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Diversity Article Review

Acknowledging diversity and its needs has always been an issue in the educational system; from segregation to utter ignorance of the very existence of diversity. Thankfully, though there have been many negative setbacks, there have also been many positive strides. The four articles assigned for reading, “The Effects of Culture on Special Education Services”, “Creating Culturally Responsive, Inclusive Classrooms”, “Wendy or Tinkerbell?”, and “Culturally Responsive Practices in Schools” examined the differing cultural perspectives of “disability” and how to use special education effectively to meet diverse needs.

The first article discussed the differing perspectives of disability—primarily, the cause. It also started the discussion on how to explain the disability from the western perspective without removing the persons own diverse perspective. Much of this information I had already learned in a previous cross-cultural psychology class, but it was well worth the review. In the second article, strategies were given on how to be culturally-welcoming and balanced for the multiple students in a single special education classroom. The strategies seemed easy enough, but I didn’t read much about examples and so still wonder how well it prevents complications on diversity to occur. I would have liked to have heard more about the effectiveness from a case study. Within the third article, there was an extensive discussion focused solely on the female minority in preschool special education classrooms. I learned a lot from this article. Specifically, I learned about the impacts on play, social skills, language, and preacademics for the girls. According to a study by Coutinho, Oswald, and Best (2006), “girls were less likely to earn a high school diploma, more likely to be unemployed or to earn less if working, and more likely to be a parent” (TEACHING 64) if they were in special education. Many individuals point out the difficulties of succeeding as boys in a general education classroom, but it seems the situation is flipped in the special education classrooms. Finally, the fourth article examined the problem of over representing diverse students in special education. With that in mind, I was introduced to the Checklist to Address Disproportionality in Special Education (CADSE). The format of CADSE involved three sections on how to properly approach students with racial, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity (RCELD). The first section, Culturally Responsive Beliefs and Practices of Schools and General Education Classroom, is “designed to review the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the schoolwide and general education classroom practices, services, and programs” (TEACH 54) . In the second section, Culturally Responsive Coordinated Early Intervening Services (EIS) and Referral to Special Education, the focus is on “coordinated early interventions, including classroom-specific supports, schoolwide supports, and time-limited specialized support” (TEACH 56). Finally, the third section, Culturally Responsive IEP Team Decision Making—Evaluation and Determination of Eligibility, assesses “specific issues, beliefs, and practices pertaining to special education referral, assessment, and determination of eligibility” (TEACH 57) after a student has been referred for a special education evaluation.

So how am I going to utilize this knowledge that I have received? Will I have to change myself and my own personal perspective to match the needs of another? Not necessarily. If I were to change my perspective, I would be going against my own personal diversity which is what these articles are persuading us to do to others. Somehow, there has to be a balance. If there is no balance, then someone out there—especially in special education—someone is not receiving the help that they deserve. What I will work on is my knowledge of other, vastly different cultures, and become educated on how to approach the different perspectives in an appropriate, effective manner.