

Diverse Faculty Survey Results July 2014

The unit distributed a faculty survey in July of 2014. The intent of the survey was to learn more about the cultural and educational background of the unit faculty who teach candidates at VCSU. The diverse learning experiences enhance the unit faculty members' potential to work with diverse candidates and model environments that are respectful of all learners.

Diversity of Faculty

Answer	Response	%
Hispanic/Latino of any race	2	5%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	3%
Asian	3	8%
Black or African American	0	0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0%
White	33	85%
Two or more races, please identify:	0	0%
Race/Ethnicity Unknown	0	0%
Total	39	100%

Have you completed all of your education experiences (K-12 plus your higher education degrees in North Dakota?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	11	28%
No	28	72%
Total	39	100%

Please identify the states or countries you were educated in outside of North Dakota.

Text Response
Minnesota
Utah, Michigan
Washington and Minnesota
Kansas
Missouri, Texas, California
South Dakota and Minnesota
California
Minnesota
Minnesota and Wisconsin
Montana
Utah, California
Minnesota
Minnesota
Maryland and Texas
South Dakota
California, Kansas, Missouri, Hawaii, and Germany
Iowa, Wisconsin, Montana, and the country of Austria
Wyoming
K-12: DeKalb, Illinois: College Course work: Illinois and Montana -- in addition to North Dakota.
Minnesota; Texas
South Dakota, California, Utah
University of Minnesota in Minnesota; University of Durham in UK; University of Henan in China
Minnesota
Minnesota
Honduras, Wisconsin, Minnesota
Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Minnesota
University of Minnesota - Moorhead, University of Wyoming
Texas
Iowa

Please identify your socioeconomic background prior to beginning your career in education.

Answer	Response	%
Upper class	0	0%
Middle class	32	82%
Lower class	5	13%
Other, please specify:	2	5%
Total	39	100%

Other, please specify:
Lowest middle class
Student

Have you taught students from low socioeconomic backgrounds?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	38	97%
No	1	3%
Total	39	100%

If you have any socioeconomic background related living or teaching experiences that help you relate to students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, please share your thoughts in this section.

Text Response

I taught high school in low SES backgrounds in Idaho and Michigan
 Taught in Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica and had experiences in Guatemala.
 I taught at a small rural community with a fair amount of students with free and reduced lunch and have been on mission trips that help me to realize the importance of basic needs and how a lack of having basic needs met can impact learning.
 Both of my parents were immigrants. My father joined the US Navy and my mother worked in low paying jobs. The struggles my family faced growing up (being on free/reduced lunch, living paycheck to paycheck, etc.) has helped me relate to students from low SES (socioeconomic status). I also taught in South Whittier School District in CA where, at the time, 92% of my students were Hispanic and many of them living in poverty. My teaching experience in Clark County School District (Las Vegas, NV) also allowed me to teach students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.
 A simple example- my elem students would often come to school hungry, so I always had snacks available. I share that with my undergrads.
 I used to teach Hmong students who came from Laos. I also taught in a Migrant School to students with came from Texas. Both typically did not speak English (or very little) and were financially impecunious.
 I am Native American and grew up on and near an Indian reservation. I both attended and taught in a school with a 95% Native population.
 29 years' experience in low socio-economic K-12 schools; equivalent amount living in low socio-economic communities; SDAIE certificate (Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English) in California; GLAD certificate (Guided Language Acquisition by Design) in California;
 I taught for two years in Mission, TX - on the border of Mexico and two years in New Town.
 I have taught many first-generation students. Some were women who had escaped abuse and had little self-esteem. They were testing the waters in school to learn not only the lessons of college, but to discover who they were after living for years with physical and emotional abuse. I also taught in a small town in western ND, where German was the first language of many of the students, including it still being used at home. The parents were struggling ranchers who did not trust education. They found men who paid a dowry to marry their daughters, often when the daughters turned 17. This culture certainly was foreign to me. I also worked for three summers with 2 and 3 year old migrant children (Hispanic) at the Migrant School in my hometown. We had 50 in our classroom (with three aids). The migrant workers were poor and lived in the area long enough to hoe the sugar beet fields, then move on to the next place. I worked with the children, as well as subbed in kindergarten and 4th grade and visited with parents when they brought their newborns to the school on the way home from the hospital (I would take in the information as they passed the newborns to the school, and sometimes would go to the hospital to receive the newborns and interview the parents there).
 Attended classes regarding poverty.
 I taught in a high school that had a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds as one of the key areas we were focusing on when I was leaving was those who were poor or homeless and how to work effectively with students. I also was in a district that worked with the Native American culture.

During my K-12 teaching experience, I taught students in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas. The majority of students were Hispanic and from low income families.

Taught on the reservation - generational poverty

At the North Valley Vocational Center in Grafton, I started the first inclusive classroom for adult students working to get off the social welfare system. The adult students were integrated with the secondary students to learn job related skills and later on the job training. The model was later adopted statewide for ND.

I have taught students of upper, middle, and lower socioeconomic in California for 24 years. This has improved my teaching to meet the needs of the wide spectrum of K-12 learners.

Worked with disadvantaged youth in Minneapolis one summer; taught in an economically deprived (defined by the U.S. government) area for four years and did home visits during that time for one student who lived below the poverty level; taught several eighth grade remedial reading classes, comprised primarily of disadvantaged youth

I grew up in a very large family and while I was younger my parents worked from paycheck to paycheck, which was very hard at times. When I was a young girl I had to babysit and do other odd jobs to help pay for my school clothes and supplies until I was old enough to get a "real" job. I remember hard times when my family didn't have enough money to pay for the bills or buy Christmas presents. It wasn't until I graduated that I was able to live worry free. I can relate to my lower-income students very well and the dynamics that they face on a day to day basis. With this, I work hard to treat all my students fairly and without judgment based on where they come from or what they may possess. I have even went so far as to help a few lower-income students' buy boots and gloves in the winter because first, they truly needed them and second, because I could relate.

There were periods in my life when I had serious trouble making financial ends meet - one of those as a single parent with a young child. I know what it's like to try and get by without a safety net and trying to buy food to get by on very little. I also worked for 14 years in public health, working with individuals and families in need, and volunteered at the Dental Clinic for homeless people in the Fargo-Moorhead area.

taught at Pine Ridge Reservation

My teaching experience is all in North Dakota but there were students in my classes who came from severe poverty. On a couple of occasions, I visited their homes. Newspapers were window coverings, children slept on the floor, cupboards were bare. Over the years, I purchased warm clothing for many students and sometimes a pair of shoes.

I work full time in the area of special education. Many of the students that I serve on a daily basis are from low socioeconomic backgrounds. I meet and visit with parents of the students I serve regularly. Often, but not always, my families from lower socioeconomic backgrounds have different "hidden rules."

Lived, study and worked in a Third World country.

I taught for 8 years in a working class community in Minnesota. I had students each year that were considered migrant workers who lived for part of the year in Minnesota and part of the year in Texas, these students were primarily of Hispanic background.

Each elementary school I taught in had a high percentage of children on free/reduced meals. Socioeconomics were effected by cattle prices (small ranch operations) and drought (family farms). Lack of industry or closure of a company who employed numerous individuals as hourly wage earners. Garage/rummage sales were very popular for children and adult clothing. Parents that did not read, a few that did not graduate from high school. Multiple families with 4 - 8 children (I taught 5 children from one family, the four girls in 2nd grade, lots of their shirts/sweaters were the same - passed down to the younger sister). Families did not go on vacation, some children had never been to the state capital (125 miles away).

Have worked with an all-African American school in the Chicago area. Also have worked with teachers and students at the Standing Rock Reservation

Is English your native language?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	34	87%
No	5	13%
Total	39	100%

If your native language is something other than English, please specify:

Text Response
Spanish
Japanese
Chinese
Born and raised in a Spanish speaking country

Please identify any other languages you have learned. (You may include sign language if you know it.)

Text Response
Spanish, German
Melanesian Pidgin
Tagalog (language of the Philippines); French (4 years in jr. high/high school); Some Spanish
Spanish
French and some Gris Ventre (native language)
Spanish is high school and college
French, pieces of Spanish and Norwegian.
Sign language
Spanish, a little French and German
Spanish
Spanish and German
German
German but it has been years since I've used the language!
Norwegian
Very basic French
German
Chinese, French
sign language
American Sign Language
Spanish
Spanish
Latin

Have you worked with the education of exceptional students?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	28	74%
No	10	26%
Total	38	100%

If you have living or teaching experiences that help you relate to exceptional students, please share your thoughts in this section.

Text Response

I learned to make adaptations to students in based on IEPs or in physical education activities. I have tried to find ways to challenge gifted students and incorporated recommended strategies to for helping ELL students.

As a child, I participated in the Gifted and Talented Program (GATE). As a professional, I worked in a school that didn't have a GATE teacher available, so we had to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of our GATE students. Throughout my teaching career, I have worked with English Language Learners as well.

I taught selectively-mute adolescents for about 2 years. We not only worked on academic and social skills, but personal hygiene as well.

I have taught in several classrooms with at least a 70% exceptional population. Both ends were represented.

Of six of my own children, four have exceptionalities resulting in placement on IEP's. Those exceptionalities include: multiple disabilities, specific learning disabilities, autism spectrum, and deafness. Two of those children are twice exceptional and have also tested at the 99%ile for gifted and talented. K-12 teaching experiences include teacher of the gifted and talented, gifted and talented site facilitator, gifted and talented district leadership committee, adjunct faculty for gifted and talented graduate certificate (California), teacher for far below basic students in Language Arts.

I taught High School English and provided higher level thinking activities to a group of students in each class.

I have taught students with special needs in a K-12 setting. I have also taught undergraduate courses in a teacher education program designed to prepare teacher candidates to work with students who have special needs.

I worked with students in a high school setting with keyboarding courses as well as other courses with exceptional students. I also advised a DECA chapter in which we worked with HIT, Inc. out of Bismarck on projects which included working with exceptional students and community members.

I was one

Exceptional students were included in my classrooms in Langdon and in Grafton during my K-12 career.

In my 24 years of teaching my regular education classes have included many students with special needs (IEP's, 504's, etc...) and students who were G.A.T.E... I am also a parent of a student with special needs.

Numerous opportunities, personal and professional, to interact with exceptional young people...

I strive to find different methods of instruction as to reach all types of students from advanced to the lower-end. I find that if I can use multiple strategies within a single lesson, I reach more of my students. It is my sole belief that all students can learn if provided the necessary tools.

The challenge was to give them ways to dig deeper into the work that the rest of the students were doing -- as a student teacher and substitute teacher.

My sister is developmentally delayed. I have extensive experience working with exceptional students. I taught the primary grades for 19 years and in that time I had students with Cerebral Palsy, deaf student, blind student, students with ADD and many learning disabled and moderately cognitively delayed students

I work full time in a k-3 building in the area of special education as a speech-language pathologist. I service roughly 30 students per year that have identified special education and/or speech-language needs. I have worked in the public schools for the past 13 years; I am an adjunct instructor at VCSU.

I taught in an inclusive learning environment, as a lead teacher I was primarily responsible for meeting these students needs within my classroom.

Special education undergraduate major - taught in a self-contained sped classroom - cerebral palsy, language delays, mental retardation. Regular education classroom - learning disabilities, hearing impaired, language delay, autism, emotional disabilities

Worked with the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy at the Center of Problem Based Learning. Had the opportunity to work with exceptional students across Illinois.

Have you lived or worked in a rural community?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	37	95%
No	2	5%
Total	39	100%

Have you lived or worked in an urban community?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	23	59%
No	16	41%
Total	39	100%

Have you lived or worked in a foreign country?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	13	34%
No	25	66%
Total	38	100%

Please identify the country or countries you have lived in, worked in, or in which your travel experience has added to your teaching effectiveness.

Text Response

Canada, Germany, Austria, Czech Republic

Papua New Guinea, Costa Rica, Guatemala

Canada. I lived and taught in Canada for 12 years.

Italy, Mexico

Canada - I use my experiences for teaching metric system conversions and life example problems in mathematics.

I used to travel to Mexico annually. This experience enhanced my understanding of extremely low socio-economic living. I was able to share my personal experience through my teaching to enhance my students learning.

I lived in Canada, but did not work there. I have traveled to Mexico and Australia.

Mexico, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, and Canada--Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec,

I had a lot of traveling experiences with students taking them to a wide range of states throughout my high school teaching career. This expanded my experience to culture and community as well as working with students traveling in those areas. I also was planning and working on a trip to Germany with students when I left that job.

Mexico

I lived in Germany during my elementary and secondary school years. During my school years my travel experiences included Spain, Greece, Yugoslavia, Switzerland, Sweden, France, Italy, and Turkey. These cultural experiences profoundly shaped my understanding of how it feels to be a non-native speaker and a minority of a group. As a result, I better understanding of what an ELL student may experience. I applied my learning to the classroom which enhanced my teaching effectiveness.

Canada, France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, England, Iceland

Norway

I lived in Australia for 2 years and spent a summer in New Zealand. I have also traveled in Mexico, Canada, Fiji, French Polynesia, England, Scotland, and North Wales, as well as throughout the U.S. growing up and as an adult. In all places, I have been interested in people, their culture, and the conditions in which they live and work. I think all of these experiences has helped me understand how culture and socio economic conditions impact individuals and families; and through my higher education experiences, better understand how student learning and achievement may be impacted as a result of culture and socioeconomics.

China, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait

UK, USA, China, Canada

Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Mexico, England, Scotland

I have traveled to Europe and experienced the culture in countries such as Bosnia, France and Finland. Taught English in Japan for a Summer. Spent a summer in Europe visiting a number of countries. This fall I am spending two weeks visiting countries on the Baltic Sea

Worked in: United States, Australia Traveled throughout Europe, Russia, Japan, Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore, Macu, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, United Kingdom (England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland

Please identify anything from your previous experiences in rural or urban communities, or from your experiences from other states or countries that help you in educating VCSU teacher candidates.

Text Response

Any experience outside of what you were raised in helps you to relate to different cultures and ideas. I have lived and taught in five states, each with a unique culture and dialect.

I have worked with ESL students as an instructor in an online graduate program, mentoring them through the research process.

exposer to different points of view

Working in many different settings (both rural and urban) has helped me prepare our VCSU teacher candidates in several ways. I am able to share my experiences and use real-life examples to support what is in the curriculum. My wide range of experiences (with students from diverse backgrounds) has also helped me feel more prepared when asked specific questions by the candidates. Furthermore, I am able to ensure that my students are being taught current strategies and content so that they are equipped with the knowledge that will make them effective teachers once they leave VCSU.

I have lived in various states across the country and worked with various cultures and socioeconomic levels. I have learned much from my experiences.

All of my 29 years in the K-12 classroom contribute greatly to my teaching at VCSU. I am able to share direct experiences from my teaching in California, which was rich with diversity.

I stated some earlier (Teaching in Western ND, Migrant School), but I also have traveled extensively in the US, spent a week living with a family from the "hills" in Tennessee, studied Intercultural Communication, and taught for the University of Maryland University College, where most students are culturally diverse and live and/or come from many different countries.

My initial K-12 teaching experiences were in a rural community where I experienced some of the benefits and some of the challenges schools face in that environment.

I have had a wide range of experiences with advising students in communities with a range of culture acceptance which would allow me to share my experience with VCSU teacher candidates. When I have planned trips I expose students both past and present to diversity experiences.

Reservation - ND - real world experiences that are a bit out of the ordinary, but allow for preservice candidates to understand that unforeseen things happen.

I have had a fairly wide range of living and teaching experiences that helped broaden my perspective as a teacher. Because of these first hand experiences, I can better assist our VCSU teacher candidates with their various questions and diverse teaching experiences.

Greater awareness of the common bonds of humanity; appreciation of cultural differences; openness to change and a broader perspective; greater empathy for circumstances of others; gratitude for the blessings of life and desire to make positive contributions to it; acceptance of others - every person has intrinsic worth.

Focusing on the rural community, I have found that these communities really pull together during crisis, I have found that they are very diverse, not only on ethnic backgrounds but socioeconomic backgrounds too. I have found that at times, the lower-income students feel left out or disqualified. Sometimes these students are made to feel that they won't or don't matter and sometimes this leads to them failing academically. I have also seen their social skills suffer as well due to lack of friends based on status as well as unable to afford things such as playing sports, etc.

I have lived in both urban and rural areas and traveled extensively. I have traveled, worked, and been involved as a volunteer providing education and other services in urban and rural areas, as well as overseas. Having been a people watcher since I was a young child, I have observed people in all kinds of places and as an adult learned to engage with people in all kinds of places, which has made it possible for me to understand people from other walks of life and develop empathy by putting myself in other people's shoes. All of this has helped me understand that each student brings their own issues into a classroom, and that we need to get to know our students in some depth in order to be able to best facilitate their learning in our classrooms. I try to share with my students, insights I have gained from my experiences, as I try to draw them into classroom discussions and one-on-one to help them begin to see their current and future students in a broader context. One which, I hope, will help them begin to figure out how to best meet the needs of the students in their current and future classrooms.

worked with ELL Hutterite, American Indian, new immigrant and political refugee students
Experiences in different cultures and countries help me to understand students from different perspectives.

Most of our teacher candidates come from rural communities. Some come from larger cities, but most from smaller, rural areas. I feel that my experiences working in rural communities helps prepare them for the jobs available in a tri state area. I have 19 years of teaching experience and I've mentored 13 student teachers. I have experienced many different types of learning problems through my years of teaching. I have taught children of Christian, Jewish, and Islamic faiths. I hold a lifetime teaching certificate in North Dakota and try to substitute teach about 3 times a year in our local public school. Teaching is different than watching.

As an adjunct VCSU instructor and full time speech-language pathologist in the public schools, my college courses are very practical and authentic. I value theory but feel my courses most benefit my students by the authentic assignments I assign. I expect that my students are able to apply their knowledge from my courses. Due to my full time work, I am able to bring the students real examples of what students sound like, write like, etc.

The educational experiences that I have experienced in other countries allow me to bring a different perspective of the educational systems abroad.

Working with students with a low socioeconomic status has helped me prepare my students using personal experiences to share.

I found teaching English to Japanese students very enlightening. I started coaching several sports in Red Wing, MN while teaching there. I learned from that the importance of student time during the planting and harvest.

I share my experiences of living and working in 4 rural communities - children, parents, opportunities in those rural communities, struggles with communities who may not have enough funds or enrollment to keep their school open or the school is the hub of activity for everyone in the community.

My experiences with working with teachers in the Chicago, Dallas -Fort Worth area have provided me with a better understanding of the many challenges that urban schools face, I grew up in a small rural community and presently do professional development with schools throughout North Dakota.

Have you worked with culturally diverse students in a P-12 classroom? (Comments about your experience are appreciated.)

Answer	Response	%
Yes	29	74%
No	10	26%
Total	39	100%

Yes

I have worked with and tutored students on Indian Reservations in Canada and the United States in a face to face environment.

The same comment as above about the Hmong students from Laos and the Spanish students from Texas.

Native American, German Hutterite, African American, Hispanic were in my various classrooms. I have loved the richness the cultures bring into the curriculum.

Extensively, in California, where the schools in which I taught had a high percentage of ELL students. As a teacher certified in SDAIE and GLAD, I had ELL students placed in my classroom every year. I also taught many students who were homeless.

In Texas we made home visits. I learned how "wealthy" I have always been since I have always had what I need. The Hispanic students and families had deep respect for teachers and education. The Native American students I worked with in New Town were also very respectful. Although education was not a top priority. Even young students were responsible for household chores and taking care of younger siblings.

Very few, but some minorities were in my classroom.

Native American

During my experience in Sout Texas, the student population was primarily Hispanic and low socio economic backgrounds.

Native Americans

I coordinated Project COFFEE which was a dropout prevention program on all reservations in ND administered by Career Technical Education.

My classroom was filled with 5-10 ELL students each year. These ELL students came from different areas of the world.

Native American, Black, Hispanic

I have worked with a summer Migrant program as well as some of my classes over my HS experience have been culturally diverse. I found that I need to have an open mind about different cultures and be mindful of their various beliefs. I find that it is very appropriate to incorporate different cultures within my class lessons, projects, etc. I also have these students share their cultures with their peers.

As a health and safety educator during my years in public health, in completing my student teaching experience, and as a K-12 substitute teacher.

ELL (German or Dutch spoken at home), Native American children - lived with grandparent or aunt

Vietnamese and Native Americans

Taught science in a diverse classroom in Australia. Native aborigine children were in the classes.

VCSU shares NCATE's definition of diversity as differences among groups of people and individuals based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, and geographical area. This last box provides an open space that allows you to volunteer anything you would like to add that helps you as an educator to prepare the teacher candidates for working with diverse learners.

Text Response

Worked with ELL students in Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica.

Several courses in the M.Ed./LIT program have content which teaches prospective librarians about the value of purchasing diverse materials for their libraries both for a diverse student population and to promote understanding of diversity.

I have worked with many ethnic groups, and with students across the socioeconomic spectrum. I have worked with transgender students. I have taught students who are blind, deaf, and non-ambulatory. I have taught students with Down's Syndrome, spina bifida, and cerebral palsy. I have taught students and worked with parents who speak (as a first language) French, Spanish, German, Vietnamese, Polish, Hmong, Navajo, Pharsi, Hindi, and Arabic. Italian, Mandarin, Korean, and Tagalog. I have taught students from Christian backgrounds, Buddhist backgrounds (I also have a sister and brother in law who are Buddhist), Muslim backgrounds (I also have a sister and brother in law who are Muslim), Hindu backgrounds, Native American backgrounds, Mormon backgrounds, and Wiccan backgrounds. I have taught children of Fundamentalist Mormon polygamists. I have taught students who are LGBTQ, I have worked closely with colleagues who are LGBTQ, and my family is close friends with several couples who are in same-sex marriages. I have one adopted son (another type of diversity not mentioned). I have worked and/or attended school in Canada, Utah, California, Arizona, and North Dakota. I feel that my background is rich in experiences that bring a diverse perspective to my teaching.

All students, regardless of their ethnic background and socioeconomic status, have a natural curiosity about science and nature. All students need to feel valued and successful. Students A part of my studies in intercultural communication is learning about education and how to communicate through the context of education. We also studied this quite extensively in courses I took that prepared me to teach college students. Additionally, I learn from my students, who relay a variety of experiences in my courses that I can share with others.

I would believe that my willingness to continue to travel with VCSU students providing them experience not only as a state level, but also at an International level through advising a student organization that will expose these students to experience will only enhance their background prior to setting foot in their own classroom. The one major component is that I also have students shadow HS advisers through these conferences to see and experience firsthand the experience to help teacher candidates gain experiences prior than going into the field.

In my C.Diversity course, we have speakers from ND and MN who are teaching in diverse locations (reservations, Hutterite Colonies, ELL populations, and varied ethnic populations) speak/present to students either face/face or through Skype.

As a VCSU student teaching supervisor and new teacher support coordinator, I have been very fortunate to travel to and learn about the various diverse communities of mainly North Dakota and Minnesota. I am able to pass what I learned to our teacher candidates and new teachers. My VCSU SEGS faculty experience has provided me opportunities to connect with diverse learning communities, thus improving my ability to help our teacher candidates for working with diverse learners.

1. When student teaching, the HS students are their students and NOT their best friend! 2. Work ethic, with technology so readily available we tend to disassociate ourselves from our goals and focus on our phones, iPods/iPads, etc. 3. Morals and values 4. Philosophy of education: we need to have an understanding of our philosophy if we want our students to "buy into" what we are selling. 5. Empathy: we need to be compassionate (on a professional level) of the many problems that our students may face on a day to day basis. e.g. handicaps, shut-ins, no food in their homes, no running water, neglect, abuse, etc. 6. Teaching using multiple instructional strategies. 7. Communication skills: lack of communication skills due to technology...we don't talk anymore! 8. Writing skills. These are just a few of the areas of concern from a few of my former student teachers.

In addition to the experiences shared above, I also spent 14 years working in private dental practices in urban, inner-city, and rural areas. Very few of those years were spent insulated in private practices for middle class families with dental insurance. Because of the nature of the invasive work that dental hygienists do, the amount of one-on-one time spent with patients, and the length of time spent with each patient while awaiting the dentist's oral exam; I learned much about my patients, their circumstances, and their needs and wants from people who were living with affluence, in poverty, as refugees, as immigrants, homeless and on the streets, and an abundance of people with special needs that most private practices refused to see. I think all of my experiences have helped me see my students as individuals with their own issues, needs, and wants.

Within in my Ph.D. program I have been studying race, class and gender and have completed course work on Advocacy and Empowerment within our classrooms.

I have worked with all these groups. The experience has provided me with a rich experience in understanding people, cultures, throughout the world. This experience has allowed me to identify strategies and methodologies that are valuable in working with these diverse populations. It has developed an appreciation and understanding of diverse populations. What I have learned can assist others in the appreciation of diverse groups. These diversity experiences can be used to assist teacher candidates understanding of the similarity, differences, and challenges each of these groups share.