Addressing Learners from Diverse Background
“Diversity”

- The condition of being different
- The composition of distinct or unlike elements or qualities
To react in response
To show favorable reaction
To be answerable
How can teachers respond to differences in the classroom?

- Positively – I’ll embrace this challenge!
- Negatively – I’ll resist this. (No one can force me!)
- Indifferently – Whatever! No skin off my nose either way… I treat everyone the same.
- Proactively – I need to learn about this before I encounter it firsthand.
- Reactively – Uh oh! What should I do?
The professional teacher establishes a comfortable environment which accepts and fosters diversity. The teacher must demonstrate knowledge and awareness of varied cultures and linguistic backgrounds. The teacher creates a climate of openness, inquiry, and support by practicing strategies such as acceptance, tolerance, resolution, and mediation.

(Florida Dept. of Education)
Sample Key Indicators:

- Accepts and values students from diverse cultures and linguistic backgrounds and treats all students equitably.
- Fosters a learning environment in which all students are treated equitably.
- Recognizes the cultural, linguistic, and experiential diversity of students.
- Recognizes students’ learning styles and cultural and linguistic diversity and provides for a range of activities.
- Has a repertoire of teaching techniques and strategies to effectively instruct all students.
- Selects appropriate culturally and linguistically sensitive materials for use in the learning process.
- Analyzes and uses school, family, and community resources in instructional activities.
- Employs techniques useful in creating a climate of openness, mutual respect, support and inquiry.
- Selects and introduces materials and resources that are multicultural.
• Acknowledges the importance of family and family structure to the individual learner.
• Promotes student responsibility, appropriate social behavior, integrity, valuing of diversity, and honesty through learning activities.
• Provides learning situations which will encourage the student to practice skills and gain knowledge needed in a diverse society.
Cultural Competence requires that educators:

- Have a defined set of values and principles, and demonstrate behaviors, attitudes, policies and structures that enable them to teach effectively cross-culturally.

- Have the capacity to (1) value diversity, (2) conduct self-assessment, (3) manage the dynamics of difference, (4) acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge and (5) adapt to diversity and the cultural contexts of the communities they serve.

- Incorporate the above in all aspects of policy making, administration, practice, service delivery and involve systematically consumers, key stakeholders and communities.

~National Center for Cultural Competence
Types of Diversity

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Linguistic
- Academic Ability/Disability (Gifted, LD, etc.)
- Physical Ability/Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Socioeconomic
- Religion
- Culture (Big “C” vs. Little “c”)
- Personal Backgrounds and Experiences
From one end of the spectrum…

**Poverty** (Students do not have basic school supplies, may experience malnutrition, have limited to no travel experiences)

**Disability** (Physical or academic – challenges and limitations will be a factor in the classroom.)

**Abuse & Neglect** (Negative personal experiences can have negative effects on learning.)

**English as a Second Language** (Immigrant and refugee children face challenges beyond language learning.)

**Facing Prejudice** (Whatever the “differences” they may be negatively perceived by others.)

…to the other!

**Affluence** (Students travel, own books, computers, supplies, their own study area, etc.)

**Ability** (Gifted and high ability students require additional challenge just as athletically gifted students seek outlets for their talents.)
Responder to Diversity will…

- **Recognize diversity** by identifying types of diversity and distinguishing degrees of variance within each type.

- **Accommodate diversity** by creating a classroom environment that allows every student to achieve his or her personal best within the realm of each person’s individualism.

- **Value diversity** by moving from tolerance to acceptance, modeling and fostering accepting attitudes in the classroom, and embracing diversity as an integral component to our society as a whole.
Four arenas where Diversity is Addressed:

1. Curriculum
2. Field experiences
3. Clinical practice
4. Professional practice
Teaching about diversity...
Curriculum is designed and implemented to teach about cultures and customs different from those of the students. Sensitivity and respect are emphasized as important concepts. Materials are selected for their honest depiction of people, places, and events. Curriculum promotes student responsibility, appropriate social behavior, integrity, valuing of diversity, and honesty through learning activities. Curriculum reflects diverse points of view.
Interaction with Diverse Faculty
Field experiences will be supervised by Stetson faculty and cooperating teachers from diverse backgrounds. Every attempt is made to place candidates in with teachers who are trained in diversity and represent diversity.
...Field Experiences

Interaction with Diverse Students
From earliest observations to senior internship, every attempt is made to place candidates in classrooms comprised of diverse learners. Volusia County is especially diverse in nature.
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What knowledge, skills, and dispositions must teachers possess to impact student learning?
There are many types of diversity. Cultural differences and learning styles are a good place to begin…
Select materials that reflect diversity honestly and respectfully. Select and implement curriculum for the readiness level of each child.
DISPOSITIONS…

Demonstrate high expectations for ALL.
Model acceptance of those who are different.
Responders to Diversity know that…
...talent comes in all shapes and sizes...
... and it also comes in all different containers!
Not only **can’t** we judge a book by its cover, we must recognize that some books have had their covers torn off, some are written in a foreign language, and some might contain ideas with which we don’t agree.

**Recognize, accommodate, and value** ALL of your students for what they represent and what they have to offer. Be **positive** and **proactive** in this endeavor.
Civilizations should be measured by "the degree of diversity attained and the degree of unity retained."

— W.H. Auden, English poet (1907-1973)
THANK YOU

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