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Transformative Leadership: An Asset-Based Approach to Leadership for Diverse Schools and Learners

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, school leadership has been viewed as emanating from a sole source, the school administrator. This top-down perspective suggests that school leadership lives and dies by the leader's specific skills, mind-set, and preferred activities. This perspective ultimately oversimplifies the difficult work that school administrators must navigate in order to ensure the success of all learners. While there is no doubt that many individual school administrators are empathetic and compassionate educators, unilateral decision-making means that the cultural, linguistic and social lenses utilized to inform decision-making are limited to the perspective of the administrator.

In this chapter we propose that school leadership should be framed as a complex activity that occurs through the interaction of school administrators, teachers, and students--within the unique social context of specific classrooms, schools, and communities. This leadership style is *transformative* since it honors the resources that diverse students, teachers, and communities bring to the school. Transformative leadership purposefully integrates these resources into school- and classroom-level decision-making. Additionally, this leadership style is *distributive* **as** it assumes school leadership activity must be stretched across stakeholders and types of tasks. We maintain purposeful examination of school level issues from the perspectives of diverse groups is an essential piece of the school leader's work. Through transformative, distributive leadership a culturally proficient learning community is created.

It is not who you attend school with, but who controls the school you attend.

~ Nikki Giovanni

Many researchers point to the school leader as having great impact on the extent to which a school is effective in meeting the learning needs of all students. Studies completed by Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2004), for example, found a significant positive correlation between effective leadership and student achievement. In other words, as school leadership improves, student achievement improves. Other researchers concur. Hopkins (2001) states: "It is now a truism that effective leadership is a cornerstone for successful schooling" (p.14). DuFour and Eaker (1998) write: "The general agreement in educational research has been that the best hope for school improvement is to be found in the principal's office" (p. 182). The impact of the principal's leadership on student learning is profound.

In the past school leadership has been seen as a top-down model, resting on the shoulders of the school administrator. The beliefs, values, and skills of this leader determine the focus and direction the school community takes. Such a unilateral approach ultimately oversimplifies the challenging work that school administrators direct in creating an optimal learning environment. Another disadvantage of this unilateral approach to school leadership is that the decision-making tools are narrowed to fit the singular cultural, linguistic, and social views of this one individual leader. Certainly, many school administrators bring empathy and compassion to their leadership. However, the richness of multiple perspectives is lost when one individual is the primary source of leadership and decision-making in a school. A school administrator who is open to including multiple perspectives acknowledges how personal values and beliefs systems directly impact the decision-making process. Furthermore, this school administrator realizes the power of the decisions one makes and the impact those decisions have on diverse learners.

We recommend that school leadership be a model in which school administrators, teachers, and students collectively share decision-making. This leadership style is **transformative** as it honors the resources that diverse students, teachers, and communities bring to the school. These resources are purposefully included in school- and classroom-level decision-making. Additionally, this leadership style is **distributive**. It disperses leadership activity and decision-making across all stakeholders. This leadership approach acknowledges the power of diverse thinking and greatly impacts learners.

Nowhere is the need for **transformative and distributive leadership** more important than in the increasingly diverse U.S. schools. Just as the nation's population has become increasingly diverse, so has the student population in America's public schools. Of the more than 46 million school-aged students enrolled in public schools in the 2002-2003 school year, for example, over one third were from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. Latino students alone made up 18% of the total enrollment in 2002-2003, an increase of 64% from the 1993-1994 school year (Fry, 2006). The growth in racial and ethnic diversity found in our public schools has also brought about an increase in the number of linguistically

diverse students enrolled in public schools (Christian, 2006; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). During the 10-year period preceding the 2005-2006 school year, for example, the total public school enrollment increased by 4%. In contrast, during the same time period the population of linguistically diverse students, grew by over 55%. For the 2005-2006 school year, the population of linguistically diverse students totaled in excess of five million, or just over 10% of the total school population (U.S. Department of Education [U.S. DOE], 2007). Projections for the future estimate that by 2020 the population of school-aged children will grow by 4.8 million, and Hispanic children, many of whom are linguistically diverse, will account for 98% of the increase (Fry, 2006).

The recent increase in the population of students from diverse backgrounds, however, has not been accompanied by ethnic and linguistic diversification of the corps of teachers and school administrators. The teacher corps is still composed primarily of White, female, middle class English-monolinguals, and the number of minority teachers in our public schools does not approach representation of the diverse student body (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). The most recent Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS; Coopersmith, 2009), a nationally representative survey of schools conducted in the 2007-2008 school year, reports that approximately 83% of all public school teachers self-report as non-Hispanic White. The SASS reports similar demographic numbers for school principals. Over 81% of the 90,470 public school principals in the United States, self-identify as White, non-Hispanic (Battle, 2009). The high percentage of White school principals and teachers relative to the student population is important because students of color tend to receive more negative and exclusionary disciplinary consequences, higher levels of referrals to Special Education, and lower levels of referrals to programs for gifted and talented students than do White students (Artiles & Trent, 1994; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). While a host of factors may contribute to these disproportionate practices, it is likely that a lack of cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic synchrony between school staff and students of diverse backgrounds contributes to misperceptions and biases related to students' abilities, intentions, and behaviors (Townsend, 2000).

While there has been tremendous growth in the numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students in our public schools, there has been a lack of educational opportunities offered to students of diverse backgrounds. School administrators are arguably in the best position to push for equitable educational opportunities for CLD students, and transformative, distributive leadership allows school administrators to address this process of change in a manner that includes teacher, student, and community stakeholders.

TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP IN DIVERSE CONTEXTS

The meaning of "culturally responsive," "culturally proficient," "honoring diversity," or "multiculturalism," has changed over time. Educational practices have moved beyond simply adding activities for Black History Month. However,

if the aim of becoming culturally proficient is to transform the school community into an inclusive community in which the goal is to acknowledge and respect the diverse groups (Lindsey, Roberts, & Campbell Jones, 2005), then we must become truly introspective as to our individual beliefs and values.

Historically, diversity has been interpreted as being different from the "mainstream" or White, middle-class, English monolingual population (Boethel, 2003). Although the term diversity can refer to a host of variables including sexual orientation, gender, geographic location, and religious background, the term is typically used in schools to refer to students of "non-majority" racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. In turn, schools commonly approach diversity initiatives as knowledge about and appreciation for the culture of minority students within their school setting. For the majority of schools, this signifies examining the cultures of different groups, such as Native-American, African-American, and Latino students. This line of thinking implies that Euro- and Anglo-American descendants are the "real" Americans (Cole, 1995). Schools are foundationally based on practices that mirror the middle-class Euro-American culture – the culture of the majority of the teachers and principals. Gay (2000) describes this as "cultural blindness" and states that this "cultural blindness" stems from the following misconceptions:

1. Education is about teaching skills – intellectual, vocational, and civic; rather than having to do with cultures and heritages.

2. Teachers have inadequate knowledge about how teaching practices reflect Euro-American cultural values.

3. Teachers have the mistaken belief that treating students differently because of their cultural differences is racism.

4. Good teaching is "transcendent;" good teaching is identical for all students in all situations.

5. The way to success for all students is assimilation into mainstream society. This goal is best achieved when students have the same school experiences.

In a chapter that is directed to administration, why is the above information presented? The leader directly impacts the climate and culture of the school. Dr. Todd Whitaker (2003), an expert in principal and teacher leadership, shares a metaphor to describe the centrality of the school principal when he states, "When the principal sneezes, the whole school catches a cold" (p. 30). While this is a playful description of the principal's role, it certainly exemplifies the infectious nature of positive practices and policies that the principal institutes and models as well as the potential for an epidemic of negativity that can stem from the front office. If the culture of the school is one that is not culturally proficient, the charge to the principal is to bring about the changes needed.

Several bodies of work inform our understanding of the phrase transformative leadership for diverse contexts. In the school administration literature, transformative leaders assess followers' motives, satisfy their needs, and treat them as full human beings (Northouse, 2004). Transformative leaders create relationships, concerning themselves with the emotions, values, and ethics of others. This style of leadership motivates others to place the needs of the team or organization above their own self-interests. Transformative leadership empowers followers to address higher-level needs.

We also draw from the work of scholars of multicultural education in developing a definition of transformative leadership. Dr. James Banks, one of the foremost experts in multicultural education, describes a transformative approach to multicultural integration in which we change the structure, assumptions, and perspectives of the curriculum to purposefully examine issues and content from a variety of cultural, ethnic, and social class perspectives (Banks, 1994). He notes that this approach "helps students understand that how people construct knowledge depends on their experiences, values, and perspectives. It helps students learn to construct knowledge themselves" (p. 6). This approach is in stark contrast to the typical and superficial approach to multicultural integration that relies on celebrations of heroes and holidays. While Banks typically describes the transformation approach as being implemented by teachers at the classroom level, we purport that encouraging the purposeful examination of school level issues from the perspectives of diverse groups is an essential piece of the school leader's work in creating a culturally proficient learning community.

Finally, our understanding of transformative leadership emanates from the work of educators and scholars who have explored the notion of deficit thinking and its powerful, negative effects on the educational and life experiences of students of diverse backgrounds. The deficit perspective assumes that students, especially those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds or students living in poverty, need to be "fixed" in order to do well in school. Dr. Richard Valencia (1997), who has written extensively on the topic, explains that from a deficit-based perspective, "a student who fails in school does so because of internal deficits or deficiencies. Such deficits manifest, it is alleged, in limited intellectual abilities, linguistic shortcomings, lack of motivation to learn and immoral behavior" (p. 2). This perspective has generally been unquestioned amongst teachers and school leaders and allows the school to blame the student for a lack of academic success rather than working to change the school to fit the learners.

Transformative leaders must purposefully refute the deficit perspective and be keenly aware of the ways in which a deficit perspective infiltrates the school culture and practices. Rather than automatically assuming diverse students are "at risk" simply due to their skin color, home language, or cultural background, transformative leaders must empower teachers and staff to envision students "at potential" and to honor and utilize the resources that diverse students bring. Transformative leaders must be willing to intentionally create opportunities for explicit discussions related to race, culture, and class and must be purposeful about including traditionally marginalized groups in the school in authentic ways (Kose, 2011). Moreover, the leader must model these beliefs and shape the constructs of the school to support these values.

DISTRIBUTIVE LEADERSHIP IN DIVERSE CONTEXTS

Leithwood (1992) described transformative leadership as one that emphasizes participative decision-making and embodies a power that is facilitative in nature. Leithwood explains that this power is "manifested *through* other people, not *over* other people. Such power arises, for example, when teachers are helped to find greater meaning in their work, to meet higher-level needs through their work, and to develop enhanced instructional capacities. Facilitative power arises also as school staff members learn how to make the most of their collective capacities in solving school problems" (p. 9). Transformative leadership is the very definition of distributive leadership. It is a collaborative, shared decision-making approach with an understanding of how to encourage change in others. It places an emphasis on teacher professionalism and empowerment.

Much research points to the positive impact of distributive leadership upon a school. The principal is instrumental in building capacity within a school that ensures instructional program coherence. Elmore (2003) warns that the knowledge base needed in the domains of curriculum, instruction, and assessment is so vast that it would be overwhelming for a single leader, such as the principal, to oversee. He proposes distributive leadership as the solution. Lambert (1998) agrees, calling distributive or shared leadership "leadership capacity" and defines it as "broad-based, skillful participation in the work of leadership." She further states the principal does not "fill all or even most" of the leadership roles in the school (pp. 91-92). "The days of the principal as the lone instructional leader are over. We no longer believe that one administrator can serve as the instructional leader for an entire school without the substantial participation of other educators" (Lambert, 2002, p. 37). Fullan (2001) agrees stating, "...effective principals share – in fact, develop – leadership among teachers" (p. 138). Senge (1996) sums up both the definition of leadership and stresses the importance of distributive leadership.

He writes:

> We are coming to believe that leaders are those people who 'walk ahead', people who are genuinely committed to deep change in themselves and in their organizations. They lead through developing new skills, capabilities, and understandings. And they come from many places within the organization (p. 45).

In schools with diverse populations, this attention to transformative, distributive leadership that is informed by a variety of skill sets, values, and experiences is critical in school leadership. Transformative, distributive leadership allows a school leader to have an informal system of checks and balances in which a multiplicity of perspectives are engaged and utilized to check curriculum, instruction, policy, and other school matters for unintentional bias or stereotyping.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRANSFORMATIVE AND DISTRIBUTIVE LEADERSHIP

In this section, we discuss the intersection of transformative, distributive leadership with a variety of student, teacher, and school level issues. We first describe each issue and then we provide examples of the variety of ways in which a school leader could respond to diversity in the school setting. For each issue, we provide

1. a subtractive response in which a school leader perpetuates a deficit perspective related to diverse students;

2. an additive response in which a school leader attempts to address the issue by adding something to the school's practices, but does not restructure the issue or examine the issue with a critical lens; and

3. a transformative, distributive response in which a school leader examines and acts upon the issue from a multiplicity of perspectives and fundamentally and collaboratively changes the school structures or culture to better serve a diverse population.

In the following examples, fictional Pine Tree School is used as a context for describing issues that reflect the intersection of school leadership and diversity. Pine Tree School was once a school of mostly White, middle class, English monolingual students. During the past decade, the student population has changed and mirrors the neighborhood in which it is located. The majority of the student population comes from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds including refugee students and English learners. The majority of the school staff is White, middle class, and English monolingual, although several Spanish-speaking teachers have been added to the staff recently.

STUDENT LEVEL

Self-identity

Historically, students of diverse backgrounds, and specifically immigrant students, have been asked to leave their culture, language, and social experiences at the schoolhouse door (Cummins et al., 2005). The "melting pot" ideology, in which students are forced to assimilate into White, middle class, monolingual culture has dominated U.S. schools. Typically, students who go through this process of assimilation experience a subtraction of their first culture and language. This loss of connection to the home language and culture leaves students vulnerable and marginalized in both cultures and frequently leads to negative attitudes about school and academic success (Valenzuela, 1999). Research contradicts the long-standing assumption of the value of assimilation and in fact suggests that students who resist complete assimilation and maintain meaningful connections to their cultural and linguistic communities, tend to have educational outcomes superior

to those students who reject their home language and culture and fully assimilate into the dominant culture (Benard, 2006; Nieto, 2004).

Identity is complex and fluid. While some students may view their identity as centered in their linguistic community, others may perceive their identity more tightly connected to the country of their birth. Ngo (2009) notes the existence of multiple, intersecting, and competing identities that are constructed across social contexts such as in the home, school, and community. Not all students from a particular language group, for example, will assume the same identity or navigate their identity in the same way. The responsibility of the school, then, is not to prescribe identities to students, whether those are negatively framed identities such as limited English proficient students, or positively framed identities such as multilingual learner. Instead, the job of the school and the school leader is to give students the space and support to navigate, reflect upon, and modify their own identities. Dr. Jim Cummins (2003), a prominent researcher on multilingual learners notes, "We must examine our interactions with students who are learning English not only through the lens of the technical efficacy of our instructional strategies but also through the lens of identity negotiation the extent to which the classroom interactions we orchestrate build on and affirm the cultural, linguistic, intellectual, and personal identities that students bring to our classrooms" (p.1).

Subtractive:

In an effort to acknowledge the increasing numbers of Latino students, the school principal encourages the staff to plan a Cinco de Mayo celebration for the students and school community. Students who speak Spanish are encouraged to take leadership roles in planning for the celebration.

Additive:

The school principal notes that the majority of texts read by students at the school portrays only White, middle-class characters. The principal and team leaders decide to require each teacher to give students choice in their text selection. Each team must develop a list of text choices that are representative of the various languages, cultures, and ethnicities of students at Pine Tree School.

Transformative and distributive:

The school principal gives teachers the freedom to teach the content standards through topics that are relevant to students from diverse backgrounds. Students use the inquiry process to explore content and document their progress on the standards through multi-modal (speaking, listening, reading, writing, technology-based) projects such as identity texts. In identity texts, students create a product that is connected to their own life experiences and reflects their understanding of the content. The school community values both the process and product, and the principal ensures that the documentation of students' work is visible in places of prestige such as the school library and the front office.

Language

Schools in the United States are overwhelmingly havens of monolingualism, and education policy at the state and federal levels reinforces the English-centric practices found in schools. In 2000, for example, the title of the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs was changed to the Office for English Language Acquisition. After decades of progress in valuing students' language, the federal government made a strong symbolic statement that English language acquisition would be valued above and perhaps instead of students' first languages. In many states, students who are learning English (ELs) are required to take the state standardized exams beginning one year after immigrating to the United States, regardless of their English proficiency level. This policy encourages school administrators and staff to push ELs to reject the native language and learn English at all costs. Ironically, while schools are busy trying to "cure" students of their native language affliction, political rhetoric suggests we must globalize education and push native English speakers to become multilingual.

While the common, although illegal (see *Lau v. Nichols*, 1974), practice of submersing (sink or swim) ELs in English with the goal of supporting their English language development and academic success seems acceptable, decades of research refute the value of this practice. In a robust, longitudinal, and multi-site study, for example, Drs. Wayne Thomas and Virginia Collier (1997; 2002) found that students who received systematic support in their first language while also receiving focused instruction in English, showed the most positive long-term academic outcomes. In other words, the better developed the students' first language and literacy were, the more successful the students were in learning English and becoming successful in U.S. schools. Although the research is clear on the importance of native language development for ELs, school leaders are under pressure to quickly turnaround the test scores of ELs. While increases in school accountability measures have had the positive outcome of increasing awareness of lack of educational opportunities for ELs, our current policy obsession with quick fixes ignores the reality that it takes ELs an absolute minimum of four years to learn the academic language necessary to be successful in school. More commonly, however, ELs take at least five to seven years to learn the academic English necessary for grade level achievement (Thomas & Collier, 2002).

Even though school leaders must function within the confines of current policy expectations, school leaders must advocate for ELs by encouraging the development of students' native language whenever and wherever possible. Transformative leaders must change the status quo approach of sink or swim for ELs and must collaborate with teachers, community members, and students to create a rich learning environment in which multilingualism is understood, valued, and enacted.

Subtractive:

Students at Pine Tree School are encouraged to give up native language and use only English at home. A teacher in the lunchroom is overheard saying, "If they would only learn English, all their other school struggles would go away." Besides a lack

of understanding regarding the value of the home language, English language development is confounded with cognition, and ELs are frequently referred to Special Education without attention to their status as language learners.

Additive:

The daily school news is broadcast in multiple languages or words from multiple languages are utilized. ELs are honored for multilingualism and their parents are encouraged to continue first language development at home. The principal arranges trainings related to second language acquisition for teachers and instructional assistants at Pine Tree School.

Transformative and distributive:

The principal initiates a long-term goal of systematically supporting ELs and encouraging multilingualism through bilingual instructional programs. Beyond providing instruction in students' home language, the plan for reaching the goal includes discussion of language issues relevant to the school context such as language bias, linguistic discrimination, and privileging of certain dialects.

Parental involvement

Parental involvement is widely accepted as an important facet of a child's educational experience and is valued by teachers and administrators. In fact, multiple studies link parental involvement with specific and positive educational outcomes for students (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Hong & Ho, 2005; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Parental involvement typically has been understood as parents going to the school building to support students' academic success through some sort of structured activity that is planned by the school (Peña, 2000). The unspoken implication of this structured view of parental involvement is that parents must go along with what the school deems as legitimate parental involvement in order to be seen as "good parents." When parents do not participate in school-initiated parental involvement activities, teachers and school leaders often assume that the parents do not care (Sobel & Kugler, 2007). Frequently, educators' conversations about parental involvement emanate from the spoken question of *How can we get parents involved?* and the unspoken question of *How can we get parents to do what we want and what we think is important?* This approach to parental involvement usually fails to go to the next step in which educators ask *How can we bring parents into the decision-making process? How can we honor the resources that parents bring?*

Scholars in the field, however, note a lack of common understanding of the meaning of parental involvement. Pérez Carreón, Drake, and Barton (2005), for example, argue for a reconceptualization of parental involvement. They note that parental involvement should be understood through parents' presence *in schooling,* not just their presence in a specific and formal school setting (e.g., teacher-parent conferences or family science night) or context (help with homework completion). Pérez Carreón and colleagues go on to suggest that our ultimate goal should be

parental engagement, not just parental involvement. Parental engagement connotes a broader understanding of how parents can support students and suggests that there is a multiplicity of avenues in which this support can be manifested. This suggestion is in line with the extensive work of a group of researchers (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) who focused on the "funds of knowledge" that families offered their children. The concept of "funds of knowledge" is based on the assumption that people, including immigrant parents, are competent, have access to important knowledge, and their life experiences from which this knowledge is developed are relevant to the school curriculum. In other words, González and colleagues advocate that schools honor and value the out-of-school knowledge that parents provide their children on a daily basis.

For parents of diverse students, parental engagement is particularly complex. Immigrant parents, for example, may assume that as in their home countries, school and education are the domains of the teacher and the school principal and that parents should not meddle in school business. Additionally, parents may have logistical issues in getting to school events such as working multiple jobs, lack of transportation, and lack of babysitters for younger children. For linguistically diverse parents there is also the issue of communication with school staff.

Subtractive:

The staff of Pine Tree School plans parental involvement events only during the day. In an effort to increase parental involvement, the principal creates a competition in which the class with the highest attendance at parental involvement events wins a pizza party at the end of the school year.

Additive:

Pine Tree School ensures that translators are available at school events and efforts are made to translate the monthly newsletter. The content of the newsletter, however, does not honor diversity and the voice of CLDs is not present.

Transformative and distributive:

The multiple ways that parents can support their children's academic experiences are encouraged and valued. The school plans various options for parental involvement in collaboration with community events or interests. The Pine Tree School principal creates a culture of creating relationships with families and the community so as to encourage parental engagement.

TEACHER LEVEL

Professional development

The purpose of professional development is to improve instructional practice and to bring about increased student learning in the classroom. Numerous

research studies attest to the importance of effective professional development and its impact on student learning. In a research study of 25 schools, for example, Drago-Severson (2004) concludes that effective principals work extensively on professional development and that work includes "teaming or partnering with colleagues, placing teachers in leadership roles, engaging in collegial discourse and reflective practice, and mentoring" (p. 17).

The role of the principal is to ensure that the professional development being provided, as well as the construct of the professional development is effective. Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) note that a new standard for professional development has developed over the past two decades. "Drive-by" or "One-shot" workshops in which the participants "sit and get" have not been effective in changing instructional practices and have necessitated the move to more effective models. Chappuis, Chappuis, and Stiggins (2009) describe an effective delivery model as one that involves teachers teaching teachers, embodies elements pertinent to adult learners, focuses on desired student outcomes, is job-embedded, occurs on-site, and is sustained over time. Reeves (2009) describes an effective delivery model as being the use of model teachers. In this approach teacher leaders provide examples of best practice. The environment must be one in which teachers feel safe to rehearse practices and to take risks. The principal must also set the expectation that all teachers are expected to learn from each other, with everyone contributing. The principal must also provide support, such as time for teachers to collaborate.

Effective professional development provides examples of best practice through multiple means, such as print, digital, and one-on-one modeling. Reflection and collaborative discussions provide opportunities for teachers to share ideas and for individuals to engage in sensemaking (Huebner, 2009).

Subtractive:

A common practice in schools with diverse populations is to provide training for staff as to "typical" behaviors of a particular ethnic group or socioeconomic class. This knowledge in itself is not subtractive. In fact, it is critical that teachers get to know everything possible about their students' backgrounds and cultures. However, the next step is often to use this information to begin to "change" the child. Students are taught the manners and customs of the dominant culture, in order for them to be "successful" in life – even though those customs may be very different from the customs of the child and his family.

The principal of Pine Tree asks district facilitators to take Pine Tree staff through a book study dealing with students of poverty. It is a common practice at Pine Tree to hear a teacher tell a student to make eye contact when speaking to the teacher.

Additive:

The principal of Pine Tree invites Dr. Oliver from the local university to come to the school and teach the staff about the process of language acquisition. Dr. Oliver shares information with the staff and leaves the teachers with a list of ten strategies for effectively teaching CLDs.

Transformative and Distributive:

Professional development which is transformative and distributive focuses on bringing about change in the system by offering training and activities which provide opportunity to be introspective into one's own beliefs and values in order to begin a transformation of the self, first. The training strategies "provoke dialogue, challenge assumptions, and catalyze change for individuals and the organization" (Lindsey, Roberts, & Campbell Jones, 2005, p. 97). The training might include activities that cause individuals to determine the stereotypes they hold and how these are impacting the manner in which they teach and react to students.

The principal invites a Pine Tree teacher who has experience working with diverse students to lead the staff through a year-long professional growth process focused on cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity. The goal is to assist participants in identifying and understanding the stereotypes they hold and how those stereotypes affect the way they teach and respond to students. During the year of professional development activities, staff members engage in personal reflection and dialogue that challenge the assumptions they hold regarding individual students or groups of students.

Teacher Observation

In his extensive work analyzing principal behaviors that lead to high student achievement, Heck (1992) found one of the three most important predictors of student achievement was the amount of time a principal spends in direct observation of classroom practices. Hess (2005) suggests successful principals visit classrooms often and provide coaching to teachers. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005), after conducting a meta-analysis of 69 studies on principal leadership, list monitoring and evaluating as one of 21 principal responsibilities having a statistically significant relationship with student achievement. They note the importance of feedback and the need for a system for its provision.

For what is the principal observing? Many principals conduct (and may be required to do so by district office) classroom walkthroughs. Often, this walkthrough consists of a checklist established by district officials for which the principal is observing. However, the feedback that is essential to improving student learning is that which is focused on the effectiveness of the implementation of instructional practices, and is directly tied to the professional development being provided for increased student learning. Marzano (2003) states, "Once a specific intervention is identified, it must be thoroughly implemented if a school is to expect it to impact student achievement" (p. 165). He further notes that it is not uncommon for interventions to either not be implemented or to be ineffectively or marginally implemented. It is the role of the principal to observe classrooms to

determine the implementation of the focused instructional practices and to give meaningful feedback to teachers in order for practice to improve.

Subtractive:

The Pine Tree principal drops into the classroom of Mr. DeWitt. Mr. DeWitt is working with a small group of students. The students are preparing to write a reflective essay on a story just read, and Mr. DeWitt is leading the group in a discussion of cause and effect. A group of six students from Burma leave the room to go to a "pull-out" instructional session with an instructional assistant. These students are gone from the room for 90 minutes of the language arts period.

Additive:

The Pine Tree principal observes Ms. Smith's mathematics class during a lesson in which students are working in groups. All of the groups appear to be working on a different project, and the group members are doing a lot of talking. The volume level is higher than most classrooms, but the principal commends Ms. Smith for allowing so much oral interaction in her classroom. The principal understands the importance of opportunities for oral language development for English learners' content mastery and literacy outcomes.

Transformative and Distributive:

Prior to conducting a classroom observation, the Pine Tree principal conducts a pre-observation conference with the teacher, Ms. Roberts. Ms. Roberts shares that the fourth grade team determined through student assessment data collection and analysis that additional instruction in responding to written text is needed. She asks the principal to observe how the additional instruction goes with students. On the day the principal observes Ms. Roberts, two classes are working together. The teachers have established four different stations for student instruction. The principal notes that students are reading self-selected material that is relevant to their cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

SCHOOL LEVEL

Policies, Procedures, and Resources

Management of a school's resources is a critical responsibility assumed by the principal. Although typically seen as a role that is separate from that of being an instructional leader, management of the school organization is essential to school improvement efforts and is a foundation for instructional leadership. Principals play a central role in managing the daily tasks of running a school and creating a safe and effective learning environment. School improvement efforts rely on the effective management of resources – personnel, money, time, and materials, and ensuring that these align with the school's instructional goals and the professional development needed to meet these goals.

Management of a school organization necessitates being cognizant of a school district's policies and procedures. This includes the establishment of policies and procedures at the school level for the purpose of supporting federal, state, and district policies and for the distinct purpose of creating a safe, efficient and optimal learning environment for students and staff. The principal must be able to analyze policies and procedures, and to interpret the impact of those on the school community.

When an administrator unilaterally makes decisions regarding procedures, policies, and utilization of resources, those decisions reflect only the beliefs and values of the administrator. Participative decision-making, an attribute of transformative, distributive leadership, involves a variety of stakeholders in collaborative inquiry, study, and discussion. This allows for multiple and varied perspectives that in turn can avert unintentional bias when making decisions regarding policies and procedures. School leaders and stakeholders must be proactive and purposeful in examining how decisions differentially affect students from diverse backgrounds. In other words, transformative and distributive principals work with their stakeholders to ensure that the school's policies and procedures achieve cultural proficiency and equity (Lindsey, Roberts, & Campbell Jones, 2005).

Subtractive:

The Pine Tree staff members who are bilingual sometimes converse with each other in Spanish. This has caused some staff members who do not speak Spanish to feel resentful and excluded and has caused a division to begin to develop in the ranks. The principal creates the policy that all teachers will speak English in this school.

Additive:

As more and more Spanish-speaking parents begin to attend the Pine Tree Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings, the principal brings Spanish-speaking staff members to serve as interpreters. The English-speaking parents begin to complain because the meetings are lasting considerably longer with the additional time taken for interpreting what is being said. The principal decides to begin holding two PTO meetings – one in English and one in Spanish.

Transformative and Distributive:

As more and more Spanish-speaking parents begin to attend the Pine Tree PTO meetings, the principal brings Spanish speaking staff members to serve as interpreters. The native English-speaking parents begin to complain because the meetings are lasting considerably longer with the additional time taken for interpreting what is being said. The principal is concerned about the division becoming evident and establishes a committee to study the issue. The committee is composed of parents and students representing the various ethnic groups, teachers, staff, and school- and district-level administrators. The task placed before the group is to assess the situation and create a plan for developing relationships

amongst the school community. The committee will also study school and district policies and procedures to ensure cultural proficiency.

Data

Collecting and analyzing data is essential in the school improvement process. In his book *Results*, Schmoker (1996) quotes numerous educators who recognize and support the need for data to improve teaching practice. Good data provides evidence of what is occurring. Data analysis assists in the understanding of how instructional practices, programming, and curricula are impacting the needs of the diverse learners within a school's setting and lays the groundwork for creating a strategic plan for meeting the needs of diverse students. "The need to ground policy decisions in data about how the school is functioning is paramount. Involving teachers in the process provides them with a stimulus to make the changes work for the benefit of students" (Hopkins, 2001, p. 67).

Data collection and analysis provide the basis for moving a school's central focus from teaching to learning. Marzano's (2003) research as to the factors impacting student achievement stresses the importance of a "guaranteed and viable curriculum" (p. 22). He breaks this down into three types of curricula: intended curriculum (content specified by federal, state, district, or local school); implemented curriculum (content presented by the teacher); and attained curriculum (content learned by students). Data collection and analysis provides the evidence that the curriculum was attained, or that learning occurred.

Many effective and ineffective schools are in the practice of data collection. Data walls and data charts are evident throughout school buildings. However, *what* data is collected and *how* that data is used is the determining factor into its impact on student learning. Frequently, student achievement data, usually obtained from standardized tests, is studied to determine the "gaps" in student achievement. The data collection focuses on whose needs are not being met. This method is demanded by policy such as No Child Left Behind in which the progress of student population groups is determined and a label placed on the school based on whether these groups met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Subtractive:

The principal requires teachers to keep a data binder of students' attendance and their progress on the language arts benchmark, which is given each grading period. Students who have poor attendance are not allowed to attend the monthly school convocation. This practice negatively impacts migrant students at the school who must travel with their families during late summer and fall.

Pine Tree staff analyze standardized test data and discover that the EL subgroup did not meet AYP in the area of language arts. This is the fourth consecutive year this subgroup has not met AYP. The principal constantly reminds the staff that the continued failure of the EL subgroup in the area of language arts has given Pine Tree the label of a "failing" school and has placed them in the position of possible restructure, should this pattern continue for one more year.

Additive:

The Pine Tree staff analyze the standardized test data to determine whose needs are not being met and add remedial programs and interventions to assist the "failing" students in increasing their level of achievement. The principal requires teachers to keep a data binder of students' attendance and their progress on the language arts benchmark, which is given each grading period. The principal meets monthly with each grade level team to discuss the progress. Teachers are encouraged to communicate with parents when students demonstrate poor attendance. Migrant students are provided curriculum packets to work on during the days they miss school.

Transformative and Distributive:

The school staff collects and assesses data to determine whose needs are being best served. Data comes from a variety of sources – standardized tests, end of course assessments, and common formative assessments (which the teachers created as they mapped the intended curriculum). The staff uses reflection and introspection, individually and collectively, to determine why particular groups of students are not being served. They examine the written, taught, and assessed curricula, knowing that the key piece of information is the attained or learned curriculum. The focus is directed back to instructional practices and how those practices are serving some students, but not all. Particular attention is given to data collected from the formative assessments and this information is used to determine future instruction. Professional development is planned and implemented to increase teachers' expertise in meeting the learning needs of all students.

The Pine Tree principal requires teachers to keep a data binder of students' attendance. The staff analyzes the attendance data and determines many students miss school during Jewish Holy days. A committee of stakeholders meet to determine what adjustments could be made to the calendar to meet the needs of families. The principal is taking the recommendations of the committee to district administrators for further action.

CONCLUSION

We offer an approach to leadership that calls school leaders to initiate and share the difficult process of introspection and reflection with teachers, students, and the community. Transformative, distributive leadership is not a prescriptive quick fix, one-size-fits-all approach for meeting the needs of diverse learners. Instead, transformative distributive leadership empowers school leaders to begin, and invites others on an ongoing, complex, and dynamic journey to broaden the perspective of school practices and to privilege the identities, experiences,

and values of diverse stakeholders. Transformative, distributive leadership is a philosophical approach to school leadership, but its power is manifested in the day-to-day decisions and choices that school leaders make in collaboration with staff, students, families, and the community.

> Collaboration is vital to sustain what we call profound
> or really deep change, because without it, organizations
> are just overwhelmed by the forces of the status quo.
>
> ~ Peter Senge

Case Study

Mill Run School is an intermediate school housing grades four through six. Mill Run is in a mid-sized town about sixty miles from a large metropolitan area. The school district in which it is located has four elementary schools, grades Pre-K through three; two intermediate schools, grades four through six; two middle schools, grades seven and eight; and one high school, grades nine through twelve.

Mill Run mirrors the community in which it is housed, with most children coming from low income families. Students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch comprise 85% of the population, with the remaining 15% of students coming from upper middle income families. The ethnic make-up of the student population has changed with a large group of migrant families moving into the area to work in the tomato and melon fields. These families are primarily Hispanic and these students comprise 35% of the student population, and that number increases each year.

The staff at Mill Run has remained very constant over the years and is mostly Caucasian, female, and monolingual. A new principal, Mrs. Bern, was hired from a neighboring school district. Mrs. Bern has five years experience as a principal, and twelve years experience teaching fifth and sixth grades. Mrs. Bern replaces Mr. Hedrick, who retired after serving as the Mill Run principal for 27 years. The assistant principal, Mr. Hill, has served as assistant principal for three years and was a grade six teacher at Mill Run prior to his appointment as an administrator. He applied for the principal's position, but was passed over in favor of Mrs. Bern.

With the start of the school year just three weeks away, Mrs. Bern asks Mr. Hill to assist her in reviewing the class lists and the building schedule for the coming school year. During this review, Mrs. Bern notices that all students with Hispanic surnames are grouped together at each grade level. Mrs. Bern expresses concern that grouping by ethnicity does not provide diverse classrooms and does not fit with her philosophy of creating a culturally proficient learning environment for all students. Mr. Hill simply shrugs his shoulders and replies that this is the way the classroom assignments have always been made at Mill Run.

CASE STUDY REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Describe the current practice of making classroom assignments in terms of a subtractive or additive approach.

2. How should Mrs. Bern proceed with the classroom assignments if she wishes to model transformative, distributive leadership?

3. Imagine that you are serving Mrs. Bern in an advisory role. Beyond the issue of classroom assignments, what recommendations would you make about curriculum, instruction, professional development and parental and community relationships at Mill Run that would reflect a transformative, distributive approach to school leadership?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Consider how your own experiences with diversity have influenced your approach to leadership.

2. What is your school's stated and enacted definition of diversity?

3. In what ways does the curriculum at your school reflect middle class, White, English monolingual values?

4. How do the policies and procedures enacted at your school exemplify a culturally proficient environment? (Or not?)

5. What instructional strategies, programs, and practices at your school would be considered subtractive? Additive? Transformative and distributive?

Additional Resources

http://www.ascd.org/research-a-topic/english-language-learners-resources.aspx
http://www.ascd.org/research-a-topic/multicultural-education-resources.aspx
The ASCD (formerly the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) is an educational leadership organization focused on best practices and policies for the success of each learner. The links above include information regarding English language learners and multicultural education.

http://depts.washington.edu/centerme/home.htm
The website of the Center for Multicultural Education includes ideas, activities, and resources for promoting multicultural education.

http://www.chlive.org/pbeck/eastlibrary WHITEPRIVILEGE&RACISMRESOURCES.htm
The website includes a collection of resources focusing on white privilege and racism that were compiled by Peggy Beck Haines and Julie Rion.

www.nabe.org/
The National Association for Bilingual Education advocates for bilingual learners and their families.

www.teachingtolerance.org
This site includes a free magazine that focuses on promoting and supporting multicultural understanding in education.

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Curriculum in a Diverse Environment: The Impact on Learning

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ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on curriculum in a diverse school environment. Let's begin with an historical look at American schooling and curriculum. Then move on to a definition for curriculum in a diverse school environment. A subsequent section describes the current situation of diverse curriculum, including how diversity has an impact on the curriculum today, and how the curriculum influences the diverse populations presently in schools. The final section provides suggestions for designing and making curricular decisions in a diverse environment.

INTRODUCTION

In the early 1900s, most children attending school were Caucasian, male and aristocratic (Kliebard, 1995). Slowly, this picture began changing. Since the time of those immortal words "give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free..." (Lazarus, 1883), people from all parts of the world have landed on more places besides Plymouth Rock. This has led to a population that is very diverse and hence, a population of children attending school that is very diverse. Educators now realize that not all people learn at the same pace and in the same manner. Although everyone is considered an American, there is not one American culture and certainly not one American way of learning. As a result, educators must learn to adjust the learning process to attempt to meet the needs of all students. In this chapter I offer the reader classroom vignettes and reflection