. All the children had limited language abilities. About 20 had no speech, language, writing or reading skills. Many of the children had physical handicapping conditions such as Cerebral Palsy and numerous growth disorders. The Mexican exceptional children grouped by age into grade levels of (a) pre-school, (b) one through two, (c) three through four, and (d) five through six. There were also a group of 15-22 year olds that did not receive any academic skill training but worked on job and life skills training (*capacitación laboral*). Last, there was a special group of about 12 children with severe behavior problems not integrated into the classroom groups. These students with severe conditions were served on an appointment basis with their parent present for one-on-one sessions with a single Mexican instructor. Five or six of these children had been medically diagnosed as having autism and the others had never been specifically diagnosed. Teachers at the Mexican special education school specialized in the areas of learning disabilities (*problemas de aprendizaje*), mental disabilities (*deficiencia mental*) and hearing/speech (*audición y lenguaje*). This border area school was under the skilled supervision of *la directora* a certified Mexican public education administrator.

In the design of the SLMP course instructors utilized all the best service-learning principles (Mayhew & Welch, 2001) to accomplish as many goals as possible in the ten days university students were in the Mexico community. Some activities included (a) participation in an academic day camp,

(b) designing and building a wheel chair accessible garden, (c) conducting individual student assessments in augmentative communication, (d) training teachers to use an augmentative communication system, (e) providing basic physical therapy intervention for wheelchair students, (f) demonstrating basic occupational therapy approaches to teachers/parents, (g) providing information for parents on medication for severe behavior problem children, and (h) helping design a teen living program for adolescent level students.

Procedures

This study employed a comparison group quasi-experiment survey design (Fink & Kosecoff, 1998). We administered the survey to 17 special education, physical therapy, and occupational therapy preservice service provider students deliberately assigned to one of two groups based on their participation or not in the SLMP. Our intention was to gain insights into their beliefs on diversity issues. Researchers were specifically investigating the possibility of significant differences on individual answers to questions between the two groups of students in each of four areas. All of the questions were Likert-type questions on a 1 to 5 scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree, see Appendix) in the survey were focused around the four areas which were identified through an extensive review of literature as key areas of focus concerning diversity issues when educating minority populations with exceptionalities. They included: (a) seven questions on English language issues, (b) seven questions on service provider's perceptions of ability to have success with diverse groups' issues, (c) eight questions on service provider roles with diverse population issues, and (d) six questions on the role of institutions of higher education in preparing service providers to work with diverse population issues.

The survey originally was designed to have an equal amount of questions in each area of the four areas but a number of questions were eliminated due to structure problems which were discovered during a basic review process by study investigators and interested faculty colleagues in the College of Education who had some experience in evaluation measures. This preliminary review included answering the questions to determine a reasonable time frame for completion and to ensure clarity and ease of completion of the survey by the subjects. The final survey instrument contained seven questions in the language area, seven questions in the ability area, eight questions in the provider role area, and six questions in the institution role area. The survey designers listed the questions in the order of area focus (albeit without headings). The rationale was that mixing the items would not likely change the way subjects would answer them, and subjects could easily see the themes and patterns represented in the questions anyway. The research investigators or program coordinators in each of the service provider areas gave surveys to subjects in sealed envelopes. The sealed envelopes consisted of an introductory letter briefly describing the purpose of the study and encouraging the student to participate; a copy of the survey; and a self-addressed stamped return envelope. The students were encouraged to return the self-addressed stamped envelopes via mail service. The estimated time for survey completion by the participants was 20-25 minutes.

Return rate of surveys was 100% for data analysis. To check the reliability of coding responses for all items, we reviewed 30% of the surveys. We entered the coded responses into a database and compared two copies of the database.

We conducted descriptive statistical analyses and computed a non-parametric measure of significant differences between two groups. Clason and Dormody (1994) recommended using either Kendall's *tau-b* or Spearman's *rho* for analyzing individual Likert-type items such as those used in the survey. Such data is generally ordinal in nature and is inappropriate for parametric statistic procedures such as *t*-tests. Kendall (1955) argued that *tau-b*, Spearman's *rho*, and Pearson's *r* are special cases of a general correlation coefficient. Kendall suggested that Spearman's *rho* gives more weight to more divergent values than *tau-b* and as such is more useful for ordinal time scales. *Tau-b*

treats the differences between values with more linear weights and was the more appropriate statistic for analyzing five-point Likert-type opinion scales used in this study.

Results

Several questions in the survey produced significant results showing a difference between the Mexico group and the campus group. The preservice students who went to Mexico agreed more strongly ($\tau = -.477, p < .01$) that “children with disabilities who speak a language other than English have the right to special education teachers certified in bilingual/ESL education.” They students who went to Mexico also agreed more strongly ($\tau = -.577, p < .01$) that “service providers (e.g., special education teachers, physical therapists, occupational therapists) must prepare themselves for the increasing diversity of student populations in the United States” and that “institutions of higher education should have explicit goals and objectives in courses to prepare students to work with children and/or adults who speak a language other than English” ($\tau = -.682, p < .001$). A significant difference ($\tau = -.569, p < .001$) was found for opinions about the extent to which “institutions of higher education should require preservice students in fieldwork, internships, or student teaching to work in settings with a high percentage of diversity population clientele and for opinions about the extent to which “institutions of higher education in the United States should expect that all service provider graduates be culturally competent in a number of nationally identified minority group population language and culture needs” ($\tau = -.514, p < .01$).

No other items on the survey showed significant differences between the Mexico group and the campus group. There were however interesting patterns of non-significant differences that would benefit from a larger study. For example in the area of English language issues, question three which involved a perception of student learning problems being linked to a lack of English proficiency, findings showed that the majority of service learning students who went to Mexico had agreement, while students who did not have the SL experience were split in half on the question. On question 9 in the increasing diversity of student populations having changed the way schools are providing services, all students basically agreed with a neutral or above level while only one student that participated in Mexico service learning reported being at a disagree level. On question 16 in the area of the roles of service providers with diverse populations, the SL Mexico students had a split level of responding while the students who did not attend Mexico were at a neutral or agreement level.

Discussion

Our findings supported the assertion that preservice students, who participated in a service learning course with an international service learning connection, differed from students in a traditional campus program in their beliefs on questions in three diversity areas investigated. In the area of language on question number seven, the Mexico students were in full agreement that children with disabilities who speak a language other than English have the right to have special education teachers certified in bilingual/ESL education. The traditional campus students divided on their responses in this area around neutrality and basic agreement. It is interesting to speculate that the English speaking students who found themselves in a total immersion Spanish speaking setting lacking in language skill may have developed a level of cultural sensitivity for the importance of communication needs when working with monolingual Spanish speaking exceptional students within a classroom setting. This was an especially interesting finding since the majority of higher education students in the study were related service providers not typically required to be in classroom settings on a daily basis with exceptional students.

In the area of service provider roles on question 15 the Mexico students again were in unanimous agreement at the highest level possible on the Likert scale that service providers must prepare themselves for the increasing diversity of student populations in the United States. The on-campus students while also in agreement were evenly split between agreeing and strongly agreeing. The response of the Mexico students on this question was the most remarkable level of agreement attained on any question in the study. Possibly a heightened awareness by the Mexico students due to the personal nature of their service learning experience and course work involving a monolingual Spanish speaking group of exceptional students increased their desires to be better prepared for such work in their future employment in the United States. This finding seems to lead directly to the next area where three questions about the roles of institutions of higher education resulted in significant agreement levels by the Mexico students and a more notable splitting of on-campus student answers.

Mexico students were in full agreement on several questions. First, the Mexico group indicated that institutions of higher education should have explicit goals and objectives in courses to prepare students to work with children and/or adults who speak a language other than English. Second, the Mexico group also believed that institutions in higher education should require preservice students in fieldwork, internships or student teaching to work in settings with a higher percentage of diversity population clientele. Finally, the Mexico group fully agreed that institutions in higher education in the United States should expect that all service provider graduates be culturally competent in a number of nationally identified minority group populations' language and culture needs. Interestingly, the dramatic agreement of the Mexico students on these three questions in this area is even more impressive when looking at the split of feelings among the on-campus students on the same three questions. More on-campus students answered in the lower range of the scale, and the first total disagreement on significant questions occurred.

The SLMP group appeared to change in three areas of importance concerning their beliefs of the role of higher education (a) they would like a focus on diversity being represented in required fieldwork placements, (b) higher education courses should have specific goals and objectives represented in courses for dealing with language issues when providing service, and (c) expectations in higher education should be raised to a level where graduates are expected to be culturally competent in dealing with a number of identified minority groups' language and culture needs. Once again it seems highly possible that the SLMP experience has resulted in the Mexico group of students having a heightened understanding of the importance of becoming culturally competent in working with diverse populations and this has increased their desire to have specific training in their higher education coursework be responsive to these needs.

The finding of significant difference in three areas among students in this study suggests that it is possible to use service learning with an international connection to affect students' beliefs concerning issues of diversity. The Mexico students answers of agreement on the five research questions discussed suggest an increase in their cultural sensitivity, a desire for cultural competence and a hope that institutions of higher education will increase their programming in helping them meet the challenge of working with culturally linguistically diverse populations.

Limitations

This study has two concerns that create a threat to internal validity of the findings. First, since there was not a standardized instrument for surveying participants attitudes and belief structures the researchers had to develop one. The issue here is that study participants may unconsciously or consciously tend to see and record what they know the researcher is hypothesizing resulting in answers that may not have been an accurate measure of their true feelings. Second, participants in the Mexico group came from a self-selected volunteer already-formed group which could also account for the difference in the groups ratings of items on the surveys. The fact that we

did not randomly select participants in the Mexico group for inclusion limits the ability to generalize the findings to a larger population causing a threat to external validity. The small number of students within this study due to the constraints of issues related to students having means to travel outside of the United States could also be a threat to external validity and generalization.

Conclusions

The Mexico Project is just one example of the growing service learning civic engagement movement in higher education in the United States. These kinds of higher education courses and programs involve students in diverse communities to enhance knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make a positive difference with children from diverse language and cultural backgrounds. Through participation in service learning with diverse population's higher education students may gain a deeper understanding of issues minority exceptional students with language and culture differences face when entering American public schools. There is no denying that much research still needs to be done to investigate service learning programs such as the Mexico Project presented in this study to justify it as a viable method in developing future special educators and related service providers to meet the needs of culturally linguistically diverse students. However, it is a joy to imagine that CLDE children in American schools may increasingly find positive professionals who do not base their beliefs about students and families from diverse backgrounds on faulty assumptions and stereotypes due to their active participation in service learning higher education courses that give them empowering experience in diverse communities.

Implications for the Improvement of Practice

There are several important points that Institutions of Higher Education, especially teacher preparation programs, can learn from the results of this study. The new beliefs about the role of higher education expressed by the participants in the Mexico group coincide with other studies in the literature. Baca and Cervantes (2004) reviewed the research and found one of the key factors that determines the degree to which the needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional (CLDE) children are met is the preparation or lack of preparation of teachers to be responsive to the unique needs of these students and to be more sensitive to their cultural heritage. To appropriately serve the growing CLDE population in the country, it is essential that general and special education teachers are provided additional training with a multicultural focus (Fletcher, Bos & Johnson, 1999; Maroney, 2000; Salend, 2005). Teacher education programs must promote more effective ways to teach students from diverse backgrounds (Correa, Hudson & Hayes, 2004; Futrell, Gomez & Bedden, 2003).

Teacher preparation programs have a responsibility to dynamically prepare teachers for the realities of teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students (Peterson & Montfort, 2004). University courses and field experiences should be based on the principle that instructional programming is effective only to the degree that faculty, administrators, general and special educators, and related service providers are knowledgeable about cultural and linguistic variables and the extent to which these variables contribute to the psychological development, social behaviors, and academic accomplishments of culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities. Unfortunately, educational issues for culturally and linguistically diverse students are not reflected to a high degree in current general education and special education teacher training programs.

In order to most effectively prepare future teachers to work with diverse population groups' language and culture needs, teacher preparation programs in both general and special education should incorporate Culturally and Linguistically Diverse instructional practices into their coursework (Balderrama & Díaz-Rico, 2006; Hernández Sheets, 2005). If additional coursework cannot be added to the teacher preparation program, then at a minimum the appropriate culturally and

linguistically diverse competencies in the following domains should be infused into existing courses and fieldwork assignments: 1) Language and Linguistics, 2) Sociocultural Foundations, 3) Curriculum and Instructional Strategies, 4) Testing and Evaluation with Least Biased Assessment, 5) Classroom Management, 6) Inclusion and Collaboration, and 7) Family Involvement.

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Appendix

All questions are presented with this Likert-type scale

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

English Language Issues

1. Children whose primary language is not English should learn English as quickly as possible.
2. Children whose primary language is not English must be encouraged to speak English only in their home and community.
3. Children whose primary language is not English are likely to have learning problems linked to their lack of English proficiency.
4. Children who are learning English should be instructed in both their primary language and English.
5. Children with disabilities should always be included in the general education classroom to the greatest extent possible.
6. Children with disabilities who speak a language other than English will have a greater difficulty learning English than regular education English language learners.
7. Children with disabilities who speak a language other than English have the right to have special education teachers certified in bilingual/ESL education.

Service Provider's Perceptions of Ability to Have Success with Diverse Groups' Issues

8. I feel prepared to work with children and/or adults who speak a language other than English.
9. I feel that the success of children and/or adults who speak a language other than English depends on my ability as a service provider to have a good understanding of their native language and culture.
10. I value children in a learning environment who have a culture and language different than my own.
11. I value communication and understanding between my clients/students, parents and myself.
12. I value family involvement and interaction when providing services to children and families who have different languages and cultures than my own.
13. I understand how language and culture differences can affect learning.
14. I understand how instructional practices and services with children whose primary language is not English may be different than for other children I serve.

Service Provider Roles with Diverse Population Issues

15. Service providers (e.g. special education teachers, physical therapists, occupational therapists) must prepare themselves for the increasing diversity of student populations in the United States.
16. The increasing diversity of student populations has changed the way schools are providing services to meet the learning needs of students in the United States.
17. Service providers working with diverse populations must understand their students/clients language and culture histories to better meet their needs.
18. Immigrants often do not have much experience with reading and writing and lack experience with school culture and performance expectations in the United States.
19. Immigrants have difficulty following service provider directions due to a lack of understanding of experience with school culture and performance expectations in the United States.
20. Parents of immigrant students must learn to speak English as quickly as possible to better support their children.
21. There are a number of service providers in the United States who have not been adequately trained to deal with the increasing diversity of student populations.
22. Institutions of higher education should have explicit goals and objectives in courses to prepare students to work with children and/or adults who speak a language other than English.

Role of Institutions of Higher Education in Preparing Service Providers to Work with Diverse Population Issues

23. Institutions of higher education should require preservice students in fieldwork, internships or student teaching to work in settings with a high percentage of diversity population clientele.
24. Institutions of higher education in the United States are preparing service providers capable of working with diverse populations.
25. Institutions of higher education in the United States should include courses that are responsive to only their local community population language and culture needs.
26. Institutions of higher education in the United States should expect that all service provider graduates be culturally competent in a number of nationally identified minority group population language and culture needs.
27. Institutions of higher education in the United States should be required meet nationally recognized standards related to diversity (e.g., NCATE, CEC).
28. Institutions of higher education in the United States should require graduates to demonstrate an ability to be sensitive to cultural and linguistic variation among clientele.