

Diversity Proficiencies

Proposed by the School of Teacher Education Western Kentucky University

Given the major goal of multicultural education is the development of the intellectual, social, and personal growth of all students to their highest potential, it depends on the teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and behavior whether he or she provides equitable opportunities for learning, changes the monocultural curriculum, and helps all students become more multicultural (i.e., helps them understand different systems of perceiving, evaluating, believing, and doing). (Bennett, 2011).

The WKU Professional Education Unit believes that all education professional candidates must be able to demonstrate knowledge about issues of diversity that affect teaching and student learning. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, exceptionalities and inclusion, gifted and talented learners, English language learners and language acquisition, ethnic/racial cultural and linguistic differences, social-economic status, and gender and sexual orientation.

The development of the proficiencies below was influenced by many sources. Among these were Goal Two of the WKU Quality Enhancement Plan that states, "Students will demonstrate respect for diversity of peoples, ideas, and cultures." Also, NCATE Standard 4 Diversity states, "The unit designs, implements, and evaluates curriculum and provides experiences for candidates to acquire and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates can demonstrate and apply proficiencies related to diversity. Experiences provided for candidates include working with diverse populations, including higher education and P-12 school faculty, candidates, and students in P-12 schools." Furthermore, the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) Standards state, "The teacher appreciates and values human diversity, shows respect for student's varied talents and perspectives, and is committed to the pursuit of 'individually configured excellence.'"

Thus, we propose that each program associated with the WKU Professional Education should adopt and articulate various assignments and assessments that require their education professional candidates to demonstrate the following diversity proficiencies prior to their program completion:

1. Candidates will connect theory and practice to meet needs of diverse learners.
2. Candidates will demonstrate sensitivity and respect for diverse groups.

References

- Bennett, C. I. (2011). *Comprehensive multicultural education: Theory and practice*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (1996). *Standards for School Leaders*. Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.
- National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). (2008). *NCATE Unit Standards*.

Approvals
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