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PRINCIPALS' EXPERIENCES REGARDING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP PREPARATION AND PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS

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A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy
Educational Leadership

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by
Monica Alyssa Wills Brown
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ABSTRACT

Culturally responsive education improves the educational success of ethnically diverse students (Gay, 2002). The research presented states the case of the need of culturally responsive leadership preparation programs that influence the practice of culturally responsive principals. Emerging evidence has found that preparation programs impact the efficacy of future school leaders (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Jackson & Kelly, 2002). A large body of literature points to persistent achievement gaps for children of color—especially for African American males—and demands that school leadership preparation attend to issues of cultural competence (Dantley, 2005; Evans, 2007; Lopez, Magdeleno, & Mendoza Reis, 2006). The changing demographics of schools require instructional leadership skills, advocacy skills, and specialized knowledge in what works best for students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Ladson-Billings, 2001). Despite the rise in concern about leadership preparation for cultural diversity, the research base about such programs is thin.

The guiding questions for the research are as follows: How do principal preparation programs prepare aspiring principals to be culturally responsive? How are principals prepared to practice as culturally responsive instructional leaders? How do principals practice as culturally responsive instructional leaders? Faculty of educational leadership preparation programs and culturally responsive principals from the states of Mississippi and South Carolina provided data that were analyzed with qualitative research methods, particularly the case study method. Within-case analyses were

conducted for each research participant. Cross-case analysis followed the within-case

analyses that produced emergent themes for educational leadership programs and

culturally responsive principals. The emergent themes were discussed and supported

Gay's (2002) theory of culturally responsive teaching and learning.

DEDICATION

I would like to give praise to my Heavenly Father and my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for providing sound perspective throughout my graduate studies. I pray that God bountifully blesses my husband and best friend, Pervis L. Brown who has loved, encouraged and supported me throughout my dissertation. I am grateful to be blessed with my beautiful sons, Chason and Trenton. I pray that they grow to be strong men of God and are inspired to live out their dreams. I thank God for my wonderful parents, George and Anna Crawford Wills for being my backbone my entire life. Words cannot express how blessed I am to have them as my parents. To my brother, Corvin, thanks for being an awesome "little" brother.

I dedicate this dissertation to my late grandfather, Mr. Mose Crawford, Sr. and my late great-grandmother, Mrs. Pearl Armstrong, who both passed away during my doctoral journey. My maternal grandmother, Mrs. Ruth Crawford, taught me so much about life as well as my paternal grandmother, Ms. Catherine Wills and my grandmother, Mrs. Juanita Key. The late Ms. Jeanne Lenhardt and the late Ms. Joan Yarbrough inspired me. They always made me believe I was capable of achieving anything. Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my entire family and closest friends because the success of one is the success of all.

I pray God blesses and protects all children, that they may always have someone in their corner who genuinely cares about their well-being.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents (Continued)

Table of Contents (Continued)

LIST OF TABLES

List of Tables (continued)

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Current reforms in education advanced by the federally mandated and

reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act, known as the No Child Left

Behind Act of 2001, forced increased attention on state level standards, curriculum

frameworks, and assessment measures (Beachum, Denith, Boyle, & McCray, 2008). This

heightened awareness led increased focus on specific student populations (also known as

subgroups) and their academic "achievement" (Beachum et al, 2008). In most school

reform efforts, principals automatically assume the role of being the essential figurehead

for school-wide change, priorities, and vision (Blackmore, 2002; Fullan, 1993).

Principals, as instructional leaders, are responsible for ensuring that each subgroup

receives the best educational opportunities.

A serious and controversial issue in American education is the persistent gap in

academic achievement between majority and minority students, especially African

American students (Coleman et al 1966; Jencks & Phillips, 1998). Much has been written

about the school failure of African-American students (African American Male Task

Force, 1990; Comer, 1984; Irvine, 1990; Ogbu, 1981). The quest for improved

performance of African American students inspired theorists to propose methods of

teaching and learning that meet the cultural needs of African American students (Delpit,

1995; Gay, 2000; Ladson Billings, 1994; Villegas, 1988).

One perspective suggests that the needs of African American students are best

met when culturally responsive teaching methods are utilized (Asante, 1980: Delpit,

1995; Grant, 2008: Ladson-Billings, 1994). Gay (2000) defined culturally responsive teaching as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them. Culturally responsive teachers recognize the importance of academic achievement while maintaining the cultural identity and heritage of African American students (Gay, 2000).This study examined the preparation and practices of building level administrators related to cultural responsiveness, especially those administrators with high African American student enrollments.

Leadership Preparation Programs

Although significant changes in leadership preparation programs have occurred in recent years, leadership theory, preparation, and practice must be approached from a diverse perspective. Rather than using outmoded and failed educational methods from the past to prepare school leaders, universities are called to create a new type of program of study that is embedded in social, cultural, and moral leadership committed to ensuring schools are just and equitable (Allen, 2006). The preparation and development of exemplary school leaders is vital in ensuring that every student achieves a high level of academic performance in every school. School leadership is second only to teacher quality among school related factors that affect student learning (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2005).

The evolving demographic landscape of American education warrants changes in the ways educational leaders are prepared. Brown (2005) and Tillman (2005) both advocated that a focus on diversity is important in preparation of education leadership

given the rapidly increasing number of students of color in prekindergarten through 12th grade (Brown, 2005; Tillman, 2005). Changing demographics require instructional leadership skills, advocacy skills, and specialized knowledge that work best for students who come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Ladson-Billings, 2001). Additionally, the performance of African American students calls for greater leadership efforts. The greater the challenge (e.g. societal inequities, academic gaps, etc.), the greater the impact of principals' actions on learning (Brown, 2005). A culturally diverse education is sensitive to cultural differences and builds on the differences to impact the academic achievement of students of color (Gay, 2002; Ladson Billings, 1994).

Educational administration scholars must explore the racial dynamics of their preparation programs to respond to the changing needs of the educational demographic landscape (Young & Brooks, 2008). Educational leadership preparation programs that utilize the tenets of cultural responsiveness and relevant pedagogical approaches provide opportunities for school leaders to respond to the evolving educational needs of both educators and African American students.

Leadership Practices

Standards and educational leadership practices are often focused on managerial, instructional, and participatory leadership (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Within these areas of competence, administrators and their staffs should be knowledgeable about cultural responsiveness. Cultural responsiveness in education promotes educational equity (Gay, 2002; Ladson Billings, 1994, 1995). Unfortunately,

diversity in the principalship is virtually nonexistent as approximately 88% of the nations' principals are White (Evans, 2007; National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.). Therefore, it is imperative for school leaders to adhere to leadership that meets the diverse needs of social and cultural situations (Selznick, 1984).

Senge (1990) noted that leaders must design environments that allow people to develop the skills necessary to address the critical challenges they encounter in daily practice. Senge's argument suggests that the school principal is integral to teaching and learning. Principals are empowered with the ability to shape the environment in which the students learn and influence the teaching work force (Papa et al, 2003). Principals committed to student achievement create a school culture that is focused on learning and is characterized by high expectations for all students (Heck & Hallinger, 1999; Leithwood, seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstron, 2004).

Leadership practices that are "color conscious" (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002) are analogous to the principles of cultural responsiveness and cultural relevance. School leaders who have "color conscious" leadership practices are able to: a) address intercultural contact between groups and understand how to navigate between cultures (while maintaining identity); b) develop intercultural relationships that develop leadership skills to respond to all of the needs of the school community; c) rotate between the cultural identities within a school community; and d) acquire an understanding of within groups as well as between group processes (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

African American students in public schools experience negative and inequitable treatment on a daily basis (Brown, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Scheurich & Laible, 1999). The educational experiences of African American students often include low expectations, a feeling of inferiority, and a sense of defeat in their academic pursuits (Cooper & Jordan, 2003). Furthermore, African American students attend schools and receive instruction from teachers who often lack experience, motivation, resources, and/or enthusiasm to effectively engage students in the learning process (Cooper & Jordan, 2003; Kozol, 1991). Compared to their White middle class counterparts, African American students (and students of low socioeconomic status) consistently experience significantly lower achievement test scores, teacher expectations, and allocation of resources (Banks, 1997; Brown, 2008; Delpit, 1995; Jenks & Phillips, 1998). For example, currently, 61 % of fourth grade African-American students fail to reach basic levels of achievement in reading, and the reading and math achievement of African-American high school graduates is equivalent to that of eighth grade White students (Grothaus, Crum & James, 2010).

Scholars are alarmed about the persistent widening of the academic achievement gap between African American students and students from other ethnic groups (Darling Hammond, 2000) and have sought to explain why African American students face academic deficiencies. Some scholars attribute the pervasive issues to *Brown vs. Board of Education* not yet being fulfilled by the American educational system (Foster, 2008; Scott, 2004). Scholars such as Ogbu and Simmons (1998) attribute the lack of proficiency

to the cultural differences Black students have with their nonminority counterparts. In general, cultural differences in schools have been linked with the disproportionately high rate of school failure among African American children. The cultural disconnect that many African American students encounter in schools contributes to their academic underachievement and inability to adapt socially (Lee, Lomotey, Shujaa, 1990).

Principals who acknowledge and lead school reform efforts to address the cultural disconnect of African American students, draw from the pedagogical tenets of cultural responsiveness or culturally relevant instructional practices. School leaders that respond to the complexities of the learning needs of African American students understand the importance of closing the academic achievement gaps, increasing the number of minorities in gifted and honor classes, and reducing the disproportionate differences in special education. Leadership that utilizes culturally responsive instructional practices also takes on the challenge of mitigating educational discrepancies regarding the racial disparities African American students have in suspensions, expulsions, and graduation rates (Dantley, 2005; Tillman, 2005; Howard, 2010).

Purpose of Study

The major purpose of the study was to explore principals' experiences regarding culturally responsive leadership preparation and practices that promote academic achievement of African American students. Two major objectives were included in the study. First, this research explored how educational leadership preparation programs prepared administrators to be culturally responsive school leaders, especially to meet the educational needs of African American students. Second, the research explored the

culturally responsive leadership practices principals utilize in their schools to achieve academic success. The focus of the study was on high performing schools with high African American student enrollments. Interviews were conducted with principals regarding their experiences along with the review of related documents to provide a rich, thick description of the school leaders' experiences.

Review of Literature

Culturally Responsive Educational Practices

The conceptualizations of culturally responsive educational practices are defined depending on one's worldview and one's particular needs as a researcher and scholar (Tillman, 2002). Culture continues to be viewed as a major influence in cognitive development (Sue, 2004). The attributes of culturally responsive educational practices can be connected to Vygotsky's (1978) genetic law of cultural development and further with his socio-cultural theory that "emphasizes social activity and cultural practice as sources of thinking, the importance of mediation in human psychological functioning, and the inseparability of the individual from the social context" (Moll, 1990, p. 15). Vygotsky's student centered learning approaches are aligned with how educators can address the cultural diversity issues that exist in American society. For many years, researchers have sought to identify how teachers can reach students from culturally diverse backgrounds (Gay, 2010).

The relationship between culture and the academic achievement of the African American school aged population advances the argument that a set of authentic culture-based values is supported by behavioral, thought, and interactional patterns of African

Americans (Boykin, 1983). African American students' academic performance is optimal when the cultural values of their behavioral, thought, and interactional patterns are a part of the instructional practices utilized in schools (Boykin, 1983; Boykin & Cunningham, 2001).

Culturally responsive educational practices have ties with how teachers effectively and efficiently deliver instruction to culturally diverse students. Teachers who have proven to be successful have shared three propositions that constitute culturally relevant pedagogy: 1) Students must experience academic success; 2) cultural competence must be developed and maintained by students; and 3) students understand the ways that social structures and practices help reproduce inequities (sociopolitical critique) (Ladson-Billings, 1995). In addition to culturally relevant pedagogy, the term cultural responsiveness expresses how teachers can address the myriad academic needs of students from diverse backgrounds. Culturally responsive educational systems use cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits to teaching them more effectively (Gay, 2000). Villegas and Lucas (2002) advanced the conversation on cultural responsiveness by applying the term to teachers who have a sociopolitical consciousness and affirm views of students from diverse backgrounds. These teachers are responsible for and capable of bringing about educational change, embrace constructivist teaching and learning, and build on students' prior knowledge and beliefs while challenging and expanding familiar knowledge sets.

While the term "culturally relevant and responsive" has traditionally appeared in the literature focusing on teacher preparation, the concept of principals applying

culturally responsive leadership practices can be found in Lomotey's 1980s research on the compassionate and caring attitudes of African American principals as well as in Dillard's (1995) research on African American women principals. However the vitality of this research study moved to examine how all races of principals can be prepared to eradicate personal biases and deficit thinking and replace those mindsets to that of being caring and committed and empowering marginalized students to attain high levels of academic achievement.

Diversity in Schools

Schools reflect the society in which they are situated. As changes in society take place, schools reflect similar transformations. In the sweeping case of society's changing racial and cultural demographics, schools must respond to efficiently meet the needs of the myriad races and cultures that permeate schools. Challenges have emerged on the status quo on school leadership, curriculum, and pedagogy (Anyon, 1997; Carlson & Apple, 1998; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Delpit, 1995; Dimitriadis & Carlson, 2003). As open systems, schools in racially diverse societies will require leaders and models of leadership that will address the racial, cultural, and ethnic makeup of the school community (Brown, 2005). By 2020, students of color are most likely to constitute 50% of the total school population (Marshall, 2004). A focus on diversity is particularly important in educational leadership given the rapidly increasing number of students of color in prekindergarten–12th grade (Brown, 2005).

The academic achievement of African Americans is a concern for principals, especially in the increasing call for higher and more stringent accountability (Beachum et

al, 2008). The excessive job demand placed on school principals makes it difficult for them to focus solely on teaching and learning. In addition, there appears to be a growing shortage of people who are qualified and willing to assume principal positions that are committed to instructional improvement, particularly in culturally diverse schools (Darling-Hammond, Lepointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2007).

Despite almost a half century of the desegregation of America's schools mandated by *Brown v. Board of Education*, the proper and appropriate education of African American students in U.S. schools remains ever more problematic and more troubled than in pre-Civil Rights days (Foster, 2005). The overpopulation of Black males in special education, the tremendous disparities between Black and White student achievement, and the fact that African Americans' rate of suspension is higher than any other ethnic group gives reason to pause and reflect (Dantley, 2005).

Ladson Billings (2002) argues that the educational literature is silent on the issue of teaching African American students because much of the educational research has relied on generic models of pedagogy that position themselves as "culture neutral" when they actually support the learning of mainstream students (Shulman, 1987).

Educational Leadership Principal Preparation

Changes in accountability structure, demographics, and overall educational needs require quality principals who are equipped with the tools needed to meet the myriad needs and functions of schools. Preparation programs are responsible for developing principals who have the knowledge, skills, and attributes of instructional leaders that exhibit the capacity to galvanize increased student achievement and learning (Campbell-

Stephens, 2009). The assertion that "educational leadership makes a difference in different ways" causes a critical analysis in understanding the complexity of leadership and the importance of avoiding "one-size-fits-all" preparation approaches to successful school leadership (Crow, 2007). While some leadership qualities or practices may have universal characteristics, other leadership qualities are culturally specific (Crow, 2007).

A culturally responsive principal preparation program is synonymous with social justice preparation programs. The social justice literature addresses not only students of color, but low-income students, students for whom English is not their first language, students with disabilities, and students with alternative sexual orientation (McKenzie et al, 2008). While tenets of social justice are similar to that of culturally responsive pedagogical practices, culturally responsive pedagogy applies more to the teaching and learning that takes place within schools under the leadership of the building administrator. Principals/building level administrators whose leadership is intertwined with the tenets of social justice are perfect examples of why culturally responsive leadership programs are important. Preparation programs not only can assist principals with the realities of how to impact the pervasiveness of marginalized students, but transform the power relations that plague educational settings.

Instructional Leadership Practices

Instructional leadership is generally perceived as a role carried out by the school principal (Dwyer, 1986; Glasman, 1984; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Daresh and Playko (1995) defined instructional leadership as the direct or indirect behaviors that significantly affect teacher instruction and, as a result, student learning. This definition

11

identifies a connection between leadership, teaching, and student learning. School leaders who have come to realize that schools are situated in a broader social and political context can see how the systemic practices and policies of racism are often part of the educational process and can hinder the academic and self-esteem of African American children (Dantley, 2005).

Instructional leadership traditionally assumed a focus by the principal on teacher instructional behaviors that affected student outcomes and consisted of a blending of supervision, staff development, and curriculum development (Blasé & Blasé, 1998; Hallinger & Heck, 1996, McKenzie, 2008). However, leadership for social justice requires that leaders identify good teacher instructional behaviors and ensure that these behaviors meet the learning needs of every child, daily (Frattura & Capper, 2007; Larson & Murtadha, 2002). More specifically, instructional leadership that identifies pedagogy specifically recognizes the cultural aspects of learners and acknowledges what good instruction looks like for African American students (Gupton, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Effective school leaders take responsibility of leading their schools in rethinking of goals, priorities, curriculum, pedagogies, learning resources, and assessment methods (Levine, 2005). Effective leaders must design environments that allow people to learn the appropriate skills needed in order to address the critical challenges they encounter in daily practice (Senge, 2000).

Research Questions

The questions for this research were rooted in the tenets of culturally responsive leadership practices and explored the experiences of principals regarding culturally responsive leadership preparation and practices that promote academic achievement of African American students. The following inquiries guided the research of the study:

1. How do principal preparation programs prepare aspiring principals to be culturally responsive?

2. How are principals prepared to practice as culturally responsive instructional leaders?

3. How do principals practice as culturally responsive instructional leaders?

Theoretical Framework

There are two types of learning associated with the preparation and practices of school principals. First, there is the knowledge that is acquired as a leader. Second, there is the knowledge that principals demonstrate as instructional leaders. Cruickshank's (1990) identification of effective teachers, Ladson-Billing's (1995) culturally relevant pedagogy, Villegas and Lucas' (2002) model of culturally responsive teaching, and Gay's (2000) culturally responsive teaching applicable to school leaders contribute to the theoretical framework of this study.

Cruickshank (1990) identified effective teachers by character traits, what they know, what they teach, how they teach, what they expect from their students, how their students react to them, and how they manage classrooms. Ladson-Billings (1995) asserts that culturally relevant pedagogy rests on three prepositions. Teachers who possess

effective traits and skills: a) focus on student achievement; b) develop and maintain students' cultural competence, and c) develop students' sense of sociopolitical consciousness. Villegas and Lucas' (2002) model of culturally responsive teaching argues that effective teachers: a) have a sociopolitical consciousness; b) affirm views of students from diverse backgrounds; c) are responsible for bringing about educational change; d) understand how learners construct knowledge; e) know about the lives of their students, and f) use the knowledge about their students' lives to design instruction.

Gay's (2002) model, mostly utilized for the preparation of teachers, may be applied to the preparation and practice of the instructional leader of the school. This research study was based on Gay's (2002) theory of cultural responsiveness: a) developing a knowledge base about cultural diversity; b) including ethnic and cultural diversity content in the curriculum; c) demonstrating caring and building learning communities; d) communicating with ethnically diverse students, and e) responding to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction.

Developing a cultural diversity knowledge base

Developing a cultural diversity knowledge base focuses on the idea that explicit knowledge about cultural diversity is imperative to meeting the educational needs of ethnically diverse students. Educational programs prepare culturally responsive educators with a cultural knowledge base to understand the cultural characteristics and contributions of different ethnic groups. Candidates acquire detailed information about the cultural particularities of specific ethnic groups as well as acquire knowledge about

the contributions of different ethnic groups to a wide variety of disciplines. Candidates have a deeper understanding of multicultural education theory, research and scholarship.

In addition to acquiring knowledge about ethnic and cultural diversity, educators need to learn how to design culturally responsive curricula and convert it into culturally responsive curriculum designs and instructional strategies. Three types of curricula offer myriad opportunities for teaching cultural diversity. *Formal plans* for instruction are instituted by policy and governing bodies of educational systems. The second instructional plans are artifacts instructors utilize known as *symbolic curriculum*. The third plan is *societal curriculum* or the knowledge, ideas, and impressions about ethnic groups that are portrayed through the media (Cortes, 1991, 1995, 2000).

Demonstrating cultural caring and building a learning community.

Preparation programs stress to future leaders that caring is a moral imperative, a social responsibility, and a pedagogical necessity. Instructional leaders acknowledge that caring is action oriented in that it demonstrates high expectations and uses imaginative strategies to ensure academic success for ethnically diverse students. Additionally, to build communities of learning is to emphasize holistic or integrated learning. Personal, moral, social, political, cultural, and academic knowledge and skills are taught simultaneously.

Cross cultural communications

Culturally responsive preparation programs teach how the communication styles of different ethnic groups reflect cultural values and shape leaning behaviors and how to modify classroom interactions to better accommodate students. Programs include

knowledge about linguistic structures of various ethnic communication styles as well as contextual factors, cultural nuances, discourse features, logic and rhythm, delivery, vocabulary usage, role relationships of speakers and listeners, intonation, gestures, and body movements.

Cultural congruity in classroom instruction

Cultural characteristics provide the criteria for determining how instructional strategies should be modified for ethnically diverse students. Educational leadership programs that emphasize cultural responsiveness confront the misconceptions and controversies surrounding learning styles. Also, ethnic and cultural congruity in teaching is consistently integrated into the most fundamental and high status aspects of the instruction process.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Figure 1 provides an illustration of the research study's conceptual framework. The conceptual framework illustration begins with the experiences of principals who were asked to share their experiences regarding culturally responsive leadership preparation and practices that promote academic achievement of African American students. Participants included principals from high performing schools with high African American enrollments.

Experiences of Principals

- High Performing Schools
- High African American Student Enrollment

Interviews and document retrieval related to Cultural responsiveness

Preparation
How are principals prepared to practice as culturally responsive instructional leaders?
1. Develop a cultural diversity knowledge base
2. Design a culturally relevant curricula
3. Include ethnic and cultural diversity content in the curriculum
4. Demonstrate caring and building learning communities
5. Respond to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction

Practices
How do principals practice as culturally responsive instructional leaders?
1. Develop a cultural diversity knowledge base
2. Design a culturally relevant curricula
3. Include ethnic and cultural diversity content in the curriculum
4. Demonstrate caring and building learning communities
5. Respond to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction

1. Focus on meeting diverse student population needs
2. Specific course address diversity issues
3. Cultural responsive data analysis
4. Using data for decision making
5. Professional development to address diversity issues
6. Activity based
7. Use of data
8. Observations by faculty
9. Supervision of principal mentors
10. Program assessments

1. Focus on diverse cultures
2. Courses focus on cultural responsiveness
3. Use of learning styles
4. Test data analyses
5. Internships in African American populations
6. Culturally responsive experience gained
7. Knowledge of curriculum; differentiated learning
8. Practices of caring; high expectations
9. Parental education and involvement
10. Understand cultural diversity
11. Data driven decision making
12. Classroom observation and planning

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Research Study

The principals were selected from the state of Mississippi–which has the highest African American population in the nation–and the state of South Carolina. Interviews were scheduled with the identified principals by telephone. The questions related to their preparation programs and their practices were used as the interview protocol. Other documents were obtained and reviewed. The outcome of the study was to generate emergent themes that may be useful for aspiring administration, faculty of leadership preparation programs, and practicing administrators in their responses to improving achievement in schools with high African American enrollments.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The case study method was selected to conduct this research study. Case study research is effective in investigating the intricacies of real life events and understanding complex phenomena (Gerring, 2007; Yin, 2009). Case study research involves a detailed method of understanding research processes needed to uncover a deeper meaning or exploration of a subject (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Yin, 2009). Within-case summaries defined the individual cases. Cross case analysis facilitated the comparison of commonalities and differences of the cases.

Four characteristics are essential components of qualitative case studies: particularistic, descriptive, heuristic, and inductive (Merriam, 1988). The *particularistic* component focuses on a particular situation, program, or phenomenon. The *descriptive* component ensures that end product is rich and provides a "thick" description of the study (Merriam, 1988, p.11). The *heuristic* component clarifies the reader's

understanding of the study (Merriam, 1988, p 13). The final component, *inductive*, relies on the researcher's inductive reasoning. Generalization and concepts emerged from the examination of data (Merriam, 1988).

The first research questions focused on how educational leadership programs prepare principals to work in schools with high African American populations. The research questions described the practices that principals utilize to ensure high academic achievement for schools that serve predominately African American populations. A cross-case analysis was used to assess the preparation programs of principals to analyze the similarities and differences of the leadership preparation programs and the principals' instructional practices (Gerring, 2007).

Case Selection

In order to identify principals that exhibit culturally responsive leadership qualities, a purposeful sampling defined the setting and population. The goal of the study was to select principals that could provide the greatest contributions to the knowledge base. Mississippi–the state with the highest percentage of African American residents– and South Carolina served as the setting for the research study.

In 2009, Mississippi updated the statewide accountability rating system. The Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks (or learning standards for language arts and math) and corresponding assessments were aligned with the new accountability rating system. Schools fall under the following classification (from highest to lowest): *Star, High Performing, Successful, Academic Watch, Low Performing, At Risk of Failing*, and *Failing*. Principals who lead schools that have a '*Star, High Performing*, or *Successfu*l'

rating *and* serve a 75% or higher African American student population serve as the within-case study sample.

Data Collection

Data for this research were collected by structured interview questions and the retrieval of documents. The interview process was selected because the actual preparation and practice had not been observed, and past events may not be replicable (Merriam, 1988). Two sets of data were collected for the research. Faculty of educational leadership programs that prepared successful principals were selected to be interviewed. Questions were asked to determine the extent to which culturally responsive tenets were applied to principal preparation programs. Principals with notable African American student success were interviewed to determine how their leadership preparation contributes to the academic success of their students. Principals also described how their instructional leadership practices impact the academic performance of African American students. The interview protocol was based on the tenets of Gay's culturally responsive teaching. Documents and artifacts (e.g. school report cards and preparation program curricula) provided the documentation to support (i.e. provide triangulation) the preparation and practices of leaders who exhibit culturally responsive behaviors. Interviews were conducted by telephone.

Data Analysis

Following the recommendations of Creswell (1994), a systematic approach was used to analyze the qualitative data. Merriam's (1988) components of data analysis were followed: a) simultaneous data collection and analysis; b) organization of data into

narrative account of findings; c) develop categories or themes that interpret data; d) explain phenomena and how it is related. Tesch's (1990) steps for coding of data were followed. The steps include: 1) gather a solid feel by reading all of the documents; 2) examine one document to find explicit meaning; 3) cluster the topics; 4) code the topics using abbreviation; 5) categorize the topics using description; 6) finalize abbreviations for categories and alphabetize codes; 7) assemble data by category and perform preliminary analysis; and 8) recode if necessary. NVivo software package was used for entering the data and to assist with organizing and coding the data

Definitions of Relevant Terms

African American students represent the ethnicity group of individuals that were the focus of study. Interchangeable words used throughout the study were Black students, minority students, culturally diverse students, and students of color.

Candidate – In this study, the term candidate represented the student enrolled in a university based leadership preparation program and seeking school building leadership licensure.

Culturally responsive – School leaders' ability to understand and respond to cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more meaningful and relevant (Ladson-Billings, 2001). Students' home cultures, contexts, and languages are respected, valued, and utilized to improve student academic achievement (Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Scheurich & Skrla, 2003). This term was interchanged throughout the

study with culturally competent, culturally relevant, multicultural, culturally diverse, cultural equity, cultural equality, and social justice.

Educational leadership preparation programs – University based programs that prepare candidates for school building leadership licensure and certification. Although educational leadership preparation programs include district level leadership licensure and certification, this study specifically focused on school building leadership–also known as the school principal.

Instructional leadership – The direct or indirect behaviors of school leaders that affect teacher instruction that result in student learning (Daresh & Playko, 1995). The role also focuses on managing, coordinating, controlling, supervising, and developing curriculum and instruction (Hallinger, 2005). Throughout this research, instructional leadership was interchangeable with pedagogical leadership and school leadership.

School building leadership – The National Policy Board for Educational Administration uses school building leadership in defining standards for educational leadership programs. School building leadership was synonymous with principal or school administrator for this research.

Students – Enrollees of pre-Kindergarten through 12th grades.

Delimitations

There are limitations associated with case study research. In addition to the limited generalizability–a result of the small sample sizes–the researcher did not have control over the data collection environment or the responses received from the interviews and observations of the subject(s) (Yin, 2009).

A delimitation of the study was that the culture of African American students served as the focus of the study. Culturally responsive methods can be utilized with students of differing socioeconomic status (especially those varying from the background of the leader). Cultural responsiveness also provides sound instructional leadership strategies for different minority groups (Latino, Asian, Native American, etc.), races, and ethnicities.

Elements of cultural responsiveness focus on the social and political development of students. However, I chose to focus on how cultural responsiveness impacted the academic achievement of students. The whole child is important, but African American students with high academic achievement have higher self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977).

An additional delimitation was that cultural competence can be applied to instructional leaders domestically as well internationally; however, the focus here is based on a domestic (U.S.) approach.

Role of Researcher

Merriam (1988) states that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Following her definition as role of researcher, data were mediated through human instrumentation. The researcher developed the description of the settings and cases that were analyzed. The researcher as instrument was responsive to the contextual settings of the cases. As the primary instrument, the researcher processed data immediately, clarified and summarized the data as the study evolved (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Merriam, 1988).

Significance of study

Tillman (2002) defines culture as "a group's individual and collective ways of thinking, believing, and knowing, which includes their shared experiences, consciousness, skills, values, forms of expression, social institutions and behaviors" (p.4). Cultural differences constitute the essence of American society, however all cultures are not equally regarded. "It is a mistake to assume that U.S. mainstream culture is characteristic of all groups in U.S. society. Those groups that do not conform to mainstream culture or who are viewed as being outside the mainstream assume a marginalized status and are oppressed. Minority status is highly associated with prejudice and discrimination" (Guy, 1999).

A culturally responsive leadership preparation program is important because it allows future school leaders an opportunity to reflect on life experiences and social constructs that define leadership styles that ultimately shape the leader's approach to how school(s) will be led. Individual leader styles are valuable due to the impact various leadership styles have on a school's level of success, thus should be protected (Lomotey, 1993; Tillman, 2005).

The needs of African American students have generated theorists to propose methods of teaching and learning that meets students' of color cultural needs. African American students–particularly males–are marginalized and victimized by school experiences within capitalist educational structures (Cooper & Jordan, 2003; Noguera, 2003; Polite & Davis, 2001). Rates of Black male school attrition, disproportionate assignment to special education, relatively poor academic performance, college

24

enrollment, and persistence are perceived as a function of Black males' inability or disinterest in fulfilling their roles as conventional learners in school settings (Davis, 2003; Delpit, 1995; Polite & Davis, 1999).

Culturally responsive pedagogy, multicultural education, and social justice are educational topics that permeate literature to increase academic achievement levels for African American students. The repeated use of these topics promotes further exploration for the study of culturally responsive educational leaders and their connection to African American students.

These terms are generally associated with teacher preparation or professional development. Logically, a similar focus should be placed on the creation or expansion of culturally responsive leadership preparation and developmental programs. Just as there is a need for teachers to create a culturally responsive pedagogy that impacts student achievement, it is important for school leaders to be empowered with similar learning constructs.

Organization of the Study

This study is presented in five chapters. Chapter One provides an overview of the study. The statement of the problem is addressed along with the purpose of the study. The chapter proceeds with a brief review of the literature. The chapter progresses with the research questions and methodology. The chapter concludes with the significance of the study.

Chapter Two is the Literature Review and provides a review of the existing literature that is pertinent to the study. The literature review covers culturally responsive education, educational leadership preparation programs, and leadership practices.

Chapter Three covers Research Procedures. In Chapter Three, a comprehensive account details the research methods utilized in the study. The case study approach is detailed that provides an account of the research process. Chapter Three includes how data were obtained, collected and further analyzed to determine the themes for educational leadership preparation programs, principal preparation, and principal practice.

Chapter Four details the study Findings. The findings detail the within-case analyses of both educational leadership preparation program faculty and culturally responsive principals. Themes emerged during the cross-case analyses of each group of participants.

Chapter Five contains the Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations of the study. Chapter Five includes a discussion of emergent themes that detail the extent to which educational leadership preparation programs are culturally responsive. Emergent themes also detail culturally responsive principals' preparations and practices. Chapter Five is concluded with recommendations for education anal leadership preparation programs, aspiring principals, and practicing principals.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The content of this literature review focuses on culturally responsive educational practices and educational leadership principal preparation programs. The first section provides a review of the importance of culturally responsive instructional/pedagogic leadership practices. The section describes how those practices mitigate educational inequities and meet the needs of African American students. The second section discusses the reformation of educational leadership preparation programs and the current direction of the components of preparation programs. The components are connected with the concepts of culturally responsive education and social justice. This literature review closes with a section that discuss leadership practices and how instructional leadership impacts African American student learning.

Introduction

The opportunities to learn and to access education are valued commodities in a free and egalitarian society. The importance of a quality education accompanies the belief that education offers its recipients an improved quality of life (Howard, 2010). However, the idea that a one-size approach fits all students equally hinders those who are being prepared to be educational leaders and the students within these leaders' schools.

Schools reflect the society in which they are situated. As changes in society take place, schools reflect similar changes. In the sweeping case of society's changing racial and cultural demographics, schools must respond to meet the needs of the myriad cultures that permeate schools. The status quo where school leadership, curriculum, and pedagogy

are concerned is being challenged (Anyon, 1997; Carlson & Apple, 1998; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Delpit, 1995; Dimitriadis & Carlson, 2003). As open systems, schools in a racially diverse society will require leaders and models of leadership that will address the racial, cultural, and ethnic makeup of their respective school community (Brown, 2005). By 2020, students of color are most likely to constitute 50% of the total school population (Marshall, 2004). A focus on cultural diversity is particularly important in educational leadership given the rapidly increasing number of students of color in prekindergarten-12th schools (Brown, 2005).

Because of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, educators are faced with the challenge to close the achievement gap between "disadvantaged and minority students and their peers" or students that belong to a "subgroup." The 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) defined the achievement gap as "the difference in the academic performance between different ethnic groups" (see No Child Left Behind Act of 2001).

The academic achievement of African Americans is a concern for principals as higher and stringent school accountability requirements increase. African American students struggle to pass proficiency tests and other measure of academic excellence across the United States (Gay, 2010). Universities must shoulder part of this burden by preparing strong instructional leaders who are better equipped to narrow the margins of achievement of African American students. Closing the achievement gap will require all educators to think analytically about their pedagogical practices by utilizing culturally relevant experiences (N.E.A., 2004). Cultural hegemony contributes to the disparity in

academic achievement. However, Gay (2010) insists that for schools to truly be reformed, culturally responsive pedagogy must be enacted.

While it seems evident that instructional leadership affects student achievement, research on instructional leadership rarely explores issues of student diversity and learning explicitly (Riehl, 2000). Thus, knowledge about how leaders promote inclusive instructional practices in schools must often be inferred from broader work (Riehl, 2000). Surprisingly, there have been few attempts to apply this culturally responsive framework to the study of leadership practice in high poverty, challenging schools (Johnson, 2007).

Culturally Responsive Education

Eliminating the academic achievement gaps among ethnicities and finding methods that empower students of color are the fundamental reason educators utilizing culturally responsive educational practices. Research, theory, and practice attest to the effectiveness of culturally responsive educational practices (Gay, 2002, 2010). This section describes several components of culturally responsive practice. First the section will explore the principles of culturally responsive teaching and learning; culture, race, and African Americans; and cultural responsive pedagogy that meets the needs of African American students.

Exploring cultural responsiveness

The theory of culturally responsive pedagogy (developed by Kathryn Au, Roland G. Tharp, A. Wade Boykin, Sonia Nieto, Lisa Delpit, Geneva Gay, and Gloria Ladson-Billing and also identified as culturally relevant, culturally competent, culturally proficient, or culturally sensitive pedagogy) postulates that discontinuities between

school practices and the needs of low-income students and students of color is an important factor in low achievement levels among these groups. This theory also states that the academic achievement of students will increase if schools and teachers transform to reflect and draw on students' cultural and language strengths (Banks, 2000).

Culturally responsive educational practices have their ties with how teachers effectively and efficiently deliver instruction to culturally diverse students (used to raise the academic performance of African American students). Several scholars advocate integrating students' culture with pedagogical techniques that lead to effective measures that raise the academic performance of African American students (Gay, 2000; Irvine, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Gloria Ladson-Billings' (1994) theory of culturally relevant pedagogy provides three propositions for teaching and learning. First, there must be a focus on individual students' academic achievement. Next, teachers must ensure that cultural competence is developed and maintained by students. Third, students must understand the ways that social structures and practices help reproduce inequities. Culturally relevant pedagogy increases student performance because it empowers African American students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by utilizing culture as an influence to convey knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Culturally relevant pedagogy focuses on meeting the needs of African American students; the term culturally responsive suggests that teachers can address the myriad of academic needs of all students from diverse backgrounds.

Gay's (2000) conversation on culturally responsive education uses cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits to

teach them more effectively. The theory of culturally responsive teaching and learning states that educators: develop a cultural diversity knowledge base for students; design culturally relevant curricula; demonstrate cultural caring; establish cross-cultural communications; and establish cross-congruity in classroom instruction (Gay, 2000). Villegas and Lucas (2002) further advanced the conversation on cultural responsiveness by applying the term to teachers who: have a sociopolitical consciousness, affirm views of students from diverse backgrounds, are responsible for and capable of bringing about educational change, embrace constructivist teaching and learning, and build on students' prior knowledge and beliefs while challenging and expanding familiar knowledge sets.

Educators who utilize culturally relevant pedagogy as a framework for their instruction rely and build on the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of racially diverse students to make learning experiences more meaningful and relevant (Ladson-Billings, 2001). Villegas and Lucas (1991) believe that in order for teachers (educators) to maximize learning opportunities for all students, they must gain knowledge about their students' cultures and permeate their instructional practices with that knowledge.

Educators who utilize culturally responsive pedagogy recognize that education can provide individuals with tools to empower students (and themselves) while strengthening democracy. The use of culturally responsive pedagogy deploys education in a process of progressive social change and stronger egalitarian society (Gay, 1994). Although the role of the administrator is generally not explored in the culturally responsive pedagogy literature, it can be inferred that principals promote these strategies

in their role as instructional leaders (Riehl, 2000). Gardiner & Enomoto (2006) contend that effective instructional leaders are aware of culturally proficient pedagogical practices and encourage teachers to explore teaching methods that promote educational equity that is culturally sensitive and free from discrimination. School leaders who promote instructional strategies specific to African American students are school leaders who encourage their teachers to practice culturally responsive pedagogy (Dantley, 2005). MacNeill, Cavanaugh, & Silcox (2003) further explain the intersection of pedagogy and leadership by stating:

> Pedagogy specifically recognizes the cultural and societal aspects of what is learned and why it is learned. Pedagogy acknowledges aspects of learning that were previously described as the "hidden curriculum." Pedagogy also peels back the veneer of teaching methodology to expose the conscious and unconscious decisions made by teachers as agents of enculturation. Pedagogic leadership is therefore an act that motivates others, thus facilitating culturally aware learning in a third party. Pedagogic leadership concerns leading improvement of student learning and this requires facilitating the professional learning of teachers (p.77).

Culturally responsive leadership has come in the form of different of various names that try to establish how educators can respond to the needs of diverse student populations.

Emergence of Culturally Responsive Education

Culturally responsive education builds on the foundation of more familiar educational terms or ideologies known as multiculturalism, diversity, and social justice.

Multicultural educational reform focuses on equity and equality in education and establishes the foundation that builds culturally responsive educational practices.

Multicultural education

In the early 70s, concerns for the racial and ethnic inequities that were apparent in learning opportunities and outcomes began to evolve in a myriad of multicultural educational reform approaches by scholars (Howard, 2010). The beginning of the educational multicultural movement provided guidance for how educators should respond to the multicultural needs of students (and sometimes of educators themselves). The works of Abrahams and Troike (1972) state that teachers must learn the cultural differences of their students as well as be able to analyze their own cultural attitudes and assumptions. Carlson (1976) advised educators embrace the realities of ethnic differences among students and the roles those differences play in U.S. education. Banks (1974) admonished teachers of racial minority students to stop conducting business as usual by using traditional instructional conventions. Banks stated that educators should respect the cultures of students and revise curriculum so that it reflects students' learning and cultural styles that enhance student achievement (1974). Cuban's (1972, 1993) assertion is similar to that of Banks in that educators are cautioned to avoid looking for simple, single dimensional solutions for students of color. The roots of this research come from the early multi-cultural reform of Aragon (1973). Aragon's (1973) argument stated that the reason ethnic minority students did not do well in school was due to teacher limitations rather than the limitations of students. Student achievement would improve when educational reform focused on changing teacher attitudes about minority cultures

and ethnic groups. Teachers would then be able to provide classroom instruction by incorporating cultural diversity (Gay, 2010).

The differences that make a person distinct and unique from another are the focus of diversity. Diversity is an inclusive term that encompasses groups distinguished by race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental ability, age, and national origin. Yet, diversity advocates recognize that there are similarities between persons that bind people together as part of common humanity (Lum, 2003). In educational practices, formative work exploring diversity or multicultural dimensions were substantiated from teaching and learning (Aragon, 1973; Au, 1981: Banks, 1981; Gay, 1979) as opposed to multicultural or diversity studies in educational leadership.

Most teachers report that their pre-service preparation did little or nothing to prepare them for today's diverse classrooms (Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994b). Additionally, research studies inform teacher candidates that school achievement is intricately connected with socioeconomic status, "culturally different" students are generally not expected to achieve comparable to their white middle class counterparts, and children of poverty are developmentally slower than other children (Banks, 2010; Delpit, 1995; Perry, 2004). Labeling terms ("disadvantaged," "at risk," "learning disabled") are often used to explain educational failures of poor or minority students (Delpit, 1995). Regardless of these failure explanations, little research has been done to examine academic success among African-American students (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

The need for educators to be prepared to utilize culturally responsive educational practices is best addressed by Delpit as she actualized the cultural clash between students and school (1995). She noted that there are two ways to define the clash: first, cultural clash exists when a significant difference exists between the students' culture and the school's culture. This difference manifests in styles of language use and interactional pattern, and educators can easily misread students' aptitudes, intent, or abilities. Secondly, when cultural differences exist, educators may utilize styles of instruction and/or discipline that are contrary to the students' or community's norms (Delpit, 1995).

Culture, Race, and African Americans

Understanding culture is an important aspect of understanding what it is to be culturally responsive (competent, etc.). Culture is conceptualized and defined differently depending on one's worldview and one's particular needs as a researcher and scholar (Tillman, 2002). Culture continues to be viewed as a major influence in cognitive development (Sue, 2004). The attribution of culturally relevant educational practices can be connected to Vygotsky's (1978) genetic law of cultural development and further with his socio-cultural theory that "emphasizes social activity and cultural practice as sources of thinking, the importance of mediation in human psychological functioning, and the inseparability of the individual from the social context" (Moll, 1990, p.15). Vygotsky's student-centered learning approaches are aligned with how educators can address the cultural diversity issues that exist in American society.

Drawing from King (1995), Hilliard (2001), and McCarthy (1998), Tillman defines culture as a groups' individual and collective way of thinking, believing, and

knowing. This definition includes the groups shared experiences, consciousness, skills, values, and forms of expression, social institutions, and behaviors (Tillman, 2002).

This research focused on cultural responsiveness to the needs of African American students. While culturally responsive educational practices are not solely identified with race (as economic differences, geographic differences, gender, sexual orientation, and religion may also require culturally relevant educational responses), culturally responsive practices help educational systems that have been dominated by a particular group of individuals. Darder (1991) defines this as "cultural invasion." Cultural invasion is a way majority groups maintain continuous economic, political, social, and cultural power over minority groups (Darder, 1991). Structural inequalities in public education are attributed to Darder's "cultural invasion." Darling-Hammond and Orphanos (2006) supports this because they state that access to resources and high stakes assessment practices contribute largely to the structural inequities that maintain unequal opportunity among racial groups. They further found that because the minority racial groups are not being given equal access to high quality education, the achievement of students from minority backgrounds is far lower than nonminority students (Darling-Hammond & Orphanos, 2006).

Identifying culturally responsive strategies is significant because the cultural heritage of the dominant group permeates mainstream institutions, programs, policies, and structures (Sue & Sue, 2003) while schools are widely believed to be institutions that transmit academic knowledge, they also transmit cultural knowledge that are frequently consistent with mainstream concepts, paradigms, and experiences (Banks, 1996; Carter,

36

2005). Banks' reference to mainstream academic knowledge is problematic for culturally diverse students in their attempt to exhibit academic proficiency because it conflicts with the students' personal and cultural knowledge.

A culturally proficient educator acknowledges students' cultural heritages and views them as assets. Neglecting the role of culture in education is defined by Irvine as "cultural aversion" (1990), which is the general reluctance by educators to consider race and race related issues such as equality, prejudice, discrimination, and social justice. The reluctance to discuss the concept of race inhibits educators from embracing the complexities of race and cultural issues associated with specific races. Reluctance to discuss race and cultural issues prohibits leaders from engaging in serious deliberations with students, teachers, parents, and community members focused on issues of power and pedagogical practice (Giroux, 2001).

As Billings illustrated in her 1995 article, "But That's Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy," the practice of culturally relevant pedagogy is poignant for paving a way for student success. African American students who receive culturally relevant instruction perform at higher levels (academically and socially). Therefore, the case can be made that leadership that is not culturally relevant or responsive and that does not meet the needs of African American students cannot be considered exemplary. Theoharis (2007), in his discernment of what 'good' leadership is, found that there is a divide between what is considered 'good' leadership and the leadership roles those committed to social justice entail. "Good" leadership is focused on successfully creating equitable schools for marginalized students. Principals committed to

social justice are also committed to culturally responsive educational practices (Theoharis, 2007).

The social justice educational tenets prescribed by McKenzie and colleagues (2008) are similar to the propositions of culturally relevant pedagogy. McKenzie et al (2008) state that leadership for social justice requires that school leaders work to raise the academic achievement of all students. This mirrors the first point of Ladson-Billings' (1995a) culturally relevant pedagogy that focuses on individual students' academic achievement. The second tenet of social justice leadership states that educators are required to prepare their students to live as critical citizens in society (Shields, 2004). This mirrors the third proposition that Ladson-Billings (1995a) addresses that educators ensure students have a sense of sociopolitical consciousness.

Educators' abilities to know and understand students is not restricted by their race but by educators' willingness to know and understand the complexities of race and culture and to develop a healthy sense of their own racial identity (Howard, 2010). My research agenda, examined how all races of principals can be prepared to eradicate personal biases/deficits and replace those mindsets to that of being caring and committed to empowering marginalized students to attain high levels of academic achievement.

The definitions provided by Ladson Billings (1995a) of cultural relevance, and the defining of culturally responsive teaching by Gay (2002) and Villegas and Lucas (2002), served as the springboard for applying cultural relevance to school leadership. Although teachers play an important role in student achievement (Darling Hammond, 2007; Marzano, 2003), school leaders are the instructional leaders of school – ultimately

making them accountable for the academic achievement of all students. The instructional role of the principal is imperative in increasing academic achievement. In order for principals to be effective for African American students, they must be cognizant of culturally responsive teaching and learning methods to further impart on the teachers they lead. Leadership of schools that serve African American students cannot afford a learning environment where the cultural environment is ignored (Dantley, 2005).

African American students and education

The early works of scholars such as W.E.B Dubois (1903) and Carter G. Woodson (1919, 1933, and 1968) defined the history of social inequities and educational opportunities afforded to African Americans in the United States. Although DuBois and Woodson were speaking from an early to mid-20th century perspective, it is evident from 20th century achievement gaps and disciplinary infractions within schools that "race matters," as identified by Cornel West (1993).

Groups that have been excluded from educational opportunities over the past centuries represent those who now in the 21st century, continue to be at or near the bottom of the achievement hierarchy (Howard, 2010). Educators attempting to cross the intersection of race and culture while attempting to identify methods to eradicate achievement gaps must include a historical understanding of African Americans. While disparity was more political and class driven in the early 1900s, the "eagerness to learn" by Blacks during the pre-Civil war era was observed by Northerners as well as by those who attributed negative values to Blacks (Anderson, 1988). In addition, a perplexing component of the current poor performance of African American students and poor

parent participation are inconsistent with the educational attainment of Blacks following the Civil War. Anderson's (1988) summation of African Americans acquisition of education in America states from slavery to the modern Civil Rights movement argued that African Americans' pursued learning because it established freedom and humanity, it contributed to the racial uplifting and liberation of their people, and it prepared one to be a leader (Perry, 2003). Those attempting to understand the history of African Americans for the sake of mitigating academic disparity must examine the correlation between their systemic exclusion from educational opportunities and their current state of educational progress (Howard, 2010).

Despite almost a half century of the desegregation of America's schools mandated by *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), the proper and appropriate education of African American students in U.S. schools remains ever more problematic and more troubled than in pre–Civil Rights days (Foster, 2005). African American students struggle to pass proficiency tests and various measures that equate to academic excellence across the United States (Gay, 2010). African American students have the lowest reading and math scores of any ethnic group on National Assessment of Educational Progress measures and various states' proficiency tests (Gay, 2010). The overpopulation of Black males in special education and the fact that African Americans' rate of suspension is higher than any other ethnic group gives reason to educators to reassess how to meet the needs of African American students (Darling-Hammond, 2002; Dantley, 2005).

When scholars begin discussing the needs of African American students, the argument is that their performance is related to their having a poor or lower socio

economic status. However, a startling discovery of African American achievement finds that African American students who have middle class backgrounds exhibit lower academic performance than White students from low socio economic standings (Gay, 2010; Howard, 2010).

Tatum (2003) described an oppositional identity development in which Black students are forced to choose between affirming their culture and academic success. When their culture is not present in the curriculum, Black students may feel that academic success is not part of being Black. In contrast, students who see their culture represented in the curriculum are more likely to have a higher self-concept, and when students feel good about themselves, they are more likely to be open with others and to learning (Gay, 2000).

Educational Leadership Preparation Programs

Changes in accountability structure, demographics, and overall educational needs require quality principals who are equipped with the tools needed to meet the myriad needs and functions of schools (Levine, 2005). Among the challenges in leadership preparation programs for meeting the new demands of school leaders are the limits of educational leadership curricula for adequately address issues of how race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and other cultural characteristics create a climate that places some students at an educational disadvantage (Furman & Starratt, 2002). Another challenge is the need to adequately prepare educational leaders with experiences that increase their desire to promote and practice social justice (Sheurich & Skrla, 2003). There is also the

misconception that pre-service training or professional development will provide aspiring school leaders with all the knowledge needed to be an effective leader (Daresh, 2000).

Preparation programs are responsible for developing principals who have the knowledge, skills, and attributes of instructional leaders that have the capacity to galvanize increased student achievement and learning (Barth, 2001; Gurr, Drysdale and Mulford (2007) state that "educational leadership makes a difference in different ways" causes a critical analysis in understanding the complexity of leadership and the importance of avoiding one size fits all preparation approaches to successful school leadership. Rather than using outmoded and failed educational methods from the past to prepare school leaders, universities are now called upon to create a new type of program of study that is embedded in a social, cultural, and moral leadership based in democratic authority that is committed to a just and equitable school (Allen, 2006).

Situational leadership is such a method that strengthens setting the knowledge, skills, and attributes of instructional leaders (Brown, 2005). Preparation programs that ensure its candidates are culturally responsive, prepare leaders to be situational leaders. The situational leadership aspect of culturally responsive preparation, prepares leaders to assess the current situation of the educational landscape and utilize the assessment to determine the principal's behavior (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). Furthermore, preparation programs committed to preparing situational leaders teach candidates to constantly be aware of the climate of the school. The awareness of the climate permits principals to be more proactive in mitigating the various aspects of the school's culture (Marzano, 2003).

Historical Snapshot of Educational Leadership Programs

During the past decade, several changes have taken place that modifies how educational leaders are prepared (Levin, 2005). However, Tucker and Codding's (2002) assessment of "elite" educational administration programs observed that there is little connection between what is being taught and the existing demands of today's educational landscape (Hess & Kelly, 2005). The traditional process of preparing leaders in many programs was not meeting the need of school leaders. The role of principal is essential to school reform, yet problems occur when the inadequacies of preparation programs cannot meet the current needs of schools (Crowther, 2002; Foster, 1989: Hallinger & Heck, 1996).

In the late 1980s, the National Commission on Excellence in Education and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration called for educational preparatory programs to institute change (Levin, 2005) by increasing the sequencing of program content and aligning programs to meet the job demands of a school administrator (Jackson & Kelly, 2002). In 1996, the Council of Chief State School Officers advanced a set of standards through the Interstate School Leaders Consortium (ISLLC) that established a framework for administrator preparation in approximately 40 states In 2002, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) adopted the standards for accreditation school administration programs (Cambron-McCabe, 2010). While ISLLC standards received acclaim for focusing attention on leadership practices and student learning, the standards received intense criticism. There was concern that the standards inadequately addressed social justice concerns or did very little to bring about

significant shifts in leadership practices (Achilles & Price, 2001; English, 2000). In 2008, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration released updated standards, called Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008. These standards gave attention to and were specifically directed toward social justice and making shifts in leadership practices (Cambron-Cambron-McCabe, 2010).

Preparing school leaders

The process of training and preparing leaders is paramount to address the criticism of reform (including the need to clarify accountability measures and standards of effective leadership). Leaders should not only understand how to perform as effective instructional leaders, but to be effective, they need training that prepares culturally competent leaders, enables learning by all student populations, and makes them cognizant about their personal dispositions that may impact their leadership performance.

"The state accountability measures have focused educators' attention on student learning as well as the development of curriculum and pedagogy to ensure that students meet high academic standards" (Cambron-McCabe, 2010, p. 38). The accountability standards place student achievement at the center of the programs of study of preparation program and licensure requirements (Cambron-McCabe, 2010). The route to ensuring that administrators receives adequate licensure to practice entails successful completion of credit hours in approved principal preparation programs (Hale, 2003). After completion, applicants must pass an examination that connects the leadership preparation programs to the applicants' performance on the state assessment test (McCarthy & Murtadha, 2001; Oliva, 2001). A correlation to the quality of leadership preparation

program is made on how leadership practices taught in preparation programs influence the overall school-learning climate (Orr & Orphanos, 2011).

Programs that are considered exemplary in the current accountability climate have similar constructs and features: (Davis, Darling-Hammond, Myerson, & LaPointe, 2005; Jackson & Kelly, 2002; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Young, Crow, Ogaway, & Murphy, 2009). These programs have:

- A well-defined and comprehended theory of leadership for school improvement
- A coherent curriculum that addresses effective instructional leadership, organizational development, and change management that aligns with state and professional standards
- Active learning strategies that simultaneously integrates theory, practice, and stimulate reflection
- Quality internships with a myriad of opportunities to apply leadership knowledge and skills under the auspices of an exemplary principal
- Knowledgeable faculty
- Support that organizes students into cohorts that take common courses together in a prescribed sequence and receives advising from expert principals
- Use of standards based assessments for candidate and program feedback with continuous improvement that is tied to the program vision and objectives

The quality of preparation influences what graduates learn, which ultimately lead to how they lead schools (Orr & Orphanos, 2011). Therefore, in addition to the themes

that an exemplary preparation program must possess, programs committed to preparing culturally responsive leaders should provide:

- A necessary prerequisite in building cultural proficiency for educational leaders is the process of self-evaluation to identify personal beliefs about ethnicity, race, class, gender, ability, and other cultural elements (including unearned privilege accorded to members of dominant cultures) (Lindsey, Roberts, and Campbell Jones, 2005; Ponterotto, Utsey, & Pedersen, 2006).

- Experiences to develop cultural proficiency for perspective educational leaders (Abbate-Vaughn, 2006).

Culturally responsive leadership preparation

Educational leaders are challenged to promote greater cultural competence among school personnel and create school climates where all students have equitable opportunities to learn (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2003). The focus on culture as both object and subject of individual and group learning serves as a way of breaking the destructive cycle of racial, gender, and ethnic oppression (Guy, 1999).

There are examples of how leadership preparation programs make social justice the focus of their programs. In these preparation programs, universities generally form collaborative efforts with surrounding school districts. The collaboration includes, but is not limited to, customizing the preparation programs to meet the needs of the surrounding district; sharing the responsibility of planning the program; selecting the program candidates; teaching the classes; evaluating the program; and receiving professional development as new school leaders. The goal of some initiatives is to prepare leaders for

a particular student population. Others are guided by a commitment to social justice while simultaneously placing a strong emphasis on the role of principal as instructional leader. Other programs ensure that the content includes moral and ethical leadership, power and politics, change and diversity, and teaching and learning (Cambron-McCabe, 2010).

Theoharis (2007) and Bogotch (2002) argue that social justice cannot be separated from the practices of educational leadership. While scholars agree that social justice is difficult to define (Dantley & Tillman, 2010), there are characteristics that help connect social justice with educational leadership preparation (Cambron-Cambron-McCabe, 2010). McKenzie and colleagues (2008) link social justice to student achievement, critical consciousness, and inclusive practices. Feldman and Tyson (2007) state that in order for preparation programs to address leadership for social justice, there must be a framework to which programs adhere. Such framework should include anti-bias education, critical pedagogy, multicultural education, and whiteness studies. The combining of McKenzie and colleagues' works and that of Feldman and Tyson greatly assist faculty in preparing social justice leaders. Without assessing this framework, professors responsible for preparing future school administrators subject them to the same kind of hidden curriculum that has the opportunity to exacerbate racism, classism, sexism, conditions of hierarchy and oppression (Riehl, 2000).

Leadership Practices

Instructional leadership is conceived as a curriculum-oriented role carried out by the school principal (Dwyer, 1986; Glasman, 1984; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Daresh and Playko defined instructional leadership as the direct or indirect behaviors that significantly affect teacher instruction and, as a result, student learning (1995). This definition identifies a connection between leadership, teaching, and student learning. Cumulative research conducted by Leithwood and associates (2004) found that there are two important claims regarding a link between successful leadership on student learning. The first is that leadership is second to classroom instruction in terms of impact on student learning. The second claim states that the greater the need, the greater the impact leaders actions have on learning.

As instructional leaders, principals are concerned with ensuring that teachers are equipped with meaningful pedagogical practices (Senge et al, 2000). Therefore, principals who are committed to ensuring that students have an equitable opportunity to learn are also committed to social justice. They realize that the tenets of social justice leadership complement those of culturally responsive pedagogy. School leaders who have come to realize that schools are situated in a broader social and political context can see how the systemic practices and policies of racism are often part of the educational process and can hinder the academic and self-esteem of African American children (Dantley, 2005).

Instructional leadership traditionally assumed a focus by the principal on teacher instructional behaviors that affected student outcomes; such leadership was consisted of a

blending of supervision, staff development, and curriculum development (Blasé & Blasé, 1998; Hallinger & Heck, 1996, McKenzie, 2008). The instructional role of principals is paramount in increasing academic achievement. Principals who are willing and able to reach outside the traditional standards of leadership understand that there is a moral responsibility connected to leadership (Rapp, 2002). These principals recognize that the avoidance of issues of culture and race further perpetuate the status quo (Larson & Murtadha, 2002). However, leadership for social justice requires that leaders identify good teacher instructional behaviors and ensure that these behaviors daily meet the learning needs of every child (Frattura & Capper, 2007; Larson & Murtadha, 2002). More specifically, instructional leadership that utilizes culturally responsive pedagogy acknowledges what 'good' instruction looks like for African American students (Gupton, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Effective school leaders take responsibility for leading their schools in rethinking of goals, priorities, curriculum, pedagogies, learning resources, and assessment methods (Levine, 2005). Effective leaders design environments that allow people to learn the skills needed to address the critical challenges they encounter in daily practice (Senge, 1990).

Instructional leadership and African American students

Good instruction that addresses the needs of some or even most students do exist, but rarely does good instruction meet the needs of every child in the classroom (McKenzie, 2008). Teaching and learning describe a common set of strategies that greatly increase the effectiveness of teachers in meeting the needs of students (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Delpit, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1995; McKenzie, Skrla, &

49

Scheurich, 2006). However, rarely are those strategies applied consistently with all students (McKenzie, 2008).

Although political, social, and economic contexts of schools impact student achievement, the correlation of school leader practices to student achievement cannot be underestimated (Marzano, 2003). Teacher quality plays a large role in student achievement; however, research has shown that school leaders play an additionally integral role in influencing student achievement the school learning environment (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Darling-Hammond, 2007; Marzano, 2003; Waters, 2003). Principals are at the nexus of accountability and school improvement with the definitive expectation that they will function as "instructional leaders" (Hallinger, 2005). Not surprisingly, the need for instructional leadership is greatest where there are acute learning needs. The greater the challenge (i.e. societal inequities and achievement gap), the greater the impact of actions leaders make towards learning (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2005).

Principals who are strong instructional leaders define the instructional climate and exhibit particular instructional actions. In a review of research, Leithwood and others (2004) concluded that the leadership practices that contribute most to student achievement include that principals have a vision and believe that all students can achieve at high levels; are focused on providing high-quality programs; are committed to their students until they achieve high levels of performance; emphasize the value of research-based strategies; and, are highly involved with providing instructional support to assist teacher performance.

Summary

The chapter summary reviews the existing literature on culturally responsive educational practices and educational leadership principal preparation programs. The chapter began with an introduction to the statement of the evolving demographic landscape of education. The next section discusses culturally responsive education. The literature review explores cultural responsiveness by focusing on the theory of culturally responsive pedagogy and advances to the emergence of culturally responsive education. The emergence of culturally responsive education discusses multicultural education; cultural, race, and African Americans; and African American students and education.

The next section of the chapter discusses educational leadership preparation programs. The literature review of this section begins the historical snapshot of educational leadership programs and advances to current reform. The next review of the literature includes preparing school leaders. The review on culturally responsive leadership preparation includes the extent to which civil rights and social justice is included in preparation programs.

The final section of the chapter discusses instructional leadership practices of principals. The literature review details successful instructional leadership practices. The chapter concludes by investigating instructional leadership influences on African American students.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine how culturally responsive principal preparation programs influenced the overall academic achievement of African American students. Decuir-Gunby, Taliaferro, and Greenfeld (2010) indicate that there is a need for more empirical research to confirm the effectiveness of culturally relevant educational practices for addressing the achievement gap. Additionally, Murtadha and Watts (2005) state that there is an absence of adequate analysis of leadership methods that will assist in improving learning opportunities for students of color. Suggestions on the importance and need of culturally responsive leadership frequent the literature (Bustamante, Nelson & Onwuegbuzie, 2009; Davis, 2003; Growe, Schmersahl, Perry, & Henry, 2002; Johnson, 2006), yet, the unfinished task is to describe how educational leadership programs develop culturally responsive leaders and how that preparation influences African American students. The results of the study can be utilized to help principals with high percentages of African American student populations lessen the academic achievement gap that has been pervasive in American society over the past 30 years.

The foundation of my focus was based on the assumption that principal behavior can be explained and/or identified as knowledge is acquired from principal preparation programs. First, there are the characteristics of preparation programs that prepare leaders (i.e. understanding the theories of leadership and understanding the legal and fiscal responsibilities of managing a school). Next, there is the transference and evolution of

knowledge that begins with effective preparation programs, is honed by experience and ongoing learning, and ends with student achievement. I wanted to know how top administrators from preparation programs move through this evolutionary process. The following inquiries guided the research of the study:

1. How do principal preparation programs prepare aspiring principals to be culturally responsive?

2. How are principals prepared to practice as culturally responsive instructional leaders?

3. How do principals practice as culturally responsive instructional leaders?

Qualitative Research Characteristics

Qualitative research is the process of examining and interpreting data in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The world, and how we interpret it, is very complex. Qualitative research enables researchers to investigate these complexities by 'interacting' with data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). I chose qualitative research because of my natural curiosity about the development of educational leaders; qualitative research allows one to explore dynamic behaviors and to discover unexpected variables and unexpected relationships among variables. I also selected this method because I wanted to connect with my research on a personal level.

The ability to connect to the research is based on the premise of Merriam's characteristics of qualitative research (1998). The first characteristic is that qualitative researchers are involved in the socially constructed nature of reality. This form of research is committed to '*how* social experience is created and given meaning' (Denzin &

Lincoln, 2008, p.14). The second characteristic is that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1998). When 'telling the story', qualitative research allowed me, in my role as researcher, to engage personal/professional experiences as I gathered and analyzed data. The third characteristic Merriam addresses is that qualitative research usually involves the researcher's placement in the research environment (1998). Fourthly, this type of research employs inductive research strategy (Merriam, 1998). These characteristics allow researchers to focus on process and meanings that provide a basis for discourse and arrive at shared understandings (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Case Study Approach

Case study research is effective for thoroughly investigating the intricacies of real life events and understanding complex phenomena (Gerring, 2007; Yin, 2009). Case study research involves a detailed method of understanding research processes needed to uncover a deeper meaning or exploration of a subject (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Yin, 2009). Four characteristics are essential components of qualitative case studies: particularistic; descriptive; heuristic, and inductive (Merriam, 1988). The particularistic component focuses on a particular situation, program, or phenomenon. The descriptive component ensures that the product is a rich and "thick" description of the study (Merriam, 1988, p.11). The heuristic component will clarify the reader's understanding of the study (Merriam, 1988, p 13). The final component, inductive, relies on the researcher's inductive reasoning. Generalization and concepts emerge from the examination of data (Merriam, 1988).

The multiple case study method was selected to conduct this research. Multiple case studies involve two phases of analysis. First there is the within case analysis. This phase allows the researcher to define the individual cases and treat each case comprehensively (Merriam, 1998). Data is gathered to assist the researcher with identifying variables that contribute to themes and codes that will be utilized later. The second phase is a cross-case analysis in which the study shifts from assessing the preparation programs of principals to analyzing the similarities and differences across leadership preparation programs and across the principals' instructional practices (Gerring, 2007). Cross-case analysis facilitates the comparison of commonalities and difference of those individual cases.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical assumptions of cultural responsiveness serve as the foundation of this research. There are factors working against the notion of cultural responsiveness in education such as cultural differences among students and among the schools that they attend (Vogt, Jordan, & Tharp, 1987) or that schools emulate society (McDermott, 1987). Nevertheless, the purpose of describing culturally responsive educational systems (including higher education) is to instill ethics of care, respect, and responsibility in the professionals who serve culturally diverse students (National Responsive Educational Systems, 2008).

Darling-Hammond, Lepointe, Meyerson, & Orr's (2007) analysis of how school leaders are prepared found that school leaders' professional learning is grounded in analyses of classroom practice and teacher development. "Moreover, mounting research

suggests that culturally responsive educational leadership positively influences academic achievement and students' engagement with the school environment" (Banks & McGee-Banks, 2004; Johnson, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Riehl, 2000; Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly, 2006). Yet, the intersection of leadership preparation with culturally responsive education leadership is missing from the conversation. One must ask how one can be an effective leader in minority schools if one does not exhibit culturally responsive leadership traits.

For this reason, Gay's (2000) theory of culturally responsive pedagogy served as the framework of this research. The theory of culturally responsive pedagogy states that "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students will make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (Gay, 2000, p. 29). According to Gay, educators who exercise cultural responsiveness ensure that the connections of students' cultural heritage and learning styles are deemed important. Culturally responsive educators also demonstrate care as well as develop, design and deliver culturally responsive learning opportunities. To explore this theory, I interviewed seven principals from high performing minority public schools and three faculty members in higher education preparation programs from the states of Mississippi and South Carolina. Five principals from Mississippi and two principals from South Carolina provided insight on their preparation experience as well as their leadership practices. Two faculty representing Mississippi institutions and one institution from South Carolina shared perspectives about how their preparation program prepares educational leaders.

Three elementary school principals and two middle school principals represented the state of Mississippi. Three of the principals led urban city schools, one principal was in a suburban setting and one led a rural school. The state of South Carolina had one elementary principal and one middle school principal provide their culturally responsive perspective. The elementary school was located in an urban city setting while the middle school was in rural settings.

The racial diversity of the principals consisted of: one Asian female; two African American females; one White female; two African American males, and one White male. Their experience ranged from serving for two years to leading for more than 20 years.

The criterion for selecting the principals/participants required that principals lead high performing schools, as determined by the respective state report card performance rating, with high African American enrollments. The principals were selected from the states of Mississippi and South Carolina. Further descriptions are in the case selection.

The study also interviewed educational leadership faculty who are responsible for leading the school administration certification process at their respective institution. Faculty members were selected from the states of Mississippi and South Carolina. Each institution was responsible for preparing at least one of the principal research participants. The educational faculty interviewed represented two public universities of higher learning from Mississippi and one public university from South Carolina. Two black females represented the one predominately-white institution and the Historically Black College interviewed. One white male represented the predominately-white institution from South Carolina. An appropriate contact from the Historically Black

College and Institution in South Carolina declined to participate in the research. Faculty members were asked five questions that described how faculty members at their institution prepared aspiring school leaders with a culturally responsive curriculum knowledge base (Appendix A). They were also asked to describe the experiences their preparation program provides to prepare school leaders with cultural responsiveness instructional practices.

Although principals and faculty members represented two states and differences existed with the location of each institution there are definitely similarities that emerged from the interviews. Every principal interviewed exhibited traits associated with cultural responsiveness. They all had high expectations for their students, demonstrated great care and understood that the students they serve have unique backgrounds and work to accommodate the students' needs. While some acquired traits from their respective principal preparation program, others referenced personal experiences to help provide leadership for African American students. Similarly, with the educational leadership faculty, the focus of candidate development was of high importance with the focus being on the type of classes made available to candidates that would allow stronger knowledge of cultural diversity infused with strong instructional leadership skills. Every faculty member and principal interviewed generated enthusiasm about the research agenda.

The analysis began with principals describing the extent of culturally responsive leadership preparation they received and the practices that they utilized to promote academic achievement of African American students. Interviews were scheduled with principals by telephone. The interview protocol was guided by six questions that relate to

the principals' preparation programs and five questions that relate to their practices (see Appendix B).

Questions

There were two intertwining foci of the research. The essential questions that guided the research involved educational leadership preparation programs and culturally responsive principals. The first essential question asked: How is cultural responsiveness conveyed, or not conveyed, by principal preparation programs that prepare aspiring principals? The secondary questions that corresponded to that question asked:

1. How are preparation programs structured (or not structured) to be culturally responsive?

2. In what ways does the curriculum promote cultural responsiveness?

3. How do preparation programs address the academic achievement gap among African Americans?

4. How does the principal's internship address culturally responsive instructional leadership skills?

5. How are candidates assessed to determine if they are culturally responsive?

The second essential question asked practicing school leaders: How are principals prepared, or not prepared, to be culturally responsive instructional leaders? The secondary research questions that guided this inquiry were:

1. What were the characteristics of the principals' preparation program?

2. How is culturally responsive instruction addressed in the preparation program?

3. How do aspiring principals learn to effectively respond to the academic achievement gap?

4. How are aspiring principals' cultural responsiveness assessed, if at all?

5. How do internship experiences influence culturally responsive instructional leadership?

The final essential question asked: How do principals practice as culturally responsive instructional leaders? The secondary research questions used to answer this question asked:

1. What knowledge and skills are pertinent for a culturally responsive instructional leader?

2. How is culturally responsive environments established by principals?

3. How do principals ensure teachers utilize culturally responsive instruction?

4. What methods do principals use with teachers to mitigate the academic achievement gap?

5. What ways are teachers assessed by principals to determine the processes used to build culturally responsive instruction?

Case Selection

Mississippi, the state with the highest percentage of African American residents in the U.S. (Rastogi, Johnson, Hoeffel, & Drewery, 2011), and the state of South Carolina served as the setting for research. Two distinct populations make up the cases from which the researcher collected data. The first population represented principals who lead academically successful schools that enroll mostly African American students. The

second population represented educational leadership faculty from institutions in Mississippi and South Carolina that are responsible for preparing school administrators.

In order to identify principals that exhibit culturally responsive leadership qualities, a purposeful sampling process was used to select participants. The goal of the study was to select principals that could provide the greatest contributions to the knowledge base.

Principals in Mississippi who lead schools that had a 'Star', "High Performing', or 'Successful' rating and who served a 75% or higher African American student population were invited to participate in the study. In 2009, the Mississippi Accountability Task Force and the Commission on School Accreditation updated that state's accountability rating system. The Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks (or learning standards for language arts and math) and corresponding assessments are aligned with the new accountability rating system. In previous years, only districts in Mississippi received performance ratings, yet with the new accountability system, performance classification designations are issued to both schools and districts. Also, the rating labels issued to schools and districts were changed as to not confuse the former classifications to the newly modified accountability ratings. Schools fall under the following new classifications that reflect the school's performance (from highest to lowest): Star, High Performing, Successful, Academic Watch, Low Performing, At Risk of Failing, and Failing. The performance classification assigned to a school is determined by the percentage of students who are performing at the minimum, basic, proficient, and

advance levels and the degree to which student performance has improved (Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, 2010).

In South Carolina, The Education Accountability Act of 1998 (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee, 2010) provides the foundation determining which principals to invite for the study. In 2001, the report cards for each school and district had two accountability system ratings: an absolute rating and a growth rating. The absolute rating is the level of a school's academic performance on achievement measures for the school year. The growth rating indicates the level of growth in academic performance for the school when comparing the current school year's performance to the previous school year's performance. South Carolina has five rating terms that reflects the absolute and growth ratings. The ratings are: Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, and At Risk. Like Mississippi, principals were selected from schools in South Carolina that had an Excellent, Good, or Average rating while leading student populations that are 75% or higher African American. The researcher utilized the Mississippi rating levels and the absolute rating from South Carolina to depict the overall school performance.

The process for selecting participants involved several steps. The principal interviewees were selected after the accountability ratings for schools in the states of Mississippi and South Carolina were retrieved from each state's Department of Education website. The researcher organized a spreadsheet of schools that included the Mississippi ratings of Star or High Performing and the South Carolina ratings of Excellent, Good, and Average. The next step reviewed each school's demographic composition. Elementary,

middle, and high schools that have an African American population of 75% or higher were included on the spreadsheet.

In the state of Mississippi, 95 out of 278 schools with large African American populations are Star, High Performing, or Successful schools. In the state of South Carolina, 11 schools with a large African American population out of 186 had an Excellent, Good, or Average accountability rating. Every eligible principal in the states of Mississippi and South Carolina were contacted and requested to participate in the research. Five principals in the state of Mississippi and two South Carolina principals agreed to be interviewed after the researcher emailed and followed up with telephone calls to make personal contact with principals.

The years of experience leading a school and the level of school varied among the principals. Five elementary schools (grades preschool through fifth) and two middle schools (grades sixth through eighth) made up the schools in in the study. The years of leading schools ranged from two principals having less than 5 years' experience, one principal with six to ten years' experience, two principals with eleven to fifteen years; experience, one principal with sixteen to twenty years' experience, and one principal with more than 20 years of educational leadership experience.

Interview protocols (see Appendix A and B) were created prior to the interviews that would create opportunities for the participants to provide accurate recounts of experiences that would provide emergent themes and descriptions. The interview protocol closely adhered to the propositions of Gay's theory of culturally responsive

teaching and learning. All interviews for both principals and faculty members were conducted via telephone and audio recorded.

The interviewed educational faculty represented state institutions that are responsible for certifying school administrators. Educational leadership faculty selected to participate were referred by successful principals. Due to the success of the principals participating in the research, the researcher wanted to explore a sample of the educational leadership programs that were responsible for preparing them. Faculty from two institutions from the state of Mississippi and one institution from the state of South Carolina agreed to participate in the research.

Data Collection Procedures

Data for this research was collected using semi-structured interview questions. The interview process was selected because the actual preparation and practice had not been observed and past events were not be replicable (Merriam, 1988). Additionally, Yin (2009) states that the interview process is the best method for collecting case study data.

Participants were contacted after the researcher utilized the states' report cards to investigate the success ratings of each individual school. The racial composition of schools that fell in the respective categories were identified. Principals of schools with high minority enrollment were emailed to solicit interest in participating in the research. Principals who did not respond after the first email were resent emails that were followed up with phone calls to garner interest. Principals that responded were given an introductory call to allow them an opportunity to become familiar and build trust with the researcher. The call also gave the researcher an opportunity to learn more about their

education philosophy. Three principals opted to begin the interviews without the introductory call.

Faculty members were selected based on the preparation program of successful school leaders. After institutions were identified, the chair of the educational leadership department was contacted via email and followed up with phone calls to further explain the purpose of the research. Two chairs (one from Mississippi and one from South Carolina) opted to provide data for the research. The remaining chair from Mississippi (willing to conduct the interview if needed) referenced the coordinator of the corresponding institution's principal preparation program to provide research data.

For both principals and faculty, an introductory phone conversation took place with the option of a face-to-face interview or phone interview to take place. Each participant opted phone interviews, which were recorded utilizing both digital recorders and the audio recording mechanism software included on the researcher's personal computer. In each instance, audio files were labeled and saved. As the researcher conducted the interview, the interview protocol grid (Appendices C and D) was utilized to record written accounts of each participant's response. As interviews were finalized, participants were provided an opportunity to add or retract information recorded. The researcher played back the audio recordings by stopping and rewinding the recordings multiple times to ensure that all data were captured. The researcher then reviewed the audio interviews and transcribed responses to compare and align the data for accuracy. After the transcriptions were completed, participants were sent their interviews via email to solicit their input and make any necessary changes prior to data analysis.

Data Analysis

Stake (1995) describes data analysis as a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to the final compilations of data. Following the recommendations of Creswell, a systematic approach was used to analyze the qualitative data (1994). Data from each interview was analyzed using Merriam's (1988) components of data analysis. First, data collection and analysis was simultaneous due to the sensitive correlation between the timing of analysis and the integration of analysis (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984). Analysis began when the first interview was conducted. The researcher was sensitive to accounts that principals provided as it related to the theoretical posits of cultural responsiveness. As the interviews continued and transcriptions were made, the researcher made notes of themes and keywords that were repeated that corresponded to the research questions. The notes and keywords supported Merriam's next step of data collection that states that the researcher extract emerging insights from the interviews (1988). After keywords, common themes, and characteristics were identified, corresponding conclusions were made. Data was then organized into narrative accounts of the findings

Because there were ten research participants, the research was considered a multiple case study. After the within case analysis was completed for each participant, the cross case analysis began. Ultimately, cross case analysis differs little from analysis of data in a single qualitative case study (Merriam, 1998), but it allows the researcher to compare and contrast patterns across respondents. Cross case analysis was conducted first

for the seven principals and then again for the three educational leadership faculty members.

Data Coding

        A system for organizing data is needed in qualitative case study. Coding is used to manage, derive, and develop concepts from data (Merriam, 1998; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). It occurs during analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This part of the research process allows the researcher the opportunity to differentiate and combine data that has been retrieved and then reflect on that data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). However, this happens only after the researcher considers all possible meanings from the data and examines the context carefully (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

        Tesch's (1990) suggestion for eight steps of coding data was used to be thorough in the analysis process. The first step in Tesch's approach is to gather a solid feel for the data by reading all of the documents. As the first interview concluded, the researcher connected pre-conversations conducted with five of the eight principals to the actual interview. This linkage provided the researcher with a broader conceptual meaning that the participant conveyed. Also, reading all of the documents helped the researcher become more familiar with the concepts and to identify keywords that were expanded in the next steps. The second step was to examine the documents to find explicit meaning. The concepts and keywords identified in the first step were transitioned and combined into broader categories. Clustering the topics is the third step Tesch recommends for coding data. As topics were created, generic tables were made to organize data that create coherence for the researcher. Cluster nodes were created in NVivo9©. The next three

steps included coding the topics using abbreviation; categorizing the topics using description; and finalizing abbreviations for categories. The nodes were alphabetized immediately after they were created. These steps helped the researcher ensure that the nodes selected support the research's theoretical lens as well as assess the commonalities of the responses. Tesch states that in the eighth step, the researcher is to recode the data if necessary. It was during this step that codes were either merged together or eliminated to reduce replication.

It is important to note that, while abbreviation is an essential component, coding is more than following steps. Coding during data analysis involves techniques that ask questions and makes comparisons about the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The seventh step the researcher utilized was assembling data by category and performing preliminary analysis. It was during this phase that major nodes and sub-nodes were created. Although Tesch's final step states that researchers should recode if necessary, the nodes created for this research were deemed sufficient by the researcher.

Cross-Case Data interpretation

Cross-case data analysis is utilized in qualitative research to reflect the similarities that exist within each individual case. In a multiple case study, the cross case analysis occurs after the within case analysis is conducted. The individual cases may vary, but "abstractions" across cases are built (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009). Tesch's steps for coding helped manage the complexity of the data because "cross case analysis differs little from analysis in a single qualitative case study" (Merriam, p. 195, 1998).

The cross case analyses involving the principals emerged from each individual case and was used to generate the similarities as well as the differences between cases. The major themes associated with principals as it relates to their preparation and practice are: instructional methods, program required assessments, internship structure, internship placement, experience gained to increase cultural responsiveness, leadership practices, principal characteristics, recognition of belief systems, commitment to diversity, and empowerment of school community. Tables for each theme were created and the principals' examples of the themes were listed in each corresponding table. Principals indicated the extent to how their preparation and practices applied to each theme. The tables were then used to write the cross case analysis.

Cross-case analysis of interviewed faculty was conducted utilizing the same steps. Tables were created: program of study, promotion of cultural responsiveness, program address of achievement gap, internship practices, and assessment of candidates. Each institution's input that addressed the themes were included and written in the cross case analysis section of Chapter 4.

Due to the variance of time when principals were prepared and the current structure of each principal preparation program, a cross case analysis was not conducted between principals and faculty.

Researcher Biases

In any tradition of research, the research instrument is the tool that researchers use to collect data. In qualitative research, the investigator is the primary instrument for collecting and analyzing data (Merriam, 1998). Qualitative research covers several forms

of inquiry that helps us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena. Qualitative researchers are concerned with the research process instead of outcomes and process. They are also interested in how people make sense of their lives and experiences. Qualitative researcher involves fieldwork where the researcher physically observes the environment or natural setting (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998). It is during this natural setting that the researcher as instrument emerges as the tool used to collect data. Data is analyzed through a human instrument, the researcher, as opposed to a questionnaire, inanimate inventory, or computer (Merriam, 1998).

As I assumed the role of a qualitative researcher, I realized that my 'humanness' impacted the type of data I collected and the manner in which it was processed. I was sensitive to the context being researched, the physical setting, people, overt and covert agendas, nonverbal behavior, and the information being gathered (Merriam, 1998). Creswell (2003) states that during the data collection, the researcher must provide detailed information about the instrument to be utilized during the proposed study. While this is true of the details of the proposal's survey instruments, it is also true that I provided details of my emic (insider's) point of view and the social construction of my reality or perceptions (Glesne & Peshkin, 2005). I also became astute of my biases (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Because I was an instrument, all observations and analyses were filtered through my worldview, values, and perspectives (Merriam, 1998).

This research involved how culturally relevant leaders influence student achievement. My perspective was that of an educator involved in various leadership capacities focused on improving student achievement. There were sensitivities and

instincts that I have as an educator that influenced my understanding of educational settings. My perceptions (which could also be my biases) involved the practices I believe or have observed work and practices that do not support African American student achievement. As an African American female, I can reflect on the biases I experienced as a student, practicing administrator, and graduate student. Those reflections, while painful at times, reminded me of why I selected this research topic. However, I was careful not to place my values and beliefs on that of the research participants. Prior limited interviewing experience taught me that it is not good to lead the interviewee with personal reflections or words that generated emotion toward the interviewee's responses. My research questions reflected what is stated in the literature as opposed to regenerating my biases or perceptions. As a result, the data analysis was richly developed and described the research setting instead of interjecting my sole views (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

The researcher as instrument provides personal involvement and partiality in the research process. It also allows the qualitative researcher to be cognizant to multiple realities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As a former teacher and administrator, I reflected on the preparation that I received in both preparation programs and identified strategies that were familiar and learned from leadership traits that were proven beneficial to student success.

Ethical Issues

Adhering to the selected data collection steps, analysis procedures, and dissemination of findings contributed to the validity and reliability of the research findings. Outlining the steps to select participants, utilizing the theoretical lens to develop

the research questions, and establishing the database spreadsheets allow for replication of research which Yin (2009) states is necessary for reliability.

Since the topic of this study involved race, there was a heightened sensitivity to the role of the researcher to not let personal biases interfere with the analysis and to be sensitive to the participants' views. Additionally, the researcher decided to provide anonymity to the participants as not to shed any negative light on unfavorable preparation programs or practices within their perspective school districts that may be deemed unfair as it pertains to African American and/or poor students.

The researcher provided participants with opportunities to add or enhance interview questions that would strengthen the interview process. After the interviews were completed, the researcher sent the participants the transcribed data of their within case analyses to ensure the researcher accurately collected their sentiments as well as securing their identities.

Clemson University's Institutional Review Board provided the researcher approval prior to conducting the research. Prior to the interviews, participants were given an overview of what the topic of the research entailed and that their participation was voluntary and confidential. They were given the opportunity to withdraw from the research at any given time. Only one participant, an educational faculty member, decided not to participate prior to the beginning of the interview process. A second educational faculty member indicated that they would be glad to participate, yet communication was disrupted after the researcher tried on several attempts to establish an interview date.

Summary

Chapter Three provided detail of the qualitative research tradition. The purpose of the qualitative study was to examine how culturally responsive principal programs influence the overall academic achievement of African American students. The chapter reviewed qualitative research characteristics with the focus of the case study approach. The case study approach was pertinent due to the research being a multi-case study. The cases included Mississippi and South Carolina educational leadership preparation programs and principals who have had success leading African American student populations. The next section of the chapter expounds on the study's data collection procedures. Data coding described the steps conducted by the within case analyses and cross-case analyses. The chapter concluded with the research biases and ethical issues of the study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a summary of the within and cross-case analyses of the data collected from educational leadership faculty responsible for preparing school administrators and from successful principals who practice culturally responsive leadership. Two sets of analyses are included in this chapter. The first set presents the data from three principal preparation programs in Mississippi and South Carolina. The case summaries of the university preparation programs included a description of the extent to which the program prepared candidates to obtain a culturally responsive knowledge base. The second set presents data of eight principals from those respective states. The case summaries of the principals detailed their perception of how they were prepared and how the practices they utilize align with the tenets of cultural responsiveness.

Two educational leadership preparation programs in Mississippi (Tradition University and Mission University) and one program in South Carolina (Community University) served as the institutions from which principal preparation program data were obtained. Five Mississippi principals and two principals from South Carolina provided their perspectives on the type of preparation they received and the practices they currently utilize as building level administrators. Across-case analysis was then conducted collectively for the set of educational leadership faculty and again for the set of principals. The chapter concluded with a summary of research findings.

The findings in each of the two major sections (the educational leadership preparation program and then the principals) begin with within case analyses. The professors in the preparation programs discussed how their programs address or fail to address cultural sensitivity. Principals discussed the type of preparation they received to be instructional leaders and the practices they utilize that supports academic achievement. The last part of each major section of this chapter will present data from the cross-case analyses for both participating educational leadership faculty and school principals.

Faculty of Educational Leadership Preparation Programs

The within case analyses findings for the educational faculty are organized by the following secondary research questions:

1. How are preparation programs structured (or not structured) to be culturally responsive?

2. In what ways does the preparation program curriculum promote cultural responsiveness?

3. How do preparation programs address the academic achievement gap among African Americans?

4. How does the principal's internship address culturally responsive instructional leadership skills?

5. How are candidates assessed to determine if they are culturally responsive

Mississippi Case 1: Tradition University, Dr. Miles

Tradition University is an urban, public Historically Black College and University (HBCU) located in the state Mississippi. Tradition's historical background of a minority

culture has created a heightened sensitivity to the need for responsive equity pedagogy

that addresses education's contribution to society to provide educational access and

equality for all students. Tradition has transformed their educational leadership program

over the years to provide sound educational programs that prepare its candidates to serve

an often-misunderstood culturally diverse K-12 population. The program seeks to prepare

school leaders with the tools necessary to equip principals with instructional processes for

school restructuring (Unit Professional Education Council, 2007).

   Tradition's educational leadership department has successfully gone through the

accreditation process of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

(NCATE). Tradition's educational leadership department has earned the distinction of

being a Nationally Recognized Program by the Educational Leadership Constituent

Council (ELCC). Candidates preparing to be principals are done so through a 39 hour,

Master's level cohort based program. Dr. Miles, program coordinator for Tradition's

Educational Leadership Department, provided insight into Tradition's principal

preparation program.

Secondary Question 1: How are preparation programs structured (or not structured) to be culturally responsive?

   The cohort-based program is divided into sections that focus on varied aspects of

urban education. Within each section, courses are targeted to solve urban issues. The rich

heritage of the institution has fostered sensitivity to the need to have a culturally

responsive equity pedagogy that addresses education's role in contributing to the equality

of a democratic society. The socio-cultural context from which Tradition's principal

program has emerged, and continues to play a vital role, provides the basis for sensitivity

needed to equip educators, not merely as delivery technicians, but as "cultural brokers" (Gay, 2003). (Unit Professional Educator Council, 2007).

Tradition's program has four phases: The first phase begins in the summer and has 12 hours. The courses in this phase are as follows:

- *Evolution of American Education*

- *Elementary Statistics for Urban Setting*

- *Becoming Skillful Consumers of Educational Research*

- *Approaches to Teaching and Learning in Urban Settings*

The courses offered in the fall comprise the second phase. Three courses totaling nine hours make up this phase.

- *Challenges Facing Urban School Organizations*

- *Fiscal and Economic Leadership*

- *Educational Administration Internship I*

The third phase is taken in the spring and are:

- *Human Resource Leadership*

- *Legal, Ethical, and Policy Leadership*

- *Educational Administration Internship II*

The fourth and final phase is taken by candidates in the summer. Its courses are:

- *School/Community Relations in Urban Setting*

- *Leadership Refinement*

- *Educational Administration III*

The next question involving program tenet of culturally responsive instruction will provide more detailed explanation of these courses.

Dr. Miles stated of Tradition's program, "The uniqueness of the preparation program that addresses culture involves the internship. Candidates are placed in field setting that involves either an elementary or middle or high school, so that at the completion of our program, they have had an opportunity to interact with students and teachers who work with African American students on all levels". The program is designed so that experiences are structured in the internship that correlate with that particular phase's coursework.

Tradition is intentional in the design of the curriculum courses for their culturally responsive educational offerings. The program is, "A model urban learning community for highly motivated students from diverse backgrounds", states Dr. Miles. A majority of candidates that apply to tradition teach in schools with a high African American student population. Dr. Miles said that the program was designed because a majority of the public schools that Tradition serves are urban and have an urban focus. Additionally, the candidates that are prepared by Tradition go back to work in urban settings. The program course and content has been revised with the focus maintaining that the revisions are aligned to fit the urban focus.

Secondary Question 2: In what ways does the curriculum promote cultural responsiveness?

Coursework is designed to move from the traditional way educators view education and to "evaluate the implications of a personal set of beliefs on teaching and

learning". The reviewing of personal beliefs and views is necessary in developing a culturally diverse knowledge base (Montgomery, 2001).

Tradition's program is built around a framework that builds candidate competency to be in tune to diversity needs. Candidates are provided the opportunity to allow their prior knowledge and experiences to penetrate cultural barriers that are often placed in educational settings in order to create educational opportunities for the students they will lead and serve. Tradition wishes to produce caring, responsive educators who are ethical and support evidence based equity pedagogy.

As stated earlier, Tradition has an urban focus and each cohort's coursework is divided into four phases. The courses (excluding the internships) that implicitly state cultural responsiveness are detailed in *The Responsive Educator* (Unit Professional Education Council, 2007):

- The *Evolution of American Education* is a course concerned with the review of dominating ideas and how institutions have affected the course of educational development in urban settings. A special emphasis is placed on the leading philosophies of education and the implication of those philosophies on modern educational practices. Candidates gain an understanding of relationships between major historical, political, sociological, and philosophical shifts and the way schooling and education is actually "done". The candidates will compare and contrast teaching practices that are influenced by these historical and political forces. At the conclusion of this course the candidate will understand and be able to analyze, discuss,

and evaluate the implications of a personal set of beliefs on teaching and learning.

- *Elementary Statistics for Urban Setting* is a course that Dr. Miles references in mitigating the achievement gap. Candidates learn to tabulate, analyze and record data. Candidates receive an understanding of statistical concepts to be able to read and understand research.

- The next course that has tenets of cultural responsiveness is the course titled *Approaches to Teaching and Learning in Urban Settings*. This course is designed to provide educational leaders with a comprehensive understanding of curriculum methods, design, implementation, assessment, improvement, and evaluation in urban settings. It also provides practical approaches to curriculum development and curriculum management. The student becomes familiar with and skilled in the process of curriculum alignment-which is the correlation of the curriculum with state and national standards, state and national assessment programs and resources.

- *Challenges Facing Urban School Organizations* is a course where candidates examine various styles of leadership for managing the organization from both a theoretical and application perspective. Primary topics to be explored include organizational development, the nature of leadership within organizations, the nature of managerial tasks, transformational and cultural leadership, organizational behavior, the application of research methods on

organizations, structures of organizations, and the role and importance of strategic planning.

- *The Fiscal and Economic Leadership* course covers the development of school finance theory and practice from the early period in history of complete local school funding to present day educational practices that seek to promote equity and equality as linked to academic performance.

- *Human Resource Leadership* provides the foundations for working with people within educational organizations and programs in an urban setting. Emphasis is placed on individuals within context, management theory, adult development and learning, communications in organizations, personnel issues, and professional development. Tradition's candidates examine attitudes and an understanding that their own attitudes toward ethical and moral behaviors are critical in working with people in organizations. They move toward a realization that human growth and development are lifelong pursuits, and toward an acceptance that effective administrators respect the attitudes and values of the people with whom they work.

- *School/Community Relations in Urban Settings* examines the changing politics and administration of school community relations. It addresses topics in the areas of consensus building, marketing, use of marketing research, diversity, communication (internal and external), crisis management, the local politics of education, managing school-community relations, implementing

site-based management, strategies of parental involvement, collaboration with the business community, and school outreach efforts in the community.

Secondary Question 3: How do preparation programs address the academic achievement gap among African Americans?

Tradition's preparation program addresses the academic achievement gap by teaching candidates the purpose of data and effectively utilizing it to track school and student performance. Dr. Miles stated that the curriculum and instruction are reviewed at the schools where the candidates are conducting their internships. "During the first internship, candidates become familiar with the demographics and data of the school. They go in looking at school profiles and looking at strengths and weaknesses of that data so that they are able to be familiar with that school". When candidates leave the program at the Master's level, they are able to analyze data and make informed decisions connected to the data.

Secondary Question 4: How does the principal's internship address culturally responsive instructional leadership skills?

The internship courses taught at Tradition provide candidates with the opportunity to engage in hands on experiences related to school administration. Candidates practice performing administrative and leadership skills under the mentorship of a practicing administrator. During the internship, candidates gain insight and support of their own personal leadership styles as well as learning about the styles of their cohort counterparts. Once candidates complete their internship experiences, they will be able to discuss how different administrative actions influence various aspects of the educational environment.

Tradition's educational leadership candidates are required to complete a total of 540 hours of clinical experiences and clinical hours during the three separate internships. The experiences are selected to provide opportunities for students to observe, plan and practice in a variety of setting appropriate to the professional roles for which they are being prepared.

Dr. Miles stated that the actions candidates perform during their internship are based on the data, demographics, and needs of the schools. More specifically during the internship, candidates observe administrators, work with teachers, and have planning sessions with administrators. After spending some time in the field, they reconnect with their cohort members to reflect on the administrative styles they have observed as well as how their own administrative styles are formulating.

Tradition's first principal preparation internship is based on the candidates' places of employment. The second and third internship placement is based on the needs of the candidates. Candidates with specific leadership needs are partnered with principal mentors that exhibit strengths in those particular areas. Dr. Miles additionally states that input is made on placement because there are times candidates may need to review the leadership decisions made at one schools to see if those same decisions would be applicable in other school settings.

Tradition's educational leadership department is strategic about the principal mentors the candidates will serve under as it is important for candidates to receive the richest preparation experience possible. Dr. Miles expounds by stating, "Selection of principal mentors is careful because some of the administrators are more visionary than

others. Some want to give back because someone helped them at some point and not view the candidates as a warm body that will just come in and shadow them, but to give them hands on leadership experiences at that site". Once the candidates are placed at their internship, the candidates and mentors discuss course requirements and specific tasks the instructor has asked candidates to perform at that school site. Based on mentor's vision and leadership style and the drive the mentor utilizes to motivate the candidate, the candidates and mentor then decide on other projects that mentor would like the candidate to do.

Based on the urban locale of Tradition, all internships take place in urban settings. The knowledge, skills, theories, and dispositions that the candidates acquire in class are able to apply to real life settings. Dr. Miles has found that, "Those entry level perceptions that they have are viewed differently after internship experience. They are challenged to take off their teacher hat and look through the lens of an administrator who is accountable for the day to day management at the school".

- Examples of Tradition's candidates' internship activities are as follows (Gaye,2007): Participate in large and small group seminar discussions centered on various educational leadership issues. In cooperation with assigned mentor, analyze and document findings of 3 case studies from the assigned text, identifying core leadership issues; make recommendations that succinctly detail pros and cons associated with each issue, appropriately recommending alternative solutions.
- Develop a leadership portfolio that includes the following:

A) Resume

B) Leadership Framework

C) Five Year Goals

D) Accomplishments aligned with Mississippi Standards for School Leaders

E) Accolades

F) Vita

- Maintain a log of internship activities that includes personal reflections. The information below should be included in the log:

    A) A description of all activities performed during the field-based internship, including the date, timeframe, location, and assigned mentor.

    B) Personal reflections or your reactions to the activities performed. In addition to performing duties as assigned by the supervising administrator, the intern will complete the following specific duties as assigned during each of the semesters:

    C) Attend a meeting of a school or school district planning committee and write a report describing the meeting, analyzing the extent to which the committee functions as a pro-active, empowered team, and reflecting upon the significance of the tasks of the committee in relation to realizing improved student achievement.

D) Analyze the Mississippi Department of Education Report Card for the host district to determine how the district's performance indicators and other demographic data compare with those of three other districts. The comparison districts should have an accreditation level of four or above. Identify similarities and differences between the host district and the comparison districts. Prepare a report of findings that include suggestions for improvement in the host school or district.

E) Develop a school orientation program for students who transfer into the school during the school year and their parents or guardians.

F) Analyze the adopted host school district's curriculum in one academic discipline. Develop a matrix that includes the state standards and identifies where the school district curriculum reflects each standard. Write a report that indicates how the local curriculum aligns with the state framework and includes suggestions, if warranted, about needed changes in the local curriculum.

G) Accompany the site-supervising principal on a minimum of two classroom visitations and the pre-observation conference, and the post-observation conference. Complete the same evaluation forms as the principal. Discuss your evaluation with the principal by exploring areas of difference and reasoning behind both ratings.

H) Prepare and deliver a professional development session in an area of need as identified by the faculty.

I) Study the special education program at the host school by identifying the placement procedure, the Individualized Education Program process; the process of mainstreaming the disciplinary procedures used for students with disabilities by interviewing the principal, a mainstream teacher, and a special education teacher about the strengths; needs, and issues with special education. Write the findings in a report.

J) Observe a grade level team meeting or a curriculum committee meeting. Volunteer to participate in a task of the committee. Record your activities and reflections in your journal.

K) Prepare a profile of the host school including but not limited to the following descriptions: the community; the demographic characteristics of families, children, and community members; the staff; the school plant; the curriculum; types of instructional strategies used; the school climate; the leadership; and the organizational structure.

L) Attend an annual conference of either the Mississippi Association of School Administrators, the Mississippi Association of High School Principals, the Mississippi Association of Elementary School Principals, the Mississippi Association of Female School

Administrators, or the Public Education's annual seminar. Write a

reflective essay concerning what you learned about leadership,

instruction, and the political/aspects of the professional association.

M) Attend a public hearing on a school district or state board of

education budget. Prepare a written report of the hearing and an

evaluation of the budgets relationship to the districts of state's

educational priorities.

N) Observe a disciplinary conference and assist the principal in seeking

solutions to the problem.

The assessments that instructors use to assess candidates' mastery of skills are

field based activities, mentor evaluations, leadership portfolios, activity logs, and

reflective journals.

Secondary Question 5: How are candidates assessed to determine if they are culturally responsive?

Candidates of Tradition's preparation program are educators who can understand

and adapt to diverse school climates with skills that promote culturally responsive

educational practices. Tradition intends that candidates become aware of different

teaching and learning styles that are shaped by cultural influences.

Dr. Miles directed attention to the NCATE diversity component that is addressed

in each course, which states: "Candidates will be equipped with the knowledge to adapt

instruction and services to meet the diverse educational, cultural, and emotional needs of

students" (NCATE, 2008). She stated that Tradition's educational leadership program

strongly relies on the NCATE diversity standard to help measure diversity issues and

topics, as rubrics are assigned to rate the knowledge level of candidates. Candidates are expected to understand how diversity affects their community as well as be able to respond to the diverse needs of those in the school settings that they will lead and/or work. The assessments that faculty use to measure the candidates knowledge of cultural responsiveness are: comprehensive exams, portfolios, problem based learning projects, internship experiences, and the evaluations of the internship site supervisor.

As candidates move forward through programs, they are evaluated from the vantage point of three focal points: pre-clinical experience, clinical experience, and in-service experience. Data from assessments are used to make decisions at four transition points: (1) entry to program, (2) entry to clinical practice, (3) exit from clinical practice, and (4) exit from program. Sustained efforts have been made to ensure that program and unit expectations have been clearly communicated to candidates so that criteria for each transition point are well known by all program enrollees. Further, the continuous feedback given to candidates through face-to-face consultations, as well as assessment instruments, provides a review of candidates' observed strengths, leadership concerns, and specific suggestions for developing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions relative to professional and unit standards. Currently, candidate success within courses is measured through assessments of learning outcomes that are defined in course syllabi and assessed through grade point averages (GPA). These outcomes are correlated with the conceptual framework and state and professional standards. Additionally, candidates pass rates on the School Leadership Licensure Assessment is used to assess if candidates are culturally responsive instructional leaders.

A wide variety of assessment types are used within courses to evaluate candidate knowledge, skills, dispositions, diversity, and technology. Rubrics, checklists, and other scoring tools are used to assess candidate performance on activities and to provide feedback to candidates. The assessment data types that Tradition utilizes are: course based assessments, transition point assessment, program entry, clinical entry, clinical exit, and program exit data. Assessment data sources include: course based assessment outcomes data and candidate database results that include professional key assessments, transition point assessments, and unit assessments. Tradition uses data to: provide feedback to individual candidates, provide feedback to faculty on candidate status, and add content to the candidate assessment database.

The vision and expectations of Tradition's principal preparation program has an urban focus and are woven throughout the program and aligned with the courses, internships, and final assessments. Dr. Miles stated that a comprehensive assessment is done however, determining the extent to which candidates had adequate knowledge and skills for instructional leadership is not apparent.

Mississippi Case 2: Mission University, Dr. Wise

Introductory Overview

Mission University is a rural public institution located in the state of Mississippi. The program that prepares principals is nationally accredited by the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) and approved for administrative licensure by the Mississippi Department of Education. The 33 hour, cohort based, Master's level program has recently gone through a major program revision. The program revision of Mission

University has created a new path for Mission University. The principal preparation

program redesign efforts took place over a two-year span and included significant

changes to the current available program.

Currently, there are six faculty members that hold degrees in Educational

Leadership that are responsible for teaching principal preparation courses. After

candidates have completed their coursework, they must take the School Leaders

Licensure Assessment (SLLA) exam administered by the Educational Testing Service

(ETS). Candidates must score 169 or higher to receive administrative licensure in

Mississippi. Of the fifteen states that require aspiring principals to take the SLLA,

Mississippi requires the highest score (169) to receive an administrators license.

Graduates of the program are prepared to serve as building level principals, assistant

principals, or district level administrators.

Secondary Question 1: How are preparation programs structured (or not structured) to be culturally responsive?

Mission University's program of study is aligned with the College of Education's

Conceptual Framework. All programs in the College of Education at Mission University

use a conceptual framework involving four specific areas of study: General Studies,

Professional/Pedagogical Studies, Content Specialty Studies, and Field and Clinical

Experiences. Each area of study builds upon the development of educators/professionals

who are dedicated to the continual improvement of their own as well as their students'

educational experiences at all academic levels. Programs incorporate the essential

characteristics of an effective educator/professional stated in the conceptual framework:

knowledge, collaboration, reflection, and practice. Graduate programs additionally

emphasize research and performance-based outcomes. Candidates' abilities to use technology and to work with diverse populations are important skills addressed in the Conceptual Framework and fostered in the graduate education programs in the College of Education (Williams, 2012).

More specifically with the principal preparation program, Dr. Wise', Mission University's coordinator of Educational Leadership, stated that Mission offered two courses in the principal preparation program that focus specifically on cultural responsiveness. The first course is *Creating a Positive School Culture* and the second is *Educating Diverse Learners*. Within both courses, the faculty at Mission strives to cover content knowledge of being a culturally responsive leader.

Dr. Wise spoke of the current redesign of the entire principal preparation program. She states, "For the first time since 1998, we took a Zero Based Curriculum approach and redesigned the (principal) preparation program from 39 to 33 hours". Mission's Educational Leadership department began the redesign process in early 2010 and engaged many superintendents, district level administrators, and practicing principals assist with relevancy. The redesign team met every other month to review research pertaining principal preparation, collect data, and draw from the practitioners' experiences to set program goals. The redesign team also set the curriculum content and general program design to include embedded clinical experiences and two redesigned internships. Additionally, the redesign team worked together to write course syllabi, assignments, and assessments that would be aligned with the Educational Leadership 'Constituents Council (ELCC). Building level principals prepared by Mission University

demonstrate knowledge and skills in three content areas. The first content area's courses focused on building a quality educational program for all P-12 students. Courses within this content area allowed candidates to strengthen their knowledge on how to influence P-12 student learning (irrelevant of student poverty, learning impairments, gender or race. Candidates also learn essentials of state and federal school improvement initiatives that influence classroom instruction (Williams, 2012). The courses that support that content area are:

- *Leading Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment*

- *Educating Diverse Learners*

- *Evaluation of School Programs*

- *School Leadership Internship I*

- *School Leadership Internship II*

The second content area requires candidates to use processes to engage others to strengthen the educational program. Three courses assist aspiring leaders to learn to work with others as a team to ensure the academic success of their students and achieve school goals.

- *Using Data for School Improvement*

- *Leadership for Positive School Culture and Climate*

- *Human Resource Leadership for Schools*

The third content area teaches candidates to administer resources and operations to strengthen the educational program. There is a heavy emphasis for candidates to not only learn the leadership and management skills of a principal, but the legal, political, and

ethical principles for which they must operate. The courses aligned with this content area are:

- *Legal, Policy, and Ethical Perspectives for School Law*

- *Effective Leadership and Management for Schools*

- *School Business, Safety, and Facility Management*

Candidate recruitment

Dr. Wise stated that the candidates Mission University looks for "are those who have demonstrated themselves as excellent teachers, teacher leaders, and those who have a commitment to caring for children in schools". She stated that they must also have a commitment to promote instructional achievement for all students by committing to acknowledge and accommodate the diversity of students in schools.

In the redesign process, Mission made numerous changes to the candidate selection process. Mission seeks to accept candidates who exceed the minimum requirements set by Mission's graduate school and meet the criteria that predict candidates' success. Mission's revised candidate recruitment efforts also included developing a consistent and fair process to use a myriad of measures and tools that allow a thorough view of applicant's potential. A third revision involving candidates was to match applicant criteria to the work demands of a typical school leader. Mission will identify applicant strength and growth areas in: instructional expertise, demonstrated leadership experience, work ethic, advocacy for children, and work performance through direct supervisor observations, prior academic background, and their personal interview. Mission also

seeks to collaborate with districts to recruit and screen potential applicants (Williams, 2012).

Secondary Question 2: In what ways does the curriculum promote cultural responsiveness?

Dr. Wise stated that one example of culturally responsive instruction is that "students must prepare the demographics of schools by looking at the data of the schools and the needs of the schools". As they conducted the needs assessments for the schools, they prepare data walls that help in promoting learning for all students. Simultaneously, the schools' communities and parents must be involved, because when you involve the community and parents you are really getting into the culture of what is happening in the (P-12) students' lives.

Secondary Question 3: How do preparation programs address the academic achievement gap among African Americans?

Mission University addressed the achievement gap by teaching candidates to utilize school and student data. The purposes of the data were to assist candidates with decision-making and curriculum assessments. Programs for diverse learners were also designed according to the data that are implemented within school settings.

Secondary Question 4: How does the principal's internship address culturally responsive instructional leadership skills?

Mission's principal preparation program was redesigned from 400 internship hours over three semesters to two internship courses that require100 internship hours. Additionally, 50 to 80 hours of clinical experience are incorporated within the nine required courses. The purpose of the redesign came about due the heightened concern that candidates would focus solely on accumulating hours (Williams, 2012). The new

internship's emphasis is for candidates to experience an in depth focus on the ELCC

standards. Additionally, the redesign team wanted to place more structure into the new

internships by creating internship handbooks, resources, clear guidelines and specific

assignments (Williams, 2012).

Candidates began their first internship in the late summer. The purpose is for

candidates to gain the experiences that principals endure at the beginning of the school

year. Experiences include, but are not limited to, the opening of school, establishing

teacher professional development, setting up the school year's advisory group

responsibilities, and becoming familiar with facility supervision. The second internship is

completed during spring and early summer. Principal work responsibilities from which

students gain knowledge include planning for the next school year, examining the master

scheduling process as an instructional strategy, student data management and evaluation,

teacher supervision, instructional monitoring, and standardized testing that takes place in

spring (Williams, 2012).

Mission's redesigned internship was created for candidates who may have limited

leadership experience and have varying levels of skills that are needed for school leaders

to perform adequately. As the internship progresses, so will the expectations of the

candidates' leadership responsibility (Williams, 2012).

Dr. Wise added that there is a rubric linked to the ELCC standards that provides

assessment measures. For every ELCC standard, the intern is expected to acquire

experiences that make each standard more knowledgeable for them. However, the

internship cannot be conducted without the mentor component. Mentors (active

principals) are the gateway between the educational leadership coursework and the hands on experience with the practitioners. Mentors are trained to ensure that candidates receive quality guidance. The training along with a mentor handbook and assessment instrument ensures that there is continuity within each candidate's internship experience.

Secondary Question 5: How are candidates assessed to determine if they are culturally responsive?

Dr. Wise stated that there are two assessment activities utilized to determine if candidates possess adequate knowledge of culturally responsive curriculum content. The first assessment is conducted within the course structure. The second is on the comprehensive exam. "Students are required to respond to cases or situations related to (cultural responsiveness) and we always make sure that we have a question on the comprehensive exam that would relate to cultural responsiveness". One example of a question on the comprehensive exam is candidates must address what programs can schools implement that would bring about equity for all of the schools' students. Candidates are assessed on the amount of research they have ascertained on the role of the administrator and how to address diversity issues and establish cultural responsiveness. Dr. Wise states that they are given scenarios and must respond to those particular scenarios/vignettes.

Faculty selected to teach the courses related to cultural responsiveness are selected because of their research interests relating to cultural responsiveness. Dr. Wise states that, "One particular professor is very knowledgeable and has done extensive work relating to diversity issues and teaches Mission's candidates how to have difficult conversations as a school leader". The professor is astute in what readings school leaders

should become familiar with as it relates to cultural responsiveness. This professor, because of her work in this area, has developed the course work for "*Educating Diverse Learners*".

As faculty related cultural responsiveness to school culture, Dr. Wise discussed three strands of courses that address the flow of courses in Mission's preparation program. The strands are: leading and managing curriculum approaches in educational foundations, and bringing about equity.

While there are assessment measures in place, Dr. Wise responded that there were no faculty assessments in place to ensure the level in which faculty implemented cultural responsiveness in their courses. However, diversity was embedded in the department's goals, vision, and mission statement with the expectation that faculty will aspire to work toward meeting those departmental goals, vision, and mission.

"All assessments are based on ELCC rubric measures", stated Dr. Wise. The ELCC standards and elements provide the framework that creates the principal preparation courses. The instruction for those courses entitled Educating Diverse Leaners and Leadership for Positive School Culture and Climate are all centered on the ELCC standards.

South Carolina Case 1: Community University, Dr. Sanborn

Introductory Overview

Community University is a South Carolina public institution of higher learning. Rurally located, Community's principal preparation program is a cohort based 42-hour program offered on the Master's level. Community's principal preparation program is

organized around the following concepts: leadership, scholarship, and stewardship. Candidates preparing to become advanced educators have thirty-two outcomes that measure how well the candidate understands and is able to perform in those three concept areas.

Community has full accreditation through NCATE review and is a nationally recognized preparation program through ELCC. In 2005, community redesigned their curriculum. During this revision, courses were aligned to ELCC standards. More specifically, significant changes were made regarding clinical assessments. To ensure that candidate internship assignments reflect contemporary professional and pedagogical skills, Community solicits the advice of administrators from 24 surrounding districts. These administrators serve as Community's Educational Leadership Advisory Council. Building practitioner knowledge and skills is important to Community's faculty because they are all retired administrators. Dr. Sanborn, program director for the Educational Leadership Program served as the participant to provide the preparation data for Community University.

The faculty at Community are retired practitioners from various districts that have high poverty and high minority schools. Dr. Sanborn stated that Community looks for faculty with this type of experience because they have better insight on teaching aspiring leaders how to lead impoverished and minority situations. He qualifies this by stating, "A leader that has worked in high minority and high poverty schools can speak better to that type of situation. We don't have a very diverse faculty right now, full time staff are Caucasian, only two are adjuncts are Black, but I don't know that we've haven't

addressed cultural issues. Ideally, we would like to have minority faculty but it hasn't

happened yet".

Secondary Question 1: How are preparation programs structured (or not structured) to be culturally responsive?

As mentioned in the overview, Community's revised principal preparation

program has been in place for seven years. A massive curriculum change took place in

2005 and along with it; vertical alignment was done for each course. Faculty at

Community eliminated redundancy and aligned courses that lead to other courses. For

example, candidates take *School Law* as a prerequisite to *Leadership in Special Needs*,

and *Supervision* is set prior to *Curriculum*. Dr. Sanborn states that this is done with the

"idea that one course tailors to the next course". The delivery of courses was also altered.

Dr. Sanborn illustrates this with the following statement:

> We teach in eight-week segments. For instance, in the fall you would have a
>
> three-hour course that starts in August and go one night a week for four hours a
>
> night. And two Saturday mornings for four hours, so each three-hour class has 40
>
> contact hours, and at the end of the 8 weeks they would take another 8-week class
>
> that would be for 3 hours of credit. The idea is to bring teachers out one night a
>
> week for graduate school and they are only working on one class at a time. And
>
> we have found that it is much better for teachers and their families. It is more for
>
> us because we get a better quality of work.

The cohort structure of classes are arranged by the following:

Fall Semester 1

- *Educational Leadership*

- *Techniques of Supervision*

Spring Semester 1

- *Curriculum Leadership in Schools*

- *School Personnel Development*

- *Summer 1*

- *Internship*

Fall Semester 2

- *Leadership for Students with Special Needs*

- *School Law*

- *Internship*

Spring 2

- *Fiscal and Business Management in Schools*

- *Principalship for the 21st Century*

- *Internship*

Dr. Sanborn addressed how the courses are prepared by filtering it through a culturally
responsive lens:

> We work with a lot of different school districts a lot of which we train principals
>
> for high poverty or high minority schools, and if they're not culturally responsive,
>
> they don't have any business being in the business. There's something else to that.

If you look at the schools we have right now, we are going through a change in

demographics. In a very short period of time, Caucasian people are not going to

be the majority in this country. Hispanic people will be the majority, so for the

first time since the US has formed, white people are not going to be the majority

race. There will be more African American people and everything is catching up.

And if you don't address that from a leadership standpoint, you're missing the

boat. Because the schools of the future do not look like the schools of the past.

And we have to be trained and ready to deal with that. We rely heavily on our

public school partners. That's one of the things that we think make a difference.

And that's the fact that our curriculum is not static and it changes consistently.

And we're proud of that. We review one course every month and make revisions

all of the time. Courses are revised on a monthly basis and done on rotation…we

do constant evaluations and look at assessments that we use; we don't do it all at

once. It is done monthly and once a year we make adjustments. Most of the time

we keep the same course listings and change content. The reason being that we're

able to make curriculum changes and not have to go through the university. We

try to review content as to what the needs of the schools are. We customize

curriculum for the schools that are in the cohort.

One large, urban district has a distinct working relationship with Community. Not

only do aspiring principals from the district provide a cohort for Community, but

Community seeks the district's input on curriculum. In return, Community customizes

their cohort instruction to center around the district's personnel policies as well as

business and finance policies. The urban component assists Community with addressing the diversity needs of the district's students.

Candidate selection

Community selects its candidates from a strong dependency on recommendations from principals. Dr. Sanborn stated:

> Most of the students we have now are tapped to be principals; they are identified by their principal/superintendent of people that need to be in a principal preparation program. We really depend on our public school partners a lot in identifying good candidates. When they go through the screening process, we look for a variety of different things. One of the things I look for is their passion about educating *all* kids, the idea that they have to understand that the schools they are working in are not necessarily the schools that they will be working in 10 years from now. (That) everything you do has to have a cultural influence. We look for people who are very dedicated to what they are doing. We look for people who are not just moving on the salary schedule but are very serious about being practitioners…...We do look for good writing/communication skills (verbally) and look for those who are passionate about being school leaders.

Secondary Question 2: In what ways does the curriculum promote cultural responsiveness?

Dr. Sanborn stated that multicultural aspects are in every course taught at Community, to include the specialty courses and internships. In Community's preparation program, Dr. Sanborn stated, "Curriculum is designed on a multicultural basis, supervision is designed on a multicultural basis…I think that's one of the common

strands that we have in all of our courses is the emphasis on cultural differences and it really becomes standard in all that we do. That's one mainstay of the program is the emphasis on cultural differences".

In the *School Personnel Development* course, Community equips candidates with the knowledge of incorporating diversity employment practices in their leadership scope. Diversity training is also provided in the course titled *Leadership for Students with Special Needs*. The training addresses cultural, religious, and gender diversity as well as racial sensitivity. Instruction is given to candidates to meet the needs of children in poverty. Closing the achievement gap is also taught in this course.

Secondary Question 3: How do preparation programs address the academic achievement gap among African Americans?

The achievement gap is addressed in the courses *of Curriculum and Supervision*, *Leadership for Special Needs*, and *The Principalship*. The *Curriculum and Supervision* course structure is to teach aspiring principals how to use data analysis to drive instruction and prepare them to help teachers plan and implement curriculum. The Principalship course focuses on principals creating professional development opportunities based on data to address the needs of schools. Dr. Sanborn stated that in those courses, the academic achievement gap is connected to Response to Intervention (RTI). He stated that the driving force behind RTI is the over classification of African American males in the special education program. "There was a disproportionate number of those (African American) kids in special education and it was discriminatory. It was one of those out of sight out of mind things, so I think one of the premises behind RTI was setting up different levels of response for kids, I think is directly related to that. The

curriculum course, special needs, and principalship all address RTI. One of the things we realized when we realigned the curriculum was that there were certain strands that need to go through every class". Dr. Sanborn addressed one such strand as cultural diversity.

Secondary Question 4: How does the principal's internship address culturally responsive instructional leadership skills?

The syllabus that covers Community's internship experience state the following (Mitchell & Martin, 2009):

> All field experiences/internships initial licensure programs include at least one
> placement in schools where there is either a poverty index above 40% or a non-
> white student enrollment greater than 40%. Community's internships are heavily
> arranged around activities that not only have to do with special needs students but
> with students of different races and different cultures. Prior to the beginning of
> each internship experience, the faculty and the intern select internship activities
> that involve students with exceptionalities and those from diverse ethnic/racial,
> linguistic, and low SES groups for completion during three internship courses.
> Assessments are closely aligned with ELCC standards and reflect candidates'
> conceptual understanding connected to theory and practice.

Dr. Sanborn added, "Candidates are required to complete activities where they are forced to work in culturally different situations" He also stated that Community's preparation program went to an activity-based internship to ensure that candidates gain work experience with underrepresented populations or students with special needs. He addressed this by stating:

If it were left up to the student and principal they would end up doing things a lot

of times the principal didn't want to do. And what we wanted to do was make

sure that they had hands on experience with every single ELCC standard and

force them into situations where they did not have experience (like working with

special needs students and working of high poverty or high levels of minority

students) those are all built into our internships. We don't leave it to chance. In

the summer internship, we work with them on who they will select to work with.

During their last two internships, we don't have much to say about because their

internship is done in the school where they teach. But in the summer, we have a

lot of influence on that, but not so much the other two. It's important that we

name the activities because we want to make sure they get everything, not just

what the principal wants.

Secondary Question 5: How are candidates assessed to determine if they are culturally responsive?

Community assessed candidates' knowledge of cultural responsiveness in various

ways. The Institutional Assessment Plan and Guide (2011) detail how the following

assessments are utilized:

- Case studies are used as the culminating project for the *Leadership for Special*

  Needs course. Candidates must summarize the needs of these students,

  research schools serving similar demographics, and then prepare a

  comprehensive plan of action that could be implemented to serve the school

  and raise student achievement. The written plan is shared in a class

presentation where the student speaks to members of the class as if they were serving on a Superintendent's Council for Special Need Students.

- The next form of assessment is the internship evaluation by principal mentor. The internship evaluation is an online survey that is emailed to the principal mentor at the conclusion of each internship. The perception data collected by this assessment is one component used in the total evaluation of the candidate's internship experience. The internship candidate is also evaluated by the university supervisor. Grades are given on the quality of the internship activity reflections, participation in critical sharing meetings, and timeliness of the candidate's completion of activities throughout the semester.

- The comprehensive examination is a culminating activity in the Educational Leadership program. Two weeks prior to the examination, each candidate is provided data from a school in their respective state, in their chosen grade level. The information provided includes perception data, resource data, student achievement data, and demographic data about the specific school. Each candidate meets with the Educational Leadership faculty and is asked eight questions directly related to the ELCC standards. The candidate is also asked to apply these standards to hypothetical situations as if they were the new building principal in this school.

- To assess the cultural responsiveness of aspirant principals, Community utilizes an oral comprehensive exam and exit interviews. The exit interviews are in survey form and are done entirely on line. The faculty also conduct a

follow up study with employers after the program's candidates are hired. Dr. Sanborn says that more is learned about their candidates after they leave the program and are placed into schools. The school data is tracked to measure the levels of school performance.

Cross-case Analysis of Educational Leadership Faculty

Secondary Research Question 1: How are preparation programs structured (or not structured) to be culturally responsive?

Aside from the similarities that these programs have, as a result of preparing aspiring principals, one distinct theme emerged that they all have a focus on meeting the needs of diverse student populations. All of the institutions stated that the curriculum in their program is advised by practicing administrators in nearby districts. The advisory groups help with ensuring that curriculum is current and relevant. The advisory group also serves to help the programs attract sound candidates. One institution's program was designed with an urban focus, based on its minority heritage. The program structure is totally immersed in cultural responsiveness. One program recently revised its program and hired staff to focus on preparing culturally responsive principals. The other institution had faculty that are all retired administrators that are from high minority, high poverty backgrounds. The experience from faculty was considered unique to assist future building level administrators.

Table 1: Emergent theme: Focus on meeting the needs of diverse student populations

Case	Program of study
Tradition	- Program has urban curriculum/focus 39 required hours - Cohort based - Program divided into four phases (phases 2-4 are internship with culturally responsive focus) - Problem based learning approach (based on real time instances occurring in respective schools) - Provide part time as well as full time program for candidates working on sabbatical basis - Curriculum designed to meet needs of diverse populations - Program prepares candidates to work in urban settings
Mission	33 required hours - Cohort based - Two courses that focus on cultural responsiveness (*Creating a Positive School Culture* and *Educating Diverse Learners*) - Rely on advisory group for input - Program revised in 2011 (first time since 1998) with zero based curriculum - New faculty experienced in being building level administrators
Community	42 required hours - Cohort based - Principal pipeline for two states (NC and SC)

	• Constant changes in curriculum
	• Work with advisory group
	• Work with schools to keep abreast of curriculum/course offerings (schools have urban population)
	• Every presentation in coursework must address cultural differences (i.e. special education populations, different races)
	• Faculty are all retired practitioners from high poverty, high minority schools
	• Work with districts that train principals with high poverty or high minority schools
	• Customize curriculum for schools in cohort
	• Track students after employment has been gained (with approx. 60% rate)

Secondary Research Question 2: In what ways does the curriculum promote cultural responsiveness?

Two themes were derived from the tenets that are found in culturally responsive preparation programs. The first theme was understanding diversity. Programs addressed diversity issues by teaching candidates to acknowledge cultural diversity and provide opportunities to teach their staff about cultural diversity. Each program indicated that their program was either structured around diversity or specified courses discussed diversity issues. The second theme was instructional methods. Each program prepared candidates to analyze data to drive decision-making. The coursework that two programs specifically stated assisted in culturally responsive data analysis included focusing on the academic achievement gaps that exist on national and state levels. One program's

coursework included viewing cultural diversity from a legal, policy, and ethical

perspective.

Table 2: Emergent themes: Specific courses address diversity issues; Cultural responsive
data analysis

Case	Promotion of cultural responsiveness
Tradition	- Coursework designed to challenge traditional views of education - Program framework builds diverse candidate competency - Program builds on prior knowledge and experience of candidates - Courses address: - Achievement gap - Traditional views on educational settings impact on urban student achievement - Challenges facing urban school organizations - Preparing curriculum to address needs of urban schools - Challenging candidates to address personal and staff attitudes regarding diversity - Acceptance of diverse cultures - Engaging parents and communities with culturally diverse backgrounds - Utilizing data to make instructional leadership decisions
Mission	Assess needs of school by utilizing student data

	• Prepare data walls to promote student learning
	
	• Provide opportunities to work with school parents and community
	
	• Courses address
	
	    ○ Legal, policy, and ethical perspectives for cultural diversity
	
	    ○ Teaching and learning diversity for special populations
	
	    ○ Using data for school improvement	

Community	• Curriculum designed on multicultural basis
	
	• Supervision designed on multicultural basis
	
	• Courses address:
	
	    ○ Incorporating diversity employment practices
	
	    ○ Training for cultural, religious, and gender diversity
	
	    ○ Racial sensitivity
	
	    ○ Closing the achievement gap
	
	    ○ Data analysis for instructional decision making	

Secondary Research Question 3: How do preparation programs address the academic achievement gap among African Americans?

Every faculty interviewed indicated that teaching candidates the diverse uses of data was the way they addressed the academic achievement gap. Programs prepared candidates on the purpose of data and how to utilize data in decision-making and curriculum assessments. Programs indicated that the data from candidates' respective schools and/or the site they served their internship as the data sources they used to gain

112

experience. One program indicated that professional development was taught with the

expectation that the achievement gap would be addressed. Candidates would be able to

combine the use of data to planning an effective professional development model.

Table 3: Emergent themes: Using data for decision making; Professional development to address diversity issues

Case	Program address of achievement gap
Tradition	- Teach candidates the purpose of data - Teach candidates how to effectively utilize data - Utilize data of candidates work site or internship placement - Candidates learn how to make curricular decisions based on data that exists within schools
Mission	- Teach students how to use data in decision making and curriculum assessments - Design programs for diverse learners based on data
Community	- Teach students how to use data analysis to drive instruction - Professional development to address diversity issues in school - Train candidates how to address cultural diversity and racial sensitivity

Secondary Research Question 4: How does the principal's internship address culturally responsive instructional leadership skills?

The culturally responsive internship practices that programs utilize varied in

response but are similar in nature. All of the programs indicated that their cohort-based

internships begin in the summer so that candidates can experience administrative duties

prior to the beginning of the school year. The educational leadership program that has an

urban focus indicated that candidates' entire internship experiences involve urban

settings. The internship practices were aligned with the urban focus of the course

structures so that candidates may build cultural sensitivity. The urban program and the

South Carolina program both stated that candidates do not have flexibility in selecting

their internship activities. The faculty was responsible for the candidates' placements.

One principal preparation program does not place candidates in their internship. They

allow the candidates to perform their internship assignments in their respective school.

For all of the preparation programs, candidates are required to complete an internship

project that involves diversity. All projects must be approved by educational leadership

faculty.

Table 4: Emergent themes: Activity based; Use of data; Observations by faculty;
Supervision of principal mentors

Case	Culturally responsive internship practices
Tradition	• Experiences structured by faculty • Internship is correlated to coursework/course knowledge expected to be obtained • 1st internship focuses on demographics and data of school (dissect school profile strengths/weaknesses) • All internship practices are tied to data • Reflective journal (includes personal observations as well as feedback from supervising administrator) • First internship based on employment, 2nd and 3rd based on needs of candidate and with administrator that can address

		candidate needs
		• Develop portfolio
		• All experiences are in urban settings
Mission		• Candidates work in schools in which they are employed
		• Minimum of two activities required for completion focused on Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards
		• Candidates expected to spend 25-50 hours assisting the principal with particular projects
		• Candidates are required to keep a written time-log pertaining to their activities
		• Internship assessment based on the principal's evaluation, the university supervisor's evaluation, and the quality of the portfolio
Community		• Activity based internship
		• Candidates do not have flexibility to select what internship activities they can do, activity based internship that focuses on underrepresented populations or special needs
		• Hands on experience with every ELCC standard and challenge candidates to work in situations that they have little experience or prior knowledge
		• Help candidates select who they will serve internship with during summer internship (two others are done in school where they teach)
		• Name activities for candidates instead of relying on supervising principal to select activity for candidate

Secondary Research Question 5: How are candidates assessed to determine if they are culturally responsive?

The two Mississippi preparation programs indicated that an assessment measure of their preparation program was students passing the School Leadership Licensure Examination with a score of 169 or above. The Mississippi programs also measured culturally responsive instructional leadership by candidates' performance on course assessments and successfully completing the preparation program with an acceptable grade point average (GPA). The South Carolina preparation program indicated that they used follow up studies after candidates are employed as administrators to assess their culturally responsive instructional leadership skills. Data would be obtained from student performance to measure how well the candidates performed as principals. Transition point assessment was used by one institution for the candidates' instructional leadership capacity. They assessed candidate knowledge at the beginning of the program coursework and internship and measured candidates as they completed the program and internship activities.

Table 5: Emergent theme: Program assessments (course assessments, SLLA exam, GPA)

Case	Culturally responsive assessment of candidates
Tradition	- Successful completion from program (GPA) - Pass SLLA - Type of feedback provided by faculty - Course based assessments - Transition point assessment - Program entry vs. program exit data - Clinical entry vs. clinical exit data
Mission	- Successful completion from program (GPA) - Pass SLLA - Course based assessments
Community	Follow up studies with employers after candidates are hired

Preparation and Practice of Principals of High Performing Schools

The next section provides the within case narratives of Mississippi and South Carolina principals who lead high performing, high minority schools. Mirroring the organization of the educational leadership faculty, the within case analysis for culturally responsive principals are organized by the following secondary research questions:

1. What were the characteristics of the principals' preparation program?
2. How is culturally responsive instruction addressed in the preparation program?

3. How do aspiring principals learn to effectively respond to the academic achievement gap?

4. How are aspiring principals' cultural responsiveness assessed, if at all?

5. How do internship experiences influence culturally responsive instructional leadership?

6. What knowledge and skills are pertinent for a culturally responsive instructional leader?

7. How are culturally responsive environments established by principals?

8. How do principals ensure teachers utilize culturally responsive instruction?

9. What methods do principals use with teachers to mitigate the academic achievement gap?

10. What ways are teachers assessed by principals to determine the processes used to build culturally responsive instruction?

Mississippi Case #1: Urban Elementary School, Dr. Joy

Urban Elementary School is located in one of the largest school districts in Mississippi. It has been very successful academically over the past 3 years, scoring the highest of the state ratings consecutively. It has approximately 685 students with 85% of the population being African American. Additionally, 78% of the students receive either free or reduced lunch that is based on the student's families' socio-economic standings.

The principal of Urban Elementary is a 60-year-old white female, who has 12 years' experience as a school administrator, with six of those years leading Urban Elementary. She is an avid learner – an advantageous characteristic within the school

culture and a trait that she hopes that those under her leadership aspire to acquire. Dr. Joy

believes that educators are servants. Servitude, in Dr. Joy's opinion, is the greatest value

educators can possess.

As we prepared for our interview, she expressed that her personal drive to being a

productive instructional leader is to attempt to have a true understanding of the needs of

her students so that she may better serve them. Serving the children of Urban Elementary

includes being respectful of the student's cultures, establishing beneficial rapport with

parents and building the amount of parent participation within the school.

*Secondary Research Question 1: What were the characteristics of the principals'
preparation program?*

The realization that Dr. Joy had when aspiring to become a principal was to

acquire a fundamental knowledge of the students she would serve. As she contemplated

where she would obtain preparation for her administrative certification, she opted to

attend a Historically Black College and University in the state of Mississippi. A major

component of the selected preparation program was to assist administrators with

understanding the diversity and culture of the population she would lead.

*Secondary Research Question 2: How is culturally responsive instruction addressed in
the preparation program?*

While it had been fourteen years since she received her administrative degree, she

recalled that her program of study had a focus on Urban Studies addressing the

psychology of children in urban environments. Understanding the psychology of children

in urban environments is paramount for Ms. Joy because as she states, being in an urban

setting "requires that you face more diversity".

Secondary Research Question 3: How do aspiring principals learn to effectively respond to the academic achievement gap?

One of the reasons that culturally responsive practices are utilized is to mitigate the achievement gap. When reflecting of how her preparation program addressed the achievement gap, Ms. Joy reflected that models of learning were utilized throughout her program. Her program also assess the correlation of effective schools as well as what characterizes effective schools. To accomplish this task, Dr. Joy stated that her program looked at the following: models of learning; correlation of effective schools; characteristics of effective schools; what makes solid (good) leadership; and lastly the culture of schools.

Secondary Research Question 4: How are aspiring principals' cultural responsiveness assessed, if at all?

Dr. Joy could not recall if her program faculty assessed the knowledge of cultural responsiveness curriculum content. While several years have elapsed since Dr. Joy completed her preparation program and became certified to be a school administrator, she was able to reflect on the overall gist of her preparation program.

Because of the time that had elapsed, Dr. Joy was not sure of the process used by the university to determine if candidate had adequate levels of cultural responsiveness. She recalled there being a screening process, an interview panel with professors, but stated that she would hate to speculate on the methods used then.

Secondary Research Question 5: How do internship experiences influence culturally responsive instructional leadership?

As stated earlier, Dr. Joy opted to attend a historically black college and university because she "felt the need to better understand the clients that I serve". As she

reflected on the internship practices that lead to culturally responsive curriculum content, she indicated that there may have been a course where the content that had the philosophical underlying thoughts of cultural responsiveness that interacting with people from a culture different from hers as well as that of her students was important as the classes she attended.

Secondary Research Question 6: What knowledge and skills are pertinent for a culturally responsive instructional leader?

As Dr. Joy described the knowledge and skills that contribute to the success of being a culturally responsive instructional leader, she focused on the psychological and sociological aspect of people's culture. She stated:

> Where I'm thinking about psychological, I'm thinking about the different
>
> kinds of learners, or the different ways you classify the learner's
>
> personality. And you have to know who you are and how your needs are
>
> met through your actions and the same thing with people or other
>
> personality types or sociological differences of people".

Secondary Research Question 7: How are culturally responsive environments established by principals?

As a successful principal of a predominately African American school, Dr. Joy described how she promotes cultural responsiveness with teachers, parents, students, and community leaders. Dr. Joy stated that in her school, she has done quite a bit with being culturally aware. She began by providing an overview on how that is done with teachers:

> I think you have to have a beginning level and you have to bring people to
>
> the awareness of themselves and their feelings about others, and the

cultures that might be different from (your own)…we've had a consultant

to help me with that because it causes you to ask the tough questions of

yourself as well as others. We ask: What are our core values? What do we

want for our children and how is that any different from what we want

from our own child? Yet you must understand differences, and how to

react to those differences whether it is conscious or subconscious. We've

done quite a bit of role play with that and I think that must continue for

our staff to begin to be aware of actions they may have, whether its verbal

interaction or whether its body language, things of that that nature, that

may have an impact on the learners more than the lessons they are

preparing.

With the parents, she indicated that it is a very delicate thing. She stated that it is

about finding ways to help parents find common ground. She indicated, "We have a very

diverse population. I have poverty and upper middle income. I think the piece we have to

deal with the most is really how to deal with poverty". Her school staff is learning how to

interact with children and families with poverty and respect who they are. This, she

believed, will add values to the lives of the community she serves.

Promoting a culturally responsive environment with the students was currently

still in the works. She realized that the younger the child, the more flexible they are to

receiving cultures of different individuals. In Urban Elementary, they utilized

opportunities to work with children by helping them with their communication skills,

expressing their feelings, and developing their character. They also utilized book therapy

to strategically, but not overtly, point out cultural differences by highlighting differences in people. She stated, "Understanding differences in personality (is essential), but it takes all of us together to make a team".

Dr. Joy expressed that culturally responsive environment is essential for building the partnership between parents, community, teachers, and students. Dr. Joy asserted that the focus at Urban Elementary was to see that every child is proficient and that a quota was not necessary because she believed every child deserves to be proficient. That was achieved by differentiating the type of culturally responsive support that they provide. She turned her attention mostly to the type of support she provided for parents.

I start out with parents at beginning of the year. We have conferences with parents and the children and we share results of state tests and we identify the challenge areas. We start out with strengths then the challenge areas and we give them strategies to help them along with the curriculum. And I think that helps in the beginning to set the tone on what our work is all about and how we are going to help their child and how they can help, it's a partnership. The process of doing that is where culturally responsive comes in as well; being aware of how to approach different families and how they interact with their children and it's a fine art. And having a conversation of that type you have to be very careful in how you approach that because some families are going to want you to be direct. You have to know how to read people, and some people are going to want you to take your time and break down what is needed as well as what their expectations are. If I have a less educated family, you're gonna have to break the language

down. You must make certain, with all families that you are careful and that you are using terms that they understand, that they are very practical terms, if they are the least educated then you have to be very ,very basic. You must bring out the strengths of the child so they can celebrate and challenge areas of weakness. You then suggest that what they do for their child is gonna be a little different than other parents. The basic thing you want them to do is read with their child because that's as much as they can do without putting excess stress, because they may want the child to do well, but may lack the skills to do it themselves. That is something that we have provided, is to have classes here for the parents that we call Parent Education. We provide opportunities for parents to learn more about curriculum. But that as well is differentiated and based on need of the parent. We have afternoon "lunch bunch" that we do once a week. They bring a sack lunch and the parenting coordinator plans sessions. We try to use resources such as an influential grandmother and bring her in to help with how to discipline. The coaching coordinator and I, or the parent coordinator, may work with that grandmother to facilitate the parent education course, because they are going to listen to the person in their community. We tailor the parent education based on the need of the group, (i.e. how to help my child separate) and we do that for the three and 4 year old parents. There are different approaches to parent education based on parent need. It focuses on issues we're dealing with at school (whether its culturally, curricula, conflict resolution, how to help parents make transitions to school) because I think we have a prime opportunity with children so small to

help parents to develop the skillsets or the tools to be advocate for children for the rest of their academic career. Sometimes parents come in with the feelings that they had when they were in school so we try to help them to see what their role is and that what is going on with their children is different than what happened to them when they were students. We try to do parent education every term, but every grade level should have at least three in year> That is a minimum of what we do. What we try to do is have parent education at different times of day to accommodate different parent needs. We have Saturday sessions, then we have early evenings (6pm) and then we do lunch bunch. We sent a survey out to poll our parents of what time of week would be good for you, what topics (they would like to discuss) and anything else they would like and we do that at the beginning of year. We've had a Parent Education coordinator in place for two years empowering families and helping them be certain that the school is there to help not displace the parent's role. Parents need to stay empowered as their children transition to middle school because the child will be more successful. They also need to be advocates for their children. I believe the parents love their children and they are doing the very best that they can and part of our job as educators is to empower them because they are going to be with their child a lot longer than we are.

Secondary Research Question 8: How do principals ensure teachers utilize culturally responsive instruction?

Dr. Joy further illustrated how she performs as a culturally responsive instructional leader by describing the ways in which she assists teachers with designing

culturally relevant curricula. She met this task by discussing learning styles of students, creating activities on cultural awareness, and helping teachers develop community within their classrooms. She also assists teachers with setting up a mutually respectful and responsive environment and teaching the students to be respectful. Her consistent modeling allows teachers to provide opportunities to help learners grow. When learners are stagnant there is a problem and she insists that in her schools that won't work. She helps teachers find what the children need and set up environments that build trust. She supported that by stating, "Children can read people very well. They come more accepting and less with preconceived notions and classifications of people so it's about being honest understanding what your (the teacher's) mission is, and teaching the whole child".

The notion of assisting teachers in delivering culturally responsive curricula is supported by first assessing what the core values of teachers are. The question that drives this assessment is if the teachers think students can learn what they need to learn. If the teachers believe the students cannot, they must build lessons to meet the needs of students and engage them rigorously. Dr. Joy believes in and reminds teachers that those working to educate children should have "servant attitudes, which is our only existence". The focus must be kept off of the adult (teacher) and meet the needs of the children. This is done through interaction with the child and the parent (which is just as important as the child). When one takes the time to develop parent partnerships, they must find out what the parent needs, and help with their child's success.

Secondary Research Question 9: What methods do principals use with teachers to mitigate the academic achievement gap?

Dr. Joy described that the power of data is a sound instructional leadership practice that is utilized to assist teachers in addressing the academic achievement gap. She stated that there were different kinds of data needed to mitigate the gap. Instructional leaders must be familiar with demographic as well as community data and strategies that meet the needs of students that included diagnostic assessments that had predictor qualities. Leaders must also be objective and look for ways to quantify variables to make decisions. Dr. Joy stated that in addition to understanding the power of data, the principal must be an avid learner that models learning.

Secondary Research Question 10: What ways are teachers assessed by principals to determine the processes used to build culturally responsive instruction?

Finally, to ensure that teachers are designing and delivering culturally responsive instruction, instructional leaders must look for responsive classroom environments. Children must be engaged and exhibit positive behavior coupled with a positive environment that is responsive to children and promotes social and emotional development.

Mississippi Case #2: Complex Elementary School, Dr. Bright

Complex Elementary School is a school in a suburban community that has demographics that vary greatly from the demographics of the district. The overall demographics of the district indicate that only 49% of students in the district are African American. However, Complex has an enrollment of 293 students with 85% of its student population being African American. The overall socioeconomic standing of Complex is

that 91% of the students are on free and reduced lunch. Complex's most recent scores are successful as opposed to the two years prior where the school was either on academic watch or at risk of failing.

The principal of Complex is a 43-year-old African American woman that has 19 years of administrative experience. She has been at Complex for 2 years. Prior to leading Complex, she worked in an upper administration position in an urban district. She indicated that she moved from a high socioeconomic environment to an area that not only has low socio-economic standings (SES), but SES for the community Complex serves is steadily declining.

Secondary Research Question 1: What were the characteristics of the principals' preparation program?

Dr. Bright's reflection on her preparation experience involved not only her principal certification process from which she obtained her Master's degree, but it included her doctoral coursework that was conducted at an HBCU. When discussing her culturally responsive experience, she mainly discussed her HBCU experience.

Dr. Bright's program of study at a small, private, predominately white institution comprised of courses in educational leadership theory, supervision of school instruction, school law, school finance, and school principalship and supervision (that served as the practicum or internship portion of her program). However, her doctoral program was based on the Responsive Educator Model that was designed to move from theoretical learning to practice. The model teaches educational leaders how to use data to make data driven decisions based on the educational environment. The course work included

leadership theory, technologies in education, educational research and statistics, and how to lead in cross-cultural environments.

Secondary Research Question 2: How is culturally responsive instruction addressed in the preparation program?

Culturally responsive instruction was not addressed in Dr. Bright's Master's program; however her doctoral program exposed her to how education may be viewed across different cultures. During her program, she stated, she had to "take realities of our current and potential educational landscape and tie to coursework of becoming principal". In addition, the program insured that their candidates were cognizant of the political and racial realities that were relative at the time and tie to the preparation course work. Dr. Bright thought that her preparation at the HBCU was very sound and contributed to her knowledge base of being able to serve and meet the needs of diverse learners.

Secondary Research Question 3: How do aspiring principals learn to effectively respond to the academic achievement gap?

Dr. Bright did not recall her Master's principal preparation program addressing the academic gap. It was only in her doctoral program that she felt her program "kept hand on pulse of urban issues", particularly that of the academic achievement gap.

Secondary Research Question 4: How are aspiring principals' cultural responsiveness assessed, if at all?

Dr. Bright did not recall how her Master's program assessed culturally responsive curriculum content. However, in her doctoral program, she indicated that while she completed assignments that focused on multiculturalism and diversity, she was required to complete action research projects, write research papers on the topic of diversity, and review diversity related data. She also had class presentation and developed

scenarios that focused on diversity. She did not take a test to assess her content

knowledge, but she felt the coursework definitely responded to cross-cultural diversity.

Dr. Bright's master's preparation program provided the fundamental "nuts and

bolts" of a principal preparation. However, her doctoral program was an expansion of

cultural competency because it focused on the urban setting and needs of urban schools.

She stated that her doctoral program "broadened my horizon and opened my eyes to

diverse needs".

The faculty of Dr. Bright's principal preparation established program completion

as maintaining a passing grade average after 36 hours of course completion and 12 hours

of internship. Other than the comprehensive oral examination that candidates take at the

culmination of the preparation program, Dr. Bright could not recall if there was any other

mode of assessing cultural responsiveness.

Secondary Research Question 5: How do internship experiences influence culturally responsive instructional leadership?

The internship Dr. Bright had during her Master's program was "not a written or

verbal commitment to cultural responsiveness". The program focused on administration

and supervision. She stated of her program that the sentiment was, "This is what it is and

this is how you do it. There was no conversation on how to approach diverse learners.

The conversation was more of how to become to a principal and what the role principal

plays as well as what a principal does".

The focus of her internship included learning about the in-depth activities of the

principal and learning how to adequately document those activities. The activities

included how to complete teacher observations, analyze data, and how to make

130

recommendations on data. The internship also prepared aspiring principals how to focus on master class scheduling and prepare professional development for teachers. Additionally, she recalled that she was required to learn how to implement school wide discipline. Accreditation practices on state and federal levels were also addressed during the internship. Dr. Bright attributed her program with learning relevancy and ensuring that current trends were incorporated into her personal and professional growth.

As stated earlier, cultural responsiveness was not explicitly stated in Dr. Bright's principal preparation internship. Yet during her doctoral internship, the state of Mississippi began to look at the curriculum course of study. During this time, conversations about the achievement gap focused on meeting the needs of diverse learners as well as what was being done across the state to mitigate academic gaps for students.

Secondary Research Question 6: What knowledge and skills are pertinent for a culturally responsive instructional leader?

Dr. Bright's attributed success of being a culturally responsive instructional leader to knowing and understanding the school community. She stated that knowing who is in the building is important. She also stated that principals must understand what is going on with the families in order to understand the students (which includes the racial, socio, and living environments of the school's families).

Dr. Bright indicated that communication is a huge skill that principals must possess to be culturally responsive. She also believed that being available (both physically and emotionally) as well as being visible as a principal is imperative. Principals must "know what they're doing, have a plan of cultural responsiveness, yet

even bigger, understand how establishing a culturally responsive school culture affects

student achievement". To ensure students grow academically, principals must identify

varied approaches that meet the needs of students of different cultures. The models that

exist on the state and national level must begin to individualize around student data. She

indicated that the culture of race and poverty must be addressed. Principals must take into

account the cultures of race or poverty "are all real pieces that must be dealt with".

Secondary Research Question 7: How are culturally responsive environments established
by principals?

Although Dr. Bright's students are mostly African American, she also faces

poverty. She stated, "Poverty is the culture (that exists in my school). Because my

children are poor, they experience lack of options in life because of high poverty

situation. So I'm thinking they are poor and black. I am not only thinking about what it is

to be just African American. I want you to be aware that I am thinking about my children

being poor".

Dr. Bright encourages her staff to always get to know the students thoroughly. To

accomplish this, teachers should talk to the children and spend time with the children to

learn their individual needs as well as how to approach their varied cultural backgrounds.

She stated:

I spend a lot of time with students. I am in classrooms every day. I am in there

and am available, we have a set structure, when the children enter the building at 7am, I

am out there with them. If they need me, they come to me, which is one of the cultural

issues, our (African American) children need someone to listen to them, they need a

verbal outlet. They have to have conversations with what they are doing and what they

are learning. On the classroom level, I encourage teachers to have instructional conversations with children. I feel strongly that teachers need to know what their children know. You need to hear what they are saying. You have to know what they know. In terms of parent groups, I have parent and community workshops. I give the parents and community opportunities to take part in student activities. But, I protect instructional time because I do a lot of work with maintaining time on task. That is very, very important.

Cultural responsiveness was promoted with parents by Dr. Bright by providing workshops that allow parents to ask questions on state objectives. Tutorials are provided that give parents the adequate tools to assist students with subject matter that may be difficult for the students' comprehension. She also provides workshops when the state tests come up and invite parents in to give an overview of what the students will be facing and the type of things that the school needs parents to help with as they prepare the students for state testing. She indicated, "What we want is for parents to really understand what children are encountering with state framework objectives. The big idea is state framework objectives. We want the parents to be equipped to make the children successful".

Secondary Research Question 8: How do principals ensure teachers utilize culturally responsive instruction?

Teachers are required to submit unit plans in the summer months and work together on unit plans and they submit those unit plans to Dr. Bright. Dr. Bright stated:

I want to ensure they have those culturally relevant pieces throughout those unit plans. Primarily, when we are looking at language arts, we are focusing on children's literature that has all those cultural elements within. So not only are children exposed in

their regular classes, but also I ask my librarian to make sure she brings in texts for different children that focus As teachers are planning their lessons, they give those lesson plans to me to review. I provide feedback to teachers and then I have a three-point observation document that I utilize when I go into the classroom. We focus on instructional delivery, planning, and classroom management. As we are doing that, we're looking at a lot of different things, and we are talking about cultural relevance. Cultural relevance for our students is that small group skill instruction; that differentiated teaching, where you focus on the needs of students. What is very important to me, is when I'm guiding teachers, I'm guiding teachers to look at strengths of individual students and to plan instruction for those students.

In addition, Dr. Bright utilized research-based strategies to train her teachers on culturally responsive pedagogical strategies that focus on the needs of her students. The premise is that the more culturally responsive the instructional methods, the higher the performance of the students. An example to illustrate her rationale is to ensure that when units are being planned; appropriate literature is embedded within each unit. She monitors how teachers plan each week of instruction and provides feedback on ways to work with the children. She investigates how teachers differentiate instruction and provides feedback on adequate ways to assess the instructional curriculum.

At the beginning of the year, Dr. Bright provides teachers with informal documents that investigate the varied ways and methods of engaging all learners. When she observes the teachers, she expects "100% of the students to be engaged 100% of the time". She inspects how sound the classroom procedures are as it responds to order and

134

structure. Dr. Bright feels that procedure is essential for African American children as well as children in poverty because their home life may be a "bit scattered and disorganized so the school environment has to be tightly structured". The structure included the fine points of classroom management and effective instructional delivery.

The children can't just sit there. They can't be ignored. During my observation period, within the hour, you should be doing direct instruction. You should make sure you touch every child in some way, and when I say touch them that you ask them a question about something. You get some type of feedback from them, or something that lets you know what everyone knows in that classroom. You don't do the response and call method where you stand in front of the class and say, "Who knows the answer to this?" Because in that model, only about 50% of the kids answer and you don't know what the other 50% knows. So it's about teachers actually knowing what every child knows in that classroom. I would say, giving them their informal observation instrument and formal instrument and providing feedback leads to conversation. Then we can change and implement if we need to work on something and review again. I meet with the teachers and let them know what I saw and ask them do they think they got everything out of it…knowing what the student knows is very important.

Secondary Research Question 9: What methods do principals use with teachers to mitigate the academic achievement gap?

Dr. Bright states that to mitigate the academic achievement gap, the principal must first ensure that the curriculum, instruction, and assessment cycle is in place. She reflects on previous international baccalaureate training and asks big questions:

The first question that supports your curriculum piece asks, "What do you want the students to learn"? The instructional piece asks, "How will you teach them"? The assessment component asks "How will you know when they have learned?" She parlays her training to instructional practices by asking the following questions of her staff: do you know what you are teaching. What are the state framework objectives? What are the common core standards? How do you know what you know? How do you know what you don't? How do you deliver? How do you assess? How do you know when student have met standards? How do you know that students have learned what you want them to learn? I would say our assessment tools have to be so strong so that you can narrow achievement gaps because see the achievement gap is closed day to day. It is not closed when kids take state assessments once a year. You close it every single day and you close it by asking questions throughout the day. You cannot wait until the end of the week to close the achievement gap. Achievement gap closes with every piece of information that you give to every child every day. So I think the big issue for me is assessment looking at assessment results, training teachers to understand that assessment is not the big chapter test kids take every six weeks but it's what you do every single day. That's how you close it. And then, when you think about the bigger standpoint, it's about how effectively teachers differentiate instruction where, using a medical model, you have some kids coming in to you that are critically ill and require hospitalization and excessive intervention, but some just need a band aid and that you (the teacher) are walking around the classroom making sure that they are staying on task. Making sure the teacher knows what the children knows is a big deal".

Secondary Research Question 10: What ways are teachers assessed by principals to determine the processes used to build culturally responsive instruction?

Dr. Bright lists the following as her methods. First, she states that there must be effective unit planning. Secondly, teachers must create effective lesson plans. The next is the ability to extend literature to different cultures. The fourth way is to expand experiences for students that goes beyond the classroom. After that, she looks at the informal and formal observation notes that she takes to know how teachers are responding to students in the classroom. Finally, Dr. Bright analyzes the data and monitors the teachers to see how they are making changes for children. The end result must be that teachers strive to "grow 100% of the kids 100% of the time".

Mississippi Case #3: City Elementary School, Mrs. Exceptional

City Elementary School is a Title 1school located in the heart of a large urban district in Mississippi. The principal of City Elementary Schools is Mrs. Exceptional, a 59-year-old Asian woman who has been at City Elementary for 20 years, while serving as the principal for 14 of those years. The student population of City is 100% African American and 93 % of the student population receives either free or reduced lunch. Once located in a stable neighborhood environment, City has the highest transient rate of students of any school in its district. The transient nature of the school provides an opportunity to exercise unique leadership skills that constantly adjusts the academic curriculum to fit the needs to the revolving door of students. While there may be high numbers of transient students, City Elementary has been able to maintain successful standards as deemed by the state of Mississippi.

Mrs. Exceptional is a seasoned veteran with experienced wisdom and a passion for leading guiding her path as a successful instructional leader. During the 2010-2011 school year, City received a successful rating. The school year prior to that, the school was labeled 'at risk' dropping from 2008-2009's classification of successful. Mrs. Exceptional's candid interview allowed the researcher to be open to the myriad of ways principals are prepared.

Secondary Research Question 1: What were the characteristics of the principals' preparation program?

Mrs. Exceptional was different, in that she did not receive her principal certification by taking the traditional route. After 11 years of teaching, the principal of the school Mrs. Exceptional was teaching at the time, asked if she would consider being her assistant principal. After receiving a call from a deputy superintendent in the district, she realized that it was something that should be taken seriously. She indicated that at that time, she did not have any administrative credit hours as her Master's was in Elementary Education and not Administration. However, the deputy superintendent indicated that the district would be willing to work with her while she simultaneously earned her certification while being an assistant principal. After she accepted her new administrative position, she began to work on her administrative degree at night and during the summer. She received her certification through an Education Specialist program in 1989. she stated that her program preparation:

> Was more about theory, statistics, school law, budget management, finance, and
>
> some evaluation of what to do as far as teacher observation. It was about the
>
> management part of administration as opposed to instructional side. Certification

138

was more of the business aspects of education – learning the legalities of what you could and could not do. When I got my certification, a lot of what I got was on the job training. I worked with a well-respected principal who I worked with for several years, and she gave me the latitude to do as an intern would do because I was already in that position.

Mrs. Exceptional stated that she was selected to be an administrator based on her success as a teacher and other leadership activities she conducted in the building. She was a team leader and volunteered within the school community. She also attributed her principal selecting her to serve as her assistant because of her proficiency in organization and structure. "I felt like I've always gotten good ratings as a teacher and I think sometimes in order to recognize good teaching, you have to be able to teach, you have to be a good teacher. And I had good rapport with my students, good rapport with my parents".

Secondary Research Question 2: How is culturally responsive instruction addressed in the preparation program?

Mrs. Exceptional stated, with sincerity, the following:

Honestly, I do not remember anything that I went through getting my certification that dealt with any of that. Like I said, it was more the business aspect of it. The legalities of what you could do, what you can't do. Nothing that would specifically tell you, you know, if you have a diverse population, how you should handle it. How you should approach it, whether it was diverse students or staff. None of that. I think that was more or less (getting involved with the diverse populations) on the job training.

Secondary Research Question 3: How do aspiring principals learn to effectively respond to the academic achievement gap?

Mrs. Exceptional stated that the academic achievement gap was not addressed during her certification. She was not presented with culture or diversity issues. However, low achievers were discussed but not regarding the disparity in education that is seen now. She attributed the achievement gap discussion not taking place due to the period that she received her certification. However, since then, her district's professional development certification program has offered instruction and training regarding the academic achievement gap. She stated that her district is providing administrators with "much needed professional development on how to close the achievement gap."

Secondary Research Question 4: How are aspiring principals' cultural responsiveness assessed, if at all?

Because Mrs. Exceptional's certification program did not address the academic achievement gap, the assessment component was not apparent. The only assessment that was provided was based on the coursework that dealt with the business aspects of being a principal. Mrs. Exceptional stated that, "There was nothing that I received during my administration certification that was really a process for this".

Secondary Research Question 5: How do internship experiences influence culturally responsive instructional leadership?

On the job training was the key method to acquire the experiences of being a culturally responsive instructional leader. Mrs. Exceptional was in a 100% African American school with an African American principal and a staff that was 50% African American. She attributes her preparation not to her program, but to her background and the experiences that she received. Her assistant principal experience helped her be better

equipped to lead at all African American school that is currently experiencing academic success.

Secondary Research Question 6: What knowledge and skills are pertinent for a culturally responsive instructional leader?

Mrs. Exceptional stated that a portion of the knowledge of being a culturally responsive instructional leader is, "Actually realizing what some of your students are going through. You see a different diverse culture, but you also have to (not sympathize) but empathize". Mrs. Exceptional stated that you have to know the actual meaning of free and/or reduced lunch. She states that she grew up with the biases and came from a middle class background; therefore, she had to empathize with what it meant to receive "free lunch" that contributes to understanding the varied background of her students. She provided a reflection on her early days of being an assistant principal and she stated that home visits used to be a requirement. While the visits may have initially been to accomplish one task, it gave her a different perspective and better understanding of the child.

Secondary Research Question 7: How are culturally responsive environments established by principals?

As Mrs. Exceptional reflected on this question, she pointed out that her staff is diverse by race, social background, experience, and education. She found that mainly her white teachers are vocal about not understanding the culture of African American students. However, sometimes the vocalization comes in the form of judgment of the parents' financial decisions that do not reflect the child's listed socio economic status. While it may be confusing, Mrs. Exceptional uses these cultural moments to educate the

teachers on what is ultimately important; and that is ensuring the children have what they need instructionally. Regardless of the need of the child, whether the child needs clothes, school supplies or a bath, Mrs. Exceptional stated that the bottom line of being culturally responsive is being responsive to the needs of the whole child. She supported this thinking by asserting the following about how she responds to teachers:

> You know, a lot of the cultural part is that it is different from yours, so you have got to address it, you didn't raise this child so this child is not going to have your values. No. somebody else raised them, but while you are in this building, we have three behavior expectations I say, every day, they are posted all over the wall, every day the children know: listen, follow directions, and be respectful. If they are in this building, they know that I don't tolerate anything else. They are a child. You are the adult. It has nothing to do with whether you pay free and reduced lunch or full price. It has nothing to do if you're wearing, a new uniform top or the other kid is wearing the same uniform top all over (again), and they are the child. I have to remind teachers, "They are a child. They are children. They didn't grow up in your culture. Obviously you have a lot more education (than their parents), but we still have to remember that's our job. Don't separate it and how you feel about that child".

Working with the community also promoted cultural responsiveness. The 'response to children' sentiment was evidenced by the mentoring groups that provide structure to the children. They build leadership skills; provide self-esteem building opportunities; and how to work effectively with others. Other community services

142

included providing wellness enhancement that collaborated with churches and other foundations to benefit City Elementary. Not only are there fitness opportunities, but options that address certain cultural eating habits that contribute to poor health.

As she investigated the diverse methods of working with teachers and parents to build cultural responsiveness, she stated that she has a low tolerance for teachers unwilling to accept or understand diverse cultures. "If you have a strong personality and you feel you are up here, and the parents and children are below you, I don't need you. I need someone who can relate to the parents and empathize". She has found out through the years, time must be taken to educate the parents on parenting.

> I have a homeschool coordinator in the building. When you sit down on parent-teacher-conference day, don't just sit down and say this is what your child's grades are. Be very specific. Your child needs help and this is what you need to do as a parent to help them. This is the website you can use or a game you can play that you can use to talk to them about something you can do. Be specific.

Secondary Research Question 8: How do principals ensure teachers utilize culturally responsive instruction?

Mrs. Exceptional stated that diverse populations are in the curriculum, yet she reminds teachers when they design lessons and assessments, to utilize the children in the class names. While it is important to celebrate the African American culture, as all of her students are African American, she deems it important for her students to learn about different cultures.

Outside of the culturally relevant curriculum and textbooks, Mrs. Exceptional stated that she helps her teachers with delivery by helping them find culturally responsive

resources. She indicated that the resources that she has available in her school are diverse and that children's books that are available to take home are culturally diverse. Mrs. Exceptional stated that there are no boundaries to what she is willing to provide to her teachers to ensure that culturally responsive pedagogy is applied in the classrooms. Utilizing Title I funds, she is able to provide a huge technological initiative that will enable teachers to "access anything that will help them with diversity".

Part of assisting teachers with their delivery is to ensure that teachers have strong content knowledge and the ability to integrate technology into the lesson. She stated:

> These children are the Nintendo, Xbox generation; They are used to interactive things to get their attention. So, you must use interactive lessons. True enough, you must use paper and pencil assessments, but sometimes, a lot can be done with performance assessments. If this child can do it on the smart board, hey, he knows it. You know it's not all pencil and paper. So, we have to know what they can do on paper but we have to KNOW that they know the material, they must be able to transfer (knowledge) and the application has to be there.

Therefore, having strong teachers that are able to blend content and interpersonal skills is what is going to help with delivery. As Mrs. Exceptional stated, "Everyone that knows knowledge can't necessarily bring it across".

Secondary Research Question 9: What methods do principals use with teachers to mitigate the academic achievement gap?

As Mrs. Exceptional discussed methods to mitigate the academic achievement gap, she stated that:

The best (method) is the use of data. Although you have your basic guides, blueprints, and curriculum, you can't go through lessons by just teaching. You've got to teach, assess, post assess, build on that and do it over again. You've got to know where they are and where you need to take them. So, you have to use your data and build assessment prior to teaching. That is something I am really struggling with some of my teachers. I know I was guilty of it as a teacher. We teach, teach, teach, *and then* write the assessment. You would basically write your assessment from what you have taught.

To assist teachers, Mrs. Exceptional stated that it is best for them to build the assessment for lessons first and teach from the assessments. She stated when that method is utilized, teachers can be assured that they have covered everything. She wanted her teachers to understand that they need to be fair and consistent – and fair for one child does not necessarily mean the same for another. She felt that teachers have to take into consideration the individual needs of children. She stated that teachers generally do not have a problem assessing the skills of a student (i.e., what a child knows, how to accommodate for this child for what he does or does not know). However, teachers must understand that skills utilized to assess the academic needs of students must be applied to understanding the student behaviorally and/or culturally. Behaviorally, if there is a child that has a disorder, a teacher cannot expect him to behave the same way as a child that does not have a behavioral disorder. Teachers must be fair and recognize that the child may have a true medical problem. The same rule applies to responding to cultural differences. Mrs. Exceptional reminds teachers that they should not expect students to

produce more than their capabilities. For example, if an assignment requires a child to utilize a magazine to complete an assignment, the child should not be penalized for not having access to magazines. Teachers must consider differences of a child, be it cultural or behavioral and be fair to that child.

Secondary Research Question 10: What ways are teachers assessed by principals to determine the processes used to build culturally responsive instruction?

Mrs. Exceptional addressed the assessment of teachers by the following:

A lot of that has to deal with what I see in their plans, in their interaction, in the total picture. Its, do I have 15 behavior referrals from this teacher, or do I have none? Do I see that this teacher has a really good rapport, do I have parents who call and complain on this teacher, it's the whole total package. When I walk in the classroom, do I see a child who is scared of their teacher or do I see a teacher who is firm and there is a mutual respect? When you look around the room, you can read the room. Do I see things that are posted up on the wall? Do I see different cultures being represented? You can see if there is a bias. You can see a lot of that by observation, by listening to the children, to the staff, to the parents and the community. Leaders must listen to the total package of open communication.

She added that, "I have implemented more children centered activities. At first, I looked at the teachers. But, now, my biggest change was to center on the children. I let the teachers know it's not about you, it's about the children".

Mississippi Case #4: Active Middle School, Dr. Strong

Active Middle School is an urban school located in a major Mississippi city.

Active is led by Dr. Strong, a 34-year-old African American male. He has 4 years of

administrative experience, all of them as the principal of Active. Active only has two

grade levels, seventh and eighth, but has an enrollment of 616 students, and 94% of those

students are African American. The free and/or reduced lunch percentage is 96%. The

academic performance for Active the past two school years have been successful. The

school was classified at the risk of failing when Dr. Strong accepted the principal's

position for Active.

Active Middle serves as the educational bridge between six neighborhood schools

and one high school. As Dr. Strong began his interview, he stated that Active was unique

in that the students are divided into "small interdisciplinary learning communities". The

learning communities are designed to support a nurturing atmosphere for students who

are at the delicate adolescent stage.

Secondary Research Question 1: What were the characteristics of the principals'
preparation program?

Dr. Strong's preparation program was at a large public majority white institution

in Mississippi. His program was geared toward the research of educational leadership on

the building level. The semblance of cultural responsiveness of his program involved one

course, *The Principalship*. During this course, the culture of poverty was explored. He

recalled researching the characteristics of 90/90/90 schools which entails the following:

90% or more of the students were eligible for free and reduced lunch, 90% of more of the

students were members of ethnic minority groups, and 90% or more of the students met

147

the district or state academic standards in reading or another area (Reeves, 2000). The 90/90/90 school concept was explored to focus on mitigating the achievement gap. The remainder of his courses in his program was school finance, school and community relations, human resource, school law, and technology. The idea of cultural responsiveness was introduced as diversity in schools. However, Dr. Strong stated that is was only surface conversations. The focus of his program was how to being an effective instructional leader of school settings.

Secondary Research Question 2: How is culturally responsive instruction addressed in the preparation program?

Dr. Strong stated that during the course of *The Principalship*, candidates in the program inferred cultural responsiveness from the historical aspects of educational foundation. It matriculates through cases such as *Brown vs. Board of Education,* as well as the equity vs. adequacy debate often discussed in school finance. The Brown vs. Board of Education explored cultural responsiveness because it forced principals in training to assess the impact the Supreme Court decision had on America as a whole, and more specifically to assess what it meant for students of color and apply the rationale that was projected to meet current educational policy such as No Child Left Behind. The conversation was then applied from a national level to how the state of Mississippi was impacted, especially when achievement ratings were applied to individual schools.

Dr. Strong stated that cultural responsiveness was gently discussed as an instructional tool for principals during school finance to future leaders to ensure that students receive "adequate funding as it related to the different set of cultures of schools".

Accountability measures were tied to funding whether the schools were academically effective or if the school was taken over by the state.

Secondary Research Question 3: How do aspiring principals learn to effectively respond to the academic achievement gap?

As Dr. Strong reflected on the way his preparation program addressed the academic achievement gap, two courses came to mind. One course addressed curriculum construction and standardized test assessment. The second course stressed the importance of utilizing data analysis to meet the specific academic needs of students. He stated that data allows administrators to "identify the who and what so that strategic plans can be made". He also stated that there was not a course on how principals should be strategic thinkers, yet such a course could be beneficial to aspiring school administrators.

During his program that he started in 2005, the accountability debate was a major educational discussion in the state of Mississippi. The charge was made for prospective administrators to know how state accountability assessments force instructional leaders to be knowledgeable about Mississippi's state curriculum. He further said:

Moving forward, closing the achievement gap involves making sure (which not only includes minority students) that performance and growth are met. A student may perform on an advanced level but is that particular student growing? So as an instructional leader, I have to not only look at, OK, what students are behind, what students are below academically, I must also look at NCLB…making sure you not only leave the children behind but learn how to push them forward. Some programs have prepared so much to not leave children behind, that we didn't push children forward. So, I said all that to say, train principals to not only look at

children who score below proficient but also look at those students that score advanced. The students that score advanced, those are the kids who will perform well on ACTs and AP courses and things of that nature. You used to have college readiness focus in public schools to college and career focus in public schools, so regardless of whether students are matriculating to four year institution or just a certificate program, you have to have a holistic approach to looking at data. So it's important to know when you are talking about the academic achievement gap, you have two achievement gaps. You have a gap that is in your state and the 2014 NCLB mandate that all students be proficient. You also have an achievement gap of the educational standards of where students should be and where the international benchmarks expect them to be.

He stated the responsibility is placed on the principal to look at NCLB achievement gaps and student proficiency on the international level. He stated that his program did not prepare administrators to focus on international benchmarks. His preparation program focused specifically on how to prepare students to achieve to meet America's college readiness requirement.

Secondary Research Question 4: How are aspiring principals' cultural responsiveness assessed, if at all?

Dr. Strong stated that, "Only one professor dealt with the issue of cultural responsiveness and the impact it had on education". He stated that his program did not gage if students had adequate knowledge of cultural responsiveness. He indicated that this professor was sensitive to the issue due to her research interest, prior experiences, and how brain research influenced student learning.

At the time Dr. Strong conducted his internship, he indicated that he could not definitively state that his preparation program measured candidates' adequate knowledge of cultural responsiveness. The process is now different with the accountability goals that must be met in the state of Mississippi. Yet, during the time he worked toward his administrative licensure, the university rated candidates on the bottom line of meeting goals of what principals are expected to do. He stated that the focus on the internship was ensuring that candidates "logged hours".

Secondary Research Question 5: How do internship experiences influence culturally responsive instructional leadership?

The internship experience that prepared Dr. Strong to be an aspiring administrator required a completion of 125 hours. He was required to select his own mentor, however all internship assignments (that were selected by the principal mentor) had to be approved by his university supervisor. The internship took place over the course of two different schools. Dr. Strong's performance was regularly supervised and communication between the supervisor and the mentor was done on an as needed basis. At the beginning of the semester, Dr. Strong submitted a proposed list of internship activities. As the semester progressed, the activities list was revised and verified by the principal mentor. The preparation program requires completion of an activity journal with sample of projects.

Secondary Research Question 6: What knowledge and skills are pertinent for a culturally responsive instructional leader?

Dr. Strong stated that principals must have exposure to different cultures. His military experience helped him ascertain the concept "that all means all". He stated that when a principal is culturally responsive, there are high expectations. It means that there is the

knowledge of understanding data. He states that one cannot be an instructional leader without understanding data.

Dr. Strong asserted that leadership is more than position. It is about being able to motivate others to do an unwilling task. It is hard to work with challenging students at times but leaders must motivate them. School leaders are faced with situations where you say (to a student), "I know you are living with your stepbrother's grandmamma but while you are in school these are things you need to do. These are the things you need to accomplish. I love you, but these are things we have to do". Dr. Strong also believes that leaders must have understanding and a sense of compassion, not sympathy, for students. Students must know you care. Cultural responsiveness begins once leaders establish relationships with their students. Leaders must build a relationship and become knowledgeable of the student. Once that is accomplished, principals can then engage the student in the educational process.

Secondary Research Question 7: How are culturally responsive environments established by principals?

As it related to culturally relevant leadership practices, Dr. Strong works with parents on several dimensions. He stated that he builds on the school demographics to work with the PTA to establish programs that enables relationship building that leads to a parent education component. Within parent education, parents are given an opportunity to learn how to work with students at home to supplement the education that teachers provide, whether it is for skill building or preparation for state mandated testing. To provide additional funding, the PTA partnered with the business community to ensure that the reading program was successful.

Members of the community also volunteer their time to assist with two mentoring programs that provide structure for students transitioning to young adulthood. One program is focused for the males and one for the females. Each mentoring group has community projects to teach how to interview for jobs and other social skills. The overall purpose is to provide guidance for students who may not be familiar or have the opportunity to grow into a contributing member of society.

As it related to working with his school staff on cultural responsiveness, he focused on how to respond to school discipline issues and infractions. Dr. Strong instituted a 48-hour policy for students exhibiting behavioral issues to receive guidance from school counselors to try to understand what is going on in a student's life that would contribute to disruptive behaviors.

Secondary Research Question 8: How do principals ensure teachers utilize culturally responsive instruction?

Dr. Strong discussed a variety of techniques he utilizes that leads to "affirmation of performance". For teachers to be culturally relevant, a "design team" is responsible for creating the school's curricular structure. The design team consists of teachers and assistant teachers who work together to "serve as advisory team for staff and provide performance enhancing reviews". He stated that he also takes measures to ensure that teachers utilize differentiated instruction by providing instructional training and resources to support the training. A method he utilized, in addition to the training, was to conduct staff book studies that focus on various aspects of instruction. For example, at the beginning of the 2011-12 school year , the book study centered around differentiating

vocabulary instruction for different academic levels of students. This particular method is new, yet he felt that it has contributed to the success of his students.

Dr. Strong indicated that it is a twofold scenario to understand the extent to which a teacher delivers culturally relevant curricula. The teacher must have a thorough understanding of the content and then effectively organize knowledge or what students need to understand. To meet this goal, Dr. Strong uses rubrics to establish the levels of acceptable design requirements.

He also stated that a 'risk free environment' is needed for teachers to adequately design culturally relevant curricula. A risk free environment is when a student has a particular learning deficiency, mechanisms are built in by the teacher that allows the teacher to go back and remediate without isolating the student or wearing on the emotional vulnerability of the student. Yet, he stated:

> It is difficult to get teachers to do remediation when it's separate from instruction. We try to find ways for teachers to remediate instruction without isolating the student. So those are things we look at. We make sure they have a variety of instruction delivery through classroom observations, one of our issues when dealing with delivery is having instructional team help with questioning techniques.

Questioning techniques and other instructional strategies are discussed in faculty meetings that serve as professional development opportunities. Issues are "attacked" during these meeting times and are based on administrative evaluations or issues that develop with student data.

Secondary Research Question 9: What methods do principals use with teachers to mitigate the academic achievement gap?

Dr. Strong stated that he provides a framework for what sound instruction looks like and immerse teachers in knowledge of student data. He stated, "I don't believe in being a keeper of knowledge. The data speaks for itself and the key to being an instructional leader is to let the data drive instruction methods". He does not allow the data to belittle or attack teachers, however he uses data to assess what is or is not working for individual teachers. He said:

> We look at data to determine skill sets that will address the needs of each student and revisit objectives each nine weeks. I have found that teachers become strategically engaged because of belief of teacher efficacy. Some are going to do just enough and some will be strategically engaged and you have to work with all of them. Teachers must believe students can change. So, if you have a teacher that does not believe students can move to academic proficiency, it's not about student origination, it's about destination. That is one thing about education. You gotta look at the optimistic expectation of what students can do. Leaders must have programming in place to help students be successful.

Secondary Research Question 10: What ways are teachers assessed by principals to determine the processes used to build culturally responsive instruction?

Dr. Strong stated that he looks at formal observations and data spectrums (such as the PBIS model to determine the behavior and discipline climate that counselors track) and academic benchmarks. In addition, he observes the classroom climate. He stated, "Students are the best indicator of what is going on in classroom."

Mississippi Case #5: State Elementary School, Mr. Young

State Elementary School is located in a rural setting in Mississippi. It is the only elementary school in its respective district that covers two small Mississippi counties. State Elementary has an enrollment of 461 students. Ninety-eight percent of those students are African American and over 95% of the students receive free and/or reduced lunch. The current principal at State is Mr. Young. He is a 34-year-old African American male with seven years of administrative experience. For five years, he served as an assistant principal in another state. Two years ago, he started at State Elementary after being hired as the principal.

State's staff is predominately African American, much like the counties they serve. State has had considerable success as an elementary school for the past three school terms. In the 2009-10 and 2010-11 school years, State was labeled High Performing. The following school year they were labeled successful.

Secondary Research Question 1: What were the characteristics of the principals' preparation program?

Mr. Young attended a Historically Black College and University located in Mississippi. The cohort structured program focused on meeting the needs of urban students. He stated that his cohort started in the summer and ended the following summer.

Secondary Research Question 2: How is culturally responsive instruction addressed in the preparation program?

Mr. Young stated that he could not remember exactly the program tenets, but stated that, "We had a culturally responsive model that we followed as well as followed

the ISLCC standard as it relates to the quality and type of instruction we were given. We had a lot of case studies that focused on cultural responsiveness".

Secondary Research Question 3: How do aspiring principals learn to effectively respond to the academic achievement gap?

Mr. Young's program, in his opinion did not explicitly focus on the achievement gap, however, it focused on preparing candidates for the needed skills that they would face as school principals. The program provided the candidates with scenarios on the day-to-day operations of a school, which included how to handle school turnover, and crisis management. It also addressed the personnel matters that principals must face.

Secondary Research Question 4: How are aspiring principals' cultural responsiveness assessed, if at all?

Mr. Young stated that his preparation program assessed their cultural responsiveness by requiring that candidates provide explanations and responses to specific case scenarios. The educational leadership faculty assessed their responses with a rubric. In addition, assessments were in the form of formal tests, presentations, and group projects. They also created a portfolio that served as the culmination evidence of learning activities that took place during the semester. Additionally, they were required to pass the state administrative licensure exam, which he attributed his success (as well as that of his peers) to faculty assisting with licensure preparation.

Mr. Young recollected that faculty members created assessments of the course content that would measure candidate proficiency. He stated that faculty also utilized rubrics that measured how students conducted presentations as well as scored how well the candidate portfolios were assembled. He recalled that discussions were part of the

assessment. Mr. Young indicated that the topic of race (along with religion and sexual orientation) was "at times, touchy". He contributed the tense vibe to the racial composition of the class. The cohort that Mr. Young was in was mostly African American with only two cohort members being Caucasian. In many discussions, the plight of the African American student was at the forefront of race conversations. The conversations explored how African American students would come to schools with a myriad of challenges and needs only to have those challenges and needs not met. Yet, the personal conflicts are not taken into consideration when African American students are expected to perform at a particular level.

Secondary Research Question 5: How do internship experiences influence culturally responsive instructional leadership?

Mr. Young's preparation included practicing as an intern on the elementary, middle, and high school level. Each school level's student population was majority African American. His collective internship experience gave him the "chance to observe the problems African American students come to school with". Those problems included lack of parental support and how children are impacted when they do not have fathers in the home. He stated that his experience on the day-to-day basis allowed him to be more sensitive to the need of African American students. He began discussing his internship that occurred on the middle school level. His reflection on his culturally responsive internship practice was associated with working on his placement school when his immediate supervisor allowed him to work with his school's discipline situations. The principal supervisor also provided Mr. Young with after school supervision activities. Mr.

Young felt as if his supervisor provided him with autonomy to be totally involved with the responsibilities and practices required of an aspiring administrator.

Mr. Young stated that his elementary experience was "unique". He said of his experience:

> I was given a project to reduce number of tardies that they were receiving from some of the elementary students, so I had to work to collaborate with the counselor and other people at the school to develop a plan to address the tardy issue at the school. In fact, we called it the Sunrise Club and we developed a system where we gave out alarm clocks to help parents.

Mr. Young's high school experience centered on overseeing a high school's summer school. The supervisor entrusted Mr. Young to work with guidance counselors on creating the school's master schedule.

Secondary Research Question 6: What knowledge and skills are pertinent for a culturally responsive instructional leader?

Mr. Young stated that this particular question was difficult because he believes "leadership is situational". However, flexibility is what he felt is needed by all instructional leaders. Mr. Young said:

> You have to be willing to listen more than talk. You have to understand the skill of timing and you have to be patient. Those are skills you need. You have to have skills to work with others, to talk and communicate effectively, and I'm not saying you have to be the best at it, but have those to skill where you are able to communicate, whether it is verbal as well as nonverbal. Another skill, I also believe, you must be strategic in thinking and you have to have good preparation

skills and you have to have the skill of knowing that you don't know how to do everything. That's a skill in itself, you have to know that you have limits and you need others to help you with your limits.

The knowledge skills that Mr. Young stated are needed are the fundamental platform of educational leadership. He believed that administrators must learn and read about leadership, whether it is exploring various leadership styles or comprehending the theoretical views of leadership. However, what the researcher appreciated was the 'knowledge of self' that Mr. Young deemed important. He said that one must know their strengths and weaknesses. He further expounded by stating:

You need to be knowledgeable of the curriculum, assessment, planning, operations, policies and procedures. You need to be knowledgeable of the law and the list goes on because your knowledge base will continue to grow. So the #1 thing is you have to understand that you don't know it all and be knowledgeable that every day is a learning process, and knowledgeable of the change process. Education changes. Change is embedded in public education itself, so you have to understand change is inevitable, and be knowledgeable of that process of change.

Social justice has played a major part in his seven years as an administrator. As Mr. Young described his experience, he discussed the culture of poverty as the barrier that he has faced as an instructional leader. He stated that in order to address the academic needs of his students; he first had to establish a safe haven to serve as a barrier against social injustices and poverty. He meets the need of his students by ensuring that they have substantial food and clothing. He stated that the use of federal dollars is

beneficial to purchase items that students need. He also addressed the school's homeless

student situation. Mr. Young felt that educational leadership preparation programs must

do a better job of preparing aspiring principals to be more knowledgeable of federal

programs and funding opportunities that principals can access to ensure that students are

being educated without being plagued by social deficits. He insisted that if schools had a

real opportunity to address some of the social injustices that impacted students, gaps in

educational access can be minimized.

Secondary Research Question 7: How are culturally responsive environments established by principals?

The goal of his district (which matriculates to the school wide goal), is to be

competitive in a global markets. The first task is to ensure that exposure and knowledge

of culture is explored with the students, staff, and parents of his school. In addition to

celebrating the culture of African American students, a different country is investigated

each month. The country is introduced to parents in the form of a newsletter and the

school community builds by learning about the languages, customs, and what everyday

life is like in that particular country. They explore the historical background of countries

and the evolution of progress of the countries' cultures.

Secondary Research Question 8: How do principals ensure teachers utilize culturally responsive instruction?

Mr. Young assists his teachers by providing them resources, information, and

professional development training. He stated that he provides the opportunity for them to

go to professional development away from the school that will inform them on the

various cultural and curriculum expectation of the state.

Mr. Young said, "I have a predominately African American teaching staff so I help them by talking and discussing issues and concerns with our staff". When issues arise, they have an open dialogue to better understand the issues and ways to solve problems. One example he provided is the issue of homework. They attributed children not completing their homework on the elementary level to lack of parental support. Therefore, they work with their children in the school's afterschool tutoring to "make sure they get their homework done".

Secondary Research Question 9: What methods do principals use with teachers to mitigate the academic achievement gap?

Mr. Young assists his teachers with making data driven decisions and designing lesson plans that meet the individual needs of students. He also provides teacher development opportunities that focus on improving classroom instruction. The final leadership practice mentioned was assisting teachers with effective classroom management. He stated that to ensure teacher proficiency, leaders must look at student behavior and academic achievement and compare them to teacher performance.

Secondary Research Question 10: What ways are teachers assessed by principals to determine the processes used to build culturally responsive instruction?

Assessments of teachers are made by looking at lesson plans and formal principal observations. The follow up of the observations provide opportunities to give feedback on what was going on in the class. He stated that principals must spend time in the classroom and that it is a lot on the principal to ensure teachers are executing accurately and appropriately. He stated that he wants to experience growth in developing teachers that can be trusted as well as acquire the skills needed to select the best teachers.

South Carolina Case #1: Metro Elementary School, Dr. Wright

Metro Elementary School is located in a major city in South Carolina. Metro is led by Dr. Wright, a 56-year-old White male. Dr. Wright has 25 years of administrative experience and has been the principal at Metro for the last ten years. Metro is situated in the middle of a housing community and has an enrollment of 297 students. Eighty six percent of Metro's enrollment is African American. Eighty percent of the students receive free and/or reduced lunch. In 2009 and 2010, Metro's report card received an "average" rating. In 2011, improvements were made and Metro earned a "good" rating.

Secondary Research Question 1: What were the characteristics of the principals' preparation program?

Dr. Wright's preparation to become a principal was initiated by a district instituted internship program that was established for future administrators. The two-year program was set up to attract more blacks and minorities into administration. But, the relationship that Dr. Wright shared with his then current supervisor opened the door for him to enter the internship program. The requirement for entry was to have a Master's degree. However, Dr. Wright did not have a degree. Therefore, he enrolled into a Master's program in elementary education so that he could take advantage of the of the course requirements while simultaneously obtaining his Master's degree. After being enrolled in the program for two years, upon completion, he applied for his certification in administration.

Dr. Wright stated that during the first year he was enrolled in the program, he was an intern within a school. During the second year, he served as an acting principal but could not take the job full time because he had not finished the internship program and

was not certified. Fortunately, he was able to complete his licensure requirements prior to the position being filled and officially became the school's principal.

During the process of gaining his administrative degree, he stated that he took the "usual courses" such as school law, school administration, and courses surrounding scheduling. The concept of cultural diversity was beginning to enter the educational conversation during the 70s while Dr. Wright earned his administrative credentials. However, the discussion "did not prepare you for the kind of diversity or the differences you might find (on a daily basis within school)". He reflected that the conversation was the general acknowledgement of cultural differences. He supported this sentiment by acknowledging what the program provided. "People are different, and you gotta know that people are different and you have to take those differences into account. But on a practical day to day basis, it missed the mark in my way of thinking".

He then began to reflect on how the instructional leadership conversation was also in the beginning phases and how it was not until he began to serve as a principal that he actually was 'prepared' to be an instructional leader:

At the time I came along, most of the stuff (courses) was pointing towards management. We were beginning to talk about instructional leadership, and then as I moved into the principalship for the first few years, that became more and more the discussion. But, for the time period that I had my actual training, it was actually management that we were trained in. What helped me most become an instructional leader were the in-service programs that came over the next few years after I was actually in the position. Because my first few years, things were

primarily management. It was a lot of emphasis there, on logistical management and people management (how to get along with staff and helping the staff get along with each other). The instructional leadership was confined to whatever happened when you conferenced with teachers about observations and primarily it were more of a give and take of "this is what I found, but we weren't given the tools and emphasis on the evaluative end as opposed to professional development or professional growth emphasis.

Secondary Research Question 2: How is culturally responsive instruction addressed in the preparation program?

Dr. Wright stated that there was very little inclusion of culturally responsive instruction for effective school leadership evident in his preparation program. The discussions that were discussed during his internship were primarily centered on the type of experiences that the candidates received as principal interns. He was given projects to examine at the school where he was an intern that would foreshadow how we would respond as an administrator to varied scenarios. Yet, the concept of cultural responsiveness was not apparent. The experience was situated in a "practical emphasis".

Secondary Research Question 3: How do aspiring principals learn to effectively respond to the academic achievement gap?

At the time Dr. Wright was in his program, the topic of the academic achievement gap was not discussed. He said, "We recognized that there were schools that didn't do well, but it was pretty much the assumption. Schools that had large populations of disadvantaged students just did not do well. It was kind, of like 'that's just the way it is'…so, there just wasn't a lot of acknowledgement of it. So, I guess in my initial training

and first few years of professional development training, they did not address the

achievement gap at all".

During this time, the accountability of schools was also in the beginning phases of

exploration. The type of assessment given at the time did not have the emphasis of

putting categories on schools. Accountability assessment was to "provide an overview on

how students were performing".

Secondary Research Question 4: How are aspiring principals' cultural responsiveness assessed, if at all?

Due to the time that elapsed between his internship and current placement, he

could not recall if there had been a course that addressed culturally responsive pedagogy.

Overall, the emphasis of being assessed on his level of cultural responsiveness was not on

the program's forefront. Dr. Wright remembered that there "were times in our

coursework when we had to turn in a unit of study where we had to indicate where we

made reference to other cultures". The emphasis was on appreciating the fact that people

are different more so than grasping the concept of how much cultural differences come

into play in school relationships. But as far as what cultural responsiveness entailed, "we

never got that deep".

Secondary Research Question 5: How do internship experiences influence culturally responsive instructional leadership?

Dr. Wright's reflection of his internship was extremely candid. His description

was as follows:

My internship was instituted by one of the superintendents in my district. It was

an experimental thing. And interestingly enough, the primary emphasis was

166

moving minorities and women into administration. And I didn't fit in any one of those categories, but my principal at the time, thought I would do really well in administration. So I applied, not really expecting to be accepted because they kept saying we are looking for women and minorities. There were only two men accepted into the program, the rest were women and it was fairly evenly divided between minorities and whites. It was almost a fluke (that) I got included in that program. But since that time, that program went away, due to budget and a new superintendent came that had different priorities, and didn't feel like it (the internship program) was the best way to do it. But, I found the internship program was excellent because it got you into the spot and you lived it for a while before you actually took the job. And that gives you a big leg up and, to me, makes it easier. The internship for my Master's was tied to the district internship, so I only had one internship. Our program was designed so that you stayed with a person half of a school year. Now, they readjusted mine a little bit and the end of my first semester (as did for several of us), because they were trying to tailor the internship to the needs of the individual and went ahead and allowed me to stay with the one principal at the one school for the full year because I had some projects I had set up and really wanted to see play out. Being there every day and taking on some of the responsibilities and becoming part of the faculty of the school of an administrative standpoint was what was really important. I've been a mentor for people since that time and they come in for a couple of hours once a week and follow you around, and it just didn't get you the same

(results/understanding). The program was a long time ago, and it was expensive. It had to be lots of cooperation with the university and the district and I don't know if the stars would ever be aligned to get something like that accomplished again anytime soon, but it was a good program.

Dr. Wright described his internship as being at a small, neighborhood elementary school that was mostly African American with the majority of the students receiving free and/or reduced lunch. He obtained culturally responsive awareness through interaction with the students and their parents. Unfortunately, the program did not uncover culturally responsive pedagogical methods for aspiring principals to address. Dr. Wright indicated that the program did "not recognize the extent of needing a culturally responsive literature to help the children read". He further explained:

I remember looking at cultural differences as black and white. Now we look at Hispanics. Most of the way people looked at it then was that you wanted whites to be culturally sensitive to blacks and vice versa. But when you looked at the materials, the testing materials, there was a lot of irrelevance. The everyday experiences of dealing with the children and dealing with their parents - getting able to understand some of the cultural differences that I ran into, but it wasn't a formal part of the program. If I had been an intern at a primarily middle-income white school, then I don't know if I would have developed any cultural sensitivity.

Secondary Research Question 6: What knowledge and skills are pertinent for a culturally responsive instructional leader?

Dr. Wright responded to the knowledge and skills of a culturally responsive

administrator:

> You have to take time to build relationships and there has to be an understanding
>
> that although you may be called to lead a group of people, or your job is to serve a
>
> population of people, (and) that education is still an individual one-to-one thing.
>
> You don't really educate groups, you educate individuals and therefore you have
>
> to understand where that person is coming from and their frame of reference and
>
> their cultural experiences and their cultural background is an integral part of all
>
> that. So, it's not so much that you have to know everything about a person's
>
> culture, but the knowledge part of it knows how deeply culture can affect and how
>
> it equates to the child. But, not necessarily knowledge of the culture itself,
>
> because that will come as you deal with the individual. But, there has to be a
>
> process where you build those relationships. You must look for the connections
>
> and things people have in common so that you get a good feel of how those
>
> individuals make up the culture of your school and how your school culture can
>
> take advantage of the things it can to help educate those individual children.
>
> Knowledge of the importance of culture to the relationship and the skill at being
>
> able to build relationships between teachers, and parents, and students and the
>
> skill of being able to see the perspectives of other people and acknowledge their
>
> perspectives even if you can't always understand it, you still acknowledge the fact
>
> their perspective is different. I think those are the things you have to be able to do.

Additionally, Dr. Wright stated that a culturally responsive instructional leader has the knowledge of curriculum and how (that knowledge) can help students. His conversation advanced with his belief that aspiring principals must understand what makes the curriculum valuable to students. The value system will be different for different sets of students. Administrators must be able to see the connections of relationships in order to help students understand the relevance and the importance of learning the curriculum.

Secondary Research Question 7: How are culturally responsive environments established by principals?

Dr. Wright's strategy for building culturally responsive environments involves talking to all stakeholders about perspectives and personal experiences. He stated that principals must take advantage of opportunities to ensure that the school community understands that the school has a diverse population. Dr. Wright stated that even though his students are African American and primarily disadvantaged, there are differences and those differences represent the goals of the diverse population. Additionally, book studies have been conducted to discuss the culture of poverty and how to effectively address children who come from impoverished backgrounds. Dr. Wright contributed the need to address poverty and race issues because the majority of teaching staff in his district come from middle-income backgrounds. They are not from disadvantaged backgrounds; therefore, they have to learn that parents and students view school from varied vantage points.

Dr. Wright indicated that it was important to include experiences for students that give credence to their culture. He stated, "You need to have reading and work material

that exposes them to people who look or sound like them or live like them but at the same time, you are stressing the fact that there are other things out there". He became familiar with this framework upon the start of his administrative career. For the first six years, the school that he led was socio-economically disadvantaged and primarily African American. At the beginning of his seventh year, the district changed attendance lines and the school suddenly had students from upper middle-income families that were predominately white. The school transformed into a successful learning environment. The test scores "were great" because the students had "lots of experiences" and had parents "whose ideas about education were very similar to the school's idea of education". After transitioning to other positions within the district, he decided to take a principalship at a school that was "at risk". It was a totally African American school with a 95% free and reduced lunch rate. He indicated that it was during this placement that his leadership vision was tested. He stated that he wanted to apply all of the knowledge he had accumulated on effectively leading disadvantaged students in order to make them successful. During this trial, he placed focus on educating the individual student and ensuring that there was in depth data available on all students. He wanted to compare the students' testing ability to the actual test given. If the students experienced problems, he explored whether the test was culturally relevant and what was additionally needed to get the students prepared. He illustrated by stating:

> It was a learning experience for me even though I felt like and I still do feel like, I
> was a little better (prepared) or maybe had a little more experience than people
> thought I did because my other school had been in this same boat when I first

went there and the school I did my internship was very similar. It still required a refocus of my skills. Coming and taking a look at all the previous relationship building that occurred as well as looking closely at the curriculum that would be advantageous for the students. Fortunately, we were beginning to look at the achievement gap in the district, in the state, and in the nation, and so we were able to tap in to some of that understanding for professional development with our teachers.

Dr. Wright's school, over the last few years, has integrated a Montessori program. The program has piqued the interest of middle and upper income families from nearby neighborhoods. The "meshing" of the Montessori culture and the African American culture has provided the school with opportunities to conduct various parent education classes. It has also provided parents the "opportunity to come together and talk to see what the differences are as far as what the expectations are for our children, what things we're gonna be involved in, what things we're gonna be responsive about".

Identifying the needs of the parents is important for Dr. Wright. He stated that parents of his African American students want to get to the "bottom line". They want to know can the students read, write, and do math on grade level. He said:

> They (African American parents) are not so much into the esoteric things that come with the (Montessori) kids. They (the Montessori children) come to us with lots of experiences. Their parents want their child to have a happy experience at school and to have fun kinds of things happen. The extracurricular things that are available to them are what are a little bit more important. (They want to know)

what contests are they in? Do they get to take dance class after school? And those

kind of things. Whereas so many of our more disadvantaged children, their

parents are just concerned about them being able to read and write, because they

(deem it important for them to) have to be able to do that. "I'm not so interested in

all that other stuff you guys want to do".

However, Dr. Wright deems it important to expose the children to a myriad of

experiences while making sure they are successful while maintaining their frame of

reference.

Secondary Research Question 8: How do principals ensure teachers utilize culturally
responsive instruction?

Dr. Wright attributed the pacing guides utilized by his district to the assistance

teachers receive when designing culturally responsive curricula. He stated that culturally

responsive initiatives are built into the standards, which are now more prevalent than ever

before. However, for teachers to receive assistance in designing curricula, they first have

to be able to identify that students come from diverse cultures. Once that is accepted, they

have to ensure that they understand the standards as well as the material utilized to be

able to better relate to the students.

Dr. Wright also provided time for 'teams' that allows teachers to assess how

different cultures respond to one another. This is accomplished by providing common

planning time for teachers so they can bounce their varied cultural experiences off of one

another. He found that utilizing this method created a chance for teachers with strengths

or skills to assist teachers that may be deficient in the areas that others are strong. The

state of South Carolina does not have required time for elementary level instructional

planning. Principals must help teachers be creative with scheduling planning time throughout the school day. Yet, sometimes staffing issues or population of the school may pose challenges that do not permit teachers to have planning throughout the school day.

As lesson plans are submitted to Dr. Wright, he inspects them to identify the type of delivery teachers may utilize with their students. Prior to teachers executing their plan, he (along with the curriculum resource teacher) meets with teachers to discuss "what lessons are going on and what results are expected". As they talk, he provides guidance on how to make the material culturally responsive to the children.

Secondary Research Question 9: What methods do principals use with teachers to mitigate the academic achievement gap?

The idea of focusing on the individual needs of students is the driving force to how Dr. Wright assists teachers with mitigating the academic achievement gap. He then examines the standardized test scores to find out where and what gaps exist. Afterwards, he instructs teachers to turn their attention to individual student needs. As Dr. Wright explained:

> We study and test groups of people but you have to educate individuals. And, so for example, we examine the concept of the African American male (which in our district is a group that does not do well on our standardized test scores). We look at a student and say, "We know a student falls into that category so we need to look at scores to see if the student is beating odds or just falling into the category everybody expects him to be in and determine on an individual basis why for that student". Maybe this student is doing well with a teacher or maybe this teacher's

class just happens to be the one that overall is beating the odds. It is in this classroom where African American male students are doing just as well as everyone else in her class, so let's talk to her about what she's doing that may be different and what it is that makes a difference and sometimes, there is something you can put your finger on and say. "OK, let's try this". But, there is always a situation where it all looks like everybody's doing all the same thing and you can't figure out why it's working over here and not over there. And I think that part is where you begin to see how important relationships with the children are.

Dr. Wright believes that students respond to teachers based on the level of care shown toward them. He attributed that his success has been gained by simply sitting down, planning and talking with teachers to make sure they are spending the time discerning the performance of individual students. The individual basis approach is needed to make a real difference in test scores.

Secondary Research Question 10: What ways are teachers assessed by principals to determine the processes used to build culturally responsive instruction?

Expectations and protocol are set for lesson plans that follow up prior discussions Dr. Wright had with his teachers. He encouraged his teachers to utilize grade level meetings to discuss what needs to be covered in the classroom and then identify how relevant the lessons are for the students. He stated that he assesses the data on individual students to serve as a guide to the overall effectiveness of teachers. He concluded that principals should "make sure protocols are in place and expectations are given out to teachers. Once you've told them you have to take the time as a group to look at the curriculum, procedures, and assessments and then provide feedback to state "yes, you are

doing what I've asked you to do' or let's look at this again because it doesn't seem to be having the effect it needs to have".

South Carolina Case # 2: Valley Middle School, Mrs. Clear

Mrs. Clear, principal of Valley Middle School, is a 39-year-old African American female. She has been an administrator for 13 years, with seven of those years being a principal. For the past five years, she has been the leader of Valley Middle School.

Valley has an enrollment of 1100 students. The African American population makes up 65% of the total population at Valley; 79% of the students receive free and/or reduced lunch. In 2011 and 2010, Valley received a school rating of "average" which an improvement of the 2009 "below average" is rating.

Secondary Research Question 1: What were the characteristics of the principals' preparation program?

Mrs. Clear received her Master's in secondary educational administration leadership in a thirty-nine hour program. However, she does not have any recollection of cultural diversity issues being addressed in her program. During the course of her program, she recalled taking administrative theory courses, a course in school law, and a course in school finance. She also recalled taking courses on how to be an instructional supervisor, yet did not receive implicit diversity training in any of her courses.

Secondary Research Question 2: How is culturally responsive instruction addressed in the preparation program?

In some of the theory classes, Mrs. Clear indicated that the psychological approaches of how teachers and adults think and operate were covered. The courses also covered why teachers took various approaches and responded to certain students.

Secondary Research Question 3: How do aspiring principals learn to effectively respond to the academic achievement gap?

Mrs. Clear indicated that her program did not directly address the achievement gap. Her program focused on supervisory issues effectively supervising people in the building. The faculty addressed school management concerns as well as instructional leadership components that included to the ability to facilitate instruction and monitor the teachers.

Secondary Research Question 4: How are aspiring principals' cultural responsiveness assessed, if at all?

Mrs. Clear stated that, "Nothing like this was in place during my program" when she was asked to describe how her preparation program assessed the cultural responsiveness of candidates.

Secondary Research Question 5: How do internship experiences influence culturally responsive instructional leadership?

Mrs. Clear's internship was conducted in a secondary setting. The school was majority African American. She stated that the structure of her program was centered on the management aspects of administration, to include budgeting and managing personnel. Yet her supervising principal, created opportunities that were tailored specifically for her that helped her hone in on strong administrative experiences. Mrs. Clear attributed her success during her internship and practice to her supervising principal. The principal established a strong and trustful situation between the two that helped Mrs. Clear see the values and depth of administration.

The diversity component was not apparent in the internship requirements, but Mrs. Clear's internship experience was with mostly African American students. She

stated that during her internship she learned that she must develop relationships and trust with every member of the school community. She stated that, "Once that is accomplished, you can accomplish anything". She clarified of her experience:

With African American parents and students, once trust is developed, you can say whatever you want, however you want, and it is not taken in an offensive way because they believe you are looking out for them. The relationship piece allows for truth to come out and (the truth) allows people to admit that they make mistakes. They (African American parents and students) know you have their best interest. If there is a deficiency you don't hide behind judgment or anything of that nature, because they know you are working with them you still want the best (for them).

Secondary Research Question 6: What knowledge and skills are pertinent for a culturally responsive instructional leader?

Mrs. Clear illustrated that to be a culturally responsive instructional leader; the leader should first consider the mind of the student and then place his/her self into the mindset to understand the student's value system. She said:

Once you place yourself there, you've got to figure out how to move to get them to understand what it is that you want them to know. I learned through experience. Unless they understand that you understand them and that you are not being judgmental about whatever way they are or whatever ways they think is not wrong. The problem with society and education is that it can be cruelly judgmental. Schools lose so many kids because the school doesn't try to understand who the student is and accept that they are individuals. We are quick

178

to say that this box fits everybody and if you don't fit in this box you are just wrong.

Mrs. Clear substantiated her statement by recalling how she felt as a child in school. She stated that she was a different type of child with learning needs that did not mirror her classmates. This difference led to her stance on the importance of valuing the learning needs and differences in students. Her personal experience prompted her to feel as though she had been dismissed and her worth invalidated. As a leader, she works to ensure that her staff understands the complexities of teaching to diverse cultures and learning styles that mitigates children experiencing the feelings she had as a child. She is firm in her belief that adults should not make themselves the center of schools. The best interest of children is what should be considered.

Secondary Research Question 7: How are culturally responsive environments established by principals?

Mrs. Clear stated:

> One of the things I preach to teachers is to accept the child for who they are. You need to learn who he or she is, and then we start to understand who they are so you can begin to teach them. You can't teach them until you understand who the child is culturally. What is their mindset like? How do they process information? Then, you begin to teach the child. I always say this to my staff, "You're a teacher right? Are you a teacher of content or teacher of children"? You can teach the knowledge, but if you are a teacher of children, you've got to learn the children first before you teach the content.

Her approach to parents is to establish relationships to allow them to observe what is going on in the building. Observations allow parents to see that all children are involved in all school capacities.

With students, Mrs. Clear discussed the multicultural programs that focus on different cultures that constitute the United States. She stresses that there must be acceptance for one another. As a leader, she refuses to create a system of have and have-nots in the building. She stresses that all students be applauded for whatever their achievements are. As students come to school, she encourages everyone in the school culture to keep the mentality of fairness.

Secondary Research Question 8: How do principals ensure teachers utilize culturally responsive instruction?

Valley Middle has two curriculum coordinators on site. One coordinator works with the math curriculum and the other coordinator works with the science curriculum. Mrs. Clear and the coordinators discuss the standards or objectives that they plan to implement to enhance instruction. Valley's teachers have collaborative planning time. They sit down with the curriculum coordinators to discuss the standards and objectives then plot instructional strategies. Mrs. Clear's instructional and administrative staff is responsible for ten observations per week. Special attention is given to the interaction teachers have with the children. Additionally, they make observations on students' abilities to retain knowledge presented by the teachers. Mrs. Clear and the coordinators also observe the engagement level of students. After observations are concluded, teachers are given feedback and are expected to make adjustments. If there are deficiencies, all stakeholders brainstorm through collaborative planning on how to meet the needs and

ensure that all children involved understand the curricula. She assists teachers on how to change strategies for African American students to make sure the students "get it".

Mrs. Clear assists teachers mostly through observations. In circumstances that heed additional assistance, the instructional leadership team models varied pedagogical methods. Professional development is also provided to approach varied instructional strategies. Mrs. Clear said that she drives data usage in her school. She says, "If the numbers don't say what you want them to say, you have to change what you're doing to make sure that it happens. Fix it until we get what we want and we are not going to stop until we fix it. And so there is never a complete answer until we are able to see the numbers we want to see, if not, we gotta go back and change our instruction so that the kids get it". Brainstorming instructional delivery methods is another technique Mrs. Clear uses to assist teachers to deliver culturally responsive curricula. It is used to help teachers understand how the students process information.

Secondary Research Question 9: What methods do principals use with teachers to mitigate the academic achievement gap?

Mrs. Clear stated that the best instructional practice to mitigate the achievement gap is to rely heavily on the data. She said, "You take it. Dissect it. And analyze it from every corner. You look at where areas of gaps exist and find ways to close the gaps".

Secondary Research Question 10: What ways are teachers assessed by principals to determine the processes used to build culturally responsive instruction?

Instructional leaders must analyze the data. Mrs. Clear says, "Data is the ultimate means of determining what kids are able to retain and able to use". She stated that it is important for teachers to provide assessments that are based on the curriculum standards.

Cross-case Analysis of Principals

The themes extracted from the cross-case analysis of the interviewed principals are provided in this section. The cross-case findings regarding principal preparation and practices are organized by the secondary research questions. Questions 1-5 detail the finding on the preparation the interviewed principals received. Questions 6-10 discuss the practices that culturally responsive principals utilized. Tables summarize the responses of the participants in the order that each participant was interviewed. The first five principals listed in each table are from the state of Mississippi. The last two principals on the tables are from South Carolina. Table 6 provides the demographic information of principals.

Principal Preparation: Demographic information of principals

The seven principals interviewed represent a wide spectrum of experience, age, and racial composition. The average year of administrative experience was 15 years. The average time that principals served in their current school was 6 years. Four women and three men participated in the research. The average age of the principals was 46. The racial breakdown of principals was four African Americans, one Asian, and two Whites.

Table 6: Demographic information of principals

Principal Name	Age	Race	Sex	Years as administrator	Years principal at current school
Dr. Joy	60	White	Female	12	6
Dr. Bright	43	African American	Female	19	2
Mrs. Exceptional	59	Asian	Female	26	14
Dr. Strong	34	African American	Male	4	4
Mr. Young	34	African American	Male	7	2
Dr. Wright	56	White	Male	25	10
Mrs. Clear	39	African American	Female	13	5

School demographic data

Seven schools were represented in the study. Five of the schools were elementary schools. Two were middle schools. The schools that were referenced in this research had high percentage of African American enrollment and high free and/ or reduced lunch percentages. The average percentage of African American students in all schools was 90%. The average SES standing was 88%. All schools received a passing rating or higher. One school received the highest accountability rating for that respective state.

Table 7: School demographic data

School Name	Percentage African American students	SES	Enrollment	2011 School rating
Urban Elementary	85%	78%	680	Star
Complex Middle	85%	91%	293	Successful
City Elementary	100%	93%	474	Successful
Active Middle	94%	96%	616	Successful
State Elementary	98%	97%	461	Successful
Metro Elementary	86%	80%	297	Good
Valley Middle	65%	79%	1100	Average

Secondary Research Question 1: What were the characteristics of the principals' preparation program?

The program of study for principals who exhibited culturally responsive leadership behaviors vary. The distinct theme was the focus on diverse cultures and ELCC standards. Three principals were prepared at the same urban HBCU. The cohort-based program has a culturally responsive focus and principals who attended the program viewed the program beneficial in addressing issues of race, particularly the African American student experience. Two principals received principal preparation more than 25 years ago and the focus of the principalship did not center on cultural diversity nor was there an emphasis on instructional leadership. Principals during this time frame were prepared to become managers of the school building as opposed to being the instructional leader. The remaining three principals attended schools that provided sound instructional

leadership preparation. The importance of cultural diversity was emphasized in addressing the diversity statements within the Educational Leadership Constituent Council standards.

Table 8: Emergent theme: Focus on diverse culture

Case	Program of study
Dr. Joy	Urban HBCU cohort program with focus on understanding students with diverse cultures; Course work emphasized principal as instructional leader; ELCC recognized
Dr. Bright	Urban HBCU cohort program with focus on understanding students with diverse cultures; Course work emphasized principal as instructional leader: ELCC recognized
Mrs. Exceptional	Rural public institution with no distinct focus on cultural diversity; Course work focused was on school management.
Dr. Strong	Rural public institution with no distinct focus on cultural diversity; Course work focused on management and general guidelines on being an instructional leader.
Mr. Young	Urban HBCU cohort program with focus on understanding students with diverse cultures; Course work emphasized principal as instructional leader
Dr. Wright	District instituted administration certification program that was supported by an urban public institution that focused on school management; The program did not focus on cultural diversity
Mrs. Clear	Urban public institution that took theoretical approach to leadership; Did not focus on cultural diversity.

Secondary Research Question 2: How is culturally responsive instruction addressed in the preparation program?

No apparent theme resulted from this research question. Principals either received culturally responsive courses and instruction that prepared them to be culturally responsive instructional leaders or they did not. Principals were able to respond to the tenets of culturally responsive instruction only if they were enrolled in a preparation program that had an urban focus. The remaining candidates attended programs that did not include tenets of cultural responsiveness. Three of the principals interviewed received preparation from the same institution. The tenets of culturally responsive preparation programs include teaching candidates to: provide instructional leadership that includes culturally responsive curriculum, build on the knowledge of their culture as well as others, accept diversity in people, acknowledge biases that may hinder equity or lack of understanding, transcend cultural barriers that impede student achievement, and promote student advocacy. The principals that did not attend an urban focus preparation program attributed experience and personal ideology as the source of gaining cultural responsiveness.

Table 9: Emergent theme: Some courses focus on cultural responsiveness

Case	Program tenets of cultural responsive instruction
Dr. Joy	All courses had a culturally responsive focus
Dr. Bright	All courses had a culturally responsive focus
Mrs. Exceptional	No recollection of culturally responsive courses in program
Dr. Strong	No in-depth application of cultural responsiveness; Briefly addressed in two courses
Mr. Young	All courses had a culturally responsive focus
Dr. Wright	No recollection of culturally responsive courses in program
Mrs. Clear	No recollection of culturally responsive course in program

Secondary Research Question 3: How do aspiring principals learn to effectively respond to the academic achievement gap?

The theme that emerged from the way program addressed the achievement gap was instructional methods. Three principals attended a preparation program with an urban focus that required aspiring principals to utilize school data to learn how to mitigate academic achievement gaps. Aspiring principals are also taught about various models of learning styles as well as how to determine characteristics of effective schools. Effective leadership practices were also used to address the academic achievement gap. One principal stated that data analysis was taught to assist with understanding standardized assessment. The data could be used to decipher the needs of students who did not perform well on tests. Included in the instruction was as opportunity to learn about the achievement gap. The remaining principals did not recall their principal preparation

program addressing the achievement gap in any way. Principals stated that they were taught how to utilize data to make decisions, but mention of the achievement gap was not included in coursework or class discussions

Table 10: Emergent theme: Use of learning styles and test data analyses

Case	Achievement Gap
Dr. Joy	Analyzed test data; Provided models of learning styles; Indicated characteristics of effective schools; Effective leadership practices
Dr. Bright	Analyzed test data; Provided models of learning styles; Indicated characteristics of effective schools; Effective leadership practices
Mrs. Exceptional	No recollection of program addressing achievement gap
Dr. Strong	Analyzed test data
Mr. Young	Learning styles; Analyzed test data; Indicated characteristics of effective schools
Dr. Wright	No recollection of program addressing achievement gap
Mrs. Clear	No recollection of program addressing achievement gap

Secondary Research Question 4: How are aspiring principals' cultural responsiveness assessed, if at all?

The theme that emerged from cultural assessments used in preparation programs were program required assessments. Principals, with the exception of one, who attended an urban focus preparation program, stated that because the courses were culturally responsive, they assumed the assessments given measured their level of cultural responsiveness. .The assessment measures that were utilized included action research projects, case scenarios that responded to diverse situations, individual and group class

presentations, and more recently portfolios. The principal that could not recall if culturally responsive assessments had been made indicated that a significant time had elapsed between the preparation and the interview. Although there were assessments in place, the extent to which they were culturally responsive is scant. No other themes emerged from principals regarding culturally responsive internship assessment. Principals who did not attend a culturally responsive preparation program could not recall any assessments that focused on cultural diversity.

Table 11: Emergent theme: Limited assessments (i.e. comprehensive exams, licensure exams, and class assessments)

Case	Assessment
Dr. Joy	Comprehensive exam; Exit interview with faculty
Dr. Bright	Action research projects; Research papers; Class presentations, comprehensive exam; State licensure exam
Mrs. Exceptional	No recollection of culturally responsive assessment of curriculum
Dr. Strong	No recollection of culturally responsive assessment of curriculum; "Never got that deep"
Mr. Young	Internship portfolio; Action research projects; Class presentations, comprehensive exam,; Sate licensure exam
Dr. Wright	No recollection of culturally responsive assessment of curriculum
Mrs. Clear	No recollection of culturally responsive assessment of curriculum

Secondary Research Question 5: How do internship experiences influence culturally responsive instructional leadership?

Internship experience conducted in high African American school populations

        The first theme that emerged from principals' internship practices was the type of school principal or placement that principals received to build their administrative skill sets. All principals indicated that they conducted their internship in predominately African American schools. One principal indicated that she wanted the placement so that she could better understand the needs of African American students.

Table 12: Emergent theme: Internship experiences conducted in high African American school populations

Case	Internship Experience
Dr. Joy	Internship conducted at African American school; selected to better understand African American students
Dr. Bright	Internship conducted at African American school
Mrs. Exceptional	Internship conducted at African American school
Dr. Strong	Internship conducted at African American school
Mr. Young	Internship conducted at African American school
Dr. Wright	Internship conducted at African American school
Mrs. Clear	Internship conducted at African American school

<u>Experience gained to increase cultural responsiveness (opportunities to build relationships and demonstrate appreciation of cultural needs of African American students)</u>

Principals gained cultural awareness or increased their knowledge of leadership skills to obtain cultural awareness during their internship practices. One principal stated that she appreciated the diversity found in her internship. It helped her appreciate African American culture. The two principals that received on the job training stated that their placement could be considered their culturally responsive training. It was during their on the job trainings that they were able to appreciate African American culture. The second principal interviewed found that she learned valuable instructional skills (i.e. analyzed data, completed teacher observations, professional development). Three principals indicated that they learned the value of parent involvement. They learned how to build relationships through communication to establish trust with parents. Two principals were given the responsibility of managing discipline and school logistics.

Table 13: Emergent theme: Experience gained to increase cultural responsiveness
(opportunities to build relationships and demonstrate appreciation of cultural needs of
African American students)

Case	Experience Gained
Dr. Joy	Appreciation of African American culture
Dr. Bright	Analyzed data to mitigate achievement gap; Completed teacher observations, manage discipline; Professional development; Responsiveness to special student populations; Title I facilitation; Importance of staying aligned with educational trends
Mrs. Exceptional	On the job training; Appreciation of African American culture
Dr. Strong	Manage discipline; School logistics; Value of parental involvement (athletics)
Mr. Young	Multi-level experience; Manage discipline; Working relationship with parents; Several small administrative projects
Dr. Wright	Hands on; Appreciation of African American culture
Mrs. Clear	Importance of building trust and relationships with African American students and parents; Value of open communication

Principal Practices

The next set of secondary research questions are the cross-case analyses for

culturally responsive practices that principals utilize.

Secondary Research Question 6: What knowledge and skills are pertinent for a culturally responsive instructional leader?

Knowledge of curriculum and differentiated learning

The leadership practices of culturally responsive principals involved sound

pedagogical practices of successful instructional leaders. The most prominent practice

principals indicated was to have an extensive knowledge of the curriculum. Six principals

acknowledged that to successfully meet the needs of African American students, the instructional leaders must do their part in ensuring that they have a strong grasp of the content. Three principals indicated the need to individualize or differentiate instruction to the meet the diverse needs of students. Appropriate accommodations for the learning styles of students were also pertinent. Two principals stated that culturally responsive principals are strategic. One principal was more explicit in stating the need for a successful principal to understand how culture influences achievement. She stated that principals need a plan to ensure cultural responsiveness is evident in every aspect of schooling for African American students.

Table 14: Emergent theme: Knowledge of curriculum and differentiated learning

Case	Knowledge of curriculum
Dr. Joy	Provide differentiated learning
Dr. Bright	Extensive knowledge of curriculum; Have a plan for cultural responsiveness; Individualize instruction per student data; Understand how culture influences student achievement
Mrs. Exceptional	Extensive knowledge of curriculum
Dr. Strong	Be strategic
Mr. Young	Have extensive knowledge of leadership; Be strategic; Extensive knowledge of curriculum
Dr. Wright	Individualize education; Extensive knowledge of curriculum
Mrs. Clear	Differentiate education; Make accommodations for learning styles; Adhere to standards

<u>Practices of caring, high expectations, and effective communication</u>

The next theme that emerged from the pertinent knowledge and skills of a culturally responsive leader were principal characteristics. The characteristics are personal attributes that principals provided for their school community. The majority of principals stated that building relationships is a necessary culturally responsive skill. In addition to having relationships with teachers, principals stated the need to have relationships that build trust with students and parents. Effective communication helped establish those relationships with teachers, students, and parents. Two principals indicated that leaders must recognize the call to serve. The servant attitude allowed principals to care, have compassion, or empathize with the needs of students. The caring sentiment is aligned with a proposal in Gay's (2000) culturally responsive theory that states that cultural responsiveness is achieved by demonstrating cultural caring. Three principals indicated the need to have knowledge regarding students' home lives. Once the home lives of students are understood, leaders can provide and make accommodations for students' needs. Principals also indicated that culturally responsive practices focus on the needs of learners. Whether it be academic, social, or behavioral, the needs of learners must be pertinent to leaders. Principals must believe that all students can achieve and fight to ensure student success. One principal stated that principals must be flexible and have patience. Another principal stated that principals couldn't afford to be nonjudgmental. She also said that principals must be advocates for the culturally disadvantaged students. Motivating others was also mentioned as a skill used by

successful principals. Finally, one principal stated that leaders must be accessible to the school community.

Table 15: Emergent themes: Practices of caring, high expectations, and effective communication

Case	Care and expectations
Dr. Joy	Focus on needs of learner; Recognize call to serve; Care
Dr. Bright	Care; Effectively communicate; Be Accessible; Be Visible; Have relationships with students, parents, and teachers
Mrs. Exceptional	Empathize with diverse needs of students; Have extensive knowledge of home life of students; Create culture of fun
Dr. Strong	Have high expectations; Have compassion; Build relationships with school community; Have knowledge of home life of students; Motivate others to succeed; Believe all students can achieve
Mr. Young	Be flexible; Be patient; Effectively communicate; Understand change is inevitable
Dr. Wright	Recognize call to serve; Care; Build relationships with school community; Focus on needs of learner; Be tenacious about student success
Mrs. Clear	Nonjudgmental; Focus on needs of learner; Give students acceptance; Be an advocate for culturally disadvantaged students; Ensure student success; build trust; Build relationships

Recognition of Belief Systems

An important aspect of culturally responsive educators is the ability to look at one's attitudes and practices (Montgomery, 2001). Recognition of belief systems was the theme that emerged as principals detailed the pertinent knowledge and skills of cultural

responsiveness. The majority of the principals said that for them they began with themselves to decipher their personal biases or strengths and weaknesses. Principals who were not African American indicated that they had to become astute to their own biases. Unchecked biases created a lack of understanding for African American students. Lack of understanding hindered communication and relationships to be established between teachers and students and parents. Principals noted that students were not receiving fair treatment from teachers due to the lack of understanding. All of the female principals provided opportunities for their teachers to recognize their biases against students from differing races and cultures with the hopes that students received fair treatment and teachers learned how to provide culturally responsive instruction. One principal noted that it was necessary for principals to recognize their personal strengths and weaknesses in order to lead diverse cultures properly.

Table 16: Emergent themes: Recognition of personal beliefs and biases

Case	Belief and Biases
Dr. Joy	Recognize personal biases; Encourage teachers to recognize biases
Dr. Bright	Encourage teachers to recognize biases
Mrs. Exceptional	Recognize personal biases; Encourage teachers to recognize biases
Dr. Strong	N/A
Mr. Young	Recognize personal strengths and weaknesses
Dr. Wright	Recognize personal motivation
Mrs. Clear	Encourage teachers to recognize biases; Familiarize with mindsets of students

<u>Understanding and Commitment to Diversity</u>

Understanding diversity was the third theme extracted from culturally responsive knowledge and skills. Understanding diversity not only encompassed the principals' reaction to race and culture, but that of learning differences and poverty. Although only stated by one principal, the remaining principals implied that once diversity was understood, appropriate accommodations and provisions must be made to efficiently lead.

Principals indicated that it was necessary for them to be able to recognize the diverse needs of students by taking the time to understand their background and how that background influenced academic performance. One principal likened it to understanding the psychology of culture. Another principal stated that sensitivity was needed to respect differing views. Two principals reflected that the poverty was difficult for many teachers to relate. They taught teachers that students from poverty have different needs than middle class students therefore when lesson plans are made, consider the financial capacity of students to ensure that all students received a fair opportunity to learn.

Table 17: Emergent themes: Understanding and recognition of cultural diversity

Case	Understanding Diversity
Dr. Joy	Understand psychology of cultures
Dr. Bright	Provide accommodations for poverty; Provide accommodations for race; Understand needs of other cultures
Mrs. Exceptional	Recognize cultural needs of students; Recognize and empathize with culture of poverty
Dr. Strong	Recognize cultural differences
Mr. Young	Recognize and understand cultural differences
Dr. Wright	Be sensitive to differing views;
Mrs. Clear	Recognize diverse needs of students

Secondary Research Question 7: How are culturally responsive environments established by principals?

Relationship building

Principals were asked how they promoted culturally responsive environments. Principal practices emerged as a theme. The responses that made up the theme are similar to the section on Knowledge and Skills, yet there are some differences.

The common practice that principals most utilized was showing genuine care towards the school community. Their responses align with Gay's (2000) culturally responsive posit of demonstrating cultural caring. Principals demonstrated care by working to build meaningful relationships within the school community. Care was also demonstrated by principals' belief that all students are proficient. Principals also demonstrated fairness and equity. They model optimism and commit to providing

services that support student success. One principal understood the importance of creating an outlet for African American students to openly communicate. This practice built trust between the principal and the students, and often times the parent. Outside community members were invited in to help build the academic and social capacity of students. One principal hired a consultant to help her school bond by teaching how to have the tough conversations of race and poverty. One principal indicated that it in order to have a culturally responsive environment, the leader must protect culturally diverse students from demeaning experiences.

Table 18: Emergent theme: Relationship building

Case	Relationship building
Dr. Joy	Seek outside help to have tough conversations; Invite community to work in schools; Believe every child is proficient; Establish effective communication; Build relationships with parents and community; Care
Dr. Bright	Encourage staff to build relationships with students; Have relationship with school community; Provide outlet for African American students to openly communicate; Care
Mrs. Exceptional	Build community relationships; Care; Challenge teachers to learn their students
Dr. Strong	Coordinate with school counselor and community volunteers to create guidance for behaviorally challenged students; Care; Belief all students should receive equal treatment; Partner with businesses to establish reading program
Mr. Young	N/A
Dr. Wright	Provide optimism; Commit to student success; Build on experiences; Encourage parent support; Build student self-esteem; Protect students from demeaning experiences; Provide students with varied exposure
Mrs. Clear	Model fairness; Care; Build trust; Build relationships

Encouraging teachers to recognize and understand personal beliefs and biases

As with the prior section, principals said that it was very important for principals to know themselves. However, a majority of the principals indicated that it was necessary for teachers to recognize their personal biases. A culturally responsive system was built to address belief systems through professional development opportunities and tough conversations between principals and teachers.

Table 19: Emergent theme: Encouraging teachers to recognize and understand personal beliefs and biases

Case	Teacher recognition of beliefs and biases
Dr. Joy	Knowledge of self; Encourage teachers to recognize biases
Dr. Bright	Encourage teachers to recognize personal biases
Mrs. Exceptional	Encourage teachers to recognize personal biases
Dr. Strong	N/A
Mr. Young	N/A
Dr. Wright	Encourage teachers to recognize biases and differences;
Mrs. Clear	Encourage teachers to recognize biases

<u>Cultivating awareness and commitment to cultural diversity</u>

The importance of understanding diversity is required for principals to promote culturally responsive environment. The most prominent method principals used is making sure that an atmosphere is established that promotes the awareness of diverse cultures. Principals began this process by first modeling cultural acceptance. School wide multicultural initiatives are instituted by a few principals. Teachers were taught to be sensitive to and respect the diverse needs of students. Students also received diversity training to learn how to respect the differences in others. Two principals indicated that accommodations are made for the diverse needs of parents and families.

Table 20: Emergent theme: Cultivating awareness and commitment to cultural diversity

Case	Awareness and commitment to cultural diversity
Dr. Joy	Cultivate cultural awareness with staff; Respect and learn how to address culture of poverty; Teach students cultural tolerance; Accommodate diverse needs of parents; Understand differences are important in team building
Dr. Bright	N/A
Mrs. Exceptional	Promote staff diversity; Model cultural acceptance for teachers; Teach respect for others;
Dr. Strong	N/A
Mr. Young	Expose staff to different cultures
Dr. Wright	Commitment to Diversity of cultures; Ensure students respect cultural differences of others; Respect differences in family needs; Provide opportunities to intertwine differing cultures
Mrs. Clear	Create atmosphere for cultural tolerance and acceptance; Ensure teachers are sensitive to cultural needs of students; Create multicultural school wide learning initiatives

Parental education and involvement

A majority of the principals indicated that they build cultural responsiveness by creating parent education classes. Although what was taught in the classes vary from school to school, the overall intention was to build relationships between parents and the schools. The goal was to create a team approach so that the diverse needs of the students and parents could be understood and met. Several principals indicated that the parent classes were used to empower parents with the skills needed to extend education beyond

202

the classroom. The parent education classes often equipped parents with the skills needed

to help understand how to increase student academic proficiency at home.

Table 21: Emergent theme: Parental education and involvement

Case	Culturally responsive environment
Dr. Joy	Parent education classes; Invite community member to provide training for families
Dr. Bright	Parent education classes
Mrs. Exceptional	Parent education
Dr. Strong	Parent education
Mr. Young	Parent workshops
Dr. Wright	N/A
Mrs. Clear	N/A

Secondary Research Question 8: How do principals ensure teachers utilize culturally responsive instruction?

Promoting pedagogy and instructional practices related to cultural diversity

The first theme that emerged from the methods and approaches principals utilized

as pertinent instructional leadership methods were leadership practices.

Culturally responsive design begins with a clear understanding of the students that

will be served. Principals recognize that teachers must acknowledge and be sensitive to

the needs of diverse cultures in order to create relevant lessons. Professional development

was cited by five principals as a method used to assist teachers with designing culturally

responsive curriculum. Professional development opportunities were based after

principals conducted needs assessments, reviewed student data, or part of larger district wide initiatives to increase student proficiency. Four principals utilized collaborative planning with teachers. Teachers shared lesson plans or brainstorm ideas to create culturally responsive lessons. Three principals found it important to ensure teachers had culturally responsive resources and materials to aid in designing lesson plans that meet the needs of African American students

Principals stated that providing training, professional development, or modeling were the methods that were used to help teachers acquire instructional delivery skills. While explicitly stated by one principal, all principals alluded to open lines of communication with teachers to provide culturally responsive instructional delivery.

Cultural responsiveness occurred when principals employed certain characteristics. Similar to the practices that principals find important to the knowledge and skills, the theme drew on ways that principals work with teachers to improve instruction. One principal deemed it valuable to assess the core values of teachers. She expected teachers to create a mutually learning environment. In this environment, students are academically and culturally understood. Teachers spend time building trust with their students. She stated that students performed for people that they knew cared about and trusted them. She would provide instructional method training for teachers that would struggle teaching African American students. One principal found that establishing open communication with teachers helped them create balance and provide the appropriate instruction for the respective needs of the student. Another principal would

provide brainstorming opportunities to share ideas on best practices of what worked to

achieve African American student success.

Table 22: Emergent theme: Promoting pedagogy and instructional practices related to
cultural diversity

Case	Pedagogical practices
Dr. Joy	Provide modeling of successful pedagogical practices; Provide adequate professional development to meet school needs; Equip teachers with culturally responsive materials; Ensure teachers: create mutually respectful learning environment; Understand needs of students; create activities on cultural awareness; Value opportunity to learn; Build trust; Assess teacher core values; Provide instruction for teacher training.
Dr. Bright	Submission of lesson plans; Feedback on lesson plans; Ensure school has culturally diverse academic materials; Differentiated instruction; equip teachers with material to meet learning needs; Meet with teachers to review assessment data; Observations
Mrs. Exceptional	Ensure resources are culturally diverse and complement curricula; build on observations; Provide adequate pedagogic tools; Incorporate technology; Teach teachers to target specific learning needs
Dr. Strong	Create team approach for curriculum design; Provide materials that have depth; Provide professional development on differentiated instruction and remediation without isolation; Utilize book studies for research on strategies; Observations; Provide rubrics for teachers to organize content; Utilize data to transform meetings to professional development
Mr. Young	Provide teachers with adequate resources; Provide appropriate professional development; Ensure teachers utilize culturally responsive material; Open communication with teachers; Help teachers create balance
Dr. Wright	Ensure teachers recognize cultural diversity in pacing guide; Utilize curriculum design teams; Provide common planning for teachers; Review lesson plans
Mrs. Clear	Utilize curriculum coordinator; Provide collaborative planning; Assess lesson plans; Monitor classroom data; Provide strategies to adjust instruction; Observations; Model; Professional development; Create brainstorming opportunities with teachers to share ideas

Secondary Research Question 9: What methods do principals use with teachers to mitigate the academic achievement gap?

Data driven decision-making

Leadership practices emerged as one of the two themes from the methods principals used to mitigate the academic achievement gap. Principals used data to make data driven decisions. One principal used data to make informal as well as formal assessments of students. Standardized tests were used to determine the academic disparities of African American students. Principals used extracted test data to dissect the strengths and weakness of student abilities as well as assess student proficiency. Another principal used data to create a system of teaching, assessing, and post assessing. She would combine observations with class data and make academic, cultural, and behavioral accommodations based on student need. Data were also used by one principal to dictate the type of professional development his staff needed.

An additional practice that principals used was differentiated instruction. The needs of African American students were met in schools led by principals that focused on the individualized needs of the students. One principal stated that the he found success in teaching African American students when he provided teachers a framework of solid instruction. Another practice used by a principal was to draw on the success of other teachers. Teachers that had difficulty teaching African American students would observe and collaboratively plan with teachers who had been successful in structuring an environment that fostered student mastery of knowledge.

Table 23: Emergent theme: Data driven decision making

Case	Data driven decision making
Dr. Joy	Understand power of data; Keep abreast of research based strategies
Dr. Bright	Make data driven decisions; Provide informal and assessments of students; Ensure teachers differentiate instruction; Knowledge of student level of subject mastery
Mrs. Exceptional	Utilize data; Create a system of teaching, assessing, and post assessing; Make academic, cultural, behavioral accommodations
Dr. Strong	Provide framework of solid instruction; Immerse teachers in data; Ensure teacher efficacy/proficiency meets student efficacy/proficiency
Mr. Young	Make data driven decisions; Assist teachers with lesson plans; Provide appropriate professional development
Dr. Wright	Individualize education; Make data driven decisions; Draw from knowledge of successful teachers; Spend time planning with teachers
Mrs. Clear	Dissect data extensively

Secondary Research Question 10: What ways are teachers assessed by principals to determine the processes used?

Classroom observation and planning

The prominent theme that emerged from how principals assessed the cultural responsiveness of teachers was leadership practices. Every principal interviewed stated that they utilized classroom observations to conduct assessments. Principals indicated that constant informal and formal observations ensured that students received appropriate instruction and engaged in the learning. Observations allowed principals opportunities to determine if teachers were adhering to lesson plans, standards, and/or curriculum. The

submission of lesson plans was a practice used to assess teacher performance. Feedback was provided by principals on the observations and lesson plans to address concerns, strengths, weaknesses, or give praise to teachers. Two principals utilized classroom observations to ensure teachers provided adequate assessment of the subject matter. Two principals stated that they monitored student behavior during the observations. One principal reviewed the referrals of teachers to assess their cultural responsiveness.

Data was also utilized as a practice to assess teachers. Principals would review student performance of grades and standardized tests to assess how teachers were performing. Student data was analyzed for academic proficiency.

Table 24: Emergent theme: Classroom observation and planning

Case	Classroom observation and planning
Dr. Joy	Classroom observations; Look for responsive classroom environment;; Ensure students are engaged with positive behavior
Dr. Bright	Ensure teachers utilize proper planning; Review lesson plans; Ensure teacher provide adequate assessment of subject matter; Classroom observations; Analyze classroom data
Mrs. Exceptional	Ensure teachers utilize proper planning; Review lesson plans; Classroom observations; Ensure teachers are student focused
Dr. Strong	Classroom observations; Allow student behavior to serve as indicators
Mr. Young	Review lesson plans; Classroom observations
Dr. Wright	Review lesson plans; Classroom observations; Establish protocol for teachers to implement recommendations from lesson plan review and observations and build on administrative feedback; Analyze student data for proficiency
Mrs. Clear	Classroom observations; Analyze data

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to present the findings of the within case and cross-case analyses of two populations. Analyses were conducted for educational leadership preparation programs and culturally responsive principals.

The chapter began with the within case analyses of educational leadership program. Data were collected from two principals programs in Mississippi and one program in South Carolina. The within case analyses described each preparation program overall program of study. Secondary questions were asked that discussed the extent to

which: culturally responsive courses were taught; internships were structured; how the academic achievement gap was addressed, and how aspiring candidates were assessed to determine their level of cultural responsiveness.

The secondary questions also guided the structure of the cross-case analyses. The themes that emerged from the cross-case analyses were program structure, instructional methods, and commitment to diversity.

The chapter progressed with the within case analyses of seven, successful, culturally responsive principals who lead predominately African American schools. The preparation and practice of five Mississippi principals and two South Carolina principals were discussed. Principals responded to five secondary questions on the level of their preparation program's cultural responsiveness. The within case analyses were completed by principals responding to five secondary questions that detailed the type of practices they utilized to create successful learning environments for African American students.

The chapter concluded with cross-case analyses of the principals. Five prevalent themes emerged from the data. Principals themes were leadership practices, principal characteristics, recognition of beliefs, and commitment to diversity.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary purpose of this chapter is to analyze, synthesize, and summarize the results generated from data collected by educational leadership faculty and principals as it relates to cultural responsiveness. The chapter is divided into the following sections: significant interpretations extracted from the existing literature; the themes that directly connect to the purpose of the research; conclusions based on the themes; summaries of the cross-case analysis themes; limitations of the study; general recommendations for educational leadership programs focusing on cultural responsiveness; general recommendations for principals to be culturally responsive; and finally recommendations for further research.

Significant Context from Existing Literature

Emerging evidence has found that preparation programs influence the efficacy of future school leaders (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Jackson & Kelly, 2002). A large body of literature points to persistent achievement gaps for children of color and especially for African American males and demands that school leadership preparation attend to issues of social justice and/or cultural competence (Dantley, 2005; Evans, 2007; Lopez, Magdeleno, & Mendoza Reis, 2006; Parker & Shapiro, 1992; Shields, 2004; Young & Brooks, 2008; Young & Laible, 2000). The changing demographics of schools requires instructional leadership skills, advocacy skills, and specialized knowledge in what works best for students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Ladson-Billings, 2001). Despite the rise in concern

about cultural diversity in leadership preparation programs, the research base about such programs is thin (Gooden & Dantley, 2012).

The research on teaching and learning offers resources and tools that can be utilized by individuals developing leaders who embrace and practice social justice (Delpit, 1993; Gay, 2000; Giroux, 1988; Hafner, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2000; Nieto, 1999 and others). Culturally responsive or culturally relevant teaching and learning are such methods. Through culturally responsive or culturally relevant teaching and learning, the tenets of social justice that seek to provide educational equity, tolerance, and cultural respect are transmitted to school leadership candidates.

Culturally responsive teaching in public schools relies on classroom level promotion of social justice. Culturally responsive teachers have views that reinforce the diverse backgrounds of students. They believe that students' backgrounds are relevant to the learning process (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Johnson, 2006; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Culturally relevant teaching and learning advocates argue that students must experience academic success. Educators committed to student success develop and/or maintain cultural competence and a critical mental consciousness that challenges the status quo (Ladson-Billings, 1995b). The existing literature does not specifically investigate how principal preparation programs prepare culturally responsive leaders who can foster this attitude among teachers nor does it provide empirical evidence on how preparation programs address race to mitigate the academic achievement gap (Gooden & Dantley, 2012).

Gooden and Dantley (2012) state that, "Leadership preparation programs are instrumental in helping students frame the problems in education and find that voice". A preparation program can shift aspiring leaders' perspectives by ensuring that adequate attention to race and development of personal awareness is given. "Leaders in such a preparation program can begin to challenge the status quo and search for viable solutions rather than restating the problem" (Gooden and Dantley, 2012).

Prominent Research Themes

This section provides a summary of findings from this study regarding, first, the characteristics of educational leadership preparation programs, and, second, the culturally responsive educational practices of principals. Secondary research questions were asked of each research population.

The first analysis asked about educational leadership principal preparation programs that have prepared culturally responsive school principals. Representatives from select educational leadership preparation programs provided data germane to their principal preparation program structure and content. The questions asked of these respondents deciphered the extent to which the tenets of culturally responsive instruction was included in programs of study, programs addressed the achievement gap, programs assessed candidates' cultural responsiveness, and the cultural responsiveness of internships.

The second analysis and research questions uncovered the preparation and practices of principals who lead schools with high African American student enrollment. The research questions were divided by the type of preparation principals received and

the culturally responsive practices they utilized. As principals responded regarding the structure of their preparation programs, they were asked the extent to which: preparation programs are developing culturally diverse knowledge and providing culturally relevant curricula. Principals also responded to the practices that culturally responsive leaders utilize. They were asked the extent to which instructional leaders deliver culturally responsive instruction, promote cross-cultural communications, and demonstrate cultural care.

The prevalent themes that manifested from the research questions of educational leadership preparation programs and the preparation and practices of principals are detailed in the following sections.

Summary of Themes from Educational Leadership Preparation Programs

The following table provides a summary of the emergent themes provided by faculty of educational leadership preparation programs.

Table 25: Summary of Themes from Educational Leadership Preparation Program

Secondary Research Question	Emergent Themes
How are preparation programs structured (or not structured) to be culturally responsive?	• Focus on meeting the needs of diverse student populations
In what ways does the curriculum promote cultural responsiveness?	• Specific courses address diversity issues • Cultural responsive data analysis
How do preparation programs address the academic achievement gap among African Americans?	• Using data for decision making • Professional development to address diversity issues
How does the principal's internship address culturally responsive instructional leadership skills?	• Activity based • Use of data • Observations by faculty • Supervision of principal mentors
How are candidates assessed to determine if they are culturally responsive?	• Program assessments (course assessments, SLLA exam, GPA)

Secondary Research Question 1: Program of study

Initial licensure principal preparation programs were assessed on their levels of cultural responsiveness. Each cohort-based program had a focus on meeting the needs of diverse student populations. One preparation program was a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) and had an urban focus. Two programs were traditional, predominately white institutions located in two Southeastern states with culturally responsive coursework.

Secondary Research Question 2: Promotion of cultural responsiveness

Two themes emerged about how the preparation programs' curricula promote cultural responsiveness. The first theme was specific courses address diversity issues. Programs would teach candidates the value of acknowledging diversity. The second theme was effectively teaching candidates to use cultural responsive data analysis to address the various instructional needs in schools.

Secondary Research Question 3: Program address of achievement gap

Two themes emerged as professors in the different programs reflected on how their programs address the academic achievement gap. The first theme was using data for decision-making. Program respondents indicated that they taught candidates the purpose of data as well as how to utilize data to make decisions. The second theme was teaching candidates how to design professional development to address diversity issues.

Secondary Research Question 4: Culturally Responsive Internship Practices

As internship practices were compared, the major theme that emerged was how the programs structured their internship. Each program agreed that there were specific practices that needed to occur to successfully complete the internship, including structured supervision. The first theme that emerged was that the internships were activity based. The second theme was that use of data was taught during internships. The next theme was that each program conducted observations of the candidates' internship. The final theme was each program provided supervision of principal mentors however, the placement of the internships varied.

Secondary Research Question 5: Culturally responsive assessment of candidates

Faculty responded that assessments of candidates were identified by successfully passing program assessments. The assessments included completing coursework, passing state licensure assessment, or having a passing grade point average. Faculty also stated that candidates were assessed on the knowledge gained by follow assessments of candidates once they have received an administrative position.

Themes: Perceptions of Culturally Responsive Principals about their Preparation

The following table provides a summary of the perceptions of culturally responsive principals about their preparation.

Table 26: Summary of Perceptions of culturally responsive principals about their preparation

Secondary Research Questions	Emergent Themes
What were the characteristics of the principals' preparation program?	• Focus on diverse cultures
How is culturally responsive instruction addressed in the preparation program?	• Some courses focus on cultural responsiveness
How do aspiring principals learn to effectively respond to the academic achievement gap?	• Use of learning styles and test data analyses
How are aspiring principals' cultural responsiveness assessed, if at all?	• Limited assessments (i.e. comprehensive exams, licensure exams, and class assessments)
How do internship experiences influence culturally responsive instructional leadership?	• Internship experiences conducted in high African American school populations • Experience gained to increase cultural responsiveness (opportunities to build relationships and demonstrate appreciation of cultural needs of African American students)

Secondary Research Question 1: What were the characteristics of the principals' preparation program?

The theme that emerged for programs of study was the focus on diverse cultures. Principals who participated in the research were prepared in four different settings. Three attended a HBCU administrative licensure program that had an urban focus. Two principals were prepared in an university administrative licensure program. One principal went through a district sponsored principal preparation program. One principal received on the job training to become a school administrator.

Secondary Research Question 2: How is culturally responsive instruction addressed in the preparation program?

The theme that materialized for this question was that some of the courses the principals took focused on cultural responsiveness. Three principals that attended a preparation program with an urban focus reported that their programs provided culturally responsive instruction. The remaining principals indicated that a course or a professor addressed culturally responsive content.

Secondary Research Question 3: How do aspiring principals learn to effectively respond to the academic achievement gap?

The theme that emerged detailed how principals were prepared to mitigate the achievement gap with the use of learning styles and test data analyses. Principals whom attended a culturally responsive preparation program indicated that their program emphasized varied instructional methods to alleviate the academic achievement gap of African American students.

Secondary Research Question 4: How are aspiring principals' cultural responsiveness assessed, if at all?

Principals indicated that they had limited assessments on their cultural responsiveness. Principals that did not have a culturally responsive preparation found it difficult to respond to this question (although one had been out so long that she could not remember).

Secondary Research Question 5: How do internship experiences influence culturally responsive instructional leadership?

Two themes emerged from the inclusion of culturally responsive internship practices of a principal preparation program. Principals reflected on the type of placement principals had during their internship. The second theme that emerged was the type of experience gained to increase cultural responsiveness. The experiences included opportunities to build relationships and demonstrate appreciation of cultural needs of African American students.

Themes: Practices of Culturally Responsive Principals

The following table provides a summary of the practices that culturally responsive principals utilized.

Table 27: Summary of Practices of Culturally Responsive Principals

Secondary Research Question	Emergent Theme
What knowledge and skills are pertinent for a culturally responsive instructional leader?	• Knowledge of curriculum and differentiated learning • Practices of caring, high expectations, and effective communication • Recognition of Belief Systems • Understanding and commitment to diversity
How are culturally responsive environments established by principals?	• Relationship building • Encouraging teachers to recognize and understand personal beliefs and biases • Cultivating awareness and commitment to cultural diversity • Parental education and involvement
How do principals ensure teachers utilize culturally responsive instruction?	• Promoting pedagogy and instructional practices related to cultural diversity
What methods do principals use with teachers to mitigate the academic achievement gap?	• Data driven decision making
What ways are teachers assessed by principals to determine the processes used?	• Classroom observation and planning

Secondary Research Question 6: What knowledge and skills are pertinent for a culturally responsive instructional leader?

The investigation of knowledge and skills exhibited by culturally responsive principals yielded four themes. The first theme that emerged was knowledge of curriculum and differentiated learning. Principals discussed the instructional methods that are needed for cultural responsiveness. The second theme was practices of caring, high expectations, and effective communication. This theme reflected the personal attributes of principals. The next theme was the recognition of belief systems. Principals looked at

their attitudes and biases. The final theme was understanding and commitment to diversity.

Secondary Research Question 7: How are culturally responsive environments established by principals?

Principals promoted cultural responsiveness within their school community with: relationship building; encouraging teachers to recognize and understand beliefs and biases; cultivating awareness and commitment to diversity; and parental education and involvement. The relationship-building theme addressed personal ideology. Encouraging teachers to recognize and understand beliefs and biases helped principals be cognizant of mindsets that create cultural discord. A culturally responsive principal understands that cultivating awareness and commitment to diversity must be second nature for a culturally responsive school community. The final theme that emerged was parental education and involvement. Principals provided empower parents with knowledge and skill building opportunities.

Secondary Research Question 8: How do principals ensure teachers utilize culturally responsive instruction?

The theme that described how principals ensure teachers utilize culturally responsive instruction were promoting pedagogy and instructional practices related to cultural diversity. Principals reflected on how they helped their teachers prepare lessons to meet culturally diverse needs. They also discussed how they monitor teachers' interaction with their students. The leadership practices of culturally responsive principals include instructional strategies that are designed to meet the academic needs of

African American students. Principals used their personal traits to assist teachers with the design and delivery of culturally responsive instruction.

Secondary Research Question 9: What methods do principals use with teachers to mitigate the academic achievement gap?

The theme that emerged from the question about how instructional leaders mitigate the academic achievement gap dealt with data driven decision-making. Data mining was most frequently cited as the practice that administrators rely on to dissect and differentiate instruction for marginalized students.

Secondary Research Question 10: What ways are teachers assessed by principals to determine the processes used?

The prominent theme that emerged from how principals assessed the cultural responsiveness of teachers was classroom observation and planning. The practice that the majority of principals stated that they used was informal and formal classroom observations.

Discussion of Prominent Themes

Discussion of educational leadership preparation programs

Program structure

The first theme that emerged from the question about the cultural responsiveness of educational leadership preparation programs was program structure. In the states of Mississippi, six institutions are NCATE accredited and nationally recognized. The state of South Carolina has five nationally recognized, NCATE accredited educational leadership programs. All of the universities in this study were NCATE approved. For the purpose of the research, three traditional participating institutions provided the research

on the program structure. A traditional program is led by faculty and the bulk of the coursework is university based (Sanzo, Myran, & Clayton, 2011).

The program structures of all the educational institutions in the study shared two commonalities: They each were cohort based and each relied on surrounding districts to assist with program development. Research has stated that effective programs have both of these characteristics (Davis, Darling-Hammond, Myerson, & LePointe, 2995; Jackson & Kelly, 2002; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Young, Crow, Ogaway, & Murphy, 2009). Although the courses were different, the overall offerings were quite similar. Each program offered courses in educational leadership theory, school law, school finance, instruction supervision, history of American education, educational research, and internship in educational administration. Only one program required candidates to take a course that addressed technology issues in administration.

In the context of cultural responsiveness, one program was totally centered on meeting the needs of diverse learners in an urban environment. This program was based at an HBCU. The urban focus came because of the institution responding to the diverse needs of the majority of their candidates and the schools that their candidates served. The university stated that the basis of the program was to create culturally responsive learners (Responsive Educator, 2007).

The other programs in the study had been recently revised. One program's revision included cultural responsiveness in five of its new or restructured courses. This change came about to meet the diverse needs of students in the state. Another program closely aligns their curriculum to meet the needs of one of the largest urban districts in

the United States. Administrators from the district work with the institution to keep it abreast of changing policies and methods so that aspiring administrators are prepared to meet the demands of the district.

Focus on meeting the needs of diverse student populations

Another aspect of effective preparation programs is to ensure that educational leadership faculty models the type of instruction the program promotes (Darling Hammond et al, 2007). The dilemma in principal preparation training programs is that cultural diversity education is not integrated into the curriculum in a consistent manner. To ensure that programs are culturally responsive they must consistently build cultural proficiency for educational leaders and help them identify personal beliefs about ethnicity, race, class, gender, ability, and other cultural elements (Growe, Schmersahl, Perry, & Henry, 2002). The courses, the instructional methods used by faculty, and the instructional methods faculty wishes to convey must hinge on cultural responsiveness.

Each educational leadership program stated that their programs focus on meeting the needs of diverse student populations. One program stated that they integrated cultural responsiveness throughout the majority of courses in their preparation program. Another program's recent revision incorporated four courses that prepared aspiring principals to meet the diverse needs of learners. The third program responded to cultural diversity by stating that the curriculum was designed on multicultural basis.

The urban program stated that they designed their coursework to challenge the traditional views of education that highlight the disparities of minority students (Jencks and Phillips, 1998; ay, 2000, 2010; Perry, Steele, and Hilliard, 2003). The program

224

centered on Gay's (2002) theory of cultural responsiveness. Throughout the coursework, they addressed the needs of minority P-12 students by preparing leaders to recognize and respond to the academic achievement gap, face challenges of culturally diverse organizations, accept diverse cultures, engage culturally diverse parents and communities prepare curriculum to address cultural diversity, and utilize data to make instructional leadership.

The recently revised preparation program's commitment to diversity was through courses that prepared leaders to understand the legal, policy, and ethical perspectives for cultural diversity, plan instruction for culturally diverse populations, and lead to create positive school culture. The latter courses are aligned with culturally responsive leadership. Culturally responsive educators design culturally responsive curricula and create culturally responsive environments (Gay, 2002).

The third program, as stated previously, worked with an urban school district to design coursework that would address the needs of minority students. The coursework prepared principals to incorporate diversity employment practices, train for cultural, religious, and gender diversity, train for racial sensitivity, and close the achievement gap.

As programs defined their commitment to mitigate the achievement levels of minority students, each program indicated that they prepared their candidates to utilize the multi-faceted purposes of data. Candidates placed in heavily minority populated schools were able to practice methods that would increase academic proficiency of minority students.

However, as programs addressed cultural diversity training, no one was able to discuss the level of cultural sensitivity of faculty members. When asked if training or professional development was conducted of faculty, one faculty honestly stated that there was nothing like that in place at their institution. Culturally responsive knowledge was equated to the research expertise of faculty members.

Discussion of Principal Preparation

The principals selected to participate in the research led schools with high percentages of African American students. The gender or race of the principals did not suggest that one race or gender was more effective at providing cultural responsiveness. While there were more African American principals interviewed, what seemed to matter most were the principal's practices and attitudes toward their role as the building leader.

In the state of Mississippi, only 34% of the P-12 schools considered to be successful have an African American population of 75% or higher. In relation to all schools in the state of Mississippi, the successful African American schools constitute 9% of the total population. In South Carolina, there were only eleven successful, high minority P-12 schools (the differences between Mississippi and South Carolina may, of course, be due to different standards for defining excellence). Those eleven schools represent 6% of all large minority schools and 1% of the total school population.

The schools represented in the research are in a small minority. The total mean of the schools' population was 88% African American and 88% on free/reduced meals. The percentages are disheartening as the number of schools with large minority students are not faring well. Due to the successes of the principals in this study, secondary research

questions sought to determine how they were prepared to meet the needs of African American students.

A total of five preparation programs were represented by principals in the overall research. Three Mississippi licensure programs and two licensure programs in South Carolina. One principal attended a district based principal preparation program that worked in conjunction with a state university. All of the principals were trained in the state that they now serve.

Program structure

As principals talked about the cultural responsiveness of their preparation programs, some principals indicated that their program really helped them to be culturally responsive. Other principals were not impressed with the level of culturally responsive preparation they received. Three of the Mississippi principals in the study attended the Mississippi institution that had an urban focus. Principals that attended the urban educational leadership program varied in race. One white female indicated that she selected the program because she wanted to have a better understanding of the population she served.

Two of the principals that did not attend schools with culturally responsive programs had been administrators for more than 25 years. These administrators came from both Mississippi and South Carolina. They stated that they were not prepared to be instructional leaders. They indicated that their preparation focused on meeting the managerial aspects of leadership.

The remaining two principals (representing both states) indicated that their overall program claimed that the program they attended had a diversity focus, yet the majority of their courses did not match that claim. Each principal indicated that one course helped them recognize the use that data has in understanding standardized test assessments as well as ways to provide instructional leadership to meet the needs of students who did not fare well.

A commitment to diversity is more than giving "lip service" to the diversity efforts of preparation programs (Henze, Katz, Sather, and Walker, 2002). Course offerings often have a diversity component, but there may not necessarily be a way to ensure the faculty knows *how* to relate theory to practice (Haviland & Rodriguez-Kino, 2009). Stating that there are diverse components in prep programs yet not executing true diversity is not enough. Research has found that programs not committed to cultural diversity have faculty that have not been prepared with tools to analyze racial or ethnic conflict, nor are they able to build effective cross-cultural communities (Henze, Katz, Sather, and Walker, 2002). Current literature concludes that many programs are not focused on understanding the inequities of society or preparing principals to be culturally responsive leaders (Bell et al, 2002; Brown, 2004; Rush, 2004).

Structure and Placement Internship

Based on the responses of the interviewed principals, their internships were instrumental in helping them acquire cultural responsiveness skills. Although several principals indicated that they did not receive culturally responsive course curriculum, they acquired a knowledge and skill set needed to work with African American students

during their internship. One interesting account was that each principal interviewed indicated that their internship was at predominately African American schools. Some attribute this placement to being an eye opener to the needs of African American students.

The structure of some of the internships caused concern as principals indicated that they did not have an opportunity to serve in the instructional leadership capacity. Some principals indicated that their program was structured so that each ELCC standard was met. In some programs, principals indicated that mentors were assigned to them. In others, principals reflected on the mentorship they received. Two principals gained a culturally responsive experience through their principal mentor. They attributed their success to the teachings they acquired from their mentor.

A total correlation to the principal programs and the efficacy of the principals cannot be totally determined due to the time elapse of some principals preparation and the structure that exists with the programs now. However, the course offerings of the urban educational leadership program greatly mirrored the responses of the candidates that attended the program.

Discussion of Principal Practice

The prominent themes that emerged from the practices of culturally responsive principals were that they are instructional leaders of the school and they are to ensure that they create a learning environment that values the cultural differences of students (Growe, Schmersahl, Perry, & Henry, 2002). Preparation programs must be prepared to meet both needs.

As data manifested, the tenets of culturally responsive theory were reinforced. Culturally responsive educators develop a culturally diverse knowledge base, design culturally relevant curricula, demonstrate care and build learning community, and deliver culturally responsive instruction (Gay, 2002).

<u>Leadership practices</u>

The leadership practices of principals emerged as a prominent theme in several responses to the secondary research questions. The leadership practices were the supervisory practices principals conduct to ensure teacher efficacy. Oliva (1993), described leadership supervision as practices that are used to specialize the help teachers receive to improve instruction. Student achievement is positively impacted when principals effectively exercise their role as the instructional leader the school (Hallinger and Heck, 1998; Leithwood and Riehl, 2003).

As principals/respondents reflected on the knowledge and skills of culturally responsive principals, they felt that their success with African American students was because they had an extensive knowledge of the curriculum. Sanzo (2011) state that principals who are strong instructional leaders effectively manage the curriculum and consider the needs of every student. When the learning styles of each student are taken into account, leaders utilize differentiated or individualized instruction.

Differentiated instruction is used to respond to the varying levels, interests, and learning styles of students (Tomlinson & Kalbfeisch, 1998). The topic of differentiated instruction and individualized instruction was frequently addressed by principals as their often-used leadership practices. The differentiation of instruction supports cultural

responsiveness. Ladson Billings stated that culturally relevant pedagogy entailed a focus on the individual student's academic achievement (2001). The principals discussed how they made provisions to ensure that every child was proficient; they were committed to the students achieving academic and personal success.

The theme of promoting culturally relevant pedagogy and instruction emerged when principals explained how they assisted their teachers with culturally responsive curricular design and instructional delivery. Culturally responsive curriculum design begins with a clear understanding of the students that will be served. Principals acknowledged that teachers must acknowledge and be sensitive to the needs of diverse cultures in order to create and deliver relevant lessons. The most prominent method principals used to achieve this was substantial professional development opportunities for teachers. Sparks (2003) stated that professional development is necessary to "create a stream of continuous actions that change habits and effect practice".

Principals used professional development opportunities to address pedagogical concerns or build teachers' knowledge of cultural responsiveness. Kose (2009) stated that effective principals provide ongoing equity building professional development. Through professional development, principals augment teachers' abilities to work with culturally diverse students (Shields, Bishop, & Mazawi, 2005; Tomlinson & Allan, 2000; Valencia, 1997).

Data driven decision-making was the theme that emerged when principals discussed ways to mitigate the achievement gap. Principals indicated that the leadership

practice they most utilized was using data to make decisions and drive instructional needs.

Classroom observation and planning was the final theme that addressed principal leadership practices. Principals stated that observing teaching and the overall climate in classrooms were necessary to assess teachers' use of culturally responsive practices. Principals used methods of instructional supervision to provide teachers feedback on ways to improve culturally responsive instruction and establishing stronger rapport with students. In addition to observation, principals would review lesson plans, model culturally responsive lessons, and encourage teachers to plan lessons collaboratively. The later discussed themes of 'commitment to diversity' and 'recognition of beliefs', detail how principals help teachers influence the learning of African American students.

Principals did not indicate if there were inventories to assess teachers' level of cultural responsiveness.

Practices of caring, high expectations, and effective communication

The next prominent theme that emerged from the principal interviews was principal characteristics. The principal characteristics comprised of personal skills, ones not necessarily taught in preparation programs, but skills needed to work with culturally diverse populations nonetheless. Each principal interviewed stated that they cared about and had compassion for their students. Demonstrating cultural care was a theoretical construction of culturally responsive theory (Gay, 2002). School principals that demonstrate care towards their students were essential in the lives of African American

students (Foster, 2005). Principals who were caring were highly concerned and engaged with the learning and emotional needs of students (Gay, 2010).

As principals discussed the knowledge and skills needed for culturally responsive leaders, they stated that principals must build relationships with their school community. Some principals attributed building relationships by establishing effective communication with students, teachers, and parents. Others stated that building relationships entail learning or knowing their students by learning about what is relevant to the students, what is important and needed for the parents, and understanding the home life of their students. Gay (2010) states that it is "inconceivable how educators can recognize and nurture the individuality of students if they don't know them" (p.24). Villegas and Lucas state that culturally responsive educators use the knowledge they know about their students and build on the knowledge to stretch the students further (2002). Many of the principals stated that establishing communication and building relations with African American students helped established trust.

Cultivating awareness and commitment to cultural diversity was also a theme that emerged as principals discussed how they promoted culturally responsive environments. During the interviews, principals really went into specific detail of the practices that they utilized to build a culturally responsive school environment. Of the answers generated, this question elicited the most diverse responses. Some principals responded with the type of characteristics they exude with each group of members in their school community. Other principals discussed what they actually *do* with each group within the school community. When principals talked about what they did with the different groups,

233

one common answer emerged. Each principal discussed how he or she empowered the school community through parent education workshops. Parent education workshops were used by principals to serve several purposes. One purpose was to learn how to better work together to meet the need of the student. By engaging parents, principals gained more insight into the home life and cultural backgrounds of the students. Another purpose for the parent education classes/workshops were to help students improves academic proficiency. Some principals felt that African American students' backgrounds did not equip nor prepare them to perform at satisfactory aptitude levels. Parent education classes would provide parents with the skills that they could use at home to build literacy and numeracy skills. Parent education workshops also were held to meet specific needs of parents. The socioeconomic status of the schools reflected adversity that parents were facing. Principals would have classes that would help parents with career building skills or other skills that could provide.

Recognition of personal beliefs and biases

The theme of principals' recognition of belief systems occurred as principals discussed the knowledge and skills needed to be a principal and the ways that they create a culturally responsive environment. Non-African American principals indicated that they had to recognize their own biases. They stated that they went to great lengths to understand how they had to place themselves in the shoes of their students to lead them effectively. Gay (2000) attributes this to self-reflection. All but one principal stated that they encourage teachers to use self-reflection to "examine their own beliefs about relationships among culture, ethnicity, and intellectual ability" (Gay, 2000). Principals

stated that they have had to have hard conversations with teachers to recognize biases about race but also about the culture of poverty. Principals did not make any accommodations for teachers who did not exercise fairness for students. A few principals indicated that teachers with prejudices against students were "not needed" and eliminated positions due to intolerance.

The recognition of bias is perpetuated in thought that culturally responsive pedagogical methods are not necessary. There is the belief that good education employs the same pedagogical methods and should transcend people and be applicable any time. This school of thinking states that good teachers should increase academic efficacy regardless of class, race, gender, ethnicity, or cultural of students (and teachers) (Gay, 2010). However, "decontextualizing teaching and learning from the ethnicities, cultures, and experiences of students minimizes the chances that student achievement and potential will ever be fully realized" (Gay, 2010, p. 24).

Understanding and recognition of cultural diversity

All principals indicated that it was imperative for principals to teach their staff to be "aware" of the diverse needs of students, however, it cannot be assumed that awareness means that teachers will ascribe to the transformational task of preventing academic inequities by embracing culturally relevant pedagogical knowledge and skills (Gay, 2010). Principal referenced the commitment to diversity in different ways. When they referenced the skills needed to be culturally responsive, they stated that it was imperative to recognize the diverse needs of students. However, when they responded to cultural environments, the focus was on how they help their teachers and students gain

cultural knowledge. Leaders who ensure their school community encompasses diversity are culturally responsive (Howard, 2010).

There were varied levels to how principals commit to diversity. Most principals indicated the concept of race. Yet, a few principals indicated that the culture of poverty that was difficult for their teachers to grasp (Beachum et al, 2008). They viewed poverty as a huge battle that created obstacles but did not stop the learning process.

Summary

The findings of this study are summarized in Figure 5.1 Culturally responsive educational leadership programs have a distinct program structure and a commitment to diversity. The program structure includes the tenets of an effective leadership program (Davis, Darling-Hammond, Myerson, & LePointe, 2005; Jackson & Kelly, 2002). The program has measures in place that ensure faculty develop a culturally relevant knowledge base, design culturally relevant curricula, demonstrate cultural care and build a learning community, and deliver culturally responsive instruction (Gay, 2002).

Culturally responsive principals have characteristics unique to their leadership styles. They also have a commitment to diversity and encourage themselves as well as their teachers to recognize the belief systems of students and parents. As instructional leaders, they utilize leadership practices that include the tenets of Gay's (2002) culturally responsive theory.

Culturally responsive leadership preparation programs influence culturally responsive principal practices that, in turn, produce successful student outcomes.
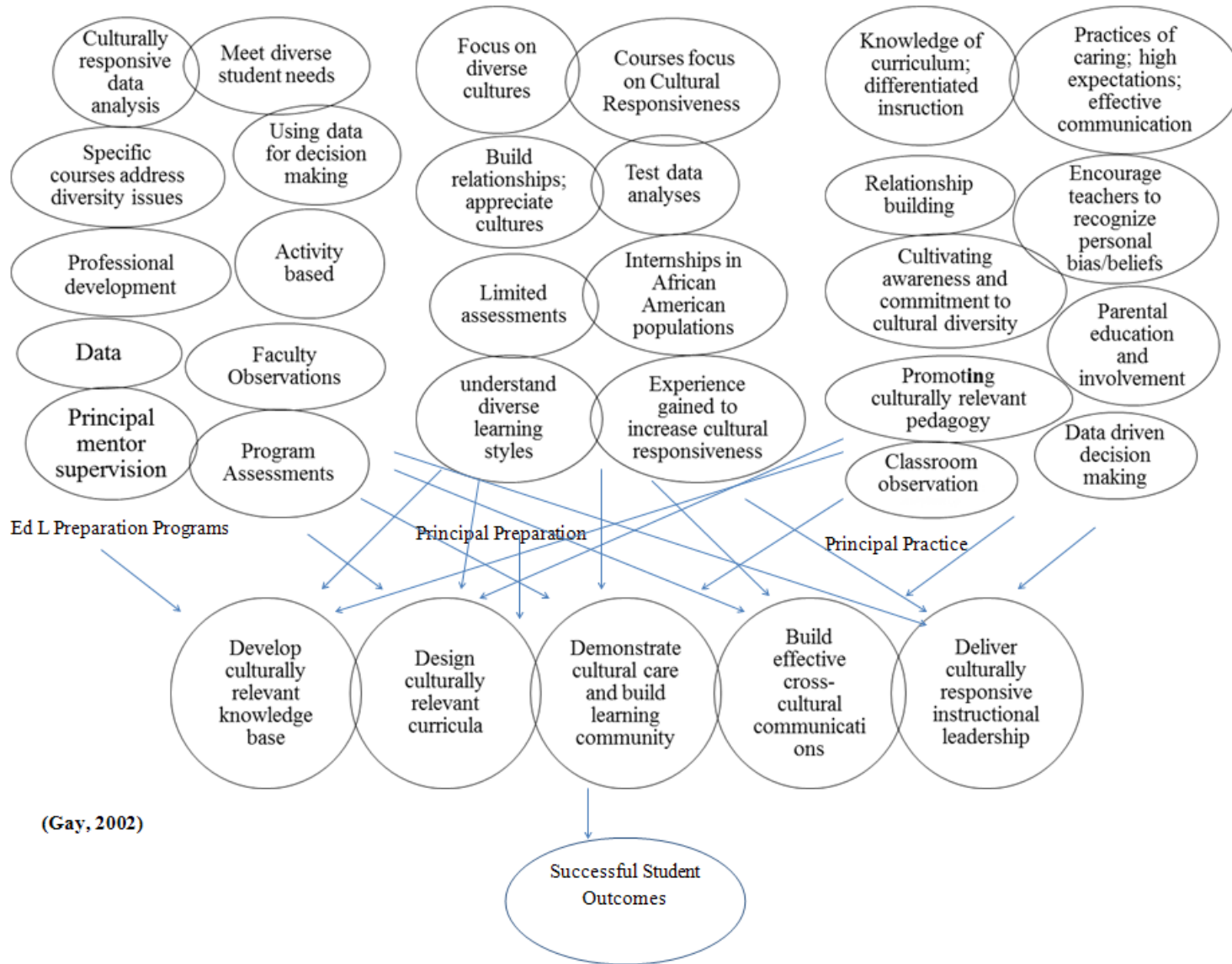
Figure 2: Summary of Conclusions about Culturally Responsive Leadership Preparation and Practice of School Principals

Limitations

The current study was limited by the research being restricted to predominantly African American schools. A second limitation was that, in most cases, significant time had elapsed since the principals were prepared and consequently a clear correlation between current university practices and the practices of the principals in the study could not be established. The final limitation is that the researcher did not make observation of the actual interviewed sites.

General Recommendations

Educational leadership preparation programs

University faculty members must consider several issues as they design and deliver the curriculum to ensure candidates receive cultural responsiveness instruction.

1. Principal preparation programs must ensure that those preparing principals follow tenets of cultural responsiveness to mitigate the achievement gap. This is first accomplished by responding to one's own attitudes and practices of different cultures (Montgomery, 2001) then understanding the cultural characteristics and learning needs of different cultures. Preparation programs must be committed to and believe the tenets of cultural responsiveness by developing culturally diverse knowledge (Gay, 2002).

2. Preparation programs must ensure that the assessments of the preparation program curricula are culturally relevant (Gay, 2002). This is done to by being cognizant that curricula assessments are a powerful means to convey the extent to which principals are culturally responsive. Candidates must be

238

properly assessed to determine that they are sound culturally responsive leaders who will be able to transform what they have learned to the schools that they lead

3. Internships should include culturally responsive activities and assignments. This allows aspiring principals to learn how to supervise instruction to recognize that are built on the cultures and experiences of students to make learning more meaningful (Brown, 2007).

4. The faculty of principal preparation programs must incorporate curriculum focused on data decision making. Once the design is in place, the fifth consideration is to deliver culturally responsive instruction (Gay, 2002).

Culturally responsive preparation of principals

1. Aspiring principals should thoroughly investigate the structure of principal preparations prior to enrollment in given university programs.

2. Aspiring principals should consider how to apply culturally responsive leadership behaviors as they learn the content related to school administration and move into their internship practices.

3. Aspiring principals must carefully consider their biases prior to accepting positions in culturally diverse schools.

Culturally responsive practice of principals

1. Practicing principals must hire and/or train teachers to support and promote culturally responsive teaching.

2. Practicing principals must also build culturally responsive assessment measures in classroom observations.

Recommendations for Future Research

The following recommendations are for further research regarding educational leadership preparation programs.

1. The findings of the research found the need to explore the effectiveness of "culturally responsive leadership preparation" programs to emerge that focus on meeting the needs of culturally diverse groups. Further research could explore how preparation programs construct culturally responsive programs as well as assess the cultural responsiveness of faculty.

2. Further research could explore how culturally responsive leadership preparation programs assess candidates' level of cultural responsiveness. The assessment should take place prior to program entrance, throughout coursework, and as candidates exit the program.

3. Further research could measure the effectiveness of culturally responsive preparation programs' influence on leadership efficacy (which is measured by student achievement).

4. The final recommendation is to explore the policies that relate to cultural responsive leadership preparation programs.

Practicing principals

1. Further research is needed to measure if the level of cultural responsiveness an administrator influences the outcomes of culturally diverse students.

2. Further research is needed to study how and what principals utilize to measure teachers' cultural responsiveness.

3. An investigation should be conducted that measures how culturally responsive administrators move culturally diverse schools from low performing to high performing.

Summary

This chapter presented significant interpretations of the pertinent literature reviewed in this study. The summaries of the prevalent themes were extracted and followed by cross-case analyses data. Discussions further analyzed data of educational leadership programs and the preparation and practices of culturally responsive principals. The chapter concluded with general recommendations and recommendations for future research.

APPENDICES

Interview Matrix for Educational Leadership Faculty

Table A-1: Interview Matrix for Education Leadership Faculty

Interviewees/ Demographic Data	Interview Questions	Documents to review
Educational Leadership preparation program faculty Demographic Data: • Entry requirements • Licensure requirements • School category (ELCC, etc.) • Program credit hours • Number of faculty • Location of school (state, urban/rural, private/public)	A. Describe how your preparation program prepares school leaders with a culturally responsive curriculum knowledge base. a) Describe your program of study. b) Describe tenets of culturally responsive instruction for effective school leadership that are/included in the program of study? c) Discuss how your program addresses the academic achievement gap? d) Describe how you determine if candidates possess adequate knowledge of cultural responsiveness curriculum content.	• Program of study • Program assessments • Courses and/or course materials that relate to culturally responsive instructional leadership
	B. Describe experiences your preparation program provides to prepare school leaders with cultural responsiveness instructional practices? a) Describe adequate internship practices of cultural responsiveness curriculum content. b) Describe your process for determining if a candidate has adequate knowledge and skills for success as a culturally responsive instructional leader.	• Internship requirements • Internship assessments • Internship policies, guidelines, and procedures

Interview Protocol for Principals of High Performing Schools

Table B-1: Interview Protocol for Principals of High Performing Schools

Current Practicing Principals in High Performing Schools	Interview Questions	Documents to review
Principal Demographic Data: • Race • Age • Years of leading • Years at current school • Year degree received • Type of degree/certificati on received **School Demographic Data:** • Enrollment • Percentage African American student • Number of certified/noncerti fied teachers • Overall SES standing • School rating (last 3 years) • Size of PTA	A. Describe how your preparation program prepared you as a school leader with a culturally responsive curriculum knowledge base. a) Describe your program of study. b) Describe tenets of culturally responsive instruction for effective school leadership that were included in the program of study c) Discuss how your program addressed the academic achievement gap d) Describe how your program faculty determined if candidates possessed adequate knowledge of cultural responsiveness curriculum content.	• Course documents
	B. Describe the experiences your preparation program provided to prepare you as a cultural responsiveness instructional leader? a) Describe adequate internship practices you had of cultural responsiveness curriculum content. b) Describe the process used at your university for determining if a candidate had adequate c) Describe the knowledge and skills that contribute to the success of being a culturally responsive instructional leader.	• Internship documents

	C. Describe your experiences as a culturally responsive instructional leader.
	   a) Describe how you promote cultural responsiveness with teachers, parents, students, and community leaders.
	   b) Describe ways in which you assist teachers with designing culturally relevant curricula.
	   c) Describe ways in which you assist teachers in delivering culturally responsive curricula.
	   d) Describe the best instructional leadership practices that you utilize to assist teachers in addressing the academic achievement gap.
	   e) Describe ways you assess teachers to ensure they are designing and delivering culturally responsive instruction.
		• Curricula
		• School communication (newsletters, websites)
		• Culturally responsive school events
		• Professional development
		• State mandated documents
		• Supervisory observation checklist
		• Teacher evaluation assessments

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