

Workforce Education and Development (WED): Graduate Students' Perceptions of Cultural Insensitivity in Classroom Teaching – A Mixed Methods Study

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Growing ethnic student diversity (to include Caribbean students) on U.S. campuses requires exercising cultural sensitivity in classroom teaching, in accommodating for the culturally/internationally diverse students in U.S. classrooms. A Midwestern university embarked on a diversity thrust that included workshops for boosting faculty cultural competence in facilitating culturally/internationally diverse learners. This descriptive study examined the extent to which cultural insensitivity existed in WED teaching delivery. A Within Stage Mixed Model research design and a pragmatic paradigm were employed to guide the study's design and data collection/analysis of its census survey data consisting of quantitative and qualitative data from three student groups: Minority, Majority, and International. Findings included the following: International students felt that cultural insensitivity occurred in verbal and non-verbal communication with students in WED teaching delivery very often; U.S. majority and minority students felt it almost never or sometimes occurred respectively. Suggestions from WED graduate students for addressing this cultural deficit mainly include faculty diversity training and diversification of teaching styles, in keeping with multicultural education, ethnocentrism and critical race theory.

Keywords: Workforce Education and Development (WED); Perceptions; Cultural Insensitivity; Classroom; Teaching

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