Abstract:

As there are increasing numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students in United States public schools, there is a disproportionate number of CLD students receiving special education services. Culturally diverse students is a term that generally refers to students who may be distinguished (from the main stream culture) by ethnicity, social class, and/or language, as well as students who are from racial/ethnic minority groups and students who's primary language is not English (Irving & Terry, 2010). Linguistically diverse students are referred to as students who's first language is one other than English. Public schools in the United States are federally mandated to identify and serve all students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), however CLD students are at risk for being inappropriately identified due to culture and language differences. This presentation will showcase the overrepresentation of CLD students in special education, while also addressing the negative effects of special education labels on such students. It will highlight the importance in every student receiving the education that best suits his or her needs, whether these students be CLD or not. This presentation will also touch upon why inclusion methods of teaching are essential in addressing and fixing the overrepresentation of CLD students in special education.

Key Words:

Culture
Diversity
Language
Special Education
Overrepresentation
Inclusion