

**Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Special Education in the United States and South Korea: Exploring Current Practices and Recommendations**

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**Abstract**

*In the spirit of moving toward a more “global community”, multicultural special education practices designed to reach culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students represent an imperative in countries world-wide where education is a core value, including the United States (U.S.) and South Korea. As CLD students in the U.S. and South Korea attend public schools at increasing rates, exploring current education practice and policies is warranted. The authors conducted a comprehensive review of the literature as well as an exploration of educational policies and laws across both countries. As a result, the authors identified: the latest student demographic trends and issues, and current policies and practices addressing the education of CLD students with and without disabilities in both countries. Implications and recommendations for special education teacher educators will be provided.*

**Keywords:** *culturally and linguistically diverse students, multicultural education, special education, preservice teachers, South Korea, United States.*

## Introduction

Globalization has impacted educational practices in special education worldwide including, but not limited to, the United States (U.S.) and South Korea. The populations from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds have been increasing in both the countries. As culture and language play an important role in student learning and educational needs, it becomes crucial to provide training for future teachers to be responsive to the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of all of their students.

A closer look at the demographic profiles of public school students in the U.S. and South Korea reveal that there have been changes over time. First, according to the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), 20% of individuals above the age of five speak a language other than English at home in the U.S. and it is estimated that by the year 2030 nearly 40% of the K-12 school population will speak English as a second language (USDOE & NICHD, 2003). Further, projections from the National Center for Education Statistics suggest a steady increase in the number of students who are Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, and from two or more races, and a decrease for White and American Indian/Alaska Native student populations (Hussar & Bailey, 2016). As a result, public school educators will be responsible for teaching an increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse student population.

According to the Ministry of Education in South Korea (2012, 2014), the number of CLD students enrolled in primary school through high school rose from 9,389 to 55,780 from 2006 to 2013. This represents over a remarkable 600% increase in growth over only seven years. At the same time, this trend is occurring while the total number of children attending public schools has been slowly decreasing over the past five years (Ministry of Education, 2014). The ratio of CLD students attending the public schools, in proportion to their non-CLD Korean peers does remain small, but is increasing. In 2009, 0.35% of the students were reported as belonging to a CLD community, increasing to 0.85% in 2013 (Ministry of Education, 2014). As the proportion of CLD students attending schools in South Korea has been increasing, more attention has been placed on multicultural education (MCE) and the need to support teachers in training (Um & Won, 2012).

Meeting the needs of these diverse students across both countries has, therefore, become a “demographic imperative” (Banks, 1995). That is to say, in order to ensure appropriate and meaningful educational practice, attention to the changes in demographics and other student characteristics is necessary. In the U.S., the multicultural education (MCE) movement evolved to examine and advance the curricula and teaching practice to ensure that the needs of all students would be met in the public schools. A fundamental belief of this movement has been to advocate for social justice and equity for all students, including those who are receiving special education services (Banks, 2008; Smith, 2009). The U.S. has a comparatively longer history with MCE and culturally responsive teacher preparation than South Korea. However, MCE has been gaining considerable traction in the country, as suggested by the recent allocation of funds to support culturally responsive practices from the Ministry of Education (2009). In this manner, examining current education practices and research on MCE and culturally responsive practices in both countries is important.

With this background established, the goals of this paper are to: (1) identify the latest CLD student demographic trends and issues in both countries, (2) explore

current policies and practices that address educating CLD students with or without disabilities, and (3) provide implications and recommendations for special education teacher educators, as they are charged with training their teacher candidates to serve students in either country. To accomplish these objectives, factors operating in the U.S. and South Korea will be explored separately, followed by a summary of the findings and recommendations.

### **Trends and Issues Within Special Education Impacting CLD Learners**

In the U.S., the latest reports on student demographics and special education status suggest that many CLD students continue to be over-represented in certain special education programs, compared to their White peers. While in South Korea, the country has a long-standing history of being culturally and linguistically homogenous; therefore, it is not surprising that limited research would be available to suggest any correlation between a student's special education status and his or her cultural or linguistic background. Nonetheless, culturally and linguistically diversity, as well as other forms of student diversity (i.e., socioeconomic status, religion), present unique educational needs and considerations for teachers and teacher educators in both countries. The next subsections will explore these topics in greater depth.

### **Demographic Trends and Issues Impacting CLD Learners in the U.S**

According to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs in 2014-15, 13% of the eligible public school-aged population between the ages of 3 and 21 years received special education services (USDOE, 2016). This percentage includes: 13% White students, 15% African-American, 12% Hispanic, 7% Asian, 12% Pacific Islander, 17% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 13% Two or more races (USDOE, 2016). African-American and American Indian/Alaskan Native students were statistically more like to qualify for special education services than the other racial/ethnic groups. As noted by Artiles, Kozleski, Trent, Osher, and Ortiz (2010), this data underscores the over-representation of CLD students in special education classes. Over a seven-year period, between 2007 and 2015, the percentage of representation within special education services increased for all racial/ethnic groups of students.

Over-representation of CLD students in the U.S. special education system is accompanied by findings that suggest that many of these students do not reach their academic goals despite the required federal and state accommodations and modifications (Artiles et al., 2010; Ford, 2012; Harry & Klingner, 2006). Research over time indicates that the special education system has not always provided appropriate remedial services for its students, noted by a persistent failure to narrow the gap of high school dropout rates (Artiles et al., 2010; Patton, 1998), poor post-secondary outcomes (Artiles et al., 2010; Patton, 1998), and social stigma associated with the label of a disability (Harry & Klingner, 2007; Shifrer, 2013) that too often separates students with a disability from students without a disability.

Furthermore, the eligibility criteria for intellectual disabilities (ID), emotional disturbance (ED), and learning disability (LD) rely on the clinical decision-making of a school-based multidisciplinary team, and criteria that varies not only from across states but across school districts. Researchers argue convincingly that both the referral

processes for disability testing and the criteria used for diagnosing disabilities are associated with a number of confounding issues such as testing bias (Klingner, Artiles, & Barletta, 2006; Skiba et al., 2008) and deficit-oriented models of classification (Artiles et al., 2010; Harry & Klingner, 2007; O'Connor & Fernández, 2006) that have resulted in a higher likelihood of diagnosing a student from a CLD background with a disability. Researchers who have examined such issues (e.g., Losen & Orfield, 2002; O'Connor & Fernández, 2006) have focused on these school-determined special education categories of ID, ED, and LD because it is in these areas that databases have revealed the greatest disproportions of CLD students in special education (Donovan & Cross, 2002). For example, African American youth disproportionately received special education services in the areas of LD, ED, and ID and this has remained constant even after more than 40 years that this discrepancy was recognized, beginning with the research of Deno (1970) and Mercer (1973) and continuing today (Ford, 2012; Skiba et al., 2008).

Donovan and Cross (2002) calculated a risk ratio for racial/ethnic group to qualify for each special education disability category, using data from the U.S. Office of Civil Rights (OCR). Their study revealed that African American and American Indian/Alaskan Natives were at the highest risk identification of ID when compared to their peers, while Hispanics and Asian/Pacific Islanders were at least risk. Using the same OCR survey, they showed that the odds were greatest for American Indian/Alaskan Natives, African Americans, and Hispanics for LD determination while Asian/Pacific Islanders were underrepresented. Donovan and Cross also found that African American students were at the highest risk for being identified as having a LD, while Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander students experienced the lowest rates.

While the discussion of disproportional representation within special education in the U.S. has been extensive, it is compelling to see whether or how the discussion has relevance in another country such as South Korea, as the country continues to experience a shift in the cultural and ethnic composition of its public-school student population.

### **Demographic Trends and Issues Impacting CLD Learners in South Korea**

South Korea has a long-standing history of being a culturally and linguistically homogeneous country. Historically speaking, South Koreans have tended to view themselves as belonging to a connected, cohesive, and national community that shares a common identity and takes pride in its ethnic homogeneity (Lee & Shon, 2011). Researchers have found that this belief has been reflected in the public schools' curricula, reinforcing the strength of homogeneity over the recognition of multiculturalism (Lee & Shon, 2011). It has also been suggested that the notion of a South Korean national identity has a history of excluding those who are not culturally or ethnically Korean (Choi, 2010). For example, the notion of *danil minjok*, or one-blood ethnicity remains a widely-held belief among many Koreans, suggesting that genetic and cultural homogeneity should be a source of pride. It is therefore unclear how non-native born Korean individuals fit in under *danil minjok*, leaving such students in the schools at risk for marginalization (Watson, Park, & Lee, 2011).

South Korea has a different history compared to the U.S. in its relationship with CLD learners in its public schools. It was not until the early 1900's when South Korea experienced a more culturally diversity country with the immigration of foreign-born workers. Migrant workers sought economic opportunity, increasingly

taking jobs previously held by native-born Koreans (Choi et al. 2009) and roughly 350,000 migrant foreign workers chose to stay longer than their visas permitted, making the country their new permanent residence (Park & Watson, 2011).

A closer analysis of the immigration patterns over the past twenty years reveals that the majority of these immigrants are arriving from other Asian countries. According to 2011 data from the Ministry of Security and Public Administration, approximately 80% of the immigrants to South Korea came from within the continent. Specifically, 55.1% (696,861 out of 1,265,000) immigrated from China (including Chinese people of Korean descent), 22% from Southeastern Asian countries, and 4% from Southern Asia (MPAS, 2011). Over this same time period, between the 1990's to the present day, there has also been a spike in the number of rural Korean males who marry non-native females, marking an increase in the number of multicultural families within the country (Choi et al., 2009). Eight percent of native Korean men have married non-native women, resulting in a total of 1,265,006 multicultural families with 151,154 school-aged children (MHW, 2009; MEST, 2011). The number of school-aged children from multicultural families is projected to increase and continue to change the demographic profile of the South Korean K-12 student population. Along with this wave of immigration and new marriage patterns arrive school-aged children, each with his/her own unique educational needs and considerations – something that the U.S. and South Korea have in common.

According to a survey issued by the Korean Ministry of Health and Welfare, 17.3% of multicultural families had at least one child with a disability enrolled in South Korean public schools compared to 5.61% of Korean-born families (MHW, 2009). Similarly, through his survey data, Kang (2010) found that CLD students were: (a) more likely to be identified as having a LD, and (b) more likely to experience *wangatta*, or group exclusion as a form of social punishment. Kang's data also revealed that social struggles characterized by *wangatta*, were linked to a higher dropout rate for CLD students compared to their native-born peers similar to the social stigma associated from receiving a disability label in the U.S. (Harry & Klingner, 2007; Shifrer, 2013). Nonetheless, at this time there still remain little data revealing the relationship between special education status and membership to a CLD community in South Korea; however, the existing literature suggests that this could emerge soon.

### **Current Policies and Practices Addressing Educating CLD Students**

In this section, current policies and education practices related to CLD students with or without disabilities in the U.S and South Korea will be examined. Also, recent research exploring MCE and its impact CLD students and MCE in both countries will be introduced.

#### **Current Policies and Practices in the U.S. Supporting CLD students**

Beginning with the reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1997, all fifty states have been required to monitor representation by race/ethnicity in disability categories in order to receive funding for special education services (IDEA, 1997; Skiba et al., 2008). Further, the U.S. Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requires that state and local education agencies monitor the representation of CLD students in special education every two years. If disproportionality by students'

race/ethnicity is found, OCR requires that local education agencies put into place specific steps to reduce it. When this occurs, OCR first alerts the district that they have disproportionate representation(s) in the disability category. Then, the Office works with districts to create an action plan that outlines approaches that must be taken, along with a timeline to report back to the Office on how they eliminated the over- or under-representation (Elementary and Middle School Technical Assistance Center, n.d.). In this manner, U.S. public schools must now carefully consider disproportionality in order to comply with the law and receive funding.

### **Multicultural Education and Culturally Responsive Teaching**

Concerns of disproportionality in the U.S. illuminate a problem that could emerge in South Korea. Data from the U.S. underscore the importance of ensuring that teachers implement culturally responsive instructional practices that afford all students optimal opportunities to learn before referring them for special education services. While many students may not enter school with the skills expected for their age and grade, teachers must use all methods available to determine if a student's performance is due to a lack of social, cultural, or educational opportunities that can be advanced with good instruction or if a student has a biologically-based disability that impacts learning at the expected rate in spite of adequate quality and quantity of instruction (Ortiz & Yates, 2002). Given this expectation, it becomes crucial to prepare preservice teachers (PSTs) by using MCE and culturally responsive teaching practices at the onset of their academic programs.

Multicultural education courses and culturally responsive teaching (CRT) are two movements that support teacher-training programs in the U.S. Multicultural education is an idea, an educational reform, and a process to create educational equity for all students (Smith, 2009), influenced by a constructivist orientation of learning that uses the students' socio-cultural backgrounds (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Vygotsky, 1978). Many MCE courses offers ways for teachers to develop culturally responsive practices that feature the students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds in the teaching and learning. To help conceptualize CRT, Villegas and Lucas (2002) offer six intersecting characteristics of culturally responsive teachers' classrooms. They are: (a) developing a socio-cultural consciousness, (b) developing an affirming attitude towards students from CLD backgrounds, (c) committing to act as an agent of change, (d) possessing constructivist views of learning, (e) continuing to learn about students, and (f) applying specific culturally responsive teaching strategies. These approaches build upon the students' familiar knowledge bases to attach new meanings (Bergeron, 2008; Gay & Kirkland, 2003). If realized, MCE can empower the PSTs with a toolkit of mental models, mindsets, and methods to actively support and promote the learning of all of their students, leading to more confidence in their own professional efficacy (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). It has also been found that when students' cultures are included in the classroom, positive academic outcomes follow (Ware, 2006).

Yet, implementing multicultural curricula in the U.S. is not simple. Its implementation is also made more complex as PSTs consistently do not represent the range of the cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity of their students. Instead, the PST population mirrors the backgrounds of current teachers, remaining predominantly White, middle-class, monolingual, and female (Boutte, 2012; Bales & Saffold, 2011). Thus, it is important to promote practice in field experiences that take place in racially and ethnically diverse settings. Furthermore, the PSTs' practicum needs to be coupled with a culturally competent mentor teacher or supervisor to promote effective

teaching across diversity in their field experience. Various studies found that a mentor teacher, supervisor, and/or university supervisor can support PSTs in promoting culturally responsive teaching (e.g., Achinstein & Athanases, 2005; Zozakiewicz, 2010). The mentor should be appropriately trained and supported to ensure effective supervision. With these combined efforts, teacher preparation programs can help better prepare future teachers to reach the diverse needs and backgrounds of all of their students.

### **Preservice Teacher Education in the U.S.**

In addition to federal mandates regarding the issue of disproportionality among racial/ethnic groups in special education programs, many professional organizations have voiced serious concerns over this disproportionality, which has led to the development of diversity criteria for accreditation standards, indicators, and requirements of teacher performance. For example, the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), a leading organization in special education professional standards, includes several standards that highlight diverse cultural perspectives of relationships, biases, and differences under CEC's Initial Preparation Standards (CEC, 2015). Teacher education programs are taking heed, requiring that their teacher candidates engage in some form of MCE coursework prior to licensure.

It is helpful to contextualize how integrating MCE course within a teacher preparation program is done, with an example. According to Robertson, García, McFarland, and Rieth (2012), at one large research university in the southwestern U.S., specific classes that address diversity issues are part of the core special education curriculum. Specifically, this teacher preparation program offers a class on the sociocultural influences on teaching and learning for its special education teacher candidates. This particular course is a prerequisite for student teaching and interning and addresses such as: (a) dynamic cultural interrelationships, (b) language disabilities versus language differences, (c) second language acquisition, and (d) culturally responsive practices through personal reflections and dialogue with a person from a different cultural background (p. 119). A second class on intercultural communication and collaboration, offered by the same teacher preparation program at the university, aligns with the final semester of student teaching and addresses such issues as developing: (a) inclusive special education practices for students with disabilities from diverse socio-cultural and linguistic communities, (b) collaborative practices with families and other educators, and (c) new knowledge to manage the classroom environment (p. 120). This course also features the opportunity for PST to work with other teacher candidates in the university's bilingual education program to develop collaborative skills with their future colleagues (p. 121).

In sum, IDEA (1997, 2004) indicates that U.S. states are to monitor their students' representational patterns in the special education system. Turning to the literature, there is plenty of guidance available to teachers, administrators, and teacher educators seeking to support culturally responsive teaching and other practices supportive of reaching the full diversity of the students.

Now we will explore current educational practices and policies designed to support CLD students in South Korea.

### **Current Policies and Practices in South Korea for CLD students**

When considering MCE in South Korea, it is important to begin with the

federal government's policy and guidelines for the educational needs of the country's growing CLD population. To begin, the Ministry of Health and Welfare officially enacted the "Multicultural Family Support Act" of 2008. Under the definition of the Act, a "multicultural family" refers to any family that is comprised of a marriage between an individual of immigrant-status to a citizen who had previously acquired the citizenship of the Republic of Korea (i.e., through birth). This Act mandated that the minister of education and superintendents of municipal and provincial offices of education formulate plans to better understand multicultural families within their schools and provide them with after-school programs or extracurricular activities. The Act also calls for more comprehensive multilingual services for Korean language learners and support centers for multicultural families, designed to support the families as they continue to build their lives and networks within South Korea.

Further, the Ministry of Education began allocating funds in 2009 to implement specific programs to support multicultural families through its "Educational Support Plan for Children from Multicultural Families" (2009) and assigned National Institute for Lifelong Education to establish National Center for Multicultural Education in 2012. Currently, the National Center for Multicultural Education supports schools that feature Korean as a Second Language (KSL) curriculum and provide professional development for multicultural coordinators and multicultural education specialists of both municipal and provincial offices of education. Also of relevance, the Enforcement of Elementary and Secondary Education Law was partially amended in 2013 to allow CLD students to be admitted or transferred to multicultural special classes in elementary schools, as well as codifying the specific qualification standards of instructors to teach the Korean language learners. Each of these laws signified noteworthy developments and provides evidence that the federal government is taking heed of the growth of multicultural families and other demographic changes within the country.

### **Advancements of Multicultural Education in South Korea**

Over the past decade, there has been quite a bit of research featuring students and families from CLD backgrounds and their interactions within the public schools in South Korea. The topics of the research are multifaceted, although predominantly focused on teachers' perception of MCE (e.g., Kwon, 2010; Kim., & Kim, 2008; Park, 2011). Examples of the topics of past research include: multicultural curriculum (Park et al., 2008; Jang, 2009; Chang, 2006); rights protected under education laws (Park & Kwak, 2008); inclusion in Korean textbooks (Cho, Yoon, & Jin, 2008); and, language education programs (Kim & Shin, 2008; Seo, 2007). Recent immigrants' limited fluency of the Korean language and the challenges they face in supporting their children's acquisition of the language have also been reported (e.g., Sul, Han, & Lee, 2003).

Other relevant studies completed in the country have included the public-school teachers as the focus of the research. For example, two qualitative studies explored teachers' perceptions of CLD students' difficulties in school (Kim, Kong, & Lee, 2007; Kim, Kim, & Yoo, 2012), while one study looked at students' emotional and academic challenges related to their limited Korean proficiency status (Park & Lee, 2010). It is not surprising that yet other researchers have suggested that many learners from CLD communities experienced academic under achievement and are more delayed in using the Korean language when compared to their native-born peers (Pae & Kim, 2010; Hwang & Jeong, 2009). Finally, and in a more favorable light,



additional research has been conducted on specific interventions designed to improve CLD learners' language proficiency and academic achievement (e.g., Kim & Kim, 2011; Cho & Jeong, 2009).

Among the corpus of literature on cultural and linguistic diversity in South Korea, there remain considerably fewer sites that focus on the intersection of culture, language, and disability. The studies that are present focus solely on language disabilities (Lee & Kim, 2010; Lee & Seok, 2010). The convergence of students with disabilities and CLD backgrounds in South Korea is, therefore, a newly emerging focus of empirical study and warranted. This gap in the literature should provide the impetus for future educational research. It also follows that it could prove helpful for South Korean teachers to participate in training on: (a) cross-cultural communication and (b) interventions that have been normed on CLD learners that represent the diversity found in the public schools. Although the CLD population remains relatively small, estimated to be 1% of the total student population in 2014 (Ministry of Education, 2014), the numbers are projected to increase. Furthermore, students belonging to such communities, along with their peers, will continue to enter the workforce, so even from an economic perspective, it would be quite beneficial for educators, teacher trainers, and administrators to be in tune to the unique needs of their CLD students with or without disabilities.

There remains a scant amount of literature exploring the intersection of MCE with special education. However, Kang's (2010) was one exception, reporting data suggesting that CLD students were more likely to be identified as having an LD. Given a larger corpus of literature supporting MCE in the training of teachers in the U.S., support for MCE as a component to South Korean teacher training was also identified (Park & Watson, 2011; Watson et al., 2011). It remains the case that possessing and enacting on a knowledge base of culturally responsive practices can support PSTs to teach their CLD learners and empower the teachers to make appropriate decisions when it comes to referral for special education services. It is therefore worthwhile to explore the practices, trends, and curriculum from the U.S. to consider whether it could be adapted to fit a Korean public school context.

### **Preservice Teacher Considerations in South Korea**

The field of MCE and the curriculum available to support culturally responsive practices for PSTs are emerging in South Korea. For example, Watson et al. (2011) completed survey research to better understand PST university students' perceptions of MCE while they were completing their required coursework. The majority (72.5%) of the participants (53 out of 82 participants) had no experience working with children from CLD communities, even in their teacher training prior to this program under the study. A portion of the remaining participants (9 out of 82) had fieldwork experiences teaching in a mentoring program for CLD students in collaboration with several universities, with the support of the South Korean government. They were members of a government-led program designed to support, mentor, and meet children from multicultural families (Watson et al., 2011). As a result of their experience mentoring CLD students in South Korea, the vast majority (96.2%) of the participants (78 among 82 of the respondents) indicated that MCE was an important or very important component of teaching (Watson et al., 2011). It is equally compelling that the majority of the participants (71%) expressed concern that CLD families were being treated unfairly in South Korean society and many of them noted that CLD students were having difficulties in schools. This awareness led

Watson et al. to conclude that these PSTs were emerging with a sense of responsibility to these students.

Um and Won (2012) analyzed 62 studies to explore current trends in research, as well as directions for future research regarding multicultural teacher education. Of the 62 studies, 39 focused on general education teachers' perceptions regarding MCE and current multicultural teacher education practices. All 39 articles were published after 2006. The participants in 8 of the 39 articles were preservice K-12 teachers. However, studies of special education teachers' perceptions pertaining to MCE with CLD learners with exceptionalities were not included in this review.

Several studies that examined special education teachers' perceptions and/or experiences with MCE and few studies included preservice special education teachers as the participants. Shin, Han, and Yi (2011) study explored the meaning of special education teachers' education practices and experiences teaching CLD learners with exceptionalities through interviews with three teachers. The data from the interviews suggested that the participants rarely were able to communicate with general education teachers and students' parents due to the lack of time and opportunity to meet with them. The participants also noted that parents/caregivers tended to have their own responsibilities outside of school and would sometimes have to leave the parent meeting early. When parents were present at the meetings, they were also described as being reserved. Special education teachers indicated that most of their CLD students were receiving some of their instruction in special education classes even though they were not formally identified as having disabilities. They also reported they perceived that support from general education teachers, as well as from the South Korean government for the families, were essential components in achieving success with CLD learners with disabilities.

In a very recent study, Lee (2012) investigated both general education ( $n = 68$ ) and special education teachers' ( $n = 75$ ) competences in their experiences, knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs pertaining to MCE. Her findings revealed that general education teachers had more experience delivering multicultural content in their classrooms and took more multicultural classes than those taken by special education teachers. Thus, Lee recommended that multicultural classes be provided to PSTs in special education university programs, in accord with Kim (2013). Through interviewing current special educators in South Korea ( $N = 12$ ), Kim (2013) concluded that MCE classes should be embedded within the preservice teacher education curriculum.

Kwon, Kwon, and Lee (2012), who conducted a survey with a large sample of special education PSTs ( $N = 481$ ) reported that the respondents agreed that academic instruction in MCE is very important in helping them prepare to work with CLD learners. However, this still does not remain a common practice. For example, according to Park and Kwon (2013), only 10% ( $n = 22$ ) of their early childhood special education PST respondents took multicultural classes. As a result of their respondents' feedback, Park and Kwon (2013) concurred with Kwon, Kwon, and Lee that there is a need for MCE classes within general and special education university teacher preparation programs.

In summary, to meet CLD students' needs and appropriately identify CLD students with exceptionalities, both general and special education teachers should be taught both instructional and collaborative strategies for meeting the social and academic needs of struggling CLD learners. In the words of Watson et al. (2011): "The collective process of schooling and the mindsets of teachers and administrators, rather than the students themselves, is the key to addressing this challenge" (p. 4).

## **Implications and Recommendation**

Over-representation experienced by CLD students within the U.S. special education system would not be a concern had the service system been fulfilling its intended goals of accommodating and modifying the classroom content to allow full access to its learners. Yet, research over time has suggested that the special education system stops short of achieving these goals (e.g., Artiles et al., 2010; Ford, 2012; Harry & Klingner, 2007; Skiba et al., 2008). As a consequence, diverse students are being inappropriately categorized for special education and related services, which in return results in repetitive and continuous failure in the U.S. public schools.

Recognizing over-representation of certain CLD communities in special education has already received attention in the laws and policies in the U.S., such as the procedures identified in the Exclusionary Clause of IDEA (2004) and those of monitoring proportionality. Indeed, South Korea has begun paying attention to this issue. The Ministry of Education (2009) has allocated money to implement more programs for students from multicultural families while supporting universities that have teacher credential or certification programs that include MCE courses. However, it remains the case that South Korea still does not have a system to monitor proportionality in education similar to IDEA (2004) in the United States.

Due to the increasing number of CLD learners in public schools in South Korea, proper multicultural education to ensure each student's education equity (e.g., Park & Watson, 2011; Watson et al., 2011) and specific MCE training for all teacher candidates are needed. South Korean educators, administrators, and policy makers would benefit from proactively taking heed of the disproportionate issues in the U.S.

There are many promising sources to further inform teachers' instructional judgments when they are considering how to provide appropriate services to their students from diverse backgrounds in the U.S. Training at the PST level, by using the body of literature on MCE and culturally responsive teaching (e.g., Bales & Saffold, 2011; Gay & Kirkland, 2003) can be one method, along with featuring a culturally competent mentor to facilitate the PSTs' new professional learning and practice (Achinstein & Athanases, 2005; Zozakiewicz, 2010).

## **Recommendations**

First, best teaching practices for the CLD learners must include and ensure a collaborative relationship between general education and special education practitioners to reach the needs of all of their shared students. Courses on individual learning differences are now required in PST training programs or institutes designed for general and special education in the U.S. While in South Korea, the PSTs in general education teaching credential programs usually take one course in special education with limited discussion covering the causes and characteristics of disabilities, rather than education practices and interventions for all students (Heo & Lee, 2011). To support all students, including the CLD learners, the two fields must continue to share their knowledge and experiences.

Second, further study is recommended to discover more quality indicators of successful MCE programs, both in the United States and South Korea. The literature has suggested various practices for incorporating MCE in their PST training, but nearly unanimous among them was the need for the PST to pair their coursework with field experiences. The combination of field experience with coursework has been described as a necessary part of the PSTs' training (Fitchett, Starker, & Salyers, 2012)

and leaving a lasting impression, long after certification (Ladson-Billings, 2000).

Third, further attention is needed in the process of making an appropriate distinction between two groups of students: English language learners and English language learners with a learning disability (LD). A student who is acquiring an additional language, such as Korean or English, is different from the one who may also have a LD. Clearly, the former learner needs extra time to acquire the second language while the learner with a language-based LD may still need additional instructional supports to acquire his or her second language. Both groups of learners have been emerging in the schools, not only across the U.S. but also in South Korea and around the globe wherever the acquisition of second and third (plus) languages is the norm. Therefore, in the spirit of equity and justice, it is crucial that teacher educators begin or continue to train new general and special education teachers in the implementation of CRT practices, as offered in the field of MCE.

Fourth, at the center of MCE and CRT practices are the calls to use students' own diverse experiences as a familiar knowledge base to attach new meaning, informed by a constructivist orientation to learning (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) and socio-cultural theories of education (Vygotsky, 1978). Activating students' personal and previous experiences from various cultures into the classroom empowers the students to deepen their understanding of the context. Failure to adequately address the insights offered by diversity could not only harm the student's self-concept and self-determination, but also jeopardize equity, which is essential to maintaining and supporting a civic democracy (Banks, 2008; Smith, 2009).

Fifth, MCE must be appropriately implemented in order to empower the PST with a toolkit of mental models, mindsets, and methods to actively support and promote all of their students' learning. Failure to implement MCE appropriately could actually reinforce deficit thinking about cultural differences, so training is needed for professional staff and teacher educators that work with PST. Indeed, these five recommendations for teacher preparation programs in both the U.S. and South Korea should be professional responsibilities and warrant continued research.

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