

Positionality of Teachers regarding IDE Professional Development in SBAE

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Introduction/Need for Research

In recent decades, multicultural education has shifted to encompass all cultures showcased in the educational system (Banks, 2006). As the world becomes smaller and more diverse, multicultural education will continue to be an important aspect of the educational system in order to prepare global and competent citizens. Problems for creating proper multicultural teaching practices reside in a lack of preparation and isolation of teachers among their own ethnic groups (Vincent et al., 2014). In school-based agricultural education (SBAE), this is evident as the current demographics of teachers do not mirror the variety of cultures found in public schools across the United States (Foster et al., 2020). In order for SBAE teachers to provide a positive educational experience for all students, they too should be knowledgeable and concerned about diversity. While inclusion, diversity and equity (IDE) practices were addressed in the Agricultural Education Research Agenda in Priority areas 3 & 5, these trends continue to grow (Roberts, T.G., et al., 2016). While the need is immense, limited research exists on the positionality of SBAE teachers regarding professional development training related to IDE.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

This study is framed by the idea of positionality. According to Banks (1993), a teacher's *positionality* or attitude play a significant role in shaping the culture of inclusion. Moreover, Garmon (2004) found that the most important positionality factor in predicting teacher success among culturally diverse students is a disposition towards openness, appreciation of differences and an eagerness to engage in new experiences. For SBAE teachers, their positionality and individual dispositions affect their multicultural teaching practices (Eberly et al., 2007). While the U.S. becomes a more diverse and pluralistic society, the openness of SBAE teachers towards culturally diverse students and IDE practices will continue to be an important issue in the future. Determining the positionality and disposition of SBAE teachers on IDE will be the first step in addressing the challenges facing the profession. By using the frameworks of Banks and Garmon, it will allow us to get a clearer understanding of teacher positionality with hopes of remedying this challenge that is facing the educational system.

Methodology

The purpose and primary objective of this study was to describe the positionality of SBAE teachers toward IDE practices and IDE professional development through survey feedback. As part of a larger quantitative descriptive study, the target population was all SBAE teachers in Delaware and Utah during the 2021-2022 school year ($N = 335$). During November and December of 2021, an online survey instrument (i.e., Qualtrics) was administered. The survey instrument for this specific analysis consisted of one open-ended question asking participants what thoughts they have about IDE training in SBAE. Participants had the option to omit this question or type a response. As part of a larger study, Dillman's (2007) was used to elicit responses, with follow up correspondence being sent twice via email to non-responding participants. The total response rate was 22.9% ($N = 77$) with 27.2% of survey participants providing commentary ($N = 21$).

Results/Findings

Participant comments were categorized and thematically coded into three positionality domains: 1) Against the integration of IDE practices and/or IDE professional development; 2) Identified stereotypes and a need for the integration of IDE professional development; and 3) Programs are already diverse and don't see an immediate need for IDE professional development (see Table 1).

Table 1.

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Positionality	Example quotes
Against the integration of IDE practices and/or IDE professional development	<p>"...Trying to include diversity as an agenda leads to segregation."</p> <p>"Although it is important to know about differences in students, I don't think it is very important to preach about certain differences like religion, sexual orientation, etc. It's not something that we should bring up in class."</p> <p>"I do not believe there is a problem with inclusion in Ag Education and FFA. Professional development on this would take time from learning valuable information that can help prepare my students for future careers and to become better citizens."</p>
Identified stereotypes and a need for the integration of IDE practices/IDE professional development	<p>"The stigma associated with Ag and FFA can be an immediate barrier to entry for some minority groups...I believe the best way to make inroads with diversity...is to target students, providing them with diversity training."</p> <p>"I think it is extremely important to focus on. FFA is becoming less relevant in my classroom because my students don't match the demographic that is commonly seen in FFA chapters."</p> <p>"I am open to training, but even more open to receiving resources on how to best approach this topic. I would like to see representation in Ag Ed & FFA curriculum/promo materials that makes all students feel welcome and included in our classes and organization."</p>
Feel their programs are already diverse	<p>"My chapter is as diverse as my school and my classes...I've always had diversity in chapters I've led, [but] I see how our national convention looks "very white"."</p>

Conclusions/Recommendations/Impacts

Our findings show that the profession is split in terms of their beliefs about IDE professional development in SBAE. One group recognizes a problem with IDE and would like to foster change through attending professional development related to the topic. Another group sees the importance of IDE, but feels their programs are already diverse enough. Lastly, the final group is against the integration of IDE practices in the classroom and/or professional development. This dichotomy in belief seems to mirror the socio-political atmosphere of today; a culture divided by ideologies who have politicized IDE. Based on the frameworks of Banks and Garmon, SBAE teachers who are against IDE collectively struggle with shaping a culture of inclusion and are less eager to engage in new experiences. Research conducted has shown that professional development positively impacts a teacher's attitude regarding IDE (Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007). Therefore, we recommend state staff consider offering unique IDE professional development opportunities that align with the different dispositions of teachers. Moreover, we recommend SBAE teacher educators seek to develop positive dispositions among preservice teachers on IDE

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