

## ABSTRACT

For the past three decades, multicultural education has remained a focal point in the culture wars that United States education has encountered. Multicultural education is an educational reform movement that continues to evolve as ethnic minorities make their educational concerns and needs known. The forces driving the reform effort extend beyond linguistic and cultural diversity to include issues of academic diversity, gender, social class and sexual orientation (Wilhelm, 1998). How do educators address these needs, and how does the interaction among these diverse groups impact students and society?

The purpose of this paper is to determine the perceived competency of Hispanic teachers to teach diverse students. Without identifying the competency of teachers in South Texas to teach diverse students, leaders in education are unable to address the needs of teachers in order to educate all students successfully. It is the obligation of educators to serve all students equitably.

The methods used for data analysis are both exploratory and confirmatory, which are used side by side (Tukey, 1977). The study is examining teachers from 11 elementary campuses located in South Texas. Data are gathered through the use of three survey instruments developed to measure a teacher's perceived competency to teach diverse students as well as acculturation and authoritarian personality.

It was found from this study that Hispanic teachers' perceived competency to teach diverse students is a function of attitudes toward multicultural pluralism, sensitivity to issues of cultural pluralism, acculturation, authoritarian personality, gender, ethnicity, age, educational background, language(s).

The findings of this study have implications for school district personnel who work in the area of staff development as well as teacher hiring. Interview questions can be geared toward identifying areas that are a function of perceived competency as well as formulating staff development that will ultimately assist all students educationally.