

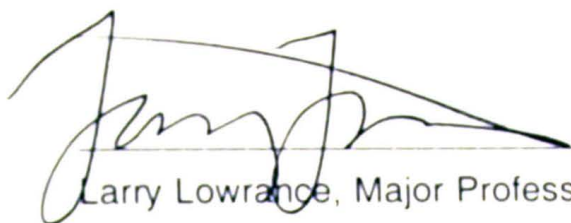
**TEACHERS' ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS  
MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN THE GRADE SCHOOL**

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**DAVID J. SUMMERVILLE**

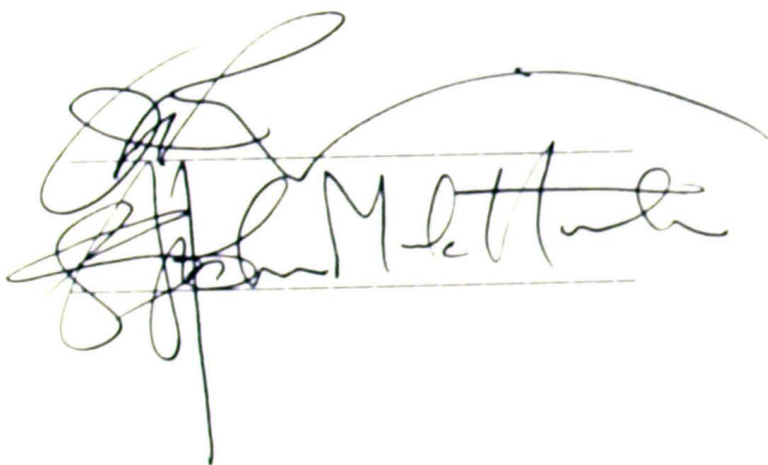
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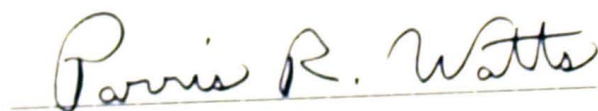
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Larry Lowrance", written over a horizontal line.

Larry Lowrance, Major Professor

We have read this field study  
and recommend its acceptance.

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*August 6, 1999*

Teachers' Attitudes and Perceptions Towards Multicultural Education In  
The Grade School

A Field Study  
Presented to the  
Graduate and Research Council of  
Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Education Specialist

by  
David J. Summerville  
August, 1999

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My appreciation is extended to the participants who made this study possible. Also, I would like to thank the professors who allowed me to conduct this study in their classes.

## ABSTRACT

American teachers are often placed in classroom environments that contain students from various ethnic backgrounds. Many of these teachers are not aware of the needs of these students and have not been trained to foster an atmosphere that reaches all students academically and socially. Due to this lack of understanding cultural differences, some teachers have developed negative attitudes and perceptions toward the use of multicultural education in their classrooms. Unfortunately, the students are the ones who are not benefiting academically and socially.

The purpose of this study was to analyze regular education teachers' attitudes and perceptions about multicultural education in diverse population classrooms.

This study identifies teachers' attitudes and perceptions toward multicultural education. The data was gathered by using a twenty question questionnaire and a demographic survey. The significance of my findings showed a positive relationship between public and private school teachers' attitudes and perceptions toward multicultural education and their prior experience in multicultural settings. Recommendations were also made for encouraging the use of multicultural education and making teachers more aware of the needs of students in a culturally diverse school environment.

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# CHAPTER I

## Introduction

### Purpose of the Study

With the continued influx of so many different cultures in America today, there is an urgent need for multicultural education in our public schools. U.S. schools are the major institutions for teaching awareness of multicultural education. There must be an understanding of what people from different social practices do and believe.

By incorporating multicultural education in schools, students can gain a better understanding of societal differences among individual groups or cultures of people in our culturally diverse classroom environments. It can also help eliminate stereotypes and prejudices toward others because of cultural practices, race, nationality, ethnicity, etc. Not only will students benefit from multicultural education but teachers will also benefit by gaining knowledge that can be beneficial in helping them develop appropriate strategies to teach students from different cultural backgrounds. There are many challenges for teachers with this increased diversity inside their classrooms. By having a diverse classroom, teachers are given an opportunity to establish positive relationships with students from different cultural backgrounds.

When foreign students are in class, they should be encouraged to actively participate in classroom activities through multicultural curriculum strategies that appeal to all students without a special focus on one particular group. This will allow students to feel more comfortable and welcome. In order to make students realize that being different does not make them superior or inferior, teachers should not give them special treatment (Ross, 1995).

Teachers must be aware of their assumptions about students who are from different cultures. They must also keep every student in mind when making sure their

classrooms reflect diversity. To be effective in their classrooms, teachers must relate teaching content to the cultural background of all their students. Research has shown that teaching methods that are responsive to students' behavioral norms arouse student involvement. The methods that ignore their behavioral norms provoke resistance (Ogbu, 1995). Teaching must be culturally responsive. It should instruct across disciplines and cultures to engage learners while respecting their cultural integrity and accommodating the dynamic mix of race, ethnicity, class, gender, region, religion, and family that contributes to every student's cultural identity. One of the major tools that can accomplish this goal is multicultural literature: quality books that are relevant to the experiences of all of today's children (Silvey, 1995). For older students (middle and high school), teachers can integrate cultural issues in the course content.

It is important that schools develop an awareness of cultural diversity among students and teachers. Student diversity is reaching new heights, and teachers as well as students must be well prepared to understand the backgrounds of our ethnically diverse students and what their cultures demand of them. Teachers must also understand their own possible cultural limitations which may influence their interactions with and judgments of these students. Few teachers will openly admit carrying their biases into the classrooms. This is one of the major reasons multicultural education may benefit them and hopefully give answers to the question, "why are there cultural difference among race, class, gender, religion, ethnicity, etc?" (Solomon, 1996).

The purpose of this study is to analyze regular education teachers' attitudes and perceptions about multicultural education in diverse population classrooms. The study will focus on two distinct phases associated with multicultural education. The first phase will focus on preset attitudes and perceptions of teachers toward cultural difference of students in their classroom as well as their colleagues. The second

phase will focus on using a multicultural curriculum in their classroom and how it increases student achievement.

### Statement of the Problem

Often, in culturally diverse classroom settings, teachers as well as students experience difficulties understanding the culturally unique nuances which affect attitudes. Members of various backgrounds may view, interpret, and relate to certain events differently. The major attitudinal problem of both students and teachers is a lack of exposure to particular cultures which results in a lack of understanding one's beliefs and values. This has led to many stereotypes and prejudices, even among educators, which can be a hindrance to effective teaching and to the academic success of students who may be affected by this type of attitude. The major problem concerning situations like these is to analyze teachers' attitudes and perceptions toward a multicultural education agenda and to discover how teachers with prior experience in teaching in a multicultural setting have benefited from incorporating a multicultural curriculum in their classrooms.

### Hypothesis

There will be a positive relationship between public and private school teachers' attitudes toward multicultural education and their prior experience in multicultural settings.

### Importance of the Problem

According to Zeichner (1993), one of the major goals of multicultural education is to help teachers acquire the attitudes, knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to work effectively with a diverse student population. With this in mind, it provides an

understanding about how to better deal with the differences in a culturally diverse classroom as well as eliminating negative stereotypes of inferiority and superiority due to race, class, gender, religion, and ethnicity. Multicultural education will not only benefit teachers and students, but will go beyond the school environment into the work environment. Understanding differences is what eliminates negative attitudes toward others and gives a better understanding of how to relate without conflict or negative preconceived attitudes and perceptions toward these diversities in students.

### Definition of Terms

The following terms are used throughout this study:

Diversity: The variety of the development of the mind, the social and religious structures and intellectual and artistic manifestation, etc. that characterizes a society.

Ethnicity: Relating to a people whose unity rests on racial, linguistic, religious or cultural ties.

Heterogeneity: Having dissimilar characteristics such as gender, race age, learning abilities, etc.

Multicultural education: Education that helps learners acquire rich understanding of culturally different groups and of social, economic, and political issues that affect their status and interactions.

### Limitations

This study contains the following three limitations.

- (1) Only private and public school teachers in grades K-12 were surveyed.
- (2) Only teachers in a specific and narrow geographical location were surveyed.

(3) Most of the subjects surveyed taught in a culturally diverse environment and did not have experience teaching in a culturally pure environment.

## CHAPTER II

### Review of Related Literature

Historically, schooling has granted some voices privilege over others. In the process, it has silenced many students. Using a consensus model of education perpetuates this silence because it compresses diversity into a single, monolithic voice. By using a diversity model to educate students, it will break this silence by believing that inclusivity, not exclusivity, is the goal of education and by envisioning classrooms as “plurivocal” communities of learners in which all voices must be heard (Polkinghorne, 1993). Today, multicultural education has become the key model in hearing all voices in U.S. classrooms. Effective multicultural education should not separate students from one another, but it should strive to satisfy the educational needs of each student in a holistic setting (Dunn, 1997). It has been distorted by some as a movement that threatens to divide citizens along racial and cultural lines. However, its true purpose is to increase academic achievement and promote greater sensitivity to cultural differences in an attempt to reduce bias. Many children develop biases and prejudices long before they enter the classrooms. A study done by researchers Alejandro - Wright , Bartz, and Katz, showed that children as young as two years of age begin to develop discriminatory perceptions of bias and prejudice. If these perceptions are unchallenged, they may later develop into overtly racist or other discriminatory behaviors. Multicultural education provides a solution to this problem in classrooms around the country. Through this kind of education, students can learn more about themselves and the multiple races, ethnic groups, and cultures making up America. Beyond academics, it provides an anti-bias curriculum that focus more specifically on the reactions people have to racial and cultural variations (Derman-Sparks, 1989). The anti-bias curriculum in classrooms educates children to diffuse the

bias which precedes prejudice and discrimination (Phillips, 1989). As some may think, it is not just about blacks and whites but all people, including their cultural norms. Multicultural education originated in the 1960s as a response to the long-standing policy of assimilating immigrants into the melting pot of the dominant American culture. It has expanded over the past three decades from an attempt to reflect the growing diversity in American classrooms to include curricular revisions that specifically address the academic needs of students (Sobol, 1990).

There are many challenges schools in the U.S. face as they seek ways to become more responsive to students from diverse cultural backgrounds. There is no clear definition of multicultural education, yet educators must clearly go beyond merely acknowledging the traditions of various cultures and encourage a school climate that will allow all students and teachers have the opportunity to recognize that each individual is special and unique (Hale, 1997). Teachers and administrators in multicultural schools can relate their background to the school community and encourage others to do so. They must begin capitalizing on the possibilities diversity presents for teaching and learning as the faces of America's classrooms continue to change. Bintz (1995) suggested formal schooling should not be based on a consensus model of education but on a diversity model. By using this, it will recognize, value, and support individual differences while rejecting the assumption of education as the practice of predetermining what student learning should be and instead embrace the principle of seeing what learning really is. Many students' learning abilities reflect their cultural heritage that may be deeply embedded in a culturally defined system of values, beliefs, and meanings about the social world. This system may significantly influence and reflect what students value and why they value it. It is central, not peripheral, to create a curriculum in the classroom that is culturally relevant and has personal meaning. One of the main concerns of multicultural education is how

to effectively prepare future teachers for these future changes. A study by Banks (1991), indicated that there were over 22 million Hispanics in the United States with their population nearly doubling every ten years. That same year, 70% of all American students were Caucasians. By the year 2020, students of color will make up 46% of the student population in the United States. A study by Garcia (1995), projected that by the year 2026, this percentage will increase even more resulting in 70% of students in America being nonwhite or Hispanic. There is both an ethical and a practical need to make classrooms mirror the heterogeneity of the student population because of the persistent learning gaps and the explosive growth of the non-white and Hispanic student population. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards recommends that middle childhood generalists understand that factors such as language, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and gender influence learning and that teachers should value student diversity as an asset that can facilitate the pursuit of academic, social, and civic aims (Latham, 1997).

There are effective ways to prepare teachers for cross-cultural awareness that will help them develop an appreciation of diversity and how to deal with differences that all teachers face regardless of the setting. Since the majority of preservice teachers hold a "limited cultural world view" and a modest amount of culturally diverse experiences, the development of programs that actually immerse preservice teachers in other cultures in other nations for teacher internships are now being used in many teacher education programs. This includes a multicultural education course taught in conjunction with a field experience. These programs provide direct human contact that help teachers stop thinking of people as representatives of groups and begin to respect them as unique individuals. By providing experiences in diverse settings, teachers are better prepared to teach diverse student populations (Myers, 1996).

For teachers that are currently in the classroom, Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) give four conditions necessary for culturally responsive teaching: establish inclusion, develop positive attitude, enhance meaning, and engender competence. These four motivational conditions constantly influence and interact with one another. Students also benefit because each condition contributes to student engagement.

Students must be prepared for diversity in the classroom as well as teachers. Teachers are the main mediators in developing a classroom that is culturally stimulating to their students. This can be done by providing quality cultural literature that relates to the background of all students; being sensitive to and making adjustments for cultural behavior norms and by simply being fair to all students. Teachers must develop the right concept of cultural diversity. Solomon (1996) viewed two types of concepts for cultural diversity: positive cultural diversity and negative cultural diversity. A positive cultural diversity means that societal groups coexist harmoniously, secure in their distinctive social, ethnic, religious, and gender patterns. They feel equal in their accessibility to the resources of a nation, including civil rights and political power. Cultural diversity implies that all separate groups abide by a set of societal norms that stress tolerance for group differences and endorses the belief that the interests of no one group can be placed before the welfare of the collective group. Negative cultural diversity means that separate groups regard each other suspiciously, resulting in competition for economic, social, and political power. This view also implies that groups are unequal, that some groups are dominant and more powerful than others, and that one or a small number of groups decide what is proper for all groups.

## CHAPTER III

### Methodology

The introduction briefly described the purpose of the research and the field study completed. The methods and procedures used to obtain the information will be explained in this section.

#### The Study Group

The study group consisted of approximately fifty graduate students who attended summer school at Austin Peay State University. All participants were licensed teachers. They were teachers of various academic subjects taught in elementary, middle, and high school. Private and public school teachers were accepted to participate in the study. The subjects were selected based upon teaching experience and their willingness to participate. Each subject's school system was not a factor in this project. The targeted individuals were from various cultural backgrounds consisting of differences in age, gender, and ethnicity. The subjects filled out the survey anonymously.

#### Research Instruments

The survey instruments used for this study were an author-designed questionnaire and a short demographic survey. The questionnaire consisted of twenty questions related to teachers' experiences in dealing with a culturally diverse student population. The questionnaire was designed to measure the subjects' attitudes and perceptions of multicultural education and cultural diversity experienced during their career as a classroom teacher. The format of the questionnaire included five yes/no questions and fifteen questions that required the subjects to rate how they relate their

experiences, attitudes, and perceptions of students to multicultural education as a teacher. The first fifteen questions required the subject to respond using a Likert Scale. The scoring for the scale was as followed: SA - strongly agree; A - agree; U - Undecided; D - disagree; SD - strongly disagree.

The demographic survey was composed of nine questions. The subjects were requested to complete the survey with limited personal information. None of the information required the subject's name or school system. The questions were designed in a format that allowed variation in years of experience for each response and were of an impersonal nature relating to the subjects' classroom and college training experiences. The information from this survey was considered in the evaluation of this study and how it related to the respondent's attitudes and perceptions of multicultural education.

### Procedures

In completing this field study, the examiner requested permission from the professors in the Education Department at Austin Peay State University to use several of their students as volunteer subjects to participate in the research. With permission being granted, the examiner gave a brief description of the study and its purpose. The procedures in participating were explained. Each participant was asked to complete a demographic survey and a questionnaire for collecting data in the study. They received written and verbal instructions. The subjects were given an option to participate or not. If a subjects chose not to participate, there was no penalty. Each student received a copy of both instruments. The subjects who chose not to participate were also given the instruments, but they did not have to fill in any of the information. If subjects participating felt uncomfortable with the instruments, they were allowed to discontinue their participation at any time during the study. If the subjects had a

question before, during, or after the project, they were allowed to ask. After subjects completed the information, the instrument was placed in a designated box to insure confidentiality.

To tabulate data for analysis, the returned surveys were scored by a computer program to ascertain the mean scores and percent of subjects' responses to each question. The data was then compared on the computer program using a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation to compare total experience teaching multicultural education with responses to questions. To present the tabulated information, the results were presented using the questionnaire itself along with the tabulated responses from each participant for the given questions. The answers from the participants showed the responses of their attitudes and perceptions toward multicultural education using the mean scores, percent of responses to each question, and the correlation coefficients.

# CHAPTER IV

## Presentation of Data

The purpose of this study was to identify public and private school teachers' attitudes and perceptions toward multicultural education and to compare their attitudes with years of experience teaching in a multicultural setting. The study required the participants to answer the following questions using the given questionnaire and procedures described in chapter three of this study. The results of the survey are compiled and reported as followed:

<u>Key</u>	<u>Scores</u>
SA - strongly agree	(5)
A - agree	(4)
U - undecided	(3)
D - disagree	(2)
SU - strongly disagree	(1)

- Some students are more intelligent due to their race or nationality.

Years of Experience	<u>1-3</u>	<u>4-6</u>	<u>7-15</u>	<u>16-20</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>
SA:	0	0	0	0	0	0
A:	1	2	1	0	8%	4
U:	4	1	1	0	12%	6
D:	6	2	2	1	22%	11
SD:	14	7	8	0	58%	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>2.0</b>		<b>1.8</b>
<b>Pearson Correlation Coefficient:</b>						<b>.961* (significant at the .05 level)</b>

2. Some students' socioeconomic status effects them academically.

Years of Experience	<u>1-3</u>	<u>4-6</u>	<u>7-15</u>	<u>16-20</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>
SA:	7	0	5	0	24%	12
A:	16	10	7	1	68%	34
U:	0	0	0	0	0%	0
D:	2	2	0	0	8%	4
SD:	0	0	0	0	0%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.0</b>		<b>4.1</b>
<b>Pearson Correlation Coefficient: .431* (significant at the .05 level)</b>						

3. I am adequately prepared to handle cultural diversity in my classroom.

Years of Experience	<u>1-3</u>	<u>4-6</u>	<u>7-15</u>	<u>16-20</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>
SA:	2	1	3	0	12%	6
A:	17	7	4	0	56%	28
U:	3	1	3	1	16%	8
D:	3	3	2	0	16%	8
SD:	0	0	0	0	0%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.0</b>		<b>3.5</b>
<b>Pearson Correlation Coefficient: .601* (significant at the .05 level)</b>						

4. Teachers should incorporate multicultural education into the curriculum.

Years of Experience	<u>1-3</u>	<u>4-6</u>	<u>7-15</u>	<u>16-20</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>
SA:	19	7	11	1	76%	38
A:	6	4	1	0	22%	11
U:	0	1	0	0	2%	1
D:	0	0	0	0	0%	0
SD:	0	0	0	0	0%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>5.0</b>		<b>4.8</b>
<b>Pearson Correlation Coefficient: .485* (significant at the .05 level)</b>						

5. Teaching cultural diversity causes racial problems.

Years of Experience	<u>1-3</u>	<u>4-6</u>	<u>7-15</u>	<u>16-20</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>
SA:	0	0	0	0	0%	0
A:	1	0	0	0	2%	1
U:	1	1	0	0	4%	2
D:	12	7	6	1	52%	26
SD:	11	4	6	0	42%	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>2.0</b>		<b>1.8</b>
<b>Pearson Correlation Coefficient: .558* (significant at the .05 level)</b>						

6. Multicultural education would not help students academically.

Years of Experience	<u>1-3</u>	<u>4-6</u>	<u>7-15</u>	<u>16-20</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>
SA:	0	0	0	0	0%	0
A:	0	0	0	0	0%	0
U:	0	3	3	0	12%	6
D:	9	6	4	1	40%	20
SD:	16	3	5	0	48%	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>2.0</b>		<b>2.2</b>
<b>Pearson Correlation Coefficient: .055 (not significant)</b>						

7. Multicultural education is not needed in my classroom.

Years of Experience	<u>1-3</u>	<u>4-6</u>	<u>7-15</u>	<u>16-20</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>
SA:	0	0	0	0	0%	0
A:	0	1	0	0	2%	1
U:	1	0	0	0	2%	1
D:	3	6	5	0	28%	14
SD:	21	5	7	1	68%	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.0</b>		<b>1.4</b>
<b>Pearson Correlation Coefficient: .426* (significant at the .05 level)</b>						

8. Multicultural education will help teachers understand cultural differences in students.

Years of Experience	<u>1-3</u>	<u>4-6</u>	<u>7-15</u>	<u>16-20</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>
SA:	19	5	9	1	68%	34
A:	5	7	3	0	30%	15
U:	0	0	0	0	0%	0
D:	1	0	0	0	2%	1
SD:	0	0	0	0	0%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>5.0</b>		<b>4.7</b>
<b>Pearson Correlation Coefficient: .783* (significant at the .05 level)</b>						

9. Teachers can be more effective if they use multicultural materials in their classroom.

Years of Experience	<u>1-3</u>	<u>4-6</u>	<u>7-15</u>	<u>16-20</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>
SA:	7	4	6	0	34%	17
A:	16	5	5	0	52%	26
U:	2	3	1	1	14%	7
D:	0	0	0	0	0%	0
SD:	0	0	0	0	0%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>3.0</b>		<b>3.9</b>
<b>Pearson Correlation Coefficient: .926* (significant at the .05 level)</b>						

10. I am uncomfortable dealing with cultural issues in my class.

Years of Experience	<u>1-3</u>	<u>4-6</u>	<u>7-15</u>	<u>16-20</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>
SA:	2	0	1	0	6%	3
A:	4	2	1	0	14%	7
U:	0	0	1	0	2%	1
D:	11	8	4	0	46%	23
SD:	8	2	5	1	32%	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>1.0</b>		<b>1.9</b>
<b>Pearson Correlation Coefficient: .708* (significant at the .05 level)</b>						

11. Minority students should be taught differently than non-minority students.

Years of Experience	<u>1-3</u>	<u>4-6</u>	<u>7-15</u>	<u>16-20</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>
SA:	0	0	0	0	0%	0
A:	0	0	0	0	0%	0
U:	4	0	1	0	10%	5
D:	11	11	4	1	54%	27
SD:	10	1	7	0	36%	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>2.0</b>		<b>1.8</b>
<b>Pearson Correlation Coefficient: .353* (significant at the .05 level)</b>						

12. If classrooms were divided culturally, students would learn better.

Years of Experience	<u>1-3</u>	<u>4-6</u>	<u>7-15</u>	<u>16-20</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>
SA:	0	0	0	0	0%	0
A:	0	0	0	0	0%	0
U:	2	3	0	0	10%	5
D:	8	5	5	0	36%	18
SD:	15	4	7	1	54%	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.0</b>		<b>2.4</b>
<b>Pearson Correlation Coefficient: .844* (significant at the .05 level)</b>						

13. Multicultural education benefits students socially as well as academically.

Years of Experience	<u>1-3</u>	<u>4-6</u>	<u>7-15</u>	<u>16-20</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>
SA:	14	4	8	0	52%	26
A:	11	5	4	0	40%	20
U:	0	3	0	1	8%	4
D:	0	0	0	0	0%	0
SD:	0	0	0	0	0%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>3.0</b>		<b>4.1</b>
<b>Pearson Correlation Coefficient: .808* (significant at the .05 level)</b>						

14. All teachers should have some multicultural education training.

Years of Experience	<u>1-3</u>	<u>4-6</u>	<u>7-15</u>	<u>16-20</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>
SA:	13	4	8	1	52%	26
A:	9	7	4	0	40%	20
U:	3	0	0	0	6%	3
D:	0	1	0	0	2%	1
SD:	0	0	0	0	0%	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>5.0</b>		<b>4.6</b>
<b>Pearson Correlation Coefficient: .294* (significant at the .05 level)</b>						

15. Schools should conform to one dominant cultural view in educating students.

Years of Experience	<u>1-3</u>	<u>4-6</u>	<u>7-15</u>	<u>16-20</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>
SA:	0	0	0	0	0%	0
A:	0	0	0	0	0%	0
U:	1	1	1	0	6%	3
D:	8	7	6	1	44%	22
SD:	16	4	5	0	50%	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>2.0</b>		<b>1.7</b>
<b>Pearson Correlation Coefficient: .105 (not significant)</b>						

16. Were you ever in a culturally diverse classroom in grade school?

yes 30 (60%)  
no 20 (40%)

17. Do you use multicultural educational materials in your classroom?

yes 44 (88%)  
no 6 (12%)

18. Have you ever considered multicultural education an academic issue?

yes 38 (76%)  
no 12 (24%)

19. Do you feel that multicultural education is a racial issue?

yes 9 (18%)

no 41 (82%)

20. Have you ever had any multicultural training? If yes, how did it benefit you?

yes 29 (58%)

no 21 (42%)

\* This training opened my eyes to the diversity of all ethnic groups. The training also supplied trainees with materials such as picture books, audio tapes, posters, etc. that involved multicultural characters, music styles and such. These materials paved the way for excellent units to be taught.

\* It made me more aware of issues and concerns of other cultures.

\* It benefited me because I am a foreign language teacher.

\* It allowed me to gain an appreciation for all people the world.

\* It helped me to keep in mind that you must make learning fun, directed to all students, and include culture to relate to the real world.

\* It help me to become more aware of the students' needs.

\* It help me to be more aware of issues I did not realize before.

\* It benefited me a great deal in understanding others.

\* It afforded me the opportunity to see through both eyes rather than with tuned vision. I can now see how our children are not having their needs met through a generic curriculum.

\* It helped me understand how subtle little words and ideas mean different things. Some students are lacking little things such as certain nursery rhymes, etc. to help them understand a concept, while being taught other rhymes and stories from their cultural that are never used.

\* It made me aware of a need and short coming in my classroom.

\* It was little to no benefit as I was already aware of the materials being presented.

\* It made me more aware of some basic differences in how students may perceive and handle situations.

- \* It taught me ways to incorporate cultural histories and aspects into social studies. In doing so, students became familiar with the lessons and appreciated cultural differences that exist and have existed in the United States.
- \* It gave me more ideas in how to incorporate multiculturalism into my classroom.
- \* It increased my awareness to teach and understand multicultural students. It also helped the students and me academically and socially.
- \* It helped by making me aware of what others thought.

## CHAPTER V

### Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

#### Summary

The purpose of this study, as stated in chapter four, was to identify teachers' attitudes and perceptions toward multicultural education hoping that it will encourage them to become aware of making improvements of cultural awareness and attitudes toward teaching in culturally diverse classrooms creating a positive atmosphere for all students. The teachers' responses to the questions on the questionnaire were correlated using Pearson-Moment Correlation to see if the responses were positive or negative. The research along with the independent field study of teachers' attitudes and perceptions of multicultural education, related the teachers' feelings and knowledge of multicultural education to their experience.

All of the items on the questionnaire showed a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes and perceptions toward multicultural education and their prior experience in multicultural settings. Using a significant level of .05, two of the questions were not significant (numbers 6 and 15). The items that were significantly correlated showed that the study would give similar or same results if given to a different sample with the same experiences.

#### Conclusion

Although multicultural education is a major issue in today's schools, 12% of the teachers surveyed had no multicultural education training, 80% had culturally diverse classrooms composed of students from several ethnic groups, and 26% were not teaching multicultural education. After correlating the responses using Pearson-Moment Correlation, the teachers showed a positive relationship to each question.

These are major findings that must be paid close attention to in creating a positive atmosphere for all students. With the changing faces in America's schools, it is important that there is a continual push for culturally diverse training for pre-service teachers as well as experienced teachers.

Multicultural education is not a matter of separating or changing curriculum but making a transformation for new approaches in educating all students and teachers. Most importantly, teachers must become aware of their own attitudes and perceptions of students who are culturally different. Multicultural education is one of the main tools in creating a positive understanding of how to educate students of diverse cultural backgrounds.

### Recommendations

According to this research, one of the most effective recommendations in creating positive attitudes and perceptions of multicultural education is to train in-service teachers to deal with and understand cultural diversity before entering the classroom. Teachers should have more than just in-service training in multicultural education. They should have a required class in college that deals with cultural issues. After completing this required class, pre-service teachers should have a field study in a culturally diverse classroom setting where a multicultural curriculum is taught.

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## APPENDICES

## Composition of The Sample

### Analysis of Respondents

#### 1. SEX

Male	(9)
Female	(41)

#### 2. AGE

20-29	(25)
30-39	(13)
40-49	(10)
50-59	(2)
60-69	(0)

#### 3. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

BA	(7)
BA+	(34)
MA	(6)
MA+	(3)
EDS	(0)
EDD	(0)

#### 4. YEARS TEACHING

1-3	(25)
4-6	(12)
7-15	(12)

## YEARS TEACHING CONTINUED

16-20	(1)
20-30	(0)
30+	(0)

## 5. YEARS TEACHING MULTICULTURALISM

0-1	(25)
2-3	(14)
4-5	(3)
6-10	(7)
11-15	(0)
16+	(1)

## 6. HOW DID YOU BECOME INVOLVED IN TEACHING MULTICULTURALISM?

Volunteered	(29)
Asked To	(4)
Told To	(4)
Not Teaching Multiculturalism	(13)

## 7. MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION TRAINING RECEIVED

None	(6)
In-service Level Trainings	(29)
College Level 1-6 Hours	(22)
College Level 7-12 Hours	(3)
College Level 13-16 Hours	(1)
College Level 19 More Than Hours	(1)

8. A. NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN CLASSROOM (The numbers in parenthesis represent how many teachers responded to each number of students):

Less Than 20 (8)

21-25 (26)

26-30 (12)

30+ (4)

B. ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF YOUR CLASSROOM (The numbers in parenthesis represent how many teachers responded to each ethnic composition):

Caucasian (49)

African American (39)

Asian (20)

American Indian (3)

Bi-Racial (30)

Hispanic (17)

Other (17)

9. TEACHING METHOD

Traditional Textbook Approach (7)

Whole Language Approach (3)

Integrated and/or Thematic Units (6)

A Combination of Several Methods (45)

# APPENDIX B

## Questionnaire

### TEACHERS' ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS

Directions: Indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement by circling the appropriate letter(s).

SA - strongly agree  
 A - agree  
 U - undecided  
 D - disagree  
 SD - strongly disagree

- |    |   |   |   |    |  |
|----|---|---|---|----|--|
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 1. Some students are more intelligent due to their race or nationality.                    |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 2. Some students' socioeconomic status effects them academically.                          |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 3. I am adequately prepared to handle cultural diversity in my classroom.                  |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 4. Teachers should incorporate multicultural education into the curriculum.                |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 5. Teaching cultural diversity causes racial problems.                                     |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 6. Multicultural education would not help students academically.                           |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 7. Multicultural education is not needed in my classroom.                                  |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 8. Multicultural education will help teachers understand cultural differences in students. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 9. Teachers can be more effective if they use multicultural materials in their classroom.  |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 10. I am uncomfortable dealing with cultural issues in my class.                           |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 11. Minority students should be taught differently than non-minority students.             |

- SA   A   U   D   SD   12. If classrooms were divided culturally, students would learn better.
- SA   A   U   D   SD   13. Multicultural education benefits students socially as well as academically.
- SA   A   U   D   SD   14. All teachers should have some multicultural education training.
- SA   A   U   D   SD   15. Schools should conform to one dominant cultural view in educating students.

16. Were you ever in a culturally diverse classroom in grade school?

☐ yes

☐ no

17. Do you use multicultural educational materials in your classroom?

☐ yes

☐ no

18. Have you ever considered multicultural education an academic issue?

☐ yes

☐ no

19. Do you feel that multicultural education is a racial issue?

☐ yes

☐ no

20. Have you ever had any multicultural training? If yes, how did it benefit you?

☐ yes

☐ no

## VITA

David James Summerville was born in Boligee, Alabama on June 23, 1965. He attended grade school in Boligee, Alabama and graduated from Paramount High School in 1983. Immediately after high school, he joined the Army Reserve. In January of 1984, he entered Alabama State University for two quarters. From January 1985 to May 1986, he attended West Alabama University. He joined the U.S. Army in October, 1986 and was stationed at Ft. Campbell, KY. After spending five years in the army, he entered Austin Peay State University in August 1991. He received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education in December 1993. He re-entered Austin Peay State University in January 1996, and he received his Master of Arts in Education Degree in May 1997.

He is presently employed at Kenwood Elementary School in Clarksville, Tennessee as an elementary teacher.