

PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS AND STUDENT RESPONSES  
TO A CULTURALLY RELEVANT CURRICULUM

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PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS AND STUDENT RESPONSES  
TO A CULTURALLY RELEVANT CURRICULUM

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## VITA

Gary Steven Gibson, son of Julia (Brown) and the late William Ernest Gibson, was born February 19, 1958, in Andrews, North Carolina. He graduated from Andrews High School, Andrews, North Carolina, in 1976. He entered Western Carolina University and after three years, spent the next eighteen years as pastor or associate pastor of three different congregations. While continuing to pastor, he entered Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, Tennessee, and in December, 1994, received a Bachelor of Science degree in Health and Physical Education. In the spring of 1995, he entered graduate school at Austin Peay State University, where he completed his Master of Science degree in December, 1996. In August, 1996, he accepted a teaching position in the Dickson County, Tennessee, Public School System. In the summer of 1998, he completed 45 hours above the Masters Degree and was certified in School Leadership, through Austin Peay State University and the Tennessee Department of Education. In August, 2001, he accepted a teaching position in the Muscogee County, Georgia, Public School System. In August, 2003, he accepted an instructor's position at Columbus State University, Columbus, Georgia in the Health and Physical Education Program. In August, 2003, he began work on the requirements for his doctoral degree at Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama. He married Danna S. Messer, daughter of Daniel and Elise Messer, on July 7, 1978.

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT  
PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS AND STUDENT RESPONSES  
TO A CULTURALLY RELEVANT CURRICULUM

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Teacher candidates may not be receiving the appropriate training needed to succeed in today's culturally diverse schools. This research placed teacher candidates into a lab setting consisting of culturally diverse students and asked them to facilitate a culturally relevant pedagogy. Teacher candidates taught one unit of multi-activity games and another of non traditional African Stepping. The purposes of this study were to examine responses and communicated attitudes of secondary school students and teacher candidates to: (1) an intercultural curriculum, and (2) a traditional multi-activity physical education curriculum. One-hundred thirteen secondary school student and twelve teacher candidates participated in this research. Teacher candidates and school students were surveyed before and after the units of instruction to determine perceptions of the

activities. One hundred and forty-four Critical Incidents were recorded daily by the teacher candidates to ascertain what was considered significant for each class period and unit of instruction. School students were interviewed and their responses were coded for perceptions of the units of instruction.

Results indicated a need for teacher candidates to understand and present curriculum relevant to school students' lives. During the stepping unit, teacher candidates indicated less management concerns and focused more on school student learning. School students were motivated to participate and class leaders emerged during the stepping. When combined, these results indicate positive school student responses to the culturally relevant pedagogy and curriculum, and suggest a need for teacher education programs to incorporate multicultural education in preparing teacher candidates to meet instructional needs of diverse school students.

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This work is dedicated to my parents, Ernest and Julia Gibson, who taught me in those early years the following priorities: God, family, church, and school. This work also is dedicated to the greatest four kids in the world: Jonathan, Blayke, Cassie, and Joseph. Also, I need to thank my best friend and wife, Danna. You are the one who pushed me when no one else cared, and asked me to do more rewrites when everyone else was afraid to ask. For 28 great years, you have been a beautiful light in my life. This wonderful moment in my life would not have occurred without you, “My Love.” Thanks for allowing God to use you in shaping the man I was to become.

Finally, I have walked with someone since I was nine years of age and need to offer thanks and adoration. This person is my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He called me and has used me when I was, by no means, the best choice. He never faltered or gave up on me and was *an every present help in time of trouble*. To Him I owe everything and hope, that as a doc, He will find me continually faithful.

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

*The Problem*

It has been forecast, that by the year 2026 of the total K – 12 public school student enrollment 70 percent will be comprised of Hispanic and non-White populations (Garcia, 1995). While the drastic demographic shifts have been occurring within the school student population, the demographics of the school faculty have remained relatively unchanged. The fact that 85 – 88 percent of the teaching force at the turn of the century was predominantly White, middle class females both reflects and confirms warnings from previous research (Applied Research Center [ARC], 2000; Banks, 1991; Grant, 1989; Haberman, 1989) of the need for preparation of school faculty to meet the needs of an increasingly non-White culturally diverse school student demographic (Gordon, 1988; Grant & Gillette, 1987; Holmes Group, 1986). It is not difficult to imagine the disconnection found within each of the demographic groups represented, as well as within the individual demographic groups themselves as Ladson-Billings (2005) notes. Simultaneously, teacher education programs are caught in a dialectical tension that finds them struggling to recruit non-White teacher candidates while they face considerable resistance to training and equipping future teachers effectively for the multicultural setting.

Of the 1,200 university-based teacher education programs in the United States there has been little progress within these programs fundamentally speaking in terms of research based multicultural teacher education curriculum (Irvine, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2005). Program changes necessary to prepare student for urban and rural settings are yet to be complete (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). For example, many teacher educators' multicultural experiences are limited to reading and publishing materials on the subject. Many have never actually taught in a multiculturally diverse school setting nor do they possess ethnic, linguistic, or cultural ties with the multiculturally diverse students they are preparing their teacher candidates to teach (Sleeter, 2001). Ladson-Billings (2005) for example, has described teacher educators as being overwhelmingly White, and removed from the realities of urban classrooms.

In an effort to meet the instructional and educational needs of these more diverse school students, those within the educational community are calling for a culturally responsive approach to teaching (Howard, 2001, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Sparks, 1993, 1994). It follows, that a natural channel for increasing school student understanding of cultural diversity should also be included within the physical education teaching curriculum (Sparks, 1994). From a culturally responsive perspective, physical education should address cultural diversity naturally in light of the emphasis traditionally placed upon social interaction and development (Bucher & Wuest, 1987).

### *My Story*

There are times when the story behind the research tells more than what the research study reveals. There is a need to know the background that drove the primary researcher to conduct this research. This research grew from the recognition of a problem

capable of destroying those who are most innocent; our school students who desire an appropriate change to receive an education. As hard as it is to admit, it is humbling to research such an abstract problem yet such a real problem. With this research you are never quite sure where the problem begins and which of many turns it could and will take. Academia did not place within me a fire to look at this research, but rather participating in the lives of a group of school students and their families.

Exposure to multicultural diversity by the researcher came in two similar yet very unique settings. The first setting involved multicultural ministries in two separate churches and in two separate states. These children come in various shapes, sizes, and represent various ethnicities, and on the surface are the most unlovable, unsightly, and smelly children a county could produce. For 13 years in one setting and 2 years in another, I have participated in their lives and their stories, and have grown to dearly love them. Many Wednesdays and Sundays I have seen them come tumbling out the doors of their homes to ride an old, yellow bus. Frequently having to dress themselves, many don't come with clean and shining faces, and rarely are they wearing clean clothing. Much of the time they are smiling and happy to ride the bus. It is a small reprieve for these children to escape the many unsettling occurrences common to their homes.

The children ride one of three, old yellow buses to my church that chose, in 1988, to work with at-risk children in our community. My family moved in 2001 which means that the region and faces have changed, but multicultural needs are not limited to one particular region. I asked my current church to adopt a diverse neighborhood for the purpose of starting a ministry for culturally diverse children and their families. They agreed, and at the time of this research continue to conduct a similar type of multicultural

ministry. These congregations had as their goal to create a place for these children that could serve as a buffer for the problems they encountered in their homes and schools of which, for the most part, they felt had very little to do with their everyday lives.

The second setting involved a secondary school where I both taught Health and Physical Education and coached football and baseball. The racial demographic for the school students in this urban school was 85 percent African-American, 10 percent Hispanic, 3 percent Asian, and 2 percent White. I grew to love these school students and began to understand that if I wanted to teach them, I first must reach them. In order to reach them, I needed to appreciate and be aware of what was going on in their lives. Soon, I learned to enjoy the opportunities they afforded me in which I could participate in their lives and hear their stories. I tried to visit in the homes of each of my students and athletes as a means of better understanding the realities that made up their lives. At times, this awareness found me offering help and at other times, I just listened and grew to appreciate them and the efforts it took for them even to come to school each day. As I was able to build a relationship with my students, I noticed gradual improvement in their behavior and grades, and I found that their respect for me and my respect for them improved. Meeting them where they *lived* meant that I offered genuine love and concern as empathy - not sympathy, and found me changing my teaching philosophy to one that placed the students as central in the education process. I came to realize that if I truly wanted my students to succeed in school and in life, I must adopt a pedagogy that was responsive to their needs as a whole, rather than divided, individuals.

### *Society's View*

From a societal perspective, these children are at risk to fail in school and likely are to have difficulty in educational and occupational pursuits throughout their lives. Often, their parents are those identified as being little more than children themselves and are easily credited with passing a cycle of hopelessness on to another generation. I have known these children to experience mental, physical, sexual, and verbal abuse and violence directed toward them and/or other family members within their homes. They report witnessing the arrest of their parents and frequently have no idea where their parents are. At school, their unacceptable classroom behavior is likely to receive more reprimands which, in turn, generally results in poor grades. For many of these children, home is not good and school is worse.

### *Coming to this Research*

Moving from the public school setting, I began my new role at a local university where I taught in the Teacher Education Department. As part of my job requirements, I agreed to complete my doctorate in physical education pedagogy, which required me to attend another university. During my coursework with Dr. Peter Hastie, I was given the idea of stepping as a possible curriculum for secondary physical education students with one additional component. How would school students respond to a curriculum (stepping) tied to their culture and taught by mostly White teacher candidates and how would the White teacher candidates respond when called upon to teach a curriculum (stepping) to a majority non-White school student population. In other words, a multiculturally diverse curriculum taught to the group from whom it had originated.



### Background of Stepping

African stepping can be traced to the 19<sup>th</sup> century at the height of South Africa's apartheid rule. The slaves were forced to work in the gold mines and were forbidden to speak with each other (Goddale, 2000; Malone, 1996). Out of their need to connect, they devised a way to communicate with their feet which eventually became known as stepping. More recently, stepping has come to be recognized as synchronized body movements / chants that are performed without the aid of musical instruments, where the body becomes the instrument (Malone, 1996, p. 189). The performance becomes purposeful when coordinated with other members in the group.

### Applications for Stepping Unit and Multi-activity Unit

#### Purposes

The purposes of this study were: (1) to examine the responses and communicated attitudes of secondary school students and teacher candidates to an intercultural curriculum, and (2) to examine the responses and communicated attitudes of secondary school students and teacher candidates to a traditional multi-activity physical education curriculum.

Given that African stepping is rooted in the human desire to connect with the *Other* makes it particularly appropriate for the present study. The teacher candidates have been trained to teach physical education classes more representative of the dominant Anglo group (Hastie, Martin, & Buchanan, 2006). Teaching an African stepping unit will stretch their more traditional multi-activity (games) teaching strategies. This is due in no small part to the lack of professional text, studies, and/or journal articles from which to gather information or examples. The unit becomes more difficult for the teacher

candidates due to the culturally diverse backgrounds possessed by many of the school students. This means the school students in many instances will have a much larger experiential knowledge of stepping than the teacher candidates.

Therefore, given the purpose of this study the following themes drove the research. First, the teacher candidates were exposed to a group of school students who possessed: (a) a better understanding of stepping, (b) more knowledge of stepping instruction from a community or cultural setting, and (c) more practical stepping experience than the entire cohort of teacher candidates. Second, adopting a nontraditional and ethnically reflective approach to physical education pedagogy may enhance learning in the following ways: (a) school students may connect what they are being taught in class to what they know of their own historical richness, (b) school students may view what they are learning in class as something to add on – rather than replace – what they know of their own backgrounds, (c) teacher candidates may learn the value of adding new methods, such as vulnerability and reflexivity, to old ways of teaching, and (d) teacher candidates and school students may come to appreciate the courage and insight required to teach and participate in the world of the *Other* (Freire, 1970; 1974).

#### Definitions of Terms

Contained in this section are the terms with definitions reflecting their use in this study.

Critical Incidents Reports: A means to critically reflect on the teaching session and to identify what the teacher candidates believed to be the most critical incident that occurred during their teaching of that day's class.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: “is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitude” (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 17, 18).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them. It teaches to and through the strengths of these students. It is culturally validating and affirming.” (Gay, 2000, p. 29).

Multicultural Education: “Multicultural education is a field of study designed to increase educational equity for all students that incorporates, for this purpose, content, concepts, principles, theories, and paradigms from history, the social and behavioral sciences, and particularly from ethnic studies and women studies” (Banks & Banks, 1995, p. xii).

Non-White: Any ethnicity other than Caucasian (White).

Other: Paulo Freire’s (1974) perspective of the oppressed based upon economic status, culture, race, or value differences.

Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE): The physical education program within a teacher education department.

Researcher Field Notes: Notes generated from initiated and non-initiated informal conversations with school students, teacher candidates, and school faculty from events experienced and observed as an active observer.

School Faculty: The teacher of record at the time of the research in grades P – 12.

School Students: A person at the time of the research who was currently enrolled as a student in grades P – 12.

Stepping: Part of the African American vernacular dance tree (Malone, 1996). Stepping was developed as a language for the miners who were slaves to South Africa's apartheid in the 19<sup>th</sup> century gold mines (Goddale, 2000; Malone, 1996).

Teacher Candidates: University students who are accepted into the college of education to earn a degree with teacher certification in preparation for teaching within a segment of the P – 12 school setting.

Teacher Education: A department within the college of education in a university whose mission is the preparation of teachers for the P – 12 school setting.

Teacher Education Faculty: The teaching faculty within the teacher education department.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

On paper and in talk, *multicultural education* has become almost a mantra, often repeated and desired by all. In its abstract form, it is desired by all and rejected by none. Yet, attempts to move those same words into the practice of making them a legitimate component of university teacher education preparation produces more questionable results. To date, what began over six decades ago continues to remain politically charged, frightening, and its goals illusive (Davis, 1948). Additional research establishes the difficulties associated with convincing the dominant White middle class culture to hear the silenced minority voices of the *Others* in society (Bloom, Davis, & and Hess, 1965; Davis, 1948). The Commission on Multicultural Education (1972) met with considerable resistance as did the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in 1976 for their development of multicultural standards that were to be met by teacher education programs that desired accreditation (Gollnick, 1992). Whether in the past or in the present, advocates of multicultural teacher education receive considerable resistance (Ladson-Billings, 2005).

In its purest, practical sense, multicultural education is quality teaching for those of another culture that does not automatically require giving up *old ways* in order to apply some effective new ways of teaching (Freire, 1970: 1974). Rather, it encourages teachers to incorporate curriculum components that both encourage students to build upon

knowledge they already have, as well as to apply that knowledge to help them participate in a changing and differing world. In its most practical sense, a multicultural educational learning environment is one that encourages both teachers and students to consider the *Other* and to take an insightful look at all peoples, histories, and cultures (Freire, 1970: 1974). Current research indicates, however, that for most teacher education programs, multicultural educational curriculum exists in word alone, and produces little to no evidence of actual program changes (Gollnick, 1995). For example, Ladson-Billings (1999) suggested in her review of diversity and teacher education that few changes had actually taken place and those changes were simply attempts to insure program accreditation.

Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to review the literature pertinent to multicultural education in terms of the present study, particularly as they relate to (a) the demographic imperative (Banks, 1995; Cochran-Smith, 2003; Dilworth, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1999), (b) perceptions of in-service and pre-service teachers and in-school students, and (c) the commitment of teacher educators and teacher education programs. To demonstrate the efficacy of taking steps toward making multicultural or responsive teaching part of the student teacher curriculum, the chapter also reviews published research concerning multicultural education in the physical education setting. Finally, the chapter will identify one aspect of physical education curriculum, specifically the use of African-American stepping, as a physical education curriculum piece that might be utilized to reflect a more culturally responsive education.

### *The Demographic Imperative*

A plethora of research supports the idea that the landscape of the nation's public schools is rapidly changing as is exemplified by the following facts (a) U.S. non-White and Latino student population increased from 10.4 million in 1985 to 13.7 million in 1994 and now constitute 34 percent of public elementary and secondary school enrollment, up from 29 percent a decade ago (Garcia, 1995), (b) U.S. White enrollment accounted for a 5 percent increase, from 25.8 million to 27 million, and an overall decline in student population 71 percent to 66 percent (Garcia, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1999). Research suggests that demographic changes by the year 2026 will see that of the total K-12 student enrollment, 70 percent will be comprised of Hispanic and non-White populations (Garcia, 1995).

Research on the changing demographics also suggests significant social and economic challenges as additional concerns for non-White school students in that 33 percent of all African-American families have annual incomes identified as below poverty level (Daniels, 1998; U.S. Census, 2000). Additional research on challenges faced by non-White school students include the increased likelihood that they will be poor, live in single parent homes, and have higher rates of school dropout than do their White student counterparts (Darling-Hammond, 1998). Additional research confirms that large urban public schools with high percentages of non-White students encounter dropout rates much higher than that of the national average (Wilson, 1998). Furthermore, non-White student rates of suspension occur three to eight times more frequently than for White students (Irvine, 1990). Finally, research warns of an increasing trend of

disproportionate overrepresentation of non-White student enrollment in special education programs nationwide (Kunjufu, 1984).

A more recent look at public school demographics lends further credence to the research forecast made by multicultural education researchers in the 1980's and 1990's. Current in-school student populations consistently are more culturally diverse and represent about one third of the overall student population (ARC, 2000). Of the total in-school student population in Texas and California, for example, less than 50 percent is White (ARC, 2000). Likewise, of the total in-school public school student population in the 25 largest cities in the United States, more than 50 percent are identified as non-White (ARC, 2000). When considered in total, the annual rise in numbers of non-White immigration living in the United States when combined with the continued annual non-White group birthrate increases, leads researchers to conclude that school demography also will reflect the same rapid changes (Ladson-Billings, 2005). If conservative projections for non-White student populations continue to hold true, the majority of school students will be non-White by 2035, with the possibility of those numbers increasing to 57% overall in the United States by 2050 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1996; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

In sum, the rapid increase in non-White and decrease in White school student populations suggests the tide of a long-term demographic change that will have an impact upon in-school student populations and, thus, provides the imperative for culturally responsive teaching that more accurately reflects and meets the needs of all student populations.



## *Stakeholders*

### *(School Faculty, Teacher Candidates, and School Students)*

While the drastic demographic shifts were occurring within the school student population, the demographics of the in-service teaching faculty remained relatively unchanged. Specifically, in the year 2000, approximately 12 to 15 percent of the school faculty population was identified as non-White. The fact that 85 to 88 percent of the teaching force at the turn of the century was predominantly White, middle class females both reflects and confirms warnings from previous research (ARC, 2000; Banks, 1991; Grant, 1989; Haberman, 1989) of the need for preparation of school faculty to meet the needs of an increasingly non-White culturally diverse school student demographic (Gordon, 1988; Grant & Gillette, 1987; Holmes Group, 1986). Comparing the demographics of teacher faculty to those of the students they teach suggests an education system composed of two diversely different and sometimes separate cultures. It is therefore not difficult to imagine the disconnection found within each of the demographic groups represented, as well as within the individual demographic groups themselves (Ladson-Billings, 2005).

It is easy to recognize how the methodology and curriculum of the dominant group of teacher faculty will mean an extension of the dominant culture upon the culturally diverse in-school students. Given enough time and if the current demographic trends persist the cultural gaps between teacher faculty and school students will continue to widen unless in-service teachers choose to train for a culturally diverse group and teach a culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Simultaneously, teacher education programs are caught in a dialectical tension that finds them struggling to recruit non-White teacher candidates while they face considerable resistance to training and equipping future teachers effectively for the multicultural setting. Recent research concludes that many teacher faculty, as well as teacher candidates, continued to see little to no need for diversity training and perceived multicultural training as helpful for minorities, especially when the training included instructional components on helping those minorities assimilate to and prepare for economic competition in the predominant mainstream culture (Ukpokodu, 2003). Other researchers, noting the same underlying mindset, have called this proclivity to devalue culturally responsive teaching as a form of “conservative multiculturalism” and note the concerns of passing this mindset on to future generations of school faculty (Jenks, Lee, & Kanpol, 2001). Current research also suggests that some teacher faculty and teacher candidates actually resent the thought of being exposed to multicultural training which they viewed as unfair, and an excuse to allow non-Whites to receive higher than earned assessments for delivering poor academic performance (Grant, 1989; Jenks et al., 2001). This perspective seems to connect soundly with idea of postcolonial hegemony. Simply put a postcolonial hegemonic is typically a White male North American and/or Western European who feels a preponderance of influence or authority over other perspectives or peoples (Gems, 2002; Mangan, 1988). For example, a hegemonic attitude was held by many of those peoples who colonized the African, South American, and North American continents.

Self-reports show that many White teacher candidates have little if any motivation to teach in schools where the student population is predominantly non-White (Ukpokodu,

2003). Additionally, the declining number of non-White students enrolled in teacher education programs is especially troubling when the number of non-Whites is on the rise in areas of higher education other than teaching (Hodgkinson, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2005). While the decrease in non-White teacher candidates can be attributed to increased accessibility to other degree areas that can deliver more lucrative job opportunities, the possible implications for an increasingly non-White in-school student population are considerable and may not prove to be so positive (Hodgkinson, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2005). Given that the previously cited demographic trends for current teacher faculty and teacher candidates will dictate the composition of the teaching workforce for years to come, educators must consider possible ramifications this depletion will have on the entire student population as well as the curricula they are taught (Hodgkinson, 2002).

#### *Teaching Perspectives for Culturally Diverse Settings*

School students of color are misunderstood at many levels because of the obvious differences inherent to the groups represented. Additionally, few studies have taken into consideration the perspectives of low socioeconomic school students in non-White school settings (Labonty & Danielson, 1988; Miron & Lauria, 1998). Several researchers have focused their scholarship on the need for a culturally responsive pedagogy to better meet the needs of classroom students who are non-White, poor, and culturally diverse (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Lee, 1995; Lipman, 1995; Shade, Kelly, & Oberg, 1997). To provide guidelines for the development of a culturally responsive pedagogy would include teaching strategies to support teachers who recognize the importance of a culturally responsive pedagogy (Hollins, 1990; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). A culturally responsive pedagogy would engage students in an educational experience that

respects cultural differences, and recognizes the vital role those differences play in constructing student cultural identity (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995).

Hollins (1990) research in Black urban settings suggests three particularly successful perspectives to take when teaching students in non-White urban settings. These are (a) defined as remediation, the situation where all students are considered to be similar and, thus, all necessary academic coursework is taught without regard to cultural or socioeconomic ties, (b) defined as resocialization or resocializing (which some researchers refer to as social reconstruction), is a situation that disregards any student differences and attempts to mainstream all behaviors and attitudes into an “accepted” scheme that uses same methods and strategies to teach basic skills, and (c) defined as the awareness of students’ personal cultural and social backgrounds, which recognizes and builds upon students’ cultural and social differences to produce culturally responsive pedagogy. Research does suggest, however, that awareness of students’ cultural and social differences is the perspective that has become a strong overall academic model in Black urban settings and delivers the most positive academic results in many Black independent schools (Hollins, 1990; Lee, 1994).

In tone, Hollins’ (1990) third perspective seems to model most closely the works of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1974). Freire’s work among the disadvantaged called for an interpersonal pedagogy where both teacher and students become involved in learning. As such, he called for teachers whose desire to reach their students outweighed their fear of humiliation or loss of face, and for those who would take the risk to adopt new teaching concepts that would build upon (rather than demolish) students’ cultural and social backgrounds. From Freire’s perspective, true education of oppressed *Others*

could not coexist in an educational atmosphere that denies the value of differences and frowns upon adopting new ways to reach those students from minority backgrounds. Only when learners feel they are in learning environments that introduce instruction representative of their cultural and social backgrounds (rather than just reflective of the dominant culture) can truly responsive learning occur (Arnett & Arneson, 1999; Freire, 1970; 1974).

Additionally, Hollins' (1990) three academic perspectives are useful in understanding what teacher education programs use and value as foundational for their programs of study. Hollin's (1990) perspectives have been extended and applied to teacher education programs and the traditions resulting from them that, in turn, strongly influence teacher candidate curriculum exposure and experiences (Zeichner, 1991, 1993).

Zeichner suggests there are four teacher education program traditions and that teacher candidates will graduate from their training program considering that at least one of these traditions as foundational (1991, 1993). The four traditions are as follows: the academic tradition, the social efficacy tradition, the developmental tradition, and the social reconstructionism tradition. The academic tradition emphasizes the teacher candidates as a scholar and specialist in a chosen field of study. The social efficiency tradition, based upon the science of teaching in which teacher candidates proficiency is determined by comparing teaching skills against a "best practice" scoring guide or rubric. The developmental or natural order tradition bases the course of study for teacher candidates on the assumption that there is a natural order and timeframe for instruction and presentation of material and that optimal learning for school students occur when this time frame or natural order is observed. The social reconstructionism tradition recognizes

the need to have and maintain social equity among school students and to develop an understanding of the social and cultural background of the various *Others* in the educational setting (Zeichner, 1991, 1993).

Of the 1,200 university-based teacher education programs in the United States there has been little progress within these programs fundamentally speaking in terms of research based multicultural teacher education curriculum (Irvine, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2005). Program changes necessary to prepare students for urban and rural settings as of yet are not complete (Villegas & Lucas, 2002), and many university departments of education could be considered as being unconcerned with the labor demands of their region for teachers. Majors are being offered in certification areas of little demand, and this problem is magnified when education departments serve as a “cash cow” for the entire university (National Commission on teaching & America’s Future, 1996).

#### *Developments in Multicultural Teacher Education Programs*

In the face of political, philosophical, and bureaucratic challenges to teacher education programs, some authors do however note that a small number of programs are beginning to prepare their students for the in-school student diversity currently within the public school system (Berry, 2005; Cochran-Smith, 2003). Indeed, some universities are developing new innovative programs specifically designed for the urban school setting (Haberman & Post, 1998; Oakes, Franke, Quartz, & Rogers, 2002). Teacher educators are questioning their own long held ideas in an effort to offer more appropriate courses. Teacher educator self-studies are beginning to occur with resulting courses and programs that relate to the current cultural diversities found in the public schools (Martin & Gunten, 2002; Obidah, 2000). This is encouraging given that teacher-training programs

generally have reacted rather than retooled their programs. The body of work written for multicultural teacher education training is beginning to be consistent and viable. As a whole, this body of scholarship may be thought of as the “new multicultural teacher education” (Cochran-Smith, 2003).

Current research suggests that of the numerous factors making the rethinking process extremely difficult for teacher training programs is the overall lack of understanding teacher educators possess of the theories and strategies supportive of including culturally diverse perspectives and relevant pedagogies into the curriculum and courses used in teacher candidate preparation (Ruiz & Fernandez-Balboa, 2005). Results from recent physical education research reveal that a majority of physical education teacher educators who claim an active adherence to the strategies and perspectives of critical pedagogy could not effectively describe even the most basic elements of the pedagogy’s principles and practices (Ruiz & Fernandez-Balboa, 2005). Critical pedagogy as an educational strategy and perspective takes into account the need for social justice while surrounding the ideas of critical theorists like Habermas (1971), and social activists like Horton (1990). These results appear to suggest that teacher educator’s may require additional training while endeavoring to rethink the existing foundational perspectives stressed by teacher education programs. Given that a low socioeconomic and non-White demographics comprise much of the overall school student population, teacher educator’s may need to rethink from outside of the traditional “academic tradition” box (Goodwin, 1997).

### *Non-White Culturally Diverse School Students*

As stated previously, one group seldom heard from is the non-White culturally diverse in-school student population (Howard, 2001). In their study of African-American student perspectives on teacher instruction, Hollins and Spencer (1990) identified three key themes. First, when positive relationships were built between school faculty and school students, academic achievement was possible. Second, school students were positively impacted and gave more academic effort when their school faculty were responsive to their personal lives. Third, school students preferred school faculty who allowed them a voice in class and gave them academic freedom to present their own feelings and ideas when completing tasks.

Research assessing teacher perceptions of first and third grade African-American and Latino students produced similar results, and identified interactive teacher-child relationships as having the greatest impact on establishing a positive school climate for African-American students (Howard, 2001; Slaughter-Defoe & Carlson, 1996). Qualities most often identified by African-American elementary school students as essential to creating a positive school environment were school faculty who (a) showed they cared for their school students, (b) exhibited concern by being accessible to their school students, and (c) were aware of school student needs and helped them deal with personal issues (Howard, 2001).

Conversely, research conducted among high school students has identified school faculty structures and practices that more likely will result in poor school student academic performance. Academic performance suffered for the non-White student if a school faculty (a) used a teacher-centered versus a student-centered approach, (b) actions,



interactions, or assignments gave any hint of racism or discrimination directed toward the school student, or (c) school faculty exhibited little or no interest in building a personal relationship with the non-White school student (Lee, 1999). Overall, non-White school students were more likely to academically perform poorly when they perceived their teacher to be apathetic or uncaring.

Howard's (2001) research provides three strategies which teachers may find useful when teaching non-White school students. First, non-White school students expect their school faculty to be concerned with their academic progress and with their personal lives. Second, non-White school students are more interested in establishing a community or a type of extended family unit than are their White classmates and desire to have and maintain a positive relationship with their school faculty. Third, non-White school students thrive in a classroom environment that is challenging and provides engaging learning activities.

### *The Dominant Culture Paradigm*

The previous discussion in this review indicates the numerous ways that the individual teachers perspective, personality, cultural background, teacher training, and chosen teaching style impact the educational experience of school students. Additional research suggests the possibility that teacher faculty may diminish the education opportunities for diverse school students (Boyle-Baise & Grant, 1992). The previous literature has also explained possible ways in which biographical and experiential differences may present opportunities for misunderstandings between school faculty and their school students. Additional research suggests that even the way in which school faculty and school students perceive language can potentially create barriers to learning

within the classroom (Gay, 1993; Irvine, 1997). Given that the language skills for the majority of school faculty are limited to White middle class English, teachers tend to overemphasize English, even in situations where it is not their school students' native language (Gay, 1993; Irvine, 1997). Additionally, non-White school students may have a cultural language, such as Ebonics, or speak live in a home where more than one language or dialect is spoken in their home, extended family, or community (Gay, 1993; Irvine, 1997).

White school faculty and non-White school students reside in culturally different worlds and both groups revert to culturally influenced points of view and reference when searching for ties to learning or as they seek answers to other experiences encountered within the classroom (Gay, 1993). Consequently, there is the potential for White school faculty to find difficulty developing into role models and agents of positive change for their non-White school students, without developing a feeling of desertion from their culture and its reference points (Gay, 1993). Additionally, White school faculty are hesitant to advise their non-White school students for fear of non-White school student desertion of culture and background while attempting to implement White school faculty advice (Gay, 1993; Goodwin, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Ladson-Billings (1995) suggests that non-White school students have the greatest instructional needs, but at the same time are the least likely to tie the learning to their individual lives. Yet, even the act of planning and incorporating culturally responsive curriculum and instruction (valuable if the facilitation of learning is to occur for non-White students) may appear challenging for White school faculty (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Nonetheless, research clearly supports making changes to reach and include the

non-White school student population in building a curriculum that is culturally relevant, with such teaching being defined as

a pedagogy of opposition not unlike critical pedagogy but specifically committed to collective, not merely individual, empowerment. Culturally relevant pedagogy rests on three criteria or propositions: (a) Students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 160).

The perspective of White school faculty may pose additional problems for non-White school students. School faculty perceptions have an impact upon the way in which school faculty view their school students as individuals and how they interpret student actions and behaviors. In turn, school faculty perceptions may interfere with the school faculty's ability to effectively instruct culturally diverse students (Capella-Santana, 2003). In addition, a number of authors have suggested that the diverse school student population may create increased levels of fear within the White school faculty and lead them to set lower behavior and academic performance expectations for their non-White school students than they would for their White counterparts (see, for example, Gay & Howard, 2000; Irvine, 1990; Valenzuela, 2002; Weiner, 1993; Yeo, 1997).

*Students / Disparity of Resource Allocation.* Low expectation is but one of many disparities found within the outcomes and conditions of non-White versus White school students. Among all advanced nations, the United States has the highest rate of children living in poverty, of which 42 percent of which are Black, 40 percent Hispanic, as opposed to only 16 percent White (Kilborn, 1996; US Census, 2000). Given these

demographics, research recognizes a wide array of educational resource disparities faced among non-White school students (Children's Defense Fund, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a) that include consistently lower math and reading scores (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997), lower high school graduation rates, (Education Research Service 1995), and increasingly widened gaps in educational outcomes. This suggests that the current ways of training teacher candidates as well as school faculty members are insufficient to meet the needs of the culturally diverse school students found in today's classrooms (Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). Further research suggests there is a connection between low school student performance and achievement and insufficient resources in the schools they attend. That is, schools with predominately non-White school students consistently receive fewer resources than do schools with higher concentrations of White school students (Darling-Hammond, 1995; Kozol, 1991).

In addition to a lack of resources, low socioeconomic predominately non-White school student settings deal with higher percentages of school faculty who are teaching out of their area of academic certification, a situation that some researchers suggest greatly diminishes the quality of the school student educational experience (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996). With the many problems facing low socioeconomic schools in non-White settings the role of preparing teacher candidates by teacher educators, and teacher education programs becomes increasing important.

### *Teacher Educators*

University faculty find themselves in a unique and central role as they prepare teacher candidates through classroom activities and experiences to enter the new and

unknown territory of a diverse classroom environment. Research concludes that teacher candidates are at a juncture in life well suited to developing ideas that will mold their future teaching practices and attitudes (Kennedy, 1999). Furthermore, Gay (1997) concludes that teacher candidates are more likely to model the behaviors and attitudes exhibited by their teacher educators than had been previously thought. Therefore, it stands to reason that teacher candidates look to and potentially emulate the foundational philosophies (e.g., management strategies, instructional methods, or personal relationship building) demonstrated by their university educators and in-service classroom teachers. Recent research suggests that the multicultural experiences for many teacher educators is limited to reading and publishing materials on the subject; that many never have taught in a multiculturally diverse school setting nor do they possess ethnic, linguistic, or cultural ties with the multiculturally diverse students they are preparing their teacher candidates to teach (Sleeter, 2001).

As a result of these limitations, Ladson-Billings suggests it becomes extremely important for teacher education programs to hire teacher educators who possess a personal belief in the need for multicultural education training (2005). Ladson-Billings (2005) has described teacher educators' as being overwhelmingly White, and removed from the realities of urban classrooms. Teacher educators indicate a concern for and understanding of the needs of those culturally diverse students and culturally diverse school settings while many teacher educators never have any involvement with these situations or feel the demands of these unique situations. Thus, an important role for teacher educators is to examine their frames of reference and in turn facilitate the same examination by their pre-service teachers (Kennedy, 1999).

Teacher training programs are uniquely positioned to provide the best setting for teacher candidate reflection as well as to utilize specific training opportunities developed to expose teacher candidates to diverse philosophies (Kennedy, 1999). Teacher candidates in the teacher education program are beyond the days of being a P-12 classroom school student, and most of their basic undergraduate curriculum is completed. Ahead of the teacher candidate lies a myriad of classroom teacher events to be experienced (Kennedy, 1999). As was suggested previously, this juncture in a teacher candidate's life is well suited to the development of new ideas that will mold future teaching practices and teacher attitudes (Kennedy, 1999). As the history of teacher education programs repeatedly indicates, *attempts* to meet current needs of teacher candidates and their educators always lag behind the actual need. Ladson-Billings (1999) described teacher education programs' failures to deal with social change and school reform in the following manner:

I want to argue that the social conditions that precipitate certain changes rarely, if ever, are incorporated into the standard and practices of teacher education. Thus, the changing demographics of the nation's schoolchildren have caught schools, colleges, and departments of teacher education by surprise. Students are still being prepared to teach in idealized schools that serve White, monolingual, middle-class children from homes with two parents. (p. 86)

#### *Physical Education and Multicultural Curriculum*

The school student demographic in public schools rapidly is becoming more culturally diverse (Banks, 1992, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1995, 2005). In an effort to meet the instructional and educational needs of these more diverse school students, those

within the educational community are calling for a culturally responsive approach to teaching (Howard, 2001, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1995, 2005; LeCompte & McCray, 2002; Lenski, et. al., 2005; McDonald, 2005; Sparks, 1993, 1994). Teaching physical education from a culturally responsive perspective should come naturally in light of the emphasis traditionally placed upon social interaction and development (Bucher & Wuest, 1987).

Sparks (1994) suggests that the social development element found in much of the physical education curriculum is a natural channel for increasing in-school student understanding of cultural diversity, if it is supported by schools and is perceived to be important to teachers. However, according to Kamens and Cha (1992), the diffusion of culturally diverse physical education curriculum has been slow and remains greatly impacted by the Euro-American point of view. Additional support comes from research that points to the ease with which the origins of many games used in multi-activity physical education classes can be traced to Euro-American descent (Hastie et al., 2006).

Banks (1992) recognized that making changes to better reflect a culturally diverse society presents a challenge for all (especially those who are of the White Euro-American tradition) public school stakeholders (teacher educator programs, teacher training educators, teacher candidates, school faculty, school students, parents, communities, administrators, boards, and all levels of government). This implies a need for change in physical education teacher education programs where they develop course work and field experiences more representative of the school students to be served by teacher candidates when they enter the in-service setting. In this manner, some physical education researchers caution that teacher education programs should include training in cultural

diversity, social justice, and the use of culturally relevant pedagogy for its teacher candidates to help them be aware of the social development possibilities unique to their field and activity setting (Lenski, et. al., 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2001; McDonald, 2005; Obidah & Howard, 2005; Sparks, 1994; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Wasonga & Piveral, 2004).

*Student Perspectives and Curriculum.* As discussed previously, student perspectives seldom have received serious consideration from researchers in the educational setting. Physical education research is no exception and certainly falls into this category with research warning that many program curricular choices make little if any attempt at being relevant or having meaning related to students (Cothran & Ennis, 1999; Kirk, 1997; Tinning & Fitzclarence, 1992). Furthermore, a myriad of current research indicates that most programs with a multi-activity approach continue to show a preference toward allowing the highly-skilled students to control the class even to the detriment of the lower skilled counterparts (Ennis, 1999; Ennis et al., 1997; Evans, 1993). Additionally, research clearly establishes the impact teacher candidate educators' perceptions toward particular activities has on overall student performance of and teacher attitudes concerning those activities (Alpert, 1991; Anyon, 1981; Cusick, 1992; Pauly, 1991; Spaulding, 1995; Sun, 1995). Given the potential for poor curriculum choices to lead to school student resistance, Locke (1992) suggests a change in secondary physical education activities. Also addressing these concerns, Rink (1993) presses physical education professionals to develop a program direction that better meets the needs of all students.



### *Students Give Curriculum Positive Marks*

New physical education secondary curriculum alternatives such as Sport Education receive positive remarks from students (Carlson & Hastie, 1997; Grant, 1992; Hastie, 1996, 1998; Siedentop, 1994). According to Siedentop, Hastie, and van der Mars (2004), Sport Education places the physical education activity within an authentic sport experience, thereby giving school students more voice within a contextualized sport season setting. Sport for Peace, an offshoot of sport education, allows for ultimate school student involvement and ownership with a diversity and sportsmanship component tied to student social responsibility (Ennis, 1999; Ennis, et al., 1999). As curriculum option, this appears to be favored by school students, yet research calls for a continual awareness that watches for the presence of inequalities in the physical activity setting (Kirk & Tinning, 1990; Tinning & Fitzclarence, 1992).

Research also indicates that physical education will enhance learning if the pedagogical goals involve linking the learning to student, community, and social interactions (Cothran & Ennis, 1999; Ennis, 1999, 2000; Fernandez-Balboa, 1997a,b; Mosston, 1966). More recently, physical education researchers have suggested the use of social constructivist (SC) approaches as it is believed that they better allow school students to make those connections between their social and cultural environments, and physical education experiences (Cothran & Ennis, 1999; Ennis, 1999, 2000; Ennis et al., 1999; Fernandez-Balboa, 1997a,b). Torrey and Ashy (1997) surmised the challenge for White physical education school faculty in the following words:

While research does not indicate that individuals from one culture cannot effectively teach students from another culture, it is a challenge for educators to

successfully teach students from culturally and linguistically diverse background. Physical education may be even more of a challenge since students bring into the gym very different backgrounds and experiences, attitudes, values and skills regarding games, sports, activities and leisure (p. 120)

It has been suggested that Sparks' (1994) extension of Jackson's (1993; 1994) teaching strategies for the development of culturally appropriate responses could provide a foundation for physical education school faculty (e.g., school faculty as well as teacher candidates). This list of seven instructional strategies included, " build trust, become culturally literate, build different methodological approaches, use effective questioning techniques, provide effective feedback, analyze instructional materials, and establish positive home-school relations." (1994, p. 35). In this area, research suggests that if the physical education school faculty so desires, proper social development can naturally become a product of a culturally relevant curriculum through culturally prudent physical education experiences (Sparks, 1993).

#### *Stepping and Multicultural Physical Education*

When stepping or steppin' is entered into the Academic Search Premier (at EBSCOhost) there is only one response to the entry. This one article speaks to the possibilities of using stepping as a physical education culturally relevant pedagogy. The study investigated the, responses of the African-American 6<sup>th</sup> grade school students, the responses of administration and school faculty, as well as the praxis of two White school faculty members implementing a teaching unit they hoped would provide a culturally relevant physical education pedagogy. It was agreed upon by the three teacher education

researchers that stepping might be a good choice as a response to the pedagogical needs of African-American children in the elementary setting (Hastie et al., 2006).

The perspective and definition of praxis used in this study was based upon Freire (1992) in combination with Carr and Kemmis (1986). The researchers' paraphrased each of the definitions as follows:

Freire (1992), who argues that praxis is the action and reflection of people upon their worlds of practice in order to transform them. Praxis is a combination of action and reflection. Carr and Kemmis (1986) extend this understanding by defining praxis as informed action which, when reflected upon, changes the knowledge base that informs it (p. 3).

The continued understanding of praxis for this setting was formed around the post-colonial thought based upon the history of European colonization. A major piece of this thought is entangled with the use of education as a controlling force over those colonized peoples (Mangan, 1993). The research questions were as follows: "How did these African-American children respond to the particular curriculum innovation?" and "What implications did this have for teaching?" One deeper question asked, "How did teaching this unit differ from our previous experiences (as Anglo teachers with more familiar content areas)?" Finally based upon Mangan's (1993) notion that if the receivers of a curriculum purely accept its content without question they therefore have little or no idea or understanding of politics and/or control by social agenda; the researchers asked two additional questions. "Did this experience sway us to see ourselves as potential (or past) "colonizers"?, and, thus, to question the source of our own influence, however tacit and unintentional?" (Hastie et al., 2006).

Stepping as a culturally relevant pedagogy needed to be meaningful and relevant to the school students (Hastie et al., 2006). Malone (1996) is able to pinpoint stepping as a part of the African American vernacular dance tree. Hastie et al. (2006) also noted that stepping is not dance. They describe stepping in this manner, “stepping is not dance, but a series of synchronized, rhythmical body movements that are combined with chants and, often, verbal play. In stepping there is an absence of musical instruments; the body itself becomes an instrument. Clapping, foot-stamping, and slapping of the hand against various body parts are used to produce multiple rhythms.”

Stepping in the United States has grown in popularity as part of the black fraternities and sororities use in their liturgies. Malone (1996) additionally points out that stepping does contain the five basic qualities found in western African dance. This gives strong indication of stepping as an outgrowth of the gumboot communication developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century gold mines of South Africa’s apartheid (Goddale, 2000). In the following passage Hastie et al. (2006) give clear insight as to their feelings and ultimately the teacher candidate and teacher educator’s feelings in terms of stepping as a culturally relevant pedagogy.

Stepping is a legitimate activity for inclusion within physical education, and it seemed at the outset that it would be an appropriate vehicle through which to present a culturally relevant pedagogy to African American children: First, it relates to traditional student learning outcomes in physical education through the development of skillful movement and the social goals of cooperative learning. Secondly, it is meaningful and relevant, particularly given its popularity (and even Ownership) with both performers and spectators in the African-American college

community. Nonetheless, as we recount later in this paper, perhaps the cultural relevance of the pedagogy/curriculum was less easily determined than we first assumed (p. 4).

The success of the pedagogy did little to lessen the feelings of political uneasiness. One question continued to arise during times of stress while teaching or during times of reflection. Should White teacher educators of privilege be presenting this uniquely African-American activity? After study of Fuller's (1969) initial work on teacher concerns which include; (1) "self" simply surviving, (2) "task" managerial skills such as paperwork, and (3) "impact" developing into a student centered teacher, Hastie et al. (2006) develop an additional fourth piece to Fuller's work. Hastie et al. (2006) suggested that teaching in today's culturally diverse school environment will require teachers to develop "a concern with the socio-political dimension of student work" (p. 12). While impact is important, it is not enough for teachers to be concerned for student learning only. Teachers should dare to venture into the problematic political environment that permeates educational settings in order to understand their students, themselves, and the curriculum choices they make. Not just a getting to know the setting and stakeholders, especially the students, but a relationship was built that created a better understanding of the taught and the teacher! It was no small piece of information to realize how much these African-American students were more a part of the Pepsi generation than their African-American cultural heritage.

In conclusion, additional research must further explore the topic and findings from said research must be incorporated into actual classroom experience before culturally relevant pedagogy becomes the norm rather than the exception when teaching

culturally diverse school students. Many in physical education have seen the need for and suggested an attempt to adopt culturally relevant pedagogy, yet few have taught the curriculum to a group of minority school students to whom the curriculum is relevant. Wessinger (1994), King (1994), Sparks (1994) and others have presented multicultural games to their students as a means of making them aware of games from other cultures. Once such game, Iroquois Indian game of Long Ball, was introduced, not to American Indian students but to students in a New York classroom (Ninham, 2002). However, little has been done in the field when teaching a multicultural activity to school students who are enmeshed within that culture. EBSCO host shows eight hits when entering the terms multicultural education and physical education. These eight articles offered information in three areas. First, there were suggestions for possible strategies when teaching from a multicultural curriculum prospective. Second, school faculty and teacher educators respond to the need for having a multicultural curriculum strategy in physical education, and last, articles gave examples of multicultural games (Bridges, et. al., 1995; Chepyator-Thompson, 1994; Fleming, et. al., 1999). Literature in physical education culturally relevant curriculum or pedagogy with an emphasis upon school students who are enmeshed within the cultural currently is limited to a single study (Hastie et al., 2006).

The ultimate question to be considered is: how do teachers who are not part of the cultural relevance of the content feel about teaching that content to students who represent the culture? Now is the time for teacher educator's to place their teacher candidates into culturally diverse settings and allow this question and other issues such as White privilege and social injustice to be faced. Hastie et al. (2006) framed the possibilities facing PETE programs in the following manner.

If we fail to do this, we are faced with two equally unpalatable scenarios. In the first instance we run the risk of producing teachers who are unaware of (or chose to ignore) the political underpinnings of any multi-cultural content they teach, and as a result perpetuate a lack of respect for that content. Alternately, we run the risk of producing teachers who continue to present content and pedagogy that is either not relevant or contributes to sustaining the Western hegemony (p. 13).

On paper and in talk, *multicultural education* has become almost a mantra.

Teacher educators often repeat its phrases and encourage its usefulness for all. In its abstract form, it is desired by all and rejected by none. Yet, attempts to move those same words into the practice of making them a legitimate component of university teacher education preparation produces a less grandiose vision and questionable results. With the social development component playing a large role in the history of physical education there is a need to put into practice a response to the need for a culturally relevant curriculum (Sparks, 1994). This practice should include school students, school faculty, teacher candidates, and teacher preparation programs (Ladson-Billings, 2005). In this study the purpose was to check for the responses to a culturally relevant curriculum by school students, school faculty, and teacher candidates.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

Today's public school student body is very diverse and thus, teachers must be willing to think "outside the box" in efforts to offer effective curriculum choices. An intercultural curriculum may offer an avenue for teachers that is meaningful and culturally relevant. The purpose of this study, then, was to examine the responses of school students and teacher candidates to the introduction of a culturally relevant physical education program.

#### *Purposes*

The purposes of this study were: (1) to examine the responses and communicated attitudes of secondary school students and teacher candidates to an intercultural curriculum, and (2) to examine the responses and communicated attitudes of secondary school students and teacher candidates to a traditional multi-activity physical education curriculum.

#### *Participants*

*School Students.* Students ( $N= 100$ ) from four secondary physical education classes were the participants in this study. The participating school was located in the southeastern United States in a city with an estimated population of 250,000 (See Table 3.1 for a listing of the specific demographics of this cohort). At the time of the study, student demography at the school was in a state of flux, with the trend being a shift from



a predominantly middle class setting with a large Caucasian student population, to one that was economically disadvantaged with most students being African American. These demographic changes were indicated through comparison of the annual parental responses on the school student registration materials.

Table 3.1. PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Variable	SS (school students) High School	TC (teacher candidates) University	SF (school faculty)
Participants	N = 100	N = 12	N = 4
Male	24.5%	58.3%	50%
Female	75.5%	41.7%	50%
Mean Age	15.9 years	23.2 years	37.8 years
Grade Level	Ninth: 34.0% Tenth: 25.4 % Eleventh: 22.6 % Twelfth: 17.0 %	Freshman: 0 % Sophomore: 0 % Juniors: 16.7% Seniors: 58.3% Post Bach.: 25%	
Race			
Af-American	69.1 %	8.3 %	0 %
Caucasian	19.6 %	91.7 %	100 %
Hispanic	9.4 %	0 %	0 %
Asian	1.9 %	0%	0 %
Self-Perceptions of Socioeconomic Levels			
Low			
Lower Middle	41.5 %	0 %	0 %
Middle	32.1 %	25 %	0 %
Upper Middle	18.9 %	50 %	40 %
Upper	7.5 %	16.7 %	60 %
	0 %	8.3 %	0
Context	Urban 100 %	Suburban 66.7% Urban 8.3 % Rural 25.0 %	Suburban 100 %

Human Subjects approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects. Consent was obtained from the school system and informed consent (see Appendix A) was obtained from the custodial caregiver of each student and assent from each participant.

One hundred thirteen letters were sent home and 100 were returned with signatures stating willingness to participate in the study (a return rate of 88%). Students were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and they could drop out of the study at anytime. Students who did not volunteer to participate in the study followed the regular physical education curriculum with their assigned classroom teacher.

*Teacher Candidates.* The study also utilized 12 teacher candidates (7 males, 5 females; 11 Caucasian and 1 African-American) who were senior-level students enrolled in the local state university's physical education program. As partial fulfillment of their secondary physical education methods course requirements, the teacher candidates were responsible for teaching two blocks of a secondary school physical education class twice a week for six weeks. Teacher candidates take this methods course either the semester prior to, or two semesters before their student teaching experience. Each teacher candidate was on track for student teaching and graduation with licensure in health and physical education.

Prior to the study, each teacher candidate was informally surveyed to ascertain teaching style preference. All candidates self-identified as preferring the command style of teaching. Each of the teacher candidates chose to implement this style for use in the traditional multi-activity games approach when planning for and teaching physical

education classes. In essence, these participants perceived their teaching role as being in *charge* of the classroom, being fully skilled, prepared to teach the planned curriculum, and having students look to them for instruction.

*School Faculty.* School faculty ( $N = 4$ ) were the regular physical education teachers at a secondary school. Each teacher was degreed and certified in Health and Physical Education. The teaching experience of the all White school faculty ranged from one to 32 years (see Table 3.1 for specific demographics).

#### *Data Collection*

Data were collected from school students, teacher candidates, and school faculty before, during, and at the completion of the six-week period. Teacher candidates were given an orientation at the school to help familiarize them with the school students and the dynamics of the school environment prior to the beginning of the study.

Formal data sources included: (a) student perception surveys given at the beginning and end of the unit to teacher candidates and school students, (b) audio taped semi-structured interviews with school students on completion of the unit, (c) researcher's daily field notes, and (d) daily critical incident documents from teacher candidates.

*Student Perceptions of Content Survey.* As a means of assessing changes in perceptions of class activities during the study, surveys were given to school students (see Appendix C) and teacher candidates (see Appendix C) at the beginning and end of the six-week stepping unit and the traditional unit of instruction. The school students responded to survey questions concerning their feelings and perceptions of the unit of

instruction taught by the teacher candidates. Additionally, the teacher candidates responded to survey questions concerning their attitudes and feelings about teaching a content area that was new to them and one that was familiar.

The survey was scored by using a five point Likert scale for each individual question, with a score of “one” indicating “not concerned” and “five” indicating “extremely concerned.” In addition to the scale responses, both surveys requested participants self-identify the following items: (a) perceived socioeconomic status, (b) gender, (c) age, and (d) race.

*Audio Taped Semi-structured Interviews.* Interview data were collected through semi-structured interviews at the completion of the 6-week unit of instruction on stepping and took place in one faculty members’ office with their permission. Students were interviewed in pairs by the researcher and a graduate assistant.

The interviewer used a pre-determined and ordered set of questions (see Appendix B) to guide the process. The interview schedule consisted of open-ended questions regarding the issues, attitudes, and curriculum of the study. The questions were open-ended to allow for additional responses by those who wished to comment on concerns and issues of interest to them. The interviewer was allowed to respond with questions raised by the school students if clarification of a comment was deemed necessary. Interview sessions lasted approximately 5 to 8 minutes.

The interview room was quiet with good lighting and had room for the students to sit comfortably. School students were informed of their right to leave the room at any time without any grade or discipline infraction. Initially, school students were made aware of the open passageway to the doorway and of their right to be dismissed or simply

leave the room unannounced at any time if they so desired. Student interviews were not initiated until the informational assent statement had been read and each student had acknowledged hearing and understanding the following statement:

We are conducting this interview to obtain your responses in regard to the unit on stepping in your physical education class. Your names will not be used in the study. Only the interviewer and the college students who code your responses from this taping will be exposed to the research material. You may stop the interview or leave the interview at any time you feel it necessary without penalty. At this time I would like to begin the interview. Each of you may answer any of the questions you feel comfortable in answering.

Interviews took place at the end of the six-week unit. This also provided the school students the necessary time to become comfortable with the researcher as part of their school environment. When interviewed, the school students appeared to be comfortable and verbally responded to the questioning with ease. The interviews were audiotaped with a small hand held recorder that was operated by the graduate assistant and the audiotapes were later transcribed.

*Researcher Field Notes.* Field notes were recorded daily by the researcher. As an observer in the classroom, the researcher was able to take notes from conversations with school students, teacher candidates, and school faculty. Notes comprised comments made by any of the groups of participant cohorts. Researcher field notes were generated from initiated and non-initiated informal conversations with the school students, teacher candidates, and school faculty from events experienced and observed as an active observer.

*Daily Critical Incidents Reports.* Critical incident reports (Appendix D) were completed by the teacher candidates at the end of each class meeting. These reports were considered a way to critically reflect on the teaching session and to identify what the teacher candidates believed to be the most critical incident that occurred during their teaching of that day's class. Flanagan (1954) used the critical incident technique to investigate components of the curriculum viewed as significant by the students during the unit of instruction. At the completion of each lesson, the students completed a critical incident reflective sheet. This sheet contained instructions similar to those provided by O'Sullivan and Tsangaridou (1992). Each day teacher candidates were asked to write about an event from their class that day which was in their opinion important. The event listed by the teacher candidate could have been something that excited, bored, worried, or facilitated learning on the part of the school students or teacher candidate. Teacher candidates were encouraged to consider and explain why the classroom event was significant. More recent physical education research studies have used critical incidents to examine teacher candidates (see O'Bryant et al., 2000) and teacher faculty (see Parker, 1995) responses to classroom events.

### *Procedure*

Data were collected from eight classes (four from block 1 and four from block 2) of physical education students at the described secondary school. The schedule at this school followed a four block daily schedule. Each block was 90 minutes in length. Physical Education courses were consistent with other courses offered in the school in that they were one semester (18 weeks) and students met each school day for one block.

*Implementation of Culturally Relevant Program.* This program consisted of 12 classes of instruction for 90-minutes two times per week during a 6-week period and occurred during the first block of instruction. The 12 classes focused instruction on “stepping” which was not part of the regular physical education curriculum at this school. Four different classes of students received physical education during the first block. Students in this group were randomly assigned by the school faculty to small groups of 5 to 10 students who become a “step” team. Teacher candidates taught in pairs and were assigned an individual step team. A typical lesson for the day involved teacher candidates facilitating step practice and guiding the team in the development of a 2-minute step routine. Teacher candidates served in an advisory role and allowed school students the freedom to create the routine.

*Implementation of Multi-Activity Physical Education Curriculum.* This program consisted of 12 classes of instruction for 90-minutes two times per week during a 6-week period and occurred during the second block of instruction. The 12 classes focused instruction on traditional physical education content such as soccer, Ultimate, and flag football that was a part of the regular physical education curriculum at this school. Four different classes of students received physical education during the second block. Students were randomly assigned to a group of approximately 10 students by the school faculty to a traditional sports activity. Teacher candidates taught in pairs and were assigned a traditional physical education activity to teach. A typical lesson for the day, involved an introduction, skill drills, practice, and a closure of the lesson.

### *Data Analysis*

In order to analyze the data in a way that would increase the trustworthiness of the generated themes, the general outline for data analysis proposed by Tesch (1990) was followed. Three major strategies were used: creating a system to organize the data, segmenting the data, and making connections about what was present. Triangulation was used to crosscheck thematic consistency within and across multiple data sources (Patton, 2002).

Data were analyzed with the aim of interpreting the relationships among the student interviews, the perceptions of student surveys, and the daily critical incident reports. To begin that process, daily critical incidents were transcribed into a daily chronological log of statements for both the step and traditional units of instruction. The coders examined each statement line by line, from the daily log and categorized each statement for primary significance. These primary statements were numerically tabulated and the three most frequently recurring codes were noted for each day. Coded statements were tallied to see if a pattern was consistent over time. Statements then were collapsed into themes from which the coders further divided into three main categories. Three coders completed this process individually to note and categorize answers (Creswell, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), based on the teacher candidates' reported perceptions in critical incident reports and student surveys. Following the individual coding, the three coders compared analyses to discover recurrent themes. Lack of agreement by the coders was settled through further discussion.

*Interviews.* Interviews were transcribed. The coders examined student responses to each interview question from which they categorized and coded for primary



significance. The comments for each question were collapsed into 3 common themes from which the coders further divided into main categories. Three coders completed this process individually to note and categorize answers (Creswell, 1994) based on school student responses to the interview questions. Following the individual coding, the three coders compared analyses to discuss and clarify recurrent categories. Lack of agreement by the coders was settled through further discussion.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The results of the data gathering procedures are presented in the following order: (a) communicated perception surveys, (b) interviews, (c) researcher's daily field notes, and (d) teacher candidate daily critical incident reports.

Teacher candidate responses to each question on the pre and post test survey instrument were recorded on Microsoft Excel. The data were transferred to and analysis conducted using SPSS.13 for personal computers (PC). The standard alpha level of .01 was set for the analysis.

#### *Communicated perception surveys*

Table 4.1 provides the total number of students' scores and students' communicated perceptions before and after their experiences with the stepping unit. A nonparametric procedure, Wilcoxon Signed Ranks, was used with two related variables to test the research questions that the two variables (instructional curriculum units) have the same distribution. The test makes no assumptions about the shapes of the distributions of the two variables. However, it does take into account information about the magnitude of differences within pairs and gives more weight to pairs that show large differences than to pairs that show small differences. The test statistic is based on the ranks of the absolute values of the differences between the two variables.

Table 4.1. School Students Surveys of Multicultural Curriculum: Pre and Post Perceptions of Stepping

Question	Low concern			High concern		
	Pre	Post	<i>p</i>	Pre	Post	<i>p</i>
Keeping a steady beat and having good rhythm	47	64	<.01	35	21	<.01
Gaining and understanding of the cultural relevance of stepping	60	55	<.01	17	22	<.01
Being taught stepping by an instructor who is not African American	75	73	<.01	14	18	<.01
Stepping as a part of the physical education curriculum	61	57	<.01	17	21	<.01
Who will emerge as the leader of my step group	63	63	>.01	23	26	<.01
Curricular activities whose importance is largely derived from a minority culture	68	59	<.01	11	5	<.01
Receiving a favorable grade for this portion of the physical education class	47	49	<.01	39	27	<.01
African American students developing a sense of ownership through the use of a culturally relevant curriculum	61	48	<.01	18	27	<.01
Stepping as a beneficial unit of instruction in physical education for all students	64	49	<.01	17	23	<.01

Question	Low concern			High concern		
	Pre	Post	<i>p</i>	Pre	Post	<i>p</i>
Students of different cultures having their needs met in physical education through the use of culturally relevant curriculum	57	47	<.01	21	30	<.01
Accepting African American culture as part of the physical education curriculum based on my past experiences with minorities	62	56	<.01	21	24	<.01

The overall differential suggests that, over time, the school students became more comfortable with the stepping unit. With awareness of the stepping activity the school students focused less on the originations of the content and more on the participation in the activity. The differential in stepping as a beneficial unit suggests that through participation, school students lost their heightened concerns for stepping and came to see the benefits. School students concerns about the relevance of the curriculum dropped as well as their concern as to the curriculum ties to African-American culture. Overall, of the survey questions that resulted in significant change, findings indicate that school students who begin the stepping unit with higher levels of concern – no matter the reason – saw those levels drop by the end of the unit. Table 4.2 provides the total number of teacher candidates’ scores and teacher candidates’ communicated perceptions before and after their experiences with the stepping unit. This table presents the areas of concern held by the teacher candidates’. Teacher candidates were concerned about (a) stepping as

a beneficial unit of instruction for all school students and (b) teaching African American students (see Appendix C ).

Table 4.2. Teacher Candidates Surveys of Multicultural Curriculum: Pre and Post Perceptions of Stepping

Question	Low concern			High concern		
	Pre	Post	<i>p</i>	Pre	Post	<i>p</i>
“How concerned am I about”						
Keeping a steady beat and having good rhythm	3	3	>.01	8	7	<.01
Guiding students toward an understanding of the cultural relevance of the topic	2	2	>.01	3	3	>.01
Maintaining class control during the unit	1	1	>.01	10	9	<.01
Being accepted as a legitimate teacher of the content (stepping)	1	2	<.01	9	6	<.01
Teaching content that is new different from the “norm”	2	2	>.01	4	5	<.01
Diagnosing student learning problems	2	4	<.01	5	4	<.01
Getting a favorable evaluation of my teaching methods	0	2	<.01	8	8	>.01
African American students developing a sense of partnership through the use of a culturally relevant curriculum	2	3	<.01	6	6	>.01
Stepping as a beneficial unit of instruction in physical education for all students	2	7	<.01	7	3	<.01

Question	Low concern			High concern		
	Pre	Post	<i>p</i>	Pre	Post	<i>p</i>
“How concerned am I about”						
Whether each student is getting what he/she needs	1	2	<.01	7	5	<.01
Teaching African American students based on my past experiences with African Am.	1	3	<.01	7	2	<.01

*Interviews with school students*

Table 4.3 provides students’ thoughts and communicated perceptions about the traditional multi-activity physical education curriculum. As can be seen from this table, of the 91 student interviews, particular topics began to recur.

Students clearly had a good deal to say about the traditional physical education curriculum in four major categories; (1) rules, (2) management, (3) student choice, and (4) non-motivating climate. In each of the four categories, the school students’ views of their traditional physical education activities indicated; (1) a lack of purpose, (2) a frivolous nature, and (3) negative student affect. For example, school student responses subcategorized as a piece of the rules category included terms such as “silly,” “unrealistic,” or “a waste of time.” Likewise, subcategories in the management category were consistently negative. Issues of concern for the school students included “dressing out,” or “Teachers take too long to begin and end class and leave us with little time for activity.”

The school students also indicated that they had no choice or input in class decisions. Activity selections were completely within the teacher’s domain, and student

Table 4.3. School Student Interviews

Traditional: Multi-activity physical education

Major category	Subcategories	Occurrences
Rules	Silly	8
	Unrealistic	7
	Rules are a waste of time	7
	Crazy	3
	Forced to dress out	3
	Exercise as punishment	3
	Forced to sit if you don't dress out	2
Management	Taking roll takes too long	6
	Beginning and end of class wastes time	6
	Dressing out takes too long	4
	More activity time	3
Student Choice	Let students decide activities	3
	Activities that allow student interaction	3
	Get teachers who listen	3
	Athletes forced to lift weights daily	3
Non-motivating Climate	We have stopped trying	5
	Teachers just interested in coaching	4
	Nothing is done to motivate	4
	Athletes get the attention	3
	Teachers roll out the basketballs	3
	Too much basketball	3
	Same old games	2
	Boring	2
	Don't teach me when I ask for help	1

socialization or interaction during class was viewed as negative by the teachers. This category was labeled “student choice” and contained comments which included: “let students decide activities,” and “get teachers who listen.” Another category generated by interview comments suggested a non-motivating classroom climate. School students’

interview responses included statements such as: “we have stopped trying,” “teachers are just interested in coaching,” “nothing is done to motivate,” and “boring.”

Table 4.4 displays the school students’ thoughts and communicated perceptions about the non-traditional multicultural physical education curriculum (stepping). In this case, the school students’ statements about the non-traditional physical education curriculum centered around three significantly different major categories: (1) motivation, (2) student choice, and (3) student ownership.

Table 4.4. School Student Interviews

Multicultural Curriculum: Stepping

Major category	Subcategories	Occurrences
Motivation		
General	More active than regular PE	10
	I was really into it	10
	Made PE fun again	4
	Pumped	2
Activity Promoting	I was very active	9
	Really active	8
	Wanted to dress out	4
Student Choice	I was having fun and getting a good grade	7
	Decided to make it meaningful	6
	Teacher only advised	4
Ownership	My group worked hard	7
	I did what I was asked so I would not hurt my group	6
	We wanted to have a good step routine	5
	It affected me and I was wanted to be involved	4

Each of the three categories presented school students’ views of the activities as positive, exciting, and relevant. For example, school student responses subcategorized



within the motivation category included terms such as “more active than regular PE,” “I was really into it,” and “wanted to dress out.” Subcategories under the major category of “student choice” consisted of comments that included “I was having fun and getting a good grade,” and “teachers only advised.” The “ownership” subcategories yielded comments including “my group worked hard,” “I did what I was asked so I would not hurt my group,” and “we wanted to have a good step routine.”

When comparing Table 4.3 with Table 4.4, the traditional multi-activity curriculum was replete with concerns over management issues, where rules supported strong management and had little regard for student voice or needs. Conversely, the non-traditional multicultural curriculum shown in Table 4.4 seemed only to be bound by the students’ creativity and willingness to work as a step team. Overall, school students’ major areas of concern tended to be positive due to increased motivation to participate, student choice, and ownership of their step team and activity time.

*Researcher field notes for the Traditional Experience*

Of the 61 researcher field note entries for the traditional experience, all but two held a negative tone. Seven statements (5 school students and 2 teacher candidates) expressed dissatisfaction concerning skill performance expectations as evidenced by the following: “I don’t like doing drills, but they think it’s the only way to learn,” and “they’re not interested in anything but playing a game...they don’t want to learn the skills of playing, they just want to play.” Of the fifteen statements alluding to behavioral management, two were student and 13 were teacher candidates’ statements such as: “They just need to do what I say to,” and “These kids are undisciplined”!

Significantly, 26 statements (23 students and 3 teacher candidates) categorized as participation, included comments such as: “Let *us* decide on the game or at least the way we might practice for it and play,” and “I would like to chose the activity just one time and play it as long as I liked...but we aren’t allowed to.” Additionally, 10 (2 students and 8 teacher candidates) of the statements contained references to the affective domain. Examples of these statements include: “I just could not make them happy,” and “These kids will never make it in college...they’re losers”! The final category of “other,” contained two teacher candidate statements, one positive and the other negative, stating: “Everybody in America loves the games we are teaching,” and “I am not going to teach in a school like this anyway!...I am going to be picky about where I teach.”

#### *Researcher Field Notes for the Stepping Experience*

Of the 29 researcher field note entries for the stepping experience, 10 (7 school students and 3 teacher candidates) of these were concerned with participation. Examples of their statements include: “The boys don’t like it as much as we do, but they still are trying,” and “Lot’s of people took part in this...only four people didn’t show up to step in the competition today.” Sixteen statements (13 school students and 3 teacher candidates), alluding to motivation, consisted of “African American girls are smiling and excited about the curriculum,” and “This is the first time I’ve been excited about PE.”

Additional field notes centered upon group dynamics. Of the 9 statements, 8 were made by school students. Examples of commonly occurring statements included: “White students were quiet and the girls not as confident, yet the girls in the group who were cheerleaders thought they would be helpful in producing the stepping routine,” and “We

have some arguments but mostly over which moves we want to use...not about other things.”

Table 4.5 provides the 144 critical incidents given by the teacher candidates for the traditional unit. Significantly, 46 of these were concerned with skill performance, of these only 15 of these considered their school students’ skill as good. Teacher candidates noted “the students are still struggling with basic ball control. We must fix these problems before playing games,” and “my class did a good job once they took the skills I showed them.” Thirty-six statements, alluding to behavioral management, consisted of “We had two self-proclaimed class clowns who tried to do their own thing. Once they were under control, the entire class stayed on task,” and “When students start talking to each other, it’s hard to keep the class under control so they can learn.”

An additional 37 statements, categorized as affective, alluded to school student feelings such as “The more bored they get the worse they get - they need to show some enthusiasm,” and “You give kids an inch – they’ll take a mile.” Conversely, only 14 of the statements contained references to student participation. Examples of these statements include: “The ball is too dirty to touch – the girls are such whiners!”, and “Pickle ball was horrible! The girls didn’t want to play.”

The final category of “other,” contained 11 statements largely addressing the difficulties of teaching especially when they had to hold class inside. Teacher candidates, for example complained “Rainy day – No ROOM to do my teaching!”, and “Ultimate Frisbee in half a gym with 60 kids is CHAOS!!!”

*Daily critical incident reports*

Table 4.5 Frequency Data for Critical Incidents

Traditional Lesson

Category	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
<b>Skill Performance</b>													
Good	3	2	0	2	2	1	2	0	0	1	1	1	15
Improvement	0	1	4	2	3	2	1	1	0	1	2	0	17
Needs Improvement	4	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	2	14
<b>Behavior Management</b>													
Organization	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	7
Listening	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	8
Equipment	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4
Grouping	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
Space	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	4	1	0	0	8
Time	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	5
<b>Participation</b>													
Engaged	1	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	8
Not Engaged	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	6
<b>Affective</b>													
Enthusiasm	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	2	0	0	9
Enjoyment	1	0	2	1	1	1	2	2	3	0	1	2	16
Cooperation	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Dislike	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	2	0	2	0	0	9
<b>Other</b>													
Weather	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	5	0	0	0	7
Difficulty Teaching	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	4
	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	144

Table 4.6 provides the 144 critical incidents given by the teacher candidates for the multicultural stepping unit. Significantly, 45 of these were concerned with participation. Teacher candidates noted “They’re progressing – more people giving input

into the routine. If someone does not like something or can't do it well, they are saying something, as well as "They are giving total effort and participation – Great!", and "The students are coming with their own ideas for stepping, they added an additional 30 seconds to their time."

Table 4.6. Frequency Data for Critical Incidents

Stepping Lesson

Category	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
<b>Participation</b>													
Willing	1	2	0	1	1	2	2	3	2	4	6	5	29
Unwilling	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	7
Reluctant	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Absent	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	4
<b>Motivation</b>													
Initiative	1	0	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	11
Creativity	0	0	1	0	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	11
Enthusiasm	1	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	2	2	1	1	12
<b>Group Dynamics</b>													
Teamwork	1	1	1	2	5	3	1	3	4	3	2	5	31
Leadership	3	1	3	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	11
Work w/others	0	2	3	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	8
Difficulty w/others	2	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	8
<b>Other</b>													
	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	7
	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	144

Thirty-four statements, alluding to motivation, consisted of "The students gathered before class started and showed us they had been practicing on their own and on their own time," and "The girls found out that other groups were copying their moves so they decided to make new changes in the routine that cost us a few seconds of practice time, but they were pleased."

An overwhelming 58 statements alluded to school students working together to build and maintain their group. Examples of commonly occurring statements included: “A leader came forward to lead the group – how fast they learned each step and beat,” and “It was awesome to see them help and be patient with each other.”

The final category of “other” contained 7 statements such as: “Not as much progress today as the first day,” “They did pretty well today,” and “Not enough practice runs.”

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

#### *Summary*

Given that the purpose of the present study was to examine the responses and communicated attitudes of secondary school students and teacher candidates to an intercultural curriculum and to examine the responses and communicated attitudes of secondary school students and teacher candidates to a traditional multi-activity physical education curriculum, the primary researcher proposed two research questions that sought to discover perceptions concerning the instructional units of (a) stepping and (b) traditional. When considered overall, the intercultural curriculum: stepping unit produced positive results for both secondary school students and teacher candidates. Conversely, the traditional multi-activity physical education curriculum produced negative results in school students (e.g., lack of participation, resentment, boredom, resistance) and frustration among teacher candidates. Additionally, the data triangulated from the researcher field notes, teacher candidate daily critical incidents, surveys, and formal interviews, when examined together, produced themes which, in turn, provided a deeper and clearer picture of how school students and teacher candidates perceived each of the two curriculum units.

### *Interpretation of Results*

The first research question asked what are students and teacher candidates' communicated perceptions of an intercultural curriculum. Results from the formal interviews, and reporter field notes for students reveal an overall overwhelmingly positive student response to the intercultural Stepping curriculum in that school students in this study were interviewed, they admittedly were (a) more active in the stepping unit than in their traditional multi-activity physical education class, (b) very receptive to the new curriculum that held cultural relevance for the majority of students, and (c) enjoyed having decision making authority concerning the routine steps and their group process. In response to the formal interview follow up question: "Were you more active in stepping than in the regular (traditional multi-activity) PE class?" 100% of the school students stated they were more active. Likewise, school student responses to the interview question: "How receptive were you to this new physical education activity (stepping)?" resulted in 70.6% ( $n=24$ ) stating they were very open to this new curriculum. Of the 29 student statements included in the researcher field notes, 98% ( $n=27$ ) alluded to the positive nature of having new curriculum that held cultural relevance for the student majority and allowed them to make decisions on the routines. Additionally, 92% ( $n=46$ ) of the teacher candidate daily critical incidents contained positive statements concerning their students and the stepping unit. Often, these daily incidents statements depicted teacher candidates' amazement that students required so little step-by-step instruction and discipline and were active participants in the unit.



In the light of current literature, that the culturally relevant stepping unit was received so positively by the students and required so little discipline and constant intervention on the part of the teacher candidate, should not be shocking. Research indicates that physical education will enhance learning if the pedagogical goals involve linking the learning to student, community, and social interactions (Cothran & Ennis, 1999; Ennis, 1999, 2000; Fernandez-Balboa, 1997, 1998; Mosston, 1966). As such, the stepping unit introduced an educational component that held historical and cultural relevance to the Non-White student population (which was the majority student population) and enabled all students to connect, in some part, with the history and to participate in re-creating the stepping within the confines of their own group. As such, the results suggest that all students benefited from the experience through learning and respecting the (a) cultural relevance of stepping, (b) group members' ideas and creativity to make their own routine, and (c) social interaction required to form and maintain their stepping group. As a result, school students were engaged in creating their own version of stepping and teacher candidates found themselves in a new role of facilitators who also were learners with their students. For this study, it is safe to conclude that, just as in Hastie et al. (2006), stepping appeared to be a good choice as a response to the pedagogical needs of African American children in the elementary setting.

Research question two asked what are school students' and teacher candidates' communicated perceptions of a traditional multi-activity physical education curriculum. Results from the formal interviews, and reporter field notes for students reveal that students, overall, were dissatisfied with their traditional multi-activity physical education class. In response to the formal interview statement that asked students to describe their

regular physical education class, 69 ( $N=91$ ) of the student statements reflected overall dissatisfaction with lack of input (e.g., teachers who don't even consider asking for student input on games or activities of interest or trying to think for them, teachers not even considering allowing athletes to do anything other than weightlifting). An additional 40 ( $N=91$ ) expressed frustration over rules (e.g., teacher rules that seem to have no connection to student interest, jumping jacks as punishment for not listening to the rules), mandatory dressing out, and teacher class management strategies (e.g., taking too long to call the roll, making sure all students carry out in detail the steps taught and demonstrated by the teacher).

Student responses to the formal interview question: "If there is one thing you could change about your PE class, what would it be?", resulted in 64 ( $N=91$ ) students stating they would like to see curriculum changes that more closely aligned with their interests (e.g., more group work, activities that tap onto students' creativity, teachers who are concerned that curriculum addresses student interests). An additional 21 of students stated they would like to shorten and change existing lengthy sets of rules that left them little time to play the games. Not only were students more dissatisfied with the traditional multi-activity physical education unit, but 72% ( $N=50$ ) of the teacher candidates' daily critical incidents contained negative statements concerning their students' lack of desire to participate. Results from the data seem to suggest the presence of a negative cycle in which the less the students participated, the more teacher candidates felt compelled to utilize their traditional command style, which in turn, resulted in increased school student resentment and lack of participation.

These results are consistent with previous research on negative school student responses to traditional multi-activity physical education curriculum. A great deal of current research speaks to the impact teaching style can have upon student learning. Some studies actually caution educators against the use of more traditional teaching styles in that they have the potential to diminish the education opportunities for diverse students (Boyle-Baise & Grant, 1992). Added to this, the research suggesting that current curricular choices reflect little if any attempt at student relevance (Cothran & Ennis, 1999; Kirk, 1997; Tinning & Fitzclarence, 1992), making it is easy to understand what happens when students believe (a) their interests aren't even a consideration in their teachers' curricular decisions, (b) once teachers decide what will be taught, they provide their students little to no say in adapting the curriculum to their interests, and (c) students who desire change are perceived as negatively by their teachers and are punished with time out or having to do extra sit-ups or running. This could explain why some students responded to the question "What do you think about your PE class?" by stating "I just endure it." From previous research, we know that a teacher-centered approach that shows little or no interest in student interests is connected to poor student academic performance, particularly so for the Non-white population (Lee, 1999).

Not only did the teacher candidate daily critical incidents, primary researcher field notes consisting of comments made by students and teacher candidates, and student interviews help answer the research questions but the information resulting from them produced data that emerged into very telling themes. We were able to identify three existing themes for each of the content areas specific to the research questions. The culturally relevant Stepping Unit produced the themes of: (a) student as invested learner,

(b) student as decision-making voice, and (c) student as engaged participant. Conversely, the multi-activity traditional unit produced the themes of: (a) teacher as director of learning, (b) teacher as decision-maker, and (c) teacher as authoritative voice.

### Culturally Relevant: Stepping Unit

#### *Student as Invested Learner*

In order to be identified as a fit for this category, students must be able to show leadership, ownership in the work, and innovation as new ways to produce their stepping routine. Results from teacher candidates' daily critical incidents made during the culturally relevant Stepping unit reveal that 43.5% of the 144 teacher candidate comments alluded to some sort of student investment in the stepping unit. Similar results from primary researcher's field notes reveal that of the 36 entries, 41.7% ( $n=15$ ) alluded to incidents of students showing initiative (e.g., "The students gathered before class started and showed us their new routine moves", and "Students said they had met over the weekend to practice together"). Likewise, results from the audio-taped student interviews, conducted at the end of the unit to assess students' comprehensive recall of stepping, contain elements of students as leaders, and owning their work. Not only were 76% ( $n=69$ ) of the 91 students able to recall the cultural relevance of stepping to African-American culture, over 62% ( $n=56$ ) of their answers contained some element of the student as invested learner. Support for the finding that students in the present study tended to be invested in the stepping curriculum because of its relevance to their lives can be found in other literature as well. Lenski et al. (2005), suggests that among the numerous positive results of introducing educational experiences that positively reflected students' cultural experiences was enhanced student performance and investment. Thus,

by tying the *teaching* of stepping to the *history and culture* of the majority of students (non-White), teacher candidates were surprised to see how quickly their students *took* to the experience, became caught up in the excitement, and took pride in making the instruction their own.

Additional research that suggests school students who have vested interest in the curriculum are motivated to participate and leaders begin to emerge also supports this study's findings (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The school students perceived the curriculum was culturally relevant to them, the event became more meaningful to the entire physical education class as was evidenced by their willingness to help other students learn the routine (e.g., "Non-White cheerleaders are using some of their cheer stuff to help their group members learn the routines"). Additionally, current research suggests that exposing students to meaningful and relevant curriculum produces another positive benefit: students begin to develop positive academic traits (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Another indicator of student investment was evidenced in the teacher candidates' daily critical incidents where numerous entries spoke of amazement that school students stayed on task and did not need their continuous supervision.

#### *Student as Decision-Making Voice*

To be identified in this category, students must be able to show creativity in putting together a routine that did not exist before they began and to express voice in that they contributed to the generation of ideas in making the routine uniquely their own. Results from the daily critical incidents made during the Stepping unit reveal that 26% ( $n=37$ ) of the 144 teacher candidate comments recorded as significant for each day alluded to some nature of decision-making and voice (e.g., "Students are becoming very

creative...they've come a long way", and "A new girl came into the group. She was so creative and it benefited the whole group"). Likewise, the primary researcher's field notes' 36 entries, 30.5% ( $n=11$ ) reported these incidents of decision-making process and students expressing their ideas to help them own the routine (e.g., "The boys don't like it as much as we do, but they still are in there trying to help out", and "We're so excited...this stepping certainly has a lot of people moving and involved"). Finally, results from audio-taped student interviews contained elements of students as decision-making voices. In that interview, students were asked to rate how receptive they were toward stepping. Of the 91 student responses, 21% ( $n=19$ ) contained some element of the student as invested learner. Likewise, that 28.2% ( $n=25$ ) of them described their level of participation as high, which also supported this theme.

The idea that students enjoy having a voice or choice in their curriculum is well supported in educational literature. For example, Hollins and Spence (1990) found that school students put forth more effort and performed better for those teachers who allowed them a voice in class and gave them academic freedom to present their own feelings and ideas when completing tasks. Given the negative effects of ignoring their voices (Bloom, et. al., 1965; Davis, 1948), the students in this study were able to recognize the need for and appropriateness of adding their voice to the stepping routine. With this realization, students became leaders and teacher candidates served more as mediators and facilitators in the learning process, which, in turn, reflects the trend of current scholarship (Flemming et al., 1999; Banks, 1987; Banks & Lynch, 1986).

### *Student as Engaged Participant*

The final theme generated from the stepping unit was identified as students displaying (a) motivation to work together, (b) awareness of being a team, and (c) desire to maintain team identity and dynamics. Results from the daily critical incidents during the stepping unit reveal that 30.4% ( $n=44$ ) of the 144 teacher candidate comments recorded as significant had elements of students as engaged, rather than disengaged, participants in the stepping routine (e.g., “They surprised me at how they decided to start doing this together!”, and “Participation is 100%...they pulled through and completed their routine.”) Additionally of the 36 entries in the primary researcher field notes, 27.8% ( $n=10$ ) alluded to this element (e.g., “I realize this is about *my* people”, and “We are learning a lot about working as a team and depending upon each other”). Finally, results from audio-taped student interviews contained elements of students as engaged participants where 41% ( $n=37$ ) of them self-reported their level of involvement to the stepping unit as very high, again corroborating the student as engaged participant theme.

Results for this theme suggest that school students in this study were very motivated to work together and were receptive to the curriculum. Explanations for why the school students took so positively to the teacher candidates’ teaching the stepping unit can be found in Howard’s (2001) work which suggests that non-White students tend to perform better when they believe their school faculty are aware of their needs and are interested in building a relationship with them that recognizes their personal and cultural issues. In this study, non-White students viewed stepping as an instructional unit that reflected both their cultural backgrounds, and enhanced their desire to connect education to experience.

Additionally, the data appears to indicate that the positive impact was observed indiscriminately among all students. Student statements reflect additional relational benefits as well, where non-White students' recognized that stepping created a little fear for their White classmates and offered to help them learn the routines (e.g., "White students were quiet and the girls weren't as confident, yet some of the Black girls stepped up and helped them produce their routines"). As such, school students found themselves free to make decisions within their groups and, in turn were able to value their group members and maintain a functioning and creative group dynamic. These results also concur with that of Hollins and Spencer (1990) who connected creative freedom to enhanced student efforts and academic achievement that provided them an avenue through which they could express themselves and work together.

#### Traditional: Multi-Activity Unit

##### *Teacher as Director of Learning*

In order to be identified as a fit for this category, the role of teacher must be mentioned as being in charge of or responsible for student learning in an environment that – by teachers' standards - must be conducive for that learning to take place. When seen as such, student learning stems from receiving and carrying out teacher instructions. As such, a great deal of emphasis is placed upon maintenance strategies and skill performance. Over 38% ( $n=55$ ) of the 144 teacher candidate daily critical incidents entries made during the traditional unit contained comments that reflected their thoughts about themselves as teachers who were in charge of or responsible for learning in the multi-activity unit (e.g., "Today the girls followed our directions – we had to keep them motivated", and "Class went good today because the students did what we told them to



do to play the game”). Likewise, of the primary researcher’s field notes’ 61 entries, 26.2% ( $n=16$ ) reported incidents depicting teacher as in charge of learning. Overall, the teacher candidates tended to be negative where a great deal of the comments revealed differing levels of concern when they felt their students were not carrying out instructions (e.g., “They just need to do what I say”) or were disregarding classroom management rules (e.g., “If I’m coming out here, the least they can do is do what I say!”). Overall, teacher candidates’ statements indicated that the best environment for learning was one in which the teacher was in charge of the learning experience and expressed confusion when school students were unhappy and responded negatively to such situations. Once again, these findings support research suggesting that teacher candidates are trained to direct or be in control of the learning process (Locke, 1992; Mosston, 1966).

The theme of teacher as director of learning also was present in the school students’ audio-taped interviews and in almost every situation, was perceived negatively by the students. When asked to describe their regular (traditional) physical education class, 37.1% ( $n=34$ ) of the 91 responses contained some element of the teacher as director of learning where they noted extreme dissatisfaction with their present physical education class and alluded to desires to change the way their class currently was conducted.

The results in this study seem to suggest that the class management rules (e.g., roll call, dressing out, and showering), skill-performance instruction, and authoritative or command style of the traditional multi-activity instruction - considered as the appropriate environment by teacher candidates was perceived as a stifling, boring, and frustrating environment by the school students who felt they had no voice or choice in the curriculum. The more teacher candidates in the present study prioritized management

issues over activity, the more negatively the school students perceived their physical education class. Thus, it could be argued that students' lack of desire—evidenced in their negative statements and sometimes, blatant refusal - to participate in the traditional multi-activity unit could be connected to their perceptions of their teacher as the leader of learning. Once again, these findings support previous research which connects poor academic and classroom performance to teacher centered environments (Howard, 2001; Lee, 1999).

#### *Teacher as Decision-Maker*

To be identified in this category, the teacher must be mentioned as selecting the game and deciding when, where, and how that game will be played. In fact, in this category, any modification decisions rest solely with the teacher. Results from the daily critical incidents made during the traditional unit reveal that 38.1% ( $n=55$ ) of the 144 teacher candidate comments in their critical daily incidents alluded to some nature of teacher as the decision-maker. For the most part, these statements centered around the teacher deciding when modifications were needed and when and where an activity should be performed (e.g., “I modified my rainy day lesson and decided to play ultimate Frisbee”, “They needed to stop running after they catch the football – so I modified the game”, and “Rainy day activities must be planned well in advance”), and even contained elements of teacher candidates' decisions concerning punishment (e.g., “I decided they should run today”, “When we made students do...they finally did a good job”).

Obviously missing is the mention of obtaining student input as to why things were not working or what modifications they would suggest making. Similar teacher candidate entries in the primary researcher's field notes indicated the teacher in charge of decision

making (e.g., “They were better today because I modified a game for them to play”) as , 36.1% ( $n=22$ ) contained incidents where the decision-making process rested in the hands of the teacher.

Thirty-six percent of the research field notes contained school student statements alluding to the teacher as decision-maker and overwhelmingly depicted the classroom and its teacher in a negative light. Students stated their dissatisfaction over having no choice (e.g., “Could we *please* try playing the game?”, and “Do we have to keep on playing something we don’t care about?”), their physical education class was dull and repetition (e.g., “Why can’t we play basketball...just play the game...they have to make it like football practice”, and “How many weeks are we going to keep practicing rather than playing the game?”, and outright refusal to participate (e.g., “My parents said I don’t have to play if I don’t want to!”), and “I refuse to mess up my nails”). Student audio-taped interviews also contained elements of this theme and again, overwhelmingly depicted the teacher as the only one whose opinions counted. When asked to describe their regular (traditional) physical education class, a third of the student statements contained elements of this theme (e.g., “they won’t let us get to what we want to do...play the games”, and “It’s boring...boring...boring / we don’t ever do anything interesting.”

These findings concur with research that states students tend to be less involved in programs where students are given little curricular choice and where teachers make all the decisions (Cothran & Ennis, 1999; Kirk, 1997; Tinning & Fitzclarence, 1992). Even the blatant refusal to participate in some activities is supported in the literature which warns that poor curriculum choices – that disregard school students – can lead to student resistance (Locke, 1992). Just as with the previous theme, the traditional command style

teacher model places the teacher in the role of decision maker (Mosston, 1966). Yet, this study suggests that students are more likely to dislike their physical education class and curriculum when the teacher is the sole source of decision making. Research tells us that the teaching style can impact learning and may, in fact, hinder the education opportunities for diverse school students and even suggests that command style teaching can be detrimental to the diverse school student (Boyle-Baise & Grant, 1992).

### *Teacher as Authoritative Voice*

The final theme generated from the traditional unit was identified as teacher as authority. The concepts of team dynamics and the voice of others obviously were missing from this category. As such, the voice of the teacher is central and becomes almost like a final authority when making statements concerning students' performance and behavior. Approximately 24% ( $n=34$ ) of the 144 teacher candidate's daily critical incidents contained elements of this theme for the multi-activity unit and addressed how they perceived the activities and the students in their classes (e.g., "The more they practice, the more bored they get...they need enthusiasm", and "The kids enjoyed the activity because they participated"). Rather than asking students why they are bored or why they participated in the activity, the teacher's voice alone spoke for the students. Additionally 37.7% ( $n=23$ ) of the 61 primary researcher field note entries contained elements of this theme. Field note entries for teacher candidates contained statements such as "They are not interested in anything but playing a game...they don't want to learn...they just want to play all the time", and "I don't have time to find out what they are complaining about!". Field note entries for school students contained statements such as "They are acting all strict...do they think this is important?...It's only PE!", and "At least in

stepping, they are shown some respect!”. Student interview responses also alluded to their absence of having a say in the class. When students were asked to describe their regular (traditional) physical education class, almost 30% ( $n=36$ ) of the 91 responses contained elements of the teacher as authoritative voice (e.g., “Nobody likes dressing out...they don’t care.”, and “The athletes get all the attention...regular students don’t get to touch the ball as much.”). Likewise when asked what they would like to change about their physical education school students desire to have some curricular choices.

Sadly enough, these findings concur with current research stating that little of what occurs in the educational setting takes into consideration the perspectives of students much less carries with it concerns for cultural relevance (Cothran & Ennis, 1999; Kirk, 1997; Tinning & Fitzclarence, 1992). The presence of teacher as authoritative voice so evident in the traditional model causes additional concern when concerned in the light of current research that warns of the potential negative impact teacher candidate educators’ perceptions can have on student activities and performance (Alpert, 1991; Anyon, 1981; Cusick, 1992; Pauly, 1991; Spaulding, 1995; Sun, 1995). Given the numerous teacher candidate statements negatively summing up the student, it is little wonder that students, in turn, responded so negatively to the instruction.

#### *Additional Findings of Interest*

While school student and teacher candidate statements about the intercultural curriculum of stepping and traditional multi-activity helps us understand how they felt about the two units of instructions, it can be equally compelling to address areas that obviously were missing in the teacher candidates’ critical incidents during the stepping component. The critical incidents recorded by pre-service teachers concerning the

traditional component contained numerous references to *tools of control* (e.g., tough teaching without a whistle, need more space; had to yell until I lost my voice...without my voice) and *loss of control* (e.g., I lost control of the class; Rainy day – No ROOM to do my teaching! “Rainy day...balls going everywhere!!!, rainy day....NO ROOM!! CHAOS!!!), it is interesting to note that there was no mention of these areas in the stepping component. The fact that having to be in the gym created such frustration over lack of control during the traditional unit, being in that same gym with the same number of students, created no such dilemma when teaching the stepping unit. It could be argued that students, frustrated and bored in the traditional multi-activity physical education setting, resisted the teacher candidates and the instruction. In the face of the resistance, teacher candidates expressed their need for the tools that helped them maintain control (Locke, 1992). Conversely, the stepping component more closely met the creative needs of all students, and kept them engaged as participants in their own learning experience. As such, this study’s findings support Rink’s (1993) call for physical education professionals to develop programs that better meet the needs of all students.

Despite the overwhelmingly positive results of the stepping unit (e.g., minimal discipline problems for teacher candidates, optimal student engagement and voice for teacher candidates and school students), however, all was not smooth sailing for the teacher candidates in this study. In the present study, we encountered some of the same areas of resistance as multicultural teacher education researchers have faced (Capella-Santana, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2005).

Throughout the study, the teacher candidates remained concerned about getting a good grade, given the new curriculum. It is interesting to note that of the 12 teacher

candidates surveyed, 6 began and ended the unit as “Very” to “Extremely” concerned about “Getting a favorable evaluation of my teaching methods”. Thus, it would appear that, concern for getting a good grade was the majority concern and remained stable throughout the multicultural stepping unit. Researcher field notes also contained examples of this overriding concern for a good grade (e.g., “You can’t really grade us on this, can you?”, and “Will this hurt our grade in Methods class?”).

Given that stepping was outside the normal physical education curriculum taught at the secondary school where our study was conducted, our teacher candidates found themselves as the brunt of jokes and more than a few raised eyebrows sent their way by the coaching staff as they heard about the stepping unit. The teacher candidates became extremely concerned with how they would be perceived by the physical education school faculty/coaches. In fact, some of the teacher candidates were embarrassed to show their excitement over the curriculum for fear of being made fun of by the coaches. Statements such as “I would do this at my school if the coaches would leave my students alone and not make fun of me and my students” and “I would like to use this when I teach but it would be hard to be a first-year teacher and go against the grain of the older coaches.” In this way, these results support that previous research attesting both to the impact teachers have on curriculum and their students (Capella-Santana, 2003) and to the fact that multicultural teacher education continues to receive considerable resistance (Ladson-Billings, 2005).

#### *Implications for Education and Suggestions for Future Research*

The findings of this study hold many implications for physical education training and curriculum. Current multicultural diversity research supports the implementation of

responsive multicultural diversity training to include school students, school faculty, teacher candidates, and teacher education programs (Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2005). Teaching styles, curriculum development, and pedagogical style should have as a major tenet the goal of meeting the current and future needs of the public school student demographic. Some research suggests that those years spent in the university setting as a teacher candidate provide ample opportunity for the implementation and molding of multi-culturally diverse teaching practices and attitudes (Gay, 1997; Kennedy, 1999). Therefore, it stands to reason that teacher candidates would look to and potentially emulate the foundational philosophies (e.g., management strategies, instructional methods, or personal relationship building) demonstrated by their university educators and cooperating school faculty (Sleeter, 2001). Because of this, teacher training programs should be committed to “prepare a new cadre of teachers who can think and behave in new ways about teaching and learning and possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to work effectively with all students, especially students of color and from low-income backgrounds, who have been left behind in American’s education.” (Ukpokodu, 2003, p. 17).

To be effective in a multiculturally diverse setting teacher education programs should expose teacher candidates early and often to urban field experiences. Exposure to and experience in diverse school settings will help teacher candidates develop new beliefs about school students in urban schools. Couched within these many urban school field experiences teacher candidates have the opportunity to understand that multicultural education is a way of life, not a one month celebration. Teacher candidates’ field experiences should magnify the need for teacher education programs to develop research



based multicultural instruction taught by teacher educators who have teaching experience in these urban settings. Following completion of several field experiences the teaching, methods course should have more appeal to teacher candidates who may have come to realize the importance of a culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive pedagogy. Teacher candidates will have a better grasp of the urban setting and a positive shift in their teacher beliefs and affections for this type of school.

This research suggests positive multicultural shifts in actions and affect as presented in Table 1 regarding teacher candidates. It is important to remember that these shifts occurred within this one small stint of teaching with an emphasis on multicultural diversity. The results seem to indicate that physical education, as it has been traditionally, is a setting lent to the student social aspect of the school environment (Sparks, 1993), and may present one of the best venues for teaching from a multi-culturally diverse perspective. Hastie et.al. (2006) presents the cornerstone for this study by implementing stepping as the curriculum in a predominantly African American elementary school setting. Tagging on to this study the current research implemented a multi-culturally diverse curriculum, the majority of school students receiving this instruction were part of the same culture as the curriculum, and teacher candidates were used as teacher/facilitators. Teacher candidates found that students were more receptive to instruction when interaction was permitted between school students and teacher candidates.

When you combine current research with the findings of this study, teacher candidates and school faculty/coaches should incorporate many non traditional/culturally relevant units into their instruction. Recall, the positive responses in the present study

were achieved not by changing an entire curriculum, but by incorporating one culturally relevant unit of stepping. Teachers easily could teach one unit each block especially in light of the changing demographics and the overwhelming positive student response to the change.

Because the findings in this study support those of Paolo Freire (1970, 1974) as he called educators to consider the *other*, so too should teacher trainers and their institutions promote a more other-oriented view of education. Researcher field notes support the need to build relationships if effective classroom learning is to take place. The teacher candidates found in a very practical way that for multicultural educational learning to be successful school students and teacher candidates had to consider the *other* and to take an insightful look at all peoples, histories, and cultures (Freire, 1970, 1974).

Educators also could turn to theoretical perspectives, not particular to education alone, that support presenting instruction in ways that connect students and their cultures and interests to the classroom experience. In this way, connecting new instruction with something meaningful with which they already knew or valued, students are allowed the chance to have a voice in the educational moment. Thus, teacher training programs should include these theoretical perspectives as part of their regular curriculum, theoretical perspectives and/or research indicative and supportive of what is occurring within a multi-culturally diverse classroom setting. Research conducted by multi-cultural scholars (such as Billings-Lawson, Banks, Gay) should be part of the regular teacher education curriculum.

Additional theoretical perspectives outside the educational mainstream also corroborate the findings of the present study and could prove useful for exposing teacher

candidates to the need for understanding the student, their culture, and interests in tailoring culturally relevant physical education programs. One such theory, the Gestalt Communicator (Gibson, 2005) explains the need to take a holistic approach by viewing appreciating students as individuals with the potential to make richer the learning experience – not only for themselves, but also for the teachers as well. As the name implies – the theory emphasizes the need for communicators to consider the person (in this case the student) as a whole rather than simply just the particular part of interest to the communicator. Gestalt Communicator Theory (Gibson, 2005) poses that as communicators, it is pointless to study the elements without taking into account the totality to which those elements belong. As the theory relates to the present study, if you really want to understand the value of a culturally relevant curriculum, you must never examine it apart from the student. If you want to educate the student, you must examine the context of which the student is a part (e.g., gender, age, culture, ethnicity). Teachers as important secondary teachers, must learn how to communicate the instruction to the student. Recognizing the student only as an object not only destroys confidence in the teacher but also tends to increase cynicism among the students (Isaacs, 1999). Seen as such, this theory adds another lens through which educators could examine and better understand the need for culturally relevant curriculum.

Future researchers could examine a control group and a step group randomly chosen from classrooms within several secondary schools in one urban setting. These schools could be in one geographic area so that teacher candidates from one particular university would be available to give the instruction. Likewise the urban schools could be chosen from many geographic regions of the United States as well as around the world

giving a better sampling of how school students from various regions relate to culturally diverse curriculum and teaching strategies.

### *Limitations*

Although this research offers insight into how the variables of multicultural diversity, when implemented can enable school faculty, teacher candidates, and university teacher education faculty in providing successful strategies for meeting school students where they are in terms personal diversity. The primary researcher acknowledges the limited scope of this study in that focus was only on physical education curriculum and limited to one secondary school setting. In addition, only 100 students began the study and thus meaningful comparisons for all students in this particular setting could not be made.

The methodology employed also placed certain limitations on this study. The data were self-reported responses, which are known for their limitations. One such limitation, social desirability bias, can result from participant desire to project a favorable image to others by responding in a way they think is socially correct, thereby, attempting to avoid embarrassment (Maccoby & Maccoby, 1954). As such, it is possible that school students' and teacher candidates' responses in this study could reflect their perceptions of social "correctness" in the public school setting. Additionally, the surveys used to determine school student and teacher candidate perceptions of the stepping unit fail to relate the many physical and verbal nuances exhibited during through the physical education unit. School students and teacher candidates had little previous exposure to culturally relevant pedagogy or curriculum. Teacher candidates basically entered the teaching component Unaware of how to teach it, the value of teaching it, and the value of allowing students to

participate through voice and choice. As this study clearly indicates the teacher candidates were never quiet able to shake their perceptions about how their grade would be assigned. Finally, the primary researcher recognizes the preliminary nature of our study given the limited geographic area, single school location, and sample size of the school students and teacher candidates.

### *Conclusions*

Despite the limitations, however, this study contributes to our understanding of how school students and teacher candidates communicate about and participate in a multi-culturally relevant curriculum of stepping in the following ways: First, it provides an opportunity to examine the use of stepping, as a multiculturally diverse curriculum taught by White teacher candidates to predominately Non-White school students, as part of the group from which stepping originated. As stated previously, many multi-cultural educators see the necessity to use culturally relevant curriculum, few have taught it but to students who were not of the culture the curriculum represented, and fewer to none have been able to teach culturally relevant curriculum to the population from which the instruction originated. Add to this, the challenge of teacher candidates – as representatives of the dominant culture – teaching the curriculum of which they are not a part and with which they do not feel particularly familiar to teach. Second, the analysis provides preliminary evidence of the existence of three primary themes in both the culturally – relevant and traditional units. Third, the study provided directions for future study and ways to incorporate this study’s findings into physical education classrooms, and teacher candidate schools.

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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
INFORMED CONSENT FORM  
Hardaway High School

## **INFORMED CONSENT**

### **Pre-service teachers and student responses to a culturally relevant curriculum.**

You are invited to participate in a research study designed to examine pre-service teacher and in-school student responses to a culturally relevant physical education program. For this study “stepping” was chosen as a good intercultural curriculum choice for minority in-school students. This study is being conducted by Gary S. Gibson (Auburn doctorate student in physical education pedagogy), under the supervision of Dr. Peter Hastie (Professor, Health and Human Performance Department, Physical Education Pedagogy, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama). The anticipated outcomes of this project are; (1) for pre-service teachers to better understand the need for teaching an intercultural curriculum, (2) to make available for minority students a curriculum that is culturally relevant, (3) for pre-service teachers to become comfortable with teaching a content area that is unfamiliar, (4) to acquire minority students’ perceptions and attitudes of a culturally relevant curriculum, and (5) to acquire information in terms of minority students’ attitudes toward instructors who may have less content knowledge of the culturally relevant activity. You were selected as a possible participant because of your enrollment in the courses taught by the pre-service teachers from Columbus State University PELM 5216 and PELM 4215 methods courses in physical education.

If you decide to participate, the pre-service teachers will be teaching “traditional stepping” as a unit of instruction. This instruction will last over a 7 week period of time during your physical education course on Tuesday and Thursday of each week. It will culminate in a “step off” occurring the last day of the stepping unit. The step off will give each step team an opportunity to present a two minute step routine before their peers.

This instruction should cause no risks or discomforts associated with participation other than those incurred during regular physical education dance instruction.

The benefits should include developing the skills necessary to work together as a team while putting together and performing the step routine. Students should also better understand stepping as a positive physical education movement activity as well as a good intercultural curricular activity for physical education. We cannot promise you that you will receive any or all of the benefits described. Any information obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and anonymous and will be destroyed following transcription of all the data. The data will be kept locked and confidential in a container in room 257 Lumpkin Center, Columbus State



University. Information collected through your participation may be; (1) used to fulfill an educational requirement, (2) published in a professional journal, and/or (3) presented at a professional meeting, by the doctoral graduate student listed above. Participation is voluntary and the participant may withdraw at any time without penalty from the school and without jeopardizing their grades.

If you have any questions we invite you to ask them now. If you have questions later, Gary S. Gibson, 568-2203, [Gibson\\_gary@colstate.edu](mailto:Gibson_gary@colstate.edu), or Dr. Peter Hastie, (334) 844-1469, [hastipe@auburn.edu](mailto:hastipe@auburn.edu), will be happy to answer them. You will be provided a copy of this form to keep.

For more information regarding your rights as a research participant you may contact the Auburn University Office of Human Subjects Research or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334)844-5966 or email at [hsubjec@auburn.edu](mailto:hsubjec@auburn.edu) or [IRBChair@auburn.edu](mailto:IRBChair@auburn.edu) .

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator obtaining consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

APPENDIX B  
AUDIO TAPED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## AUDIO TAPED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS with SCHOOL STUDENTS

### **Introductory Paragraph (explanation as to why the interview is being conducted)**

We are conducting this interview to obtain your responses in regard to the unit on stepping in your physical education class. Your names will not be used in the study. Only the interviewer, and the college students who code your responses from this taping will be exposed to the research material. You may stop the interview or leave the interview at any time you feel it necessary. At this time I would like to begin the interview. Each of you may answer any of the questions you feel comfortable in answering.

1. Describe your regular physical education class.  
What do you like best about physical education?  
What do you like least about physical education?
2. If there is one thing you could change about your physical education class, what would it be?
3. Describe your physical education class since the CSU students have been the instructors.
4. What is your background in stepping?  
If they have a background in stepping, ask the following question.  
Do you know the historical aspects of stepping?  
If needed make your best guess.  
If they do not have a background in stepping, ask the following question.  
What do you think the history of stepping is related to?  
If needed make your best guess.
5. Are you aware of stepping and its cultural relevance to African-Americans?
6. How receptive were you to this new physical education activity?
7. Describe your level of participation in this activity?  
Not very active or Very active.  
Why didn't you put forth more effort? Why did you put forth such effort?
8. Would knowing the history of stepping have impacted your level of participation?

APPENDIX C

PERCEPTIONS OF CONTENT SURVEY

School Student Survey

Teacher Candidate Survey

INTERCULTURAL CURRICULUM INSTRUCTION -- STEPPING  
 School Student Survey  
 Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

How concerned am I about:

Not Concerned 1	A Little Concerned 2	Moderately Concerned 3	Very Concerned 4	Extremely Concerned 5
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1. Keeping a steady beat and having good rhythm.
2. Gaining and understanding of the culture relevance of stepping.
3. Being taught stepping by an instructor who is not African American.
4. Stepping as a part of the physical education curriculum.
5. Who will emerge as the leader of my step group.
6. Curricular activities whose importance is largely derived from a minority culture.
7. Receiving a favorable grade for this portion of the physical education class.
8. African American students developing a sense of ownership through the use of a culturally relevant curriculum.
9. Stepping as a beneficial unit of instruction in physical education for all students.
10. Students of different cultures having their needs met in physical education through the use of culturally relevant curriculum.
11. Accepting African American culture as a part of the physical education curriculum based on my past experiences with minorities.

Your gender is:                      Male                      Female

Your age in number of years is: \_\_\_\_\_ years and \_\_\_\_\_ months

Your race is: \_\_\_\_\_ .

How do you rate the socioeconomic status of your family?    Low    Low Middle    Middle    Upper Middle  
 High

How would you describe the community where your family currently lives?    Urban    Suburban    Rural

INTERCULTURAL CURRICULUM INSTRUCTION -- STEPPING  
Teacher Candidate Survey  
Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

How concerned am I about:

Not Concerned      A Little Concerned      Moderately Concerned      Very Concerned      Extremely Concerned  
1                              2                              3                              4                              5

1. Keeping a steady beat and having good rhythm.
2. Guiding students toward an understanding of the cultural relevance of the topic.
3. Maintaining class control during the unit.
4. Being accepted as a legitimate teacher of the content (stepping).
5. Teaching content that is new and different from the “norm”.
6. Diagnosing student learning problems.
7. Getting a favorable evaluation of my teaching methods.
8. African American students developing a sense of partnership through the use of a culturally relevant curriculum.
9. Stepping as a beneficial unit of instruction in physical education for all students.
10. Whether each student is getting what he/she needs.
11. Teaching African American students based on my past experiences with African Americans.

Your gender is:                      Male                      Female

Your age in number of years is: \_\_\_\_\_ years and \_\_\_\_\_ months

Your race is: \_\_\_\_\_ .

How do you rate the socioeconomic status of your family?      Low      Low Middle      Middle      Upper Middle      High

How would you describe the community where your family currently lives?      Urban      Suburban      Rural

APPENDIX D  
TEACHER CANDIDATE CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORTS

INTERCULTURAL CURRICULUM INSTRUCTION – STEPPING  
Critical Incidents

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

**Stepping Unit**

Briefly describe the most critical incident that occurred during your teaching.

**General Physical Education Unit**

Briefly describe the most significant incident that occurred during your teaching.