GAYMON, CRYSTAL C., Ed.D. Assistant Principals' Preparation for Culturally Responsive Leadership in Diverse Schools. (2017)
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The purpose of this study is to take a deeper look at the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of the assistant principals to determine if they are prepared to lead as principals in diverse schools. The role of the assistant principal is essential and it can help to enhance and enrich the school and community. This study sought to determine whether or not assistant principals' current roles, duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development are helpful for preparation towards them becoming culturally responsive leaders who are able to lead diverse schools. Being a culturally responsive leader is critical because of the increase in diversity within schools. This study represents a close examination intended to help us understand how vital the assistant principal position is and how it can be used as a stepping stone to an individual becoming a more effective and successful principal in a diverse school.

Currently, very little research has been conducted regarding being an assistant principal. The majority of the existing research on being an assistant principal targets their roles and duties within schools, while another aspect of the research examines whether or not assistant principals are prepared to be principals. This study looks further into the roles, duties, and experiences of assistant principals and their preparation toward culturally responsive leadership. To help examine this topic further, the methodology I used was a basic qualitative study. I conducted this study in a single district to determine if and how they prepare their assistant principals to be principals in diverse schools. This qualitative study considers data gathered through interviews. There were twelve

participants included in this study. The data collected in this study identified key points/themes reflecting the work of assistant principals and their preparation to be culturally responsive leaders who lead diverse schools.

My findings were unlike what I had anticipated before conducting the study. With regard to whether assistant principals felt they were prepared to be culturally responsive leaders who lead diverse schools, I expected to find that assistant principals felt that the preparation of assistant principals does not include sufficient development in culturally responsive leadership in order to lead successfully in a diverse school. During my research, I did find that the study's participants felt like they did not receive enough formal preparation such as university coursework and professional development regarding culturally responsive leadership, but the assistant principals in the study still felt like they were culturally responsive leaders who would be successful leading a diverse school.   Even though they had a lack of formal preparation toward culturally responsive leadership, they felt that being a culturally responsive leader was embedded in what they do; therefore, leading them to say they are culturally responsive leaders. This implies that culturally responsive leadership cannot be taught, which goes against established research findings. Research suggests, and the participants agreed, that more development is needed in this area. Culturally responsive leaders are intentional and thoughtful in their planning approach toward building a culturally responsive school environment. The participants neither shared examples, nor did the data reveal ways in which they acted with intentionality toward being a culturally responsive leader within their school.

Considering the existing scholarship, this study is important because currently very little research examines the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of the assistant principals toward becoming culturally responsive leaders or leading in diverse schools. This research has the potential to lend valuable insight into how districts and school leadership preparation programs can better prepare assistant principals to be successful and highly effective culturally responsive leaders when they choose to become principals in diverse school communities.

ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS' PREPARATION FOR CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE
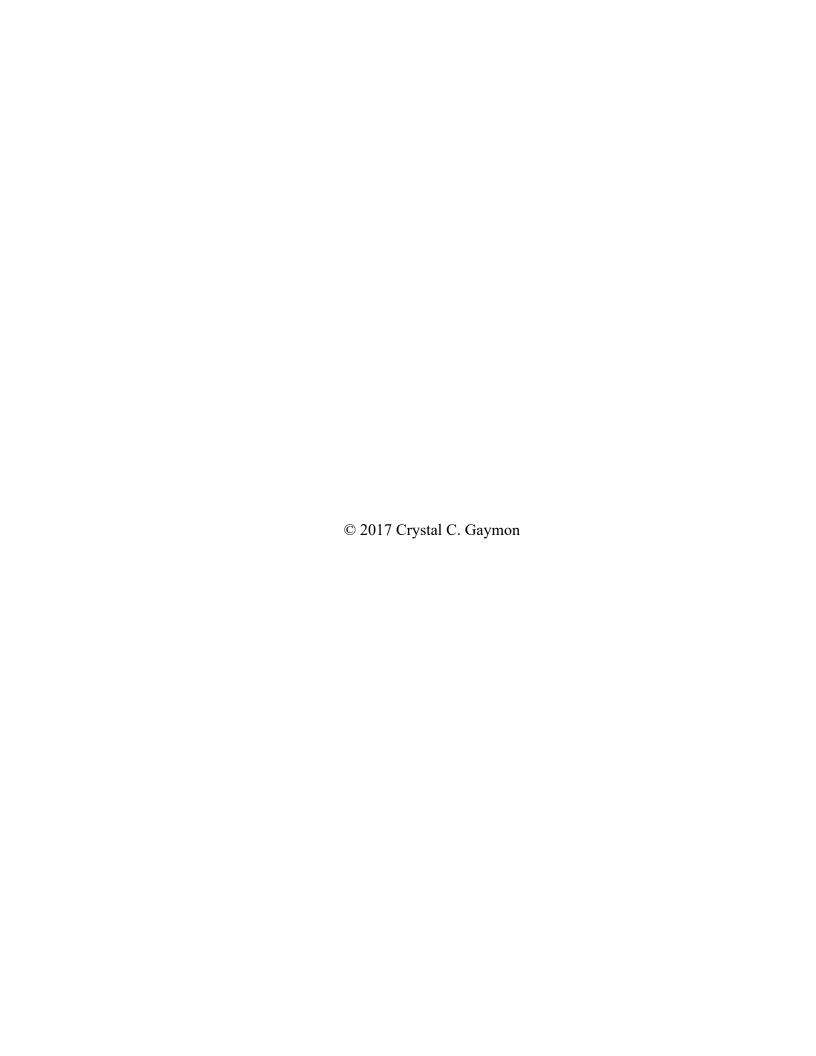
LEADERSHIP IN DIVERSE SCHOOLS

by

Crystal C. Gaymon

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
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Approved by

_____
Committee Chair

This dissertation is dedicated to my AWESOME and WONDERFUL parents, Traywick and Ivey, to the BEST children in the world, Kayla and Branson, and to my two brothers, one sister, and cousin ("Sissy"), Tray, Titus, Stephanie, and Crystal

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation, written by Crystal C. Gaymon, has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair   _____

Committee Members   _____

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Date of Acceptance by Committee

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Date of Final Oral Examination

iii

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I would like to first start out by recognizing and acknowledging God Almighty and thanking him for His continued love and grace He sheds upon me. He has surrounded me with strength and encouragement when I needed it most. Throughout this process, He has shown Himself to be Great! Lord, I thank you for your unfailing love, mercy, and your kindness. Lord, you said in Your Word that You would neither leave nor forsake me. You have kept and continue to keep Your Word, and I thank You for that.

So many people can't always say that they are blessed to have such loving and supportive parents. You have always taught me to never give up and how I am blessed with many talents. You have been my biggest cheerleaders and my biggest supporters throughout this process. You told me three years ago, when I was deciding if I wanted to continue on this journey, Crystal, you can do it; look how far you have come; you have worked too hard to let it all go; you're at the finish line and the race is already won; you just need to cross the line; and your destiny awaits you and it's tied to this degree. I did it! I crossed the finish line and won the race! How proud I know you are. I'm glad God chose you both to be such awesome and loving parents you are to me. I love you dearly and I thank you!

To my children, I thank you! I know I might have lost some precious moments with you, but I thank you for understanding and supporting me through this process. I hope that this dissertation inspires you to one day follow your dreams and never give up.

Kayla, one day in the near future I hope to see Dr. in front of your name. I tell you both all the time that you are the best children that any parent could ever have and I truly do mean it. I love you bunches and bunches, and to the moon and beyond. I thank God for allowing me to be your mother and raising such awesome gifts to the world. Go be great and do great things. Kisses!

To my siblings, I thank you for always pushing me and encouraging me to finish this process. Your encouraging words came at the right time and meant a lot. I am so thankful and blessed to have all of you as my siblings.

I would like to thank my dissertation committee members, Dr. Craig Peck, Dr. Carl Lashley, Dr. Rick Reitzug, and Dr. Brian Clarida for their support, guidance, and feedback throughout this process. I am especially appreciative of the support and guidance that Dr. Craig Peck (Chair) has given me during this process. Thank you so much for scheduling monthly meetings with me to help me stay focused and on track. You were very encouraging and helped me to expand my thinking and understanding while going through this process. I am very grateful for all of your support and again I thank you.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Prior to developing my research topic, I began to reflect on my own personal experience as an assistant principal. This reflection began when a principal position became available at a certain school. That particular school caught my attention and raised a certain awareness that I had placed so deep in the back of my mind. Prior to this school becoming available, at the time I was not interested in becoming or looking to become a principal of any school. This is not to say that I would never become a principal; it just was not in my thought process at the time to become one. At this time, I had been an assistant principal for about two and half to three years. My focus was on gaining as much knowledge as I could about the works of operating a school and continuing my development on becoming a stronger instructional leader. I had less focus on becoming a principal. I knew one day I would like to step into that role, but I knew that it would not be sometime in the near future. I did not want to rush into that position due to the experiences I had with my previous administrators. I understood how important the principal was and his or her impact on the success of the school. Again, when this certain school became available it triggered some thoughts and peaked some interest at a time that I was not thinking of becoming a principal.

I became curious enough that I began asking questions and having conversations with my current principal about the position and being a principal. During those

conversations, she gave me insight into what she thought and what she had experienced being a principal. She had been a principal for the last fifteen years, with most of her experience being in middle school as an administrator. Prior to her being at our current school for two years, which is an elementary school, she had been in another elementary school for about four years. She gave me many good ideas, which triggered more questions about the principal position. Not only did we converse about the principal position, but she also began to encourage me to apply for the position at the school that peaked my interest because she felt I was ready to move into that position of being a principal. At that point, I began to examine myself and my preparedness for a principal position. Shortly afterwards, a few more positions became available and again my principal encouraged me to apply. Each school possessed its own unique qualities, in terms of demographics and what it offered to children. As my principal continued to encourage me to step into the role of becoming a principal, I began to really question was I truly prepared to lead a school based on the experiences I had serving as an assistant principal for the last two and half to three years.

From the initial conversations to the question I had about my preparedness to lead all generated more conversations with my principal about how do you know when you are ready to be a principal. Our discussions lead me to "aha" moments, connections, wonders, fears, and me questioning my ability to lead. She shared that sometimes you have to step out there and begin to get your hands dirty and continuously wash them as you go. Throughout these conversations, it was time for me to begin to develop my idea for my research study. I became intrigued by the conversations that my principal and I

engaged in, along with the idea and thoughts I was having about my preparedness as an assistant principal toward becoming a principal. Even though the preparedness of assistant principals was intriguing, my mind focused on beginning principals. At that moment, I was not connecting the two. My initial attempt at searching for existing research focused on the principal position.

For a couple of weeks, I searched on Google and Google Scholar for random information on principals. I didn't have a specific topic on principals that I was searching for, I was just looking for something to stand out glaringly and hook me. Through my search I finally began to make connections with topics that specifically addressed the role of the principal and the experiences of first year principals. The more I dug into these topics, I began to think to myself "wow, this information on first year principals is captivating." At that moment I thought for certain that I found my topic I wanted to research for my dissertation. Then yet again another principal position became available at a school that captured my attention. Even though I was captivated by the experiences of first year principals, when this position became available those thoughts about whether I was prepared to be a principal became stronger. I began to shift my thinking towards the transition from being an assistant principal into the role of the first-year principal. In my process of all those thoughts, I was quickly reminded of the conversations I had with other colleagues who were assistant principals when some of them decided they were going to apply for a principal position. There were lots of things discussed in those conversations, but they centered specifically around whether they felt they were ready to be a principal. Instead of focusing on the experiences of first year principals, I began to

reflect on myself and the questions I had about my own preparedness to lead. It was then when the picture became truly whole and connected that I realized I had finally stumbled upon my dissertation topic, which is specifically targeting the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of assistant principals and whether or not they are prepared to be principals.

As this idea started to develop, I began to examine the many types of schools that exist. To do this I first reflected on my own experiences and the types of schools I had attended and worked in. I realized that there are many layers that impact each school and that no two schools are the same. There are many similarities but each of them possess their own unique splash of flavor. With that uniqueness, the picture was being painted of how so many schools now are engulfed with such diversity as compared to previous years. The diversity of each school can come in many forms. The school district I am in began focusing on building culturally responsive texts within the curriculum. They also began to target a specific minority group, African American students, since they showed a gap in their performance compared to other racial and ethnic groups. Taking this into an account, I began to wonder if the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of assistant principals prepare them for culturally responsive leadership. As this became clearer to me, I had finally connected everything together to develop my idea for my dissertation. The notion of assistant principals being prepared to be principals stretched further into the notion of them being prepared to be culturally responsive leaders who lead diverse schools. When those two connections were made, I came to the realization that I had a complete understanding of my focus for my dissertation topic.

Background

There are increasing discussions about improving the quality of education and how school administrators impact the success of the school. Educational standards are rising across the country. There are lots of research-based programs and strategies being published and used throughout education and across the country that are intended to help develop students who are prepared to function globally and productively in the 21st century. Khalifa, Gooden, and Davis (2016) suggest that the demands on schools and the marginalization of minority students should be revealed to create effective classrooms that are culturally responsive to influence the success of all students. But yet, the United States is still falling behind in the ranks compared to other countries educational systems (Kena et al., 2014) and minority students are still marginalized in education (Khalifa et al., 2016). Achievement gaps are decreasing but still exist among minority students according to Kena et al. (2014) and the National Center for Education Statistics (2013). School administrators must be aware of the gaps, as well as, the significant diversity that exists. They must also determine if classrooms are functioning effectively to meet all the needs of every student within their school.

Diversity among students is becoming more of a challenge for schools. The pressure to educate all students is evident throughout the educational system. Schools are faced with many challenges that some are not prepared to handle. Riehl (2000) explained,

> Despite the recurrent nature of the theme of diversity, American public schools arguably serve a more heterogeneous population now than ever before and are under increasing pressure to effectively educate a student body that is diverse in terms of race and ethnicity, social class, gender, national origin and native language, sexual orientation, and physical disability. (p. 56)

Research constantly references a gap between White and minority students. Much of the

research concerns students from economically disadvantage situations, and some of these

students reside in the inner-city community (National Center for Education Statistics,

2013). Many of these students attend schools that are considered by their state as low-

performing, at-risk, and/or priority schools (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2009;

Bunar, 2010; Riehl, 2000). Low-performing implies meanings such as: not able to

perform, not of good quality, below standard, below standard teachers, and not

functioning appropriately. Not only is this term used for the building (school) itself, but

it is also a term that many times "stigmatizes (social contamination)" (Bunar, 2010, p.

151) students within these schools.   The students who are called low-performing are

those students who are performing below grade level based on a standardized test that is

given at the end of each school year. Many low-performing schools are highly diverse.

Effective culturally responsive leaders can help engage students in diverse schools, and

sustain and maintain good teachers (Khalifa et al., 2016), which can in turn help to

change the negative stigma associated with some highly diverse (low-performing)

schools. According to Gay (2010), culturally responsive leaders are needed, but having

culturally responsive leaders in schools alone is not enough to solve the problems faced

by marginalized students.

Within diverse schools there are many inequities and negative expectations that

require a need for change. Students experience different expectations within each

classroom and within each building. Many inequities lead to students being

disproportionately placed in special education programs (Blanchett, 2006; Harry, &

Klingner, 2014; Jordan, 2005; Morgan, Farkas, Hillemeier, Mattison, Maczuga, Li, &

Cook, 2015; Riehl, 2000). A majority of these students are African American students.

> The numbers are significant. For instance, while blacks make up 15 percent of the
> general school-age population (NCES 2007), they constitute more than 20 percent
> of all special education students. In some IDEA categories, they are more than
> twice as likely to be identified as having a disability than white students. (Center
> for Public Education, 2009)

The categories that the majority of the African American students qualify in are: specific

learning disabilities (SLD), intellectual disabled (ID), and emotional behavioral disability

(EBD) (Harry & Klingner, 2014; Jordan, 2005). Harry and Klingner (2014) explained:

> . . . this number placed African American children at the highest risk of receiving
> a disability label—a risk index of 14.28% as contrasted with 13.10% for
> American Indians/Alaskan Natives, 12.10% for Whites, 11.34% for Hispanics,
> and 5.31% for Asians. (p. 2)

Further, The Alliance for Excellent Education (2009) noted,

> Roughly 13 percent of African American students ages 6 through 21 were
> identified as having disabilities, compared to 8 percent of Hispanic and 9 percent
> of white students. African American students are twice as likely to be identified
> as emotionally disturbed and almost three times as likely to be identified as
> mentally retarded as white students. African American Indian students with
> disabilities are at an almost three times greater risk of being suspended for ten or
> more days as white students with disabilities. According to a 2006 report, black
> female students are 200 percent and black male students are 300 percent over
> identified as being mentally retarded. (p. 2)

In our current educational system, these students are faced with being "at-risk" of

dropout, low self-esteem, and failure (Adkison-Bradley, Johnson, Rawls, & Plunkett,

2006; Alliance for Excellent Education, 2009). "The rate at which Black males are

dropping out and being placed in special education far exceeds the rate at which they are

graduating and reaching high levels of academic achievement" (Lawson, 2008, p. 1).

Culturally responsive administrators can begin to take a closer look at what is in place at

their schools to help these students be successful before they are placed in special

education.

School-based administrators and teachers must begin to identify and recognize the

many characteristics of each of their students throughout the building to avoid inequities.

Doing so does not mean ignoring color. Many educators proclaim to be "color-blind" and

to treat all students the same. Colorblindness is claiming not to see the "color" (i.e. race

and ethnicity) of individuals. Lopez (2003) stated, "When racism becomes 'invisible',

individuals begin to think that it is merely a thing of the past and/or only connected to the

specific act" (p. 70). Colorblindness ignores differences and cultures; therefore, it causes

one to not see discrimination and it has a negative effect on culture and racial diversity

(Khalifa et al., 2016; Lopez, 2003; Touré, 2008).

> By refusing to consider culture and race as relevant to student learning and also
> by denying the existence of White privilege, the teachers and school leaders failed
> to tap in to the uniqueness of individual student cultures, values, and beliefs as
> tools for developing culturally relevant pedagogy and leadership that could
> benefit all students. (Khalifa et al., 2016, p. 1292)

We should acknowledge and celebrate differences and cultures. Under colorblindness,

schools begin to focus on performance inconsistencies rather than inequalities and

empowerment. Administrators must help their staff to understand and acknowledge

diversity, so that all students become motivated to learn through their own culture (Gay,

2010; Riehl, 2000). It is important that administrators themselves are prepared to be culturally responsive leaders who can lead diverse schools effectively.

Many school administrators are ill-prepared to handle the challenges that diversity brings to schools. School administrators play an important role in the success of the school and it is imperative that they are well-prepared to lead schools that are culturally diverse. Many highly diverse schools have significant gaps among performance of students, and they face various inequities. As shared above, principals need to be aware of any gaps and inequities that may exist within their schools, and help to down play any stigma that may associate with their school, while celebrating diversity and culture. Without understanding cultural proficiency/relevance administrators can hinder growth while marginalizing some students (Khalifa et al., 2016). Due to the changing demographics and in education, there is a demand for a new kind of principal (Matthews and Crow, 2003; Khalifa et al., 2016).

Statement of the Problem

The United States has become very diverse over the years, encompassing a rich culture that includes an array of different ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. According to The Center for Public Education (2012), United States' demographic diversity has transformed and will continue to increase in future years. Due to the increase in the diversity within the United States, a large number of the schools have been populated with students from a vast range of ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, which begins to classify the schools as diverse schools. The Center for Public Education (2012) reports,

> In 2008, the Census Bureau reported, elementary and high school students today are more diverse by race and Hispanic origin than the Baby Boom generation of students. In 1970, when the crest of the Baby Boom was enrolled in elementary and high school, the student population was 79 percent non-Hispanic white, 14 percent black, 1 percent Asian and Pacific Islander and other races, and 6 percent Hispanic. In 2008, 59 percent were non-Hispanic white, 15 percent black, 5 percent Asian, and 18 percent Hispanic. The Census Bureau's population projections indicate that the population aged 6 to 17 will become increasingly diverse in future years. (p. 5)

The change in schools' student demographics come from many different reasons. A few of those reasons have come from the increase in immigration over the past years (Capps et al., 2005; The Center for Public Education, 2012). Other reasons for the increase in diversity within schools can be caused by: changes in community dynamics, busing of children (students being transported to schools outside their attendance zone for the purposes of increasing diversity within a school), redistricting of school zones, and the development of magnet programs.

With the increase in diversity within schools, each school administrator must begin to understand and cultivate the learning of all students and the community. School administrators must become culturally aware of the different aspects within their schools and how they need to lead such diverse environments, because they are obligated to parents, teachers, the community they serve, and most importantly the children. Scholars suggest that schools' number one focus should be to care for their students (Lindsey, Karns, & Myatt, 2010; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). It is imperative that the administrator build and maintain an ethical school environment. Since schools are diverse, administrators must create an atmosphere of respect and safety by honoring all voices and beliefs. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) stated, ". . . examine and grapple with

those possibilities that could enable all children, whatever their social class, race, or gender, to have opportunities to grow, learn, and achieve" (p. 16).   When individuals feel valued and honored, they will be motivated to achieve what is asked of them.

As stated above, administrators must be culturally aware and understand the many aspects of their schools. This understanding is not only for the principal, but also for the assistant principal. So many times the principal is said to be the sole carrier of this knowledge and understanding because they are the leaders of their school. There is a demand for a new kind of leadership among all administrators within their buildings. It is imperative that assistant principals develop the same kind of understanding of becoming culturally responsive leaders during their roles as assistant principals. One would assume that many assistant principals do seek to become principals at some point in their careers. Many of those who choose to move on to become a principal will step into a diverse school due to the changes in the United States population. As assistant principals become principals and demands on schools increase, assistant principals must be prepared to handle the great task that will lie ahead of them. As an assistant principal myself, I feel it is important to begin to shed light on whether the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of assistant principals are preparing them to become culturally responsive leaders, so that districts and schools can better prepare them for the role that lies ahead of them within diverse schools. Research shows that principals have an impact on the success of the school, which ultimately impacts all students (Branch et al., 2013; Fullan, 2014; Jacobson, 2011; Leithwood et al., 2004; Leithwood & Riehl, 2005).

There has been significant research conducted on principal preparation programs, fewer studies regarding assistant principals' duties and preparation to be principals, and some research into the increase in diversity in schools. There is, however, very little existing research on assistant principals and whether or not they are prepared to lead diverse schools when they become principals for the first time. Assistant principals complete many duties assigned to them by their principals, but this does not necessarily mean they are prepared when they leave the position to become a principal. Research shows the impact principals have on the academic success of schools (Branch et al., 2013; Fullan, 2014; Leithwood et al., 2004). Accordingly, it would be beneficial to adequately prepare assistant principals since most principals serve as assistant principals before they become principals. That is why it is imperative to look further into the assistant principal position to help gain a better understanding of how to effectively prepare them to lead in schools that are becoming increasingly diverse.

As stated above, as an assistant principal myself, my interest is in researching the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of assistant principals and if they are prepared to become culturally responsive leaders who lead a diverse school. I sometimes questioned whether or not the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development I have received as an assistant principal has prepared me to be a culturally responsive leader who can lead a diverse school. From my own experience, I feel as though assistant principals are sometimes left out of trainings, conversations, and experiences that will give them a better insight into the principal position, as well as, better prepare them for becoming a culturally responsive leader. As I began to examine

my own position and looked further into the assistant principal role and duties, I realized there was a lack of research pertaining to whether the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of assistant principals prepare them towards becoming culturally responsive leaders. I found this intriguing because I could relate to the lack of focus towards assistant principals. As I began to further examine my own experience, I realized that many assistant principals who choose to become principals for the first time are entering into schools that are diverse.

This dissertation takes an in-depth look into the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of the assistant principal position and considers whether they are prepared to be culturally responsive leaders in culturally diverse schools. The assistant principal position can be a great opportunity to help a person develop the necessary skills and ability within cultural proficiency, which will in turn help them learn to lead within diverse schools before being placed as a principal.

Research Questions

This study examines the preparation of assistant principals with regards to their duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development they receive, and if they are becoming culturally responsive leaders who can lead in diverse schools. It critically examines the assistant principal position, culturally responsiveness and culturally responsive leadership, and successful school leadership. This study uses Johnson's (2006) culturally responsive leadership practices as its theoretical framework, which highlights the importance of culturally responsive leadership, key practices, and its

impact on leading schools. Two main research questions and one sub question under

each main question were formulated to guide this study. They include:

- How do the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of the

  assistant principals align or not align with culturally responsive leadership?

  - Do assistant principals feel knowledgeable about and/or understand

    cultural responsiveness and its impact on the school and themselves?

- Why do assistant principals feel they are or are not prepared to lead diverse

  schools?

  - What experiences do principals and assistant principals perceive are

    needed in order to be prepared to make a successful transition into

    becoming a culturally responsive leader in a diverse school?

The answers to these research questions can help to determine if the duties,

responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of the assistant principals are

preparing them to be culturally responsive leaders who lead diverse schools. They will

also help to determine if assistant principals understand culturally responsive leadership

and its impact on the school.

As a result of this study, universities will be well informed on how they can help

to improve their graduate administrative educational programs. According to Touré

(2008), universities need to emphasize and provide a more comprehensive program with

regards to culturally responsive leadership in order to help prepare administrators before

they enter into the position. School districts will also be informed and recommendations

will be given to help with how they too can better prepare assistant principals before they

enter the role of being a principal. Khalifa et al. (2016) suggest that district level administrators can have an impact on education and school reform.

Future Chapters

Research shows how schools are becoming increasingly diverse and how there is a need for culturally responsive leadership within them. To help promote rich culturally responsive schools, there is a need for school leaders to understand and exhibit culturally responsive leadership practices/behaviors. A review of the scholarly literature that concerns these ideas will be discussed in Chapter II of this study. The existing literature reveals that principals are not currently prepared to lead in diverse schools. Chapter II also discusses the theoretical framework that grounds this study. Johnson's (2006) description of culturally responsive leadership practices provides this framework. In Chapter III, I discuss the study's research methodology, which constitutes as a basic qualitative research study. In Chapter IV, I report the findings at a surface level. There were 11 key points/themes that were revealed in the data and will be shared in the findings chapter. A deeper discussion and analysis of the findings, as it relates to the existing scholarly literature and the theoretical framework, is presented in Chapter V. In this chapter, I also conclude and provide recommendations for universities and school districts on ways to help prepare assistant principals become to culturally responsive leaders who lead diverse schools. I also provide additional recommendations for principals, assistant principals, and for future research. Again, the purpose of this study is to determine if the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of

assistant principals are preparing them to be culturally responsive leaders who lead

diverse schools.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

This study is unique in that it examines whether the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of assistant principals are preparing them to be culturally responsive leaders who lead in a diverse school. This section helps to lay the scholarly foundation that informs this study. I establish connections among existing literature, explain the need for my research, and consider future research possibilities. I provide a review of the scholarly literature addressing the assistant principal, cultural responsiveness in education, and successful school leadership. Considering the literature on assistant principals will help to determine whether or not the roles and responsibilities assigned to individuals in that position align to the preparation of becoming a principal who is a culturally responsive leader. I also explore further connections between cultural responsiveness and culturally responsive leadership and successful school leadership, as they relate to the preparation of assistant principals. Through successful school leadership, an individual can help sustain, support, and encourage life-long learning gains for students, teachers, schools, and districts (Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, LaPointe, & Orr, 2009).

Review of the Literature

Assistant Principals

The assistant principal position is in most cases, the entry level before becoming a principal (Hausman, Nebeker, McCreary, & Donaldson, 2002; Lee, Kwan, & Walker, 2009). Yet, there is an inadequate representation of assistant principals in the professional literature (Celikten, 2001; Cranston, Tromans, & Reugebrink, 2004; Hausman et al., 2002; Lee et al., 2009; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Oleszewski, Shoho, & Barnett, 2012; Petrides, Jimes, & Karaglani, 2014). The role of assistant principals has evolved over the years. It has transformed from being a supporting role that was developed to relieve many of the burdens off the principal, to a critical role that impacts school improvement. This section on assistant principals will review the common themes that have emerged from the scholarly literature. I review the early development of the position, university preparation, duties and roles, socialization of the position, and the professional development and the preparation for becoming a principal. Reviewing the literature on assistant principals will begin to shed light and further insight into the position. It can also be used to determine if there are any connections with culturally responsive leadership, which will be discussed later in this section.

Early development of assistant principals. Very little research exists on the early development of assistant principals, however Glanz's (1994) study presents a glimpse. The assistant principal position began its development back in the early 1920s (Glanz, 1994). During this time the position's title was not referred to as the assistant principal, it was referred to the "general supervisor" (Glanz, 1994). During that time only

men held this title/position, along with any other hierarchical position of authority (Glanz, 1994; Strober & Tyack, 1980). Females were typically teachers or what Glanz (1994) calls, "special supervisors." Special supervisors held no power. They were used to help instruct less experienced teachers on the mastery of the art of teaching. The general supervisors had a little more authority, in that they helped the principal with logistical operations of the school (Glanz, 1994; Scoggins & Bishop, 1993). Scoggins and Bishop (1993) state that the position was created due to the enormous work load of the principal. Glanz (1994) states that their duties and responsibilities included teaching math and science, preparing attendance reports, collecting data for evaluation purposes, and coordinating special school programs. The general supervisors had very few instructional responsibilities, but were still seen by teachers as more administratively and evaluative. Not long afterwards, the special supervisor's duties and responsibilities were taken over by the general supervisor, but the duties and responsibilities were still limited instructionally (Glanz, 1994). By the 1940s and 1950s the literature began to reflect the contemporary conception of the relationship between the principal and assistant principal, and the title of the general supervisor became the assistant principal (Glanz, 1994).

University preparation. The assistant principal position requires no special training besides an administrative degree, which is the same degree the principal receives. Usually, there are no aspects of the degree that are specifically targeted for being an assistant principal. Over the years, many scholars have investigated whether or not principal preparation programs are adequately preparing school administrators for the position (Cunningham, & Sherman, 2008; Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, &

Meyerson, 2005; Hess & Kelly, 2007; Kowalski, 2004; Levine, 2005; Oleszewski et al., 2012; Touré, 2008). According to Hess and Kelly (2007), the majority of the principals they surveyed did not feel that their graduate programs adequately prepared them for the enormous job of being a principal. Hess and Kelly (2007) and Khalifa et al. (2016) go on further to suggest that graduate programs should begin to examine how they are preparing administrators. Though much of the research suggests that principal preparation programs do not adequately prepare individuals for the position, very little attention is given to what they are actually being taught and if their program infuses culturally responsive practices for leaders. Many scholars reported the programs focused more on research-based content of leadership (theory) with a disconnection from real-world practices. Content, then, seemed lacking toward the preparation for being and becoming a culturally responsive principal (Cunningham, & Sherman, 2008; Davis et al., 2005; Hess & Kelly, 2007; Levine, 2005).

Some principal preparation programs try to balance and connect theory with incorporation of a hands-on internship experience to help provide a more meaningful learning opportunity and to further students' leadership and administration skills (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004; Cunningham & Sherman, 2008; Hess & Kelly, 2007; Oleszewski et al., 2012). Internships typically occur towards the end of the principal licensure program. During the internship, the principal licensure student is given the opportunity to build relationships and practice the skills they have become knowledgeable on. Through these experiences, the emerging administrators begin to understand building operations, time management, interpersonal skills, problem solving,

reflection, and communication (Barnett, Copland, & Shoho, 2009; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Oleszewski et al., 2012). Even though most of the research suggests that this experience can be positive, a few authors emphasize the effectiveness of the experience depends directly on the quality of their experience (Barnett et al., 2009; Cunningham, & Sherman, 2008; Oleszewski et al., 2012). Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2004), for instance, state that high quality mentoring is essential during the internship. Mentoring from an experienced administrator would help student interns to clarify any matters related to role socialization, professional development, and leadership capacity building (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004).

Even though much of the literature discusses school administration preparation programs, there is no specific connection toward courses that help influence or guide assistant principals in their positions nor consideration as to whether administrators are receiving courses related to culturally responsive leadership practices. In their review of the literature, Khalifa et al. (2016), also suggest the need to emphasize culturally responsive leadership within educational leadership preparation programs due to diversity within schools and the increase in "minoritized" students who are being marginalized in schools. In her research study, Touré (2008) recommended that an examination occur into educational leadership programs due to the lack of culturally responsive leadership content being covered within the program. The researchers are suggesting that because there is a lack of culturally responsive leadership knowledge being shared within educational leadership programs, school leaders are not being fully prepared to take on these types of issues within schools. With the growing demands of the position and the

increase in diversity within schools, principal preparation programs should be closely

monitored to help ensure the success of all administrators, including assistant principals

who may become principals in diverse schools. "It is imperative that educational

leadership preparation programs prepare candidates to enter the field of administration

with appropriate knowledge, skills, and habits of the mind to be successful instructional

leaders" (Oliver, 2005, p. 90).

Duties and roles of assistant principals. Typically, upon completing the

administrative licensure degree program most educators move into the position of an

assistant principal before entering the position as a principal. Many educators like to say

that the assistant principal position is the stepping stone toward becoming a principal, but

research shows there is no clear evidence of an effective progression toward becoming a

principal (Celikten, 2001; Chan, Webb, & Bowen, 2003; Kwan, 2009; Marshall,

Mitchell, Gross, & Scott, 1992; Mertz, 2000; Oleszewski et al., 2012). Many times

assistant principals have been described as the "forgotten man" (Oleszewski et al., 2012).

It is important to understand the relevance and significance of the assistant principal

position. The assistant principal is an important part of a school's leadership and

continues to evolve as such (Barnett, Shoho, & Oleszewski, 2012; Oleszewski et al.,

2012; Petrides, Jimes, & Karaglani, 2014).

Accountability measures have increased and changed, requiring more from

schools and their leaders. Yet, research shows that there is no clearly defined list of

duties and responsibilities for the assistant principal (Barnett et al., 2012; Celikten, 2001;

Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Oleszewski et al., 2012).

Celikten (2001) states, "The fact that assistant principals oversee many different duties, facing different obstacles each day, caused the job description of assistant principalship to lack a clearly defined list of duties and responsibilities" (p.67).

The roles and duties of the assistant principal vary based on districts and schools, attending to the specific needs of the school (Barnett et al., 2012; Glanz, 1994). Typically, the assistant principals job description is defined as completing all tasks assigned by the principal (Barnett et al., 2012; Kwan, 2009; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Oleszewski et al., 2012), which depends greatly of the perception of the principal. Celikten (2001) suggests "The role of assistant principal is usually one that entails a number of tasks the principal does not necessarily want to do and is based on the amount of power the principal is willing to share or delegate to them" (p. 68). The role of the assistant principal can change from year to year depending upon the need of the school. Oleszewski et al. (2012) suggests that an assistant principal's job performance and time management have been impacted by the lack of clarity of the job description. Oleszewski et al. (2012) and Celikten (2001) both express the frustration felt by assistant principals, due to the lack of clarity of the position.

Much of the literature on assistant principals focuses on the major functions of the assistant principals. Even though the research suggests no clearly defined list of duties and responsibilities, there are certain duties and responsibilities that are common among most assistant principals. Most assistant principals supervise a wide range of duties, and each day can bring something different and unexpected. Assistant principals are constantly juggling tasks and setting priorities. The most common duties and

responsibilities of the assistant principal, as seen in much of the literature, are: student

management, personnel management, and resource management (Barnett et al., 2012;

Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Oleszewski et al., 2012).

The literature suggests that the majority of their time was taken up by student discipline

and managerial duties. More specifically, the literature suggests that student

management was the most prominent role of assistant principals (Celikten, 2001;

Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2012). Student management is

defined by Good (2008) as the "three Bs", which are: "books, buses, and behinds." Of

those three Bs, student behavior (behinds) is the area that is most consistent with the

major duties of the assistant principal, as seen in the literature. In Oleszewski et al.'s

(2012) comprehensive review of the literature, they state, "Throughout the literature, it

was found that most professionals within the field of education commonly view assistant

principals as disciplinarians" (p. 276). Kwan and Walker (2008) suggest that assistant

principals in Hong Kong spent too much time in this area and they felt this was the least

important aspect of the job.

Research has negatively portrayed the role of assistant principals because they are

seen mostly as the disciplinarian (Oleszewski et al. 2012). Disciplining students for

inappropriate behavior is only one aspect of an administrator's duties and it is necessary

at times. Having too much of one thing can impact you in the long run. Oleszewski et al.

(2012) state: "However, an overwhelming amount of tasks related to discipline and

student management can have negative effects on assistant principals' effectiveness and

job satisfaction" (p. 277). Oleszewski et al. (2012) reference a study regarding New

York assistant principals by Glanz (1994). In this study, according to Oleszewski et al. (2012), they indicated dissatisfaction with these kinds of tasks and they found their job to be thankless, with low morale. Much of this dissatisfaction comes because student management can be very time consuming, which leaves very little time for other areas that impact student performance, such as instructional leadership (Celikten, 2001). Oleszewski et al. (2012) go further to state that becoming more visible within the classrooms and throughout the building and sharing the disciplinarian role with other administrators helps to decrease the amount of time spent on student management related tasks. Like Oleszewski et al. (2012), Celikten (2001) also suggests that other administrative staff could share and complete the task of disciplining students.

With a slightly different twist, but still identifying student management as the key role conducted by assistant principals, Cranston et al. (2004) conducted a study that not only identified what assistant principals actually did in a week but also identified how they might like to spend their time in a week, based on the same categories. The assistant principals responded to roles that would be completed in the "real (typical) week" and roles they would like to complete in the "ideal (preferred) week" (Cranston et al., 2004). Compared to the *"real"* duties, the assistant principals preferred to spend most of their time with strategic leadership and less of their time with operational matters. Students' issues were next to last in how they would like to spend their time. The assistant principals in this study felt they were well equipped to complete the *"ideal"* duties.

As stated above, much of the literature indicates that student discipline was the major role of assistant principals. However, a study by Lee, Kwan, & Walker (2009)

looks specifically at the assistant principal's responsibilities in relations to school academic success. Their study generated seven responsibilities associated with the assistant principals. The seven responsibilities were ranked in order of time spent by the assistant principals. Those seven responsibilities were: staff management, strategic direction and policy environment, quality assurance and accountability, teaching, learning and curriculum, external communication and connection, leader and teacher growth and development and resource management (Lee et al., 2009). Lee et al. (2009) stated that their study indicated that the assistant principals felt that strategic direction and policy environment was more important than staff management in regard to the success of the school.

As seen through the current research, there are no clearly defined roles and duties of the assistant principal. Most assistant principals spend most of their time dealing with student behaviors, and less time growing and developing in other areas of the position. The assistant principals felt capable and confident enough and they wanted to expand their development as an administrator. It is imperative that we gain a better understanding of assistant principals, in order to grow and develop successful leaders in the future. Celikten (2001) states,

> To better understand the secondary school assistant principalship, it is imperative to understand the particular duties that must be carried out, the role the assistant principal is expected to perform, and the skill and abilities that must be brought to the position. It is also imperative that there be a concrete job definition of assistant principalship, otherwise, efforts to prepare assistant principals and to study current problems will be ineffective. (p. 67)

There is a shift in the expectations of schools, due to changes in standards and new accountability measures. Because of these changes, the role of the assistant principal must be redefined to include more productivity and contribution from the assistant principals, which could be beneficial for the school (Celikten, 2001) and future administrative positions.

      Socialization. Research regarding the socialization of assistant principals is limited. Once assistant principals know what they are expected to do, they must begin to examine how they are socialized into their position. In both her articles (Mertz [2007] and Mertz [2000]), she describes the manner of looking at the *how* of the position and not the *what* of the position, as the socialization process. Mertz (2007) states:

> How assistant principals think about what they do; how they perceive their place within the organization; how they operate within the organization; and how they think about and experience the position. The goal was to get inside the position and inside the heads of people holding the position (emic perspective), and to see how they affect and are affected by the position (how it works). (p. 10)

Other studies define socialization as "learning and performing social roles" that are acquired through learning the norms, behaviors, values and beliefs of an organization, while performing the position of the assistant principal (Armstrong, 2010; Ashforth, 2000; Crow, 2004; Oleszewski et al., 2012). Not only is it imperative to know what the duties and roles of an assistant principal are, but it is also critical to understand how they are oriented into the position as an administrator (Oleszewski et al., 2012).

      There are several things that the assistant principal must deal with when they first step into the position. A few of those things are: moving from the isolation of the

classroom to an open interactive administrative office; teaching and administering; resolving conflict; learning and identifying the organization; and learning how to assist the principal in a leadership capacity (Ashforth, 2000; Crow, 2004). Many beginning administrators can feel overwhelmed and frustrated by this new role. This can be, for some, a difficult transition. The difficulty and level of frustration can vary from some due to an additional factor, which is the diversity of the school demographics (Armstrong, 2010). Armstrong (2010) states: "These administrators feel frustrated by their inability to address the needs of an increasingly diverse school demographic, and they experience ambiguity and stress when their actions and values conflict" (p. 687).

Oleszewski et al. (2012) state that the socialization of assistant principals differs from the other educational leaders because of the lack of training related to being an assistant principal. Oleszewski et al. (2012) state, "the informal training and enculturation that occurs through socialization is critical to the career development" (p. 271). Oleszewski et al. (2012) characterized the assistant principal's socialization via two categories: characteristics of socialization and socialization process. Oleszewski et al.'s (2012) review of the literature, references Greenfield's (1985) study to describe the characteristics of socialization in stages, which are: "individual, informal, random, variable, serial, and involving divestiture process" (p. 271). The principal influences the individual stage of becoming an assistant principal. The informal stage happens because assistant principals make mistakes and they learn as they go. The random stage is in the early part of being an assistant principal because organizations do not effectively influence the assistant principal and the assistant principal cannot anticipate the

socialization stages. The variable stage comes from the shock of entering the administration role, which can be difficult for some. The serial stage happens because it is difficult for the organization to help shape the assistant principal. The process of losing the teacher identity and developing the administrative identity is the stage of the "divestiture," according to Oleszewski et al. (2012).

Oleszewski et al. (2012) describes the socialization process as a series of enculturation tasks. These tasks are: deciding to leave teaching; analyzing the selection process to learn what or what not to do; hiding the culture shock and uniting with the principal; learning to prioritize tasks and interpret policy while adding their own personal values and values of the organization; asking for tougher tasks to establish authority and to show that they can assist; and adjusting the thinking about how to manage student discipline and conflict. Oleszewski et al. (2012) says that this socialization process helps the assistant principals to learn the norms, values, and beliefs of the organization and ways to conform to the expectations set by the organization.

Armstrong (2010) looks further into the socialization of the assistant principals, which also differs from the literature. She considers this process as the "rites of passage" into the position. Different from the Oleszeski et al. study, Armstrong (2010) examined the socialization structures and processes that impact their transition from teaching to administration and the challenges of leading diverse schools (Armstrong, 2010). Armstrong (2010) found through her study that the socialization of these assistant principals began earlier than the literature suggests, which was before they entered the position.

> Rites of passage were initiated as soon as the aspiring vice-principals indicated their interest in becoming administrators, and they triggered a complex psychosocial journey that, over time, forced the novices to reject their teacher values and beliefs and realign themselves with managerial and administrative goals. (Armstrong, 2010, p. 696)

Armstrong (2010) identifies four cycles that the new assistant principal goes through as they adjust to the socialization of the position. They are: "Entry-Exit, Immersion-Emersion, Disintegration-Reintegration, and Transformation-Re-stabilization" (p. 697). The phases build upon one another and the rites of passages occur differently within each one. The Entry-Exit cycle begins when the assistant principal is still a teacher, but preparing to become an administrator (Armstrong, 2010). They feel the job is simple and they can do the job. The Immersion-Emersion cycle happens when they first enter the position. The administrator has not yet lost the teacher mindset, which makes the transition complex. The Disintegration-Reintegration cycle happens later in the first year and into the second year. During this part of the cycle the administrators are developing new competencies other than the ones from their teaching experience. The final cycle, Transformation-Re-stabilization, happens when the assistant principals feels fully integrated into the school and the district culture.

Although research is limited on the socialization of assistant principals, the existing research does suggest the importance of assistant principals learning the norms and expectations of the organization. How this looks for each assistant principal may vary, depending on the values and beliefs of the school and district. Assistant principals bring their own values, beliefs, and behaviors with them, which can sometimes conflict with the organization (Mertz, 2000). Being oriented into the position can be very

stressful and a difficult transition for some, and for others not so much. Assistant

principals learn from each lived experience and each experience is important to one

another. The experiences help them to be successful within the field of administration. It

is imperative to provide the appropriate and necessary professional development to

assistant principals to help smooth the transition into such a critical role.

  Professional development and preparation for becoming a principal. Like

principals, assistant principals also need professional development to help them grow

professionally.

> Assistant principals generally indicate they are satisfied with their positions and
> plan to stay in administration (Oliver, 2003); therefore, the need for their
> professional development is crucial to both enhance their instructional leadership
> skills as well as to instill in them the desire to become principals. (Oliver, 2005, p.
> 90)

Assistant principals are vital to the school, providing support in various ways (Oliver,

2005). The literature does not reflect much attention towards the professional

development of assistant principals. As seen through the current literature, assistant

principals spend a lot of their time completing managerial/management duties. Assistant

principal training should go beyond this type of development, and expand to prepare

them to fill roles and functions within other administrative capacities throughout the

school and district (Oliver, 2005).

  Oliver (2005) suggests that the need for professional growth opportunities is

important since assistant principals may become principals. Most of the literature

indicated that the professional development received by assistant principals consisted of

mainly management items, personnel procedures, and assessment procedures/practices (Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2012; Oliver, 2005). The literature suggests that very little professional development focused on student learning and curriculum and instruction, and no literature suggested any culturally responsive professional development. Much of the professional development needed, as mentioned in the literature, referred to instructional leadership, student learning, and financial oversight (Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2012; Oliver, 2005).

However, Petrides et al. (2014) suggest a slightly different approach with professional development for assistant principals. Petrides et al. (2014) contend that professional development should be tailored based on how assistant principals see their roles and relations, and where they are in their careers. Examining this way of thinking takes the focus off a set of standard professional opportunities, like most of the research suggests, but rather customizes the professional development to meet the need of individual assistant principals. This may look different for each assistant principal based on the many factors they may encounter within their daily roles and schools. Providing professional development based on the needs of the assistant principal aligns with findings in Oliver's (2005) study, which indicated the professional development the assistant principals desired to have over the three years the study was conducted. Oliver (2005) stated that the assistant principals desired to have, in 2000 and 2002, more development on teacher supervision and personnel matters. That desire changed in 2004. During that year they desired to gain more development in student learning, instruction, and curriculum. The assistant principals in the study felt the need for additional training

to help better prepare them, not only for the being a principal, but to complete the tasks that were set before them as an assistant principal.

Despite the professional development opportunities afforded to assistant principals, one would assume that being an assistant principal prepares you for becoming a principal. According to the research this is a myth and does not accurately reflect that assistant principals are prepared to be principals (Barnett et al., 2012; Chan et al., 2003; Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2012). As stated previously, the role of the assistant principal is greatly influenced by the principal and how they perceive that position should function. It is important for principals to view the assistant principal as a partner and help to support their growth professionally.

> Clearly, principals have the power to provide meaningful growth and development opportunities for their assistant principals, especially in building their capabilities to become future principals. Supportive principals provide training, develop an open and honest relationship, create opportunities for assistant principals to attend and perform principal functions, and encourage their assistant principals to pursue principalships. (Barnett et al., 2012, p. 97)

Principals can serve as key mentors for professional development of assistant principals. Oleszewski et al. (2012) state: "Mentoring is an important part of professional development. Assistant principals have identified the principal as a facilitator of professional growth" (p. 269). Retelle (2010) also states that the principal as mentor can help to build a positive relationship, and having a positive relationship is linked to being slightly better prepared for being a principal.

As seen throughout the literature, assistant principals receive very little professional development that goes beyond the typical managerial duties. Professional

development is needed to enrich and enhance the knowledge base of assistant principals.

Oliver (2005) suggests that professional development fulfills one of two purposes: skill

development and career advancement. Throughout the literature, no reference was made

toward professional development involving culturally responsive leadership practices. If

we are asking assistant principals to become principals in diverse schools, then it is

imperative that they are properly prepared to do so. Districts must begin seeing the

assistant principal position as a training ground for becoming a principal, and treat it as

such. Those assumptions that being an assistant principal prepares one to be a principal

must be re-examined. Districts must look for ways to better prepare them for the diverse

and changing schools that await them as new principals.

Cultural Responsiveness in Education

 Cultural responsiveness. There is an increase in the use of the term cultural

responsiveness within education due to the awareness that many of the schools in the

U.S. are becoming more diverse within recent years. Administrators and teachers should

be knowledgeable about cultural responsiveness and utilize those practices to know what

works best for culturally and linguistically diverse students and to ensure the success of

all students (Ladson-Billings, 2001; Khalifa et al., 2016). The literature describes

cultural responsiveness in education as a process or way to connect and bridge the gap

between educators and their students' cultural backgrounds to help make learning more

relevant for the students (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Gay (2010) suggests more

specifically that cultural responsiveness

uses the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them. It teaches *to and through* the strength of these students. Cultural responsiveness is the behavioral expressions of knowledge, beliefs, and values that recognize the importance of racial and cultural diversity in learning. It is validating and affirming. (p. 31)

Through the growing literature on culture in education, educators are beginning to understand that students are coming to school with a wealth of beliefs, values, and cultures that need to be tapped into in order to strengthen the connection between life and learning. Their perspectives are no longer one sided, but they are a reflection of multicultural views and knowledge. Ladson-Billings (1995) suggested that cultural responsiveness began to emerge within education because it examines multicultural perspectives and is enriched with cultural knowledge. Villegas and Lucas (2007) explain that culturally diverse students need a new way of looking at teaching that involves understanding the role of culture and language, and how it can be used in learning. This way of thinking can help to improve the performance of so many underachieving multicultural groups within schools by drawing from students' cultural backgrounds (Banks, 2000; Gay, 2010; Giroux, 1992; Khalifa et al., 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Zepeda, 2005).

Many students lack the connection to learning, which makes their performance more difficult. How teachers successfully and efficiently deliver instruction to culturally diverse students are tied to cultural responsiveness. Teachers have to be aware of the lived experiences of their students by intentionally connecting with their students. They also have to thoughtfully and deliberately make an effort to include students' voices and

experiences in their instruction. Most of the literature advocates for the integration of

cultural knowledge and techniques, which help to lead to effective measures for diverse

students (Gay, 2010; Irvine, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Cultural responsiveness improves students' performance because teachers deliberately

and intentionally use cultural knowledge to help empower students intellectually,

socially, emotionally, and politically (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2002;

Ladson-Billings, 2009). According to Nelson and Guerra (2007),

> This broadened cultural lens allows teachers to see students for what they bring
> and use student knowledge and contributions as a bridge for teaching and
> learning. As a result, students feel valued and are engaged in learning, leading to
> higher achievement. (p. 60)

The focus for cultural responsiveness is on meeting the needs of all students from diverse

backgrounds. Once students are connected and feel empowered to learn they are capable

of so many things. Cultural responsiveness can be an idea used to help teachers learn to

meet the needs of the current day students, in spite the cultural and linguistic

backgrounds of their leaders and teachers (Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012).

Culturally responsive schools. Much of the literature calls attention to the

increase in the diversity among the student population in U.S. schools today. With the

increasing presence of diversity within education the idea of having culturally responsive

schools is enlightening and even, profound. According to Madhlangobe and Gordon

(2012),

Cultural responsiveness is a school improvement strategy that can transition schools into the multicultural age by equipping practitioners with an understanding and appreciation of students' cultural knowledge in order to provide personal responses to how children express their desire to learn, while enriching classroom and school environments in general. (p. 200)

Culturally responsive schools establish a school culture within the organization that is flexible, one that promotes and embraces diversity. Madsen and Mabokela (2005) state that notice should be made on "how these contexts can promote social norms for cohesiveness and mutual understanding" (p.1). The culture that is established throughout the school brings an understanding regarding how all members of the school community address issues of diversity. "School norms and their cultural nuances establish the work climate that will accommodate and lead to greater flexibility on diversity related issues" (Madsen & Mabokela, 2005, p. 3).

As previously stated, many culturally and linguistically diverse students face many challenges with connecting to learning within the schools. Even though many educational scholars acknowledge that many of these students may face underachievement or failure due to the cultural differences among school leaders, teachers, parents, community, and students, they also emphasize that culturally responsive schools recognize differences in order to help students move forward (Khalifa et al., 2016; Taylor & Whittaker, 2003). Khalifa et al. (2016) suggest that "culturally responsive schooling accepts and validates the Indigenous home cultures and proclivities of students" (p. 1290). How students of color are treated by others and how they respond to situations is influenced by a culturally responsive school. Scholars agree that

culturally responsive schools help to establish those influences by creating learning environments that are conducive to learning for all students (Gay, 2002; Gay, 2010).

Learning environments. The learning environment within schools should promote safe spaces that encourage a sense of belonging, respect, acceptance, and affirmation of one's self (Chen et al., 2009; Montgomery, 2001; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). Students should know that they belong and not feel threatened by others within their learning environments. Culturally responsive learning environments build self-esteem and confidence in students' ability to achieve while learning to demonstrate care and use social skills with each other, which builds a safe space in which students are free to take risk (Harriott & Martin, 2004; Jones, 2007). Within these spaces students should feel motivated to learn. With the right conditions, conditions that culturally responsive learning environments provide, students can increase their intrinsic motivation to learn (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). Scholars suggest the following conditions that should be created by students and teachers to increase motivation: inclusive mutually respected environments, attitudes of personal choice, integration of student perspectives and values, and belief in students to accomplish anything they set out to do (Chen et al., 2009; Gay, 2002; Jones, 2007; Montgomery, 2001; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995).

The learning environment should give a sense of family (Jones, 2007). The sense of family generates from the caring relationships built among students and teachers. Noddings, (2007) concluded, "A person earns the label 'caring' by regularly establishing caring relations, and a caring relation requires that the cared-for recognize the caring" (p.

227). Caring can be as simple as how staff and students treat the facility and property, suggests Biffle (2006). Resilience is built, which supports the development of the whole child, when care is exercised (Biffle, 2006). The literature suggests that within all of these conditions, achievement and high expectations are communicated and success is promoted (Gay, 2002; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2001; McGlynn, 2009; Wiggan, 2008). Students are acknowledged for every effort, meeting goals, and their work is displayed proudly in the halls throughout the building (McGlynn, 2009; Wiggan, 2008). As student efforts are acknowledged and goals met they become empowered (Gay, 2002; Gay, 2010). When students become empowered through their learning environments they gain control over their learning. Gay (2010) suggests that students become the "primary sources and center, subjects and outcomes, consumers and producers of knowledge" (p. 36). The literature agrees that culturally responsive learning environments help students become accountable for one another's success (Gay, 2010; Noddings, 2007).

Home and family connection. Like learning environments, culturally responsive schools not only focus on the shared learning spaces, but they extend their reach to promote responsiveness to the cultures of the school's parents and family community. Research shows how critical the connection between school and family community can be and its impact on student success. Taylor and Whitaker (2003) state that the level of care that is shown toward a school's students is reflected in the level of care shown toward the families they serve. Delpit (1995) suggests that "appropriate education for poor children and children of color can only be devised in consultation with adults who

share their culture" (p. 45). Delpit (1995) goes on further to suggest that parents,

teachers, and members of the community "must be allowed to participate fully in the

discussion of what kind of instruction is in their child's best interest" (p. 45). Despite

what scholars suggest that some school are trying with good intentions, Delpit (1995)

disagrees and states, "Good liberal intentions are not enough" (p. 45). Schools must

begin to push harder, become open to understanding cultural responsiveness, and find

ways to make connections to families of the children they teach. This is critical for

building culturally responsive schools and family community relationships.

In Cooper's (2009) study, she discusses the need for schools to build cultural

capital to ensure success. Schools need to build the cultural capital of parents and the

community of the students they serve by inviting and welcoming parents into the school,

and valuing the students' home lives (Cooper, 2009). The literature reflects the need for

schools to get parents more involved within schools. Sometimes this can be a challenge

because many parents feel uncomfortable or have had negative experiences with schools.

"The nature of home-school relationships becomes critical in racially, culturally, and

economically diverse communities where parents often report feeling shut out of school

events and marginalized by the school building and district leadership" (Johnson, 2007,

p. 50). Culturally responsive schools identify this issue, find ways to foster relationships,

and help the parents to navigate the system of education to help provide an appropriate

curriculum for all students.

Frequent and effective communication among school staff members, families,

and community can be utilized to ensure that all students are receiving the same message

about the importance of school (Taylor & Whittaker, 2003). Many times students are faced with the hardships of home and family issues, which can have a bearing on their motivation and ability to succeed in school. That is why it is very important that schools bridge any gaps that may exist between home and family community because culturally responsive schools incorporate programs that support the emotional and mental well-being of their students. Scholars suggest several programs that culturally responsive schools implement to help connect to the whole child, such as clothing exchange, mental health care, food banks, universal breakfast and lunch, and summer breakfast and lunch feedings. Culturally responsive schools understand each of these aspects and build on them to encourage and motivate students. "School-family-community partnerships can improve school programs and climate, create a family like school, provide support and family services, increase parent and family skills and leadership, serve as school-community liaisons, and help teachers" (Taylor & Whittaker, 2003, p. 49). To assure that their schools are culturally responsive, principals who practice culturally responsive leadership deliberately and intentionally make sure that the instruction is culturally relevant and connects to the students (promotes a culturally responsive curriculum), build positive relationships with parents and communities, build the capacity of culturally responsiveness within their teachers and throughout the school environment, and advocate for change.

Successful School Leadership

Throughout the years, research has well documented how leadership matters and how important effective leadership is in improving student learning within schools

(Fullan, 2014; Leithwood et al., 2004; Leithwood et al., 2010; Leithwood, & Riehl, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005; Sergiovanni, 2001). There is expansive literature about leadership. Leadership is defined by Leithwood and Riehl (2003) as having two functions: "*providing directions and exercising influence*" (p. 2). Leithwood and Riehl (2005) look at leadership further and defines it as ''the work of mobilizing and influencing others to articulate and achieve the school's shared intentions and goals'' (p. 14). Now, more than ever, many school leaders are faced with the challenges of accountability measures set by state mandates, high levels of student poverty, changes in demographics, and many other factors that affect student performances. Though these challenges arise, many school leaders can handle the challenges while research deems them to be successful leaders. This section is organized by what is success, and by some of the qualities and practices of successful school leaders. Some of these qualities and practices can be seen in culturally responsive leaders.

Success. Even though much of the literature reflects the impact of effective leadership on student academic performance, there are those that argue whether or not the impact is direct or indirect (Leithwood et al., 2006). For the most part, much of the research indicates that the impact is indirect toward student success (Drysdale, 2011; Leigh Sanzo, Sherman, & Clayton, 2011; Leithwood, 2005; Leithwood & Day, 2007; Leithwood, & Riehl, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005). Leithwood and Riehl (2005) refer to successful school leaders as having ''leadership orientations and practices that have been demonstrated to have a positive impact on student learning, whether directly or indirectly through school conditions or the actions of others'' (p. 14–15). Other scholars link

school leader success to how well students achieve (Jacobson, 2011). In review of the International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP) study, conducted across eight countries, Johnson et al., (2008) stated, "In countries with high accountability measures such as the USA and China (as well as the UK and Australia), student performance on external tests of literacy and numeracy has become a key measure of school success" (p. 419). Due to the increasing accountability pressures issued from the state and federal government, for many students, achievement is usually based on standardized state mandated tests. Those scores are usually used to determine school leaders' success. Johnson et al., (2008) states, "In challenging, high poverty US schools, for instance, [improving scores] often determines whether the school will remain open and the principal will retain his or her job" (p. 419).

Despite the increase in accountability measures, Johnson (2007) questioned what constitutes "success" in high poverty challenging schools serving primarily students of color. Was "success" just merely increasing student performance on standardized state mandated tests or should we begin to examine it differently? Should we begin to refer to "success" as considering how schools incorporate student family culture and community during their learning experience, while providing high quality culturally responsive instruction? Johnson (2007) gives another insightful way of examining success in schools that looks beyond just one moment on a state mandated test, but whether schools are providing "learning experiences that 'center' students from diverse backgrounds in the history, language, and culture of their families and home communities" (p. 56).

Capacity building. Leithwood et al. (2008) suggest that the organization has what it needs to be successful, but the school leaders serve as catalyst for helping and developing others within the organization to expand their potential capacity. Capacity building is key for the success of the school because it creates a more promising condition for successful learning. Much of the research describes capacity building in schools as "creating the conditions, opportunities and experiences for collaboration and mutual learning" (Harris, 2002, p. 3), and "the collective competency of the school as an entity to bring about effective change" (Harris et al., 2013, p. 84). As school leaders develop capacity, they are providing opportunities for collaboration and shared meaning to occur, which helps generate sustained improvement throughout the school. Gurr et al. (2006) found that capacity building emerged as common themes in different case studies they analyzed. They found that the capacity was cultivated and established through partnership, collegiality, trust, and support, which are some of the same things that culturally responsive leaders do. According to Johnson (2006), culturally responsive leaders build relationships, and build a trusting and supportive environment.

Qualities. Throughout the ISSPP, researchers found that many of the successful school leaders exhibited very similar leadership attributes, features, and styles that were linked to setting and maintaining specific direction for their schools (Ylimaki et al., 2007, 2009). Even though the research identifies similar leadership features among successful school leaders, the research also revealed differences in leadership, climate, and structure (Jacobson, 2011). Successful school leaders work to set high expectations for students and staff, in regard to time on task and student performance, create inclusive safe and

orderly learning environments for all students and staff, connect and build positive long-lasting relationships with family and home community, and hold students, staff parents and themselves accountable for meeting the expectations that were set for them (Jacobson et al., 2005). Scholars suggest that successful leaders in highly diverse schools "lead for social justice" by building a strong connection with the community (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005) and increasing the amount of students' social capital that is valued (Khalifa et al., 2016).

Along with these common features, many successful school leaders also demonstrated similar personal qualities and characteristics. Leithwood and Day (2007) identified the following: empathy and care for all, openness, belief that all students should succeed, frankness, and enthusiasm. Gurr et al. (2006) highlighted passion, optimism, persistence, determination, assertiveness, visionary, inspiring, committed to education by developing their students, and serving the community they worked in. The literature shows the importance of these features and qualities that all of the principals shared in common, and how these values guided their practices.

Practices. Like personal features and qualities, there were common core practices that successful school leaders utilized, which made them effective leaders. Although these core practices existed in all successful schools, Leithwood (2005) suggests that they are "probably not sufficient for success, but necessary in almost all contexts" (p. 620). After careful examination of the literature majority of the scholars refer to Leithwood and Riehl's (2005) extensive research, resulting in core practices that successful leaders used to help establish effective schools. Many of the studies have now

adopted core principal practices Leithwood and Riehl (2005) identified as frameworks for successful leadership practices (Drysdale, 2011; Drysdale, & Gurr, 2011; Jacobson, 2008; Jacobson et al., 2005; Jacobson et al., 2007; Jacobson &Ylimaki, 2011; Ylimaki et al., 2007).

These practices were also identified in the International Successful School Principals Project (ISSPP). The basic set of core leadership practices identified by Leithwood et al. (2008) after extensive research on school leadership across countries, are: building vision and setting directions, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing teaching and learning.

- *Building vision and setting directions.* To set a direction, leaders must establish and develop a shared vision and purpose, and high expectation for the work that is to be done. There must be a sense of inclusiveness, responsibility on all parties, and goal setting that leads to the overall vision that has been established. The direction needs to be focused around student learning. Among the discussions and directions taken, democratic values need to be infused throughout them.

- *Developing people.* Developing people involves providing support, building the knowledge and skills of staff members while building the nature to be able to apply the knowledge and skills that have been obtained, modeling appropriate values, and providing intellectual stimulation. To provide these things school leaders must be visible, and accessible to everyone. Effective

leaders are strong instructional leaders as they work to actively develop people.

- *Redesigning the organization.* This practice revolves around building collaboration based working conditions that are conducive for growth and learning for everyone. Leaders trust and encourage a culture of distributed leadership, which help to create professional learning communities.

- *Managing teaching and learning*. This practice focuses on the support of teachers and building an environment that is conducive for students and teachers. Leaders monitor the learning to avoid the least amount of distraction and to provide the best learning environment for all.

To sum up the core practices, which can increase the chances of student success, Jacobson (2011) explains,

> leaders need to create a sense of coordinated purpose within their school, then provide the resources and appropriate motivation to enable the staff to develop the skills necessary for their collective undertaking, while consciously working to remove any barriers that might impede the creation of these collaborative cultures, structures and goals. (p. 36)

Although these practices were identified as key practices, they were not completed daily and the way leaders went about doing them varied. The core practices provide a framework and can serve as a guide for leaders on successful leadership practices and can be connected to the practices of culturally responsive leadership.

Literature Summary and Gaps in the Literature

After a careful review of the literature, there are some gaps in the literature reviewed for this study. The assistant principal literature, in general, is sparse, with the majority of the research focusing on their roles and duties. There is a gap within the research as to how individuals are prepared for the assistant principal position and how to effectively develop them into culturally proficient leaders. When reviewing the literature on cultural responsiveness, most of what I found related to teaching practices and culture. Research exists on culturally responsive leadership, but more is needed due to the increase of culturally and linguistically diverse student populations that are arising in US schools today. Not only is there a need for more research on culturally responsive leadership, but also on how to prepare and develop leaders better to become more culturally responsive. While addressing the parent connection aspect of culturally responsive schools, there has been in consistency with addressing parent involvement in the literature for leadership preparation (Auerbach, 2007). Research shows the importance of principals to the success of schools. Although there is growing knowledge regarding what principals need to know and be able to do, there is a gap that exists on how to develop and prepare highly qualified assistant principals. There is still much to learn about assistant principals and how to continue to grow them without letting them fall to the side or get caught in a bad system that diminishes their best qualities. We must continue to examine further the assistant principals' leadership role and their preparation to help increase their knowledge as future leaders. Based on the literature that was studied, across all three areas, insight was given into what one needs to know and be able

to do to be an assistant principal, however, gaps exist regarding how to effectively prepare leaders (principals and assistant principals) to make these much-needed strides within education for the success of all children.

Theoretical Framework

The development of the theoretical framework of this study commenced with consideration of cultural responsiveness, which is discussed in the review of the literature. There are several cultural factors that may come into play as they relate to minority students. Society still operates in a Eurocentric viewpoint which is due to the racial background of our country's history. Culturally speaking, some educators are not proficient enough to understand or handle the various factors minority students have to face (Madhlangobe & Gordan, 2012). "This means that a teacher must understand the importance of recognizing children's backgrounds and acknowledge these differences in healthy ways." ("Culturally Proficient", n.d.). This lets us know that educators need to be fully equipped to teach diverse students. Many of these students do not connect with school and distance themselves from learning because they feel that teachers can not relate to them nor their home environment.

Culturally, students add their own splash of flavor to a very large mixing bowl. Much of their culture comes from their home environment and surrounding. Just because students come from the same community does not mean they are the same culturally. Culture provides insight into who they are and their beliefs/values (Gay, 2000). We can learn about the students' cultures by building relationships (Davis, 2002; Gay, 2000; Johnson, 2007; Madhlangobe & Gordan, 2012; Smith, 2005). Once

relationships are built among students and educators, then connections can be made in order to establish long lasting impressions and dialogue. Building that understanding across cultures can also help during instruction. School administrators need to understand this in order to build a more culturally proficient school that values all students, and they have to be intentional in doing so (Gay, 2010; Johnson, 2006, 2007; Khalifa et al., 2016; Madhlangobe & Gordan, 2012; Smith, 2005; Terrell & Lindsey, 2009).

Over the years, the schools within the U.S. have seen growth and expansion among the diversity of its student population. The diversity among students can sometimes have a negative impact on diverse learners (Chamberlain, 2005). School leaders are challenged by the needs and viewpoints that their students bring with them as they enter their buildings. Students bring with them their family history and background, experiences and exposures, and their own values and beliefs. Many administrators and teachers do not come from the same culturally diverse backgrounds as many of their students. Not coming from the same background as their students can sometimes hinder them from making connections with their students. With this rapid increase in diversity among students, staff and communities, schools need a new approach to administrative leadership that embraces culturally responsive practices for all learners, especially diverse learners. "Significant changes are needed in how African American, Asian, Latino, and Native American students are taught in U.S. schools" (Gay, 2010, p. xvii).

As seen through the literature on cultural responsiveness, it is critical for educators to understand and build environments that foster success for culturally diverse students. Many times when the literature speaks of cultural responsiveness, it references

the teacher and their need to be culturally responsive. Literature is emerging with the understanding that not only do teachers need to incorporate culturally responsive practices in their teaching, but administrators also need to develop culturally responsive leadership practices within their school to ensure that their staff understands and utilizes these practices throughout the entire building (Gay, 2010; Khalifa et al., 2016). Some scholars suggest that the more culturally responsive practices exist at the administrative level, the more they exist throughout the building (Avolio, 2005; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Leithwood et al., 1999; Sergiovanni, 2000).

Principals are a vital part of the success of the school. There are many aspects of the position that one must be capable of in order to lead a school effectively. Schools are becoming more and more diverse and it is essential that principals are culturally responsive leaders. "Culturally responsive leaders can inspire teachers to develop cultural proficiency and use culturally responsive practices in their classrooms" (Aguilar, 2011, p. 2). It is very important that principals are prepared to lead in diverse schools before they enter the position. Aguilar (2011) suggests that knowledge of student culture is essential to successfully educating all students. Not only should we be aware of how culture impacts students, but also how it impacts our own lives (Aguilar, 2011; Johnson, 2006; Khalifa et al., 2016). Terrell and Lindsey (2009) state, "school leaders must first be willing to explore their core values, beliefs, and assumptions about serving all students' needs" (p. 5). Knowledge is only but a part in the big picture, but being intentional in our actions toward applying the knowledge we have gained is what moves us further in our development of becoming a culturally responsive leader.

For these reasons, Johnson's (2006) theory of culturally responsive leadership serves as the framework for this study. According to Johnson (2006), culturally responsive leadership refers to leadership behaviors and/or processes used to respond to, support, understand, and acknowledge the various cultural aspects through a within the school community. Johnson (2007) says the practices "empower diverse groups of parents and make the school curriculum more multicultural" (p. 50). According to Johnson, culturally responsive leaders *self-reflects on their own core values and beliefs* and the work to create a "*trusting environment*" that makes people want to be there and have a feeling that they belong, while promoting culturally responsiveness throughout the school. Culturally responsive leaders also *support academic achievement*, whether large or small and makes sure the instruction is inclusive. *Students' cultures are affirmed*, *parents are invited, encouraged to get involved, and empowered within their community to make change*. *Relationships are developed* with the community. Finally, Johnson shares how culturally responsive leaders act like social activists to *bring about social change* for the betterment of the community (2006). Table 1 synthesizes Johnson's (2006) core practices that are exhibited by a culturally responsive leader.

To explore this theory as it plays out in schools with a single school district, I conducted interviews in order to investigate whether the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of assistant principals are preparing them to be culturally responsive leaders. According to Johnson (2006), such preparation is important in order to allow principals to lead diverse schools successfully.

Table 1

Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices

- Self-reflection and exploration of own core values and beliefs
- Promotes a trusting and inclusive instructional environment
- Promote culturally responsive school environment
- Affirms cultures and builds positive relationships
- Empowers parents to enact change
- Acts as a social activist within the community

Note. Source: Johnson (2006)

Summary

The theoretical assumptions of culturally responsive leadership serve as the foundation of this study. More specifically, Johnson's (2006) culturally responsive leadership practices are the basis for the theoretical framework of this study. As schools continue to change and become more diverse, it is imperative that school-based administrators understand and are being prepared to handle issues related to diversity. According to Johnson (2006), one way to combat this issue is by understanding and intentionally demonstrating the cultural responsive leadership practices stated above. This theoretical framework will help to determine if assistant principals who are part of this study are being prepared through their duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development to be culturally responsive leaders who lead in diverse schools.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to understand whether or not assistant principals are prepared to be culturally responsive leaders who lead diverse schools based on their duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development they receive and perform regularly. This case study of a district utilized participant interviews and notes taken during the interviews. Twelve participants were selected for this study. Six assistant principals were selected: two from the elementary school level, three from the middle school level, and one from the high school level. There were five principals: one from the elementary school level, three from the middle school level, and one from the high school level. There was also one district level administrator from the professional development department. Data that I collected and analyzed included transcriptions of tape-recorded interviews and field notes taken during the interview sessions. The data was analyzed using qualitative methods to identify 11 key points/themes.

Qualitative Research Study

As stated above, this dissertation is a basic qualitative research study of assistant principals, principals, and a district level administrator's perspectives. The practices that were used were interviews and field notes. Merriam (2002), Flick (2009), and Lichtman (2010) state that qualitative research is about understanding and making meaning of how

people make sense of their experiences and the world. At no point is qualitative research trying to predict the future or what will happen, but rather to understand the setting, "what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what's going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting" (Merriam, 2002, p. 5). We all see life and interpret it through our own eyes and experiences. Merriam (2002) explains, "Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding what those interpretations are at a particular point in time and in a particular context" (p. 4). Once the researcher begins to understand those interpretations then the researcher can begin to make meaning of the situation within its context, by gathering, organizing, and interpreting the information from their own eyes and ears (Lichtman, 2010).

Qualitative research is a form of exploratory research seeking to gain an understanding and insight into a problem. It does not use numbers to quantify the problem like quantitative research does. It helps to develop trends and themes that relate to a problem by examining the question in depth, with hope to uncover any possible solutions. Qualitative research data collection typically uses the following methods: interviews, focus groups, observations, and document review (Flick, 2009; Kitto, Chesters, & Grbich, 2008; Merriam, 2002). For my study, I chose to use interviews.

This qualitative research study is organized around the theoretical framework of culturally responsive leadership (Johnson, 2006) with a connected understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy. Culturally responsive pedagogy is structured in the belief that all students bring a rich abundance of personal culture, which impacts each of

their lives and ours, and it should be valued and embedded in every aspect of their learning experiences throughout school (Gay, 2010). As culturally responsive leaders, it is assistant principals' responsibility to understand these things to ensure that all students' cultures, values, and beliefs are respected, acknowledged, and embedded in their learning throughout their educational career (Johnson, 2006, 2007).

The interview questions were developed with general and open-ended questions that reflect upon the assistant principal and principal position. There were also questions that are specifically targeted toward culturally responsive leadership (leading in diverse schools). All data collected were examined to find key points/themes concerning the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of the assistant principals and their preparedness to be culturally responsive leaders who lead in diverse schools. The interview provided a means for the researcher to engage with the participants and better understand their perspectives as they relate to this study.

Key Concepts

Diverse Schools—Schools with student populations varying in cultural and linguistic backgrounds, values and beliefs, and identities; coming from various socio-economic backgrounds, experiences and exposures (Ryan, 2003).

Culturally Responsive Leadership—Culturally responsive leadership, according to various scholars (Davis, 2002; Johnson, 2006; Johnson, 2007; Khalifa et al., 2016; Smith, 2005), is represented through practices that include, but are not limited to the following: empowering parents; building relationships among students; parents and community; increasing parent and community involvement; advocating for change within community

or society; supporting academic success for all; advocating for a more diverse curriculum; and embracing and helping to affirm student's cultures, visibility, and promoting culturally responsiveness.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy—Practices that consider the whole child. The concept considers and incorporates the child's life experiences, family cultures, backgrounds, language, values and beliefs when teaching (Gay, 2002; Gay, 2010; Ladson & Billings, 1995).

Site Selection, Participants, and Sampling

Site Selection

The selection of the site and of the participants can be a critical aspect of any study (Creswell, 2012; Maxwell, 2012). For purposes of this study, the selection of both the site and the participants was important. This study considered each educational level (primary and secondary), within a single school district along the East Coast. The current schools in which the assistant principal participants serve range in demographics, but all are diverse schools. By investigating assistant principals that are currently in diverse schools allowed me to consider if being in those diverse schools had an impact on their preparation for culturally responsive leadership and their preparation to lead a diverse school as a principal. Each of the assistant principal participant's roles, duties, and experiences are different based on the school and/or the perception of the principal. This study utilized the different views from each participant to generate findings that were used to determine if their roles and duties as assistant principals have prepared them to be culturally responsive leaders who lead in diverse schools.

The schools in which the principal participants served were diverse schools and represented each educational school level. These schools were purposefully selected in order to see if the principals felt they were prepared as assistant principals to be culturally responsive leaders who are leading in the diverse school they are currently in.

Participants

The first set of participants in this study were assistant principals from elementary, middle, and high schools. They ranged in personal diversity so I could obtain different points of view and to see if they feel they were or were not prepared to be culturally responsive leaders who lead a diverse school, based on their own culture and background. There were five females and one male. The male was an African American. Three of the females were White females and the other two females were African American. The second set of participants was principals from a different set of diverse elementary, middle, and high schools. There were three females, two of whom were African American and one was White. The other two principals were both White males. The district level administrator from the professional development department was a White female. The principals selected range in their experience in the position as a principal from one to five years, with the exception of one principal who had eight years of experience. I selected these principals from those that have the least amount of experience as a principal and that have worked prior to this position as an assistant principal. The principal with eight years of experience was chosen just to possibly add in a slightly different perspective than those that have fewer years of experience. Choosing principals with less experience provided a fresher look on whether they feel that the

position that they recently came from as an assistant principal actually helped prepare

them to be culturally responsive principals in their diverse school. The last participant

was a district level administrator from the professional development department. This

participant provided insight into what (if anything) the district is doing to help prepare

assistant principals to become culturally responsive leaders who will lead diverse schools.

Description of participants. Twelve participants were chosen for participation

in this study. I provided each participant a pseudonym to help ensure their anonymity.

The participants ranged in years of experience as an assistant principal and as a principal.

Chapter IV begins with a brief detailed description of each participant and their years of

service in education. The school district was also given a pseudonym that is used to

substitute for the correct name of the school district and to ensure the anonymity of the

school district. The pseudonym that was used within this study for the school district was

High Noon High County School District. All of the participants are employed within

High Noon High County School District.

Sampling

Purposeful sampling was chosen for this study. Maxwell (2008) states, "This is a

strategy in which particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the

important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices"

(p. 235). For this study, purposeful sampling was used to identify the interview

participants and the schools of the principals. Purposeful sampling allowed me to select

principals that were from diverse schools, assistant principals from diverse schools, and

the district level administrator from the professional development department. From this

sampling I was able to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon experienced by assistant principals. By choosing a sample that was systematically selected provided me a better representation of the population chosen (Maxwell, 2008). It was important that the participants selected accurately reflected upon and gave insight into the case presented in this study. According to Maxwell (2008), one way purposeful sampling can be used is to "adequately represent the entire *range* of variation rather than only typical members or some subset of this range" (p. 235).

I purposefully selected administrators that ranged from elementary to high school to determine if they feel more prepared for one level versus another level. This is important to investigate because the majority of the time, due to assistant principals applying for the position, they choose which level they feel most comfortable with from prior experiences. There are other times in which they do not get a choice due to district placement. Even though the principals were chosen from each school level they were also purposely selected based on the type of school they were in and how many years of experience they had as a principal. The schools they were selected from needed to represent a diverse population of students, since this study focuses on assistant principals becoming culturally responsive leaders who will lead in diverse schools. Lastly, selecting the district level administrator from the professional development department was key in examining if there was a connection to what assistant principals feel they are receiving and what the districts feels they are doing to prepare them.

Data Collection

In this study, only one type of data collection technique was used, which was interviews. The data collection for this study took place from February 2016 to April 2016. Transcriptions were sent out to each participant as soon as the interviews were completed, and were used to help demonstrate the trustworthiness of this study.

Interviews

Interviews were the only source of data I collected for this study. I felt conducting in-depth interviews is a source to gather rich data needed for this study. Interviews indicate that we value other people's stories and lived experiences and the meaning they make of them (Maxwell, 2012; Seidman, 2013). Interviews must be strategic and thoughtful in nature in order to gain valuable insight that is intended for the purpose of the study (Creswell, 2012). There is a process for conducting an interview according to Seidman (2013), who explains, "The researcher has to conceptualize the project, establish access and make contact with participants, interview them, transcribe the data, and then work with the material and share what he or she has learned" (p.11).

The purpose of the interviews in this study was to elicit perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs from and about the assistant principal position and their preparation for leading in diverse schools. For this study, I developed questions that were geared towards answering my research questions and linking to the theoretical framework of culturally responsive leadership. Many of the questions are open-ended and allowed for exploration beyond the question itself. I was cognizant of this and modified questions as needed in order to follow the conversational direction the dialogue led in. I developed

three approved interview protocols, which I was used to document field notes and collect

my thoughts as the interview progressed. I conducted interviews with all the participants

within this study: assistant principal, principal, and the district level administrator from

the professional development department. I utilized the interview to hear the perspective

of each participant with regards to being prepared as an assistant principal for culturally

responsive leadership.

I developed three separate interview protocols to address each group of interview

participants (assistant principals, principals, and the district level administrator from the

professional development department). All interview protocols were approved during the

IRB process and by my dissertation committee. The interview protocols are organized

into three categories, addressing my research questions. The assistant principals'

interview protocols (see Appendix A & B) contain a total of 27 questions (A=15; B=12),

the principal's interview protocols (see Appendix C & D) contain a total of 31 questions

(C=19; D=12), and the district level administrator from the professional development

department's interview protocol (see Appendix D) contains 18 questions. Many of the

questions are similar on each protocol because I wanted to gather each group of

participants' perspectives as they related to the preparation for becoming a culturally

responsive leader who leads in a diverse school.

Interviews can be hard on a new researcher, can take up a lot of time due to

transcription of data (Creswell, 2012; Seidman, 2013), and can be expensive if the

researcher decides to pay someone to transcribe the data. The transcription process itself

can be beneficial for the researcher by helping the researcher develop a deeper

connection with the data and limit inaccuracies when trying to recall the information

(Yin, 2013).

> Transcription involves close observation of data through repeated careful listening
> (and/or watching), and this is an important first step in data analysis. This
> familiarity with data and attention to what is actually there rather than what is
> expected can facilitate realizations or ideas which emerge during analysis.
> (Bailey, 2008, p. 129)

Even though transcribing your own interviews can build a deeper connection between the

researcher and the data, due to time constraints I chose to have my interviews transcribed

by a professional transcriber. Prior to sending my recordings to the transcriber, we both

signed an agreement that he would not share any information about any participant and

that he would maintain confidentiality. After transcription of each interview was

completed, I sent each participant a copy of the transcription for their review.

Participants could provide any input about the transcription and make sure the

transcriptions were an accurate account of what they said. The copy was also sent to

determine if there was anything in the transcriptions that they felt they did not want to be

shared, if they needed me to answer any lingering questions they may have had, and to

clear up any misconceptions. Even though, I did not transcribe the interviews myself, I

still felt as though I was immersed in their dialogue. I listened to and read over their

thoughts several times to help me make those connections.

Summary of Data Collection

Over the course of this study, I conducted 15 individual interview sessions with

the 12 study participants. Three of the assistant principals' interviews were completed in

two separate sessions, while the nine other participants chose to complete one interview that lasted about the same total time as the participants that chose to complete two separate interviews. Ten interviews were with the assistant principals, five were with the principals, and one was with the district level administrator from the professional development department. My total interview contact time with participants was 25 hours. Before I began recording each interview, the participants and I would spend about 15 to 20 minutes in introductory discussion. This discussion mainly consisted of me sharing a little about myself, my schooling, and my professional experiences, and also a little about the research and why I chose this research topic to study. The recorded part of the interview began immediately after this discussion and ranged from 45 minutes to one hour and 15 minutes. Those times varied depending on how much each participant elaborated on their responses. After the recorded portion of the interview, there was typically about a 30-minute discussion that occurred. Many of the participants had questions related to my study or shared information that was not related to a specific research question I had asked them, but centered more on the nature of the administrative position within the county. I was given a tour of one of the participant's schools. Table 2 gives an outline of the data collection process that was utilized in this study.

Table 2

Types of Data Collection Process, Participants, & Time

Data Collection	Participants	Number of Participants	Interview Times
Interview	Assistant Principals	6	Three participants completed one 2- to 2.5-hour interview and three completed two 1- to 1.5-hour interview sessions
Interview	Principals	5	One 2- to 2.5-hour interview per participant
Interview	The District Level Executive Director of Professional Development	1	One 1.15-hour interview

Note. Total participants=12; Total hours completed=25.07

Data Analysis

The analysis of data consists of taking a large amount of data and making sense of it (Lichtman, 2010). This process of examining and analyzing the data from the interviews can be cumbersome and can lead to lack of clarity in its meaning, but the researcher must search and interact with the data to gather appropriate meaning (Lichtman, 2010). Creswell (2012) adds that the analysis process "involves organizing the data, conducting and organizing themes, representing the data, and forming an interpretation of them" (p. 179). During the process of analysis, the researcher may be surprised with the findings or the findings may confirm the thoughts the researcher

already had about the topic of study. The analysis is critical in forming interpretations about the study.

Qualitative research methods can be overwhelming since the data is not quantified. The data is in the form of words and not numbers (Lichtman, 2010). The researcher must have a plan in place to organize the data collected and draw meaning from it (Lichtman, 2010). There was an abundance of data collected for this study. Data for this study came from two sources: interviews and my field notes from the interviews. I analyzed the data in order to identify key points and themes that emerged within them. The data was coded using the inductive analysis approach to identify key points/themes. According to Thomas (2006), the coding process in inductive analysis is using the "detailed readings of raw data to derive concepts and themes" which allows the "research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data" (p. 238). I used those key points, themes, and relationships to answer the research questions. While I used my theoretical framework to organize my study, I also used it as a lens through which to analyze the data.

I kept notes regarding my own thoughts and interpretations during the interviews, and I reviewed these notes at the end of each day. All the notes were recorded on the interview protocol tool. The notes also included the context of events, conversations, and things I wondered about. During the interviews, a digital audio recording device was used to capture the exact responses of each participant. The notes reflected the emotions, behaviors, and other element I noticed that might have been helpful for this study.

Data from Interviews

In analysis of the data, I began with the interviews. The transcriptions serve as a written record of each interview. As stated above, I reviewed all notes at the end of each day along with the recordings of each interview. I listened to the interview twice before transcriptions were complete. Each time I was searching for segments, ideas, and pieces of information that I could use to frame my analysis of this study (Lichtman, 2010). After the interview was complete I sent the digital recording to the professional transcriber. The digital recording of the interview was shared with the professional transcriber through Google Docs. The professional transcriber completed most transcriptions two to five days after I submitted them. The first time I listened to the recordings was to retain the memory of the interview and to generate any initial ideas and thoughts. The second time I listened to the interview was to listen much deeper for any emerging themes or ideas. Once the transcriptions were sent back to me I listened to the transcription while reading the transcription. As I was reading, I would highlight in Microsoft Word any key thoughts I noticed with regards to that question and make comments using New Comments in Microsoft Word. For some of the questions I copied all of those thoughts in to another Microsoft Word document and printed them out, so that I could get a whole picture of those thoughts. Then I would write down phrases or words that stood out to help generate key points and themes that were noted. I used those key points and themes in the development of the findings chapter.

Analysis of Data

For the data collected, I printed a copy of each transcription to keep the raw data

intact, so that I could highlight and mark portions for coding when I did not have access

to my computer, but had time to review data. I took all my data from my field notes that

contained my initial thoughts and impressions captured during the course of data

collection and I coded them using inductive coding. I also used the "New Comment"

function, located under the Review tab in Microsoft Word, to insert my codes and any

comments. Coding is a way of rearranging the data into categories for comparison

between things and categories (Maxwell, 2008).   As each data set was being coded, I

began reviewing the codes to look for those codes that overlapped or occurred more

frequently. I organized those codes that overlapped or that were redundant into

categories and themes. I reported these categories and themes as my findings in Chapter

IV.

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**Researcher Subjectivity, Trustworthiness, Benefits and Risks,
and Significance and Limitations**

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Researcher Subjectivity

It is essential that I disclose my subjectivities regarding whether or not the duties,

responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of assistant principals are preparing

them to lead in culturally diverse schools. Lichtman (2010) suggests the researcher

should not try to remain outside the study, but rather reveal one's self in the study. I

would first like to begin by sharing my own personal motto, which is "all students can

learn, but they learn in different ways and at different rates so we as educators must

connect with our students beyond the four walls of a classroom and building." Educators

must begin to look outside their four walls and begin to notice the bigger picture. They

must also begin to celebrate one another and expand their vision.

As an African American female, between the ages of 30-40, my career began 14

years ago as a classroom teacher, teaching in the primary grades (1st-2nd grade). During

that time, I could only envision the four walls of my classroom. I did not quite make the

connection between the school and my classroom because I did not see the big scheme of

things. During that time the school I worked in was a Title 1 school due to the high

percentage of students who were economically disadvantaged. The majority of the

students were African American students with diverse needs. The school became a

magnet school focusing on the International Baccalaureate program. The purpose for

becoming a magnet school was to try to diversify the student population. The principals

during the majority of my tenure were White females and the assistant principals were all

African American females. The last year of my tenure both the principal and assistant

principals were African American females. During my seventh year of teaching I

decided to explore a different career option.

Upon completing my teaching career, I accepted a position as a curriculum

coordinator for four years in a different school and district. This school was a Title 1

magnet school focusing on the International Baccalaureate program. The school shared

similarities demographically with my former school. The administration consisted of an

African American female as the principal with a white male assistant principal during my

first year there. After the African American female principal retired, the white male

became principal and an African American female became assistant principal. During

this time my vision began to broaden from just four walls in a classroom. I began to

understand more and more about leadership and its impact on the success of a school.

While serving in this position I re-entered school to receive my Post Master's Certificate

in School Administration and my Specialist in Education degree.

For the last six years I have been the assistant principal in a highly diverse Title 1

School. The school's student body represents by at least 25 to 30 nationalities. Flags

hang in the hallway representing the different countries our students are from. There was

a major difference in the diversity within this school from what I was accustomed to prior

to this position. It was a culture shock for me having such a large number of White

students compared to what I was used to. Not only did I have to get used to such

diversity, but I had to begin to learn a new position that I was not sure I was fully

prepared for.

As an assistant principal, I know that the principal position is very complex and

consists of many different areas. Like most assistant principals, I too have begun to think

about transitioning into the role of principal in a diverse school. With schools' students

and staff becoming more and more demographically diverse, educators must be able to

relate to what the students are doing and help build a connection with these students.

Many of these students do not see the relevance for why they step foot in the school

building and it is our jobs as educators to help them make those connections. As an

assistant principal in a highly culturally diverse school, I question my own abilities and

knowledge base as to whether or not my duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff

development have prepared me to be a culturally responsive leader who leads in a

culturally diverse school. I also questioned whether I am prepared to take that next step as a principal in a diverse school, like the one I am in currently.

Based on my duties and experiences as an assistant principal and the lack of support I think we receive as assistant principals, I would say that most assistant principals are not prepared to lead diverse schools. Since I have been an assistant principal, I have not received any professional development in culturally responsive leadership. High Noon High County Schools recently began having monthly assistant principal meetings that cover different topics; usually the topics are similar to what the principals receive in their monthly principal meeting. I am not sure if districts really understand the significance of the role of an assistant principal, due to the lack of support given to assistant principals. My own personal experiences and biases could influence the analysis of data from my study based on what I think the data should be like. As the researcher, I must clearly examine the data for what it is and exclude my own subjectivity unless the findings warrant them.

Trustworthiness

To obtain trustworthiness, I collected the data through prolonged engagement. The data collected was transcribed and examined to find key points and themes. These documents will be available for any audits for accuracy and validity and they exist as a paper trail to verify data. I also engaged in member checking. After completing the interviews for all the participants, I sent a copy of their transcription to participants from them to review and give any insights they wanted to about the information I gathered. Finally, I engaged in triangulation because there was be more than one type of participant

(assistant principals, principals, and the district level administrator) in multiple settings. Such variety allowed me to obtain a broader picture of the situation. Triangulation, according to Maxwell (2008), is "collecting information from a diverse range of individuals and settings, using a variety of methods" (p. 245). Lichtman (2010) refers to triangulation as adding credibility to a study when multiple sources are brought to the study. All protocols are included in the Appendix of this study.

Benefits and Risks

One benefit of this study is that it can help to increase awareness in districts and university school administration preparation programs of the essential aspects of being a principal in a diverse school that assistant principals should learn and experience. Once the key aspects are identified, districts and university school administration preparation programs can help to properly train assistant principals through appropriate course work, field experiences, and/or professional development. Helping to prepare assistant principals better will make their transition toward becoming a culturally responsive principal who leads in a diverse school more successful. This will help to provide effective leadership, which will increase school performance.

The assistant principals who participated in this study run the risk of feeling that they may possibly be excluded from principal positions if they feel they are not prepared to lead in diverse schools. I feel that the principals and district level professional development person do not run a risk for participating in this study. I will ensure that the assistant principals' names and schools will not be disclosed and that all other participants remain anonymous as well.

Significance and Limitations

Schools have changed and are continuously changing, increasing in diversity. Diverse schools face many challenges, including connecting with and educating all students effectively. Because this study examined the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of assistant principals and whether or not they are prepared to lead a diverse school, it gives insight into what is needed for proper preparation of assistant principals for culturally responsive leadership. I conducted this study for assistant principals to inform them of the types of experiences or professional development they may need to engage in while they are assistant principals to help them become a culturally responsive leader. This study was also conducted for districts and university school administration preparation programs. With this research, districts can examine how they are currently preparing their assistant principals before they become a principal. Universities can look further at their school administration preparation program, what courses they offer to students, and what experiences they need to provide students and expose them to with regard to diversity and culturally responsive leadership.

Despite the advantages of qualitative methods of study, there are limitations to using this research method. Qualitative research typically has a smaller sample size due to its in-depth examination of a particular phenomenon and its dynamics, which could limit the findings and results of the study. This study used only one school district, only 12 participants from within the district, and all of the participants came from different schools. Having a small sample size makes it difficult to make generalizations towards a

larger population (Lichtman, 2010; Merriam, 2002; Yin, 2011). Although the sample size is small I believe it will provide deep insight into the problem being addressed. The study consists of different participants who will help to enrich the findings with multiple viewpoints. Completing the study in one school district only provides insight to a limited view of expectations. If the study were conducted in more than one district the researcher could show any trends among districts and ways each district helps to develop their assistant principals. Also, the researcher could point out the range of diversity among schools within each district.   Even though these issues exist, I believed that using only one district would provide informative insight into assistant principals and whether or not their duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development has prepared them to be culturally responsive leaders who lead in a diverse school as well as ways they can be better prepared to do so.

Chapter Conclusion

My research topic of assistant principals' preparedness for culturally responsive school leadership lent itself well to a qualitative method of study. My research study was designed to gather meaningful and in-depth data, which came from interviews. This study embraced each participant's perspective about the assistant principal position and his or her preparation to lead a diverse school. The next chapter will give, in detail, insight into the study's findings in the form of the categories and themes that emerged from the interviews.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter, I report findings from my interviews with principals, assistant principals, and the district level administrator from the professional development department in High Noon High County School District to determine if assistant principals were prepared to lead diverse schools. This chapter begins with an introduction of each participant within the study. This will help to paint a picture of each participant's career experiences. Those experiences can be used to help to build lenses through which we can begin to understand their experiences and how their experiences fold into the responses they gave during the interview.

Each participant had a very interesting personal angle when providing their responses, but they shared many commonalities due to their experiences. These commonalities were identified after using the inductive coding approach. This approach led to the identification of 11 key points/themes from the data. Table 3 lists the 11 key points/themes identified from the data. Following the introduction of each participant, the 11 key points/themes will be used to organize the remainder of this chapter. Quotes from the participants are also used to support the key points/themes. This chapter concludes with a summary of the findings.

Table 3

Key Points/Themes Identified from the Data

Key Points/Themes
• Mostly Managerial Duties
• Learning to Lead
• Principals Assigned No Duties that Helped Assistant Principals Develop Culturally Responsive Leadership
• Culturally Responsive Leadership Starts with Knowledge and Awareness of Student Differences
• Culturally Responsive Leaders are Open-Minded
• Understanding of the Differences Within their School
• Experiences Have Helped with Preparation
• Nothing Prepares You to be a Principal
• Hindrances in Preparation
• More Need for Instructional Leadership
• More Experiences Necessary in Dealing with Adults

Context of the Study

This study was conducted within High Noon High County School District, which is located in the Southeastern part of the United States. High Noon High County School District is within the top five largest districts within its state. Some schools are in rural or and suburban communities while others are in an urban community. The school district is made up of more than 70,000 students from various backgrounds. The district is very diverse and majority of the schools serve this diverse population of students. High Noon High County Schools consist of a little more than 120 schools, with a little over half of the schools being elementary and the rest being middle and high schools. A few of the schools are alternative schools.

Assistant Principals

       Assistant Principal Angela. Assistant Principal Angela began her career in education as she likes to call herself "a late in life teacher." She is a White female. Her first degree was in sociology. After completing her degree, she felt the need to do more with children, so she went back to school to pursue a master's degree in education. Upon completion of her master's degree, her teaching career began. Assistant Principal Angela taught eight years in an elementary school as a fifth-grade teacher. She taught another eight years in a middle school teaching sixth grade math. From there she wanted to enter the administrative degree program. When she started teaching, she realized she wanted to go into administration. She entered an administrative degree program while teaching sixth grade math. After completion of her degree she became an assistant principal at a middle school for four years. With most of her educational career being in middle school, her love for the younger children emerged and she became the assistant principal of her current school which is elementary. She has been at her current school for the last three years. She has applied for and is looking to move into a principal position when one becomes available.

       Her current school consists of around 70% of African American students, and around 29% Hispanic. Her school also has a handful of students from Vietnam, middle-eastern countries, and a few White students. She feels her school is diverse in that it they are not across the board one color or one race. When asked her perception of a diverse school Assistant Principal Angela said,

I think that is changing somewhat, because I feel like our society is becoming more diverse overall, so I think five or ten years ago I would have said a diverse school is a school that was not a White school, and now I think my perception is changing because I see—I see a diverse school now as maybe representing several races and several cultures and different backgrounds, so I enjoy the diversity, so I feel like that brings a level of richness to the school.

Assistant Principal Barbara. Assistant Principal Barbara has been in education for 20 years. She is an African American female. She began her career teaching elementary students. She has taught for ten years teaching kindergarten and first grade. She was not one who would have thought she would have ever entered the administrative field. She felt lead into the administrative field by a higher being. She entered an administrative degree program still never thinking she would ever become anyone's principal. After completing her administrative degree, she was offered an assistant principal position from her former principal in a middle school. With no middle school experience, she was terrified. Not looking for a principal position but wanting to stay as an assistant principal for several years to gain more experience, Assistant Principal Barbara was promoted to a principal position. She was even more terrified. She became the principal of an elementary school. She held that position for five years when she moved back into her current role as an assistant principal for the last four years. At this time, she is not looking to move back into the position as a principal, but is exploring other options within education.

For most of her career she has been in schools that have served predominantly African American students. Her current school consists of about 35% African American, 60% Caucasian, and 5% Latino and Asian students. Her current school is very different

from what she has experienced in her previous schools. When asked her perception of a diverse school she said,

> My perception of a diverse school is a school that, a school that is made up of many different demographics, race, gender, as well as socioeconomic standing, and it's a school that also provides opportunity for learning for, for all the cultures that it serves.

Assistant Principal Carl. Assistant Principal Carl is an African American male. He received a Bachelor's degree in health and physical education, but did not enter into the education field. Instead right out of college, he immediately entered a master's degree program for adaptive Physical Education. While in school he accepted a position at a large high school as an exceptional children's assistant. He was a one-on-one for a particular student. In his second year in his master's degree program, which was the following school year, he was moved within the same high school into an in-school suspension as the behavior coordinator. The following year he graduated with his masters and he was then moved from the behavior coordinator position into the graduation coach and dropout prevention coordinator. During this year he applied to a district administrative program and he got in. He knew he wanted to one day become a principal. He also received a post master's degree in administration. After completing his degree, he was offered an assistant principal position at a middle school, where he has been the last three years.

His current school consist of about 45% African American, 35% White, 15% Hispanic, and 5% multi race, Asian and other. When asked about his perception of a diverse school, he said,

So we, we often talk about diversity and we talk about race, but in my eyes, diversity covers gender, social and economic status, and a lot of instances now gender identities, so for me my idea of, or my perception of a diverse school is something that encompasses all of that, so you have all students from all backgrounds, from all economic backgrounds, from all races, from all neighborhoods that come together under one roof for one common goal.

Assistant Principal Dana. Assistant Principal Dana , who is a Caucasian female, started her career off in the business world as an accountant for about ten to eleven years. During this time, she realized she wanted to go back to school to be a teacher. So she went back to school to get her teaching license and began her teaching career in a different state then the state she is currently in. While in that state she taught third and fourth grade and then moved to the current state she resides in. In her current state she taught third and fourth grade for about three years, then moved to teaching academically gifted students. While teaching academically gifted students she pursued her degree in school administration. After completing her administrative degree, she obtained an assistant principal position. From there she moved into the position as a principal for two years. After those two years she moved back into the position as an assistant principal, which she has held for the last ten years now.

Her current school consists of students who are about 42% African American, 28% Caucasian, 17% Hispanic, 5% Multi-racial, 4% Asian, and 4% other nationalities. They have about 26 different countries represented within their school, which makes for lots of celebration. Her school is Title I and participates in the feeding program. She also mentions that the students come from a wide range of living experiences (big houses,

apartments, homeless, etc). Assistant Principal Dana says her perception of a diverse

school is,

> Truly, now I know, very well not my first school, but my second school that I
> ever worked at was right outside of Winslow in Angelo County, and we used to
> joke because we used to call it the United Nations because the kids were very
> much from different backgrounds, very similar to how Carbon Elementary is.
> I've been blessed twice to be able to work in diverse schools like that, yes,
> ethnicities, races, cultures, religions, and economics. Well I think there's always
> diversity because we people are different, and we need to treat students based on
> their individual needs. I believe that there can be diverse schools of that nature,
> but I guess when I think diverse I think culturally and ethnicity.

Assistant Principal Ellen. Assistant Principal Ellen has been in education for 18

years. She identifies herself as a White female. She spent most of her career in middle

school. She taught language arts and social studies in middle school. She has been a lead

teacher, a district lead teacher over seven middle schools, and she has been a curriculum

facilitator at a high school for one year. During her many roles within the school district

she pursued her administrative degree. She is currently an assistant principal at a high

school, where she has held that position for one year. She hopes to one day pursue a

principal position, but before she does that she wants to learn a little more in her current

position. When she feels she is ready to do so then she will move forward in that

direction.

Her current school consists of 41% White, 40% African American, 7% Asian, 7%

Hispanic, 3.5% Multi-Racial, 1% American Indian, and .5% Pacific Islander. She feels

that her school is very diverse and that the numbers may not reflect how diverse the

school really is. Assistant Principal Ellen feels that a diverse school is,

A diverse school doesn't necessarily just cover race but we have also lots of different religions here, we have different socioeconomic statuses here. As far as diversity, for me personally, this could not have been a more perfect job for me to come into as a first-time assistant principal because I get it all. I get the size, I get the diversity, I get the socioeconomics. We have parents that live in the Collegiate Community and then we have parents who are homeless, so we have that great balance here of all over the place.

Assistant Principal Faith. Assistant Principal Faith has had a long career in education. She is an African American female and she has been in education and her current county for the last 28 years. Her career began in education as an elementary classroom teacher for eighteen years. She has taught different grades while in elementary. After those 18 years she was asked by her former principal to move to middle school with her to teach math. With a little hesitation, she decided to take on the challenge and was very successful. She taught the middle school math one year, then moved into a curriculum facilitator position for three years. Like some administrators, Assistant Principal Faith was guided into administration by her former principal (the same principal who asked her to come work with her as her math teacher). Prior to being in the administrative role she saw herself, along with her former principal, as a teacher leader. Her former principal pushed her into the leadership role. She feels like principals who push you into leadership, view you in that capacity. She has spent the last six years as an assistant principal at two different middle schools gaining different perspectives due to how different both schools are and how different the leadership has been at each school.

She has been at her current school for one year. Prior to her current school, the demographics had been majority African American students. Her current school consists

of about 60% Caucasian, 30% African American, and 10% other students. The school

has lots of students who come from low socioeconomic backgrounds, single parent

homes, and they have students who come from the other spectrum of having two parent

homes, business owners, and are very financially comfortable, even wealthy. When

asked how she perceives a diverse school she said,

> Well, when I think about diversity I don't just think about race. I think you have
> to look at socioeconomics and you're looking at the experiences that students
> come to school with, and I do think that the socioeconomics probably plays a
> greater role than the race. When I think about diversity I just think about not
> having a predominantly anything. When I look at our students and the experiences
> they've had and some of the students that are successful academically, race is not
> really the key factor, the key factor appears to be experiences that students have,
> expectations that parents have. Whether the parents are having the education
> from the high school, so it seems that socioeconomics plays a greater role than
> race. I think students are very accepting of other students that are similar to them,
> and those students that are advanced learners and those students that have some
> academic deficiencies, they seem to form their own little groups or their own little
> cohorts.

Principals

Principal Glenda. Principal Glenda taught elementary for seven to eight years.

She taught grades third, fourth, and fifth. Principal Glenda is an African American

female. After being a classroom teacher for seven to eight years, she moved on to

become a curriculum facilitator at a school that was 97% Hispanic. After being a

curriculum facilitator for one year the budget hit; therefore, causing reductions and cuts.

Principal Glenda was given the choice to go back into the classroom or be a half time

curriculum facilitator between two schools, which would not give her any summer

breaks. She had small children at the time, so she decided to go back into the classroom

to teach Kindergarten. She looped with her students to first grade the next school year.

During that year she interviewed for another curriculum facilitator position at a different

school and got it. She remained a curriculum facilitator for a little over two years before

moving schools to become an assistant principal of instruction. In this position, she was

still doing the job of the curriculum facilitator along with the evaluative piece of

administrator. She was doing great things in that position when a principal position

became available at her current school. She received an invite for an interview. This

took her by surprise and she immediately thought that they sent the invite to the wrong

person. She emailed them back informing them that they had the wrong person. She got

an email back telling her that she was the right person and asked her if she would

interview for the position. Stricken with fear and panic, she called her principal in to

view the email. Her principal reassured her that everything was going to be fine and that

she was going to interview for the position. She interviewed for the position and got it,

and this is her second year as principal.

Her current school consists of students who are 49% White, with the rest

consisting of African American, Hispanic, and other. More recently they have been

receiving a lot of refugee students who speak Arabic, Punjabi, and Dinka. She tries to

work very closely with agencies that help assist refugees. They have eleven languages

represented in their school, which most people are very unaware of due to the school's

history of serving mostly middle to upper class White students. When discussing her

perception of a diverse school, she had this to say,

I think lots of differences. And you know, some people, some of my colleague's view that as being a challenge, and it is at times because you've got to really step back and think about what you celebrate as a leader. So for example, I'm a Christian, and it's nothing for me, if something great happens, I'll be like, "Wooh, thank you, Lord," or hold on a second, I gotta pray, like that's just my personality. I have Islamic, I have—I don't know if Arabic is a religion or what, I have African, I have our Hispanics who are Catholic, I have our Hispanics who are some of this, some of that, like they just go to non-denominational churches, and so you really have to think about what are—you have to be so mindful of what are the differences that people bring to the table and how can I accentuate that. So when I think about diversity, I think about our differences in terms of what our students look like, but also what they celebrate, also what they bring to the table in terms of socioeconomic status. We are very stratified here, that's another challenge for us, is that we have our haves and we have our have nots. Our haves don't always want to be with our have nots, and color makes no difference. My White haves don't want anything to do with changing things to benefit even my white have nots, and that's different for me because a lot of times I find myself in the middle of those struggles. So we have all of those diverse characteristics going on at the same time. So that for me, that is diversity. You would think that being in a quaint, little neighborhood school, we're not Title I, we don't have our free and reduced—it's at about 42%, so we don't have nearly enough to consider us Title I, we're at I think only the tier, like the third tier, we're not anywhere near getting any money, but that's not to say that our students don't have needs. We have 26 families, and that's siblings included. Twenty-six families who get food with our feeding program on the weekend. That's comparable with lots of Title I schools, and that's just how great the need is. We have homeless children. For a little bit of time during the fall, I had to go pick children up from a shelter because the bus didn't go there. So needs like that, to me represents diversity, but that's not something that you're going to see represented on paper.

Principal Henry. Principal Henry is a White male who started his career out teaching high school. He then decided to come out of the classroom setting and moved into a position working for an educational software company. In this position he traveled around the United States training teachers on technology devices to help with classroom management and trained teachers on math programs. From this position he moved back into the classroom as a teacher at a different high school. He pursued a degree in school administration, and obtained a position as an assistant principal at a high school. Leaving

the assistant principal position after four years, Principal Henry moved into a principal

position at a middle college for three and half years. Currently he is in his second year as

a principal at a middle school.

His school currently has about 45% African American students, 25% Caucasian,

20% Hispanic, and 10% other (Multi-racial, American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander).

He has roughly about 750 students. The grade levels reflect the mixture of students in

every classroom. Principal Henry says his perception of a diverse school is,

> Yeah, I mean to my perception of a diverse school is one that shows, I mean all
> different types of students and not just any. I think when we talk about diversity
> we talk a lot about racial diversity but we don't talk about diversity in students'
> aptitudes, students' learning styles, students' socioeconomic background. I'd say
> that's one area where we're probably not as diverse, is in socioeconomic status.
> We're 52% free and reduced lunch and before we went to the new free and
> reduced lunch program we were 74% free or reduced lunch, so a much higher
> percentage of low income students. I would say we're not as diverse in there, but
> to me diversity encompasses everything. In middle school it's a little harder but,
> when you're talking high school about sexual orientation, I mean all those things
> are diverse not just in their demographics per se and their racial identity.

Principal Ivy. Principal Ivy's first experience in education was as a social

studies teacher at a high school. She is a White female who taught for five years. While

teaching, she also became the Advanced Placement International Baccalaureate (APIB)

coordinator. During this time, she began looking for an opportunity to do something

different. She applied for the district administrative program and got in. She wanted to

make a deeper impact on students and the type of learning they were receiving. In her

internship she linked up with a principal who helped her get an assistant principal

position at a middle school, which she held for three years. She knew she wanted to

become a principal soon afterwards, so she applied for a principal position at another

middle school. She got the position and this is her first year as the principal of that

middle school.

Her school has about 865 students. The students at her school come from more

affluent homes. Her school is probably one of the more affluent schools within the

district. There free and reduced lunch numbers are very low, right around 20%. She has

noticed recently that the student population is changing from being predominantly White

affluent students to more diverse students. Principal Ivy shares this as her perception of a

diverse school,

> That is a great question. I don't know that I like my answer, I'm going to just tell you what I think my answer would be before, as I start, I haven't processed this, it's a really good question. I would say that my background is in all diverse schools. I was at a high school, I was at an elementary school, I was at a middle school, this school is totally different, I mean we're talking if you look at our data it's just totally different. Demographics are different and everything, but now I realize that I think every single school is diverse and every single school has something that makes it unique and makes each individual kid diverse. What also makes us diverse, as far as, how we differ in our population from the rest of the district, which is where we've had issues. This school has operated from what I can gather, this is my first year here, that this has kind of been like a little island and we just all kind of operate as Lester Middle School and I've been trying to talk about Lester Middle School because I want people to remember that we operate in a larger entity, particularly because we're getting a lot of transient kids from different schools. We have students coming to us from Kindle Middle School and we have them coming to us from Franklin Middle School, it's not just kids moving into these large homes, you know, that are like being built across the street from us, but they're actually been a lot of influx from different communities that we're just not used to.

Principal Josie. As a African American female, Principal Josie began her career

in the early 1990's. She has been in education for 24 years. She started out as a teacher

assistant, and completed an evening degree program to receive her teaching license.

After completing her teaching degree, she was a little bored so she decided to pursue and

obtain her first master's degree. She was then accepted into the county's administrative

cohort and became an assistant principal for six years at a high school. She was

appointed principal at her current school, and has been there for the last five years. Her

school is very unique in demographics and very diverse. Her perception of a diverse

school is,

> Well, I think for me, my perception of a diverse school is kind of what I'm in
> right now because I am, not only do I have language diversity, I have cultural
> diversity, I have socioeconomic diversity, I have academic diversity. I have some
> students that have never ever been in school and then I have students that could
> possibly teach, the math curriculum because they've been in school forever, so for
> me diversity is not just about skin color or the superficial things. It goes a lot
> deeper than that because even within language groups, you have some kids that
> have been exposed to different things, so it just all depends on the individual. So
> to me, when I think about a diverse school, I think of a place kind of like this, I
> mean where you have not just one aspect of diversity.

Principal Kevin. Principal Kevin identifies as a Caucasian male. He started his

career in a different state from where he currently resides. He began as a middle school

teacher. Upon moving to his current state, he became a middle school teacher also. He

taught middle school for a total of five years. Moving out of the classroom setting as a

teacher he became a middle school assistant principal for three years. He has held two

principal positions totaling eight years. Currently, he is a principal at a middle school.

He has a total of sixteen years in education. His current school has over one thousand

students. The school's student demographics are 40% White, 40% African American,

and about 20% other students. About 55% of the student population receive free and

reduce lunch. Principal Kevin had this to say about what a diverse school is,

> So to me a diverse school would be a school that truly has a variety of different races, socioeconomic backgrounds represented in the school. So often we misinterpret in my opinion diverse schools by saying they're diverse, meaning they're either all minority or all poor. We, in our minds, we see that as diverse, but diverse really is truly having a lots of different types of people in the building, and not being dominated by any one particular group.

District Level Administrator from the Professional Development Department

District Level Leader Lisa. District Level Leader Lisa is a White female who

started out in education as a high school English teacher. During this time, she went back

to school to pursue a degree in administration. She was an English teacher for eight years

before she became an assistant principal at a new middle school. She was an assistant

principal for one year before moving into a curriculum director position. Other positions

she has held throughout her career have been, an executive director, an elementary

principal, a university professor, and another executive director but a different position.

Currently, she is the works in the professional development department. District Level

Leader Lisa's perception of a diverse school is,

> So I ask this question a lot, what does diversity mean and what does equity mean, so diversity I think means lots of different people coming together, that could be race, gender, socioeconomics, disability, it could be life experiences, it could be family situation, it could be medical, lots of different things. So diverse just means that there are a lot of different people there. I think what a lot of people think diverse means is there are people of color and white people, that's what I think a lot of people think, but I think it's much more expansive than that.

Summary

As seen in the description of each participant, all of them pursued a career in the administrative field and at some point the majority are or are looking to become a principal. Each of the schools they currently serve at range in their demographics to give a good picture of the type of diversity that exists within the district. This also gives a good look into the different types of experience each of them have had as an administrator. This could help when beginning to analyzes their thoughts with regards to their preparation for becoming a principal in a diverse school. For some of the participants, education was not the first career choice, but became their career that they have grown to love due to their passion and drive for children. Each of the participants vary in the length of time they have spent in each of their administrative positions, which helps to show why they may feel a certain way about the role of the assistant principal and the role of the principal. Table 4 gives a snapshot of each participant to which the reader can refer.

As seen through each of their perceptions of a diverse school, each participant overall perceives a diverse school as a school that houses many student differences, not just race and ethnicity. This is important because as the analysis of their thoughts begin to unveil we can begin to see that they are coming with the understanding and stand point of being in a diverse school. This study centers around the notion of assistant principals' preparation to lead diverse schools. Laying out this context of the district and each participant, I feel is key in beginning to understand who each participant is and what

types of experiences each of them brings to this study. Again, this could help when

beginning to uncover some of their thoughts about the administrative position.

Table 4

Participant Demographics*

Participants	Position	Level	Years of Experience	Gender	Race/ Ethnicity
Assistant Principal Angela	Assistant Principal	Elementary	7	Female	White
Assistant Principal Barbara	Assistant Principal	Middle	5	Female	African American
Assistant Principal Carl	Assistant Principal	Middle	3	Male	African American
Assistant Principal Dana	Assistant Principal	Elementary	10+	Female	Caucasian
Assistant Principal Ellen	Assistant Principal	High	1	Female	White
Assistant Principal Faith	Assistant Principal	Middle	6	Female	African American
Principal Glenda	Principal	Elementary	2	Female	African American
Principal Henry	Principal	Middle	5 1/2	Male	White
Principal Ivy	Principal	Middle	1	Female	White
Principal Josie	Principal	High	5	Female	African American
Principal Kevin	Principal	Middle	8	Male	Caucasian
District Level Leader Lisa	District Level Administrator	Professional Development Office	6	Female	White

Note. *Participant names are pseudonyms

Findings

In this section of the chapter, I report out what was discovered from the

participants during the interviews. The information was organized by the 11 key

points/themes generated from the participant's responses. Table 3 at the beginning of this

chapter lists the 11 key points and themes. To support each key point/theme, I provide

quotes that are directly pulled from the interview transcriptions. Once all 11 key

points/themes have been addressed, the chapter concludes with a summary that restates

the key themes and trends found during the interviews.

Mostly Managerial Duties

The first key point/theme that emerged from the interviews that helps to answer

this research question is how the assistant principals describe their duties and

responsibilities within their schools.   The key point/theme is that *the duties and*

responsibilities of assistant principals are consumed by the management of the students

and the building. Many of the assistant principals describe their duties and

responsibilities as centering mainly around managerial tasks. Assistant Principal Dana

said,

> So a lot of my responsibilities deal with managing the school, more of the
> managerial aspects, taking control, but overseeing the custodians, making sure
> that, you know, supervision is provided, as far as duties of the staff, maintaining
> the lunchroom, all of those things as well as working instructionally with the
> teachers. I've been left to the more managerial tasks with former principals since
> being at this school. You start doing something, it kind of becomes yours, and
> then you're the expert at it.

Assistant Principal Barbara shared the same thoughts, along with a few other assistant

principals, around their duties and responsibilities as Assistant Principal Dana did.

Assistant Principal Barbara added to her management role by including "parent

concerns/conferences, daily maintenance of the school, scheduling, and making sure

teachers have what they need." Many of the assistant principals typically spend a large

part of their day managing the day-to-day operation of the school building. I noticed that

the management tasks varied based on school level. Middle and high school assistant

principals included a few tasks that the elementary assistant principals were not

accustomed to. A few of those duties were hallway monitoring, making sure students are

where they are supposed to be, and managing afterschool activities (sports). With that

said the elementary assistant principals were the only assistant principal in their building

and they typically interacted with all students and staff throughout the building. The

middle and high school assistant principals were typically one of two or three in their

building. They managed a grade level(s) and the other duties in the building were

divided among them and the other assistant principal in the building. These duties did

not necessarily align to being a culturally responsive leader.

Even though there were some variances in the duties and responsibilities among

the assistant principals, all of the assistant principals seem to still engage in the common

duty and responsibility of "books, butts, and buses" (the 3 B's). Assistant Principal Carl

said, "obviously buses, butts, and books, we all do that." Several of the assistant

principals felt that discipline was a large part of what they dealt with daily. Assistant

Principal Carl felt like when he gets into the classrooms more, it helps to alleviate some

of the behavior issues.

> I tell teachers sometime that I'm not always in here for you, so if I don't give you
> feedback or if I don't make a comment about what you were doing instructionally
> I might not have been in there for you, I might have been in there to check on a
> student, and to check on a situation between two students. I do feel like just being
> present in the hall during class changes, being present in the cafeteria, and being
> present in the classroom. I know by this time of the school year I know my
> teachers' trouble core. My math teachers, teach four classes, and I know of the

four classes they teach, which class gives them the most difficulty. So I'm strategic in when I go into their room. If I'm not going in their room for them, I'm going in for students. I go into their more challenging class so I can, you know, help negate some of that behavior that might impede them from teaching effectively.

As the administrator, being visible was important to Assistant Principal Carl and a few other participants. The participants felt that they were not always able to be as visible as they would like to be in the classrooms due to other tasks and duties that would keep them from getting into the classroom. Some of those tasks and duties that would hinder their visibility in the classrooms were: discipline, cafeteria duty, calling parents in reference to discipline, and safety issues. Assistant Principal Faith said, "Sometimes those duties keep me from getting into the classroom as much as I would like to." Discipline was a key factor for their lack of visibility within the classrooms, which hinder them from being effective instructional leaders.

Assistant Principal Ellen was originally hired to be the assistant principal of instruction (API) to focus on instruction, but on paper she is not considered the assistant principal of instruction just a regular assistant principal. She spends the majority of her time handling all the discipline for the 11th-grade team. She does do PLCs and she conducts staff development within her school. Assistant Principal Ellen, along with the other assistant principals, all felt that the instructional piece was very important and they wanted even more time on a regular consistent basis where they could spend most of their day in classrooms examining instruction and providing feedback to teachers and students. Assistant Principal Angela said, "My greatest focus is on instruction." However, the tasks they were completing each day were not all necessarily ones they could make a plan

for because each day was different with new and different issues that needed to be

addressed depending upon the situation. As these issues revealed themselves, the

assistant principals found themselves putting out fires and being more reactive than

proactive, which ultimately affects their impact on instruction within the building.

Several of them felt that the instructional piece was an area they needed improvement on.

Assistant Principal Barbara explained,

> The part that I don't think I do very well and is a struggle every day is that
> instructional part. I'm not in the classrooms the way that I feel I need to be in
> order to one, ensure that you know, the instruction is happening at a high quality,
> high level, I guess intensity and with rigor as we would want it to be, and then I
> also would provide students the opportunity to know I am there and I'm checking
> on them and being able to see what they're doing and talking with them and
> communicating with them about their performance.

Assistant Principal Dana said,

> If I had to rank my areas of strength and weaknesses or areas for growth, the
> instructional piece, even though I feel like I have a good background and was a
> good teacher, I don't feel as if that is my strongest area at this point in my career,
> only because I unfortunately have, well not unfortunately, but basically if we're in
> PLCs and there is a discipline issue, I'm the one that leaves PLCs, not necessarily
> the principal, so you know, I take care of more of the discipline and the day to day
> running of the school.

Learning to Lead

As seen above, many of the assistant principals have several common duties and

responsibilities, but some of those duties and responsibilities do vary. Many of their

duties and responsibilities, according to the assistant principals, can sometimes keep them

from becoming the instructional leader they know they should be and want to be. There

was no clear indication of what type of instructional leader they wanted to be and should be. The variation in their duties and responsibilities comes largely from the principal who is over the entire school. Principals assign what duties and responsibilities they want their assistant principal to perform. With the notion of principals assigning duties and responsibilities to their assistant principals, I decided to examine how and what duties principals were asking their assistant principals to do, and to see if they align to what the assistant principals say they do and align to culturally responsive leadership. The assistant principals were asked what their duties and responsibilities were, but the principals were asked, "What types of duties, responsibilities, and experiences do you give your AP?" The responses varied among each of them and among the different school levels.

The theme/key point that emerged from the assistant principals about their duties and responsibilities was mostly management duties, as described above. Based on the responses from the principals the theme/key point that emerged was *the duties and responsibilities that the principals assign to their assistant principals are geared toward helping them to learn how to lead a school.* The principals did assign management duties, but they felt over all that they were giving their assistant principals duties that helped them to lead or be in charge, which they thought would be needed when becoming a principal. The duties and responsibilities did vary, but many of them were similar among them. All of the principals did assign or would assign duties such as discipline, buses, custodians, textbooks, etc. There were some differences in the duties that were assigned, besides the duties listed above.

The duties and responsibilities that differed seemed to be among the middle and high school principals. The duties they assigned that differed among them included: grade level incentives, weekly or monthly meetings, the committees they were over, mentoring groups, and custodian oversight. These differences depended on the school and for some their assistant principal's area of strength. What seemed to be common among each of the middle and high school principals was that each of their assistant principals were assigned to a grade level or department, and handled a few duties like PLCs for their grade level, cafeteria, facilities, and after school extra-curricular activities. Being assigned to a grade level or department differs from an elementary assistant principal because they usually help with all grade levels/staff members.

The middle and high school principals had about two or three assistant principals at their school and they tried to divide the duties up among them. Those principals shared that they try to let their assistant principals be in charge of their grade level or department. They try to let them lead their areas with the assistant principals ultimately having to answer to the principal. Principal Henry stated, "Yeah, so I try to let my APs be, and this is just going to be the wrong vernacular, but mini-principals over their departments or grade levels." Principal Ivy had similar thoughts. She stated, "The other thing is whenever we have a new initiative or a program that we're getting ready to work through or they bring something to me, I give them full reign to implement that."

Two of the principals do not have assistant principals because their student population is lower than the required number based on district guidelines necessary to assign an assistant principal. They were still asked the same question, but they tailored

their response as if they had an assistant principal and what duties, responsibilities, and experiences they would give them. The duties and responsibilities they thought they would give to their assistant principal if they had one were very similar to the principals who had assistant principals. Principal Josie stated, "I would want them of course to take the lead on some things." Principal Glenda said, "I also think that helping with the bones and the running's of the school." Even though they did not have assistant principals, we can gather from the data that there still seems to be some commonalities among principal participants as to what is being assigned to assistant principals and/or what roles, responsibilities, and duties they should have based on the needs of the school. Depending on the needs of the school and the level of the school in many cases will determine or help define each assistant principal's duties and responsibilities.

Principals Assigned No Duties that Helped Assistant Principals Develop Culturally Responsive Leadership

The third key point/theme that appeared in this study came from both the principals and assistant principals. The principals and assistant principals both felt that exposure to cultural issues was embedded in the duties and responsibilities they assigned to their assistant principal(s) and also themselves. *There was nothing specific that principals assigned their assistant principals that would help them develop their sense of culturally responsive leadership.* The principals were asked what types of duties and responsibilities did they give their assistant principals that were related to becoming a culturally responsive leader.

According to the principals, they felt that principals have a role in the development of their assistant principals. The principals felt that the principal's role in the assistant principal's development was important. Principal Josie said,

> I think the principal can either make or break that decision, or make or break that outcome. Because sometimes people can undermine you and not even mean it, but if they withhold information and pretend to be the gatekeeper of certain things, then that—that doesn't set the AP for success, you know, and if they are not forthcoming and saying, and giving feedback, constructive feedback, to say you know, this is an area that you are weak in, why don't we work on this together, so that when you are a principal, you know this is already taken care of.

Even though they felt their role in the development of the assistant principal was important many of the principals did not feel that there were specific duties that they assigned to their assistant principals that gave them that experience of becoming a culturally responsive leader. More or less, the principals felt that culturally responsive leadership was embedded within what they are asking the assistant principals to do. Principal Henry stated, "Yeah, I mean I would say it's probably just embedded, I don't know if there's a specific experience necessarily that they might have." Principal Ivy echoes Principal Henry and the others. She said, 'I'll say they unintentionally encountered those issues. I don't think that I've done much in that area to support them, it's just in with what they do." The principals also felt like the assistant principals would experience and deal with culturally responsive issues naturally. Principal Kevin shared, "Those issues will come up naturally. So, it's like embedded. It comes into everything they do, but you just have to let them own it and let them see it through." None of the duties the principals were assigning seemed to be aligned explicitly to culturally

responsive leadership, but rather they felt as if the duties and experiences the assistant principals were getting would naturally lend themselves to and align with culturally responsive leadership. With these findings one could infer that culturally responsive leadership is not something that could be taught, but rather culturally responsive leadership is encountered daily throughout what you do. This same thinking was revealed also from the data that was gathered from the assistant principals.

When speaking with the assistant principals, they also felt like being a culturally responsive leader was embedded in what they did, and the experiences they had as an assistant principal along with the many other experiences they have had during their educational career and throughout their life. One of those experiences included their preparation at the university level. Of the six principals and district level administrator, five of them within the last five years have currently received their Doctorate in Educational Leadership. The district level administrator in the professional development department worked in a university prior to coming to this school district in her current position. She incorporated discussions of social justice and culturally responsive leadership within her courses. The other principal and one of the assistant principals are currently working on that degree at the same university. The six principals and the one assistant principal shared that during their doctoral studies they received courses or had discussions on cultural responsiveness and social justice. Of the six principals and the one assistant principal, all but one of the principals had received or will receive their Doctorate from the same nearby university. The other principal received his Doctorate from a different university in the surrounding area. Only two of the assistant principals

mentioned that during their administrative licensure program, a few of the professors would infuse discussions around social justice within education in their lectures. The others mentioned they didn't receive any discussion during their licensure for school administration. Nine of the twelve participants had some discussion on culturally responsiveness or social justice, but for most of them it was only during their doctoral studies. Principal Glenda stated, "I think that along with me actually being an AP in a diverse school and the theory and practice I received at the university, helped me with diversity."

None of the assistant principals mentioned any specific duty or responsibility they have as an assistant principal that aligns or does not align to culturally responsive leadership. Assistant Principal Carl said, "I don't know if anything I do, any of my duties or roles lead specifically to diversity. I think it's a part of what I do." Assistant Principal Dana stated, "Not necessarily, I mean I just don't think that there is anything in particular, you know, it's a responsibility, it comes in what we do, and we just deal with it as it comes." Assistant Principal Faith does not feel like there is a specific duty or responsibility in her role as an assistant principal that aligns or does not align to culturally responsive leadership. For her, she stated, "I think that, for me, it comes with me as a person." So for Assistant Principal Faith, being a culturally responsive leader was embedded within her as a person. Like Assistant Principal Faith, many of the participants felt like there is no specific duty that would prepare an assistant principal to be a culturally responsive leader. The participants felt like assistant principals would naturally

deal with cultural issues in their position, which moves us into the next key point/theme that focuses on the participants' knowledge and understanding of cultural responsiveness.

Culturally Responsive Leadership Starts with Knowledge and Awareness of Student Differences

The *participants felt that culturally responsive leadership starts with having knowledge and awareness of the student differences within your school and making sure everyone is included.* This key point/theme came from how the participants expressed their understanding of what culturally responsive leadership is. Each participant was asked what their perception of a culturally responsive leader was. In expressing their thoughts about culturally responsive leadership, each participant made it plain and clear that culturally responsive leadership starts by identifying and knowing that there are differences within your school and making sure everyone is included or feels included. Principal Henry simply stated, "I think just the knowledge of knowing it is what's important." Not only did each participant feel that knowledge of the differences was important but also creating an environment that is inclusive for all. Assistant Principal Angela noted, "I try to understand the differences and enjoy the differences.… I just try to make everyone feel welcome and that they're a part of the school." Assistant Principal Barbara said, "…someone who knows and someone who is, that has identified all, the differences in their school as far as culture and tries to be inclusive of all." Assistant Principal Carl added, "You should never be allowed to just celebrate one student population, you need to find a way to celebrate everyone." Assistant Principal Dana stated, "Someone that is knowledgeable and interacts with people of all backgrounds, all races, all economic backgrounds within their school, and assist them and help them

through whatever situation they're dealing with so they feel included." Principal Ivy

explained, "I think it's being always critical using the lens of ensuring that ALL, capital

A, capital L, capital L, have the opportunity to be successful and opening doors and not

closing them." Even though every participant is not quoted here, it is important to note

that each of these quotes helps to paint a consensus picture regarding the participants'

definition of a culturally responsive leader. All of the participants share the same

thoughts.

One other thought I wanted to share with the reader comes from District Level

Leader Lisa, which takes it beyond knowing your student differences to responding to the

student differences.

> Culturally responsive leaders are aware that there are differences in the families, the communities, and the kids that they serve and that they respond to that by having something in place that addresses it. It could be as simple as being certain that there's someone who speaks the language of every family to help interpret a meeting. It could be as simple as we make sure that all families, whether they traditionally participate in school activities or not are invited to participate in a way that makes sense for them and lifts their culture up. I think for me as a White woman leading a school that was, when I ended my last principalship, a school that was racially diverse, linguistically diverse, and socioeconomically diverse, that for me it meant recognizing my privilege as a White person, understanding that my way was not the only way or the best way and being prepared to honor what other people thought about educating children in that particular school, so I don't know, that's kind of a backwards way around culturally responsive.

This key point/theme is also reflected in the responses the assistant principals and

principals gave when they were asked to tell what types of culturally responsive training

they have had since becoming an assistant principal or principal. This fact is important to

know because it shows what training, if any, they have had that helped to develop their

understanding and knowledge of cultural responsiveness and its impact on the school.

Many of them have had some type of diversity training. There were a few who had not

received any training since becoming an assistant principal. There were also those that

have recently graduated from a graduate school and are currently in a graduate program

that have had classes on social justice and culturally responsive leadership. That fact was

seen in some of their responses. Those participants that received the diversity training

felt it helped them to become more aware of the differences among their students.

Assistant Principal Carl shared, "We've had a session or two on that to help bring

awareness of differences and it helped me to see the importance of cultural

responsiveness within the school." Assistant Principal Barbara shared that thought but

also added the following:

> I've had some training that the county has provided, diversity training. The
> cultural diversity piece was geared more to inclusiveness of genders and
> understanding the teaching, helping to teach kids and make them feel, to teach
> acceptance among, students who may not necessarily want to be seen as one
> gender or the other, they want to be different than what they're actually naturally
> born, so children who have, are, are saying that they're gay or they are interested
> or have questions. It helped us look at and be aware of the different differences
> among students.

Assistant Principal Henry has also attended diversity training offered within the

district, but he also shared how he attended an equity leadership meeting within the

community. Not only did he become aware of the differences, but he noted what was

eye-opening for him during the meeting with regards to "real diversity and culturally

responsive." He stated "I think we always look at diversity as being together, but true,

real diversity and culturally responsiveness, I think is understanding that people also have to have their own entities and differences to then come together and talk."

Culturally Responsive Leaders are Open-minded

Continuing with the examination of their knowledge and understanding of cultural responsiveness and its impact on the school and themselves, the participants were asked to discuss a recent time they engaged in culturally responsive leadership or cultural responsiveness. When describing their experiences the participants *felt like culturally responsive leaders have to be open in their thinking and mindful of their actions, while developing a sense of cultural responsiveness among their staff.* This gives the reader a glimpse into how the participants view what they do and if what they are doing is considered being a culturally responsive leader or a consideration of cultural responsiveness. How each of the participants described their recent engagement in cultural responsiveness is interesting because they tell a story. In their telling of the story, I could see their passion for what they do and the passion they have for all children. An experience Principal Henry had helped him to open his mind and acknowledge cultural responsiveness. He recapped a time as an assistant principal when he sat in on a meeting with his African American female principal. She had to deal with a student who was the son of a principal supervisor within the district. The student made a very racially derogatory remark after a basketball game to the opposing team. The remark almost caused a riot. The student was Caucasian. To avoid any thoughts about her being biased, the principal wanted another staff member who was Caucasian in the meeting for a different view. Principal Henry felt like having another staff member of the same race as

the student in the meeting was being culturally responsive to the situation. He shared, "it really made my eyes open up a little bit that, WOW! everybody has to be culturally responsive. . . . and that really opened my eyes to that, that just kind of whole culturally responsive issue."

Many of the participants, like Principal Henry, had experiences in which they became more open and those experiences elevated the sense of the importance of being a culturally responsive leader, and having to be open and mindful in all that they do and say. In those recent experiences that each of them shared, it was not just about knowing that you have differences in your school, as stated above which is important, but also moving toward beginning to help others to build that same sense of cultural responsiveness throughout the school. Assistant Principal Angela said, ". . . open their mind into thinking…part of my leadership is to help sort of counsel and help mentor the young teachers that are coming in that haven't had all the experiences with diversity."

Building cultural responsiveness within their schools looks different for each of the participants. To help the reader begin to make connections, I would like to share a glimpse into Assistant Principals Barbara's and Carl's recent culturally responsive experiences. Both of their experiences, although different, captures many of the thoughts of the other participants.

Assistant Principal Barbara said,

> I've actually led some diversity training at the school myself. Trying to get teachers to really understand and open up to how they may show difference in children although they don't feel that they are showing signs. We did a diversity walk, and that was real powerful, had a lot of people kind of come talk to me about that afterwards. It helped the teachers and myself become more open-

minded about our students and staff. It helped develop a sense of cultural responsiveness within the school. We still are far from where we need to be, but it was a great starting place for our all of us to begin to see the importance of cultural responsiveness and cultural relevant instruction, and how we have to be open-minded of all we do as educators.

Assistant Principal Carl stated,

Discipline is different. We talk a lot about differentiation in the classroom and I've always talked about differentiation in discipline to my teachers, so the cookie cutter's never worked for me, and that goes back to the idea of equity versus equality, so it might be equitable. I mean it might be equal to put two, both, students who got into a conflict on a school bus, to put both of them off the bus for three days, that might be fair or that might be the equal thing to do, but it might not be equitable because one student might miss three days of school because they don't have a way to school for those three days. So now they have a three-day bus suspension and a three-day school suspension where the other student who gets three days off the school bus, they can get a ride to school every day, so same infraction, I still get instruction for three days, but the other student loses instruction for three days and a ride to school. So being open and mindful of those situations when dealing with discipline and removing kids from the classroom setting and helping my teachers to understand this also. You need to be open and mindful of, alternatives to everything that we do, you know, whether you exercise that alternative or not, I feel like you need your mind to be moving in that direction and considering those things and your teachers need to realize this when it comes to disciplining children. It is my job to help them to understand it and their role in developing culturally responsive behaviors.

Understanding of the Differences within Their School

The participants were asked about leading a diverse school and the importance of cultural responsiveness and being a culturally responsive leader within that school. The key point/theme that emerged was *the leader should have an understanding of the differences within their school and know how to appropriately address and respond to those differences*. Each of them strongly felt that cultural responsiveness and being a culturally responsive leader in a diverse school was very important. Assistant Principal

Ellen said it best, noting "Oh, on a scale of one to ten I would definitely say it's a ten, it's of utmost importance." They felt that cultural responsiveness is important because it means that you as a culturally responsive leader understand the differences within your school, and you understand the need to examine those differences and be responsive to the needs within and throughout the building and community you serve. Assistant Principal Ellen said, "if you don't understand your clientele you can't help serve them, and you can't help move them to the next level." She went a little further by adding, "I think if you're not culturally in tune with, with your clientele, with your student population there's no way they'll respect you enough to want to try hard and want to succeed." The other participants shared some of the same thoughts as Assistant Principal Ellen.

To extend the idea of cultural understanding further, some of the participants felt to truly understand the differences within your school, then you had to have the willingness to "examine everything that's coming to the school" according to District Level Leader Lisa. This does not just mean an examination of the children, but an examination of the staff, parents, community, and of oneself as a leader. Assistant Principal Angela stated, "You have to understand what the cultural differences are and teach the staff. I think you always have to be aware as a leader of where your staff is and what they need to learn." Assistant Principal Barbara added, "You have to understand the culture or you're going to constantly be hitting your head against a brick wall. You've got to be able to bring that community together and get buy-in from everybody." District Level Leader Lisa noted,

I think a big part of being a culturally responsive leader is being willing to put yourself aside, like understand where you're coming from but also understand it's not about you. More people know the principal than they know the mayor. So we have to really think about that when we're working with communities and kids.

According to the participants the importance of culturally responsiveness and being a culturally responsive leader is the ability to understand others and what they bring to the table. Once you understand these things better, you are more successful at responding more effectively to the needs throughout the building. Understanding will help principals and assistant principals to become more inclusive of others and their needs.

Experiences Have Helped with Preparation

The participants felt that *the experiences the assistant principals have or have had throughout their educational career have helped prepare them to lead a diverse school.* This key point/theme addresses why assistant principals feel they are prepared to lead a diverse school. All of the assistant principals except for one, felt confident enough that they were prepared to lead a diverse school. Assistant Principal Faith shared, "I think my experiences has given me good balance since I've worked in both realms I would feel comfortable applying for both types of schools." Assistant Principal Dana added, "I feel that my experiences at [Passive school] opened me to a whole set of experiences or conditions that I was not really aware of until I had the opportunity to work with those students." The assistant principal that felt less confident shared that she was about 75% ready to lead. This was due to this being her first year as an assistant principal. She felt that she would be more prepared to lead a school after completing at least one to two more years as an assistant principal.

The assistant principals felt all of their experiences and the different roles they

have played throughout their educational career along with being an assistant principal

had prepared them to lead a diverse school. Assistant Principal Barbara said,

> When I think about it every school I taught at and the school that I was first an
> assistant principal at as well as the school I was a principal at, they were all Title I
> schools and they were all magnet schools, so within all of that brings its own level
> of just crazy diversity, and so yes, I know that I am, because of those experiences
> I am prepared.

The assistant principals went on further to state that being prepared can look

different and may not mean that you are fully prepared for all aspects of being a

principal. This is because they feel that there are many aspects of the principal position

that they are not privy to. Assistant Principal Faith stated, "There are still some decisions

or there's a role that a principal plays that you don't even come in contact with as an

assistant principal, so even being an AP does not prepare you for everything." Assistant

Principal Barbara noted, "I think no one's really completely prepared for when you go

into that job." They not only based that thought on them not being in contact with all

aspects of the position, but they also felt like each school is different and each day is

different which brings on different challenges or aspects that they may not have

encountered. Assistant Principal Dana stated, "I think that you can be prepared, but you

always have to remember that there's always going to be something new each day, and

that you should never think that I know it all." Assistant Principal Barbara said,

> Even if you're prepared, so many things are happening at one time and coming at
> you so quickly and you're—and the school year flies by, you've got to get a lot
> accomplished. It's gonna be a new experience even if you've handled it before,

again, new people new situation, new circumstances, similar problem, but everything's still new and you have to also be able to gauge who you're dealing with and what you're dealing with.

Nothing Prepares You to Be a Principal

This key point/theme comes from the principal's perspective. The principals felt *there is nothing that prepares you for the position of the principal*. The principals were asked the same question as the assistant principals, but they had to think about whether before they became a principal if they felt they were prepared as an assistant principal. Each of them felt they were prepared to be a principal as an assistant principal. Principal Henry stated, "Before I entered the principalship, when I was an AP, yes, I felt like I was prepared to do it all." Principal Josie added, "I just kind of felt like I had had enough experiences. So I would say all of my experiences just kind of helped me." Principal Ivy felt as an assistant principal one just knows when he or she is prepared to lead a school through some of the situations he or she encounters. For her, she knew she was ready to lead a school "when I realized that you just kind of learn innately how to react to things, you think okay well then given whatever circumstance I know what to do." Based on their responses, they too felt when they were assistant principals that their experiences helped prepare them for becoming a principal.

Both the principals and the assistant principals felt like their experiences, before becoming a principal, have prepared them to lead a diverse school. The principal participants expanded on their thoughts about being prepared to lead a school once they came into the position of being a principal. They felt like even though those experiences they have encountered throughout their career were helpful, there is nothing that they can

pinpoint that prepares one for the position. Principal Glenda shared that your experiences inform you and you cannot just think you know everything. According to Principal Henry, "I think there's no experience that prepares you for it, but I think the greater amount of relevance that you have to being in charge and to leading people does prepare you the most." Principal Kevin noted, "It's true, when you move into that seat, you—nothing prepares you for that, because there's very few things, even as an AP that you do from start to finish."

Hindrances in Preparation

Even though the participants felt they were prepared, they still felt *there were areas that hindered the assistant principals from their preparation toward becoming a principal in a diverse school.* When looking at whether or not they felt they were prepared to lead a diverse school, the assistant principals identified the lack of support in different areas that they feel have hindered them in their preparation for becoming a principal within a diverse school. Those areas they each felt that hindered their preparation did vary. A few of those areas of hindrance included the lack of cultural and diversity training. Principal Glenda noted, "There was very little training on diversity. I wish that there were trainings on the characteristics of different races and cultures." In terms of time management, Assistant Principal Dana shared, "I struggle somewhat, like I wish I was a better time management person….learning to delegate a little more would be more advantageous to my experiences as far as preparing for a principalship." Finally, budgeting was a concern. Assistant Principal Ellen stated, "I don't think the programs prepare you enough for budget even though the budget is pretty well set and there's not

much wiggle room, but still, you have to figure out how to be creative with your money."
The lack of being an instructional leader was also a hindrance for many of them.

The idea that instructional leadership was a hindrance stemmed from the assistant principals not spending as much time in the classroom to help inform instruction due to their large part in the managerial duties they are assigned by their principal, particularly discipline. Assistant Principal Barbara said, "The biggest areas for me right now, just being bogged down with the discipline, and not being able to get in and be that instructional leader that I know I need to." Assistant Principal Dana noted, "I hear that we're supposed to be an instructional leader, however so many times there are other things that I end up getting involved in that take away my time."

More Need for Instructional Leadership

The *assistant principals felt they needed more experiences with being an instructional leader because it would help in their preparation toward leading a diverse school*. Each of the assistant principals mentioned a few things they felt were important that they needed to be prepared for becoming a principal. Some of those experiences they felt were needed more are budgeting, data analysis, community outreach, and cultural/diversity topics. Assistant Principal Barbara, who was once a principal, felt like assistant principals needed to have experiences and opportunities with developing "ideas, bring them to the table, and initiate change, to initiate and to actually walk the idea through and do the follow through."

Even though the responses varied, along with those experiences, each of them mentioned the instructional leader experiences as a key part in being prepared to be a

principal. Assistant Principal Dana said, "Well of course I think the instructional piece is

by far one of the most important pieces." Assistant Principal Angela noted, "the overall

big picture of principalship I feel like the instructional part is very important." They felt

like the instructional leadership piece has a big impact on student learning. They shared

that being an instructional leader was important, but they did not address specifically how

being a culturally responsive leader impacts instruction and how that's important with

their preparation for leading a diverse school. They felt like being an instructional leader

was important because as a leader you have to know what is being taught and how to

support, coach, and nurture your teachers instructionally. Assistant Principal Faith said,

"I think that instructional leadership is really important because you don't have to know

every content area and every standard, but you need to have an idea of…really good

instruction." Participants felt that principals also have to be able to know the needs in

their school to help make improvements. The assistant principals simply felt like they

didn't get to spend a whole lot of time being an instructional leader.

More Experiences Necessary in Dealing with Adults

This key point/theme came from the principals. The principals felt that the

assistant principals need more experiences learning how to deal with adults. The

principals were asked what they felt assistant principals needed to help prepare them for

becoming a culturally responsive leader. The main thing that most of them stated was

learning how to deal with adults. Principal Henry said, "I think anytime you can deal

with adults it helps to prepare you to be the principal." They felt like a large part of what

principals deal with was adults. Those adults consisted of personnel, community, and

parents. Principal Henry felt assistant principals spent more time dealing and interacting

with children as opposed to adults. The most interaction assistant principals had with

adults were conversations about discipline with parents and evaluative conversations with

teachers. Principal Kevin said, "a lot of its people related, relational, how to deal with

employees, how to deal with parents, that's the experience I think a lot of APs miss."

Principal Henry added, "I think as much interaction as you have with having crucial and

critical conversations with adults helps you to lead a diverse school." Principal Josie's

idea of dealing with adults involved the community piece. She stressed the importance of

dealing with the community. "I think that some people underestimate the power of the

community or they overestimate their ability to deal with it." All of these aspects of

dealing with adults seem to be common among the participants, as a key experience they

felt assistant principals needed before becoming a culturally responsive leader.

Chapter Conclusion

In summary, this chapter focuses on the 11 key points/themes that emerged from

the interviews that were conducted with all participants. Those 11 key points/themes

were:

- Mostly Managerial Duties

- Learning to Lead

- Principals assigned no Duties that Helped Develop Culturally Responsive
  Leadership

- Culturally Responsive Leadership Starts with Knowledge and Awareness of
  Student Differences

- Culturally Responsive Leaders are Open-Minded

- Understanding of the Differences Within their School

- Experiences Have Helped with Preparation

- Nothing Prepares You to be a Principal

- Hindrances in Preparation

- More Need for Instructional Leadership

- More Experiences Necessary in Dealing with Adults

To recap, assistant principals felt that most of their duties and responsibilities were managerial. I found it interesting that none of the participants explicitly stated that their duties and responsibilities were or were not aligned to culturally responsive leadership. The way they described their managerial duties and tasks they were completing, did not give the impression that they were aligned with culturally responsive leadership. They felt they were prepared to lead a diverse school, not just because of their position but due to the many experiences they have encountered throughout their educational career. They also did not specifically refer to them being prepared as culturally responsive leaders. They understood the importance of being a culturally responsive leader and that being culturally responsive was naturally embedded into what they do as a leader daily. As seen in the findings, participants defined being culturally responsive involved knowing the differences within your school, being intentional and inclusive in what you do, and understanding and responding to the differences appropriately. Many of them have received some type of diversity training, but they did not feel like there was anything specific that they experienced that helped to develop them in the area of cultural

responsiveness. Lastly, assistant principals felt like having more time to be an instructional leader was important and that getting more opportunities to be an instructional leader would help to prepare them to lead in any school.

CHAPTER V

RESEARCH ANALYSIS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

If you're not willing to examine your own biases, all of your children, all of your staff, if you're not willing to think in a culturally responsive way you're not gonna make a difference in a school. (District Level Leader Lisa)

Introduction

I entered this research study to determine whether or not the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of assistant principals is preparing them to step into the role of a principal in a diverse school and serve as a culturally responsive leader. This research is coming from the lens of culturally responsive leadership. Assistant principals, principals, and one district level administrator in the professional development department made up the participants I interviewed in this study. Their thoughts and ideas about the preparation of assistant principals were carefully reviewed and will be analyzed in the first part of this chapter. In the previous chapter, I described the findings from the data, which was presented at a surface level. In the analysis section of this chapter, I analyzed and critically critiqued what was found in the data, along with making connections to what the research says as it pertains to this study. I used two main research questions, each followed by one sub-question to help guide and examine this study. Before the analysis, I shared why I developed each of these research questions and their connection with this study.

Research Questions

The first main research question is: *How do the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of the assistant principals align or not align with culturally responsive leadership?* This question was developed because I wanted to investigate if the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of assistant principals are preparing them to be principals in culturally diverse schools. To do so I feel you have to first understand what assistant principals do and if what they do aligns or does not align to being prepared to be a principal. This question takes a look at the types of duties and responsibilities that assistant principals perform on a daily basis, and if those duties and responsibilities correlate into being prepared for a successful transition into the principal role in a diverse school. It also investigates if those duties and responsibilities that they perform help to tie into being a culturally responsive leader, which connects to the theoretical framework of this study. This question is related to the types of staff development that are being offered to assistant principals in the district and its relevance to their growth as a leader, who wants to further their career as a principal and as a culturally responsive leader in general. This question is important because it allows me to examine all of these aspects to help paint a picture of the life of an assistant principal, knowing that the duties and responsibilities that they perform can vary based on the school where they work and principal they are under.

The sub-question under the first main research question is: *Do assistant principals feel knowledgeable about and/or understand cultural responsiveness and its impact on the school and themselves?* This study's theoretical framework is based on cultural

responsiveness and the actions of being a culturally responsive leader. Johnson's (2006)

culturally responsive leadership practices serve as the core foundation of this framework

(see Table 5).

Table 5

Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices

Culturally Responsive Leadership Practices
- Self-reflection and exploration of own core values and beliefs   - Promotes a trusting and inclusive instructional environment   - Promote culturally responsive school environment   - Affirms cultures and builds positive relationships   - Empowers parents to enact change   - Acts as a social activist within the community

Note. Source: Johnson (2006)

In order to examine if assistant principals are experiencing, understanding, and

using any of the culturally responsive practices, this research question was developed as a

sub-question asking them about their duties, experiences, and staff development as an

assistant principal. This research question is critical to this study because it helps to bring

light to cultural responsiveness with regards to assistant principals and if they are being

prepared and/or having opportunities/experiences with culturally responsive leadership.

This question gives us a sense of the participants' understanding and views about

culturally responsive leadership and its impact on the leadership and the school. It is also

critical in understanding and determining if assistant principals are making intentional

efforts toward culturally responsive leadership within their role as an assistant principal,

which connects to the culturally responsive leadership practices determined by Johnson (2006). The study's participants shared that there was no specific duty or responsibility that they performed that aligned or did not align to culturally responsive leadership, it was just embedded in their duties and responsibilities daily. This indicates that they made no intentional effort on their part with regard to being a culturally responsive leader.

The second main research question is: *Why do assistant principals feel they are or are not prepared to lead diverse schools?* As stated previously, the question being addressed in this research study is whether the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of assistant principals are preparing them to be principals in culturally diverse schools. The existing scholarship suggests that they are not very well prepared to do so (Barnett et al., 2012; Chan et al., 2003; Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2012). This research question was developed to determine if assistant principals feel they are prepared or not and why they feel that way. This question will help us to begin to understand what they are or are not experiencing that helps to prepare them for being a principal. This research is not just looking at being prepared to be a principal, but looking more specifically at leading in a diverse school.

The sub-question under the second research question is: *What experiences do principals and assistant principals perceive are needed in order to be prepared to make a successful transition into becoming a culturally responsive leader in a diverse school?* Their principal assigns so much of what an assistant principal does. Taking into account the many duties and experiences that are assigned to the assistant principals, this sub-

question was developed to investigate what experiences participants felt are necessary in their preparation toward becoming a culturally responsive leader who leads a diverse school. None of the responses specifically addressed experiences perceived for becoming a culturally responsive leader.

Now that you understand the purpose of the research questions and how they fit into this study, the research questions will be answered in this chapter. The findings in Chapter IV were organized by the 11 key points/themes and those key points/themes are used in the analysis to help answer each research question. The research analysis section is followed by recommendations for districts, universities, principals, assistant principals, and recommendation for future research. This chapter closes with a conclusion of the study.

Research Analysis

How Do the Duties, Responsibilities, Experiences, and Staff Development of the Assistant Principals Align or Not Align with Culturally Responsive Leadership?

Generally, the individuals' experiences with being an administrator come when they become an assistant principal. As seen in the literature review, researchers suggest that assistant principals usually go through the socialization process where they begin to examine the *how* and the *what* of the position (Mertz 2007). According to Oleszewski et al. (2012) this process is in stages and starts before they enter the position and continues when the principal assigns those duties. If the principals are saying they have a part in assistant principals' development then it is important to provide them with duties and responsibilities that help to grow them as leaders, specifically culturally responsive leaders, who are capable of leading diverse schools. This will also help assistant

principals during the socialization process to better understand and transition smoother into the *how* and the *what* of the position (Mertz 2007). Oleszewski et al. (2012) noted the importance of understanding how assistant principals are oriented into the position due to the lack of training related to being an assistant principal. This piece leads into the next area on how assistant principals viewed the duties and responsibilities they were assigned.

The assistant principals were asked to share the duties and responsibilities they were expected to perform daily. From the data, the key point/theme that was revealed throughout the assistant principals' responses was that the assistant principals felt that most of their duties and responsibilities were majority managerial tasks. In beginning to describe those tasks, the assistant principals mentioned how their duties and responsibilities were assigned to them by their principal, which goes along with what researchers state about their job being defined as completing all tasks assigned by the principal (Barnett et al., 2012; Kwan, 2009; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Oleszewski et al., 2012). Those duties and responsibilities did vary based on the school level and age of the children. Typically, the middle and high school assistant principals focused more on grade level or departments because there was usually more than one assistant principal assigned to those school levels. The elementary assistant principals generally focused on the entire staff because there is only one assistant principal assigned to those schools. In general, there were either two to three assistant principals assigned to the middle and high schools within High Noon High County Schools, and just one assistant principal in the elementary schools. In High Noon High County Schools there were no clearly defined

roles listed for assistant principals. The literature suggests that assistant principals struggled with not knowing and understanding their roles because there were no clearly defined roles and responsibilities for them.

In the review of literature section, researchers suggested that a challenge in understanding and knowing the role of the assistant principal was due to the fact that there were no clearly defined roles and responsibilities for them (Barnett et al., 2012; Celikten, 2001; Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Oleszewski et al., 2012). The assistant principals in my study did not feel that understanding and knowing the role of the assistant principal was a challenge for them because they felt they knew what was expected of them in the position. They did recognize common duties among themselves while also acknowledging that the roles could differ based on the school and principal. From what I gathered from the findings, it seemed as though the middle and high school assistant principals had similar duties they performed like being assigned to a grade level and/or departments because there was more than one assistant principal assigned to the school. The middle and high school assistant principals did not evaluate and work with every staff member throughout the building like elementary school assistant principals did. Elementary, middle, and high school assistant principals did share three common duties "books, butts, and behinds." Good (2008) suggest that assistant principals spend more of their time on the 3 "B's": "books, butts, and behinds."

Much of the participants' daily experiences is more management based, in terms of student discipline and other managerial tasks, which aligns and is in agreement with

the literature (Celikten, 2001; Hausman et al., 2002; Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2012). Oleszewski et al. (2012) goes on further to state that because assistant principals spend so much time dealing with student management that it could have negative effects on their effectiveness. In the findings, Assistant Principal Barbara shared "The biggest areas for me right now, just being bogged down with discipline." Her thoughts were captured about how her effort to be the instructional leader she knows she needs to be is frustrated largely due to her managing student behavior and other managerial tasks. Her response aligns with Oleszewski et al. (2012), in that, Assistant Principal Barbara feels less effective as an instructional leader, which as a whole negatively impacts her effectiveness as assistant principal. The assistant principals stated how they could grow more in the area of instructional leadership.

Under the same umbrella of the duties and responsibilities of assistant principals, the principals were asked what duties and responsibilities they assigned their assistant principals. From the principals' responses the key point/theme that was identified was learning to lead. The principals felt what they assigned assistant principals helped them to learn how to lead a school. Based on the findings the principals did not view what they were assigning as managerial tasks like the assistant principals did. The principals felt that assistant principals just needed opportunities and experiences to be over something like: departments, PLCs, or grade levels. The principals believed those experiences would help the assistant principals to learn how to lead a school. They did not mention whether or not those experiences would help them to become successful school leaders or culturally responsive leaders. Research suggests that successful school

leadership includes the practices that leaders demonstrate that have a positive impact on student learning (Hallinger, & Heck, 2010; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Leithwood & Riehl, 2005). According to Leithwood and Riehl (2005), the core leadership practices are setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization. Based on the findings of my study, the principals did not mention any specific experiences that they gave their assistant principals around these core leadership practices as defined by Leithwood and Riehl (2005). With that said one could argue that assigning assistant principals to be over PLCs could fall under the practices of developing people and managing teaching and learning. Even though this could fall under these two practices, assistant principals in my study did not feel they get to spend much of their time developing people and managing teaching and learning, due to student behavior and the other managerial task they have to perform on a daily basis.

Barnett et al. (2012) and Oleszewski et al. (2012) both suggest that principals have a key role in the development of their assistant principal. Retelle (2010) noted that principals who serve as mentors to their assistant principals linked to better preparation of becoming a principal. The principals, in their responses also suggested that principals have an important impact on the development of their assistant principal. If the research and the principals suggest that it is important that principals develop their assistant principals to help prepare them to step into the role of a principal, and they are assigning the duties that their assistant principals are doing which seem to be more managerial tasks, one could possibly conclude that assistant principals may not be receiving the necessary preparation to become culturally responsive leaders who lead diverse schools.

They are less likely to participate in some of the other culturally responsive leadership practices identified by Johnson (2006) such as, promoting a trusting and inclusive instructional environment; promoting a culturally responsive school environment; empowering parents to enact change; and acting as social activists within the community.

Based on what has been analyzed so far, the findings show that the duties, responsibilities, and experiences of the assistant principal are not necessarily aligned to culturally responsive leadership and do not reflect intentionality toward it. When asked, what duties and responsibilities were assigned that geared toward being a culturally responsive leader, both the principals and assistant principal felt like there were no specific duties, responsibilities, and experiences they had that explicitly prepared them to be a culturally responsive leader. The participants felt culturally responsive leadership was embedded in what administrators do all the time, which shows the lack of intentionality. The participants' feeling that culturally responsive leadership is embedded in what they do led to the third key point/theme. The data revealed that principals are not assigning duties that help develop their assistant principals into culturally responsive leaders. Participants are following routines and going through the motion lacking intentionality toward being and creating a culturally responsive school environment. I am not suggesting that following a routine or completing the "common" managerial tasks that most assistant principals do is negative, but we have to remember that within those common daily routines we must be mindful, thoughtful, and purposeful in every situation we encounter as it relates to the whole child, parents, and the community we serve. Participants' assertions that culturally responsive leadership is embedded in their daily

activities also implies that participants believed that culturally responsive leadership is not something that could be taught or learned, and that every leader is a culturally responsive leader. This idea goes against what the existing research that contends that leaders need more training on culturally responsive leadership. Going back to the literature, Khalifa et al. (2016) suggested in their comprehensive review of the literature, that there is a need for more culturally responsive leadership preparation in university educational programs before school leaders are sent into administrative roles within schools. Young et al. (2010) indicated that principals had trouble with conversations around diversity and were not prepared to lead diverse schools.

Many of the participants felt like the reason culturally responsive leadership was embedded into what they do is because they truly felt they were culturally responsive leaders. All of them had been in education for more than 10 years in some capacity, and they also felt like the deep and rich experiences they had at the various schools throughout their career had helped them to become a culturally responsive leader. The research literature does not really address the idea that the experiences one has in education can help prepare you to be a culturally responsive leader. The literature focuses more on the need for more dialogue and explicit training of culturally responsive leaders (Johnson, 2006; Khalifa et al., 2016). Even though the participants felt that their experiences have helped them develop as culturally responsive leaders, they never made explicit intentional connections to culturally responsive leadership, nor did they share specific examples to support why they felt that way. They just talked generally about

situations regarding diversity but did not explain how they acted in a culturally responsive way.

In the time I spent with the participants, many of them shared with me at different points during the interview a little more about their experiences they have had including what types of training they have received with regards to culturally responsive leadership. All of them, at some point within High Noon High County Schools, have received diversity training, which was not usually geared specifically toward assistant principals nor school leadership. For example, a few years ago the district began staff developments for schools around implementing culturally relevant texts into the classrooms in an effort to target minority students, which many of the schools served. This suggests the type of professional development that assistant principals receive, which is not targeted for them specifically. According to District Level Leader Lisa, she too stated that there was no professional development that the district offered that specifically targeted culturally responsive leadership for assistant principals or principals. Going back to the literature, assistant principals received very little professional development that would help to prepare them to lead a diverse school or with regards to culturally responsive leadership (Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2012; Oliver, 2005). The assistant principals did mention that they did receive some university coursework in their degree programs that helped them, but they did not receive it until their Doctoral studies. This confirms and aligns with the scholarly literature that states more emphasis needs to occur at the universities in their school administration program of study (Khalifa et al., 2016; Touré, 2008).

Based on the data, the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of the assistant principal do not align with culturally responsive leadership. This is not to say that they do not experience any culturally responsive leadership within what they do, but overall the data revealed that there is a need for more intentional alignment with culturally responsive leadership. Assistant principals do experience simple forms that align with culturally responsive leadership and those things are: acknowledging the differences within their schools, getting interpreters to communicate with their diverse parents, and having and receiving some diversity training.

They also receive very little development on culturally responsive leadership. The district offered some professional development on diversity but nothing specifically relating to culturally responsive leadership. The data also revealed that the principals do have an impact on the development of the assistant principal, but there was no evidence that the principals were intentionally preparing their assistant principals to become culturally responsive leaders. Barnett et al. (2012) and Oleszewski et al. (2012) also suggest that principals can have a key role in the development of their assistant principals. Retelle (2010) suggested that principals who serve as a mentor to their assistant principal linked to better preparation of becoming a principal. Overall, the assistant principals did not receive enough intentional development from the district and from principals to properly and effectively help them develop as culturally responsive leaders, which negatively impacts their growth and development with culturally responsive leadership. Not having staff development on how to become a culturally responsive leader and how to lead and develop a culturally responsive school, and not

being assigned duties and responsibilities that are geared toward culturally responsive leadership practices, can negatively impact how prepared the assistant principals are toward becoming being a culturally responsive leader. This could also affect the understanding and knowledge of how assistant principals perceive culturally responsiveness and its impact on them and the school.

Do Assistant Principals Feel Knowledgeable about and/or Understand Cultural Responsiveness and Its Impact on the School and Themselves?

When determining the knowledge and understanding of the participants toward cultural responsiveness, the data revealed that the participants had some understanding of culturally responsive leadership, but did not describe examples of intentional efforts that would have helped to move them into all of Johnson's (2006) core practices. Participants were asked what their perception of a culturally responsive leader was. From the participant's perception of a culturally responsive leader, I was able to identify the key point/theme that stated that culturally responsive leadership starts with knowing and being aware of student differences within your school. As stated in the findings, each of them clearly noted that culturally responsive leadership was identifying, being aware, and having knowledge as leader that there are differences within your school (students, staff, and community) and making sure everyone is included or feels included. The participants' perceptions of culturally responsive leadership focused more on knowing and being aware that there are differences in students' backgrounds and focused less on being intentionally responsive to students' backgrounds and needs. According to Johnson (2006) culturally responsive leadership refers to leadership practices used to respond to, support, understand, and acknowledge the various cultural aspects within the

school community. More specifically, Johnson (2006) identifies six culturally responsive

leadership practices. As seen earlier in this chapter, the culturally responsive leadership

practices that culturally responsive leaders show as defined by Johnson (2006) are: Self-

reflection and exploration of own core values and beliefs; Promotes a trusting and

inclusive instructional environment; Promote culturally responsive school environment;

Affirms cultures and builds positive relationships; Empowers parents to enact change;

and Acts as a social activist within the community.

The participants' perceptions of culturally responsive leadership only touch the

surface and one aspect of a culturally responsive leader as defined by Johnson (2006).

The participants do share the idea of being inclusive, which implies that you are doing

something. The participants' thoughts suggest that having an understanding of the

differences, which was identified as a key point/theme in the data, will help one to

become more inclusive of others and their needs, and without understanding the

differences one will not know how to respond to the needs of others within the school and

community. The participants' perception of culturally responsive leadership does not

really dig into the meat of what it is if we are looking at it from the lenses of Johnson's

(2006) description of culturally responsive leadership practices and being intentional in

our efforts to implement such an approach. One could assume that more training and

professional development is needed surrounding this topic, an idea which is reflected in

the literature (Khalifa et al., 2016). Johnson's (2006) theory of culturally responsive

leadership goes further beyond just knowing and being aware of student differences.

Instead, she adds action by responding and supporting the cultural needs within the

school. Johnson (2006) goes further to summarize these actions into core practices that culturally responsive leaders do, which is not seen in majority of the responses from the participants. A couple of those core practices not seen in the participants' responses were acts as a social activist within the community, and empowers parents to enact change. District Level leader Lisa did mention some simple forms of what a culturally responsive leader does and it includes intentionality, in her explanation of what a culturally responsive leader is.

> It could be as simple as being certain that there's someone who speaks the language of every family to help interpret a meeting. It could be as simple as we make sure that all families, whether they traditionally participate in school activities or not are invited to participate in a way that makes sense for them and lifts their culture up.

These simple forms of culturally responsive leadership that District Level Lisa mentioned align with Johnson's (2006) core practices of affirming cultures and building positive relationships, and promoting a trusting and inclusive environment, but they do not align with all of the core practices as defined by Johnson (2006).

In their synthesis of the literature around culturally responsive leadership, Khalifa et al. (2016) emphasize the role the principal has in school reform and they summarize their findings into culturally responsive school leadership behaviors. They identify four major strands: critically self-reflects on leadership behaviors, develops culturally responsive teachers, promotes culturally responsive/inclusive school environment, and engages students, parents, and indigenous contexts. Under each of these strands, Khalifa et al. (2016) summarize the behaviors in each strand. A few of these behaviors Khalifa et

al. (2016) identify are using school data to discover and track disparities in academics, challenging exclusionary policies, teachers, and behaviors, and leading with courage. These strands indicate more than identifying, being aware, and having knowledge of differences. Based on the literature, school leaders' understanding of culturally responsive leadership has to expand beyond just having knowledge of the concept and instead move toward intentional implementation. Khalifa et al. (2016) suggested "culturally responsive leadership influences the school context and addresses the cultural needs of the students, parents, and teachers" (p. 1274). Besides the district level administrator of the professional development department, I feel that the other participants have a surface sense of culturally responsive leadership, but I am not certain that they fully see all that a culturally responsive leader does on a larger scale. To investigate this further, I analyzed the participants' statements regarding examples of times when they engaged in culturally responsive leadership. I wanted to determine if what the participants said they are doing aligns with Johnson's (2006) culturally responsive leadership practices, if the participants understand its impact on the school and them as a leader, and if they were intentionally leading as a culturally responsive leader.

The participants do understand that being a culturally responsive leader is important. When they began to describe some of their recent culturally responsive experiences, their actions did move from just knowing and being aware to taking an action and helping them to become more open in their thinking with regards to culturally responsive leadership and its impact on the school and them as a leader. The experiences

that each of the participants shared varied. Some of those experiences were: Making sure classrooms had culturally driven instruction that was relevant to the students' lives, bringing families of different cultures in, disciplining students in a more equitable way, building relationships, helping teachers understand diversity within their classroom, having the students teach them their language, and conducting an African American male case study with staff. Examining these experiences, many of them do align with Johnson's (2006) list of culturally responsive leadership practices. Even though the participants shared their most recent experiences, many of them also shared that they feel that there is so much more room for them to grow in this area. They felt like those experiences helped them to become more open and mindful of culturally responsive leadership.

Their experiences fell mostly under three of the culturally responsive leadership practices defined by Johnson (2006), and they were: promotes a trusting and inclusive instructional environment; promotes culturally responsive school environment; and affirms cultures and builds positive relationships. None of their experiences fell under the other practices, which focus on advocating and serving as a social activist to bring about change in the community and family engagement. This piece is important and cannot be forgotten. According to Gay (2010) just having culturally responsive teaching is not enough to bring about change for minoritized students, but reforming all aspects of educational funding and policies is necessary also. This can be done by being a social activist for the school and within the community.

As some of the participants described their experiences with culturally responsive leadership, some of their experiences did not reflect what they did themselves, but rather what they do as a school or what their principal does. Those participants described the experience as "at our school," "my principal," or "we" do this, and some of those responses seem like it was a part of a routine and not something that is conducted with intentionality. For some of the participants, their experience they described did not occur in the current school year, but occurred in the past. Based on the findings, I feel like the participants exhibited a few of Johnson's (2006) culturally responsive leadership practices. The practices that the participants exhibited from Johnson's (2006) core practices were promoting an inclusive environment and building positive relationships. Based on the experiences the participants described, they did not always engage thoughtfully in culturally responsive leadership practices. This contradicted when the participants said that culturally responsive leadership practices are embedded in what they do because the participants were not able to share current recent practices that they engaged in, which again shows their lack of intentionality. This still makes me question if the participants truly understand culturally responsive leadership, in which the participants feel strongly that they are culturally responsive leaders. I think the participants have a surface level understanding of culturally responsive leadership due to the lack of training in culturally responsive leadership. I think the participants want to be culturally responsive leaders and they recognize the importance of it, but the participants are not sure how to go about fully accomplishing it. The participants did share how the experiences they have had have helped to open their minds and become more mindful of

the importance of being a culturally responsive leader in diverse schools. This led to the key point/theme where the participants suggested that culturally responsive leaders are open-minded. Their lack of understanding of culturally responsive leadership makes me go back to the literature that shares the need for more training on culturally responsive leadership (Khalifa, 2016).

Even though the assistant principals feel like they are knowledgeable about culturally responsive leadership, the data revealed a gap in their understanding with regard to the culturally responsive leadership practices defined by Johnson (2006), whose practices are the theoretical framework for this study. In Johnson's (2006) study, self-reflecting and exploring your own core values and beliefs; promoting a trusting and inclusive instructional environment; promoting a culturally responsive school environment; affirming cultures and builds positive relationships; empowering parents to enact change; and acting as a social activist within the community were the culturally responsive practices that culturally responsive leaders exhibit regularly. As stated above, the assistant principals did not intentionally engage in many of the culturally responsive leadership practices addressed by Johnson (2006).

Why Do Assistant Principals Feel They Are or Are Not Prepared to Lead Diverse Schools?

The key points/themes Experiences Have Helped with Preparation, Nothing Prepares You to be a Principal, and Hindrances in Preparation, are used to address and answer the second main research question to determine if assistant principals feel they are prepared to lead diverse schools. Based on the findings, the assistant principals felt they are prepared to lead a diverse school. The assistant principal responses revealed the key

point/theme that their experiences helped prepare them to lead a diverse school. In their responses, they did not distinguish between leading a diverse school and leading a school. Based on their responses, it seemed as though all schools are diverse schools. This thinking would explain why the participants did not distinguish between leading a diverse school and leading a school. The participants shared that a diverse school is not limited to just having many different races and cultures in one building, but a diverse school could be made up of majority one race with many different factors, such as socio-economics, gender, disability, life experiences, and learning styles. They did feel like some schools were more diverse than others. Overall, the participants felt they were prepared to lead a diverse school. This goes against what the research suggests. Referring back to the literature, scholars suggest that assistant principals are not prepared for being a principal (Barnett et al., 2012; Chan et al., 2003; Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2012).

The participants expressed some hesitation in saying they are completely prepared to lead a diverse school. The participants felt they are prepared for the parts of the position that they have experienced. The parts they have experienced are typically the duties of an assistant principal, which indicates the lack of experience they receive in the duties performed by the principal. Because so much of what the assistant principal does is based on the discretion of the principal, many scholars note that principals sometimes give their assistant principals lots of experiences that may not prepare them to be a principal (Barnett et al., 2012; Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2012). Even though the participants lack many of the principal experiences they feel confident enough to

understand the new situations and different perspectives brought on by the position of being the principal. Assistant Principals Faith, Barbara, and Dana shared these thoughts in the findings section. The participants felt their experiences have helped to shape and mold them for being a principal in a diverse school, and they felt they understand the big picture of being a principal. The assistant principals' preparedness, based on their experiences makes me question if the participants are really prepared to be culturally responsive leaders who lead diverse schools, due to what they previously stated their duties and responsibilities mostly consist of (managerial tasks).

The participants were then asked if they felt they were prepared to lead as a culturally responsive leader in a diverse school. Again, there was no real differentiation between whether they felt like they were prepared to lead as a culturally responsive leader in a diverse school or just being prepared to lead as a culturally responsive leader. Based on the findings, I believe the participants did not express or differentiate between the two because they felt like they are culturally responsive leaders and they are prepared to lead a diverse school. I also gathered that the participants feel that leading is just leading in any type of school. Research suggests that culturally responsive leadership is important when leading schools with a diverse population of minority students (Khalifa et al. 2016). It does not suggest that leading is just leading in any type of school, especially in schools where students are being marginalized.

Shifting the thinking from the assistant principals' perspective about being prepared to lead a diverse school, I asked the principals if they felt they were prepared to lead a diverse school before they became a principal. All of the principals felt they were

prepared and ready to lead a diverse school before they became a principal. The principals expressed the same idea as the assistant principals that they thought that their experiences prepared them for the position. Principal Henry felt like he could do it all before he became a principal. Principal Josie felt like she had enough experiences that prepared her to lead. These findings suggest that assistant principals "feel" they are prepared, but it does not necessarily suggest they actually are prepared to lead diverse schools as culturally responsive leaders.

The principals expanded their thoughts further on this matter, and their thoughts helped generate the key point/theme that nothing prepares you to be a principal. This suggested a slightly different take on whether they were prepared to lead a diverse school coming from being an assistant principal. It was not until they became principals, that the principals felt like nothing really prepares you for being a principal. They felt the principal role was seen through a different lens, unlike that of the assistant principal position. The participants realized when they entered the role that they were now ultimately in-charge. As an assistant principal, you looked toward the principal, but as the principal, everyone looks toward you and nothing prepares you for that. Assistant Principal Barbara was a principal before her current role as an assistant principal. She touched a little on this in one of our discussions. According to Assistant Principal Barbara, until you step into the role as the principal there is nothing that really prepares you for the position. She does feel that you learn and grow once you get into that role. She also felt like you cannot be afraid to ask questions and if you are not sure about something wait to respond until you get the answer.

Even though the principals felt there was nothing that prepares you for the position, the principals felt that their experiences as an assistant principal were helpful. The principals could not target any specific experience that actually helped prepare them. Principal Henry shared "I think there's no experience that prepares you for it, but I think the greater amount of relevance that you have to being in charge and to leading people does prepare you the most." He did not mention specifics, but he felt the more opportunities you have to lead as an assistant principal can help you more. This connects to the key point/theme of learning to lead, because the principals felt the duties they were assigning their assistant principals were preparing them to lead. This may be why the principals felt like what they assign to their assistant principals gave them opportunities to lead. Some where I feel like there might be a disconnect, and principals may need to define what those opportunities to lead should look like because the assistant principals felt like they manage more often than lead.

The thought that nothing prepares you for being a principal brings me to still wonder, how can you say you are prepared if nothing prepares you. This idea of nothing prepares you aligns with what the researchers are saying that assistant principals are not prepared to be principals (Barnett et al., 2012; Chan et al., 2003; Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2012). It seems as though assistant principals do not know that they are not prepared until they become a principal of a diverse school. This goes back to what I just noted above about there being a disconnect between the experiences assistant principals have and what would help to prepare them to lead. This would suggest that the current managerial duties and responsibilities assigned by the principals are not fully

preparing assistant principals to lead as culturally responsive leaders in diverse schools.

With that said, it also goes back to the research that states that the principal has the

"power to provide meaningful growth and development opportunities" (Barnett et al.,

2012, p. 97), and that the principals have a key role in the development of the assistant

principal (Kwan, 2009; Oleszewski et al., 2012). If they are key to the development of

assistant principals, I wanted to consider if the roles they assigned their assistant

principals aligned with what they do as a principal.

       To determine how the assigned duties of the assistant principals aligned to their

duties and responsibilities as the principal, I asked the principals what their duties and

responsibilities were as the principal of the school. It's obvious that they felt their duties

consisted of everything, but they each shared or summarized the key things they felt they

do as the principals. The key roles they identified were being instructional leaders and

providing feedback, serving as the community leaders and community outreach,

maintaining and establishing culture and climate, and human resources duties. These key

roles do line up with what Leithwood et al. (2008) found that successful leaders do

(developing people, and managing teaching and learning). A couple of these could fall

under what Johnson (2006) defined as the core practices of a culturally responsive leader.

Based on the findings and what the principals stated are their key roles as the principal,

does not align to what the assistant principals shared they do. The assistant principals did

not mention having an opportunity to perform these roles besides the instructional piece,

in which they noted that their time was limited due to student discipline and other

managerial tasks. I question why principals are not assigning some of these roles to their

assistant principals. The lack of the assistant principals receiving duties that are related

to the principal position could hinder their development toward becoming a culturally

responsive leader.

Since they felt prepared to lead as culturally responsive leaders, the participants

were asked if they felt that there was anything specific that has possibly hindered their

development in preparation toward leading a diverse school as a culturally responsive

leader. In the participants' response to this question, the key point/theme was developed.

The things the participants felt hindered their preparation varied in responses. A few of

the assistant principals did mention the lack of cultural and diversity training was a

possible hindrance toward becoming a culturally responsive leader who leads a diverse

school. The lack of cultural and diversity training aligns with the research that states the

need for more training and development in the area of culturally responsive leadership

(Khalifa et al., 2016; Touré, 2008). This also makes me question yet again, for those that

stated it, if they are prepared to be a culturally responsive leader.

Many of the participants felt that the lack of time spent instructionally in the

classrooms has hindered their development. The participants understand the importance

of being an instructional leader. Assistant Principal Barbara shared how she did not feel

as effective in her position due to the lack of time spent instructionally. Not spending

much time instructionally could impact how principals and assistant principals promote

an inclusive instructional learning environment as defined by Johnson's (2006) core

culturally responsive leadership practices. This is not to say they are not instructional

leaders, it just shows that they are not spending as much time as an instructional leader as

they know and understand they should. The lack of time spent as an instructional leader

can impact whether they get to intentionally promote an inclusive instructional learning

environment as described by Johnson (2006). Culturally responsive leaders intentionally

and continuously promote a trusting and inclusive instructional learning environment.

The participants never addressed the impact of being a culturally responsive leader and

its impact on instruction, and how the lack of time spent being a culturally responsive

instructional leader hinders their growth towards leading a diverse school. These are all

important things to consider when looking at culturally responsive leadership. According

to the research, the importance of being a culturally responsive leader in diverse schools

is critical, especially when you are dealing with populations that have marginalized

students (Khalifa et al., 2016). The Participants addressed only the how they spend most

of their time, which is dealing with discipline and the lack of opportunities to grow as an

instructional leader. They understand that being an instructional leader is an important

responsibility when leading a school, but there are no connections made toward the

impact of how a culturally responsive leader influences instruction and how their lack of

time spent on instruction culturally has impacted their preparation toward leading a

diverse school as a culturally responsive leader. Based on the data, I agree with the

scholars that assistant principals are not prepared to lead diverse schools as culturally

responsive leaders.

What Experiences Do Principals and Assistant Principals Perceive Are Needed in Order to Be Prepared to Make a Successful Transition into Becoming a Culturally Responsive Leader in a Diverse School?

Instructional leadership was noted throughout the data. The need for more instructional leadership experiences by the assistant principals became the key point/theme to help answer my last research question. Based on the data shared by the assistant principals, they felt that in order to successfully transition into becoming a culturally responsive leader in a diverse school, assistant principals needed more experiences with being an instructional leader. In the assistant principals' responses, they are not saying they are not at all instructional leaders, but rather they lack the time to develop and become an effective instructional leader due to the many managerial tasks they have to encounter daily. The assistant principals felt like being an instructional leader has some impact on student learning. The assistant principals also felt like knowing what learning was occurring and how to support what is being taught helps to develop and nurture teachers, which would then impact students. This aligns with the research of successful school leadership. Leithwood et al. (2008) suggest that developing people (being strong instructional leaders) are what successful school leaders do. As stated above, the assistant principals did not make any correlations between how culturally responsive leadership impacts instruction or how being an instructional leader helps them become a culturally responsive leader in a diverse school.

As stated above the assistant principals felt like more time spent as an instructional leader was needed to successfully transition into being a principal, but the principals' thoughts differed. The principals felt that assistant principals needed more

opportunities learning how to deal with adults. The adults they mentioned were personnel, community, and parents. Dealing with adults is one aspect of Johnson's (2006) core practices. According to Johnson (2006), culturally responsive leaders create environments where parents and community feel welcomed and involved, they affirm the cultures within the communities and build positive relationship within those communities, they empower the parents to push for change by guiding them through that process, and they themselves advocate and push for social change within the community.

The principals never went into detail about how the assistant principals need to deal with these key adults besides Principal Henry suggesting that they have critical and crucial conversations with them. This does not give us an idea as to their thinking about how dealing with adults can help to successfully transition them into becoming a culturally responsive leader in a diverse school. Principal Josie mentions in the findings about "the underestimation of the power of the community", and this makes me start to wonder in what ways do they deal with and handle the community, and is it in a culturally responsive way. In Johnson's (2006) core culturally responsive leadership practices, she mentioned that culturally responsive leaders act like social activists to bring about social change in the community. Khalifa et al. (2016) suggests that culturally responsive leaders use parent/community voices to measure cultural responsiveness in the school. The principals from my study did not mention either of these approaches in their interaction with dealing with adults.

Research Analysis Summary

After careful analysis, this chapter has brought some clarity while generating some questions to be answered by further research. The purpose of this chapter was to analyze the findings in connection with the review of literature and the theoretical framework presented in Chapter II of this study. Each section continued with the organization technique used in the findings chapter. This was done this way to help make a better connection in the answering of each research question. Those answers will be laid out further in the final chapter's discussion.

Under the first research question, it was noted how the assistant principals viewed their duties and responsibilities as more of managerial tasks, while the principals who assigned these duties and responsibilities felt like they assigned tasks that help assistant principals learn how to lead in a diverse school. What the assistant principals discussed aligned with the research that assistant principals spend more of their time on managerial duties, specifically student discipline. There was also an alignment with the research with regards to the principal having a positive impact on the development of assistant principals. The principals agreed that principals can have a positive impact on the development of the assistant principal. Another aspect that was addressed under the first research question was how both types of participants felt like culturally responsive leadership was embedded in the work that they do. This implies that culturally responsive leadership cannot be taught, which differs from the research that says more emphasis needs to be placed on training school leaders in culturally responsive leadership.

The next research question was a sub-question under the first research question and it encompassed culturally responsive leadership and the knowledge and understanding the participants have of it and its impact on the school. The analysis showed that there were some disconnects with culturally responsive leadership and that the participants seem to have some understanding of it, but they do not have a deep understanding of the culturally responsive leadership practices addressed by Johnson (2006).

The next research question is the second main research question to be addressed in this study. The participants all felt as an assistant principal that they were prepared to be a culturally responsive leader who leads a diverse school. This clearly goes against what researchers say, who state that assistant principals are not prepared to lead when they become principals at diverse schools. What the principals say after they became principals aligns to this because they state that nothing prepares you to become a principal in a diverse school. The last thing discussed under this research question is the areas the participants felt have hindered them from becoming a culturally responsive leader who leads a diverse school. The principal and assistant principals differ again in their thoughts. The assistant principals stated spending less time as an instructional leader hinders their preparation. They did not share how or make the connection between how being an instructional leader can impact and promote a culturally responsive instructional environment. The principals' idea of what hinders assistant principals aligns more to the culturally responsive leadership practices, but they do not elaborate on them.

The last question is a sub-question under the second main research question, and it addresses the experiences needed for an assistant principal to be a successful culturally responsive leader who leads diverse schools. Disconnects were found here also. The participant had different ideas about what that was. The assistant principals stated instructional leadership and the principals stated dealing with adults. Overall, neither of the participants really made a connection of how these areas are needed to help the assistant principal become a culturally responsive leader and how these areas impact schools and them as leader with regards to culturally responsive leadership.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Universities

According to the research, universities need to place an emphasis on culturally responsive leadership (Touré, 2008; Khalifa et al., 2016). The data revealed in the study aligns with the literature that states universities need to place more emphasis on culturally responsive leadership. Universities do focus a lot on theory, but they need to begin to have their pre-service leaders study successful culturally responsive leaders and how they can incorporate those practices they used at their schools. Johnson's (2006) culturally responsive leadership practices were used in this study as the framework to identify if the assistant principals were prepared to be culturally responsive leaders, and universities could use those or similar practices in their course work.

Universities need to be upfront and open about diversity and teach the students how to build culturally responsive schools. They can do this by incorporating more school based real life scenarios or situations into the lessons. They also need to expose

their students to more school level visits to different diverse populations of students. They would need to create and sustain relationships in those schools and the communities they serve. The learning has to be relevant and connected to what they could possibly face when they do go into those schools. Pre-service leaders need exposure to those schools to help make the learning practical for them and the need exposure to leaders who practice culturally responsive leadership. These leaders can then begin to identify the cultural needs and ways they could build cultural responsiveness within those schools and their future schools. As universities begin to build stronger partnerships with their local school districts they can help provide continued professional development, along with providing some mentoring to new assistant principals with regard to culturally responsive leadership practices that they can use in their schools.

Recommendations for School Districts

Khalifa et al. (2016) suggest that culturally responsive leaders not only are building-level leaders, but they also serve at the district level also. They go on further to suggest the impact district-level leaders can have on school reform and on education. What was seen in the data is that there was very little emphasis on the development of culturally responsive leadership among the school based leaders within this school district. The data revealed that there was a need for the school district to provide professional development on culturally responsive leadership. Before districts begin to develop what that professional development will look like and how they will provide it to their administrators, districts need to send the message that we are a district of equity and cultural responsiveness.

At a district level, one needs to be committed to equity and you have to make it a priority within and throughout the district. It should be reflected in the language and the message sent throughout the district. There should be a sense that here in our district we are committed to equity and being culturally responsive. This should be explicitly stated and be seen in everything that is done throughout the district. Once the district sets its vision and mission for equity and being culturally responsive, every area of the district should be examined through this lens with consistency. The language that is spoken at one school should be spoken at another school, the language should be consistent throughout the district at every level. When a new employee enters the district, typically there is a welcoming meeting. At this meeting is where the district could begin to instill the sense of equity and culturally responsiveness. There could be a session that focuses on cultural responsiveness and equity and what it looks like within their school district. Districts could develop their own "Looks Like, Sounds Like, Feels Like" chart and this could be displayed in every school and in every classroom. Districts have to deliberately link everything to being culturally responsive and view everything through the equity lens, and make sure there is consistent follow through and feedback given regularly.

As districts begin to create and develop an atmosphere of equity and cultural responsiveness they should also develop a plan for professional development that centers around equity and cultural responsiveness. Districts could provide their own in-house development to their principals on how to effectively coach their assistant principals toward becoming culturally responsive leaders (develop a coaching model). Research and the data showed earlier that principals have an impact on the development of their

assistant principals (Barnett et al., 2012; Oleszewski et al., 2012). This will not only help to build the capacity of their assistant principals, but it will also help to build the capacity and understanding of culturally responsive leadership within their principals and it builds their capacity to be mentors for future leaders. The literature states how mentoring is linked to better preparation for being a principal (Retelle, 2010; Oleszewski et al., 2012). Districts have to remember because they discuss equity and cultural responsiveness does not always mean that principals themselves are culturally responsive leaders. The coaching model they develop could be used to build the capacity of all their school administrators. The coaching model should include, but not be limited to, how to identify and build a culturally responsive school environment, identify what culturally responsive practices will be used within the school and know when these practices are present or absent, building the capacity among teachers, how to help teachers build relationships with students and families, how to advocate within the community, etc. Within the coaching model, there could also be a piece that specifically targets the development of the assistant principals, with regards to how to give them real leadership opportunities.

The data revealed that the assistant principals need to receive real leadership opportunities while working at their schools. They need to have opportunities were they experience all aspects of the administrative position, such as budgeting, creating plans for the school (e.g. Title I plan), advocating and being a social activist within the community, building the capacity in parents to bring about change, and developing partnerships with local universities and community leaders. Assistant principals can also be given the opportunity to create a professional development program that addresses the needs of the

school but incorporates culturally responsive practices and policies to help develop a culturally responsive school environment. Districts could create a checklist where they have to be involved and show evidence that they have done these things, and it has to reflect a sense of equity and culturally responsiveness. There also needs to be specific and intentional professional development on culturally responsive leadership. Some of the participants felt like the assistant principals could benefit from exposure to different school environments, and touring and visiting different schools. Overall, the assistant principals felt they were not always included, but wanted to be included in all aspects of administration.

Districts need to continuously send the message throughout the district they we are a district that upholds equity for all and response through culturally responsive practices. They have to be intentional in their professional development of their school level leaders, while providing recommendations and feedback. The professional development must target culturally responsiveness and culturally responsive leadership. Assistant principals must be included and given professional development on culturally responsive leadership. Districts should be growing and developing their own assistant principals to become culturally responsive leaders who lead their diverse schools.

Recommendations for Principals

Both the literature and principals suggest that principals have an important role in the development of their assistant principals. Retelle (2010) suggested that when principals serve as mentor to their assistant principals the assistant principal is better prepared to be a principal. Before they can serve as mentors, I think principals

themselves need to learn more about culturally responsive leadership. The data revealed

that even the principals lacked a deeper understanding of culturally responsive leadership

as defined by Johnson (2006). I think principals demonstrated parts of Johnson's (2006)

culturally responsive leadership practices, but I think they can grow in all areas,

especially in advocating, promoting, empowering and acting as social activist within their

school community. Once the principals have developed this, then they can develop their

assistant principals in this manner by giving them the opportunities to do so.

According to Leithwood et al.'s (2008) core leadership practices, successful

school leaders help to develop people. This does not just include the teachers but their

assistant principals also. To be an effective mentor, principals have to first find out their

assistant principals' strengths and areas of improvement, and build their assistant

principals professional development around those areas along with those culturally

responsive leadership practices defined by Johnson (2006). Principals should seek out

ways to involve their assistant principals in other capacities of leadership besides the

typical managerial task they assign them. Principals must be willing to share and

delegate those difficult situations that they usually handle with their assistant principals.

I understand that time is scare, but principals could have regularly scheduled

administration meetings with their assistant principals to keep them informed and to

provide some professional development. They can start by helping their assistant

principals learn how to hire and train staff members to support and promote culturally

responsive learning environment. As principals are mentoring their assistant principals,

they are modeling successful leadership and growing themselves. Good leaders lead by doing, which creates and builds the capacity of others to become successful leaders.

Recommendations for Assistant Principals

Assistant principals should start with an examination of themselves to determine what type of leader they want to be. In their examination of themselves, they should develop their own areas of strength and areas of improvement. While doing this, they should be building a relationship and connecting with their principal sharing their career goals. Both principal and the assistant principal should be seen as a seamless team working diligently to bring about change and impacting students and the community they serve. Assistant principals have to learn to be a better manager of their time. Assistant principals should look for ways they can get involved in other opportunities that will help to develop their sense of cultural responsiveness. Those opportunities may not be within their building, but could be things that can be occurring within the district. Sometimes the district ask for volunteers for committees at the district level. This is a great opportunity to not only get your name out their but to begin to influence the community and the district as a whole. Assistant principals have to seek out these opportunities of growth, and these opportunities can become networking opportunities.

Based on the data there were very few professional development opportunities offered specifically to assistant principals, therefore assistant principals have to seek out professional development opportunities that will help them in those areas of improvement. One way they can do this is by connecting and building relationships with their universities. Many times universities can develop and offer professional

development for their surrounding school districts and the school districts sometimes

pays for it. Assistant principals have to learn how to become a strong advocate for not

only the students, but also themselves and their professional growth.

Recommendations for Future Research

My research yielded lots of insight into the area surrounding assistant principals

and their preparation toward becoming culturally responsive leaders. The data opened

the door for more research to occur. Below are some recommendations I feel there is a

need for additional research to be conducted.

1. The role universities play after school administrators graduate from their
   university preparation program. What type of mentor or support can they
   provide to new administrators with culturally responsive leadership?

2. Further research could be on how university preparation programs incorporate
   and make sure their pre-service leaders experience culturally responsive
   leadership practices within their coursework and fieldwork.

3. Further research could investigate and measure the districts level of cultural
   responsiveness and its influence on its school administrators throughout the
   district and its impact on the outcomes of diverse students and their families.

4. More research should be conducted on the district polices as it relates to
   cultural responsiveness.

5. The final recommendation is for more research to be conducted on how
   districts develop their professional development plans for principals and

assistant principals, and how they can support their school-based administrators with culturally responsive leadership.

Conclusion

As stated throughout the research, and in the scholarly literature, schools are becoming increasingly diverse and school administrators have to be prepared to lead these diverse schools when they step into that role as a school principal. With this diversity comes lots of challenges and fears that school-based administrators have to learn to overcome and be prepared to lead effectively. One way to help prepare them for such diverse schools is to prepare them to be culturally responsive leaders. This preparation should start in university educational leadership programs, and continue through professional development opportunities for assistant principals.

This research study examined whether or not the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of assistant principals are preparing them to be culturally responsive leaders who lead in a diverse school. Based on my research, I have concluded that the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of the assistant principals are not fully preparing them to be culturally responsive leaders who will lead in a diverse school even though they feel that they are. As I went through this research study and this was revealed to me, I began to reflect back on own personal discussion I had in the Chapter I (the Introduction). I realized even more why this study was so important and needed, and why I did it. I too was wondering if I was prepared to be a culturally responsive leader who would lead in a diverse school. I also began to realize that I too could incorporate more culturally responsive leadership practices in my

current position as an assistant principal by being more thoughtful and intentional toward

cultural responsiveness within my building. I also realized that there is still more to be

learned and discovered around the study of assistant principals and principals, and their

road to becoming successful culturally responsive leaders. This study is relevant and

appropriate in its timing for the development of future leaders, as schools continuously

increase in diversity.

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APPENDIX A

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL 1

Date: Location: Elementary   Middle   High
Interviewee: Participant   Interviewee Position: Assistant Principal
Start Time: End Time: Total Interview Time:

Welcome: My name is Crystal Gregory. I am a doctoral candidate at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. I am conducting a study to determine if AP's are prepared to lead diverse schools. As a result of the study, it is my hope that it will help to inform districts and administrative licensure programs on ways to successfully prepare AP's for diverse schools. Thank you in advance for your time. Your input and perceptions are critical to this study. I will be respectful of your time. Here are a couple of norms I would like this interview to be guided by: Respect for all participants, confidentiality will be respected, no judgment, and speak freely. Your participation is voluntary.

Any questions before we begin?

General questions:

1. Tell me about yourself and your career experiences.
2. How do you describe your race and gender?
3. How would you describe your school (demographics, enrollment, etc)?
4. What is your perception of a diverse school?

In what ways do the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of the AP align or not align with culturally responsive leadership?

5. What are your duties and responsibilities as an AP?
6. Which duties/experiences do you feel are most important for preparation of becoming a culturally responsive leader?
7. What duties or experiences do you think you need to be a successful principal in a diverse school?
8. Do you feel you need the same job experiences as an AP if you want to be a principal in a highly diverse school than a school that is less diverse?

Why do AP's feel they are or are not prepared to lead diverse schools? What has helped or hindered this preparation?

9. Do you feel you are prepared to lead a school?
10. Do you feel you are prepared to lead in a diverse school?

11. What areas of your job do you think have hindered you from being prepared to be a principal and lead a diverse school?
12. Do you think districts are properly preparing AP's to step into the role of the principal in diverse schools?

What implications can we gather for successful trainings of AP's, for leading in diverse schools?

13. How can administrative licensure programs better prepare students for the diversity that make up most schools?
14. What do you think districts can do to better prepare AP's to lead in diverse schools?
15. What training do you wish you had that you didn't receive that would be helpful to the principalship?

Closure: At this time this concludes the interview. Thank you again for your time and honesty. Here is my contact information if for any reason you feel the need to discuss anything further or if you have ask questions (336-402-8144 and ccgaymon@aol.com). I would like to schedule a second interview to discuss culturally responsive leadership and to clear up any misconception you or I may have about the first interview. For the second interview, I would like for you to think of a time recently when you were engaged in culturally responsive leadership. As promised, I will maintain your confidentiality and the norms we discussed today. Do you have any questions for me? Again, thank you so much!

APPENDIX B

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL 2

Date: Location: Elementary   Middle   High
Interviewee: Participant   Interviewee Position: Assistant Principal
Start Time: End Time: Total Interview Time:

Welcome: My name is Crystal Gregory. I am a doctoral candidate at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. I am conducting a study to determine if AP's are prepared to lead diverse schools. As a result of the study, it is my hope that it will help to inform districts and administrative licensure programs on ways to successfully prepare AP's for diverse schools. Thank you in advance for your time. Your input and perceptions are critical to this study. I will be respectful of your time. Here are a couple of norms I would like this interview to be guided by: Respect for all participants, confidentiality will be respected, no judgment, and speak freely. Your participation is voluntary.

Any questions before we begin?

General questions:

1. What is your perception of a culturally responsive leader?
2. Do you feel you are a culturally responsive leader? Why?
3. Recently, describe a time when you were engaged in culturally responsive leadership?

In what ways do the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of the AP align or not align with culturally responsive leadership?

4. What types of diversity or culturally responsive training have you had since becoming an AP?
5. What experiences if any did you have in your administrative licensure program that helped to develop you as a culturally responsive leader?

Why do AP's feel they are or are not prepared to lead diverse schools? What has helped or hindered this preparation?

6. Do you feel your current duties, responsibilities, and experiences have prepared you to be a culturally responsive leader, as well as, prepared you to be a principal?
7. How important is being a culturally responsive leader when leading in a diverse school?

8. What areas of your job do you think have hindered you from being prepared or helped you to be a culturally responsive leader?
9. Do you think districts are properly preparing AP's to be culturally responsive leaders?

What implications can we gather for successful trainings of AP's, for leading in diverse schools?

10. How can administrative licensure programs better prepare students to be culturally responsive leaders?
11. What do you think districts can do to better prepare AP's to be culturally responsive leader?
12. What training do you wish you had that you didn't receive that would be helpful in being a culturally responsive leader?

Closure: At this time this concludes the interview. Thank you again for your time and honesty. Here is my contact information if for any reason you feel the need to discuss anything further or if you have ask questions (336-402-8144 and ccgaymon@aol.com. As promised, I will maintain your confidentiality and the norms we discussed today. Do you have any questions for me? Again, thank you so much for your participation!

APPENDIX C

PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL 1

Date: Location: Elementary   Middle   High
Interviewee: Participant   Interviewee Position: Principal
Start Time: End Time: Total Interview Time:

Welcome: My name is Crystal Gregory. I am a doctoral candidate at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. I am conducting a study to determine if AP's are prepared to lead diverse schools. As a result of the study, it is my hope that it will help to inform districts and administrative licensure programs on ways to successfully prepare AP's for diverse schools. Thank you in advance for your time. Your input and perceptions are critical to this study. I will be respectful of your time. Here are a couple of norms I would like this interview to be guided by: Respect for all participants, confidentiality will be respected, no judgment, and speak freely. Your participation is voluntary.

Any questions before we begin?

General questions:

1. Tell me about yourself and your career experiences.
2. How do you describe your race and gender?
3. How would you describe your school (demographics, enrollment, etc)?
4. What is your perception of a diverse school?

In what ways do the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of the AP align or not align with culturally responsive leadership?

5. What are your duties and responsibilities as a principal?
6. Which duties/experiences do you feel are most important for preparation of the becoming a culturally responsive leader in diverse schools?
7. Do you feel you need the same job experiences as an AP if you want to be a principal in a highly diverse school than a school that is less diverse?
8. What types of duties, responsibilities, and experiences do you give your AP?

Why do AP's feel they are or are not prepared to lead diverse schools? What has helped or hindered this preparation?

9. Before entering the principalship, do you feel you were prepared to lead a diverse school?

10. Do you feel your duties, responsibilities, and experiences as an AP prepared you to be a culturally responsive leader?
11. Do you feel the number of years as an AP impacts whether or not you will be successful leading a diverse school?
12. Do you think districts are properly preparing AP's to step into the role of the principal in diverse schools?
13. What are some key duties and experiences do you feel the AP should have in order to be a culturally responsive leader?
14. How important is the principal in the development of the AP and in what ways do you feel principals can better prepare their APs for diverse schools and culturally responsive leadership?

What implications can we gather for successful trainings of AP's, for leading in diverse schools?

15. What do you think districts can do to better prepare AP's to lead in diverse schools?
16. How do you help your AP to be prepared to lead a diverse school, since many of our schools are diverse?
17. How can principals better prepare their AP's for the principalship in diverse schools?
18. How can administrative licensure programs better prepare students for the diversity that make up most schools?
19. What training do you wish you had that you didn't receive that would be helpful to the principalship?

Closure: At this time this concludes the interview. Thank you again for your time and honesty. Here is my contact information if for any reason you feel the need to discuss anything further or if you have ask questions (336-402-8144 and ccgaymon@aol.com). I would like to schedule a second interview to discuss culturally responsive leadership and to clear up any misconception you or I may have about the first interview. For the second interview, I would like for you to think of a time recently when you were engaged in culturally responsive leadership. As promised, I will maintain your confidentiality and the norms we discussed today. Do you have any questions for me? Again, thank you so much!

APPENDIX D

PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL 2

Date: Location: Elementary   Middle   High
Interviewee: Participant   Interviewee Position: Principal
Start Time: End Time: Total Interview Time:

Welcome: My name is Crystal Gregory. I am a doctoral candidate at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. I am conducting a study to determine if APs are prepared to lead diverse schools. As a result of the study, it is my hope that it will help to inform districts and administrative licensure programs on ways to successfully prepare AP's for diverse schools. Thank you in advance for your time. Your input and perceptions are critical to this study. I will be respectful of your time. Here are a couple of norms I would like this interview to be guided by: Respect for all participants, confidentiality will be respected, no judgment, and speak freely. Your participation is voluntary.

Any questions before we begin?

General questions:

1. What is your perception of a culturally responsive leader?
2. Do you feel you are a culturally responsive leader? Why?
3. Recently, describe a time when you were engaged in culturally responsive leadership?

In what ways do the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of the AP align or not align with culturally responsive leadership?

4. What types of diversity or culturally responsive training have you had since becoming a principal and did you have any as an AP?
5. What experiences if any did you have in your administrative licensure program that helped to develop you as a culturally responsive leader?
6. What types of duties, responsibilities, and experiences do you give your AP that are related to becoming a culturally responsive leader?

Why do AP's feel they are or are not prepared to lead diverse schools? What has helped or hindered this preparation?

7. Do you feel your duties, responsibilities, and experiences as an AP prepared you to be a culturally responsive leader?

8. How important is being a culturally responsive leader, when leading in a diverse school?
9. Do you think districts are properly preparing AP's to be culturally responsive leaders and what do you think districts can do to better prepare AP's to be culturally responsive leader?

What implications can we gather for successful trainings of AP's, for leading in diverse schools?

10. How can principals better prepare their AP's for becoming culturally responsive leaders?
11. How can administrative licensure programs better prepare students for becoming culturally responsive leaders?
12. What training do you wish you had that you didn't receive that would be helpful in being a culturally responsive leader?

Closure: At this time this concludes the interview. Thank you again for your time and honesty. Here is my contact information if for any reason you feel the need to discuss anything further or if you have ask questions (336-402-8144 and ccgaymon@aol.com). As promised, I will maintain your confidentiality and the norms we discussed today. Do you have any questions for me? Again, thank you so much!

APPENDIX E

DISTRICT LEVEL ADMINISTRATOR OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Date: Location: Diversity Office
Interviewee: Participant   Interviewee Position: Diversity Officer
Start Time: End Time: Total Interview Time:

Welcome: My name is Crystal Gregory. I am a doctoral candidate at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. I am conducting a study to determine if AP's are prepared to lead diverse schools. As a result of the study, it is my hope that it will help to inform districts and administrative licensure programs on ways to successfully prepare AP's for diverse schools. Thank you in advance for your time. Your input and perceptions are critical to this study. I will be respectful of your time. Here are a couple of norms I would like this interview to be guided by: Respect for all participants, confidentiality will be respected, no judgment, and speak freely. Your participation is voluntary.

Any questions before we begin?

General questions:

1. Tell me about yourself and your career experiences.
2. What led you to move into your current positon?
3. What are your duties and roles in your current position?
4. How do you describe your race and gender?
5. What is your perception of a diverse school?
6. What is your perception of a culturally responsive leader?
7. Does your current position impact school base administrators? In what way?

In what ways do the duties, responsibilities, experiences, and staff development of the AP align or not align with culturally responsive leadership?

8. What types of training is offered to AP's and principals that you feel would help prepare them to lead diverse schools?
9. Is there any training offered on culturally responsive leadership? If so, to whom is it offered to?
10. Is it noticed that many of the AP's are or are not attending these trainings?
11. How often and when are these types of training offered to APs and Principals?

Why do AP's feel they are or are not prepared to lead diverse schools? What has helped or hindered this preparation?

12. What type of support does the district provide for APs within your office and other offices, if known?
13. Do you feel that the district is preparing APs to be culturally responsive leaders and preparing them to lead diverse schools?
14. How important is being a culturally responsive leader, when leading in a diverse school?

What implications can we gather for successful trainings of AP's, for leading in diverse schools?

15. What types of experiences do you feel that APs should have and how do you think AP's can be better prepared to lead diverse schools?
16. How can districts better prepare their AP's for becoming principals in diverse schools and for becoming culturally responsive leaders?
17. How can administrative licensure programs better prepare students for culturally responsive leadership?
18. What training do you feel needs to be offered more to school based administrators, specifically APs?

Closure: At this time this concludes the interview. Thank you again for your time and honesty. Here is my contact information if for any reason you feel the need to discuss anything further or if you have ask questions (336-402-8144 and ccgaymon@aol.com). As promised, I will maintain your confidentiality and the norms we discussed today. Do you have any questions for me? Again, thank you so much!