A CASE STUDY OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP IN AN EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The populations of the United States and our public schools will soon become predominately minority. National, state, and local data all reveal school achievement gaps between students along racial lines. Current racial achievement gaps cannot persist if our nation is to continue to flourish. Many educational leaders have turned to culturally responsive practices as part of the solution to address achievement gaps as well as equity concerns in public schools.

This study, performed in an eastern North Carolina school district, aimed to assess school leaders’ perceptions and dispositions towards cultural responsiveness and to determine the impact of their perceptions and dispositions on their schools. A case study of 13 principals was used to investigate this issue and six exemplar principals were selected to explore the issue further. The findings of this study confirm the important role of school leaders in influencing curriculum and programming in the best interests of all students. This study also confirms that school leaders should consider cultural responsiveness as a viable philosophy to address rapidly changing demographics and ensure that all children attend schools in a culturally responsive environment.
Acknowledgements

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- Dr. Edward Earl Bell and Ms. Vanessa Green for supporting this research study
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- My closest friends and colleagues for their inspiring words and constant encouragement
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- My school administrative team, faculty, and staff for their understanding, assistance, and support during completion of the dissertation study
- Each of the principals and teachers that participated in the dissertation study
- My family members and friends for constantly encouraging me to pursue this degree wholeheartedly and not to give up
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my deceased mother; Margaret Alberta Charity Kato; who was my very first teacher and role model. She instilled a passion for education within me at a very young age. She also instilled an endearing love of humanity, a spirit of perseverance, and the belief that I could accomplish anything I wanted to accomplish in life.
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Chapter One
Introduction

Background

Public schools mirror the increasing cultural diversification of the United States (Aud et al., 2011; Boske, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2002). The American school population will become predominately non-European, non-white racial/ethnic minorities. The changing demographics of the United States present both opportunities and challenges. The opportunities to teach diverse groups of children how to live together harmoniously will increase, however overcoming past discrimination in society and schools and diversifying leadership and instructional methods within society and schools will present challenges (Banks & Banks, 2004). Demographic shifts in American society and public schools have increased the urgency among educators and other stakeholders to ensure educational equity and excellence are a reality for all students (Brown, 2007; Dean, 2002; Gay, 2000; Johnson, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009; Nieto, 1999; Riehl, 2000).

Demographic Shifts

The percentage of public school students who are white has decreased from 78% to 56% during the years 1972-2007 while students from minority racial/ethnic groups increased to 44% during the same period. In 2007, Hispanic/Latino students represented 21% of public school enrollment and African American students represented 15% of public school enrollment. The U.S. Department of Education also reported that students from the following racial/ethnic minority groups represented approximately 8% of enrollment: (a) Asians at 4.1%; (b) multi-racial at 2.6%, (c) Pacific Islanders at .3%; and (d) Native Americans at .8% (Aud et al., 2011). Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education reported that in 2003 the racial/ethnic minority student population of the Western region of the United States had surpassed the percentage of
white student enrollment. Demographic projections are for this trend in the Western United States to continue (Aud et al., 2011; Nieto, 1999).

**Historical Context of Culture in American Public Schools**

Many educators and educational reformers assert that the American school system developed largely as a tool to assimilate immigrants and racial/ethnic minorities into the dominant Eurocentric culture (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997; Ogbu, 1992). In some cases, the task of the education system was to erase the cultural heritages of some groups (e.g. Native Americans) in an effort to build a common Eurocentric culture (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997). There were even cases where entire groups of people did not have a legal access to an education (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 2006).

**African Americans.** Ladson-Billings (2006) recounted education as forbidden for African-Americans during slavery and started solely to maintain a servant class after the Civil War. Ladson-Billings noted a period of racially segregated education for African Americans formed after having been forbidden this segregated education took place in substandard facilities with equally substandard curriculum materials. An unequal status of African American education remained largely constant until the school desegregation orders beginning in the 1950s and subsequent milestones of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s (p. 5).

**Native Americans.** Ladson-Billings (2006) also stated Native American education began as a conversion method for missionaries or a way for Europeans to educate the natives and use their free labor to advance the church. Ladson-Billings quoted General George Pratt as having said the purpose of Native American boarding schools was “to kill the Indian in order to save the man” (p. 5). Upon completion of these acculturative boarding schools, the Native American could no longer fit into reservation life and they could not gain acceptance into most
institutions of higher learning. An act of the U.S. Congress in 1864 underscored this assimilation philosophy when it became illegal for Native Americans to receive instruction in their native language (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Ladson-Billings acknowledged that the aforementioned education policies were aligned with the historical period and prevailing ideal of intellectual inferiority of peoples of color.

**Puerto Ricans.** The history of education in Puerto Rico is another example of America’s attempt to acculturate non-European peoples. Irizarry and Antrop-Gonzalez (2007) specifically researched the history of education in the Puerto Rican colony. They reported that the United States “deliberately created a system of education designed to acculturate students and make them ‘Americans’, without regard for Puerto Rican culture, thus putting colonial objectives ahead of providing quality education” (p. 173).

**Implications of Culture in Schools**

Culture is a major paradigm through which an individual views learning and this view has its beginning in the home environment (Ogbu, 1992, 1994; Riehl, 2000; Tyler et al., 2008). Forms of speech, cognitive structures, and interpersonal interaction comprise this filter and originate from this initial home learning. It is clear that culture has a large influence on learning in school (Gay, 2000; Ogbu, 1992, 1994; Tyler et al., 2008).

**Communication patterns.** Gay (2000) stated, “students know much more than they are able to communicate, or they may be communicating much more than their teachers are able to discern” (p. 77). Gay contrasted the traditional passive-receptive discourse patterns present in most schools to the participatory-interactive communication style of many African American and Native Hawaiian students. The participatory-interactive style is sometimes referred to as call and response or talk story; respectively. Gay further contrasted the convergent questioning and
deductive approaches to problem solving prevalent in many schools to the inductive, interactive, and communal methods prevalent in many racial/ethnic minority cultures. Another area of communication studied by Gay is the organization of ideas during discourse. Gay observed that the mainstream (i.e. Eurocentric) mode of discourse and writing favors a single topic centered, linear organization. Topic centered, linearly organized writing is contrary to prevailing discourse, and writing patterns of many racial/ethnic minority cultures; which tend to use a topic associative construct. The topic associative construct addresses more than one issue at a time, has overlapping explanations, and can often be circular. Gay pointed out topic associative discourse and writing may appear like rambling and disjointed to those unfamiliar with it, which in turn can lead to misperceptions by educators.

Disproportionate representation in special education. There continues to be a persistent racial/ethnic achievement gap associated with the identification of students with disabilities (Elementary and Middle Schools Technical Assistance Center, 2009; Maholmes & Brown, 2002). According to the Elementary and Middle Schools Technical Assistance Center (2009), African American students comprised 14.8% of the general student population; yet they constituted 20.2% of the special education population. White, Hispanic, Asian, and other racial/ethnic groups listed were in proportion to or less than their general population numbers. Educators have studied the issue of disproportionate representation of African-American students in special education and have identified cultural difference being one of the root causes (Elementary and Middle Schools Technical Assistance Center, 2009; Maholmes & Brown, 2002).

Maholmes and Brown (2002) cited national research of disproportionate representation of minorities in special education that revealed African American students were identified as
mentally retarded 2.9 times more than white students. Maholmes and Brown also reported that African American students were identified as emotionally disturbed 1.9 times more than white students and they were 1.3 times more likely to be labeled as having a specific learning disability than their white peers. Maholmes and Brown stated, “it has been well documented that the ecological structure of African-American children’s lives is complex requiring them to develop extensive behavior repertoires that must be demonstrated with greater flexibility in anticipation of problematic situations” (p. 46). Maholmes and Brown also stated, “the meanings and interpretations teachers assign to African-American students’ behavioral presentations are often derived from a deficit perspective” (p. 46). Over-identification of African American students needing special education can result from these teacher perceptions. Maholmes and Brown conclude that a “deficit framework” will be formed and the teacher’s “choices about curriculum, instruction and classroom management are drawn from this perspective” (p. 47).

Banks (2004) also cited research on the disproportionate representation of African American students in special education programs and addressed the same issue with Hispanic/Latino children. Banks pointed out many cognitive and intelligence tests base knowledge on mainstream cultural and verbal cues; many to which ethnic minority students have been exposed. This lack of mainstream knowledge manifests itself as academic achievement gaps, special education referrals, and disengagement from the educational process (p. 13).

Racial and ethnic academic achievement gaps. Federal and state instructional accountability standards, related standardized assessments, and the persistent racial/ethnic achievement gaps associated with those assessments have led educators and researchers to become increasingly concerned about the role cultural diversity may play in educational achievement gaps (Brown, 2007; Gay, 2000; Johnson, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009; Nieto,
In 2007, African American eighth graders averaged 27 points lower than their white counterparts on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading assessment. This 27-point reading gap also existed in the fourth grade between the same two groups. The achievement gap between African American and white eighth graders was 32 points on the NAEP math assessment and 26 points in the fourth grade between the same two groups. Hispanic/Latino eighth graders averaged 25 points lower than their white counterparts on the NAEP reading assessment. The reading gap between Hispanic/Latino and white fourth graders was 26 points. The gaps on the NAEP math assessment were 26 points between Hispanic/Latino and white eighth graders and there was a 21-point gap in fourth grade between the same two groups. These achievement gaps have been long persisted (Aud et al., 2011).

**Disparities in dropout rates.** Racial gaps in public school dropout rates have also long persisted. Table 1 displays available dropout data for the years 2000 to 2008 by race and ethnicity. For the period examined, the dropout rates for African American students have been consistently higher than that of white students. Additionally, the Hispanic/Latino dropout rate has consistently been more than double the African American dropout rate (Aud et al., 2011).

Table 1

*Dropout percentages of 16-24 year-olds, by race/ethnicity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Hispanic/Latino</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Role of Culture

The role culture plays in the public school experiences of racial/ethnic minorities is well documented and supported by research (Dean, 2002; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009; Maholmes & Brown, 2002; Nieto, 1999; Ogbu, 1992, 1994; Verdugo, 2002). Dean (2002) wrote “as we become literate human beings, the impact of culture plays a major role in how we make meaning of the world, and how we understand and develop literacy practices” (p. 4). Gay (2000) asserted,

The cultures of schools and different ethnic groups are not always synchronized completely. These discontinuities can interfere with students’ academic achievement, in part because how students are accustomed to engaging in intellectual processing, self-presentation, and task performance is different from the processes used in school. (p. 12) Ladson-Billings’ (1995, 2009) and Maholmes and Brown’s (2002) research supported the concept of cultural discontinuities in schools. Maholmes and Brown stated, “the perceptual field through which teachers view … students’ learning styles and behavior determines whether they will be pathologized or supported” (p. 46). Ladson-Billings (2006) reinforced this idea of racial/ethnic academic achievement gaps and reminded readers the same cultural gaps exist in dropout rates, enrollment in advanced courses and college admissions. Additionally, Ogbu (1992) summarized that “minorities whose cultural frames of reference are oppositional to the cultural frame of reference of American mainstream culture have greater difficulty crossing cultural boundaries at school to learn” (p. 355). Malloy and Malloy (1998) stated, “pedagogy is predicated on how the teacher interprets, understands, recognizes and integrates the students’ culture within the learning process; how the teacher allows students to construct knowledge based on their experiences; and effective classroom practice” (p. 251). Leonard and Dantley
(2002) also stated, “what teachers do or don’t do to engage minority students . . . has an impact upon these students’ performance on standardized tests and their ability to succeed” (p. 62).

**Purpose**

The purpose of this mixed methods case study was to assess school leaders’ perceptions and dispositions towards cultural responsiveness and determine the impact of their perceptions and dispositions on their schools. The following questions guided this inquiry:

- How do school leaders in an eastern North Carolina school district implement cultural responsiveness?
- What are the common personal and professional characteristics associated with culturally responsive school leaders in an eastern North Carolina school district?
- What culturally responsive practices are present in the schools of culturally responsive school leaders?

**Definition of Terms**

This section lists operational definitions for terms used throughout the study.

- African American – Residents and citizens of the United States who have an African biological and cultural heritage and identity. This term is a synonym of Black or black Americans (Banks & Banks, 2004).
- Asian American – Residents and citizens of the United States who have a biological and cultural heritage that originated in Asia or the Pacific region (Banks & Banks, 2004).
- Cultural discontinuity – when the culture of schools is not synchronized completely with the culture of different ethnic groups (Tyler et al., 2008)
- Culturally relevant pedagogy – an approach to teaching and learning that uses cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, attitudes and serve as a bridge to the mainstream curriculum. This approach to teaching also affirms the student’s own culture and uses various cultures as aspects of the curriculum. This term encompasses a plethora of instructional strategies such as culturally appropriate, culturally congruent, and culturally responsive (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997).

- Cultural responsiveness – gaining insight for understanding of the lack of achievement of students from diverse cultural backgrounds and using positional authority to address the concerns (Gay, 2000; Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997).

- Culture – Ideas, symbols, behaviors, values, and beliefs shared by a human group. This term can also refer to a group’s program for survival or adaptation to surroundings (Banks & Banks, 2004).

- Ethnic group/Ethnicity – a subset of a cultural group sharing a common history, culture, values, behaviors, and other characteristics causing the members to have a shared identity (Banks & Banks, 2004).

- Eurocentric – viewing concepts, events, and situations primarily from the perspectives of European nations and cultures (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997).

- Hispanic/Latino – Residents and citizens of the United States who share a culture, heritage, and language that originated in Spain or Latin America (Banks & Banks, 2004).

- Mainstream culture – the dominant ethnic and cultural group that drives presentation of events, concepts, issues, and problems in a society. The mainstream culture in the
United States white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant (Banks & Banks, 2004; Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997).

- Native American – Residents and citizens of the United States whose biological and cultural heritage began with the original inhabitants of land that now comprises the United States of America. This term is often a synonym of American Indian and Indian (Banks & Banks, 2004).

- Race – refers to divisions of human groups according to physical traits and characteristics (Banks & Banks, 2004, Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997).

- Social justice – belief that citizens have a personal obligation, mediated through political obligations, to help create a society in which the concerns for concrete needs of all persons and the creation of reciprocal interdependence are fundamental (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997).

- Student of color – students in the United States that have historically experienced discrimination because of unique biological characteristics (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997).

- White – Residents and citizens of the United States who have an English biological and cultural heritage and identity. This term also applies to those who have assimilated into the dominant or mainstream culture of the United States (Banks & Banks, 2004).

**Summary**

The United States is experiencing demographic changes. Public schools directly reflect the demographic changes in the larger society (Aud et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2006). Monitoring of public school student performance by educational and government authorities has
shown consistent achievement gaps between students of the mainstream, white culture and those of racial/ethnic minority cultures (Aud et al., 2011; Brown, 2007; Elementary and Middle Schools Technical Assistance Center, 2009; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2009). This study explored perceptions and responses of school principals towards cultural diversity in their schools, common characteristics of those principals and resulting practices in their schools.
Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Introduction

Researchers have acknowledged there is cultural learning that has already taken place in the home before a student attends public schools; however, educators often disregard much of the learning students of racial/ethnic minority backgrounds acquire in the home and bring to school (Duran, 1998; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2006, 2009; Maholmes & Brown, 2002; Nieto, 1999; Ogbu, 1992, 1994; Riehl, 2000; Smith-Maddox, 1998). Researchers have shown that some educators view the cultural norms racial/ethnic minority students bring to school as deficits and as contrary to the mainstream American school environment (Gay, 2000; Ogbu, 1992). This disregard by educators can cause students, their families, and communities to disengage from schools and lead to the cultural discontinuities cited as a major cause of poor educational outcomes occurring along racial/ethnic lines (Gay, 2000; Ogbu, 1992). The aims of this literature review were to illuminate the role culture plays in the public education of non-White students; highlight culturally responsive initiatives undertaken to respond to the increasing diversity in public schools and expound upon the role of the school leader in such initiatives.

Cultural Disconnections

Researchers have also acknowledged that teachers bring their own set of cultural norms and values to bear in the profession. These cultural norms and values are generally those of the European American/White middle class (Bazron, Osher, & Fleischman, 2005; Boske, 2009; Juettner, 2003; Leonard & Dantley, 2002). Table 2 displays the demographic percentages of the American teacher workforce since the year 2000.
Table 2

*Teacher Demographic Percentages Since 2000*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As displayed in Table 2, while the student population of the United States has become more diverse, schools have remained primarily staffed by white females (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Differences in racial, ethnic and cultural background are considered by many to be sources of disconnect between students and their teachers (Bazron et al., 2005; Boske, 2009; Leonard & Dantley, 2002). Tyler et al. (2008) reviewed literature related to cultural values and behaviors of ethnic minority students and those most commonly found in public schools. They reported that one source of the difficulties these students face is “the perceived cultural discontinuity” (p. 280). They further defined cultural discontinuity as “a school based behavioral process where the culture value-based learning preferences and practices of many ethnic minority students – those typically originating from home or parental socialization activities-are discontinued at school” (p. 281).

Tyler et al. (2008) identified the mainstream cultural values of public schools as individualism and competition and as being rooted in the Western European culture. They compared the learning styles and values of racial/ethnic minority cultures to those of the white mainstream culture; particularly those mainstream values conveyed and encouraged in schools. They further asserted that understanding the differences in culture and learning styles is useful in understanding the gaps occurring in student achievement, success, and educational experiences.
along racial/ethnic lines. Table 3 illustrates the various cultural values and learning styles of student culture groups resulting from Tyler et al.’s research.

Table 3

**Cultural Values Among Mainstream and Ethnic/Minority Cultures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture/Group</th>
<th>Salient Cultural Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Communalism, Movement, &amp; Verve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>Collectivism, Conformity to norms, Emotional Self-control, Humility, Family recognition through achievement, Filial piety, &amp; Deference to authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin American</td>
<td>Collectivism &amp; Spatiotemporal fluidity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>Sharing and cooperation, Noninterference, Harmony with nature, Present-time orientation, Deep respect for elders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S./Mainstream</td>
<td>Individualism &amp; Competition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Cultural Responsiveness**

The difficulty some students of racial/ethnic minority ancestry have faced in American public schools has led educators and multicultural scholars to initiate programs, philosophies, and modes of instruction to boost educational outcomes (Brown, 2007; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2009). These instructional philosophies, models, and programs generally fall into the categories of culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally appropriate instruction, culturally congruent instruction and culturally responsive pedagogy (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997). Researchers have shown that the diverse methods used to engage racial and ethnic minority children in acquiring and processing knowledge from learning activities and increase student achievement have been effective (Brown, 2007; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Gay (2000) described culturally responsive pedagogy as possessing the following five characteristics:

1. Acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups as influential to learning and curriculum.
2. Builds bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences as well as between academic abstractions and lived socio-cultural realities.

3. Uses a wide variety of instructional strategies that are connected to different learning styles.

4. Teaches students to know and praise their own and each others’ cultural heritages.

5. Incorporates multicultural information, resources, and materials in all the subjects and skills routinely taught in schools.

Additionally, Peewardy (1999) gave a more specific set of culturally responsive guiding principles. They are:

- Teachers use students’ prior cultural knowledge as a foundation in the teaching and learning process.

- Classroom practices are compatible with students’ language patterns, cognitive functioning, motivation, and the social norm and structures to which they are accustomed.

- Assessment practices and procedures reflect the diversity of student strengths and an appreciation for multiple intelligences.

- The attitudes, beliefs, and actions of the school model respect for cultural diversity, celebrate the contributions of diverse groups, and foster understanding and acceptance of racial and ethnic plurality.

- Teachers value cultural knowledge, view students as assets, and integrate them into classroom instruction.

- Teachers act as cultural mediators, and provide assistance through the use of questions, feedback, and scaffolding.
Schooling provides children with the knowledge, language, and skills to function in the mainstream culture but does not do so at the expense of the students’ Native language and original cultural orientation.

Schooling helps children participate in multiple cultural or language domains (arenas) for different purposes without undermining their connection to their original culture.

The community and the home validate and support the academic success of their children.

Researchers have shown positive effects of culturally responsive programming with students of racial/ethnic minority backgrounds (Bazron et al., 2005; Brown, 2007; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Maholmes & Brown, 2002; Verdugo, 2002). These positive outcomes include, but are not limited to: (a) increased academic achievement; (b) increased task engagement; (c) lower dropout rates; (d) decreased discipline referrals; and (e) reduction in referrals for special education (Bazron et al., 2005; Brown, 2007; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Maholmes & Brown, 2002; Verdugo, 2002).

**Culturally Responsive Initiatives**

Ladson-Billings (1995) studied culturally responsive classrooms and reported that “compared to students in middle class communities, students still lagged behind; but more students in these classrooms were at or above grade level” (p. 475). Ladson-Billings concluded that “classroom observations revealed a variety of demonstrated student achievements too numerous to list” (p. 475). Gay (2000) reported Navajo children became “physically energized, intellectually engaged, and verbally fluent” because of culturally responsive teaching methods (p. 15). Gay listed similar results for teaching methods geared toward Native Hawaiian, Cherokee, and African American students.
Duran (1998) advocated for the use of technology as an instructional tool to address the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students in California. Duran reported positive student engagement and interaction in one school’s “Web Workers” program (p. 221). The “Web Workers” program was a learning community that emphasized active learning and allowed students time to draw connections between subject matter and their personal and social identities via web page creation (p. 221). Duran also reported that a program called “History on the Silver Screen” was successful. The “History on the Silver Screen” was a program in which students were encouraged to utilize broadcast media to re-enact historical events (p. 222). The “History on the Silver Screen” program consisted of instructional units planned cooperatively by students over span of the school year (p. 222). The unit enabled students to engross themselves in other cultures as well as use their unique talents within small groups.

Another program that has shown promise in improving educational outcomes for racial/ethnic minority students is Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) (Gay, 2000). AVID started in 1980 in San Diego’s public schools. Gay (2000) reported that by reinforcing academic interventions with strong social support in an environment of caring, mutual aid, and cultural mediation, academic achievement of Hispanic/Latino and African American students improved tremendously.

Roxas (2008) researched the Rosa Parks Academy located in the United States Midwest. The mission of the school is to respond to the learning needs of pregnant, African American females. The academy develops strong bonds with young mothers, uses flexible scheduling, offers comprehensive services including childcare and medical services, and uses the tenets of culturally responsive teaching. The school takes extra care to ensure the young women know how to communicate within their communities in addition to being versed in academic language.
Ninety percent of students graduate from the school and 100% of the graduates gain acceptance into postsecondary institutions (Roxas, 2008).

**Educational Leadership and Cultural Responsiveness**

Trends in administration of public schools call for school administrators to be instructional leaders and exercise maximum influence over student learning outcomes (Becker, 1992; Glatthorn, 2000; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004; National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2004, 2006; Portin, Schneider, Dearmond & Gundlach, 2003). The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (2009) included the following responsibilities among “powers and duties of principal”: (a) grading and classifying pupils; (b) improving instruction; (c) evaluating teachers; and (d) establishing school improvement plans. The duties outlined in the general statutes directly address the principal’s role as the curriculum and instructional leader in a school building. In this role, the principal has the positional authority and responsibility to ensure that all students have the same opportunities to learn and be successful (Glatthorn, 2000; National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2004, 2006; Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 2009). Literature also provided a picture of the building level administrator’s role in curriculum and instruction as being a very necessary and appropriate role (Glatthorn, 2000; NC State Board of Education, 2006; Portin et al., 2003).

Education reform and societal changes have modified the traditional role of the school administrator as a facilities manager, student disciplinarian, and supervisor of teachers. Additional administrative skills and dispositions are now required to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population (NC State Board of Education, 2006; U.S. Department of Labor, 2010). According to the United States Department of Labor (2010), school leaders not only fulfill a traditional role as curriculum leader and facility manager, but they also
- Meet with other administrators and students, parents, and representatives of community organizations.
- Preside over school based decision making committees
- Make administrative decision based on concerns of parents, teachers, and other members of the community
- Prepare budgets and reports on various subjects, such as finances, attendance and student performance.
- Engage in public relations and fundraising to secure financial support for their schools from local businesses and the community
- Ensure that all students are meeting national, State, and local academic standards.
- Show sensitivity to the needs of a rising number of non-English-speaking students and a culturally diverse student body.
- Consider the rising number of students from single-parent families and teenage parents and support these students and their families.

Administrator roles have grown in large part due to increased accountability and ever changing demographics of student populations (Brown, 2007; NC State Board of Education, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2006). Along with the increased attention on socio-cultural leadership, the federal No Child Left Behind Act has also increased attention on closing academic achievement gaps between subgroups of students; many of which occur along racial/ethnic lines (Boske, 2009; Dean, 2002; Johnson, 2007; Saifer & Barton, 2007). The role of the building principal is important in responding to and assisting teachers in closing achievement gaps (Dean, 2002; Riehl, 2000; Saifer & Barton, 2007).
Culturally Responsive Leadership. The literature reviewed on culturally responsive practices in schools indicated the need for supportive and innovative leadership at the school and/or district level (Boske, 2009; Brown, 2007; Crow, 2007; Dean, 2002; Jackson, 1993; Juettner, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Reyes, Scribner & Scribner, 1999; Riehl, 2000). Without school and district level leadership it is clear that students from racial/ethnic minority groups will continue to lag behind their White peers in overall school success (Duran, 1998; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 1998, 2006, 2009). Davis (2002) concluded, “if we are to begin to create school systems that can enrich the lives of poor and minority children, we must develop a philosophy of leadership that is mindful of the importance of and significance of culture” (p. 5).

A review of educational leadership research revealed three basic principles regarding culturally responsive schools (Boske, 2009; Davis, 2002; Reyes et al., 1999; Riehl, 2000; Verdugo, 2002). The first principle was the school leader setting an example by modeling respect and value for all of students served. Modeling respect and valuing all students was of paramount importance because leadership sets the professional tone for a district or a school building and doing such promotes inclusive practices, which prevents marginalization of students (Davis, 2002; Reyes et al., 1999; Riehl, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2002; Verdugo, 2002). Boske (2009) summarized with “chief school executives must promote school practices that go beyond conventional didactic, individual and whole class methodologies, especially with the need to address the under-education of students from marginalized populations” (p. 116).

The second principle of the culturally responsive leadership was the willingness to confront and eliminate political barriers to culturally responsive methods and practices (Boske, 2009; Davis, 2002; Reyes et al., 1999; Riehl, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2002; Verdugo; 2002). Issues of inequity were often entrenched within the public school power
structure and bureaucracy; therefore, community members and district level leaders may not fully support effective responses to growing diversity. Research supported school leaders contending with political realities and addressing them on behalf of marginalized students (Boske, 2009; Davis, 2002; Reyes et al., 1999; Riehl, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2002; Verdugo; 2002). Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) echoed this principle when they wrote that all school reform measures depend for their success on the motivations and capacities of local leadership. The chance of any reform improving student learning is remote unless district and school leaders agree with its purposes and appreciate what is required to make it work. Local leaders must also, for example, be able to help their colleagues understand how the externally-initiated reform might be integrated into local improvement efforts, provide the necessary supports for those whose practices must change and must win the cooperation and support of parents and others in the local community. So ‘effective’ or ‘successful’ leadership is critical to school reform. (p. 4) The third principle cited was strong and responsive curriculum and instructional leadership by school leaders (Boske, 2009; Davis, 2002; Glatthorn, 1993; Reyes et al., 1999; Riehl, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2002; Verdugo; 2002). Researchers acknowledged that the school leader must recognize curriculum and school policies that are not culturally responsive and advocate ways to improve them for the sake of equity to racial/ethnic minority students. Provision of professional development opportunities related to culture and supplementing traditional curriculum with culturally responsive materials was viewed as essential. Within the principle of strong and responsive instructional leadership were the ideals of the school leader setting student centered master schedules and policies, analysis of human
resource practices, and monitoring special education entitlement (Boske, 2009; Davis, 2002; Glatthorn, 2000; Reyes et al., 1999; Riehl, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2002; Verdugo, 2002).

In 2006, the NC State Board of Education (2006) introduced a new evaluation process for school executives. The new process’ standards are aligned with the leadership principles and standards of the following professional organizations and research institutions: (a) the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium; (b) the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework; (c) the Wallace Foundation; (d) the Mid-continental Regional Education Laboratory; (e) the Southern Regional Education Board; (f) the National Staff Development Council; (g) the National Association of Secondary School Principals; (h) the National Association of Elementary School Principals; (i) the National Middle School Association; (j) the National Policy Board for Educational Administration; and (k) Education Leadership Constituent Council (NC State Board of Education, 2006). The purpose of this alignment was to focus on the leadership practices that most heavily influence student achievement (NC State Board of Education, 2006). The resulting document was the NC Standards for School Executives and its seven standards of leadership. The seven standards of the new evaluation tool are: (a) strategic leadership; (b) instructional leadership; (c) cultural leadership; (d) human resource leadership; (e) managerial leadership; (f) external development leadership; and (g) micro political leadership (NC State Board of Education, 2006). Strongly embedded throughout the standards is the need for strong administrative leadership in the area of curriculum and instruction (NC State Board of Education, 2006). More specifically, the new evaluation standards contained principles directly related to culturally responsive leadership. The vision statement of the new standards read in part “the moral purpose of school leadership is to create schools in which all students learn, the
The gap between high and low performance is greatly diminished and what students learn will prepare them for success in their futures, not ours” (NC State Board of Education, 2006, p. 1). The third standard of the new document was entitled “cultural leadership” and included the statement,

School executives will understand and act on the understanding of the important role a school’s culture contributes to the exemplary performance of the school. School executives must support and value the traditions, artifacts, symbols and positive values and norms of the school and community that result in a sense of identity and pride upon which to build a positive future …. Cultural leadership implies understanding the school as the people in it each day, how they came to their current state, and how to connect with their traditions in order to move them forward to support the school’s efforts to achieve individual and collective goals. (p. 4)

Within the practices listed as evidences of accomplishment of the third standard is “visibly supports the positive, culturally responsive traditions of the school community” (NC State Board of Education, 2006, p. 4). The NC State Board of Education concluded the standards with their Future Ready Students mission statement which read both “every learning environment will be inviting, respectful, supportive, inclusive, and flexible for student success” and “every school provides an environment in which each child has positive, nurturing relationships with caring adults” (p. 8).

**Administrators’ Role in Culturally Responsive Change.** School leaders play an important role in influencing teacher learning through provision of professional development. In order to reach and improve outcomes for culturally diverse students, teachers need to be able to acquire knowledge of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic influences on learning in addition to
learning effective teaching strategies. School leaders have a responsibility to build capacity in staff for all students to be able to learn effectively (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Gay, 2000; Glatthorn, 2000).

Ladson-Billings (2009) explored several characteristics of successful, culturally responsive teachers. In the study, teachers made several statements regarding administrative impact on the curriculum. The teachers’ statements generally addressed the requirement to use textbooks and materials that particular teachers felt were not culturally responsive and not conducive to teaching their diverse student population. In many of the cases studied, teachers silently or vocally objected to the system and did what they felt was right for their students. Ladson-Billings went on to list ideas to help administrators foster attitudes and ethos toward more culturally responsive methods. The list included: (a) recruiting teachers that have expressed a desire to work with minority students; (b) providing staff development to help teachers understand the central role of culture in education; (c) giving teachers the space to critique the status quo and allowing them to be change agents or not; (d) requiring teachers to be immersed in the predominant minority culture; (e) allowing teachers to observe accomplished culturally relevant teachers; and (f) advocate for longer periods of student teaching (p. 143).

Marshall (2009) offered a grim assessment of public schools today by stating that, “the evidence is now overwhelming that if you take an average low income child and put him into an average American public school, he will almost certainly come out poorly educated” (p. 653). Marshall offered several suggestions to educators on how to turn negative student achievement trends around. Marshall suggested an intense focus on high quality instruction; beginning with school leadership. Marshall stated “good teaching helps all students, but it gives the biggest boost to students who enter classrooms with low achievement” (p. 652). Marshall encouraged
principals to conduct “frequent unannounced classroom visits, give each teacher prompt face-to-face feedback, refuse to tolerate mediocre or low quality teaching, and work with teacher teams and instructional coaches to maximize adult and student learning” (p. 653).

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (2004, 2006) has developed an implementation process for culturally responsive change. They recommend: (a) establishing an action planning team; (b) analyzing data to identify areas to improve; (c) assessing conditions in the building and developing a plan of action; and (d) reporting details to stakeholders. National Association of Secondary School Principals stressed the importance of team selection and the tone the administrator sets for the team as they embark upon their tasks. Glatthorn (1993, 2000) advocated for school leaders to work directly with teachers by: (a) making a learner centered master schedule; (b) focusing on integrated units of study as opposed to singular daily plans; (c) aligning the written, taught, and learned curricula; (d) developing enrichment and remediation plans; and (e) evaluating the total curriculum continuously.

Summary

As our nation rapidly becomes more diverse, the urgency has increased for all children to have the best opportunities to be academically competitive and successful (Brown, 2007; Gay, 2000; Johnson, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009; Nieto, 1999). However, persistent school achievement gaps between students of ethnic/minority heritage and their white peers have collectively grown into what Ladson-Billings (2006) has termed an “education debt” (p. 3). Ladson-Billings argued now is the time to pay off this “debt” and ensure that all children have equal opportunity to succeed in our rapidly changing world.

Many students from minority racial/ethnic groups have not been as successful in school as children from the white, mainstream culture; which has been the impetus for many of the change movements in public schools (Brown, 2007; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2009). One
such movement is the culturally responsive schools movement (Dean, 2002; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009; Maholmes & Brown, 2002; Nieto, 1999; Ogbu, 1992, 1994; Verdugo, 2002). Research has shown the power, authority, and responsibility of school leaders to afford all students maximum opportunity to learn (Boske, 2009; Davis, 2002; Glatthorn, 2000; Reyes et al., 1999; Riehl, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2002; Verdugo, 2002).

Effective schools research has highlighted the school leader as the central figure in ensuring the success of curricular matters (Becker, 1992; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Gay, 2000; Glatthorn, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2002). The school principal is the individual held accountable for a plethora of outcomes; including student achievement (Glatthorn, 2000; Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 2009). The research also highlighted the principal as the visionary of learning for all students (Becker, 1992; Boske, 2009; Crow, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Gay, 2000; Glatthorn, 2000). School leaders have a legal mandate and moral imperative to influence curriculum in a culturally responsive manner (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Glatthorn, 2000). It is ultimately up to the leader to be involved and cognizant of methods to reach all children (Becker, 1992; Boske, 2009; Crow, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Gay, 2000; Glatthorn, 2000). By setting an example that educators must understand the unique backgrounds of all the students they serve, removing barriers to allow cultural responsiveness and arranging ongoing staff development for teachers; it is believed achievement gap trends can begin to turn around (Gay, 2000; Glatthorn, 2000).
Chapter Three
Methodology

The aim of this mixed methods case study was to assess school leaders’ perceptions and dispositions towards cultural responsiveness and determine the impact of their perceptions and dispositions on their schools. The following questions guided this inquiry:

- How do school leaders in an eastern North Carolina school district implement cultural responsiveness?
- What are the common personal and professional characteristics associated with culturally responsive school leaders in an eastern North Carolina school district?
- What culturally responsive practices are present in the schools of culturally responsive school leaders?

To offset disadvantages of a solely quantitative or qualitative research design, mixed methods research strategies as described by Creswell (2003) as well as Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) were used in for this study. Creswell (2003) stated the mixing of qualitative and quantitative strategies allows convergence and triangulation of different data sources. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) described mixed methods research as having “emerged as a separate orientation during only the past 20 years” (p. 7) and identified the methods as an alternative to qualitative and quantitative traditions, which enables the researcher whatever tools may be required to answer the research questions. Creswell (2003) traced the beginning of mixed methods back to 1959 “when Campbell and Fiske used multiple methods to study validity of psychological traits” (p. 15). Creswell continued to detail how “this prompted others to mix methods, and soon approaches associated with field methods such as observations and interviews (qualitative data) were combined with traditional surveys (quantitative data)” (p. 15).
More specifically, a case study design using multiple field cases helped to answer the research questions guiding the study (Creswell, 2003; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 1994; Sommer & Sommer, 1997; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Creswell (2003) defined a case study as one in which the researcher “explores in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process or one or more individuals” (p. 15). Creswell continued, “the cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time” (p. 15). Sommer and Sommer (1997) defined a case study as “an in depth investigation of a single instance” (p. 193) and wrote that the use of individual cases can be used to a researchers advantage because they catch the reader’s interest. In regards to multiple case sampling, Miles and Huberman (1994) indicated that looking at a range of similar and contrasting cases can help in understanding single case findings. In sampling multiple cases, Miles and Huberman stated the researcher can strengthen the “precision, validity, and the stability of the findings” (p. 29). They further asserted that studying multiple cases and conducting cross case analyses increased the generalizability of a study and allowed for more informed, powerful explanations. Yin (1994) concurred that studying multiple cases produced a more compelling and robust study.

Overview

In this study, I invited 14 principals to participate in a quantitative survey consisting of two scales. I used the first scale of the survey to assess cultural competence in the areas of: (a) training and staff development; (b) school’s capacity to provide culturally competent services; (c) provision of culturally competent materials; and (d) administration. I used the second scale of the survey as a tool to assess the principals’ understanding, acceptance, and beliefs on teaching for social justice. A copy of the full survey and subsequent results are located in
Appendices A and E, respectively. Based on survey responses, the six highest scoring principals were selected for a qualitative data collection phase.

During the qualitative phase, I interviewed the six individual principals, and in their respective schools, I conducted observations and teacher focus groups. Copies of the principal interview and teacher focus group protocols are in Appendices B and C, respectively. A copy of the checklist used to conduct field observations is in Appendix D. This qualitative data collection phase served to provide clearer understanding of the survey results. I integrated the quantitative and qualitative findings in the final phase of the study in order to answer the research questions. Figure 1 displays a basic flow map of the study.

![Flow Map of Research Study](image)

The quantitative survey instrument was developed from the research of the California Department of Public Health (2009) and Enterline, Cochran-Smith, Ludlow and Mitescu (2008). The qualitative interview and focus group protocols were developed from the research of Ladson-Billings (2009), Weaver (2009), and McPhail and Costner (2004). The observation protocol used was the School-wide Cultural Competence Observation Checklist (SCCOC) created by Bustamante and Nelson (2007).

**Quantitative instrument.** The California Department of Public Health’s (2009) Linguistic and Cultural Competency Self-Assessment Survey for Family Planning, Access, Care, and Treatment (PACT) providers is a self-assessment tool that I used as the first scale of the
survey. The PACT assessment was designed by university researchers and professionals in the medical field to help plan professional development and improve client service delivery for health care providers (p. 14). The creators developed the instrument to aid in the development of a “realistic plan for continued growth in the area of linguistic and cultural competence” (p. 14). The survey instrument assessed the quality of culturally responsive services provided at different points of contact and uses 3-point scale with the choices of “yes”, “no”, “don’t know” or “not applicable.” The survey measured cultural competence in the areas of: (a) training and staff development; (b) agency’s capacity to provide culturally competent services; (c) provision of culturally competent materials; and (d) administration.

Enterline et al.’s (2008) Learning to Teach for Social Justice Beliefs Scale (LTSJ-B) was part of a larger suite of surveys designed to measure the long-term effect of a teacher’s education on beliefs about teaching for social justice. The LTSJ-B comprised the second scale of the survey. An interdisciplinary team developed the scale and used a 5-point Likert scale with the choices of “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “uncertain”, “agree” and “strongly disagree.” The scale operated on the psychometric assumption that people differ from one another in understanding, accepting, believing and preparing to teach in a socially just manner; ranging from weak to strong levels. The LTSJ-B Scale developed from previously published surveys loosely related to social justice; however, the creators drafted most items new based on social justice research. The creators of the scale conducted a series of pilot tests, selected, and integrated the final set of the scale’s 12 items into the larger suite of surveys. Reliability analyses for the LTSJ-B resulted in a Cronbach’s alpha of .80.

The results from the survey of the 13 principals that participated are located in Appendix E. Questions one through 28 on the survey comprised the first scale of the survey and assessed
cultural competence in the areas of (a) training and staff development; (b) capacity to provide culturally competent services; (c) provision of culturally competent materials; and (d) administration. The questions were answered using a 3-point scale with the choices of “yes”, “no”, “don’t know or not applicable.” Questions 29 through 40 comprised the second scale of the survey and measured the administrators’ beliefs about teaching for social justice. The scale used for the second portion of the survey was a 5-point Likert scale with the choices of “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “uncertain”, “agree”, and “strongly disagree.” Each response of “yes” on the first scale earned a respondent one point toward the total score. There were items on the second scale of the survey that were reverse scored; therefore the respondent earned one point toward the total score for a response of “strongly agree” or “strongly disagree” on the appropriate end of the Likert scale. The first scale had 28 possible points and the second scale had 12 possible points. There were 40 total possible points on the entire survey. Copies of the full survey and subsequent results are located in Appendices A and E, respectively.

Qualitative methods. Qualitative data collection methods consisted of field observations, interviews with principals, and focus groups with teachers. Principal interview and focus group protocols were created from similar interviews and focus groups completed by Ladson-Billings (2009), McPhail and Costner (2004), and Weaver (2009). Additional focus group questions were developed from Bustamante, Nelson, and Onwuegbuzie’s (2009) research on cultural competence in schools. Ladson-Billings’ ethnographic teacher interviews were conducted with individual teachers in an effort to identify successful teachers of African American children and consisted of 11 questions. Weaver interviewed school principals and teachers during a study of principal attitudes toward culturally responsive pedagogy and
culturally responsive leadership in predominately African American schools. Weaver’s interview protocols consisted of 13 questions for principals and 10 questions for teachers.

McPhail and Costner (2004) conducted research in the community college setting and aimed to prepare faculty to respond to increased cultural diversity on campuses. McPhail and Costner concluded with the following seven principles for training a culturally responsive: (a) structure professional development activities that focus on cultural responsiveness; (b) ensure that all faculty respect the culture of their students; (c) value and celebrate culture and promote cultural sensitivity; (d) embrace an empowerment culture; (e) communicate the college's commitment to cultural responsiveness; (f) take away barriers that impede progress; and (g) help faculty to use effective pedagogical methods. Accompanying the principles are 25 questions to ponder. For this study, I combined similar and overlapping questions from each of the aforementioned researchers’ work and concluded with an interview and focus group protocol consisting of 14 questions.

I conducted field observations using Bustamante and Nelson’s (2007) School-Wide Cultural Competence Observations Protocol (SCCOC). Bustamante and Nelson developed the SCCOC as a way to assess how well a school responds to the needs of diverse groups. The SCCOC is a checklist of practices and procedures in areas deemed most important in responding to diverse student bodies. The SCCOC is comprised of eight observation areas/domains and 33 subsequent criteria. The domains were: (a) school vision and mission; (b) curriculum; (c) student interaction and leadership; (d) teachers; (e) teaching and learning; (f) parents and outer community; (g) conflict management; and (h) assessments. Each domain is divided into criteria; of which there were 33 total on the original instrument. The observer uses a 5-point Likert scale to rank their observation within each domain. The checklist also has space for qualitative notes.
of the observer. Bustamante and Nelson developed the SCCOC for use as part of a larger, mixed methods audit of school culture and based it on interdisciplinary practices regarding responses to cultural diversity. Construct validity was established by purposively sampling 151 school professionals in two Western states (Bustamante et al., 2009). Bustamante et al. conducted an exploratory factor analysis that revealed two domains in the areas of policy and practice that were consistent with research on organizational cultural competence. Results revealed that the SCCOC contained two factors: policy and practice. The policy factor yielded a reliability coefficient of .97 and the practice factor yielded a reliability coefficient of .89.

Bustamante and Nelson’s SCCOC was used to conduct school wide observations during the qualitative data collection phase of this study. School documents, campus walkthroughs, focus groups, exemplar principal survey, principal interview data were all used as sources of information to complete the checklist. Six criteria were not observable due to the limited nature of the study. After analyzing the observation data, the frequency of occurrence of each of the criteria was determined. Criteria that had a frequency of occurrence of five or six were selected for further use in the study. Full criteria frequency data can be located in Appendix F.

Setting

The setting for this study was school district in eastern North Carolina comprised of 36 schools. The district served more than 23,235 students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. The system operated 35 schools with 16 elementary, six kindergarten through 8th grade schools, seven middle schools, six high schools, and a pre-kindergarten center. There was also an intensive support school for exceptional children. A new elementary school opened during the course of the study. Although the entire county population was predominately white, the school
system served a predominantly African American population. The overall student population was 49% African American, 39% white, 7% Hispanic, and 5% other races.

Since 2005, the school system underwent major redistricting within the city limits of its urban core twice and was undergoing a third at the time of this study. The federal government has been very involved in this process. Due to changing demographics, the county was in danger of violating legal precedents establishing desegregation in public schools. The current superintendent had made it a goal of the system to comply with federal desegregation orders dating back to the early 1970s and become a unitary system as declared by the federal courts. Additionally, the school system redrew attendance lines as new schools opened to meet increasing enrollment. These actions caused a rift within the community along cultural, racial, and socioeconomic lines. Parent groups on opposing sides of the issue came forth to monitor the redistricting plans. One group supported neighborhood schools and the other group supported a plan for student reassignment along socioeconomic, racial, or academic proficiency bases. Parents from both sides of the issue expressed their displeasure with the Board’s redistricting plan and sought alternatives for their student’s education such as home, private, and charter schooling.

Participants

Participants in the study were selected from a purposive sample of two high school principals, one middle school principal, ten elementary school principals, and one kindergarten – eighth grade school principal. These 14 principals and schools were selected because they were the only schools in the district that had retained the same principal for at least one year prior to the start of the study. I chose to use at least one year in a particular school building as a baseline for choosing participants due to the large principal turnover rate in the district at the time. I also
considered one year in a school building as a sufficient amount of time to have minimally affected the school culture in some manner. I invited the selected principals to participate in the online survey via email. Table 4 displays the demographics of the 14 principals invited to participate in the online survey and their overall survey scores. One principal of the 14 did not participate in the study.

Table 4

*Principal Demographic Data with Survey Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>Survey Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal A</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Elementary (K-5)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal B</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Elementary (K-5)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal C</td>
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<td>Elementary (K-5)</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principal D</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal F</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Black</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Kindergarten-Eighth Grade</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principal H</td>
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<td>White</td>
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<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>White</td>
<td>Elementary (K-5)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal J</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Principal N</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Middle (6-8)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Principal J did not participate in the survey.

The purposive survey sample was predominantly white female. Of the 13 principals that self selected to participate in the online survey, nine of them were white and five were black. In the area of gender, females comprised 10 of the 13. In particular, white females comprised six of the 13 while black females comprised four of the 13. There were two white males and one black male in the purposive survey sample.

The group of 13 principals reported their ages as ranging from 36 to 60 years old. Eleven of the principals reported ages between 41 and 55 years old; and eight of them were between the ages of 46 and 55 years old. Nearly 85% of the group reported an upbringing in the southern
United States. Six of the 13 had attended [North Carolina University] for their undergraduate preparation and 11 of the 13 reported having attended [North Carolina University] for graduate school.

I ranked all of the principals according to their survey scores and identified the top six scoring principals as exemplars for further study. The top six scorers were selected as exemplars since their survey responses most positively aligned with a culturally responsive disposition. The exemplars were Principals E, F, G, K, M, and N. The exemplar group was comprised of, (a) one African American female elementary principal; (b) one African American male elementary principal; (c) one African American female kindergarten – eighth grade school principal; (d) one white female high school principal; (e) one white female elementary principal; and (f) one African American female middle school principal. I conducted follow up interviews with the six exemplar principals and conducted focus groups and observations within their respective schools.

I invited all teachers in the six schools via email and/or sign-up sheet to join teacher focus groups. I assigned each volunteer a number and had a non-volunteer staff member randomly pick five numbers within a given range. The individual teachers whose corresponding numbers were selected formed the focus group.

Profiles of the Exemplar Principals

Principal E. Principal E was a black female, born and raised in a small, rural eastern North Carolina farming town. She was educated in segregated schools and experienced integration upon enrolling in high school. She stated that she experienced flagrant racism and was discouraged from attending a 4-year university after graduation because she was an average student. Principal E reported that a local townsman assisted her with applying for college and
scholarships and she received acceptance at each and attended the one that offered her the best financial aid package. She went on to attend graduate school out of state in and returned home to work as a counselor at her high school alma mater. Subsequently, she worked as a math teacher, dropout prevention counselor, and a school administrator at all levels of schools.

Principal F. Principal F was a black male, born and raised in a small, urban town of eastern North Carolina. He reported that he was educated in the local high school and attended the closest local university for both undergraduate and graduate school. His initial background in education was working with special education students and then in an alternative school setting. Subsequently, he went on to work as an administrator in elementary, middle and high schools in small towns and in large cities. Principal F also had a stint at the state education department as a consultant after his many successes in various schools.

Principal G. Principal G was a black female, born and raised in a segregated environment in an eastern North Carolina small town. She received her undergraduate, graduate, and post graduate degrees all from the same local eastern North Carolina university. She was near retirement at the time of the study.

Principal K. Principal K was a white female, born and raised in a small, rural farming community in southeastern North Carolina. She got married and had children directly out of high school. She enrolled in a community college and attended a small, private Baptist college in her late twenties. She worked as a middle school teacher for many years and went to school at night to obtain her administrative license. She became a middle and high school assistant principal and served as head principal of a middle and high school.

Principal M. Principal M was a white female, born in upstate New York into a military family. Due to her father’s military status, the family was transient and lived multiple places.
She was educated primarily in North Carolina in public schools after integration. She had not experienced integration in New York and reported she did not become aware of racial type issues until moving to North Carolina in the early 1970s. She grew up primarily in a small rural, eastern North Carolina town. She attended a private university before returning to eastern North Carolina to teach in a very impoverished area of eastern North Carolina. She went on to receive both her administrative and doctoral degrees from the same local eastern North Carolina university and serve as an administrator, principal and central office director.

**Principal N.** Principal N was a black female, born and raised in a small eastern North Carolina town along the coast. She was the daughter of educators, attended integrated schools her whole life and had many positive public school experiences. She attended a large, public university away from her home for her undergraduate preparation. She taught elementary school and obtained her graduate degree from the local, eastern North Carolina public university. She served as an elementary and middle school assistant principal and had served as an elementary and middle school principal.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

I collected data from surveys, focus groups, interviews, and field observations. The principals were administered the survey electronically via the Survey Monkey website. The survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. I selected the six principals whose surveys most positively aligned with a culturally responsive disposition for follow up interviews. I recorded the interviews using a digital audio recorder and subsequently transcribed, coded and analyzed the interviews. To connect principal leadership with building practices, I conducted follow up focus groups of teachers working for the exemplar principals. The focus groups were
recorded using a digital audio recorder and conversations were subsequently transcribed, coded, and analyzed.

Coding procedures for the interviews and focus groups consisted of open and axial coding across each case studied (Merriam, 2009). Open coding consisted of reading through transcripts and field notes, making notations in the margins, identifying useful segments of data, and grouping the data segments into categories (Merriam, 2009). Axial coding consisted of grouping the categories into larger themes. I then used the themes generated to aid in answering each of the guiding research questions (Merriam, 2009). I also conducted observations at each school and school related documents were analyzed using the SCCOC. The domains and criteria on the SCCOC guided the observations and associated document analysis. Copies of the principal interviews, focus group protocol and SCCOC are located in Appendices A, B, and C, respectively. Full observation, focus group, and principal interview data can be located in Appendices F, G, and H, respectively.

**Summary**

To summarize this chapter, each of the study’s research questions is restated in Table 5. Each research question appears next to the data collection methods used to answer them.

**Table 5**

*Research Questions and Corresponding Data Collection Methods*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Corresponding Method</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do school leaders in an eastern North Carolina school district implement cultural responsiveness?</td>
<td>Principal surveys and principal interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the common personal and professional characteristics associated with culturally responsive school leaders in an eastern North Carolina school district?</td>
<td>Principal survey and principal interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What culturally responsive practices are present in the schools of culturally responsive school leaders?

Teacher focus groups and field observations

Limitations

A limitation of this study was that I worked in the school district as an administrator; which may have caused participants to respond to study procedures in ways they thought favorable. Another limitation of this study was the relatively small number of participants and the fact that the entire study took place in a single school system. An additional limitation was my own African American cultural background, which may have been a source of researcher bias. Another limitation to the study was the participants’ own cultural backgrounds and reported bouts with discrimination which would have an influence on their responses to study questions.

Final limitations to the study were the instruments utilized. The quantitative instruments used were originally developed for use in other settings or with other populations other than school administrators. The interview protocols developed for this study were derived from interviews originally designed for use in other settings or with other populations other than school administrators.

Delimitations

The study was delimited to principals who had served two years in their respective schools, within the school system studied.
Chapter Four

Results

The aim of this mixed methods case study was to assess school leaders’ perceptions and dispositions towards cultural responsiveness and determine the impact of their perceptions and dispositions on their schools. The following questions guided this inquiry:

- How do school leaders in an eastern North Carolina school district implement cultural responsiveness?
- What are the common personal and professional characteristics associated with culturally responsive school leaders in an eastern North Carolina school district?
- What culturally responsive practices are present in the schools of culturally responsive school leaders?

This chapter offers the results of the study. The chapter sections correspond to each research question. I answer each research question using the combined results of principal surveys, principal interviews, focus groups, and school-wide observations.

Research Question 1: How do school leaders in an eastern North Carolina school district implement cultural responsiveness?

The exemplar principals displayed a generally strong, positive view of themselves as culturally responsive leaders. There were also areas where they saw the need for continued personal development and continued improvement of the schools they lead in regards to responding to cultural diversity. Survey and interview data were used to answer this research question. Copies of the survey and interview protocols are located in Appendices A and B, respectively.
The first scale of the survey was comprised of questions clustered into the following factor areas: (a) training and staff development; (b) agency’s capacity to provide culturally competent services; (c) provision of culturally competent materials; and (d) administration. When asked a series of questions related to providing culturally responsive training and professional development in their schools, the six exemplar principals felt strongly that they were providing appropriate training to their staffs on meeting the needs of diverse stakeholders. The survey factor related to culturally responsive training and professional development in the exemplars’ schools yielded 85% agreement from the six principals. Analysis of the survey factor related to the ability of their administrations to respond appropriately to culture, 73% of the exemplar administrators agreed that their administrations had a strong ability to understand and respond to stakeholder needs.

The survey factor related to the capacity of their schools to respond to cultural diversity, the exemplar principals were in agreement with 69% of the questions. The 69% average response of “yes” signifies an overall positive belief of the exemplars that their schools are equipped and capable of responding to diverse stakeholder needs. The average “no” response was 24% that revealed areas in their schools where the exemplar principals felt needed improvement. The final factor of the first scale of the survey related to provision of culturally responsive materials to stakeholders. As evidenced by survey data, the exemplar principals viewed the provision of culturally responsive materials to stakeholders in a mostly positive manner; however, they did note areas that needed improvement. The principals’ were in agreement with items in the culturally responsive materials to stakeholders factor 56% of the time; and they were in disagreement 44% of the time.
Analysis of the second scale of the survey revealed a generally strong understanding, acceptance, disposition toward, and belief in social justice principles by the exemplar principals. The exemplars displayed the strongest average rating scores on nine of the 12 questions. There were three questions where the exemplar principals showed weaker dispositions towards social justice principles. The questions where the exemplars showed the strongest dispositions were:
(a) an important part of teaching is examining one’s own attitudes and beliefs about race, class, gender, disabilities and sexual orientation; (b) for the most part, covering multicultural topics is only relevant to certain subject areas; (c) good teaching incorporates diverse cultures and experiences into classroom lessons and discussions; (d) the most important goal in working with immigrant children and English language learners is that they assimilate into American society; (e) it’s reasonable for teachers to have lower classroom expectations for students who do not speak English as their first language; (f) economically disadvantaged students have more to gain in schools because they bring less into the classroom; (g) although teachers have to appreciate diversity, it’s not their job to change society; (h) whether students succeed in school depends primarily on how hard they work; and (i) realistically, the job of a teacher is to prepare students for the lives they are likely to lead. The questions where the exemplars showed the weakest dispositions toward social justice were: (a) issues related to racism and inequity should be openly discussed in the classroom; (b) part of the responsibilities for a teacher is to challenge school arrangements that maintain societal inequities; and (c) teachers should teach students to think critically about government positions and actions. Full survey results are located in Appendix E.

The exemplar principals participated in follow up interviews. These interviews served to provide more insight on the survey findings. The interview protocol can be located in Appendix B. An analysis of interview data generated five large themes related to the first research
question. The five recurring themes among the exemplar principal group were: (a) the importance of building relationships and rapport; (b) the importance of providing varied professional development activities surrounding diversity; (c) the need to build capacity for equity within schools; (d) promoting patience within teachers and; (e) maintaining high professional and behavioral expectations of teachers and students. A full list of codes and themes gathered from the principal interviews is located in Appendix H.

**Theme 1: Building relationships.** Each of the six exemplar principals offered strong statements on the necessity to build relationships with students and parents. Examples of statements from the exemplar group include Principal N stating, “I encourage teachers to develop critical relationships with parents and to get to know their children.” Principal E offered, “You have to love them, so you need to know something about the background of the different cultures, particularly when you look at our children who come from so many socio-economic standings.” The exemplar group offered varied ways of building these relationships with their stakeholders. The exemplar principals listed home visits, phone calls, writing letters and engaging in community activities as ways to better connect with students. The group of top scoring principals underscored the belief in the importance of relationship building in responding to cultural diversity by making statements such as when Principal G declared, “children and their parents are not really interested in what you know until they know how much you care.” Principal K added, “I encourage them to connect with students on a personal basis to get to know that student, how that student is motivated, to understand where they are coming from, so that they can better help them adjust and be successful.” Principal N continued further and underscored the importance of this theme by stating,
Anytime we have an opportunity to talk with families, those give us insight into what children are experiencing or have experienced and it gives us knowledge about how best to serve them, and I encourage them to use lots of different methods of communication.

**Theme 2: Varied professional development.** Analysis of principal exemplar interview data revealed a strong belief in the school leaders’ roles of offering varied professional development to support teacher learning and understanding of diverse student backgrounds. Five of the exemplar principals admitted that the majority of the professional development they supported focused on socioeconomic and learning styles diversity more than specific cultural diversity. Principal M stated, “I haven’t really addressed it as far as ethnic background or racial diversity as much as I have tried to address the socioeconomic differences.” Principal F was the only member of the exemplar group who stated they specifically offered professional development related to cultural diversity; but each member of the exemplar group stated they offered professional development related to teaching children of poverty, motivating students, and engaging students in learning. All members of the exemplar group agreed there needed to be more formalized training in the area of specific cultural responsiveness and all had started discussions with their teachers on the topic. Several statements throughout the interviews exemplified this theme such as Principal G stating, “our professional learning teams do a lot of working with teachers and helping them to understand children’s needs,” and Principal E recognizing that, “the kids are so different and we are the people who sometimes have to change. We have to change our way of thinking.” In speaking of their school, Principal N stated, “when we do professional development activities, we try to incorporate live experiences. We talk about scenarios that our children may have either in the community or at school.” Principal N added, “one of our biggest things with professional development is language and using language,
recognizing that students have a language they are accustomed to but then there is a school language and help bridging the gap between the two.”

**Theme 3: Building capacity for equity.** Each principal in the exemplar group expressed a need and desire to build more capacity for increased equity among students in their respective schools. The theme of building capacity for equity generally involved provision of school supplies and other materials for students in need, mobilizing formal and informal school community partners to assist struggling students of diverse backgrounds, and increasingly urgency among school staff to make equity a priority. Principal K was adamant that, “materials and supplies should not be an issue.” Principal K stated, “we work very closely with our school social workers and counselors and the administrators are paired with a counselor so they together work with the same group of kids.” Principal K ensured students had materials they needed by printing workbooks on site and providing a clothing closet for students in need. The group of principals also expressed the need to build a sense of urgency among personnel to accept equity as a goal. Principal E passionately declared, “kids are so different and we are the people that sometimes have to change. We have to change our way of thinking.” Principals E, K, and N shared that they meet with various school committees to assess the needs of their students and strategize how to address the needs. Principal N stated they meet weekly with department chairs to discuss why some children are not being successful and what they can do as a team to “fix it.” Principal N also stated, “one of the biggest things I think we do is identify what is the issue and where are the gaps and what can we do to plug those holes.” Principal M even expressed a desire to serve diverse students better by hiring parent involvement specialists and establishing “satellite places” in the community where parents can come and meet in an effort to remove another barrier to the success of their diverse students.
Theme 4: Promoting patience. A fourth theme that emerged from all six exemplars was their desire for their teachers to adopt positive and patient attitudes towards various forms of student diversity. Each exemplar principal agreed that adult attitudes are pivotal in responding to student diversity. Principal E stated, “I remind them [teachers] that I treat every child in this building the same way I would want my child treated and if you do that then you have an expectation for them and you are removing one barrier.” Principal E added, I think teachers come in with blinders on as far as what they expect the children to know coming to school. We have to remove ourselves from that attitude and that teacher attitude and put ourselves at a level where children are going to be able to relate to what we are saying.

Principal F’s approach to promoting this patience revolves around using “professional development, formal and informal observations, school improvement meetings, open houses and any other opportunity to drill the message consistently.” The following statement from Principal M underscores this theme: “I think an invisible barrier is for teachers and staff to understand the world through another person’s eyes.”

Theme 5: Maintaining high expectations. The final theme that emerged from data analysis was that of maintaining high professional expectations of the teachers and high academic and behavior expectations of all students regardless of background. Principals E and G stressed the importance of holding teachers accountable for teaching appropriate academic content and behavioral expectations. Principal G stated, “behavior really has to be taught … I think this is a key way to deter some of the discipline rather than having always to write up something because you think it’s wrong and it’s not in your culture.” Principal E stated,
We don’t yell. We always have to demand a respectful environment when dealing with the children … I am not always going to send children home … sometimes it’s going to be talking to the child maybe putting an intervention in place, setting up a contract or giving an incentive.

Principal F stated, “we have a discipline matrix we follow and we try to keep things consistent” when referring to teacher expectations for classroom management. When speaking of student expectations, Principal K stated, “we have to be sensitive to the needs that have been brought to the table, but you always have to be fair and consistent and we have a very strong [discipline] policy.” When speaking of teacher expectations, Principal N said they “remind teachers not to be quick to judge students” and instead encourages them to find out what is at the center of any given issue.” Principal N also stated they “remind teachers at the beginning of every year that what they do in the classroom directly impacts student behavior … so if you have high student engagement you will have limited behavior issues.” All of the exemplars stated they encourage teachers to maintain mutually respectful environment by speaking to children in appropriate tones and taking time to teach appropriate behaviors.

**Research Question 2: What are the common personal and professional characteristics associated with culturally responsive school leaders in an eastern North Carolina school district?**

Common characteristics among the exemplar principals emerged during the study. Three characteristics were strongly evidenced across the group of exemplars. Survey and interview data were used to answer this research question.

**Characteristic 1: Small town life.** All of the exemplar principals listed their experiences with being raised in a small town as having an impact on their adult development. Principals E, G, M,
and N reported they were raised in small, rural towns in the eastern part of North Carolina and Principal F reported being raised in a small semi-urban town in eastern North Carolina. Principal K reported having been raised in a small, rural area of southeastern North Carolina.

Principals E and G were both: (a) African American females; (b) born and raised in small farming towns; (c) educated partially in segregated schools; and (d) experienced school integration. Both Principals E and G reported heavy racial tensions in their towns at the time and pointed to the persistent support of their respective small communities to ensure their success as a major reason why they were able to attend college.

Principals K and M were both white females that pointed to small town events as important in their personal development. Principal K pointed to the small size of her community as the reason why she was so close to children of other races as a child. Principal K stated they considered many African American children as siblings and did not understand why race and culture was such a divisive factor outside of their family farm. Principal M also pointed to having friends and acquaintances of other races growing up in small towns in New York and North Carolina as a reason why they did not fully understand why race and culture was such a divisive issue until much later in childhood.

**Characteristic 2: Diverse backgrounds and experiences.** Principals E, F, G, and N self identified as racial/ethnic minorities (67%) and Principals E, G, K, M, and N were female (83%). Principals E, G, and N (50%) belonged to a double historical minority in that they were both a racial and ethnic minority and female. Of the 13 principal participants in the initial survey, five (38%) of the group identified themselves as a racial/ethnic minority, 10 of them (77%) identified themselves as females and four (31%) identified themselves as a double
historical minority. A deeper analysis of demographic data revealed that of the lowest seven scoring principals,

- Six (86%) self identified as Caucasian/white
- Five (71%) identified themselves as female
- Two (29%) self identified as males
- One (14%) identified themselves as a racial/ethnic minority (i.e. African American/black
- One (14%) identified as a double historical minority (i.e. African American/black and female)

When contrasted with the majority African American/black exemplar principal group, the lowest seven scoring principals from the initial survey were overwhelming Caucasian/White. There was only one non-White participant in the low scoring group. Additionally, out of the three males in the initial study, there were only two Caucasian/white males and they both were in the lowest scoring survey group.

Additional analysis of demographic data revealed that Principals E, K, M, and N (67%) attended different universities for their undergraduate preparation. The diverse university attendance included schools in various areas of North Carolina outside of the local area and one college in Virginia. Principals F and G (33%) had both attended [North Carolina University] for their undergraduate training. Principals E, F, G, M, and N (83%) had attended [North Carolina University] for their graduate training. In contrast, four of bottom seven scoring principals (57%) had attended [North Carolina University] for their undergraduate preparation, all of the bottom seven scorers had attended [North Carolina University] for their graduate preparation.
Each of the exemplar principals listed their experiences with uniquely challenged populations of students as significant in their personal and career development. Principals E, F, and M had worked with special populations of students at some point in their career. Principals F and M reported having worked with special education students and Principal E reported having worked as a special population’s counselor. Principals E and F both had experience working in alternative school settings. Principals E, F, G, K, and N had worked at both schools with a majority of impoverished students and schools with a majority of affluent students, which they all stated gave them more insight on dealing with diversity issues.

**Characteristic 3: Significant childhood events related to race and culture.** Principals E, G, K, and M reported they had experienced significant childhood events related to race and/or culture. Principals E and G had lived through school integration as students and Principal M experienced post segregation schools immediately after integration. Principals E and G reported they having lived through blatant racism and discrimination during integration. Principal E reported that most African American students in their town at the time of integration were steered away from college preparatory courses in high school. Principal E reported feeling isolated and unwelcome as the only student of color in many of the college preparatory classes. Principal E further stated that upon graduation, the school counselor seemed to encourage all of the African American students to apply for community college and was less apt to assist with applications to four-year universities. Principal E’s expectation was to attend a four-year university. Principal E stated that a local townsman conducted academic talent searches and assisted their family with securing financial aid and they went on to attend a four-year college.

Principal G also experienced integration and listed the experience as a pivotal moment for them in relating to diversity because there was no transition plan in place for integrating the
schools in their town. Principal G stated they simply moved into integrated schools without much preparation in either the black or the white community. Principal G identified the tensions that were present in the integrated environment as a reason for them to respond appropriately to diversity today.

Principal K and M reported having been on the outside of the norm in their towns because they had positive associations with children of other races. Principal M reported having moved to a small town in the South after integration from a small town in the North. Principal M reported having always been in an integrated school environment, particularly because their father was in the military. Upon moving to the South, the principal reported there were many more children of color in her school than there had been in previous states, but that it was not something they took notice of until much later in life. Principal M gave details of a significant childhood moment related to culture. Principal M reported there was an African American woman that helped to care for their aunt and the family children. One day the family was riding around town with their African American caretaker and came to a poor section town, which one of her relatives openly referred to as “niggertown” in front of everyone. Principal M reported the look of hurt that came upon the face of her caretaker and realizing at that moment, how painful words could be to people and how mean people had been to others. The principal stated that particular moment “has had a major impact on me as a person throughout my whole life.”

Principal K reported having been raised poor on a small farm, experiencing familial substance abuse, and raised alongside African American children. The principal reported not understanding many of the racial/ethnic divisions present outside of the farm because their family treated everyone with respect and dignity. Principal K also reported having the nontraditional experiences of getting married upon high school graduation, having children
immediately thereafter, and attending college later in life. According to Principal K, these experiences served to make them more sensitive to human differences.

**Research Question 3: What culturally responsive practices are present in the schools of culturally responsive school leaders?**

While acknowledging areas that needed improvement, the school leaders in the exemplar group all expressed a strong desire to serve all of their stakeholders appropriately regardless of diversity factors. All of the exemplar principals also expressed the need to continue building capacity within their schools to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse stakeholder population. The school leaders also expressed a commitment to be more sensitive to the needs of stakeholders from diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Focus group interviews with teachers and school observations were used to confirm how the exemplar principals’ cultural responsiveness translated into actual practices within their school building. The second method used to confirm whether the exemplar principals’ cultural responsiveness translated into actual practices within their school building was a school-wide observation protocol. The School-wide Cultural Competence Observation Checklist (Bustamante et. al, 2009) was used to conduct school-wide observations and a copy of this checklist is located in Appendix D. The observations conducted for this study did confirm that the cultural responsiveness of the exemplar principals was in action throughout their respective buildings through various programming, curriculum and instructional efforts, personnel decisions and community engagement activities.

The School-wide Cultural Competence Observation Checklist (SCCOC) is comprised of eight observation areas/domains and 33 subsequent criteria. School documents, campus walkthroughs, focus groups, exemplar principal survey, principal interview data were all used as
sources of information to complete the checklist. Five criteria were not observable due to the limited nature of the study. The five criteria that were not observable were:

- Balanced racial/ethnic TAG program
- Diverse students integrate socially
- Effort to integrate diverse teacher teams
- Authentic assessments complement standardized tests
- Organizational traditions are examined to check for exclusive/inclusive practices

After analyzing the observation data, the frequency of occurrence of each of the criteria was determined. Criteria with a frequency of five or six are reported for the purposes of answering the third research question. Areas of consistency existed on 13 items on the observation areas/domains of the instrument. The criteria that showed the highest levels of consistency across the six schools were:

- Global perspective integration throughout curriculum
- Language and content objectives addressed for English Language Learners
- Support programs to promote achievement and retention of lower groups New teacher induction program
- Vertical and horizontal teaming
- Long term, focused professional development addressing diversity issues
- Differentiated instruction
- Learning styles
- Regular surveys of local constituencies and stakeholder groups
- Parent involvement groups exist for all culture groups
- E-community used for relationship building and best
- Programs in place to ensure school safety address bullying and develop positive student relations
- Teachers and administration evaluated by various constituencies
- Celebrations reflect various cultures

The emergent themes from the focus groups and practices observed did align with the themes from the principal surveys and interviews; thus confirming that principal attitudes were permeating through to their subordinates and culturally responsive practices were occurring. Copies of the focus group interview protocol and School-Wide Cultural Competence Observation Checklist (Bustamante et al., 2009) can be located in Appendices C and D, respectively. A full list of observation data is located in Appendix F. In an analysis of focus group data, 16 categories emerged from interview data. The 16 categories where then organized into themes and the three largest themes were: (a) relationships with parents and students; (b) varied professional development and instructional strategies; and (c) mitigating for lack of student exposure or resources. A full list of focus group categories and themes is located in Appendix G.

**Theme 1: Relationships with parents and students.** A recurring theme throughout the focus groups was that teachers saw the need to develop strong relationships with their students and parents. Although each focus group gave different examples related to this theme throughout the interviews, the importance of building rapport and trust with students and their parents was obvious. The groups outlined ideas related to this theme such as (a) a need for mutual respect; (b) a need for fair treatment; (c) use of straightforward communication; (d) holding individual conversations with students; (e) a need to make parents feel comfortable; (f) taking time to learn the roots of student behaviors; and (g) development of student interest clubs,
activities and organizations. Focus group participants gave a number of personal interactions with students and parents as examples of this theme such as informal conversations, discipline conferences, classroom activities, attending athletic and other community events.

Observation of criteria on the School-wide Cultural Competence Observation Checklist (Bustamante et. al, 2009) further confirmed this theme. Regular surveys of local constituencies and stakeholder groups were present in the form of mandated district and school based climate surveys of students, parents, faculty, and staff. The district also used these surveys as an evaluative tool for administrators. Parent involvement groups were present for all culture groups in each of the schools observed. Use of the electronic community in the forms of school websites, mass telephone calling systems, emails, and webinars were present in an effort to build relationships and foster best practices. Each school had proactive measures in place such as peer mediation programs, crime stoppers rewards, and student clubs and organizations specifically geared toward safe schools to address school safety issues and build positive student relations. Focus group and observation data confirmed each school engaged in celebrations reflective of various cultures such as those centered on ethnic holidays and individual classroom events related to cultures of students. This theme of relationships with parents and students directly aligns with the principal theme of building relationships.

Theme 2: Varied professional development and instructional strategies. A second recurring theme throughout the focus groups was participation in ongoing professional development related to various diversity factors and instructional strategies. Although every focus group listed professional development activities related to socioeconomic diversity and positive behavior support, examples of other professional development activities given were (a) learning styles inventories; (b) professional learning communities on discipline; (c) professional
learning communities on meeting the needs of black male learners; (d) basic conversational Spanish; (e) use of cooperative learning; (f) differentiated instruction; and (g) diversity workshops.

The teachers in the focus groups agreed on the need to differentiate instruction for diverse learners. The focus group teachers listed various methods in which they were trained to vary their instruction such as: (a) reading aloud; (b) using folk tales; (c) selecting ethnic literature; (d) utilizing inclusive practices; (e) celebrating ethnic holidays; (f) incorporating cooperative learning; (g) using hands on manipulatives; (h) utilizing thinking maps; and (i) incorporating language instruction into daily lessons via school district mandated use of Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) language and content objectives. Observations confirmed the use of SIOP and various instructional strategies. Examples of global perspective integration throughout curriculum included multicultural literature selections in classroom library and school media centers, integrated instructional units, and reported varied methods of instructional presentation. Each school in the observations also practiced vertical and horizontal teaming across and within grade levels in the form of professional learning communities. The focus groups, principals and school documents all confirmed that differentiated instruction in the form of learning styles, flexible student grouping and integrated units of study were in use within the schools. Additionally, focus group and observation data confirmed each school engaged in celebrations reflective of various cultures such as those centered on ethnic holidays and individual classroom events related to cultures of students. Each school also had a teacher induction program in place, which also served to facilitate professional development. The theme of varied professional development offerings directly aligns directly with the similarly named theme from the principal interviews.
**Theme 3: Mitigating for lack of student exposure or resources.** The focus group participants listed very strong feelings about the need for educators to mitigate the effects of students not having exposure or access to educational experiences and/or materials outside of schools. The focus groups participants repeatedly stated the majority of their students; in particular, their students of ethnic/minority backgrounds came from low socioeconomic backgrounds and did not have exposure to mainstream cultural or educational activities prior to enrolling in school. The participants saw it as their role to ensure students had what they needed to be successful in school. Examples of activities listed by the participants under this theme are (a) helping recruit teachers that are more diverse; (b) supplying needed materials; (c) building vocabulary skills; (d) field trips; and (e) establishing clubs and organizations focused on student interests. School-wide observations also confirmed that support programs promoting achievement and retention of lower groups included remediation and enrichment programs, mentoring clubs and student organizations geared toward specific populations (i.e. step teams, drum lines, etc.).

Through survey and interview, the exemplar principals consistently saw the need for their schools to grow and improve programming or services to diverse stakeholders and provide materials and experiences when there was a lack thereof. The exemplar survey and interview data also showed a desire for their teachers to be more understanding and empathetic with students of diverse backgrounds, while maintaining high academic and behavioral expectations. The theme of teachers mitigating lack of student exposure and resources confirm the principal themes of building capacity for equity, promoting patience in teachers, and maintaining high expectations of teachers and students.
Summary

In this chapter, I restated the aims and guiding research questions of this study and reported the results of an online survey, principal interviews, focus groups, and school-wide observations within the context of answering the guiding research questions. Through data analysis, I determined that while principals in the eastern North Carolina school district studied recognized some areas for improvement, they had an overall positive view of themselves as culturally responsive leaders and their schools’ ability to respond to cultural diversity. An analysis of principal interviews and survey data revealed four demographic commonalities and one personal common characteristic among the exemplar principals. I also found that the positive actions and perceptions of the principals’ cultural responsiveness and the principles of culturally responsive leadership did appear to permeate through to their teachers and the practices occurring in their respective schools. The emergent themes from the focus groups confirmed the emergent themes from the principal surveys and interviews; thus confirming that principal attitudes and beliefs were permeating through to their faculty members. Additionally, school wide observation data also confirmed that the dispositions and beliefs of the principals deemed the most culturally responsive in the district did permeate throughout their respective school buildings in regards to programming, curriculum and instructional efforts, personnel decisions and community engagement activities.
Chapter Five

Discussion

Introduction

School leaders, scholars and reformers in the field of educational leadership have turned to culturally responsive techniques as part of the solution to address racial and ethnic achievement gaps as well as equity concerns in public schools (Brown, 2007; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 1998; Maholmes & Brown, 2002; Riehl, 2000). This study, performed in an eastern North Carolina school district, aimed to assess school leaders’ perceptions and dispositions towards cultural responsiveness and determine the influence of their perceptions and dispositions on their schools. An initial case study of 13 principals was used to investigate this issue and six exemplar principals were selected to explore the issue further.

Findings

Findings revealed that exemplar principals had an overall positive view of themselves as culturally responsive leaders. These exemplars also had a positive view of their schools’ ability to respond to cultural diversity. Results from this study revealed three common characteristics among the principals who ranked highest on the culturally responsive measures. First, all were raised in small towns. Second, all had diverse professional and personal experiences related to culture. Third, the majority had experienced significant events related to race and culture as children. A major finding of the study was that principals’ attitudes and dispositions toward cultural responsiveness did appear to align with practices occurring within their school buildings. Overall, the findings of the study indicated that principals’ personal and professional experiences have an effect on their dispositions and commitment to cultural responsiveness. Additionally,
the finding revealed that school leaders can have an impact on ensuring that all students attend school in a culturally responsive environment.

**Research question 1: How do school leaders in an eastern North Carolina school district implement cultural responsiveness?** The six exemplar principals in this study saw themselves as culturally responsive leaders and they demonstrated strong dispositions towards social justice principles on the instruments administered and during the interviews that were conducted. Five themes emerged among the exemplar principal group related to their own cultural responsiveness. First, the exemplars stressed the importance of building relationships and rapport with their students, parents, and the greater school community. Secondly, the exemplars recognized the importance of providing varied professional development activities to their staff centered on the various forms of diversity present in their schools. Third, the exemplar principals expressed the need to build capacity around equity within schools by working within the larger school community to ensure all students had materials, supplies, and a variety of educational experiences that may have been lacked. Fourth, promoting patience within teachers while they respond to diversity in their schools was a priority of the exemplar principals. Finally, the exemplar principals all expressed their practice of maintaining high professional and behavioral expectations of teachers and students. The themes aligned with literature reviewed in Chapter 2 regarding culturally responsive leaders.

Research cited in Chapter 2 defined culturally responsive leaders as those who show respect and value for all of their students, confront and eliminate political barriers to culturally responsive practices, and revise school policies that are not culturally responsive (Boske, 2009; Davis, 2002; Reyes et al, 1999; Riehl, 2000; Verdugo; 2002). The themes of building relationships, maintaining high expectations and promoting patience best exemplify the
principles of modeling respect and value for all students. Exemplar principals displayed a desire to confront and eliminate barriers when each of them expressed a need to build capacity for increased equity among students in their respective schools and by their desire to promote teacher patience in responding to diversity. Finally, the exemplar principals expressed ways in which they evaluated school policies for equity including ensuring that discipline was fair and consistent, implementing standardized lesson planning procedures, and establishing programs, clubs, and organizations to address various aspects of diversity. The themes that emerged from the study revealed that the exemplar principals implemented culturally responsive practices in their buildings by upholding principles they felt were important in order to benefit all of their stakeholders, regardless of cultural background.

An additional note is that while the exemplar principals saw themselves as culturally responsive leaders, they did admit there were areas they needed to focus on in order to improve service to their stakeholders. They each committed themselves to make those improvements. This shared attitude by exemplars in the area of cultural responsiveness may be an indicator that highly culturally responsive principals recognize that they must continue to work in this area.

**Research question 2: What are the common personal and professional characteristics associated with culturally responsive school leaders in an eastern North Carolina school district?** Each of the exemplar principals reported having had a multitude of diverse personal and professional experiences. The principals cited personal background factors such as belonging to a minority, ethnic, or a gender group as having an impact on their views on cultural responsiveness. One professional background factor cited was undergraduate preparation at a number of different universities when compared to the non-exemplar principals. Another professional background factor cited was having worked with uniquely challenged
populations of students. The majority of the exemplars also reported having experienced negative, personal, and emotional cultural or racial events in their youth. The exemplar principals all cited experiences growing up in small towns as having a significant impact on their adult development and attitudes towards race and culture. Each of these personal and professional characteristics was identified as having impacted the exemplar principals’ interactions with and responses to their diverse stakeholders.

Attempts to connect findings of this research question with available literature were difficult. There is a paucity of research on the personal characteristics and professional experiences of culturally responsive school leaders and the effects of those characteristics and experiences on their cultural responsiveness. Most current studies on cultural responsiveness were conducted at the classroom level and reported minimal personal and professional characteristics of teachers. Leithwood et al. (2004) supports the notion that outside of participation in formal programs, there is little research on what effects school administrators’ learning over the course of their careers. The lack of research available on personal and professional characteristics specific to school administrators exposed a gap in educational leadership literature. This study adds to the body of literature by offering an analysis of and attempting to connect personal and professional experiences with the cultural responsiveness of school leaders.

Research question 3: What culturally responsive practices are present in the schools of culturally responsive school leaders? Culturally responsive practices were evident in each of the exemplar principals’ schools. Professional development opportunities related to culture were occurring in the buildings of the exemplar principals and teachers were attempting to supplement their curriculums in culturally responsive ways. Long term, focused professional
development related to school diversity was present. Inclusive grouping, instructional, support, and parent involvement practices were occurring throughout each of the school buildings. Student centeredness was clearly a priority at each of the exemplar principals’ schools as evidenced by the actions of school personnel and practices within the building. As reported, exemplar principals routinely examined school policies to ensure equity for students and every school had clubs, groups, or organizations in place to address diverse student interests. Additionally, themes that emerged from the focus groups confirmed the importance of building relationships with students, varying instructional strategies and differentiating for students in need; which all support the concept of student centeredness. Finally, data from focus groups of teachers indicated that their principals used a variety of methods to recruit teachers. Study participants identified recruitment of a diverse staff as an understood goal, although they reported that the ideal of hiring a diverse staff has been elusive at times due to lack of diverse applicants in the eastern North Carolina region. Research cited in Chapter 2 related to common practices in culturally responsive schools included: (a) providing professional development opportunities related to culture and supplementing traditional curriculum with culturally responsive materials; (b) inclusive practices; (c) setting student centered schedules and policies; and (d) recruitment and retention of quality instructional staff and supporting culturally responsive methods (Boske, 2009; Davis, 2002; Glatthorn, 2000; Reyes, Scribner & Scribner, 1999; Riehl, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2002; Verdugo, 2002). The culturally responsive building practices reported in this study aligned with and confirmed research findings presented in the Chapter 2 literature review.
Implications

The purpose of this study was to assess school leaders’ perceptions and dispositions towards responding to the increasing cultural diversity in their schools and determine the impact of their culturally responsive leadership on their schools. A number of implications have emerged from this study.

School leaders must not underestimate their role in responding to culture in their schools. This study confirmed that building level leaders do have an impact on efforts to ensure equity for and appropriate responses to diverse stakeholders and historically marginalized groups of students. Superintendents, human resource directors, and school administrators may benefit from implementing procedures to recruit and vet employees from varied personal backgrounds and those that have had diverse work experiences. This may require making efforts to recruit from a variety of universities and not rely too heavily on regional or local colleges. Additionally, research cited in the Chapter 2 literature review revealed that school inequities were often entrenched within communities and the school power structure (Boske, 2009; Davis, 2002; Reyes et al., 1999; Riehl, 2000). Therefore, explicit support from higher echelons of leadership may aid in the recruitment and retention of culturally responsive employees. Support from higher echelons of leadership can include a district level plan to respond to cultural diversity or a specific commitment to cultural responsiveness within the school district vision, mission, or improvement goals. Superintendents and human resource directors should also consider putting culturally responsive training programs in place for administrators currently working in their systems. The training could begin with a school or district culture audit connected to school performance outcomes followed by specific research based training related to learning styles and modes of interpersonal interaction common among culturally diverse youth and communities.
While this study showed culturally responsive practices in each of the schools, there were a reported limited number of racial/ethnic specific training opportunities. Only one of the schools in the study reported training specific to understanding the influences of race or ethnicity on student behavior. Most training opportunities centered on topics such as understanding poverty, learning styles, differentiating instruction. While these training opportunities were no less important than specific racial or ethnic training, they may have been attempts to address the issue of racial/ethnic achievement gaps from the periphery rather than addressing the issue directly due to its potential divisiveness. It is also worth noting that selection of exemplar principals for the study was based on a survey score. While there were six clear top scorers, overall scores were relatively low on the survey. Out of a possible score of 40, the highest scoring exemplar principal scored 26 points. This may signify the need for investment in cultural responsive training across the region.

Finally, demographic trends of educators cited by the U.S. Department of Education (2011) reveal that the public schools’ teacher and administrator workforces will remain predominantly white and female. This has important implications for college and university preparation programs. Creating experiences and providing training for teachers and administrators who may not be as prepared to work with a culturally diverse student population is necessary. To keep pace with increasingly diverse student demographics, it is imperative that colleges and universities add or enhance cross-cultural experiences for their graduates prior to their entering the public schools.

**Recommendations**

There is still a need for more research on this topic to understand more fully the effects of cultural responsive leadership on public schools in the eastern North Carolina region, statewide
and nationally. There is also a need for more research into the personal and professional characteristics of culturally responsive school leaders. Improvements to the research design used in this study may provide additional useful data. First, the quantitative instruments could benefit from additional field testing for reliability. Secondly, surveys and interviews of additional principals may provide a larger view of district or regional practices related to cultural responsiveness. In this study, only exemplar principals participated in follow-up interviews, however more data comparison could have occurred if non-exemplar principals also participated in interviews. The inclusion of all participating principals in all aspects of this study would have allowed for a thorough analysis of the relationship between culturally responsive attitudes of principals and culturally responsive school-based practices. Third, while this study did reveal data supporting the occurrence of culturally responsive building practices in the schools of the six exemplar principals, due to the limited scope of the study, more in depth and longitudinal observation would be useful in providing richer data. Fourth, focus group activities and questions more specifically related to how leadership affects building practices related to cultural diversity may also serve to provide richer data. Fifth, while a relationship was identified between culturally responsive principals and practices in their schools, future studies may provide insight into how principals convey their beliefs and expectations to their school faculty members.

Additional areas of future research include connecting culturally responsive principals and their building practices with achievement and other school data. Interviewing parents, students, and community members for perspectives on the cultural responsiveness of their school leadership may be a source of additional rich data on how the school leader’s beliefs and actions affect all stakeholders. Another area of future research would be to compare the results of high
culturally responsive schools with those of less culturally responsive schools or comparing the results of high minority, culturally responsive schools to schools with low minority student populations. Finally, further study of the undergraduate and graduate experiences of the exemplars and the non-exemplars would have provided additional, rich data. A study of principals’ educational experiences would be useful to inform teacher and administrator training programs. The majority of exemplar principals reported life experiences that may prove difficult to recreate in a college setting, however it may be worth exploring if cultural simulations, study abroad, or other experiences increase cultural responsiveness. Institutions that train school administrators may need to consider enhancing or adding specific courses or experiences related to cultural responsiveness.

**Conclusion**

The populations of the United States and our public schools will soon become primarily minority. Current academic, demographic, and cultural trends should be of major importance to all educators. Historically, culture has been a major influence in our schools. Depending upon how schools have responded to culture, the influences have been enriching or they have been challenging. Appropriate, research based responses to cultural diversity in schools have been shown to increase student connectedness, student performance, and stakeholder support. Not responding appropriately to cultural diversity in schools has been a source of disconnections between schools and the community of stakeholders they serve.

Over the course of this study, I engaged in personal reflection of my lifelong experiences as a student of public schools and the fact that I have always excelled and been fully engaged in the classroom. I can remember overwhelmingly positive experiences in all grade levels, more specifically in kindergarten through eighth grade. The schools I attended were neighborhood
schools and the student population was nearly 100% black (i.e. African American/West Indian) and Hispanic (i.e. Puerto Rican). Many of my positive experiences can be attributed to expectations of my parents, but many are also a direct result of teachers and administrators taking an interest and specific care to tend to my needs as a young, African American male growing up in inner city Brooklyn. During the early 1980s, New York City was experiencing the introduction of crack cocaine, the emergence HIV/AIDS, gang violence, and political corruption. The statistics for young men living in the city were not promising as many of us ended up in prison, on drugs, ill, or murdered at young ages. More specifically, I remember my teachers (all White, mostly female) teaching ethnic oriented lessons, planning cultural trips and school events, and ensuring that I not only knew and appreciated my own heritage, but the heritages of others inside and outside of our school population. The teachers did all of this and still managed to successfully teach core academic content, thus ensuring I could navigate the world outside of our neighborhood and city. It is worth noting that from first grade through twelfth grade I never had a non-White, core academic teacher until I attended a historically black university for undergraduate training.

After my eighth grade year, my family moved south and as I started to grow up I realized that the positive experiences I had in school were not the norm for many other children, particularly children of color. My realization was reinforced during undergraduate internships and during my initial year of teaching. Attending a historically black university was an immense cultural experience for me. It had a major impact on how I viewed the role of education in helping to shape our nation and world. It was obvious to me that what we, as educators, had been doing for decades was not working for whole segments of our population. I found this unacceptable and have always had a passion to help improve our public education system.
The findings of this study confirm the important role of school leaders in influencing curriculum and programming in the best interests of all stakeholders. This study confirms that school leaders should consider cultural responsiveness as a viable philosophy to address rapidly changing demographics in our nation’s schools. The demographic changes in our nation’s schools should not be perceived as problems, but should be viewed as opportunities. Continuing to operate our schools with a status quo mindset will only result in continued lack of achievement for diverse students. Responsive and effective public schools are the only hope many of our children have at being able to participate in our democracy, have a decent quality of life, and live as competent, productive citizens. School leaders must challenge themselves and their faculties to embrace the research on cultural responsiveness and implement effective methods to engage culturally diverse communities and students. The future of our country depends on it.
References


U.S. Department of Education. (2002). To light a beacon: What administrators can do to make


Appendix A

Online Principal Survey Questions

DEMOGRAPHICS

- In regards to race/ethnicity, I consider myself
  - Caucasian/White
  - African American/Black
  - Native American/Indian
  - Hispanic/Latino
  - Biracial/Multiracial
  - Asian/Middle Eastern
  - Other

- My sex/gender is
  - Male
  - Female

- My age range is
  - 25-30
  - 31-35
  - 36-40
  - 41-45
  - 46-50
  - 51-55
  - 56-60
  - 61-65

- If someone asks me where I was raised, I usually tell them
  - In the Northern USA (please specify state in text box below)
  - In the Southern USA (please specify state in text box below)
  - In the Midwestern USA (please specify state in text box below)
  - In the Western USA (please specify state in text box below)
  - Alaska, Hawaii or a U.S. Territory (please specify state or territory in text box below)
  - In another country (please specify country in text box below)
  - I was a military child and traveled around a lot
During my undergraduate preparation, I attended
- [North Carolina University]
- Another University of North Carolina School
- A private institution (in or out of state)
- An Historically Black College/University (HBCU)
- An Historically Native American College/University
- A public, out of state institution
Please provide any additional information regarding your undergraduate education

During my graduate preparation, I attended (please check all that apply)
- [North Carolina University]
- Another University of North Carolina System school
- A private institution (in or out of state)
- An Historically Black College/University (HBCU)
- An Historically Native American College/University
- A public, out of state institution
Please provide any additional information regarding your graduate education

PART A

Professional Development

1) During the past 2 years, I have attended at least one professional development session which enhanced my knowledge of the ethnic and/or cultural groups my school serves (Yes, No)

2) During this past 2 years, I have read at least one article that has expanded my knowledge of the stakeholder population my school serves (Yes, No)

3) Over the past 2 years, as part of an professional development session, I have had the opportunity to evaluate my own cultural and ethnic beliefs and potential biases (Yes, No)

4) In the past 2 years, I have held at least one training about the various social, cultural and/or ethnic issues that affect the education of the students (Yes, No)

5) In most circumstances, I am able to communicate with people who are different from me without fear or anxiety (Yes, No)

6) In the past 2 years, I have attended professional development about how to better serve stakeholders who are culturally and ethnically different from my faculty/staff (Yes, No)

7) I have been trained in how to properly work with an interpreter while maintaining stakeholder confidentiality (Yes, No)

8) Our school has books, videos, lists of websites and other resources faculty/staff can use to enhance their cultural knowledge of the stakeholders we serve (Yes, No, Don’t know/Not applicable)

9) In the last 2 years, our school has conducted at least one faculty/staff training in the area of cultural responsiveness (Yes, No, Don’t know/Not applicable)
10) In the last 2 years, our school has sponsored at least one activity that has helped improve communication and teamwork between employees of different cultural, language and ethnic groups (Yes, No, Don’t know/Not applicable)

School Capacity

11) Our school has a way to identify the country of origin of our students (Yes, No, Don’t know/Not applicable)

12) Our school has trained interpreters easily available for various languages (including sign language) (Yes, No, Don’t know/Not applicable)

13) Our school has established connections with various community cultural, ethnic and religious groups to help us better serve our stakeholders (Yes, No, Don’t know/Not applicable)

14) Our school has developed a list of various community resources we can use for referrals to better serve our stakeholders of various cultural groups (Yes, No, Don’t know/Not applicable)

15) The décor, magazines & handouts in our lobby area reflect the diversity of our stakeholder population (Yes, No, Don’t know/Not applicable)

16) The signs in our school are in the languages of the population we serve (Yes, No, Don’t know/Not applicable)

17) Our school has the capacity to meet the needs of stakeholders who are hearing or visually impaired (Yes, No, Don’t know/Not applicable)

Educational Materials

18) Most stakeholder education materials, forms and surveys are easy to read and available in the different languages spoken by our stakeholders (Yes, No, Don’t know/Not applicable)

19) As a school, we evaluate the reading level of stakeholder materials used throughout the school (Yes, No, Don’t know/Not applicable)

20) As a school, we have a way to assess the quality, accuracy and cultural appropriateness of the materials we use, including translated versions (Yes, No, Don’t know/Not applicable)

21) Our school has a way to identify stakeholders with low literacy skills who may need assistance (Yes, No, Don’t know/Not applicable)

22) Our school has identified ways and resources to serve clients who are not able to read in their own language (Yes, No, Don’t know/Not applicable)

23) Our school is committed to providing education materials that appeal to various social, cultural, and special needs groups we serve. (Yes, No, Don’t know/Not applicable)
Administration & Policy

24) Key members of our school reflect the ethnic, racial, cultural and language diversity of our stakeholder population (Yes, No, Don’t know/Not applicable)
25) In my opinion, school leadership, faculty & staff show appreciation and respect for all coworkers no matter what their cultural and ethnic background (Yes, No, Don’t know/Not applicable)
26) Our school has a written plan to implement culturally and linguistically appropriate educational services (Yes, No, Don’t know/Not applicable)
27) We have written policies to address concerns or complaints voiced by stakeholders regarding unfair or inappropriate treatment due to their race, ethnicity or the language they speak (Yes, No, Don’t know/Not applicable)
28) Our school annually assesses our progress in implementing culturally and linguistically appropriate educational services. (Yes, No, Don’t know/Not applicable)

PART B

Learning and Teaching for Social Justice

29) An important part of teaching is examining one’s own attitudes and beliefs about race, class, gender, disabilities and sexual orientation (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Uncertain, Agree, Strongly Agree)
30) Issues related to racism and inequity should be openly discussed in the classroom (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Uncertain, Agree, Strongly Agree)
31) * For the most part, covering multicultural topics is only relevant to certain subject areas (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Uncertain, Agree, Strongly Agree)
32) Good teaching incorporates diverse cultures and experiences into classroom lessons and discussions (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Uncertain, Agree, Strongly Agree)
33) * The most important goal in working with immigrant children and English language learners is that they assimilate into American society (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Uncertain, Agree, Strongly Agree)
34) * It’s reasonable for teachers to have lower classroom expectations for students who do not speak English as their first language (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Uncertain, Agree, Strongly Agree)
35) Part of the responsibilities for a teacher is to challenge school arrangements that maintain societal inequities (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Uncertain, Agree, Strongly Agree)
36) * Teachers should teach students to think critically about government positions and actions. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Uncertain, Agree, Strongly Agree)
37) * Economically disadvantaged students have more to gain in schools because they bring less into the classroom (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Uncertain, Agree, Strongly Agree)
38) Although teachers have to appreciate diversity, it’s not their job to change society
(Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Uncertain, Agree, Strongly Agree)
39) * Whether students succeed in school depends primarily on how hard they work.
(Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Uncertain, Agree, Strongly Agree)
40) * Realistically, the job of a teacher is to prepare students for the lives they are likely to
lead. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Uncertain, Agree, Strongly Agree)

* Items 31, 33, 34, 36, 37, 39 & 40 were reversed scored, meaning a response of “Strongly
Disagree” most closely aligned with a disposition towards the principles of social justice.
Appendix B

Principal Interview Protocol

1. Tell me something about your background. When and where were you educated? When and where did you begin teaching?

2. Do you encourage teachers to connect with students and parents from a cultural perspective? How so?

3. Do the professional development initiatives at your institution train faculty members to place the students’ culture at the center of learning? How?

4. How do you handle the possible mismatch between what you have available to serve children of color vs. what you would like to have to serve them (i.e. materials and supplies)?

5. How much of what you know about serving children of color did you learn as a result of your life and/or professional experiences?

6. Can you think of any characteristics that children of color as a group bring to the school?

7. How do you think the schooling experience of your students of color differs from that of White students in middle-class communities?

8. What visible or invisible barriers are in place at your school that may hinder the academic success of children of color? How do you make up for this?

9. How do you include the community in school efforts?

10. How do you handle discipline? Are there any special things that teachers/administrators of students of color should know about discipline?
Appendix C

Teacher Focus Group Protocol

1. How are your colleagues selected for hire? How are you all subsequently organized into teams/departments/grade levels, etc.?

2. Explain how you connect with students and parents from a cultural perspective.

3. Do the professional development initiatives at your school place the students' culture at the center of learning? How so?

4. Can you think of any characteristics that children of color as a group bring to the school?

5. How do you think the schooling experience of your students of color differs from that of White students in middle-class communities?

6. What visible or invisible barriers are in place at your institution and in your classroom that may hinder the academic success of children of color? How do you make up for this?

7. Speak to me about school-wide curriculum … how well are cultural perspectives integrated? Can you give me some examples?

8. How do you handle the possible mismatch between what you have available to serve children of color vs. what you would like to have to serve them (i.e. materials and supplies)?

9. How does your school include the community in school efforts?

10. How do you handle discipline? Are there any special things that teachers/administrators of students of color should know about discipline?
Appendix D

The School-Wide Cultural Competence Observation Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School:</th>
<th>Principal:</th>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Review Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

Instructions: Rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (1= Never 2= Almost Never 3= Sometimes 4= Almost Always 5= Always) the extent to which you observe each of the following criteria for cultural competence. Please note or provide evidence or documentation to support your rating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation Area/Domain and Criteria</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Evidence/ Documentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Vision/Mission</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 There is a school Mission Statement or Vision Statement that includes a stated commitment to diversity and/or global citizenry.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Literature selections in the curriculum reflect a variety of cultural perspectives (classrooms and library).</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Global perspectives are integrated into curricula at all grade levels (world history and geography, culture studies, languages).</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Linguistic and content objectives are addressed for second language learners.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Interaction and Leadership</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Racial/ethnic representation in advanced placement classes, honors classes, and gifted programs is balanced.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Youth “voice” is considered in decision-making by regularly meeting with randomly selected groups of students to obtain feedback.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>There is a variety of student leadership opportunities for all students.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Students of different groups integrate socially outside of the classroom.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>There are identified support programs to promote achievement and retention of lower achieving groups.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Students are involved in community service and service learning activities.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>There is a program in place to facilitate the adaptation of NEW students into the school and classroom.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teachers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Teachers representing diverse groups are actively recruited by the principal and the district.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>New teachers are formally inducted through orientations and structured mentoring and support programs.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Teachers team vertically and horizontally according to individual strengths, leadership abilities, and interests.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Efforts are made to consciously integrate diverse teacher teams.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional development is offered that addresses:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>race/ethnicity/nationality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sexual orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>special needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>language and dialect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Informal teacher leadership roles are recognized.

Professional development is focused and long term.

**Teaching and Learning**

Instruction is differentiated to address students with special needs, while challenging all students.

Researched strategies that account for various learning styles are used in classrooms.

Connections are made to students’ culture and prior knowledge.

Teaching strategies accommodate the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners using a variety of grouping strategies, hands-on activities, visuals, oral language development, reading/writing workshops, etc.

**Parents and Outer Community**

Community outreach programs regularly survey the perspectives of various local community constituency and stakeholder groups, including parents.

Parent involvement programs exist for all culture groups.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>National and global ties are established through partnerships with similar organizations.</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The electronic community is realized and utilized for relationship building and sourcing best practices.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conflict Management**

|   | The inevitability of intercultural conflict is recognized by peer mediation programs and/or other proactive approaches to conflict resolution. |   |
|   | Practices to ensure classroom and school safety for all are in place (e.g. including systems for addressing bullying or developing positive student relations). |   |

**Assessments**

<p>|   | Authentic student assessments are used to complement standardized tests. |   |
|   | Formative and summative program evaluations are conducted to ensure continual improvement. |   |
|   | Teachers and administrators are evaluated by various constituency groups (other teachers, students, colleagues, self, supervisor, etc.). |   |
|   | Organizational traditions are examined periodically to check for exclusive/inclusive practices. |   |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Celebrations reflect various cultures and introduce the community to new cultures. Representation at events and celebrations is diverse.</th>
<th>1 2 3 4 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**General Observations:**

**Comments:**

Confidential

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Appendix E

Online Survey Results

Complete Online Survey Results N=13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t know/ Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the past 2 years, I have attended at least one professional development session which enhanced my knowledge of the ethnic and/or cultural groups my school serves</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During this past 2 years, I have read at least one article that has expanded my knowledge of the stakeholder population my school serves</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over the past 2 years, as part of an professional development session, I have had the opportunity to evaluate my own cultural and ethnic beliefs and potential biases</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the past 2 years, I have held at least one training about the various social, cultural and/or ethnic issues that affect the education of the students</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In most circumstances, I am able to communicate with people who are different from me without fear or anxiety</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the past 2 years, I have attended professional development about how to better serve stakeholders who are culturally and ethnically different from my faculty/staff</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been trained in how to properly work with an interpreter while maintaining stakeholder confidentiality</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our school has books, videos, lists of websites and other resources faculty/staff can use to enhance their cultural knowledge of the stakeholders we serve</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the last 2 years, our school has conducted at least one faculty/staff training in the area of cultural responsiveness</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the last 2 years, our school has sponsored at least one activity that has helped improve communication and teamwork between employees of different cultural, language and ethnic groups</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**School Capacity**

- Our school has a way to identify the country of origin of our students
  - Count: 12
  - Yes: 0
  - No: 1

- Our school has trained interpreters easily available for various languages (including sign language)
  - Count: 7
  - Yes: 5
  - No: 1

- Our school has established connections with various community cultural, ethnic and religious groups to help us better serve our stakeholders
  - Count: 10
  - Yes: 2
  - No: 1

- Our school has developed a list of various community resources we can use for referrals to better serve our stakeholders of various cultural groups
  - Count: 8
  - Yes: 5
  - No: 0

- The décor, magazines & handouts in our lobby area reflect the diversity of our stakeholder population
  - Count: 8
  - Yes: 4
  - No: 1

- The signs in our school are in the languages of the population we serve
  - Count: 5
  - Yes: 8
  - No: 0

- Our school has the capacity to meet the needs of stakeholders who are hearing or visually impaired
  - Count: 9
  - Yes: 4
  - No: 0

**Educational Materials**

- Most stakeholder education materials, forms and surveys are easy to read and available in the different languages spoken by our stakeholders
  - Count: 8
  - Yes: 5
  - No: 0

- As a school, we evaluate the reading level of stakeholder materials used throughout the school
  - Count: 6
  - Yes: 7
  - No: 0

- As a school, we have a way to assess the quality, accuracy and cultural appropriateness of the materials we use, including translated versions
  - Count: 5
  - Yes: 8
  - No: 0

- Our school has a way to identify stakeholders with low literacy skills who may need assistance
  - Count: 5
  - Yes: 8
  - No: 0

- Our school has identified ways and resources to serve clients who are not able to read in their own language
  - Count: 8
  - Yes: 5
  - No: 0

- Our school is committed to providing education materials that appeal to various social, cultural and special needs groups we serve
  - Count: 12
  - Yes: 1
  - No: 0
### Administration & Policy

- Key members of our school reflect the ethnic, racial, cultural and language diversity of our stakeholder population
  - 10 Strongly Agree
  - 3 Disagree
  - 0 Uncertain

- In my opinion, school leadership, faculty & staff show appreciation and respect for all coworkers no matter what their cultural and ethnic background
  - 13 Strongly Agree
  - 0 Disagree
  - 0 Uncertain

- Our school has a written plan to implement culturally and linguistically appropriate educational services
  - 5 Strongly Agree
  - 6 Disagree
  - 2 Uncertain

- We have written policies to address concerns or complaints voiced by stakeholders regarding unfair or inappropriate treatment due to their race, ethnicity or the language they speak
  - 11 Strongly Agree
  - 2 Disagree
  - 0 Uncertain

- Our school annually assesses our progress in implementing culturally and linguistically appropriate educational services
  - 2 Strongly Agree
  - 9 Disagree
  - 2 Uncertain

### Social Justice Principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An important part of teaching is examining one’s own attitudes and beliefs about race, class, gender, disabilities and sexual orientation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues related to racism and inequity should be openly discussed in the classroom</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the most part, covering multicultural topics is only relevant to certain subject areas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good teaching incorporates diverse cultures and experiences into classroom lessons and discussions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- The most important goal in working with immigrant children and English language learners is that they assimilate into American society.

- It’s reasonable for teachers to have lower classroom expectations for students who do not speak English as their first language.

- Part of the responsibilities for a teacher is to challenge school arrangements that maintain societal inequities.

- Teachers should teach students to think critically about government positions and actions.

- Economically disadvantaged students have more to gain in schools because they bring less into the classroom.

- Although teachers have to appreciate diversity, it’s not their job to change society.

- Whether students succeed in school depends primarily on how hard they work.

- Realistically, the job of a teacher is to prepare students for the lives they are likely to lead.
### Exemplar and Non-Exemplar Principal Survey Scale One

**Comparisons**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Factor</th>
<th>Exemplar Percentage of “Yes” Responses</th>
<th>Non-Exemplar Percentage of “Yes” Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culturally responsive training and staff development</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School capacity to provide culturally competent services to stakeholders</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School provision of culturally competent materials to stakeholders</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally responsive administration</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Exemplar and Non-Exemplar Principal Survey Scale Two  Comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Average Rating of Top Six Scorers</th>
<th>Average Rating of Bottom Seven Scorers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An important part of teaching is examining one’s own attitudes and beliefs about race, class, gender, disabilities and sexual orientation</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues related to racism and inequity should be openly discussed in the classroom</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the most part, covering multicultural topics is only relevant to certain subject areas</td>
<td>1.83*</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good teaching incorporates diverse cultures and experiences into classroom lessons and discussions</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>4.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The most important goal in working with immigrant children and English language learners is that they assimilate into American society</td>
<td>2.33*</td>
<td>3.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s reasonable for teachers to have lower classroom expectations for students who do not speak English as their first language</td>
<td>1.33*</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of the responsibilities for a teacher is to challenge school arrangements that maintain societal inequities</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers should teach students to think critically about government positions and actions.</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Economically disadvantaged students have more to gain in schools because they bring less into the classroom.

Although teachers have to appreciate diversity, it’s not their job to change society.

Whether students succeed in school depends primarily on how hard they work.

Realistically, the job of a teacher is to prepare students for the lives they are likely to lead.

Note. The * denotes a reversed scored item therefore a lower rating average is favorable.
## Appendix F

### Observation Frequency Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement of commitment to diversity</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of cultures represented in literature</td>
<td>Unable to observe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global perspective integration throughout curriculum</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and content objectives addressed for English Language Learners (ELL)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balanced racial/ethnic Talented and Gifted (TAG) program</td>
<td>Unable to observe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth voice considered via regular meetings</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student leadership opportunities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse student groups integrate socially</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support programs to promote achievement and retention of lower groups</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students involved in community service and service learning</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs to adapt new students into the school and classroom</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active recruiting of diverse groups of teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New teacher induction program</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vertical and horizontal teaming</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort to integrate diverse teacher teams</td>
<td>Unable to observe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development offered addressing diversity issues</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal teacher leadership roles</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long term, focused professional development addressing diversity issues</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiated instruction</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning styles</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections made to culture and prior learning</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching accommodates needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular surveys of local constituencies and stakeholder groups</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent involvement groups exist for all culture groups</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National and global partnerships with similar parent groups</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-community used for relationship building and best practices</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer mediation and proactive approaches to conflict resolution</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Programs in place to ensure school safety, address bullying and develop positive student relations | 6
Authentic assessments complement standardized tests | Unable to observe
Formative and summative program evaluation | Unable to observe
Teachers and administration evaluated by various constituencies | 6
Organizational traditions are examined to check for exclusive/inclusive practices | Unable to observe
Celebrations reflect various cultures | 5

*Note.* Six of the criteria were not observable due to limited nature of this study.
# Appendix G

## Focus Group Categories and Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with students important</td>
<td>Vital relationships with parents &amp; students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education is a different priority for many cultures</td>
<td>Varied professional development and instructional strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority students have a lack of exposure to school knowledge</td>
<td>Teachers can mitigate lack of exposure and resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of professional learning communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District-wide professional development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State-wide professional development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of varied instructional strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are full of energy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender roles are different in cultures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are street smart</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students have good character</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students suffer from poverty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students cannot code switch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools work to provide supplies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with parents important</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion of groups addressing student needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix H

**Principal Categories and Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with students important</td>
<td>Building relationships and rapport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must know about student backgrounds</td>
<td>Providing varied professional development activities surrounding diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School team based approach to serving students</td>
<td>Teachers can mitigate lack of exposure and resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers must change attitudes</td>
<td>Need to build capacity for equity within schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep communication lines open</td>
<td>Promoting patience within teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educators have to change ways of thinking</td>
<td>Maintaining high professional and behavioral expectations of teachers and students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional learning communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School provides clothes/materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hosting community events at school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency in applying policies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple discipline options</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and community relationships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix I

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

(Culturally Responsive Leadership in an Eastern North Carolina School District)

What Is The Research About?

You are being invited to take part in a research study about culturally responsive leadership in your school district. If you take part in this study, you will be one of 13 principals and 30 teachers to do so.

Who Is Doing The Study?

The person in charge of this study is Dr. Scott Imig of the University of North Carolina Wilmington. UNCW student, Lionel Kato, will be gathering and analyzing the information for the study.

Do Any Of The Researchers Stand To Gain Financially Or Personally From This Research?

None of the researchers participating in this study stand to gain financially or personally.

What Is The Purpose Of This Study?

The purpose of this study is determine school leaders’ level of knowledge of culturally responsive practices, analyze the impact of culturally responsive practices on school practices and to identify characteristic themes among the school leaders deemed to be culturally responsive. By doing this study we hope to learn what the best practices are for culturally responsive leadership and some of the best ways to address diversity issues in our schools.

Where Is The Study Going To Take Place And How Long Will It Last? What Will I Be Asked To Do?

The research procedures will be conducted in the Pitt County Schools. Thirteen school principals will be invited to participate in an online survey. Six will be invited to participate further in the study after the results of the surveys are analyzed. Those six principals will participate in follow up interviews and agree to have observations conducted in their building over the course of one day. The observations will include a focus group with five randomly selected teachers. The follow up interviews and focus groups will be recorded using a voice recorder. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study will be no more than 20 minutes for the survey and 45 minutes for follow up interviews. Only the student researcher and doctoral committee will have access to data collected. All efforts will be made to maintain confidentiality of collected items. This study will add to the body of literature on how educators can respond positively to cultural diversity; which may in turn help you and your district meet goals on educating all students.
What Are The Possible Risks And Discomforts?

To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm than you would experience in everyday life.

Do I Have To Take Part In This Study?

If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. There will be no penalty and you will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering.

What Will It Cost Me To Participate?

There are no costs associated with taking part in this study.

Will I Receive Any Payment Or Reward For Taking Part In This Study?

You will receive an opportunity to win gift cards for taking part in this study. You will be entered into a drawing with other participants during the various phases of the study. If you should have to stop participating before the study is over, you will be included in the drawing up to the phase in which you participated.

Who Will See The Information I Give?

Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write up the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about the combined information. You will not be identified by name in any published or presented materials.

We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information or what that information is. The researcher will use a special identification system to aid in confidentiality.

However, there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. We may be required to show information that identifies you to people who need to be sure that we have done the research correctly, such as the UNCW Institutional Review Board. Moreover, the law may require us to show your information in court, or to tell authorities if you have abused a child or are a danger to yourself or others.

Can My Taking Part In The Study End Early?
If you decide to take part in the study you still have the right to decide at any time that you no longer want to continue. There will be no penalty and no loss of benefits or rights if you stop participating in the study.

**What If I Have Questions?**

Before you decide whether or not to participate in the study, please ask any questions that come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, Dr. Scott Imig at 910-962-4174. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, contact Dr. Candace Gauthier, Chair of the UNCW Institutional Review Board, at 910-962-3558.

**What Else Do I Need To Know?**

I am required by federal law to provide you with a copy of this informed consent form. You may request a copy of the final dissertation.

**Research Participant Statement and Signature**

I understand that my participation in this research study is entirely voluntary. I may refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits. I may also stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. I have received a copy of this consent form to take home with me.

___________________________________                    ________________
Signature of person consenting to take part in the study

___________________________________
Printed name of person consenting to take part in the study

___________________________________                   ________________
Name of person providing information to the participant

Date