

AN ANALYSIS OF POLICY AND PRACTICES IN PREPARING CULTURALLY
RESPONSIVE LEADERS

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

University principal preparation programs develop school leaders entering into diverse and complex schools. This record of study is an examination of practices and policies implemented by university programs to prepare school leaders for culturally responsive leadership. It includes three journal-ready articles. The first journal-ready article was a systematic review of literature related to the practices of preparing pre-service and in-service school leaders for culturally responsive leadership. The second journal-ready article was a multiple case study of five university principal preparation programs' practices for preparing culturally responsive leaders. The third journal-ready article was a policy brief that included results from both studies as well as recommendations for policy makers, program developers, and researchers.

Findings indicated the literature on culturally responsive leadership preparation is limited. From the literature and case studies, I found university programs represent a broad approach to culturally responsive leadership development. Program developers consider culturally responsive leadership cultivation through district partnerships, cohort models, faculty and student recruitment approaches, and the scope of program curriculum. The overall findings of this program of study offer insight to program developers and policy makers towards enhancing the practices and policies for preparing school leaders who are trained and effective culturally responsive leaders.

DEDICATION

For kids in the seats, the ones before them, and the ones to come.

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NOMENCLATURE

SJL	Social Justice Leadership
CRL	Culturally Responsive Leadership
CSL	Culturally Sustaining Leadership
NCES	National Center for Educational Statistics
UCEA	University Council for Educational Administration
NPBEA	National Policy Board for Educational Administration
ISLLC	Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium
ELCC	The Educational Leadership Constituent Council
CAEP	Council for Accreditation of Educator Program

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The racial and ethnic diversity in U.S. public education has steadily been increasing (NCES, 2019), and the student population is projected to continue to diversify (de Brey et al., 2019). Between 2016 and 2028, the number of White students enrolled in U.S. public schools has been projected to decrease by 7% while the number of students of color has been projected to increase (NCES, 2019). Racially and ethnically diverse students are also diverse culturally; students in U.S. classrooms will continue to hold many identities. In order for each child to be met where they are and have an opportunity for learning, their educational context must “understand, respond, incorporate, accommodate, and ultimately celebrate the entirety of the children they serve- including their languages and literacies, spiritual universes, cultures, racial proclivities, behaviors, knowledges, critical thought, and appearances” (Khalifa et al., 2016, p. 1278).

As diversity has continued to grow in the U.S. education system, so has the persistent gap between the achievement of White students and Black, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native students. There has also been a significant difference between scores for emergent multilingual students, also known as English language learners (ELs) and non-ELs (NAEP, 2019). Gloria Ladson-Billings called this difference *educational debt* (2006), it is also referred to as the *opportunity gap* (Milner 2010, 2012). These terms are important in that they highlight that the differences in achievement are not due to the output of lower-scoring students, rather, educational disparities are caused by social injustices, inopportunity, and structures that deny opportunities to students of color, emergent multilingual students, and those who are socioeconomically challenged.

There is a significant relationship between the principal and student-learning (Grissom et al., 2015; Grissom et al., 2017; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Theoharris, 2007; Waters et al., 2003). Principals play an exponentially important role in school success through instructional leadership, school climate, teacher collaboration, and teacher retention (Rowland, 2017). Schools in the United States are made up of rich student populations with dynamic identities. Many principals are not adequately prepared to lead students of diverse backgrounds and lack the skills and training needed to respond appropriately to diversity issues happening within their schools (Young et al., 2010). Culturally responsive practices benefit all students in United States classrooms. Leadership for social justice is successful both in homogeneous, White, affluent communities and in schools where student identities vary and span racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds (Theoharis, 2007). Principals play an integral role in the success of their school (Anderson & Reynolds, 2015; Branch et al., 2013). Because of this, principals in U.S. schools are called to lead in a way where each unique student finds themselves represented culturally and set up for social, emotional, and academic success, in an effort to repair the educational debt introduced by society and create equitable opportunities for future student-achievement.

Recognizing the relationship between principals and students, school leadership has become a key focus for education policy makers (Mendels, 2016; Knight Abowitz, 2019). There is continued acknowledgement of the need for improvement among K-12 school leadership in the United States in the landmark report Nation at Risk of 1983, No child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, and the Teacher and Principal Recruitment and Training Act of 2013. When considering school improvement plans, school leadership ranks as one of the top priorities (The Wallace Foundation, 2013).

Educational leadership preparation programs often fall short in preparing school leaders for diversity issues they may face in the future (Hawly & James, 2010). Approaches to preparing principals have been evolving over recent decades and programs that train school leaders are becoming more abundant than ever (Anderson & Reynolds, 2015; Baker et al., 2007; Bogotch, 2011). School leaders are graduating at such a high rate, the demand for principals cannot keep up with it (Baker et al., 2007). With so many future school leaders rising up through preparation programs, it is important that they are trained effectively and are ready for varying responsibilities as they exit, particularly as it relates to multicultural needs, social justice issues, and the intersectionality of both.

State policy and program standards play a role in how ready principals are as they enter into school leadership positions. As it stands, many educators are trained and funneled into an educational leader pipeline, but they are entering schools underprepared for leading this increasingly diverse student community (Anderson & Reynolds, 2015; Singleton, 2014; Vogel, 2011). Policy is integral in determining what is required for principal training and licensure to ensure principals enter the field ready to lead schools effectively. Guides and standards to policy regarding principal preparation exist; in 2015, UCEA published *A Policymaker's Guide: Research-Based Policy for Principal Preparation Program Approval and Licensure* as a report that can be used to inform and guide educational policymakers as they create expectations around principal preparation programs standards and licensure in each state of the United States and the District of Columbia (Anderson & Reynolds, 2015). In this policy guide, Anderson and Reynolds (2015) applied a set of research-based rubrics to determine which states impose high leverage practices in developing school leaders and outlines what those high leverage practices are. Anderson and Reynolds (2015) offered insight into the makeup of policies which improve the

preparedness and effectiveness of practicing principals, but a gap remains in their report as it pertains to evaluating policy for the important training of principals to lead in a culturally responsive way.

The responsibility of creating standards for training principals who are prepared for leadership of such a diverse student population falls on university principal preparation programs. Many programs are evolving to provide research-based interventions and strategies to learning, including concepts of Social Justice Leadership (SJL) and Culturally Responsive Leadership (CRL) in their coursework (Hayes, 2016). Yet, still, many are not, resulting in underprepared principal candidates (Anderson & Reynolds, 2015; Baker et al., 2007; Bogotch, 2011). School leaders who complete principal preparation programs still demonstrate low levels of cultural competency (Vogel, 2011). Though some states uphold policies that Anderson and Reynolds (2015) considered high leverage, this is not universal across the country. Federal programs and national standards may have influence on practices occurring in schools, however it is state policy that determines requirements for principal licensure. Therefore, it is imperative for state policies to adopt requirements that include principal preparation programs training future school leaders to develop as culturally responsive leaders, in an effort to effectively lead in U.S. schools and eliminate the opportunity gaps that exist in our schools today.

Statement of Purpose

Principal preparation programs are the headquarters for preparing principal candidates to enter U.S. schools prepared for the community they will lead. Literature that is inclusive of the ways in which principal preparation programs prepare their students to be culturally responsive leadership is limited. I conducted a systematic literature review in this dissertation and the extensive and systematic search only yielded eight relevant studies. In addition to limited

literature, state policy is scant in upholding requirements specific to principals entering schools as effective culturally responsive leaders.

Noted in the UCEA report (Anderson & Reynolds, 2015), current state policy tends to place more emphasis on policies regarding individual candidate certification/licensure than on preparation programs. This practice leaves a gap in ensuring principal preparation programs implement policies and practices necessary for the development of prepared school leaders. Programs which integrate principles focused on equitable and just leadership can cultivate culturally responsive school leaders just as exemplary principal preparation programs can develop leaders who implement effective practices (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

Principal preparation programs can significantly support the development of socially just leaders (Grogan & Andrews 2002; Theoharis, 2007). A purpose of this study is to examine the way in which program developers apply the definition of culturally responsive leadership (CRL). A working definition of CRL will also support the exploration of strategies implemented in training future school leaders. With an understanding of what this practice looks like and is, policy makers and future program developers can identify clearer objectives related to what school leaders who respond to the cultural identities and needs of their students look like in action.

In *UCEA Professors' Perceptions of Principal Preparation Program Challenges in Developing Candidates for the Instructional Leadership Role* (2015), Hayes recommended future researchers examine challenges principal preparation programs face in preparing culturally responsive leaders. It was also suggested that researchers include the perspectives of both faculty and students to examine how university preparation programs are preparing pre-service principals to be both culturally responsive leaders and advocates for social justice. This guided

the purpose of the study towards determining ways in which UCEA principal preparation programs train culturally responsive leaders, and challenges they face in doing so.

Drawing from a number of sources as to how these programs' leaders have designed opportunities to develop culturally responsive leaders, as well as their challenges in doing so will also offer insight for future program developers and policy makers. The elite nature of programs studied supports their credibility. Program chairs who are considering ways in which exemplary programs are training their principal candidates to be culturally responsive leaders can use this study as a reference in creating new programmatic policies and practices at their institutions.

I also designed this study in order to identify approaches for measuring principal candidates' propensity for culturally responsive leadership their actual implementation of such approaches once they have established positions as school leaders. A method of measurement coupled with a consensus regarding indicators of CRL will contribute to the existing body of literature. It can also be applied to current program practices as principal preparation programs struggle to know whether or not their former students employ cultural responsiveness in their roles as principals (Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015; Lightfoot, 2003; Ward, 2018).

While the UCEA report by Anderson and Reynolds (2015) was thorough and nearly comprehensive, there was no policy analysis specifically for principal preparation programs and culturally responsive leadership training. Anderson and Reynolds (2015) touched on the idea briefly with the inclusion of candidate recruitment and internship in their rubric. When discussing the strength of a clinically rich internship experience as evidence of high leverage practices, Anderson and Reynolds offered two examples; Iowa and Massachusetts. Yet in the policy example for clinically rich internship provided by Anderson and Reynolds (2015), only Iowa's policy mentioned "diverse populations" (p. 24). There was no explicit mention of a

diverse setting requirement for Massachusetts internship in the state policy example for clinically rich internship and yet it was regarded as high leverage. Furthermore, *diverse* can represent many student traits, like age-range, and does not necessarily capture cultural identities. Anderson and Reynolds' (2015) policy analysis is a starting point and framework for analyzing state policies, it can be further strengthened with the addition of policies specific to culturally responsive leadership.

Another purpose of this study is to gain better understanding of exemplary program-based policies and practices as it pertains to CRL to contribute to the existing body of literature pertaining to such. In doing so, I aim to address gaps in Anderson and Reynold's (2015) research as it pertains to policy regarding CRL. Because I am studying practices of exemplary programs, the findings from this study can be used as recommendations for contribution to high leverage state policy for leadership preparation and licensure in the future, resulting in the development of a quality school leadership pipeline of culturally responsive leaders. Reformation of policy and administration is critical for implementing culturally responsive practices in schools (Gay, 2018).

Significance of the Study

By specifically examining the training practices of CRL for pre-service and in-service school leaders, I will report on current practices in preparing advocates towards social justice and equitable and responsive teaching strategies and outcomes for a culturally diverse student population in the United States. The findings of my dissertation will contribute to the literature in three ways. First, they will add a systematic review (Torgerson, 2003) of the literature on studies of CRL training for K-12 school leaders. In doing so, the review will also create an inventory of common CRL themes and indicators and highlight methodology of training leaders to be culturally responsive.

In addition to influencing policies and practices, an evaluation of the equity focus of principal preparation programs will contribute to a theory of social justice leadership (Theoharis, 2007). CRL is a tangent of SJL with overlapping themes of responding to the needs of marginalized and minoritized students (Khalifa et. al, 2016; Theoharis, 2007). Culturally responsive leaders “center inclusion, equity, advocacy, and social justice in school” (Khalifa et al, 2016, p. 1272). Culturally responsive leaders function in their positions as social activists (Johnson, 2006).

Finally, I will apply the findings from the systematic review and multiple case study to develop a policy brief. This brief can enhance the policy analysis by Anderson and Reynolds in 2015, and also serve as a reference point for the inclusion of CRL training when determining high level leadership framework and policies in the future. Findings from the case study will offer insight into how UCEA programs prepare culturally responsive leaders for culturally rich schools in the United States, despite little guidance from state policy and published works (Diem & Carpenter, 2012). I will also explore challenges in preparing culturally responsive leaders. These findings can be used to influence future principal licensure policies.

Definition of Terms

The terms used in the context of this study are as follows:

Culturally Responsive Leadership (CRL)

Culturally responsive leaders have a critical consciousness of who they are, their biases and assumptions, and the contexts in which they lead (Gay and Kirkland, 2003). Culturally responsive leadership has high expectations for their students, integrates students’ histories, beliefs, and cultural knowledge into the curriculum. They foster critical consciousness among students and educators as well. Culturally responsive leadership works to dismantle inequities in

school and the greater society, while empowering students and their families from broad racial and ethnic communities (Johnson, 2014).

Social Justice Leadership (S JL)

Socially just leaders “make issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions in the United States central to their advocacy, leadership practice, and vision” (Theoharis, 2007, p. 223).

Culturally Sustaining Leadership

Culturally sustaining leadership “seeks to perpetuate and foster-to sustain-linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling.” (Paris, 2012, p.95).

Culturally Responsive School Leadership

Culturally Responsive School Leadership encompasses the practices that “understand, respond, incorporate, accommodate, and ultimately celebrate the entirety of the children they serve- including their languages and literacies, spiritual universes, cultures, racial proclivities, behaviors, knowledges, critical thought, and appearances” (Khalifa et al., 2016, p.1278).

Culturally Relevant Leadership

Culturally relevant leadership considers the socio-political context of the school. Leaders are culturally proficient, their professional identities lead for equity, engagement, and excellence, and their pedagogical leadership approaches are culturally relevant and antiracist (Douglass Horsford et al., 2011).

Transformative Leadership

Transformative leadership looks toward justice and democracy as it critiques inequities in the educational context, it is a practice of linking education and education leadership with

outside social contexts (Shields, 2010). Transformative leadership takes account of socially just learning environments; leading towards equity.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

The No Child Left Behind Act (2002) put measures in place which exposed achievement gaps among students of color, English language learners, and socioeconomically challenged students. It acknowledged the need for educational reform in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA)

The University Council for Educational Administration is a “consortium of higher education institutions committed to advancing the preparation and practice of educational leaders for the benefit of schools and children” (UCEA, n.d., Improving Leadership and Policy section).

Educational Leadership Constituent Council Standards (ELCC)

The Educational Leadership Standards were created by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration. University programs use them as standards to guide graduate level programs that prepare educational leaders. They have been replaced by NELP standards (NPBEA, 2020).

National Educational Leadership Preparation Standards (NELP)

Formerly known as ELCC standards, they provide specific performance expectations for building level and district leaders in education. They outline a specific list of things leaders should know and/or be able to do once completing a quality educational leader preparation program (NPBEA, 2020).

Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL)

The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders are a student-centered outline of guiding principles for school leaders to lead towards more equitable outcomes. They are catered to educational leadership more broadly than NELP (NPBEA, 2020).

National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA)

The National Policy Board for Educational Administration is an alliance of reputable membership associations dedicated to the progression of school and school system leadership. Member organizations contribute to the development and practice of educational leaders (NPBEA, 2020).

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

These studies were framed by the conceptual framework of Critical Theory (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011), culturally responsive leadership (Johnson, 2012; Johnson & Fuller, 2014; Khalifa et al. 2016, Vasallo, 2015), and social justice leadership (Khalifa et al., 2016). Critical Theory is an integral approach to this work under Horkeimer's (1982) assertion that we can (and perhaps should) critique existing societal relations in an effort to modify an inequitable system. Freire's belief (1985) that education is the first step in developing a revolutionary consciousness supports the purpose of this work in many facets. I will discuss further in Chapter III.

Culturally Responsive Leadership (CRL) (Johnson & Fuller, 2014) "derived from the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy involves those leadership philosophies, practices, and policies that create inclusive schooling environments for students and families from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds" (p.1). CRL responds to the needs of diverse school populations (Vasallo, 2015). Under the assumption that intersectionality exists among people's cultural identities and other identities, I conclude that we cannot talk about cultural

responsiveness without considering the other identities people hold. In this same vein, scholars often derive frameworks of CRL from concepts of social justice leadership (SJL). SJL (Theoharis, 2007) considers students whose identities have historically been marginalized and centers their access to equitable education in the practice of leadership. Therefore, I believe, culturally responsive leadership is social justice leadership. I will expand on this in Chapters III and IV.

Research Questions

There are three sets of questions for my study. The first set relates to the systematic review of literature, the second set relates to the multiple case study on principal preparation programs, and the final research question guided the policy brief in Chapter 4. The following nine research questions guided my study:

Study 1: Systematic Review Research Questions

1. What strategies do principal preparation and professional development programs employ to develop culturally responsive leaders?
2. How do programs assess culturally responsive leadership?

Study 2: Case Study Research Questions

1. How do UCEA principal preparation program chairs, students, and alumni define Culturally Responsive Leadership (CRL)?
2. What value do UCEA principal preparation program chairs and students place on CRL for effective school leadership?
3. How do UCEA principal preparation program chairs determine what their students need to know in order to graduate as prepared culturally responsive leaders?
4. How is CRL training conducted in UCEA principal preparation programs?

5. How do UCEA principal preparation programs evaluate whether their students are prepared culturally responsive leaders?

6. What are the perceptions of UCEA program chairs, students, and alumni of the challenges principal preparation programs face in training culturally responsive leaders?

Study 3: Policy Analysis Brief Research Question

1. What are effective strategies to train and assess principals CRL?

Summary

Principals play an instrumental role on their campuses and in the community. There is a relationship between their training and the effectiveness in which they serve students. Culturally responsive leaders acknowledge and revere the diversity within their schools and create opportunity for learning for all their students. Though state policy determines requirements for principal certification and licensure, exemplary principal preparation programs go beyond current state policy to ensure their students are prepared to enter and effectively lead for justice in U.S. schools.

Program chairs in UCEA schools are at the forefront in developing current curriculum requirements and standards to ensure each student is ready to lead the complex and diverse school systems they may find themselves within upon graduation. With this body of work, I intended to add to the conversation about the importance of cultural responsiveness when it comes to educating our youth, to add to the literature regarding current practices and policies in principal preparation programs, and to influence policy towards more intentional consideration of leadership preparation and practices that fundamentally include the identities of the students that their policies govern, and the communities of which they reside.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is comprised of five chapters. Chapter I of the study is the introduction, which describes the organizational setup of the study. Chapter I also includes nomenclature and research questions. Chapters II, III, and IV are formatted as journal articles. Chapter V is a synthesis of implications for all three studies and the conclusion of my dissertation.

Chapter II: Culturally Responsive Leadership: A Systematic Review of Training Practices for K-12 Socially Just Principals

Chapter II is a systematic literature review and critique intended to be submitted to the *Review of Educational Research*. Many journals publish reviews of education, I selected the *Review of Educational Research* because it is a top-tier journal which publishes critical, integrative reviews of educational literature and was recommended by a committee member.

The systematic procedures which guided my research were identified by Torgerson (2003), and the PRISMA model (Moher et al., 2009), using the Cochrane method (Higgins et. al, 2019) to synthesize studies and inform the evidence-base for policy development and practice. I applied two clearly stated questions a priori (1. What strategies do principal preparation and professional development programs employ to develop culturally responsive leaders?; 2. How do programs assess culturally responsive leadership?), and an explicit and methodological way of identifying, selecting, and appraising relevant research. By conducting a systematic review, I limited bias in my search for relevant articles on the training approach in developing culturally responsive principals (Porta, 2008). In using a systematic approach, I synthesized data from qualitative studies, which oftentimes are left out in this type of review, in a methodical manner to inform policy.

The systematic review was conducted through EBSCO search engine twice, once in January 2020 and a second time in September 2020. The searches extracted 1097 articles, respectively. Terms were used in a Boolean search using leadership, or African American leadership, or instructional leadership, or outdoor leadership or student leadership or teacher leadership or transformational leadership or leadership qualities and culturally responsive or relevant or cultural relevance. Variations of culturally responsive or relevance were also included by implementing the asterisk feature to also include terms with alternate endings such as -ness, and -ant.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify common methods of training and assessing for culturally responsive leadership. Additionally, this systematic review was used to develop a policy brief which included examples of successful approaches to training and assessing culturally responsive leaders.

Considerations

Papers were considered relevant for inclusion if they were studies conducted after 1994 and included training pre-service and/or in-service principals regarding understanding and practices of culturally responsive leadership. These boundaries yielded eight relevant studies included in the systematic review of literature spanning from 1994 to 2020.

A delimitation in the systematic review is that only studies which included the training of pre-service and in-service principals were included, this left out studies which focused on pre-service and in-service teachers who could eventually become school leaders. A second delimitation of the first study is that only training initiatives in the United States were included.

Chapter III: Principal Preparation Programs: A Multiple Case Study Exploring Policy and Practices in Developing Culturally Responsive Leaders

Chapter III is a collective case study intended to be submitted to *Educational Administration Quarterly*. *Educational Administration Quarterly* includes prominent empirical articles focused on educational organizations' critical leadership and policy issues. Using a multiple case study design (Stake, 2008; Stake 2013), and the conceptual framework of Critical Theory (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011), Culturally Responsive Leadership (Lindsey et al., 2005), and Social Justice Leadership (Khalifa et al., 2016), I will study UCEA principal preparation program approaches and perceived challenges to training culturally responsive K-12 school leaders.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gain better understanding of exemplary program-based policies and practices in UCEA principal preparation programs as it pertains to CRL. The findings from this study were used in the policy brief in the third journal-ready manuscript. Findings uncovered through the case studies of exemplary programs informed recommendations. The investigation of key stakeholders' perceptions and program resources offered insight as to how these programs' leaders designed opportunities to develop and assess culturally responsive leaders. It also shed light on program developer and student challenges, offering insight for future program developers and policy makers to consider.

Methods

In this qualitative case study, I conducted interviews with program chairs and former and current students of principal preparation programs. I used an online video meeting platform (Zoom) for each interview. I met with each participant twice, once for the interview, and a

second time to follow up to strengthen credibility through member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Though face to face interviews would be ideal, the current pandemic made travel high risk. To make up for the challenges to connection brought on through the use of technology, I spent a portion of the initial 60-minute interview informally engaging. I also took notes with a pen and paper while also recording each interview. The second exchange was via email to check in if my reconstruction of the interview and content was accurate.

To further strengthen the trustworthiness of the study and support the case study investigatory approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1986), I gathered artifacts such as course syllabi, degree plans, scope and sequences, program webpages, and marketing materials from each program to reflect the multiple realities of what it may be like to earn a degree from their institution.

Participants

Participants in this study included program chairs, current students, and practicing principals who still have a relationship with the program chairs or graduated from the program within the past three years. I began participant selection by sorting the UCEA consortium of 108 institutions by region. Once they were grouped by location, I sent a recruitment questionnaire to program chairs at each university in the United States. The questionnaire invited chairs to participate as representatives of their university's principal preparation program. It also gathered data used in determining their commitment to training culturally responsive leaders through their program.

If a program chair volunteered to participate, I used their survey responses and school website to determine their orientation for CRL training, and sought out programs that are leaders in training anti-biased, anti-racist, socially just, and/or culturally responsive leaders in education.

Participants sought included one program chair and one student from those programs, respectively. I intended to select the student interviewee and past participants through snowball sampling from the program chair, seeking out a student who is near completion of the program and one who has graduated in the past three years and is currently acting as a school-level leader.

I decided to include a graduate of the program who is in a current principal role because it will enable them to indirectly take-action on their circumstances (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). I found through the systematic review that program developers identified challenges in determining whether principals graduated from programs prepared for culturally responsive leadership, and if principals would apply what they learned in their future placements. Practicing principals who offered insight to principal preparation programs for CRL could indirectly impact the training of their colleagues and peers whom they work with in the future while answering unknown questions unearthed in previous studies.

Considerations

A consideration for this case study is that the participants I interviewed only represent UCEA programs and not programs outside of the council. Additionally, participants only represented program chairs and students interviewed from a handful of UCEA educational leadership programs, making the interview pool limited. Because interview participants did not include other faculty beyond program chairs, strategies and practices towards preparing culturally responsive leaders in each respective department may not be completely comprehensive. Participant recruitment could have also impacted bias in the sample and findings. I am assuming each participant who is interviewed was honest and forthright in their responses, I used member checks and semi-structured interviewing protocol to support the accuracy of data gathered from participants as well. A final consideration was that past and

current student participants were drawn from a snowball sampling technique, and their responses may be biased due to their relationship with the program chair or unrepresentative of the entire program.

By conducting multiple case studies, I had the opportunity to become very familiar with each program I studied and integrated a number of artifacts collected to develop a clear picture of practices and policies in each program. This approach subsequently limited inherent risk of bias which can come from conducting interviews alone. Though transferability is not possible, by including programs representing the five main regions of the United States (West, Midwest, Northeast, Southeast, Southwest), I assumed my sample was more representative of the United States as a whole and compiled as multiple case studies. Through transferability it created one useful tool to offer insight into exemplary practices towards training culturally responsive leaders.

Chapter IV: Culturally Responsive Leadership as Part of Principal Preparation Program Approval and Licensure: A Policy Brief

Chapter IV is a policy paper intended to be submitted to *Higher Education Policy* or *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*. *Higher Education Policy* is a high impact journal inclusive of education policy based on national systems. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* is a mid-range journal that encompasses emerging policy directions.

The policy brief was related to the training practices of principal preparation programs and licensure requirements to produce culturally responsive leaders of PK-12 institutions. In this policy brief, I drew from findings from the systematic review in chapter two and the case studies in chapter three to address current challenges in principal preparation programs. I highlighted

implications, and identified possible strategies to train and assess culturally responsive PK-12 school leaders.

The purpose of this policy brief was to inform future policy makers of the practices and strategies exemplary principal preparation programs have in place to produce principals who are qualified to lead in U.S. schools. The purpose of the brief was to also advocate for policy and practices that intentionally address the needs of highly diverse student demographics.

Chapter V: Implications and Recommendations

Chapter V is a summary and synthesis of the implications of the manuscript findings in order to describe the collective meaning of chapters II, III, and IV. Chapter V also offers recommendations for future policy and programming, as well as future research.

CHAPTER II

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF TRAINING PRACTICES FOR K-12 SOCIALLY JUST PRINCIPALS

An emphasis on culturally responsive practices among educators has been an integral part of educational reform for the greater part of the 21st century. In this systematic review, I aimed to collect, synthesize, and appraise literature since 1994, focused on the andragogical approaches and objectives of training educational leaders for culturally responsive leadership in the United States. I examined studies and synthesized methods and findings in an effort to collect a body of literature that could impact future educational leadership policy and practices.

Policies which guide the training of culturally responsive leaders in principal preparation programs have not been well established. My objective for this systematic review of literature was to identify strategies for training pre-service and in-service principals to be culturally responsive leaders. I conducted the systematic review of articles using EBSCO (1994-2020) and, seeking relevant studies written in English. Additional studies were identified through the references of originally extracted studies and manually combing relevant journal databases. Only studies whose participants include pre-service and in-service principals in the United States were included. Independent extraction of articles was conducted using pre-identified data fields in Google forms. All qualitative data were pooled using principal approaches of meta-ethnography (Brittan et al, 2002).

Introduction

Preparing teachers in preservice education programs with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to improve school success of ethnically diverse students through culturally responsive practices has been studied extensively over the past few decades (Gay, 2018; Pang,

2013; Skepple, 2015; Villegas et al., 2002), yet little consensus exists on the approaches to prepare culturally responsive leaders, even less so as it pertains to principals in K-12 schools in the United States (Place et al., 2010; Singleton, 2014).

Culturally relevant teaching and culturally responsive pedagogical practices have been on the forefront of educational reform conversations for over a quarter-century (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2018). Culturally responsive educators are sensitive to affective, cognitive, and cultural differences in students and maximize their success by teaching to specific student needs and identities (Cazden & Leggett, 1976). Many scholars use the themes of culturally responsive pedagogy and culturally relevant teaching in tandem (Au, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Delpit, 2006; Gay, 2018; Irvine, 2003; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004; Nieto, 2015) as they provide guidance for educators who seek to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes to empower ethnically and culturally diverse students through the use of cultural relevance, prior experiences, reference points, and performance styles. In terms of nomenclature, social justice leadership is another term used interchangeably for leadership practices that positively impact educational outcomes for students of diverse identities and from historically marginalized communities (Place et al., 2010).

When it comes to school outcomes, principals play an integral role in instructional practices, school vision, and mission (Brown, 2006). Though it has been argued that there is no direct influence from principal leadership to student learning (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Leithwood et al., 2004; Louis et al., 2010), principals still play an integral role in supporting student success (Garza et al, 2004; Huerta-Macías & Tinajero, 2002; Leithwood et al., 2004; Sebastian et al., 2017).

Successful principals are conscious of and responsive to the context they lead within, promoting engagement and leveraging student success through transformational and instructional leadership (Day et al., 2016). When it comes to training, there is need for improvement in cultivating school leaders who are prepared to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population (Darling-Hammond et al, 2007; Ward, 2017). There is a call for the evolution of principal training to prepare leaders for transformative and equitable approaches to important structural decisions regarding “issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and exceptionalities” (Cambron-McCabe et al., 2005, p. 204).

While systematic reviews are relied upon predominantly in health care research and practice, they can be a useful tool in education when identifying a starting point for clinical practices and policies (Moher et al., 2009). I drew from Cochrane systematic review methodology and adapted the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) framework while conducting this review to gather, synthesize, and assess literature (Moher et al., 2009).

Objectives

The objective for this review is to examine the ways in which principal preparation and educational leadership professional development programs prepare and assess the cultural responsiveness of K-12 leaders. The population studied are pre-service and in-service principals. Interventions of interest are the training practices of educational leadership programs. I sought to identify training practices, indicators, and/or outcomes of culturally responsive leadership training.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this systematic review are:

1. What strategies do principal preparation and professional development programs employ to develop culturally responsive leaders?

2. How do programs assess culturally responsive leadership?

Methods

The Cochrane Method guided my approaches to this systematic review (Higgins et al., 2019). I also applied the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) framework while conducting this systematic review to gather, synthesize, assess, and report on literature on the training approaches used towards developing culturally responsive principals (Moher et al., 2009). Some adaptations were made because the majority of studies which met the criteria for selection happened to be qualitative, therefore making it impossible to study effects measures and perform other quantitative analyses. The studies which were mixed-methods did not use the same instruments.

Protocol and Registration

I identified methods of the review through consultation with my committee chair and university librarian. I used Covidence to guide the process of extraction and screening. Study information for extraction was identified a priori between the research team using Google forms. No registration exists for this review.

Eligibility Criteria

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994 & 1995) is heralded as the architect for culturally relevant pedagogy, therefore papers in this review included studies written from the year she coined the term in 1994, until the final date of extraction in September 2020. In order to be considered, studies must have been conducted in the United States, as the context of these studies can be used to build on and develop policy and inform practices in the United States. No limits were

applied for language, however all studies extracted were written and/or published in English. Unpublished dissertations, papers presented at conferences, and publications were included.

In terms of content, I sought studies which focused on training principals of K-12 schools. I assumed that training of principals for culturally responsive leadership included pre-service and in-service principals, however the means of and location for training was open. Training programs could be credentialed and through higher education institutions and also through independent organizations for in-service principals. To be eligible for inclusion, each study had to have participants who were either in-service or pre-service principals; however, participants could have also included other educators who may not have been school level leaders, but educational leaders in their own right. I looked for programs that examined the elements of culturally responsive leadership of school leaders in their training.

Information Sources

During a consultation with the university librarian about my study, we used electronic databases as sources for extracting literature. Electronic databases searched in this study were identified through EBSCO, including the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) which is a virtual catalog of education research, sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) of the U.S. Department of Education, Academic Search Ultimate, Education Full Text, Education Source, and Educational Administration Abstracts. Studies were also identified by scanning reference lists of papers yielded through the initial search. Two imports to Covidence were conducted, the first on January 23, 2020 and the second on September 22, 2020. In January, I searched ERIC in Ebsco. In September, I searched ERIC again, as well as Academic Search Ultimate, Education Full Text, Education Source, and Educational Administration Abstracts.

I manually screened (Hopewell et al., 2007) through the references of initially selected

studies for extraction from September 27, 2020 until October 13, 2020 and included all relevant citations for another review. On October 13th, I also digitally combed through journals individually, including *Journal of Transformative Leadership & Policies*, *Educational Leadership*, *Journal of School Leadership*, *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, and *Equity and Excellence in Education*. I searched *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Educational Administration* on October 20, 2020.

Search Terms

I consulted with the librarian about my research topic and we identified relevant search terms, as well as relevant terminology with similar cognates. Boolean operators were also applied to broaden the search of articles which contain the terms separately and/or jointly. I used the following search terms to search the ERIC database in EBSCO on January 23, 2020:

DE "Leadership" OR DE "African American Leadership" OR DE "Instructional Leadership" OR DE "Outdoor Leadership" OR DE "Student Leadership" OR DE "Teacher Leadership" OR DE "Transformational Leadership" OR DE "Leadership Qualities" OR AB leader* or TI leader*

AND

AB (cultural* n2 (responsiv* or relevan*)) OR SU "Cultural Relevance" OR TI (cultural* n2 (responsiv* or relevan*)).

This initial search conducted in January, 2020, resulted in 483 retrieved papers.

A second search was conducted on September 22, 2020, in ERIC, and Academic Search Ultimate, Education Full Text, Education Source, and Educational Administration Abstracts databases. The following terms were used in the second search:

AB leader* or TI leader*

AND AB (cultural* n2 (responsiv* or relevan*)) OR SU "Cultural Relevance" OR TI (cultural* n2 (responsiv* or relevan*)).

Data Collection Process

I created a data extraction sheet after an initial consultation with the university medical sciences librarian who specializes in systematic reviews. Then, I met with my committee chair to refine and make additions to the form. I had six more meetings with the librarian from February 2020 to October 2020, the first three meetings were to prepare and create the Google form draft and the subsequent three were to check in on the process and answer remaining questions. I pilot-tested the Google Form draft using five randomly selected studies from the original list of papers retrieved in January 2020 and refined them accordingly. I used Google Forms as a platform to store and disaggregate information rather than the instrument provided through Covidence, as they provided an easier way to organize information and adapt formatting. It was also a useful tool to identify emerging trends through graphs and charts developed automatically in Google Forms.

After I collected the data items from the eight studies in Google Forms, I also re-read each study and took manual notes on themes I found in each, detailing specific strategies to teaching culturally relevant leadership and other relevant information I had not captured in the Google Forms. I realized after creating the Google Form, piloting, and applying it that I had failed to capture some qualitative information needed to answer the research questions. I was interested in understanding how each program prepared culturally responsive leaders but did not create space to annotate additional andragogical strategies they employed or challenges they faced in doing so. Manual notes helped in gathering and synthesizing this additional information.

Data Items

Data were extracted from each study on (a) reference, (b) platform disseminated (dissertation, paper presentation, publication), (c) sample size, (d) selection of participants, (e) geographical location, (f) participants' institution, (g) school category (including urban, rural, suburban, not specified, and other), (h) if it was an evaluation of their own program, (i) theory applied, (j) if they made their own concept model (and if so, what was it)?, (k) if the words *culturally responsive leadership* were used in the study (l) if and how it was validated (m) methodology, (n) data collection, (o) indicators of CRL training (Vassallo, 2015) (including critical self-awareness, values/beliefs/dispositions, leadership program addresses race, culture, language, national identity, evaluation and understanding of who they are, understanding of context in which they lead, use understanding of self and context to create new environment conscious of race and class, interrogate personal assumptions). After reading several studies, I realized the indicators of CRL training that Vassallo (2015) had described failed to capture all the methods these studies applied, therefore I took note of these in a journal, in addition to the forms. Other data gathered after the initial extraction through Google Forms were challenges they faced and suggestions for future programming.

Risk of Bias in Individual Studies

I assessed risk of bias for individual studies by looking at sampling practices, validation practices, and evidence of trustworthiness at the study level. I assessed risk of bias through an unblinded independent review, if risk of bias was detected, it was indicated in the results.

Summary Measures

The majority of studies which met the criteria for extraction were qualitative, limiting the ability to conduct summary effect measures. The researchers who conducted mixed-methods

studies did not use the same instruments, nor did they utilize the same interventions or strategies, therefore I was unable to perform quantitative meta-analysis.

Planned Methods of Analysis

Data were decontextualized through extraction using Google Forms. There were 15 descriptor spaces to fill in for each study. Some studies did not include all the descriptor information I sought out in the Google Form initially, however I added the information which was available from the literature into each descriptor section using a manifest analysis, staying true to what the researchers reported in their studies.

To track trends and themes in the data, I initially looked at the charts compiled by Google Forms. Then I re-contextualized data while looking at the Google form for each paper on the left side of my screen, and simultaneously reading the paper on the right side. Additionally, I took notes of units, both those which had been included in the forms, and those which came up in reading a second time. These themes which arose in the content analysis in the papers themselves added to the trustworthiness of the data I input into the Google Forms.

I stayed true to the text analyzed when reporting on it by making units, categorizing in themes, and using triangulation to strengthen the rigor of the process. I also performed a latent analysis in the discussion section of the review (Bengtsson, 2016). The repeating process of decontextualization and recontextualization, categorization and compilation (Bengtsson, 2016) adds to the quality and trustworthiness of my review.

Risk of Bias Across Studies

The available data may be biased as they only include studies which were found through the databases found in EBSCO and through manually combing other journals and reference sections. I combed the reference sections of each study which met the criteria to seek out any

additional studies which could potentially meet the criteria to be added in the review in an effort to mitigate unintended bias through the search engine. I added the third layer of searching journals which could potentially publish relevant literature, as that has been a useful method in past systematic literature reviews.

In addition to risk of bias through literature selection, there is also a risk of bias when searching journals alone. Oftentimes, the decision to only include studies which have been published can add bias to findings. To combat this risk, I included non-published studies in the search. I also addressed inherent risk of bias across studies by using reflexive practices throughout, journaling during data extraction and analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

Additional Analyses

Additional analysis was conducted to make note if the programs studied were UCEA members. Of the eight selected studies, one was confirmed to be a UCEA school. Some schools were identified through pseudonyms, so more may have been present. No additional analysis beyond that was conducted, as all studies retrieved were qualitative.

Study Selection

Two electronic searches through EBSCO yielded 1,097 paper findings. Titles and abstracts of 817 titles and 280 duplicates were uploaded onto Covidence. Initially, I screened the title and abstracts of 817 papers to determine which would require a full text review. I looked for titles and abstracts that included indicators of culturally responsive leadership as described by Vassallo (2015) (critical self-awareness, leadership program addresses race, culture, language, national identity, evaluation and understanding of who they are, understanding of context in which they lead, use understanding of self and context to create new environment conscious of race and class, interrogate personal assumptions), which had been identified a priori. I also

looked for studies which made mention of training specific for leaders in education. I quickly eliminated papers which demonstrated in the title or abstract to meet reasons for exclusion. If the title and abstract indicated it may meet the selection criteria, I funneled it on to a second list.

The initial title and abstract screen resulted in 124 remaining papers, of which a full text review was conducted. In the full text review of 124 papers, I sought out qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods studies in the United States. Studies examining the training practices toward culturally responsive principals and met the other inclusion criteria specified were kept and included in the systematic review and critique. Ultimately, my specificity led to only six studies remaining in Covidence for extraction. Due to a seemingly low number of studies to be included in my review, I re-read from the full text of 124 papers. I concluded again, the 118 papers were ineligible for the review because they (a) were not studies, (b) lacked eligible study participants, (c) did not take place in the United States, and/or (d) did not include culturally responsive leadership training or a combination of the above.

Following the extraction on Covidence, I implemented a second level search. I manually sifted through the references of each of the 124 full-text papers, marking papers which had titles indicating they may meet the requirements for inclusion. This search yielded 29 new references. I read the full text of the 29 papers and identified two additional relevant studies, totaling 8 studies altogether.

The third and final level of my search included manually searching relevant journal databases on their websites. I identified relevant journals to search from a master list of journals curated by program chairs from the departments of Teaching, Learning, and Culture, and Educational Administration and Human Resources in the College of Education and Human Development at Texas A&M University. These journals were *Journal of Transformative*

Leadership & Policies, Educational Leadership, Journal of School Leadership, International Journal of Multicultural Education, and Equity and Excellence in Education. I also added a search of the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Educational Administration* after consultation with my committee chair. I performed this final eligibility assessment in a standardized and unblinded manner using the predetermined criteria that I applied in the level one and level two searches. No new eligible studies came from the final level of the search.

PRISMA Chart

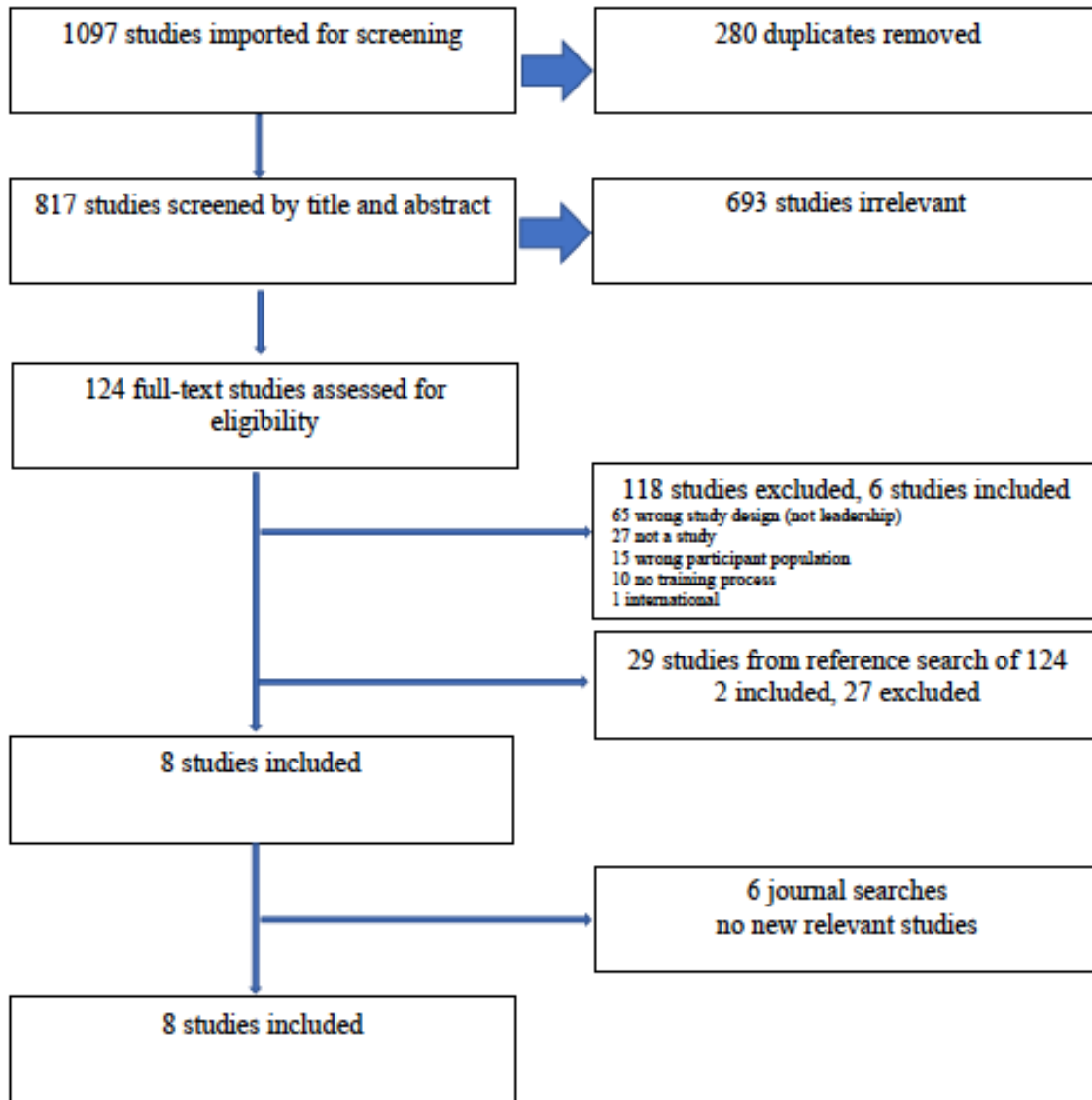


Figure 1. Process for selecting literature for review and critique

Results

In this review, I described and critiqued studies which examined the ways in which programs facilitated the growth of in-service and pre-service principals as culturally responsive leaders. I included published studies and grey literature from university and K-12 settings representing regions across the United States to create a comprehensive resource for policy

makers and program developers to reference when seeking strategies to train culturally responsive leaders and assess the efficacy of their training measures and the leader implementation of skills.

Overall, eight studies were included, two of which were dissertations, the other six were journal publications. Six of the studies took place in university settings. In two studies, researchers examined out-sourced professional development for K-12 in-service principals in New York and Arizona, respectively. Six of the eight studies were self-studies. Principal training programs in urban, suburban, and rural contexts were examined among the eight studies. Of the studies reviewed, seven included training strategies which took place in person while one examined a course which was conducted virtually. Four studies were qualitative inquiries, one was quantitative, and three applied mixed methodological approaches.

I found that in several studies, the way in which researchers collected data was also the strategy in which they taught culturally responsive practices. Through encouraged dialogue, journal writing and reflexivity, educators simultaneously created learning opportunities and rich data to examine.

Study Characteristics

Though there was commonality among themes because each answered the research questions I set out to study, the eight studies I reviewed did not have uniformity in the research questions their authors sought to answer. Additionally, there was no consensus in methodological approaches or theoretical framework. Therefore, I described the methods, interventions, and results of each where applicable in this review. I also provided a critique and risk of bias analysis as well. After describing each study individually, I coded the group of papers thematically. I synthesized the data to answer my own research questions for this systematic review, while also

providing insight into programmatic approaches towards training culturally responsive leaders. Descriptions of the study authors, type, methodology, region of study, and participants included in this review are listed in Table 1.

Study	Study Type	Methodology	Region	Participants
Brown	Publication	Mixed-methods	Southeastern U.S.	Principal candidates
Gooden & O'Doherty	Publication	Qualitative	Southwestern U.S. (Urban)	Principal candidates
Jones	Dissertation	Qualitative	Upstate New York (Suburban)	In-service principals
Keiser	Publication	Quantitative	Midwestern U.S.	Principal candidates
Lightfoot	Dissertation	Qualitative	Midwestern U.S. Southern U.S.	Principal candidates, former students, and program faculty
Murakami Ramalho et al.	Publication	Mixed-methods	San Antonio, Texas (Urban)	Principal candidates
Ward	Publication	Qualitative	Midwestern U.S.	Principal candidates
Ylimaki et al.	Publication	Mixed-methods	Arizona	In-service principals

Table 1. Study Characteristics

The Brown Study

Brown (2006) brought a mixed-method approach, using the andragogical framework of Transformative Learning Theory, Adult Learning Theory, and Critical Social Theory to explore an alternative approach to addressing the challenges of preparing educational leaders who are committed to social justice and equity. In *Leadership for Social Justice and Equity: Evaluating a Transformative Framework and Andragogy*, Brown (2006) conducted a self-study of a university-based educational administration program through examination of student experience in a foundations course she instructed and the participation in a full-time structured internship. In addition to traditional methods of teaching such as clinical experiences, internships, cohort grouping, case studies and problem-based learning, Brown also employed cultural

autobiographies, life histories, diversity workshops, cross-cultural interviews, educational plunges, diversity presentations and panels, reflective analysis journals, critical reflection, rational discourse, and practical application as new andragogical strategies for principal preparation in the program.

She used a pre and post survey, in conjunction with template analysis of reflection journals guided by five steps outlined by G. Brown and Irby (1997) to measure possible impact of these strategies on preservice leaders' aptitude toward culturally responsive leadership. Through quantitative analysis, Brown found a significant change in participants with time, indicating an improvement in affect towards diversity in education. Though Brown did not detail the credibility of the reflection analysis process, themes emerged as evidence of change in participant perception in the qualitative analysis as well.

The findings are undoubtedly beneficial for program designers and policy makers to draw from in terms of effective practices to training pre-service principals, however, limitations exist because it is not possible to determine whether participants' changed attitudes are due to the new transformative andragogical approaches Brown introduced or course content, assignments and course instructor style, or a combination both.

Participants in the study were 40 graduate students in the educational administration program, coming from two cohorts. The limited sample size contributes to limitations of the study, particularly as it relates to the quantitative analysis. Additionally, the non-randomness of participant may have an impact on the credibility. Brown did not make any specific reference to validation or credibility practices in the qualitative analysis though the survey implemented to measure change in participant perceptions used Cronbachs alpha to support strong reliability and internal consistency.

The Gooden and O’Doherty Study

In *Do You See What I See? Fostering Aspiring Leaders’ Racial Awareness* (2015), Gooden and O’Doherty used a qualitative approach to study the impacts of using racial autobiographies in their approaches towards developing culturally responsive educators. Participants in the study were a convenience sample of 12 graduate students enrolled in a 12-credit course sequence for principalship. Gooden and O’Doherty sought to uncover ways in which racial autobiography embedded within a leadership course could influence pre-service school leaders’ perceptions about race and racism. They drew upon tenants of Critical Race Pedagogy, white identity development, biculturalism, and the black identity development model to guide the design and analysis of their research.

Gooden and O’Doherty failed to explicitly state they ways in which they did or did not validate their study, however, themes they uncovered through analyses of participant autobiographies offered insight into the potential power of self-reflexive practices through autobiography. They reported a demonstrated increase in participants’ racial awareness. While the goal of the study was to measure the change in racial awareness, Gooden and O’Doherty acknowledged the inability to determine whether the newfound consciousness would result in advocacy and future actions as school leaders. This idea came up several times in the selected literature, I addressed this further in the sections below.

The Jones Study

Jones (2017) studied the nature and impact of professional development (PD) on the understanding of diversity in suburban school districts in their dissertation titled *Understanding Diversity in Suburban School Districts: The Impact of Culturally Proficient Professional Development and School Leadership*. In this study, Jones used a nonprobability, purposeful and

snowball sampling method to identify 17 participants who were educators in suburban New York schools. Participants were educators who had participated in professional development regarding cultural proficiency and creating culturally responsive environments provided through their district within the five years prior to the study. Of the 17 study participants, three were district administrators, three were principals, and the remaining 11 were teachers.

Jones worked against implicit bias by conducting member-checks and seeking out feedback from experienced researchers throughout the process. Jones increased reliability by following a scripted interview protocol and used triangulation among participants from the same school or district to support the internal validity of the findings.

Professional development opportunities offered to participants were reported by Jones to include lectures and workshops, PD communities, readings with discussions, interactive simulation, PD on understanding children in poverty, diversity and implicit bias, and creating an inclusive lens. Participants reported varying attendance rates of each PD opportunity. This lack of uniformity in intervention in Jones' study contributed to the limitations of the findings. Additionally, findings were incomplete because the interventions used in PD were vaguely identified. The study would be more informative, and thorough had it clearly detailed the strategies each participant encountered.

One noteworthy aspect about the design of Jones' study are the parameters of the intervention she identified. Participants had received professional development for cultural proficiency at any point, and in various frequencies, over the course of five years. In reading the paper, I was unable to discern to what extent educator experiences were beneficial, and if so, why. This also makes the study extremely difficult to replicate. Furthermore, though interviews

uncovered participant perceptions of the benefits of PD, the researcher did not measure the direct impact the PD had on participant practices.

The Keiser Study

In *Educational Administration Candidates' Diversity Dispositions: The Effect of Cultural Proficiency and Service Learning*, Keiser (2010) examined the way their Midwestern university addressed sociocultural consciousness, cultural proficiency, and community connections in their training of school leader candidates. Without specifying theoretical foundations, Keiser used quantitative analysis to study 47 candidate participants who engaged in nine hours of community service, as fulfilment of requirements in the school community relations course. In addition to community service, participants were also introduced to cultural proficiency in class through instruction, case studies, sharing personal anecdotes, discussions, readings, videos, and writing exercises.

The instrument Keiser used was tested for content and construct validity. Reliability analysis of the instrument was conducted using Cronbach's alpha to determine the relationship of participant diversity awareness. In addition to examining participant perceptions, Keiser also ran an ANOVA to see if there was a relationship between participant perceived growth in awareness over the span of the course, and the familiarity of their community service placement. Keiser sought to uncover whether or not the students' familiarity or comfort in their placement had any relation to their perceived learning outcomes. This is a consideration which other researchers in this review made as well, I addressed the value of such questions in the experiential learning section below.

Keiser did not uncover statistical significance in their findings in terms of community service placement. Participants did, however, indicate an improvement overall in diversity

dispositions after completing the school community course. Limitations to these findings are similar to those in Jones' study, as the researcher was unable to observe actions to support actual change, and subsequently findings are only perceptions.

The Lightfoot Study

Toward a Praxis of Anti-Racist School Leadership Preparation is a dissertation by Lightfoot (2003). Lightfoot conducted a collective case study, becoming familiar with three university programs which had self-identified as offering educational leadership students above-average opportunities to engage in socially just and critically conscious leadership development.

Through the application of a collective case study design, Lightfoot constructed an in-depth and broad analysis of three programs training future principals for culturally responsive leadership. This study may be the most relevant and informative to culturally responsive and socially just leadership development because although it is not a publication, it is a rich resource for understanding three unique university programs with broad demographic representation. Utilizing Critical Race Theory and Emergent School Leadership Theory, Lightfoot studied programs from the Midwestern, Sunbelt, and Southeastern regions of the United States, one of which was a historically black college or university (HBCU), each varied in size of student population.

Lightfoot interviewed 19 participants, including program directors, professors, adjunct lecturers, current students, and graduates of the three programs studied. Schools studied were selected from a larger group of programs which claimed to place emphasis on social justice leadership development. Student participants were recommendations of faculty participants.

Lightfoot did not belong to any of the three programs they studied, and therefore may have limited the possibility of inherent bias which can come from studying one's own program.

A limitation of these collective case studies was the failure of the author in identifying validation procedures, despite having highlighted the importance of such practices in the dissertation itself.

Many of the ideas Lightfoot uncovered were prominent themes among the other literature included in this review. Examination of these themes, including (a) recruitment, (b) field experience, (c) faculty identity, (d) community support, and (e) assessment are explored further in the sections below.

The Murakami Ramalho, Garza, and Merchant Study

Murakami Ramalho, Garza, and Merchant (2009) reported on the strategies and impact of a district/university partnership to prepare culturally responsive leaders in *Lessons from Country Borders: Preparing Leaders for Social Justice and Diversity through a District and University Partnership*. Through a mixed-methods self-study, they examined the level of participant satisfaction in the programmatic features, and graduate student perceptions of personal culturally relevant practices.

Murakami Ramalho, Garza, and Merchant sent 40 participants a survey of 20 questions to study student satisfaction. Simple frequency and percentage distributions were used to treat the data, producing reliable analysis. However, only 22 of the 40 participants responded. The researchers applied a weighted mean to reduce non-response biases due to low response rate.

In reporting the results of the survey, Murakami Ramalho, Garza, and Merchant indicated students were very satisfied with their experience in the program. The researchers gathered qualitative data through focus groups and journal reflections. Through these data sources, researchers identified four themes of the programmatic approaches towards preparing leaders for social justice and diversity. Among these themes, indicators of the power of personal experience,

mentoring, and a cohort model, and reflexive practices were discussed. I also found these recurring in other literature and expanded on this in the sections below.

The Ward Study

In *A Preliminary Study: Using a Case Study to Prepare Potential Educational Leaders for Collaboration in Leading Cultural Inclusiveness*, Ward (2018) used a qualitative case study approach to study participants' experiences in a university online class on cultural diversity, designed to prepare leaders for positions in schools. No theoretical framework was identified in Ward's self-study. Though the class included 27 adult students, the 13 of whom were included as participants in the study were those who were working towards an advanced degree in educational leadership.

Ward emphasized the role that standards played in directing learning practices and objectives for developing education leaders in this study. The course design and assessment were driven by the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (NPBEA, 2015). Participants engaged in collaboration throughout the course, and Ward studied ways in which collaboration and aspects of such contributed to learning outcomes. Students were grouped into small, diverse, teams for the duration of the course. They examined their group dynamics closely throughout the process. Case studies, intercultural communication practices, collaborative school visioning, collaboration with stakeholders, discussions, and reflexive activities were strategies employed in the cultural diversity course.

Observational protocols, interviews, and participant reflections were employed in curating the data. Ward's decision to not record interactions may have mitigated intimidation or other negative impacts on the credibility of the data. Group members' autonomy to examine and take note of their own group dynamics throughout the course while creating data may have also

supported the validity of the findings. Furthermore, Ward used triangulated data collection methods to increase reliability.

Ward found that case studies were reported to be a helpful tool in initialing discussions, building relationships, making decisions, and preparing students for a future as leaders in schools. As in other studies in this review, there was no analysis as to how or if students applied this perceived new understanding to their role as school leaders. Ward did report, however, indications that participants had become more familiar with themselves and their own identities and were more aware of concepts and definitions related to cultural responsiveness as a result of participation in the course and collaborative case study exercises. The size and intentionality of group makeup was also reported by Ward as a key element which supported student growth. This type of awareness to group dynamics during student learning is mentioned in other studies in the review as well.

The Ylimaki, Brunderman, Bennett, and Dugan Study

Ylimaki, Brunderman, Bennett, and Dugan (2014) looked at the intersectionality of turnaround school leadership and cultural responsiveness in their study, *Developing Arizona Turnaround Leaders to Build High-Capacity Schools in the Midst of Accountability Pressures and Changing Demographics*. Through a mixed-methods approach, Ylimaki, Brunderman, Bennett, and Dugan assessed their program which trained in-service leaders to lead through a culturally responsive lens while attempting to improve student learning outcomes and making their communities better places to live. They wanted to understand the impact the program had on leader skills and knowledge, as well as measure school performance in relation to leadership participation. This element is of value because it offers possible evidence of the impacts of

training on practice, an element which has proven to be difficult to capture in other studies in this review.

The researchers drew their sample from 252 Tier III schools. These schools were identified as persistently underperforming. Of the 252 schools they narrowed it down to 45 participating schools. This decision was based on the level of superintendent support and participant commitment. District leadership support was a critical aspect of other studies as well, with the assumption that interventions would be more successful when stakeholders demonstrated an investment in the outcomes. More than half of the schools represented in the study were located in rural areas, the other schools were more or less split between urban and suburban areas. 80 participants represented the 45 schools, they were predominantly female and predominantly white.

Ylimaki, Brunderman, Bennett, and Dugan utilized quantitative instruments as part of their study. Scales of the survey assessing participant turnaround leadership capacity reached strong levels of reliability using Cronbach's alpha. They sought to determine gaps in perceived principal efficacy by comparing scores of principals' self-reports and the scores of staff who were familiar with the principal's performance. They used this information as evidence of limitation in leadership capacity too. There was an 89% return rate of the survey and mean imputation was implemented to make up for missing data. The research team was unable to use chi-squared tests to determine statistical significance because some categories received too few responses, instead they determined a significant difference was a mean difference of at least .05 or more.

The second survey was used to measure knowledge about leadership capacity and was implemented prior to participating in the program and again after completing it. They also rated

each Arizona Tier III school for levels of participation in the program; full, partial, or no participation. In addition to the quantitative measures, Ylimaki, Brunderman, Bennett, and Dugan designed their study to also have a qualitative aspect. Participants included 16 principals and 13 teachers. Participants were invited to offer feedback on the interview and program as a whole. The research team achieved internal and external validity by outsourcing 30 to 45-minute semi-structured interviews of participants who had completed all aspects of the program. They employed NVivo9 software to analyze the data inductively and deductively. Codes and themes were analyzed among several researchers to support reliability.

In their study, Ylimaki, Brunderman, Bennett, and Dugan found that their principal participants reported high self-capacity for school leadership, though their staff counterparts did not always share the same perceptions. The researchers used this initial data to develop program curricula. After participating in the training, participants demonstrated an increase in their knowledge and leadership capacity. In addition to analysis of individual impacts, Ylimaki, Brunderman, Bennett, and Dugan also examined the relationship between stakeholder participation and school turnaround status. They used Spearman's Rho and found that principals and educators who participated in the professional development program focused on leaders in turnaround schools and their culturally responsive practices also saw an improvement in their school status.

A substantial focus of the study was on research methodology and findings and minimal information was provided on actual interventions implemented in the training. Ylimaki, Brunderman, Bennett, and Dugan introduced school principals and teachers to culturally responsive turnaround leadership content through direct instruction institutes spanning 10 days over the course of one year. They focused on turnaround process/stages, culturally responsive

practices, professional networking, community relationships, collaboration and professional learning communities among other things. Many of these briefly mentioned strategies were also similar approaches that other researchers in this systematic review applied.

Cross-Study Analysis

In the next section, I synthesized findings from each of the eight studies yielded from the systematic search to identify themes and create cross-case conclusions among the studies (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006; Noblit & Hare, 1988; Urrieta & Noblit, 2018). These themes can be instrumental in the development of programs which aim to train principals for culturally responsive leadership. By synthesizing the literature, I mapped out important considerations for program developers on the design, implementation, and assessment of such programs through themes and subthemes. The eight themes I identified included (a) reflection, (b) discourse, (c) the power of experiential learning, (d) equity auditing, (e) strong models for support, (f) historical understanding, (g) identity matters, and (h) assessing the CRL readiness outcomes and application.

Reflection

Perhaps the most powerful tool described in the literature I reviewed was the practice of reflection. All faculty-researchers in this body of literature reported the value of using reflection activities as a means for cultivating growth in their students (Brown, 2006; Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015; Keiser, 2010; Murakami Ramalho et al., 2009; Ward, 2018; Ylimaki et al., 2014), specifically in the area of cultural awareness. In Lightfoot (2003) and Jones' (2017) dissertations, they also reported reflection as a tool which could support development.

Gooden and O'Doherty (2015) doubled down on this notion of reflection as an asset; they ascertained that self-reflection was a means for participants to not only evaluate themselves in

the course but that it also had exponential gains after they graduated. They operated on the principle that if pre-service principals learn how to practice self-reflection, they will be more reflexive in their future leadership too. Leaders who are reflective about themselves may also have a better understanding of the identities of the students they serve (Jones, 2017).

Though Keiser intentionally included reflection as a tool for student-centered learning, developing curriculum on the tenant that principal candidates must have opportunities to reflect on personal beliefs, Keiser's quantitative study did not include findings from the reflections themselves. The degree to which reflection played a role in study results is still up for interpretation. Three research teams in this review not only used written reflection as an intervention for growth, but also as a tool for gathering data (Brown, 2006; Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015; Ward, 2018).

Some of the researchers settled on the importance of reflection through afterthought. Participants in Jones' study (2017) emphasized the need for ongoing reflection in their cultural responsiveness development after experiencing touch-and-go professional development opportunities on the subject. Participants reported the need to process the information they gathered in professional development in a thoughtful and ongoing manner. Jones also acknowledged challenges in doing this, as their participants indicated resistance because reflection tended to lead to defensiveness at times.

Participants in Lightfoot's study (2003) recognized the need for reflection following a structured internship experience. One participant said reflection opportunities in their program were happenstance and indicated a need for more intentional engagement. Another participant in the same study cited weekly journaling requirements following field experiences and class discussions in some courses.

Gooden and O’Doherty (2015) found that though their participants were prompted to reflect in their course by design, only about a quarter of them applied *self-reflection*, and interrogation of personal beliefs and the impact they may have on behaviors. Unlike Gooden and O’Doherty (2015), Brown (2006) asserted that this practice of self-reflection was innate in the design of the course activities, specifically in the reflective analysis journals. Critical self-reflection was part of their andragogical framework, in transformative learning. Brown found that critical reflection, which involved self-reflection, led to an awareness of self among participants. Brown also stated that this strong sense of self through critical self-reflection gave participants a foundation for rational discourse and potential for a new world-view.

Reflexivity. Though reflection and reflexivity can be used interchangeably when describing the value of thinking about the process of learning, the action of reflexivity was useful for participants who were engaging in personal development as it provided the opportunity for generating new thoughts as transformation took place. Brown (2006) was the only study which described intentionally introducing participants to weekly reflective analysis journals as a means of developing critical thinking and open-mindedness in real-time. The ongoing assignment allowed students to critically examine their personal assumptions, values, and beliefs.

Racial Reflection. Sociocultural consciousness, or what Freire (2018) called critical consciousness, is an imperative aspect of culturally responsive leadership and cultural proficiency. Equally as important is an understanding of one’s own sociocultural identity, the context in which they lead within, and the intersectionality of the two. Researchers used self-reflective activities to assist educational leaders in uncovering and exploring their identities as it relates to cultural background, skin color, and personal values.

Gooden and O'Doherty (2015) used auto-ethnography or more specifically, what they called racial autobiographies, as a tool towards developing culturally responsive educators. They used racial autobiographies as a vehicle to move towards racial awareness. They asserted that when leaders explore deep-rooted beliefs regarding race, examining the ways in which those beliefs impact their decisions, they can be more mindful and culturally responsive. Gooden and O'Doherty (2015) identified this method of reflection as an intentional and powerful learning experience.

Brown (2006) used cultural autobiographies to help participants develop a sense of self, with the foundational premise that people cannot be sensitive to others' identities unless they have a positive awareness of themselves. Jones (2017) underscored this notion of the importance of critical reflection, a practice of exploring one's own cultural identity as a means of becoming more acquainted with their students. Keiser (2010) indicated that this element of sociocultural consciousness through reflection was missing from their program.

Discourse

Dialogue and communication were strategies implemented in school leadership training. Researchers found that discourse provided an arena to flush out thoughts and challenge previous ways of knowing. Participants reported discomfort at times when subject-matter was particularly difficult or unfamiliar. Cohesiveness, trust, and familiarity in the room was also an important aspect of the extent to which discourse was productive (Lightfoot 2003; Murakami Ramalho et al.,2009; Ward, 2018).

Discourse led to new revelations and expanded participant understanding of diversity. It also had the potential for negative impacts if there was not diverse representation among participants in group scenarios and individuals felt pressured to speak on behalf of their racial

group or tokenized (Lightfoot, 2003). Attempts at discourse were also ineffective if participants were resistant to change and unwilling to engage in conversation about difficult topics or challenging personal biases (Jones, 2017). Cohort models and instructor intentionality supported productive outcomes from discourse (Murakami Ramalho et al., 2009; Ward, 2018).

The Power of Experiential Learning

Experiential learning was used as a vehicle for development in various forms (Brown, 2006; Jones, 2017; Keiser, 2010; Lightfoot, 2003; Murakami Ramalho et al., 2009; Ward, 2018; Ylimaki et al., 2014). Internships, case study analyses, and other opportunities for applying theory to practice were cited in the studies reviewed.

Participants in the studies conducted by Brown (2006), Jones (2017), and Ward (2018) were introduced to broad cultural perspectives and identities through educational plunges, simulations, and case studies. These activities reportedly offered an opportunity for in-service and future leaders to apply theoretical concepts and ideas they were learning into practice. Internships were also a method of acquiring experience in the field as a means of developing cultural responsiveness (Lightfoot, 2003; Murakami Ramalho et al., 2009).

Some programs required internships as one of the learning experiences in their program (Lightfoot, 2003, Murakami Ramalho et al., 2009). Placements included both observations and active participation. These field experiences occurred in communities that were familiar to participants, and at times in communities they were unacquainted with. Reflection, faculty guidance, and community mentorship were coupled with the internship experience in an effort to amplify experiential learning (Keiser, 2010; Lightfoot, 2003; Murakami Ramalho et al., 2009).

The success of experiential learning was often hinged on the intentional design of the learning opportunity and thoughtfulness of participant placement practices. Various researchers

asserted that engagement and internships in unfamiliar communities and schools, coupled with sociocultural reflection and/or discourse, had the potential for cultivating broader cultural awareness and competencies (Lightfoot, 2003; Murakami Ramalho et al., 2009; Ylimaki et al., 2014). Keiser (2010) found that this was not necessarily the case in their measurement of placement and student growth. Experiences were perceived to be most beneficial for building cultural competence when they were coupled with reflection (Brown, 2006; Jones, 2017; Lightfoot, 2003; Murakami Ramalho et al., 2009).

Equity Auditing

Beyond experiential learning, one of the more advanced skills taught in some of the included studies was the practice of equity auditing. Lightfoot (2003) described this practice as an assessment that program participants engaged in to examine K-12 student data and curricular materials. The audit measured the extent to which equity was demonstrated in materials, policy, and practice in K-12 environments. Participating in this sort of drill provided educational leaders the opportunity for growing as social justice leaders.

Brown (2006) used policy praxis and the creation of activist action plans to put the audit into motion. Ward (2018) emphasized the importance of real-life problem-solving experiences while Gooden and O'Doherty (2015) suggested that although critical examination could lead to personal transformation, the commitment to action did not ensure actual change. Related to this assertion was Lightfoot's takeaway from his study of an HBCU (2003), that if prospective educational leaders did not intentionally examine power, privilege, and equity as they grew in their leader identities, they would not strengthen the skills needed to act as culturally responsive leaders, rather they would conform to existing systems as they are.

Strong Models for Support

Many approaches to preparing principal candidates and in-service principals for cultural responsiveness included scaffolding strategies to support student growth and development. Whether it was course design elements or fertile relationships, the value of supporting educational leaders as they grow was a recurring theme among the literature.

Cohort Models. In many of the studies, cohort models were implemented in the approach to training principal candidates (Ward, 2018). The ongoing relational design had the potential to cultivate a sense of trust, comfort, and familiarity in groups (Murakami Ramalho et al., 2009; Ward, 2018). The cohort model could also be problematic when it lacked diversity or intentionality (Lightfoot, 2003). Nonetheless, an indirect benefit of the cohort models is the ability for researchers to measure change or growth over time and among groups.

Networks in the District. Superintendent support was noted as an influential aspect of training efforts. Researcher relationships with superintendents impacted whether or not they were included in professional development partnerships. They held the premise that if superintendents were supportive of the program and involved in part of the design or implementation, student learning outcomes would be greater. Supportive superintendents would also lead to program sustainability and development (Murakami Ramalho et al., 2009; Ylimaki et al., 2014). Furthermore, it was asserted that when district leadership was cooperative, internships could be more fruitful because interns and leadership shared similar agendas (Lightfoot, 2003).

Another theme that emerged from district networks was the idea of placement for program graduates. Study participants reported hiring and creating teams of fellow cohort graduates in an effort to make lasting change. They suggested that hurdles which naturally exist in the climate of education policy could be side-stepped or overcome with like-mindedness.

Graduates of principal preparation programs reported collaborating with and hiring other graduates from the same program because they knew they had similar philosophies on social justice leadership (Lightfoot, 2003).

Mentorship. Mentoring came up in several of the studies. Either through peer mentoring, faculty mentoring, or internship placement mentoring, participants' learning experiences were entwined with the support that comes from mentorship (Lightfoot, 2003; Murakami Ramalho et al., 2009; Ylimaki et al., 2014).

Intentional peer mentorship occurred in classes particularly where grouping was diverse. Whether in-person or online, participants reported benefiting from cross-cultural interactions and the dissonance that can come from critical dialogue (Brown, 2006; Lightfoot, 2003; Murakami Ramalho et al., 2009). Some instructors designed opportunities to enhance this relationship through intentional grouping methods, while others left it to chance and peer mentorship was happenstance. Ward (2018) emphasized the benefits of collaborative learning in the design and delivery of their virtual course.

Faculty were informal mentors to students in their programs. Some used self-disclosure as a means for facilitating growth (Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015) while others engaged in mentoring partnerships with students outside the classroom (Lightfoot, 2003).

A final example of mentorship that recurred in the literature was mentoring partnerships which took place through principal candidate internships. Internships required in principal preparation programs often came with a mentoring element, either through the partnering school principal, an instructor, or both (Lightfoot, 2003, Murakami Ramalho et al., 2009). Participants were paired with an in-service principal in their community, sometimes from schools

representing student demographics differing from their own, and other times in schools that were familiar to them.

Outcomes varied in terms of mentor/mentee similarities. Some participants found success in placements where their mentor had similar philosophical outlooks. Their mentor trusted their abilities, provided opportunities to develop their efficacy in leadership, and allowed for autonomy while inspiring change. Conversely, mentoring matches where the mentee was unfamiliar with the community or mentor mentality had the potential to be fruitful as well because there was ample opportunity for push-back and examination of different ways of knowing (Keiser, 2010; Lightfoot, 2003; Murakami Ramalho et al., 2009).

Historical Understanding

An anchor for the development of culturally responsive leaders is the strong understanding of historical contexts related to education, culture, and inequity. Ward (2018) called this *content knowledge*. Murakami Ramalho et al. (2009) examined the culturally deficient model while Ylimaki et. al (2014) challenged deficit thinking related to historical generalizations and biases. In Lightfoot's case studies, participants described risk of harm if principal candidates entered into field experiences without proper historical knowledge and training. Additionally, participants in the same study advocated for principal candidates in their program to obtain historical knowledge as a foundation for enhancing their ability to impact student achievement (Lightfoot, 2003).

Identity Matters

Identity, in one form or another, came up in all of the studies I included in this review. Descriptions of participating universities and the communities in which professional development took place in, individual participant identity as well as the students they could

potentially serve, and researcher and instructor identities were all discussed at varying lengths. Most studies had identity elements threaded throughout, signaling to me at every juncture that this was of noteworthy importance. From intentional student recruitment practices to careful consideration of K-12 student identities; culture, ethnicity, and race were crucial conditions made for the researchers and other educational stakeholders.

Participant Identity. Participant identity was a recurring theme among the studies I included. In nearly all of the studies, the researchers described the participants in terms of racial, ethnic, and gender identity. In addition to this, the way in which students in principal preparation programs were recruited was a careful and conscious process. A disposition for openness to growth and cultural awareness was among the factors that educators in principal preparation programs looked for. Furthermore, researchers and participants talked about the identities of participants and the impact it had on growth opportunities and the learning environment (Gooden & O’Doherty, 2015; Lightfoot, 2003). Program developers sought out diverse representation in their student cohorts in an effort to diversify both their own program settings and also contribute to a diverse leader pipeline (Lightfoot, 2003).

Instructor and Researcher Identity. Several of the studies described the identities of the instructors, which were more often than not the researchers as well. This supported the notion that identity was an important factor not only for the delivery of content and facilitating student growth, but also in the analysis of data itself (Brown, 2006; Lightfoot, 2003).

Student Identity. K-12 student demographics are vastly diverse and growing increasingly so. The richness in which students in US classrooms identify themselves was a cornerstone of many of the studies included in this review. Researchers saw an importance for training school leaders to be prepared to lead in such a broadly representative environment as it

pertains to race, ethnicity, culture, language, socio-economic status, ability, gender identity, sexual orientation and other categories of student identities.

When Race and Culture are not Explicitly Discussed. Though I sought out literature explicitly exploring themes of cultural responsiveness, I also found within those examples situations where those elements were left out in some aspects of training principal candidates. Not every article explicitly stated the terms culturally responsive leadership, yet they were selected in the search engines because of their key words and similar themes.

Lightfoot (2003) and Keiser (2010) both reflected on training strategies and acknowledged the importance of actively confronting racialized inequity. Lightfoot (2003) cautioned against leaving out explicit discussion and acknowledgement of racial disparities in fear of sidestepping their existence. One program in Lightfoot's study focused on training principal candidates for managerial elements of leadership with less intention on inequity related to student identity. A participant implied that race and diversity are constant issues in the urban district they partnered with. They asserted that through sharpening their general leadership skills principal candidates were also prepared as agents for social justice simply due to the urban nature of their placement. Keiser (2010) found that experiences that did not intentionally put participants in cross-cultural crosshairs could still yield positive results in other ways.

Assessing the CRL Readiness Outcomes and Application

The final theme I wanted to end this review exploring is the notion of assessment. If we as educators want to impact change, inspire growth, achieve student outcomes, if we want to prepare principal candidates and in-service principals to be culturally responsive leaders, we must have a method to measure it. In this review, I found that many researchers and participants reported an inability to measure whether or not their interventions were successful. Portfolios,

summative assessments, and alumni check-ins were applied in an effort to gauge change and culturally responsive proclivity, but there was no consensus among studies in regards to measuring CRL readiness. Furthermore, studies did not demonstrate a means for measuring whether a principal candidate had the necessary training and desired outcomes for real-life culturally responsive leadership application in practice. Several researchers and study participants echoed this dilemma (Brown, 2006; Gooden & O’Doherty, 2015; Jones, 2017; Keiser, 2010; Lightfoot, 2003; Ward, 2018).

Risk of Bias Across Studies

Allegiance effects were mitigated through the systematic approach of this literature review. By opening the search to all relevant literature, regardless of outcome, I limited the bias which could come from the study of studies I advocate for or particular strategies of preparing culturally responsive leaders that I may value or be privy to (Littell, 2008). Additionally, confirmation bias across studies was addressed by not just including studies that were published, but also those which were not in the search. Dissertations, papers presented at conferences, and books were included amongst the literature examined in the review process to avoid the “file drawer problem” and “grey literature” (Begg, 1994; Hopewell et. al, 2006; Littell, 2008). Furthermore, snowball sampling techniques were applied by combing through references of relevant literature, as well as manually searching the contents of relevant journals, in attempt to locate all potentially relevant studies which online searches may have missed (Hopewell et. al, 2007; Littell, 2008).

Discussion

In these eight studies, researchers wrote about strategies for training school leaders who are considerate of the cultural needs and identities of students and their community. Several

themes were identified through analyzing the content of eight studies, yielding important information about the practices and challenges of preparing principals to be agents of social justice and stewards of cultural responsiveness.

Reflection, experiential learning, and discourse were strategies implemented in training programs to strengthen the skills of culturally responsive leaders. Mentoring, identity awareness, intentional program planning, district partnerships and buy-in, and cohort models were scaffolds often used in program designs and interventions.

Researchers explored the value of the explicit discussion of race and culture in developing culturally responsive leaders. They also emphasized the importance of assessment and the measurement of student achievement leading to effective application of such skills.

Limitations

A glaring limitation of this study is the number of studies which have been conducted on the training practices for future principals and in-service principals to be culturally responsive leaders. With only eight qualifying studies, data was limited. I plan to address this limitation and add to the literature in this dissertation through a multiple case study approach of principal preparation programs and their training practices for future culturally responsive school leaders. By broadening the search to include other styles of leadership which liberate students holding historically marginalized identities, future researchers may also discover additional relevant materials and possibly combine findings to inform the development of one comprehensive socially just and culturally responsive leadership approach; *inclusive and liberating school leadership*. Future researchers can begin a follow-up systematic review combining the terms *social justice leadership, culturally responsive leadership, culturally relevant leadership,*

culturally proficient leadership, culturally sustaining leadership, transformative leadership, multicultural leadership, and leadership for diversity.

Conclusion

There is a call to develop a school leader pipeline that addresses existing inequities in education, a pipeline of principals who are prepared for the nuance and needs of the culturally diverse students and communities they serve. Yet, a gap exists between a demand for culturally responsive leaders and wide-spread, empirically-sound, research-based approaches to doing so (Diem & Carpenter, 2012). The body of literature policy makers and program developers look to for insight into tactics related to training school leaders to be culturally responsive in schools is meager. The systematic search of studies related to such yielded eight sources for reference. State policy makers and scholars from organizations dedicated to the advancement of educational leadership are looking for ways to enhance the landscape of university-based principal preparation programs (Mendels, 2016; Riley & Meredith, 2017) and an integral aspect of enhancement must include training as it pertains to the critical consideration of diverse identities and needs of the students in U.S. classrooms.

The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) published the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 to influence the every-day responsibilities and approaches of principals. The professional standards were designed to provide direction and infrastructure for the preparation of practitioners. The 2015 NPEA standards, formally known as ISLLC standards last published in 2008 were revised to bring a more student-centered approach to leadership. Standard 3 (NPEA, 2015) calls for equity and practices of cultural responsiveness, “Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student’s academic success and well-being” (p.11). These

standards inform government policies and program outcomes in determining who gets to lead U.S. schools. The standards however cannot be used as stand-alone tool to determine program protocol because they don't include empirically-supported strategies in training the culturally responsiveness they identified as integral to the profession.

In this review, I uncovered recurring themes of training methodology and considerations for efficacy of CRL training for principals in an effort to add to the growing body of literature on the subject. These findings can be drawn from when policy makers consider the requirements for principal certification and licensure. They can also provide suggestions for program developers as a catalogue of the strategies effective program leaders employ, and the challenges they encounter.

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CHAPTER III

PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAMS: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY EXPLORING POLICY AND PRACTICES IN DEVELOPING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEADERS

Introduction

The United States is rich in diversity. Educational approaches should echo the same broad beauty. The racial and ethnic demographics of students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools in the United States are becoming increasingly diverse and less white (NCES, 2019). The recent landscape shift and continued opportunity gaps for students with marginalized racial and cultural identities in U.S. schools have strengthened the call for an enhanced field of educational leadership through the advancement of policies guiding professional preparation and career development for school leaders who are prepared to address educational inequities and lead schools that liberate and reflect a culturally dynamic society. The call is clear for culturally responsive school leaders (Barakat et al., 2021; Bogotch, 2011; Bustamante et al, 2009).

U.S. students represent a broad and diverse range of identities related to who they are as individuals and how they identify culturally (NCES, 2019). Diversity in the United States has been steadily increasing and is projected to continue to do so (de Brey et al., 2019). Despite the wealth of cultural capital students enter classrooms with, an opportunity gap still persists between the achievement of Black, Indigenous, and students of color and their white peers (NAEP, 2019). A significant difference between scores for emergent multilingual students and their non-emergent multilingual peers also persists (NAEP, 2019). Gloria Ladson-Billings called this difference *educational debt* (2006), the scratch line from which students whose identities have been historically marginalized enter schools. *Educational debt*, also known as the *opportunity gap*,

identifies the significance of preexisting inequities within the systems students enter into (Milner 2010, 2012). These terms are important in that they highlight that the difference in achievement is not due to the output of lower scoring students, rather, educational disparities are caused by social injustices, inopportunity, and structures that deny opportunities to students of color, emergent multilingual students, and those who are socioeconomically challenged.

As schools continue to diversify, deeper is the responsibility for educators to bridge the opportunity gap, meeting students in culturally relevant ways. Principals are campus leaders whose roles and responsibilities directly relate to gaps in opportunities. A significant relationship exists between a principal and student learning (Grissom et al., 2015; Grissom et al., 2017; Grissom et al., 2019; Leithwood et al., 2004; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Robinson et al., 2008; Theoharris, 2007; Waters et al., 2003). Principal behavior echoes through school hallways, perspectives they share shape school culture. Their decisions leave a long-lasting impact on students and their educational experiences, particularly related to school policy, instructional leadership, school climate, teacher recruitment, teacher retention, and teacher collaboration (Rowland, 2017).

While schools in the United States are made up of rich student populations with dynamic identities, many principals are not adequately prepared to lead in such pluralistic environments. Many school leaders lack the skills and training needed to respond appropriately to diversity issues happening within their schools (Barakat et al., 2021; Tuhra, 2010; Young et al., 2010). Though diversity in U.S. classrooms is growing, not all schools represent these demographics. And yet, a call for culturally responsive leadership still exists. Culturally responsive practices benefit all students in United States classrooms. Leadership for social justice is successful in

homogeneous, white, affluent communities and in schools where student identities vary and span racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, linguistic cultural backgrounds (Theoharis, 2007).

Principals play an integral role in the success of their school and their constituents (Anderson & Reynolds, 2015; Barakat et al., 2021; Branch et al., 2013, Khalifa et al., 2016). Because of this, principals in U.S. schools must lead in a way where each unique student finds themselves seen and represented culturally and set up for social, emotional, and academic success. If we are to repair the educational debt in this country and create equitable opportunities for future student achievement, we must cater to who students are and create opportunities for all to flourish. The ability of school leaders to foster effective, equitable, and socially responsible approaches for all students is contingent on the efficacy of educational leadership programs (Barakat et al., 2021; Brown, 2004; Bustamante et al., 2009).

Preparing School Leaders for Culturally Responsive Leadership

Recognizing the relationship between principals and students, school leadership has become a key focus for education policy makers (Grissom et al., 2019; Knight Abowitz, 2019; Mendels, 2016). Roughly 90% of school leaders in the United States are trained for certification through traditional principal preparation programs (Bogotch, 2011; Grissom et al., 2019). State policies, national standards, and university policies and practices guide the development of school leaders who are competent to lead in diverse school systems, and yet policymakers and researchers have been concerned about the range of quality and preparation school leaders receive (Backor & Gordon, 2015; Grissom et al., 2019; Hess & Kelly, 2007; Levine, 2005). There has been an effort to assess and enhance the field of educational leadership through the advancement of policies guiding professional preparation and career development for school leaders (Bogotch, 2011; Cheney & Davis, 2011; Grissom et al., 2019).

An extensive systematic review revealed that literature offering insight into policies and programmatic practices towards preparing culturally responsive leaders in the United States is limited (Barakat et al., 2021; Brown, 2006; Gooden & O’Doherty, 2015; Jones, 2017; Keiser, 2010; Lightfoot, 2003; Murakami Ramalho et al., 2009; Ward, 2018; Ylimaki et al., 2014). Current literature highlights the use of reflection, discourse, and experiential learning for cultivating culturally responsive leader candidates. Principal preparation program developers are guided by policies that support experiential learning opportunities and district connections. They also consider the relationships between their students’ identities and their experiences in the program.

Reflection

Perhaps the most powerful tool used for preparing culturally responsive school leaders is reflection. Reflection is a means for cultivating student growth and is particularly advantageous for heightening cultural awareness. It can be implemented in principal preparation programs to draw meaning from experiential learning opportunities such as internships and field experiences (Lightfoot, 2003). Oftentimes, reflection is not only beneficial for student growth, but is also used as a means for faculty to gather data on principal candidates (Brown, 2006; Gooden & O’Doherty, 2015; Ward, 2018). Reflective pieces can be a source for analysis to determine whether a principal candidate has achieved desired cultural competency and awareness for culturally responsive leadership.

Though reflection can be implemented to develop cultural competency, self-awareness and an understanding of others, which ultimately can lead to a new world-view comes from critical self-reflection and interrogation of personal beliefs (Brown 2006; Gooden and O’Doherty, 2015). Autobiographies are one way to foster critical reflection among principal

candidates; the practice of exploring one's own cultural identity as a means of becoming more sensitive to students' identities (Brown, 20016; Jones, 2017; Keiser, 2010).

Students who practice reflection in their training may also benefit from exponential results after they complete the course. Gooden and O'Doherty (2015) asserted that pre-service principals who learned how to practice self-reflection during their training would be more apt for reflexive practices as school leaders in the future as well. Leaders who are reflective about themselves may also have a better understanding of the identities of their school and community constituents as well (Jones, 2017).

Discourse

University faculty often rely on dialogue and class discussions when training leaders. Researchers found that discourse provided an arena to flush out thoughts and challenge previous ways of knowing. Discourse may be ineffective if participants are resistant to change or unwilling to engage in conversation about difficult topics or challenging personal biases (Jones, 2017). Cohort models and instructor intentionality can be implemented to support productive discourse (Murakami Ramalho et al.,2009; Ward, 2018).

Discourse can be harmful if diverse representation is limited in group scenarios. Historically marginalized students may feel tokenized or pressured to speak on behalf of their racial group (Lightfoot, 2003). In the case where groups are homogenous, learning can be riddled with bias and assumptions which can go unchallenged. Indeed, cohesiveness, trust, and diversity in the room can influence the extent to which discourse is productive (Lightfoot 2003; Murakami Ramalho et al.,2009; Ward, 2018).

Experiential Learning

Educational plunges, simulations, and case studies are modes for applying theory to practice when developing culturally responsive future school leaders (Brown, 2006; Jones, 2017; Keiser, 2010; Lightfoot, 2003; Murakami Ramalho et al., 2009; Ward, 2018; Ylimaki et al., 2014). Engagement and internships in unfamiliar communities and schools, coupled with sociocultural reflection and/or discourse can cultivate broader cultural awareness and competencies (Barakat et al., 2021; Brown, 2006; Jones, 2017; Lightfoot, 2003; Murakami Ramalho et al., 2009; Ylimaki et al., 2014).

Cohorts

The way students are grouped in their coursework can impact their experience and outcomes. Cohort models where students are grouped together as they enter and complete a program are a common format for training principal candidates (Ward, 2018). The ongoing relational design can potentially cultivate a sense of trust, comfort, and familiarity in groups (Murakami Ramalho et al., 2009; Ward, 2018). The cohort model can also be challenging when limited by lack of diversity or intentionality (Lightfoot, 2003).

District Networks

Superintendent support and district partnership is an influential aspect of training culturally responsive principal candidates. Relationships with district leaders can impact student learning outcomes. Cooperative relationships with district leaders can also lead to more rewarding internship opportunities because district leaders and principal candidates may share similar agendas (Lightfoot, 2003). Hurdles which naturally exist in the climate of education policy could be side-stepped or overcome through like-mindedness. Graduates of principal

preparation programs collaborate with and hire other graduates from the same program because of perceived shared philosophies on social justice leadership (Lightfoot, 2003).

District partnerships can also lead to program sustainability and development. Partnerships frequently lead to cohort development and support university recruiting efforts (Murakami Ramalho et al., 2009; Ylimaki et al., 2014).

Identity

Little was discussed in the literature regarding the racial and ethnic identities of faculty in principal preparation programs dedicated to cultivating culturally responsive leaders (Brown, 2006; Lightfoot, 2003) though it undoubtedly plays a role in content delivery and facilitating student growth. Despite this missing data and exploration, identity was an essential element of principal preparation programs.

Principal preparation programs which prepare prospective school leaders to be culturally responsive integrate identity exploration in their approach to leadership development. K-12 student demographics are vastly diverse and growing increasingly so. The richness in which students in U.S. classrooms identify themselves is not proportionately mirrored among their school leaders and teachers (NCES, 2019). Indeed, this has led to the importance for training school leaders who are prepared to lead responsively as it pertains to race, ethnicity, culture, language, socio-economic status, ability, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other categories of student identity.

Program recruitment efforts are oftentimes carefully and consciously hinged on racial, ethnic, and gender identity. Additionally, a disposition for openness to growth and cultural awareness is sought by professors who recruit candidates for principal preparation programs. Principal candidate identity and propensity for critical engagement impacts growth opportunities

and the learning environment for students in principal preparation programs (Gooden & O’Doherty, 2015; Lightfoot, 2003). Furthermore, a diverse student group leads to a diverse school leader pipeline (Lightfoot, 2003).

While the student population continues to grow increasingly diverse, the teaching force and school leadership continues to be predominantly white (NCES, 2019). White teachers are mostly products of predominantly white schools (Nieto, 1996; NCES, 2019) This has contributed to a teacher population and subsequent school leader pipeline that is not only disproportionately white, but also limited in their exposure to diversity as well. Under the belief that *we can’t teach what we don’t know* (Howard, 2016), universities must establish programs intentional about the recruitment and training of diverse educators as future school leaders, establishing intentional opportunities for all principal candidates to examine whiteness while also nurturing prospective school leaders who are able to challenge Eurocentric and monocultural ideals in pursuit of leadership practices that are culturally competent and committed to social equity.

Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative collective case study was to contribute to the existing body of literature to gain a better understanding of the ways in which exemplary university programs rely on policies and implement practices to develop culturally responsive prospective school leaders.

Culturally Responsive Leadership

Researchers have examined practices implemented to prepare principal candidates for the needs of culturally diverse school environments (Brown, 2006; Gooden & O’Doherty, 2015; Jones, 2017; Keiser, 2010; Lightfoot, 2003; Murakami Ramalho et al., 2009; Ward, 2018; Ylimaki et al., 2014). The practice of school leadership which considers stakeholders’ cultural identity for informing educational practices and policy is referred to in varying terms.

Culturally responsive leadership (CRL) (Taliaferro, 2011), culturally sustaining leadership (Paris, 2012), social justice leadership (SJL) (Theoharis, 2007), culturally relevant leadership, and culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) (Khalifa et al., 2016) have been used to describe inclusive schooling practices that addresses eliminating marginalization in schools through leadership dedicated to student culture and identity.

Taliaferro (2011) integrated Gay's (2010) principles for culturally responsive teaching to construct a framework for culturally responsive leadership. CRL includes seven core elements:

- (a) Leaders lead with a sense of self, (b) leadership is validating, (c) leadership is comprehensive, (d) leadership is multidimensional, (e) leadership is empowering, (f) leadership is transformative, and (g) leadership is emancipatory.

Similar to Taliaferro's CRL definition is Khalifa, Gooden, and Davis' CRSL framework (2016, pp.1280-1282) which includes four pillars; (a) "Critically self-reflects on leadership behaviors", (b) "promotes culturally responsive/inclusive school environment", (c) "develops culturally responsive teachers", and (d) "engages students, parents, and indigenous contexts". Culturally responsive leadership encompasses practices that "understand, respond, incorporate, accommodate, and ultimately celebrate the entirety of the children they serve- including their languages and literacies, spiritual universes, cultures, racial proclivities, behaviors, knowledges, critical thought, and appearances" (Khalifa et al., 2016, p.1278).

Theoharis described SJL as a practice of leadership emphatic about and centered on the experiences for marginalized students, "built on respect, care, recognition, and empathy" (2007, p.223). According to Theoharis, (2007), principals who are social justice leaders

make issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions in the United States central to their advocacy,

leadership, practice, and vision. This definition centers on addressing and eliminating marginalization in schools. Thus, inclusive schooling practices for students with disabilities, English language learners (ELLs), and other students traditionally segregated in schools are also necessitated by this definition. (p. 224)

Many commonalities exist among these terms and their collective definitions have contributed to the framework of culturally responsive leadership (CRL) which guided this study. Under this construction, CRL practices critical sense of self and leadership practices and examines student identity and inequity, tending to student culture, familial and indigenous contexts, and teacher empowerment, ultimately leading towards liberation. With this in mind, principal preparation programs are called to develop policies and practices which cultivate such propensities in their principal candidates.

Research Questions

Educational leaders for culturally responsive practices foster academic success, cultural competency, and sociopolitical critique (Ladson-Billings, 1995). I sought to understand the perceptions of principal preparation program chairs and students in their respective programs in regard to the strategies and challenges that programs face when cultivating culturally responsive leaders. I aimed to identify how participants defined and measured culturally responsive leadership, the andrological and programmatic approaches implemented towards developing cultural responsiveness in students in principal preparation programs, and participant perceptions of program efficacy in regard developing culturally responsive school leaders. I also sought to delineate the relationship between state policy, professional organization standards, and program requirements in regard to programmatic approaches and design for the development of culturally responsive leaders.

1. How do UCEA principal preparation program chairs, students, and alumni define culturally responsive leadership (CRL)?
2. What value do UCEA principal preparation program chairs and students place on culturally responsive leadership for effective school leadership?
3. How do UCEA principal preparation program chairs determine what their students need to know in order to graduate as prepared culturally responsive leaders?
4. How is Culturally Responsive Leadership training conducted in UCEA principal preparation programs?
5. How do UCEA principal preparation programs evaluate whether their students are prepared culturally responsive leaders?
6. What are the perceptions of UCEA program chairs, students, and alumni of the challenges principal preparation programs face in training culturally responsive leaders?

Theoretical Framework

I used the tripartite theoretical framework of Critical Social Theory, Adult Learning Theory, and Transformative Learning Theory (Brown, 2004) to guide my study. This study is unique as it explores the preparation of prospective K-12 educators for culturally responsive leadership within the context of higher education. Because of this, it was important to integrate a framework that considered the adult learner's experience as a student as it also related to their role as future K-12 school leaders through experiential learning and critical reflection, developing leaders who are ultimately prepared to identify and "take action against the oppressive elements of reality (Freire, 1994, p.17). Our acknowledgement of racism, classism, and sexism in society comes with a responsibility to interrogate political implications in the way we teach, standards guiding outcomes, and the structures within the system of education (hooks,

1994). The process of transformation allows adults to move from one previous held belief, towards the integration of new perspectives, ultimately applying this lens to future work.

Program developers who employ a critical compass consider the ways in which power and privilege show up in our work, dismantling systems of inequity while “weaving” (Brown, 2004) threads of social justice “into the fabric of educational leadership curriculum, pedagogy, programs, and policies” (Brown, 2004, p.78).

Critical Social Theory

The origins of critical social theory trace back to the 1920s and 1930s from the traditions at the Frankfurt School in Germany (Bates, 2013), since then, scholars have expanded and added to the paradigm. Critical theorists analyze ‘knowledge’ through critique, questioning what we know as hypotheses (Friere, 1972; Habermas, 1990). Discourse and communication are integral components of the theory, centered on social justice. Critical theorists engage in activism (Brown, 2004), where the intention is to “liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them” (Horkeimer, 1982, p.244).

In critical theory, it is asserted that the context in which students learn matters. Critical pedagogies consider the contexts from which students exist, societal systems and influences, and facilitates collective learning through inquiry. Critical social theory guided this study through the belief that education is the pathway to social justice, and through this, educational systems themselves must be socially just.

Adult Learning Theory

Adult learning theory is a foundational navigation tool for many principal preparation programs in the United States (Young, 2011). Adult learners examine and analyze information to construct new understandings. Theoretical tenets of adult learning theory call for reflection,

engagement, and discussions to form connections and build on previous ways of knowing (Baumgartner, 2003; Knowles et al., 2015). Adult learning theory also highlights the importance of experiential learning. Adults learn through important experiences. When they have the opportunity to reflect and appraise the experience, they can draw meaning and value from it (Lindeman, 1926).

Critical theory can inform aspects of adult learning theory. Under the premise that no single adult or individual has the absolute *truth*, reflection, and critique are desirable aspects of the learning process to examine the nature of knowledge while moving toward new understanding and emancipation (Alford, 2013).

Transformative Learning Theory

Transformative learning underscores the process of acquiring new perspectives (Alfred et al., 2013). A branch of adult learning theory, transformative learning relates to adult experiences of moving from previous held beliefs towards new knowledge. The catalyst for transformation and ten possible phases is described by Mezirow (1975) as ; (a) a disorienting dilemma, (b) a look at self, (c) a critical assessment of assumptions, (d) awareness that the dilemma is related to the transformation, (e) exploration of new possibilities, (f) planning, (g) preparing with new knowledge and skills, (h) testing out new roles provisionally, (i) building self-efficacy, and (j) integrating back into life through the direction of a new perspective. This ten-phase process includes the four main elements of experience, critical reflection, discourse, and action (Merriam et al., 2007).

Methods

Through a multiple case study (Herriott & Firestone, 1983; Stake, 2013), I sought to uncover the policies, practices, and makeups of principal preparation programs in their pursuit of

training successful K-12 culturally responsive leaders. I conducted interviews with program chairs and former and current students of principal preparation programs. I also used artifacts, such as program websites and marketing tools, course syllabi, and programs' "at-a-glance" to capture an in-depth picture of the context stakeholders exist within, as well as the strategies principal preparation programs implement to train and assess students (Stake, 2008).

There is not a single answer as to how an educational leadership program ought to prepare principal candidates to lead for equity in a diverse society (Lincoln & Guba, 2013), rather the voices of key stakeholders in this study can provide insight into how culturally responsive leadership is identified, the value principal preparation programs place on it, how it is cultivated, and the ways in which programs assesses achievement. They can also provide insight into the relationships between our individual identities and they way we experience and interpret programmatic features.

Context of the Study

I studied principal preparation programs across the United States in universities that are University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) members. UCEA is a consortium of 108 major public and private doctoral granting research institutions committed to advancing the practice of educational leadership. I collected data during winter of 2020-2021 while a global pandemic impacted much of the educational landscape. The nature of the pandemic led many educational programs across the globe to adjust their methods to teaching and learning. Higher education was no different; some courses which had been held in-person shifted to online learning modes, enrollment was possibly impacted as well. This context should be considered in terms of possible fluctuation of programmatic approaches.

Population and Sample

I applied a purposive sampling technique to determine the sample for this study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Prior to sampling the population, I identified a set of criteria to determine participant eligibility (Hays & Singh, 2012). Criteria included chairs of principal preparation programs of UCEA member schools located in the United States. There are 108 UCEA member universities, of the 108, one is outside the United States. Therefore, the sample drew from 107 UCEA universities in the United States.

Participants

Participant selection incorporated three steps. First, a questionnaire and introduction of the study was sent to the program chair of each of the 107 UCEA member institutions in the United States. Program chairs who received the email and were interested in participating in the study completed the questionnaire. These programs are represented in Table 1.

Table 1
University Demographic Data of Questionnaire Participants

School Number	Region	Size	State Leverage	Carnegie Classification
1	Southeast	Large	5/5	Very High Research
2	Southeast	Large	4/5	Very High Research
3	Southeast	Large	4/5	High Research
4	Southeast	Medium	0/5	Doctoral/Professional
5	Southeast	Large	1/5	Very High Research
6	West	Large	3/5	Doctoral/Professional
7	Midwest	Large	2/5	Very High Research
8	Northeast	Large	2/5	Very High Research
9	Midwest	Large	1/5	High Research
10	Southeast	Large	0/5	Very High Research
11	Southeast	Large	2/5	High Research
12	Northeast	Large	1/5	Very High Research
13	West	Large	3/5	High Research
14	Midwest	Large	4/5	Very High Research
15	Southeast	Large	4/5	Very High Research
16	Southeast	Large	4/5	Very High Research
17	West	Large	2/5	Very High Research
18	Midwest	Large	2/5	Very High Research
19	Northeast	Medium	4/5	High Research

From the 19 who completed the questionnaire, I conducted a preliminary evaluation of potential participants using their responses, program websites, and briefly reviewing literature written about the program and/or by the program faculty as it related to CRL. Ultimately, I identified five programs who were representative of (a) diverse regional locations, (b) broad Carnegie Institute classification rating for university size and research orientation, and (c) strong state policy leverage (Anderson & Reynolds, 2015), and also self-reported “moderately effective” or above to question 14 and/or demonstrated attention to CRL through their website and/or faculty research interests. The university demographics and aliases of the five programs in the collective case study are represented in Table 2.

Table 2

University Demographic Data for Collective Case Study

University Pseudonym	Region	Size	State Leverage	Carnegie Classification
Sunbelt University (SU)	Southeast	Large	4/5	Very High Research
University of the Southeast (USE)	Southeast	Large	4/5	Very High Research
Western University (WU)	West	Large	2/5	Very High Research
Midwestern University (MidU)	Midwest	Large	2/5	Very High Research
University of the Northeast (UNE)	Northeast	Medium	4/5	High Research

Finally, I requested participating program chairs send out a call for participants to their current principal candidates and graduates of the program to include student voice as a part of the

case study in an effort to enable them to indirectly take-action on their circumstances (Lincoln & Guba, 1986) and add to the depth of data. Prospective and current school leaders who offer insight to principal preparation programs for CRL can indirectly impact the training of their colleagues and peers with whom they work in the future. Table 3 represents the interview participants for this study. Not every program volunteered a current or former student, in these cases, triangulation and validation of findings was supported from supplemental artifacts and member-checks.

Table 3

Participant Demographics

Participant	Institution	Race/Ethnicity	Gender
Program Chair 1	SU	White	Woman
Student 1	SU	White	Woman
Student 2	SU	Black	Woman
Program Chair 2	SEU	White	Woman
Student 3	SEU	White	Woman
Student 4	SEU	White	Man
Program Chair 3	Western	White	Woman
Student 5	Western	Camobodian-American/Asian-American	Man
Program Chair 4	MidU	White	Woman
Program Chair 5	UNE	Black	Man
Student 6	UNE	White	Woman

Data Collection

Data collection consisted of questionnaires, interviews, and artifacts collected from December 2020 to March 2021. In December 2020, I created a spreadsheet listing all UCEA member universities in the United States and sorted them by state while using the policymaker’s guide *Research-Based Policy for Principal Preparation Program Approval and Licensure*

(Anderson & Reynolds, 2015) to indicate the leverage level for each state's policies. From there, I used university websites to identify the program chair of each principal preparation program at each institution. In December 2020, I sent the recruitment questionnaire to chairs via email, and introduced myself and the purpose of my study. Due to the open-ended nature of the questionnaire I offered four weeks to complete it. I sent a follow-up email to program chairs who I had not heard from after two weeks, then a third reminder email three weeks after initial contact, and finally closed the list of potential participants after a month from the initial email sent out.

From the list of 19 participants who completed the questionnaire, I selected five to include in the multiple case study based on state policy leverage (Anderson & Reynolds, 2015), self-identified value placed on preparing culturally responsive leaders and efficacy in doing so, commitment to CRL demonstrated through their questionnaire responses, website marketing, and/or faculty scholarship, pre-determined criteria based on regional representation (West, Southwest, Midwest, Northeast, and Southeast), school size, and type of university in terms of urban, suburban, or rural landscape.

The open-ended questionnaires used to solicit participants and guide interviews were implemented as primary sources of data in each case study. Additionally, I incorporated a variety of supporting artifacts. Prior to each interview, I used program websites as an initial source of data. I combed through each page manually to gather more evidence needed to study each program in depth. I familiarized myself with university and programmatic descriptors such as school size, location, student population demographics, program faculty, and program model. Additionally, I inventoried required courses and course descriptions. These data were included to develop a rich description of each case.

Instrumentation

Among several methods, much of the data in this study were sourced through questionnaire and semi-structured interview. I developed a questionnaire consisting of seven open-ended and two 5-point Likert scale questions. The use of a questionnaire allowed me to open participation to every UCEA member university and also provided the opportunity for volunteering participants to reflect on their answers prior to their submission. Questions included in the questionnaire were based on my research questions. I shared the questionnaire for review and critique with other educational leadership scholars and adjusted based on their feedback. Their expertise in questionnaire development, coupled with a strong understanding of approaches to principal preparation provided supported by the literature provided validation through face validity (Edmondson & Irby, 2008).

As I sent out the questionnaire, I also provided each program chair with directions on how to answer the questions in an effort to explore their perceptions of their principal preparation program (Appendix A), as they pertain to my research questions. The open-ended nature of the questions provided rich data to build on and analyze if the program chair was selected as an interview participant in the study. It was also a helpful tool for program chairs to have extended time to consider their responses to the questions prior to an interview.

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

In addition to the initial questionnaire, I developed an interview protocol to guide each interview, strengthening reliability, offering uniformity, and providing structure so we could stay on time. I used a semi-structured interview protocol (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), using limited questions to guide the interview while allowing for flexibility to draw out further details of each program and the stakeholders' perceptions (Appendix B). To validate the instrument, I consulted

with a team of scholars in the field while creating questions for the protocol. The nature of a semi-structured interview (Kvale, 2005) allowed for follow-up questions to clarify and expand on questionnaire responses. It also provided the opportunity for exploration of topics not initially identified in the interview protocol, this created space for participants to have agency in the direction of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1990) and their voice to be heard (Hays & Singh, 2011).

I relied on an online video meeting platform (Zoom) for each semi-structured interview. Each interview was 45-60 minutes; this timeframe allowed for clarification of questionnaire responses, follow-up questions, and member-checks after each response to strengthen credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). When clarification or follow-up was necessary, I communicated via email.

Data Analysis

Once I completed the data collection of the case study, I performed an inductive content analysis (Mayring, 2004). I used Otter.ai to transcribe each interview and manually cleaned the transcription as I played back each recording. During the initial playback, I used open coding and took note of forming categories. I uploaded each edited transcription into a document and further broke each transcription down by unit or concepts within an interview response, resulting in hundreds of units per interview. I sorted units in each transcription, forming new categories while also strengthening preliminary ones. I repeated this sorting process, grouping by category and theme, strengthening reliability, until I identified a strong and meaningful pattern from the data (Bengtsson, 2016). In addition to the interview data, I used artifacts such as course syllabi, degree plans, award applications, webpages, and marketing materials from each program to review the multiple realities of what it may be like to earn a degree from their institution and develop a rich description of each program.

Applicability

There is little aspect of school leadership development that is truly generalizable from one institution to the next across the United States, because each institution resides in a unique context geographically and demographically. Though national organizations providing standards as guidelines are applied in programs across the country, there is still variation in how each program meets those standards within and among individual states (Achilles, 1995; Bogotch, 2011; Hess & Kelly, 2005). Principal preparation programs vary in their specializations and content. Some schools may integrate technology while others focus more on data analysis in tandem with instructional leadership. While some university programs may incorporate social justice themes throughout their coursework, other schools may emphasize inclusiveness by focusing learning objectives towards education for students with special educational needs, and yet still both can meet national standards for diversity criteria. National accrediting bodies and professional associations such as the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC), University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), and National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) create uniformed frameworks which guide learning objectives and applicable skills for the development of principal candidates of member institutions. Interpretation of standards can still lead to varying outcomes.

Furthermore, there is tremendous variation from state to state in terms of K-12 student population, demographics, and resources. Arguably, this diversity exists greatly within individual states as well. The variation among communities may make some university programmatic objectives and experiences more applicable and relevant for K-12 leaders in certain contexts over others. For example, school leaders in socio-economically challenged districts may face different

obstacles and require different skills and preparation from those who are lead schools where property taxes and PTA contributions enhance their annual budget. And still, there is a value to cultivating leaders who are prepared to consider the way nuance, diversity, and oppression exist within our greater society.

While school leaders are expected to lead in a way that meets the needs of their school community, the students within their buildings, there is also a call for educational leaders to consider their role in advancing access to education and a larger context. Culturally responsive leadership does not solely cater to student identities within the building. An attention to diverse cultural perspectives and realities through culturally responsive educational practices, even in a homogenous group, advances the worldview and cultural competency of students in their K-12 experience. Those students become productive and engaged members towards a more equitable society. Additionally, skills like critical thought and reflexivity obtained through CRL development can be applied to a myriad of contexts, Therefore, culturally responsive leadership is a practice that is applicable and essential in all of society's spheres, and arguably of value in every leadership preparation program.

By conducting multiple case studies, I became broadly familiar with five programs differing in size, region, and locale across the US. By conducting interviews of current and former program stakeholders and collecting and analyzing artifacts from each institution, I developed a rich description and analysis of the practices and policies within each program. This in-depth methodology delimited inherent risk of bias which can come from conducting interviews alone. Though there are findings which are idiosyncratic to each program, the nature of a multiple case study makes the common themes among institutions more generalizable. Thick

description provided a resource for readers to draw inferences from and potentially apply to their own context or institutions when if making programmatic or policy decisions.

Though complete transferability is not possible and only time and context-bound hypotheses are possible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), by including programs representing the five main regions of the United States (West, Midwest, Northeast, Southeast, Southwest), my sample is loosely representative of the United States as a whole. This compilation of case studies offers insight into exemplary practices towards training culturally responsive leaders to programs across the country.

Credibility

To strengthen the trustworthiness of the study (Creswell, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1986), I gathered artifacts such as course syllabi, degree plans, and program webpages in an effort to acquire triangulation and to reflect the multiple realities of what it may be like to earn a degree from their program. Member-checks (Creswell, 2007, Lincoln & Guba, 1985) were used during interviews as data was collected and after the analysis through email communication. I provided sections of written summaries of the analysis and asked for feedback. Triangulation was obtained among study participants across institutions to create a series that is trustworthy and can be used for future reference among principal preparation program developers and policy makers from similar institutions and governing bodies. Additionally, I practiced reflexivity during the process of planning, data gathering, and analysis. The practice of reflexive writing helped examine and flush out potential biases and acted as a medium to explore lingering ideas or hunches.

Researcher Perspective

In the same way that critical consciousness is an essential aspect of CRL, it is as vital while engaging in critical scholarship (Johnson, 2006; Santamaria, 2014). Careful consideration

was given to who I am as an individual, the context in which I have come to know what I know, and the assumptions and biases I hold. As a counselor and anthropologist, I bring my own perspective and biases to this study. These identities play a role in the value I place on cultural relevancy and identity in education. I understand race to be a social construct and yet I believe that the only way to achieve equity and liberation is by bringing attention to these constructs. I believe educational systems were built on notions of white supremacy; privileging Christianity, whiteness, ability, heterosexuality, cis-gender, and the patriarchy, and thus continue to uphold present day educational practices which systematically oppress people whose identities have been marginalized outside of the aforementioned identities. I believe that the act of interrogating whiteness makes room for cultural relevancy.

I am the daughter of a Latina immigrant, a San Diego native, and a current PhD student. I identify and present as a white, Latinx, heterosexual, able-bodied, cis-gendered woman. I spent much of my education in private, predominantly white institutions. I pursued my Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Leadership in an UCEA member, large, very high research-intensive, predominantly white, flagship university in the Southwest United States. The intersectionality of these identities influences the way I value CRL and the perceptions I hold about challenges and effective approaches towards preparing aspiring leaders to be culturally responsive. They also most likely influence the way I am received and interpreted by participants. It is likely that my experiences and identity influenced my research.

Considerations

I intended to include a culturally diverse representation of participants within each case and across all five cases to add insight into the ways race and ethnicity related to student and chair experiences and perspectives. As I combed UCEA institution websites for program chair

contact information, my perception was that the majority of program chairs were white. Subsequently I assumed this may have limited diversity represented among volunteering participants. Furthermore, in speaking with many of the program chair participants, it was revealed that students who enrolled in their programs currently and historically were predominantly white as well. Though I communicated a desire for diverse student representation to program chairs, a lack of diversity in their programs may have inadvertently impacted the study sample. Henceforth, future research that intentionally seeks out the perspectives of historically marginalized racial and ethnic identities is recommended.

By limiting my sample to only perceived exemplary programs and prioritizing high leverage states, I may have eliminated data which could offer insight into challenges programs face. By including faculty scholarship and program marketing strategies representing CRL, I was able to identify programs in low leverage states who may otherwise gone overlooked because of that status. This information could be useful for policy makers and program planners in determining whether state policy contributes to the strength of a program that prepares culturally responsive leaders. The decision to only include programs perceived to be “moderately effective and/or located within states where high leverage policy exists was intended as an effort to identify and replicate approaches to training culturally responsive principals that have demonstrated effectiveness their relationship to high-leverage state-policy.

Participating programs included in this study represented UCEA member universities and excluded principal preparation programs that do not belong to the Council. Additionally, participant perception was limited to the perspective of no more than three individuals from each institution. Furthermore, participating programs represent less than five percent of UCEA educational leadership programs in the US.

Findings

The movement towards preparing leaders who are culturally competent and socially-just (Barakat, 2021; Santamaria, 2014) has inspired the examination of practices and policies related to CRL in principal preparation programs. Many programs preparing educators for building-level leadership are focusing their efforts on preparing individuals capable of student-centered, CRL. Themes emerged among the five universities I studied, offering insight into strategic methods of preparing culturally responsive leaders, and challenges they face when doing so. The findings are presented by five individual cases followed by a multiple case analysis. In the multiple case analysis six themes emerged related to policy and practice in the development of culturally responsive leaders, they are: (a) partnerships, (b) faculty, (c) students, (d) recruitment, (e) CRL, and (f) standards and policy. In the multiple case analysis, nine themes emerged related to culturally responsive leadership across the five universities which offered insight into strategic methods of preparing culturally responsive leaders. The nine themes are: (a) partnerships, (b) faculty, (c) recruitment, (d) cohorts, (e) philosophies, (f) doing a lot with a little, (g) accountability, and (h) standards and policy.

Individual Case Analyses

Case 1: Sunbelt University (SU)

Sunbelt University (SU) is a large, suburban, very high research institution located in the Southeast region of the US. There are three pathways to principal certification at SU; earning a Master of Education degree, coming in with a master's degree and earning a graduate certificate, and earning an education specialist degree. All three approaches are cohort taught in an online hybrid format. Though there is value to examining all of the programs offered at SU for school

leadership preparation and their relation to one another, in this study, I focused mainly on the master's program for K-12 Educational Administration.

In 2007, under the direction of a regional organizations and state leadership, SU underwent a redesign of their program in line with the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISSLC) standards and rolled out a new leading approach to leadership development in the region in 2008. During the redesign, program designers identified four themes as integral aspects to be threaded throughout course curriculum relating to diversity, human resources, leadership, and continuous improvement. Since then, the program has continued to evolve.

In 2017, new state policy led to the creation and implementation of a specific course dedicated to diversity in all of principal preparation programs statewide. Though SU already had the theme of diversity embedded across curriculum, they were required to add an additional course to meet the new specific state demands. They called the course *Multiprofessional Leadership for Equity*.

Today, the master's degree and principal certification at SU requires 33 credit hours of courses including Principal Leadership, Action Research & Data Analysis, Leadership & the Learning Organization, Planning and Continuous Improvement, Instructional & Curricular Leadership, Educational Finance & Resource Management, Educational Systems & Communities, Legal & Ethical Issues, Supervision and Personnel Issues in Education, a three hour internship course, and Multiprofessional Leadership for Equity.

Under the premise that “we can't teach leadership completely online” (Program Chair 1), and the difficulty that working professionals have reaching on-campus classes regularly, SU implemented an executive hybrid cohort model where they combine three weekends each semester dedicated to meeting in-person on-campus or off-campus depending on the

arrangement. They supported these meetings with online learning. A global pandemic occurred during the time of this study, program leadership reported pivoting traditional approaches to education, and principal preparation classes at SU moved online to synchronous Zoom sessions.

Partnerships. The relationships SU has with school districts located in the state have played an integral role in determining program participants, location of in-person learning, and desired outcomes. District leaders were instrumental in the design process of the curricular overhaul unrolled in 2008. Since then, their feedback and input has been sought to ensure programmatic approaches are still in line with current need in the state. Program leaders and faculty formally meet with district personnel annually and informally regularly to check in on the direction of the program and desired outcomes. District partners determine the foci of capstone projects and many desired learning outcomes, provide mentoring for principal candidates, and also play an influential role in terms of recruitment and access.

Recruitment. SU has a multipronged approach to recruitment. Sitting administrator recommendations for future principal candidates, current students and alumni referrals of their peers and colleagues, the program's reputation, professional development experiences, and online marketing approaches were cited as methods for recruiting new cohorts of students annually.

According to Program Chair 1, much of the recent student recruitment has been conducted through partnerships with school districts in the state. Historically, and still, cohorts are driven by need and relationship; SU had numerous district partnerships and frequently sponsored professional development leadership institutes as a way to exchange knowledge and recruit new students. Frequently, school districts partnered with SU and sought out educators whom they believe would make an excellent leader. In an effort to strengthen and stabilize

organizations, districts and SU established a cohort of teachers, the majority of whom were from the partnering district. Cohorts met regularly throughout the program in the local region of the district. Occasionally, students who were not in the district but were interested in pursuing their degree and certification at SU in the same time period would also join the cohort, though generally they were fewer in number. The nature of this recruitment arrangement provided close support systems and networks for students in the program. It also at times lead to homogeneity within the cohort in terms of district, identity, and ways of knowing. Oftentimes, because most students were recruited from partner districts, there were preexisting relationships within the cohorts as well.

The program coordinator noted that although the majority of K-12 students in the state came from historically minoritized backgrounds, teachers in their schools were primarily white and did not reflect the same identities. They attributed this lack of ethnic and racial representation among practicing teachers in the state as a culprit for not having more diverse representation among principal candidates enrolling in their program. Though the program chair at SU said “we do a lot of work on that” in regard to recruiting diverse applicants, they attributed the hurdles in doing so to rising costs of tuition at SU and a disconnect between the graduate school’s central office and educational leadership department. Program Chair 1 said SU “priced themselves out of the market”. In spring of 2020, the program chair at SU petitioned for and was granted an emergency two-year reduction in the master’s tuition and they reported within two months, enrollments increased 250%. The racial identities of the students who contributed to the increase, however, are unknown.

Faculty. Leadership at SU reported intentional selection of faculty because of their research expertise and close connections to practitioners in the field. They relied on adjuncts

sparingly; they usually called on them to serve as experts from the field as guest lecturers, co-teachers, and mentors. SU's team of educators were full-time faculty, two of the six were clinical. Of the six full-time faculty, three were men and three women. Two professors were Black and four were white. Their collective areas of research included Educational Leadership preparation, partnership development, diversity issues in schools, teacher development, poverty, digital literacy, green schools and global sustainability, educational program assessment, educator recruitment and retention, school finance, inclusive education, and mentoring. Of the six faculty, four listed research interests in their website biographies that were perceived as related to culturally responsiveness in education

Students. During the time of this study, there were 11 students in the master's cohort. Of the 11 principal candidates, two were Black women, eight were white women, and one was a white man. Though the program chair from SU acknowledged the desire for a racially and ethnically diverse group of students, their enrollments still did not represent state or national racial and ethnic numbers. In response to the trends of student diversity, Program Chair 1 said "it's just who's interested in going to school at any particular time". Student 1 reported similar demographic makeup during their experience, they were predominantly women and predominantly white; about 20% of the students were Black, 80% white, with no representation of other racial or ethnic identities. While students in the master's program at SU tended to be predominantly white women, the Eds and PhD programs reportedly have more diversity, this was attributed to the draw and recruitment from broader regions in the US and internationally.

CRL. Culturally responsive leadership was woven into the curriculum during the 2007 program overhaul, and much of the present-day framework and model is structured the same way. The mission SU leaders developed to support the recruitment and development of school

leaders included five pillars, (a) disrupt the impersonal industrial model towards a reimagined future, (b) restore our innate capacity for deep learning, (c) foster globally aware, local agents of change, (d) advocate for socially just and evidence-based leadership practices, and (e) connect with self, others, and the world around us.

Since the 2008 implementation of the new mission and curricular approaches, and the addition of the 2017 requisite of a stand-alone course dedicated to diversity, aspects of fostering CRL in programmatic approaches were “woven into the program, in almost every class is the theme of collaboration”. Student 1 described it as a “tapestry between the classes”, attributing that to the closeness and regular meetings among a small full-time faculty team. In addition to a broad strand among classes, CRL themes were also specifically foundational for the diversity course *Multiprofessional Leadership for Equity*. In the questionnaire participants completed, SU student and faculty participants noted that CRL was “extremely important” in the program for training school leaders.

Program Chair 1 defined culturally responsive leadership as “understanding the cultural issues/concerns of the community where the school is located and finding ways to be student focused. Include values, mores and customs of students and the community in the fabric of the school... All community stakeholders should be empowered to foster academic, social, and emotional growth of students”.

Strategies to cultivate. When asked for specific examples and evidence of this value of CRL in the program, Student 1 referenced an exchange on the first day of classes when a white woman faculty member disrupted racist and stereotyping comments by a white woman student and created an opportunity for discourse around the comments, particularly calling in Black student voice. They also described a rigorous project completed in the diversity course, in which

students were required to conduct an equity audit on an issue in their district. In this assignment, they were instructed to establish goals for school's continuous improvement, including an action plan based on specific data and an approach to and timeline for measurement. The project spanned the entirety of a semester, during which time the professor guided the process and offered feedback and opportunities for reflexivity throughout, noting the reflection practice as the most important aspect.

In addition to topics of equity and diversity woven throughout courses in the program, the final assessment tool for graduation was a capstone project, in which students engage in a group action research project. Partner districts picked the topics for the students, usually based on what was current and trending. Though not always, oftentimes these topics included themes of cultural responsiveness in terms of diversity and cultural competence.

Challenges to CRL. One of the reported challenges to preparing culturally responsive leaders in the SU program was the question of “what happens once they leave?”. Student 1 referenced the threat of existing systems in education pushing back on students’ newfound ways of knowing, which they called “the ‘good ole boy’ system”. Despite this, Student 1 believed SU prepares school leaders by strengthening a growth mindset within students, “one way they did that was, from the very beginning, taught us what mental models are, and how you can change mental models...I would venture to say that a lot of us did a lot of growing”. Program Chair 1 also acknowledged candidates’ mindsets and lack of exposure to diversity as a potential for challenges, they described these students as individuals who have grown up in the region, are white, and don’t understand cultural responsiveness. They attempted to disrupt this by exploring the nuances of diversity, including international educational opportunities.

Despite perceived growth study participants reported observing, there is no formal method to tracking candidates after they graduate, resulting in an inability to determine the degree to which program interventions are effective and graduates are culturally responsive leaders. Program Chair 1 described the need for a systematic approach to gathering data on program graduates, tracking and checking in on principal candidates once they leave, and assessing the positions they obtain as well as the practices they implement. They also described a need for the resources (i.e. time and personnel) to gather such data.

Standards and Policy. Standards and policies which guided programmatic strategies and desired outcomes included state policy, Professional Standards for Educational Leadership (PSEL) from the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA), and the National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) standards.

University of the Southeast (USE)

University of the Southeast (USE) is a large, very high research institution located in the Southeast region of the United States. They offer several pathways to becoming a school leader. In this study, I focused on the Principal Preparation/Education Specialist (Ed.S.) program.

The Ed.S. program is a cohort model, enrolling 16-20 students annually. For more than a decade, and long before a global pandemic increased the prevalence of online learning, students in USE cohorts met synchronously and online. In 2020, USE introduced a new format for their cohort approach.

A pilot cohort dedicated to urban leadership was embedded within the larger cohort. Every student in the Ed.S. program enrolled in the same eight required courses, and two additional electives, however, half the students belonged to a group consisting solely of students from a partnered local urban district. Program developers intended to eventually create an

independent cohort of urban leaders, separate from the traditional mainstream cohort in the future. In the inaugural year, groups followed the same trajectory in terms of courses they took and they were in the same classes. But, the addition of the urban leader cohort from the partner district came with the integration of support from current administrators and district leaders who were experienced working in an urban educational landscape. Additionally, the urban leader cohort contributed more diversity among principal candidates and experiential knowledge of urban school settings than the other half of the larger cohort.

The Ed.S. degree at USE requires the completion of 30 credit hours over five semesters. Another recent initiative tied in a leadership academy where students earned their first 12 credits within the first year. The leadership academy emphasized “developing 21st century skills and dispositions”, a theme that had a presence within the program for years but became more vivid recently. After participation in the academy, students earned the remaining 18 hours in synchronous online sessions. Eight courses were listed as required (Contemporary School Leadership, Evidence-Based Decision Making, Securing and Developing Staff, Leadership for Learning-Centered Schools, School Finance and Support Services, School Law and Ethics, Leadership for School-Family-Community, and Organizational Learning in P12 Schools). The remaining six credit hours could be earned through the completion of two elective courses.

Faculty. Three full-time faculty taught the eight required courses in the principal preparation program at USE. Two faculty were white women and one was a white man. Their collective research interests included educational leadership, superintendency, the intersection of education, law, and technology, and justice-related implications related to school choice and students living in poverty, with special education needs, and are emergent English speakers. Of the three full-time faculty, one was an associate professor, one was an assistant professor, and

one was a clinical associate professor. One of the three had a record of engaging in research related closely to tenets of CRL.

Students. Due to the university's reputation in the state and the online nature of the program, students enrolled were from all over the state, and at times across state borders. In the 2020 cohort, 38% of students were described as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) in the urban group, while only 12.5% of the traditional group were considered BIPOC.

The addition of the urban cohort reportedly contributed to the increase in diversity, the cohort from the previous year, prior to the addition of an urban leader pipeline partnership, was all white. While the mainstream cohort offered less racial/ethnic diversity, experientially, the principal candidates brought broad backgrounds into the classroom. They represented districts all over the state and across state lines, from elementary, secondary, and private schools. The urban pipeline was less diverse in this regard, as all educators came from the same urban district. The most recent model of an integrated partnered urban cohort within a non-partnered cohort provided opportunities of exposure to different experiential knowledge and perspectives for both groups.

Partnerships. Partnerships impacted programmatic policy and practices heavily, particularly in recent years. USE relied on relationships with districts across the state to inform program approaches and support enrollment. A growth in urban areas in the state and increase in enrollment of students of color within urban school districts led to district requests for culturally competent educators who were also racially and ethnically representative of the students in the schools. In 2019, this insight led to the development of a pilot partnership dedicated to training urban leaders between the local urban school district and USE. The partnership was responsible for targeted and intentional recruitment of a more diverse and urban-focused school leader

pipeline at USE. It also contributed to the expertise and experiences shared among educators, both those who were enrolled in the program and those who supported the program as outside mentors and guest lecturers. This partnership subsequently enhanced the learning experience of the traditional cohort who otherwise tended to not be as diverse and did not receive the same exposure to common themes found within urban education.

In addition to supporting the 2020 pilot urban leader program, USE also created opportunities for information sharing through professional development events and hiring fairs. Their maintained presence with district-partnered events oftentimes supported recruiting efforts.

CRL. According to Program Chair 2, CRL development was a “front burner project or effort” at USE. Though the state’s districts have historically been “more white and rural”, urban districts are growing and the number of Black and brown students in those schools is growing too. The need for attention to CRL was also echoed by partner districts who reportedly sought an increase in the number of educator applicants who identified as BIPOC and school leaders who were prepared to step into “more diverse” (or non-predominantly white) schools. USE’s attention to CRL program design was built on Khalifa’s (2018) framework for culturally responsive school leadership;(a) critically self-reflects on leadership behaviors, (b) develops culturally responsive leaders, (c) promotes culturally responsive/inclusive school environment, and (d) engages students, parents, and indigenous contexts. Aspects of CRL were embedded across required coursework, though not hit in every class. Student participants reported numerous opportunities to integrate notions of cultural responsiveness in their projects and assignments, though the chances a student had exposure throughout and the level at which they delved in was reportedly dependent on their interests and commitment to it. For example, projects in the school family communication course, professional growth plans in the contemporary school

leadership, and discussions in securing and developing staff provided opportunities to integrate tenets of CRL though those tenets were not always explicitly stated or required for examination. PSEL Standard 3 addressing equity and cultural responsiveness provided a framework faculty used to ensure that at some point in their education, students met that standard during their required coursework, by design rather than default.

Many students in the principal preparation program at USE came from schools where there was little cultural diversity among students and educators. In the region, there are many white, often poor communities, rural and suburban in nature. Because of this, program leaders found it challenging to prepare them for more diverse educational spheres than their own. To address this, students were encouraged to seek out experiential learning opportunities at schools which differed from their current positions. Reflection activities and sharing amongst peers were included as important aspects of the experiential learning processes.

The addition of the urban leader cohort also added the inclusion of guest speakers and administrators from the urban district. This aspect provided exposure to themes occurring in urban schools that educators in more rural or suburban districts may have been unfamiliar with.

Standards and policy. Ten PSEL standards informed a matrix created to ensure each PSEL standard was addressed appropriately over the span of the required eight courses, including Standard 3, Equity and Cultural Responsiveness. Reportedly, a small and close-knit cohort faculty made it easy for each instructor to know which standards they were responsible for, and align assessments and experiences associated with each.

Western University (Western)

Western is a large, urban, very high research institution in the Western region of the United States. The K-12 Educational Leadership program is a year-long program which required

the completion of 36 credits. Though the program spanned four quarters, the dissemination of course content and flow of course sequence was nontraditional. Program leaders designed the flow of courses in a way that allowed for integrated and continual learning spanning the year, students were engaged with most of the curriculum year-round. They covered numerous modules simultaneously, ‘leapfrogging’ and weaving in components from different courses. Rather than taking a 10-week class with one instructor over the course of a grading period, students were taught by numerous faculties on numerous topics. This jumping around caused content to be stretched out over time. This approach also provided real-time exposure to themes, so students learned what they should be doing in the fall and winter during those seasons. For example, in the spring when observations tended to happen in schools, principal candidates learned experientially about observations in real-time. Some modules were longer than others, depending on standards and desired outcomes identified within them. An added benefit to this layout was that building instructional capacity started in July, and carried on until May, by design.

The majority of students who enrolled in the K-12 Educational Leadership program entered with a master’s degree and created a cohort made up of typically 20-30 students. The program for students with an existing master’s degree was 36 credits. As few as two and as many as 10 students enrolled without their master’s degree in any given year. When this happened, students without their master’s degree followed the course plan with their master’s holding peers while they also completed an additional 9 credits concurrently. Two of the required extra courses were related to leadership and teaching, and the third was selected from a variety of courses. Upon graduation from the program, with the completion of a master’s degree, students were qualified to apply for principal certification.

Students. Student racial and ethnic demographics have evolved over the past five decades. Recruitment practices and application processes were designed to encourage broad application of students representing diverse identities. Student 5 attributed their selection of the program due to the increased representation in recent cohorts and the commitment to social justice and equity represented on the website. In 2020, a little over 60% of students identified as BIPOC, including almost 20% who identified as Black, and two students who identified as indigenous. The 2020 cohort was the most diverse cohort the program had. They tended to attract more women to men, and this was partially attributed to the notion that most educators were women. For those who declared a binary gender, the program in 2020 was about 60% women, 40% men. About 80% of the teaching workforce in the region were women, so Western's gender representation inequitably supports men in leadership.

Faculty. Western relied mainly on a teaching staff of ten, which consisted of two full-time tenure line professors, one full teaching professor, one full-time employee, and six practitioners who were former or current school and district leaders. Three of whom were men, the remaining seven were women. While half of the faculty were white-passing, Student 5 attributed part of his comfort in the program to the diversity in the teaching staff, which they explained was the most diverse representation among instructors they had experienced in any educational setting they had learned in.

A noteworthy element of Western's faculty was that most of their teaching staff were part-time or adjunct practitioners. Though most do not have extensive and well-known research agendas, Program Chair 3 reported that most of the educators demonstrated a deep commitment to equity in education and a practical understanding of the field through experience.

Recruitment. There were many approaches to recruitment at Western, all emphasized relationship, rapport, and representation. Western had strong and ongoing partnerships with district leaders in the region, and because of this, they were able to extend into the community with targeted recruitment efforts. Through their partnerships, Western program leaders had a line to communicate what they were seeking in principal candidates and benefitted from leaders already in the schools who encouraged their fellow educators to apply.

Western created a nomination system to support the efforts of effective recruitment where school leaders could nominate a peer or colleague for consideration. If a candidate was nominated, program leaders contacted the individual, and indicated they had been acknowledged for their potential for leadership. Program leaders at Western found over the years that incoming students, especially students who identify as BIPOC, shared that it wasn't until someone said 'you ought to get into a principal preparation program' that they considered it. In the same vein, educators who were called to nominate were also encouraged by Western to seek out leaders from diverse backgrounds, looking "broadly across their institutions and not just nominate the people who have their hands raised... but to really look around for other equally qualified people who maybe are not volunteering" (Program Chair 3).

The nomination recruitment process was at times lengthy, as students did not always apply within the first year of being nominated. Once they were on the radar, program personnel invited students for a face-to-face meeting at a neutral site, oftentimes a coffee shop or café of the recruit's choosing. The multi-leveled recruitment approach, an initial nomination by someone who is familiar- at times more than one nomination, coupled with the outreach and personal extension from program faculty representatives oftentimes ultimately led to nominees applying.

While the nomination approach was an effective system for recruitment, nomination was not required for admittance, students were also allowed to self-nominate.

A considerate approach to the interviewing process was an added layer to Western's recruitment efforts. They aimed to construct interview teams who were both racially and gender diverse, made up of alumni who were practicing principals and district leaders, other district leaders, current students, and instructors. They also invited interview participants to critique questions and processes to identify ways to reduce "white space" in the processes. This included the practices of sending at least one question to candidates ahead of time and calling each candidate before the interview to ensure they have the question and provide opportunity to answer any additional questions applicants might have while inviting them to bring their full authentic self. Western also integrated the practice of reflexivity; all participants were encouraged to acknowledge any triggers that may have reinforced white space during the process. In the occasion where an applicant who identified as BIPOC was not recommended initially after the interview process, a second, "far less formal" (Program Chair 3) conversation was arranged to make room for further consideration of a candidate. The less formal approach led to the invitation of at least five candidates whose first experience did not reflect their knowledge and skills.

Partnerships. Partnerships at Western were a driving force for much of the program's structures and practices. From determining program goals, collaborating on the advancement of educational practices in general, recruitment, professional development opportunities, and support post-graduation, partnerships were a formidable pillar supporting Western's reported success.

Western created a network among multiple district leaders and leadership programs in the region to support the development of the educational field. Leadership consortiums were introduced around 2017, with the intention of exploring a shared problem of practice. About eight to ten districts participated in quarterly meetings where constituents examined themes relating to recruiting, selecting, supporting, and retaining effective leaders of color. As part of the efforts to do what is best for the education of all K-12 students in the region, and what they considered fair, Western leaders invited two sister-school programs to the meetings as well to share knowledge and the opportunity for recruitment and reflection.

Through consortium events, partnered districts and the Western faculty leaders engaged in knowledge sharing and problem solving. One district offered to host a “fish bowl” event where they would discuss a recent race and equity policy they instituted in the district while the remaining districts and program stakeholders observed.

District leaders from seven districts volunteered to serve on a human resources (HR) panel for current principal candidates at Western. They shared what their school districts were doing specifically around race and educational justice and spent time with candidates in small groups looking over cover letters and resumes. The HR experience was not only helpful for professional development of candidates, but was also an effective investment for recruitment, as HR staff became familiar with the principal preparation program at Western, which also led to more referrals later on.

Western relied on partnerships to support their graduates and other school leader peers as they were active in the field in an effort to enhance retention, particularly for BIPOC school leaders. Through their partnerships, Western offered insight into strategies for enhancing retention of leaders of color. For example, they shared research describing inequities in

promotion rates among leaders of color and their white counterparts due to a tendency to send leaders who identify as BIPOC to conferences geared towards emotional, social, and behavioral development and white leaders to conferences around reading, science, and math. When Western shared these statistical disparities, it led to district reflection and acknowledgement that they too had similar trends in their schools, and subsequent efforts for change.

CRL. One of the main hallmarks of the program at Western was the longstanding and foundational emphasis on equity. Six core competencies cultivated culturally responsive practices in the program: (a) shaping culture and leading change, (b) driving improvement through inquiry, (c) building instructional capacity, (d) advocating with students, families, and communities, (e) committing to ethical practice, and (f) marshaling resources for equitable outcomes. Program Chair 3 rated the program’s efficacy in preparing culturally responsive leaders at “very effective”. Program Chair 3 defined culturally responsive leadership as:

Leading an organization as a critically self-reflective person who recognizes that schools and school systems when unchecked will continue reinforce racism, ableism, sexism, heterogeneity, and other forms of oppression. In order to dismantle these systems, it is necessary to deliberately redistribute power and advocate alongside and learn from families, students, and educators who have been historically and currently marginalized. CRLeaders in schools in districts relentlessly interrogate and disrupt individual biases and prejudice, institutional practices and systems while simultaneously shaping an organizational culture that ensures agency and empowerment of shareholders (families, students, community members, educators). CRLeaders act with courage and perseverance to collectively embrace a vision of educational justice and build systems to improve instructional capacity through targeted ongoing, job-embedded professional learning,

deep engagement with and learning from families, alignment of culturally sustaining curriculum and pedagogy and a culture of shared accountability for results. CRLeaders marshal resources to address current inequities. CRLeaders design evidence-based processes to measure the degree to which the system engages and inspires learning for each and every student- and in particular for students who identify as Black, Indigenous or as People of Color and to what degree their organizational culture supports adults who identify as BIPOC to thrive. CRLeaders rely on this evidence to inform ongoing improvement.”

Though the program was equity-driven from inception, an emphasis on reflection and continuous improvement contributed to the evolution and growth over the years. Thus, it impacted programmatic approaches and an increase in diverse student representation in regard to student racial, ethnic, and other identity-related demographics.

Challenges to CRL. Despite a concerted effort to recruit and retain a culturally diverse group of educators committed to equity in educational leadership, faculty who intended to foster social justice practices in their teaching and philosophies, and programmatic scaffolding that upholds tenets of diversity, equity, and inclusion, the program at Western still faced challenges in their efforts to prepare culturally responsive leaders.

An increasingly diverse group of students resulted in a range of experiential knowledge and understanding of the relationship between race and justice in society. Because of this, it was difficult to maintain a balanced environment that stretched everyone without causing harm to students whose lived experiences fell within the case at hand. Student 4 offered insight into their experience in a program committed to equity driven practices and diverse representation within the program. They described the classroom as physically segregated. They sat with other BIPOC

students at one table, and white students sat at another. There was a perceived relationship between their physical positions and the way they engaged in the class. The student perceived their table as carrying the load for discussions and a negative response from their white classmates and faculty. They approached their instructor and shared their discomfort. Though the situation was not completely resolved, the discussion led to new behaviors from the instructor and the expression of a continued commitment to growth. It also nurtured the relationship and trust between BIPOC students and their white instructor. Program Chair 3 also described occasions where students challenged course readings and materials as biased and harmful. They reevaluated the implementation and approach to drawing from materials once considered hallmark. Program 3 acknowledged that there is work still to be done in an effort to develop a more equitable and effective program for social justice educators at Western.

An openness to feedback and culture of welcoming growth opportunities contributed to an environment where students and faculty felt safe at times to address and discuss uncomfortable situations and oppressive practices. It reportedly made room for personal development and programmatic evolution that further supported the safety and retention of students who were historically marginalized and the development of culturally responsive leaders.

Standards and policy. Western's six core competencies met state standards, and in some cases went beyond, as they also aligned with national standards. Previously based on the 2008 ISLLC Standards, the competencies were enhanced to reflect the NELP standards in recent years. Though state policy was considered low-leverage according to Anderson & Reynolds (2015), program developers connected with other leaders in the field and within their region to

form an organization which guided the development of rigorous principles for effectively preparing school leaders.

Case 4: Midwestern University (MidU)

MidU is a large, urban, very high research institution located in the Midwestern region of the United States. There are two pathways to earn a master's in educational leadership at MidU. Any principal candidate seeking a master's degree in educational leadership will take the same coursework, offered predominantly online, however the structure and pace at which they do so varies. MidU recently underwent a programmatic shift to include new guiding principles towards the inclusion of intentionality towards equity through educational leadership. All students completed the same courses with this emphasis; however, they could do so in a closed cohort model, or standalone and self-paced. The closed cohort model was accelerated, during the span of a little over a year. Students completed 33-credits in a virtual, cohort-based, accelerated master's program with opportunities for synchronous and face-to-face meetings. Most students in this trajectory enrolled without a master's degree, and earned it over the course of 15 months, from June to August the following year. Students who wished to earn additional licensure (director of instruction, business administrator, director of pupil services etc.) bundled their courses into the master's track in lieu of electives. The main courses required for the master's degree were Leadership in Educational Organizations, Foundations in Systems of Educational Equity, Guiding Instructional Improvement, Management of Educational Resources, Instructional Leadership, Politics of Education, Internship, Organizational Change & Team Leadership, School Law, Program Planning & Evaluation, and Instructional Leadership Practicum.

Faculty. MidU had two full-time faculty, a third retired during the pandemic and was yet replaced at the time of data collection. “A highly effective group of adjunct faculty” (Program Chair 4) contributed to the preparation of educational leaders in the program. Both full-time faculty members were white, one was a man and the other was a woman. Their collective research interest included local policy implementation, district level leadership structures, family-school engagement, and school leadership in educational marketplaces. Both integrated a focus of equity as it relates to education in their research agendas.

Students. The majority of students in the program were women and the cohorts were predominantly white. Program Chair 4 said there were not as many students of color as they would like, especially as they are situated in a metro area. Though they were the most racially/ethnically diverse school in the region, they attributed limited diversity in the program to a competitive market of competing programs offering more affordable routes to principalship.

Recruitment. MidU recruits from the local metropolitan area and across the state. A “tighter budget” reportedly contributed to “faculty bearing the burden of doing most of the outreach” (Program Chair 5). They relied on relationships with colleagues in the field, alumni spreading the word, and their recent equity emphasis to draw in new candidates. There was no measurement in place to determine how students were introduced to the program, though this was something program developers were considering.

CRL. Intentional equity was the guiding theme for all of MidU’s curriculum, as part of their new design. Program principles supporting equity were developed to meet state and national organization standards and each course hit on these themes.

Faculty used individual course assignments, readings, and assessments, and a final capstone portfolio to introduce materials and assess if students were prepared to lead in a

culturally responsive and equity-minded manner. Students who graduated were reportedly at different stages in their commitment to equity, though all had exposure to it throughout their coursework.

Time impacted the efforts of training culturally responsive leaders at MidU. Program Chair 4 explained, “students find it difficult to go as far into the literature as we would like”. The nature of students at MidU was that they were working professionals while enrolled as full-time students and juggled the demands of both school and work. This was exacerbated in MidU’s first two cohorts following the redesign, due to the demands on teachers during a global pandemic. Unstable conditions in approaches to education reportedly led to challenges in maintaining academic rigor while honoring personal health and balance. Despite preoccupation with a number of things, students in MidU’s principal preparation program identified themselves as like-minded thinkers with a willingness to embrace leadership for equity. Occasionally, students entered the program and reportedly struggled with equity-based language and literature. In those cases, progress was measured as success.

Standards and policy. In 2019, MidU initiated the new model for educational leadership with an equity emphasis. Prior to this, they established guiding principles for the revamped program, all of which met state requirements and PSEL standards. The new guiding principles were (a) identifying systems of inequity, (b) disrupting systems of inequity, (c) leveraging community assets, (d) creating equitable systems, (e) learning from the process and applying that learning, and (f) understanding our identities.

Case 5: University of the Northeast (UNE)

UNE is a medium, high research institution located in the Northeastern region of the United States. There were several approaches for educational leadership preparation at UNE.

Candidates could enroll at UNE with a master's and complete courses to meet state requirements for principal certification. Those who did not have a master's degree could complete 30 credits and earn a 'traditional' degree or complete their master's coursework and principalship certification in 43-credits through a hybrid route. The 'traditional' master's also had the option for an emphasis in regional school leadership or international school leadership. Additionally, there was an urban leadership pathway, which required the completion of 37 units in pursuit of a master's degree and preparation for certification.

The 'traditional' educational leadership master's program was non-cohort and available mainly online, with some courses offered in-person during the summer. It typically spanned one and a half to two years. The master's degree at UNE was 30 credits, which included five core courses and five elective courses. A master's degree however, was not enough to be a certified principal in the state. To qualify for principal certification through the state, students also completed a principal certification program. In the case at UNE, they completed the additional courses through the 43-credit hybrid program.

The 37-credit urban leadership master's program met the course requirements for state principal certification. Students in the urban leadership program completed the majority of their classes in a summer intensive, in-person cohort model. The urban leadership courses not covered in the summer occurred online, one during the fall and one in the spring, taking about 13 months from start to finish. Unlike the 'traditional' route, students in the urban leadership master's cohort followed the same specific degree plan during their schooling, there was no room for electives or choice.

While this study was mainly focused on what participants considered a "traditional" pathway for educational leader preparation, the inclusion of UNE's urban leadership program

offered a broader understanding of the differences in training and education principal candidates received within one institution, depending on their program selection.

Faculty. The main faculty at UNE consisted of four full-time professors; a Black man, Korean woman, white woman, and white man. There were also two professors of practice who were white men. Faculty shared duties of teaching in both the urban leadership and ‘traditional’ pathways though the urban leadership program tended to rely more on adjunct faculty while the ‘traditional’ teaching duties tended to fall more on full-time faculty. Half of the educational leadership faculty had research emphases based in equity related themes.

Students. The students in the ‘traditional’ pathways tended to be predominantly white, while the cohorts in the urban leadership cohort had more diversity. At the time of data collection, more than half the 22 students enrolled in the urban leadership cohort were BIPOC and represented diverse regions across the country as well. The ‘traditional’ group drew mainly from the surrounding, predominantly white areas.

Recruitment. Recruitment in the ‘traditional’ educational leadership pipeline was conducted via online marketing, billboards, word of mouth, and open house sessions. The resources dedicated to recruitment were not the same as those dedicated to the urban leader program. There was a faculty member leading the urban leader program who was responsible for personalized recruitment efforts into the program. They traveled to cities like New York, Chicago, Houston, Jacksonville, and Philadelphia in a strong effort to recruit individuals representing many urban regions.

CRL. A participant at UNE defined culturally responsive leadership as “the process of increasing knowledge of diversity, enhancing skills to utilize that knowledge, and the ability to make changes and bring diversity to life through leadership”. At UNE, there were formal and

informal processes of implementing themes of CRL into the preparation of principal candidates, though it was mostly done through informal measures and determined at the instructor level. Reportedly, if an instructor was passionate about tenets of CRL, they would integrate these themes in their readings and course requirements, conversely if they were not committed to these notions, courses might not have focused on or lead to the development of CRL.

All students in the traditional master's program completed one course dedicated to diversity as required by the college. The diversity course included a project dedicated to identity reflection, where they conduct an auto-biography as it related to race. If they were only seeking the certification requirements, students were not required to take the diversity course. Students in the urban leadership cohort did not complete this same course, rather experiential learning opportunities and 'field trips' in a large city provided the catalyst for reflection as they related to ways of knowing and thinking. Students in the urban leader program completed projects relating to the needs of urban schools and one final capstone project where they created their own school.

Policy. UNE followed state policy for principal preparation, though their master's alone did not meet it, students could complete extra courses to meet the certification requirements within their state. In addition to state requirements, students who earned a master's degree at their institution were required to complete a diversity course per their college policy.

Multiple Case Analysis

Despite national organizations with standards guiding outcomes and practices for educational leaders, principal preparation programs across the country are unique in their own right. Whether it's the program philosophy, approaches to recruitment, student and faculty demographics and identities, or regional differences, programs have characteristics which set them apart from other institutions. Some universities integrated tenets of CRL and an equity

focus in every course across the curriculum, while others had a stand-alone course dedicated to meeting state policy or national standards. And still, some universalities have come to light during this multiple case study, triangulation from participant interviews and supporting artifacts strengthened the belief that findings may be more generalizable to the institution of higher education as we prepare school leaders and pursue a more culturally responsive educational system.

Partnerships

Quite possibly the most influential element impacting the success of each program is their commitment to partnerships with districts in their state. Three of the five participating programs incorporated partnerships in their approaches to preparing school leaders. Of the three, the participating program chairs spoke about the ways in which district partnerships positively impacted their programs. The frequency from which program leaders engaged with district personnel varied from institution to institution, with some meeting formally as frequently as quarterly, to others meeting formally annually, or on an informal basis. Partnerships allowed for districts to have input on programmatic outcomes. In addition to opportunities for dialogue, program leaders also reported district participation in program planning and evaluation committees, as well as attendance at professional development events such as leadership institutes. When conducted effectively, there was an opportunity for reciprocity and knowledge sharing between K-12 constituents and educators in higher education. Program developers benefitted from real-world insight into what school leaders should be prepared for, while districts benefitted from a more prepared candidate pool.

Awareness of current trends and needs. University program partnerships with districts locally and across the state allowed for a direct line to current needs, practices, and trends. By

connecting with districts that had diverse student representation, program developers introduced future school leaders in their program to contemporary experiential knowledge of educational contexts and the realities for historically disenfranchised learners in K-12 schools. Partnerships led to guest lectures from district personnel and exposure to practical knowledge. Principal candidates gained exposure to schools which were different from their own and established mentoring relationships with school leaders in those placements. It also shed light on the important qualities which are necessary for impactful school leadership and contributed to relevant programmatic outcomes beyond those which were recommended by state policy and organization standards. One program took the insight gained from the partnerships and reinvested it into the work they did together. Knowing that their graduates of color struggled in their placements and schools failed to retain them, program developers also created building support networks to help with the retention of BIPOC graduates and their peers.

In addition to contributing a sense of awareness of current K-12 school trends among higher education spheres, district partnerships also led to relevant resources for candidate feedback and mentorship. In one case, a close and reciprocal partnership provided direct contact for principal candidates to district human resources offices. Principal candidates in the program had the opportunity to meet and connect with human resources personnel, receiving guidance on the journey toward post-graduation employment.

Pipeline and network. One clear benefit of district partnerships is the pipeline of principal candidates it develops and the exponential affect it has on the efficacy of principals in practice. Partnerships with districts allow for program leaders to have intimate relationships with their students and those who may refer them prior to their enrollment. This extension allows for programs to communicate what they are looking for in candidate applicants, encourage the

nomination and support of diverse and underrepresented educators into leadership positions, and cultivate a strong culture and educational philosophy among programs and their partners. For program chairs who are often “under the gun” to maintain enrollment, as one chair put it, intimate district partnerships are particularly important as they allow for the strategic recruitment of strong candidates without compromising the integrity of the program for the sake of staying afloat financially.

A united approach to cultivating school leaders between districts and principal preparation programs also encourages networking and resource sharing because what benefits the program also benefits the district. Participants reported that strong connections between their program and surrounding districts cultivated a shared ethos and leadership philosophy which assists in overcoming obstacles they would otherwise face alone. Gaining momentum and enacting change is less difficult to do among a community of school leaders who are either graduates or partners of one university program and share similar educational perspectives and objectives.

The Faculty

Faculty rosters from each of the five institutions included in the study were unique. While some programs relied mainly on a few full-time professors, others brought in adjunct instructors to support their teams. Both reported benefits and drawbacks to their faculty structures.

Full-time vs adjunct. Full time faculty costs more than adjunct lecturers. Oftentimes, though not always the case, full-time faculty equates to research intensive educators who may be removed from the practice in K-12 settings. Schools who reported relying mainly on a group of full-time professors noted the prestige of their research agendas and personal accomplishments. Conversely, programs who incorporated more visiting instructors benefited from their proximity

to what is happening currently in K-12 settings. Both shared intentionality in who was included among their team of educators, noting research emphasis, specialization, and representation.

Large vs small. As with the nature of full-time versus adjunct faculty, there were also benefits and challenges to the size of each department. Large faculty teams meant more people to share programmatic and teaching responsibilities with and more representation and strengths among the team of educators. Though smaller teams often led to more individual labor and compromised program efforts, it also had potential to contribute to a close-knit group, accountability, and focused practices to meet desired outcomes.

The Students

Student demographics and experience was a prominent aspect of this study. As a whole, students enrolled in these programs were predominantly white, and mostly women. While all program chair participants indicated an intention to recruit students of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, some were more successful in these approaches than others.

One finding in these multiple cases regarding students is that diversity begets diversity. Program chairs and student participants alluded to practices of word of mouth in regard to recruitment. Programs whose students were more diverse had subsequent diversity in the following years, suggesting their students who identified as people of color recruited new students of similar identities. This diverse representation was also a recruitment tool in it of itself, as student participants from historically marginalized backgrounds reported attraction to a program based on the diversity represented among current and past graduates, believing it indicated a safe and supportive environment for people of color.

Recruitment

Each participant institution is well-known within their region, and yet program chair participants acknowledged the challenge of maintaining student enrollment. Though each program in the study relied on media to disseminate marketing materials for student recruitment, several highlighted other methods to encouraging enrollment, with particular emphasis on *who* they were recruiting.

Though all program chairs identified a desire for diverse representation among students, not all programs had achieved this consistently in their enrollments. District partnerships contributed to a rise in diversity among students. Programs who were most successful in recruiting demographically diverse students were those whose (a) current students were diverse, (b) current faculty were diverse, (c) had partnerships with districts where they identified a desire for nominations of diverse applicants, (d) identified as urban education in some regard, and/or (e) communicated a sincere commitment to diversity, equity, and social justice in their marketing materials or website. The more intentional approaches program developers incorporated, the more diversity was reflected in their program.

Websites. Websites are an extremely common marketing tool for universities. Most participants alluded to the websites in relation to recruitment. Though the program websites varied in terms of the way a program was portrayed, there was still a common theme among them; either the information on the website was inaccurate and due to be updated, and/or it was not entirely clear and required clarification. Still, participants attributed the attraction of candidates with equity driven mindsets to an emphasis on equity driven practices found on the program websites.

Cohort

Participating programs commonly used cohort models to unite students on the same pathway towards graduation. Participants described benefits and drawbacks to this collective strategy.

Benefits of Cohort. Participants suggested cohorts tended to foster supportive environments. Students engaged with one another for an extended period, and the experience cultivated strong rapport with one another. The rapport they nurtured in cohorts often led to challenging one another to achieve higher and encouraging one another when content became difficult. This was especially poignant when white students felt uncomfortable with some material, particularly when it related to racial inequity. Students relied on the relationships established in cohorts to support uncomfortable conversations. White student participants also stated that intimacy in classes also allowed space to draw people out and have difficult dialogue.

Another benefit of cohorts was scheduling ease. Program designers faced fewer scheduling conflicts when every student in the program required the same courses in the same trajectory.

Drawbacks to Cohort. While cohorts bred a sense of familiarity, they could also lead to adverse effects. If there was little to no diversity within a cohort, students did not encounter as much interaction with new ways of knowing had they not been specifically designed by the faculty. Lack of diversity can eliminate learning opportunities that can naturally spring up in cross-cultural environments. Diversity within faculty and intentional course outcomes were employed in an effort to disrupt this homogeneity.

When cohorts were diverse, challenges still arose. Student 5 shared about an experience where they felt uneasy in a class where half of the students were white, and half were students of

color. The classroom organically segregated between the two groups, physical separation also led to dissonance. Though a divide grew between the two student groups, trusting relationships with faculty in the course and program directors led to productive dialogue among faculty and students. The discomfort wasn't completely eliminated, and other student participants described similar experiences where BIPOC students felt othered, however rapport between the faculty and students helped mitigate perceived power imbalances. Progress was attributed to the openness and ability of faculty for facilitating discourse and receiving feedback from students.

Program Philosophies

Though student participants represented programs from across the country, a common thread among their responses was the notion of programmatic culture or philosophy. Students from three different programs articulated unique and distinct philosophies from each of their respective programs. A commitment to “reimagining” graduates and forward-focused preparation (SEU), a growth mindset (SU), and social justice (WesternU) were ongoing themes delineated during the student experience within their respective programs.

These program philosophies were described in depth by student participants and were also echoed on the program websites. Using similar language, student description of these distinct programmatic principles was mirrored by their program chairs as well. One student participant acknowledged it was the vivid and clear commitment to social justice depicted on the website that initially attracted them to the program. Another said the theme of reimagining leadership was threaded throughout their courses and across supplemental professional development events as well. Programs which had clear philosophies attracted students who had similar paradigms and had the potential for indoctrinating their students with the same perspective.

Doing A Lot with a Little

Program chairs discussed the way resources impacted their approaches in the program. Resources in terms of funding and personnel impacted the responsibilities each educator in the program held, it also impacted the ways in which they sought student enrollment and the decisions made around who to enroll. Student enrollment was a common focal point among program chair participants.

Program Chair 1 said, “we’re under the gun to increase our numbers”, suggesting a demand to meet a quota to sustain the program. Program Chair 4 described institutions like theirs as “enrollment driven”, referring to program’s ability to “continue and thrive” as contingent on student enrollment. Program chairs also described a heavy load of responsibilities, and the ways this showed up and impacted their job execution. Program Chair 5 said “yeah, you just take on a lot”. Program Chair 4 echoed this sentiment, “with resources limited, and people’s time limited, everybody’s doing more with less”.

The demand for output falling on few individuals in each program resulted in program chairs taking on more responsibility. They created their own marketing materials, used word of mouth or informal measures to recruit, relied on program graduates and informal understandings with district leaders to refer future students. Program chairs also acknowledged limited budgets as a hurdle impeding their efforts to intentionally recruit from a diverse pool of candidates because a student in the seat was better than none.

Accountability Efforts

Accountability measures to determine whether or not students were prepared for CRL varied among programs. Portfolios, equity audits, racial autobiographies, and capstone projects were the most common practices for assessing principal candidates’ CRL efficacy. Program

chairs relied on state and national standards to determine desired candidate outcomes and as guidance for assessment. Though some programs described ways in which they formatively and summatively assessed their candidates while they were enrolled, no program had a system for measuring whether or not their graduates were practicing culturally responsive leaders once they became school leaders. Some chairs described former students as progressing in cultural competency marginally, and others as resistant to readings and language that supported culturally responsive leadership development. Though students met program requirements for graduation in some programs, they may not have demonstrated a commitment to enact culturally responsive leadership in their future institutions.

Program Chair 1 described a position in their college dedicated to collecting data from their graduates, though their research was not allocated for the principal preparation programs. Other participants alluded anecdotally to graduates who had expressed feelings of preparedness. Program Chair 5 described a situation relayed to them by a former student who was able to connect with a parent cross-culturally due to their training in the program.

While several programs were able to track placement numbers for their graduates, they were unable to determine to what extent they implemented CRL practices. Program chairs wished to collect data from former students in regard to how they implement culturally responsive practices in their school leadership once they begin their roles.

Standards and Policy

Each program chair participant identified standards and policy guiding their program layout and course development. Among the national standards cited, four of the five programs used the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership (PSEL) Educational Leadership (PSEL) from the National Policy Board for Educational Administration, three referenced the

National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) standards, and four cited state policies or a combination of state policies and national organization standards.

When program developers perceived standards and state policy as not rigorous enough, sometimes they created their own standards. One program in a low-leverage (Reynolds & Anderson, 2015) state described efforts they implemented as exceeding state expectations, in pursuit of what they perceived as more effective practices to preparing culturally responsive leaders. They developed a council among other program leaders in the state, calling on national experts, to cultivate rigorous guiding principles and policies for their programs beyond those which the state had provided.

Discussion, Implications, and Future Research

Educational transform comes from instilling culturally responsive practices in all aspects of the educational enterprise, including policy, leadership, and preparation (Gay, 2010). By entering into this research, I employed a critical lens on the very institutions I belong to. In doing this, I aimed to actively disrupt systems of inequity, compromising comfort in an effort towards a more equitable, just, and ultimately culturally responsive educational system. Higher education is responsible for preparing most school leaders in the United States (Bogotch, 2011). There are common programmatic interventions for developing educational leaders among the universities included in the multiple case study. Cohorts, intentional recruiting practices, district partnerships, diverse and equity-driven faculty, culturally responsive guiding principles, and national and local policy can facilitate the development of culturally responsive leaders. As I identified perceived effective approaches to CRL cultivation, important considerations emerged in their wake. As we evolve and progress towards more equitable, just, and culturally responsive educational spaces, we must also reflexively consider the nuances of our practice.

Whiteness in Leadership and Cohorts

Khalifa, Gooden, and Davis (2018) call for critical self-reflection on leadership behaviors as tenets of culturally responsive school leadership. Challenging whiteness is one practice of such (Theoharis & Haddix, 2011). Using critical social theory as part of this framework, it is clear that PK-16 schools are grounded in whiteness (Theoharis, 2018), privileging white racial identity. White dis-consciousness (Singleton, 2014) inhibits white leaders to see their racial identities in relation to their leadership practices. An inability to see how whiteness impacts a leader's objectivity, their work, and how they are perceived in their community. As a part of cultivating spaces where students can safely grow and learn how to show up as culturally responsive leaders, we must also examine ways in which whiteness shows up in our educational spheres.

Of the program chairs and students who participated in this study, many were cognizant of race and ethnicity in relation to the work of becoming culturally responsive. Value was placed on diversity within cohorts. Value was also placed on the racial and ethnic diversity of faculty and staff among programs studied, though the values were not always met.

A diverse group of students invited "cross-pollination" as one white participant put it, the opportunity to share different perspectives and ideologies. It cultivated opportunities for productive discourse when values or beliefs did not line up, and ultimately, it could lead to new ways of knowing and more culturally competent school leaders. Diversity within a group could also be harmful for students whose identities have been marginalized historically as they may be expected to take on the bulk of the emotional labor (Varghese et al., 2019). Because of this, the interrogation of whiteness, and examination of systemic racism and inequity must also come from program developers and faculty. Power dynamics in classrooms supported by societal

privileging can undermine the efforts of preparing culturally responsive leaders. A commitment to dismantling systemic racism and oppression, outside and within the classroom, the implementation of structures for self-examination, regular invitations for student feedback, and a demonstrated reception of critique are among effective practices towards fostering a culturally responsive environment, which also trains future culturally responsive leaders. Future research is recommended to understand how this is done among white educators, and the experiences of educators and students whose identities have historically been marginalized.

CRL in Leadership vs. Urban Leadership

Future research is recommended to examine the relationships between programs who are described as “urban leadership” and those which effectively prepare culturally responsive leaders. As I collected and sorted through data, this question continued to emerge in my mind. Three programs had relationships to urban education, either through their proximity to urban areas, partnerships with urban districts, or distinct urban cohorts in the department, and as I listened to the description of the urban tangents in the department, I heard intentional themes of culturally responsive leadership (cultural experiences for students in the program, meaningful and positive experiences with the community, using school data to inform cultural gaps in achievement, indigenized and local identities, uses the community as an informative space, sharing information etc.) that otherwise would be left out in a mainstream context if program developers did not strategically design for their inclusion.

As I considered the value of urban leadership as described by participants and looked further into what it meant I wondered what set urban leadership philosophies apart from more mainstream leadership programs, and why these principles were not the standard among all

principal preparation programs. This is a question recommended for further inquiry and exploration.

Emotional Labor on BIPOC Faculty and Students

Principal candidates and university educators existed in varying points in their journeys towards developing their identities and understanding race as it pertains to social justice and inequity. In an effort to cultivate cultural competency among educators, particularly educational leaders in this study, it is important to do so in the context of identity. As mentioned previously, participants valued diversity within cohorts, and yet diversity alone did not guarantee positive outcomes. In fact, it could be detrimental for students if not supported appropriately. As we arrive from different points in our journey towards a sense of self and cultural competency, it is important to consider how these broad understandings can contribute to the ways in which students experience faculty and their peers. Educators who are preparing culturally responsive leaders must also be sensitive to power and privilege in their own seats; negotiating between diversity and exploitation or tokenism. Liberation comes when diverse representation exists without the responsibility to carry the burden of teaching. Equity is possible when people who hold privileged identities examine ways in which their privilege shows up, when they do their own work, without dominating the narrative. These intersectional identities and proximity to power and privilege play out in program structure at the instructor level, and among students.

Capitalism Driving Decisions

Unsurprisingly, money seemed to impact program chair perceptions of what they must do, and how they could do it. Program leaders driven to maintain student enrollment risk compromising the integrity of the principal pipeline if they are not strategic in their approach. Most program chair participants referenced a value towards diverse candidates, however many

did not reflect that in their enrolled student demographics. Programs who were successful in maintaining desired outcomes were creative and resourceful in their approaches. Program developers ought to consider how limited resources may impact their strategizing and develop systems to ensure they do not compromise on product quality in an effort to maintain productivity.

Are There Gatekeepers?

As program chairs described the pace at which their students developed as culturally responsive leaders and the levels they had hit upon graduation, I couldn't help but wonder who the gatekeepers are. Who determines what a principal is? What qualities are most important? What is "qualified"? And how *qualified* is enough? Universities have requirements for admission. State policies determine broad standards for principal certification. Some universities go beyond state requirements to prepare principals, noting a gap in state policy and efficacy. Others rely on national standards to provide direction, or a combination of all the aforementioned. Yet, in most states, determining who is eligible to become a school leader falls on university programs, state policies, and a school district's hiring committee. The existence of so many variables begs the question, "Who is responsible for ensuring principals in schools will get the job done?"

The answer could be universities, state policymakers, national and regional organizations dedicated to the advancement of educational leaders, or a combination of them all. Indeed, as program developers and policy makers determine the requirements for individuals to lead schools, so they must also acknowledge a shared responsibility for identifying what schools need and implement reflexive practices to ensure their practices and policies meet student need in K-12 schools. CRL is needed in U.S. schools.

My Whiteness

Critical consciousness of my whiteness and how it showed up in my research was sought through reflexivity and reflection. Ultimately, however, I cannot escape it. Though I am many things, I am also white, and perceived as such by participants too. This may have impacted the way participants interacted with me, and it certainly impacted the questions I sought answers to. Just as *we can't teach what we don't know* (Howard, 2016) so did I struggle as the researcher to unveil what I have not experienced. Freire (2018) argued that the oppressed must lead the movement towards liberation. This notion was echoed within me throughout this multiple case study. In applying a white racial lens, I did not anticipate some challenges to cultivating culturally responsive leaders that student and program chair participants who identified as BIPOC faced until they described them. This is a limitation, one that could be delimited by seeking more participants from broader and more diverse identities, including more participants of marginalized identities. Moreover, a research team who represents broad and diverse lived experiences and identities would also enhance the pursuit of discovery. Future research should absolutely seek out the voices of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. If we are to understand effective approaches to nurturing culturally responsive leaders in the United States, we must showcase the voices of those who have been most negatively impacted in our failure to do so, historically. This includes current faculty of color and students of color who have participated in principal preparation programs across the country.

Conclusion

A culturally rich society deserves a culturally responsive education system. As principal preparation programs grow the next batch of principal candidates, they must also cultivate a pipeline representative of and sensitive to the needs of all the students they serve. As a

profession, we are moving in the direction towards preparing culturally responsive leaders, and yet gaps remain in our approaches to do so. Creativity, resourcefulness, intentionality, and accountability are necessary for constructing preparation programs that effectively prepare principals to lead schools in a culturally responsive manner.

CHAPTER IV

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP AS PART OF PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAM APPROVAL AND LICENSURE: A POLICY BRIEF

Introduction

School leaders play a significant role in students' education (Grissom et al., 2015; Grissom et al., 2017; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Theoharris, 2007; Waters et al., 2003). Among their many influences, principals impact school climate, instructional practices, recruitment and retention of faculty and staff, and school programming (Rowland, 2017). As diversity in U.S. schools rises, so too does the cultural capital flowing through the hallways. A school leader's ability to tend to and tap into student cultural assets through leadership practices subsequently impacts their students' outcomes (Horsford et al., 2011).

In recent years, policy makers have emphasized the impact of school leadership on a school community by calling for attention to the ways in which we prepare principals to lead in schools (Mendels, 2016; Knight Abowitz, 2019). Many scholars have examined and reported promising policies and practices for the evolution of principal preparation programs this century (Barakat et al., 2019; Clement et al., 2020; Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Grissom et al., 2019; Hernandez et al., 2012; Mendels, 2016; Wang et al., 2018). As programs evolve, policy makers and principal program developers in higher education are called to consider strategies for growing educators who effectively lead for every student in increasingly diverse schools in the United States. Ladson-Billings (1995) might call this sort of *effective* leadership 'just good leadership'.

Culturally responsive school leadership positively impacts student engagement in school life and academic success (Bustamante et al., 2009). The purpose of this policy brief is to inform policy makers, principal preparation program developers, and aspiring principals about policies and practices for enhancing the preparation of culturally responsive leaders.

This policy brief provides information about the following question:

1. What practices do university principal preparation programs employ to cultivate school leaders who are prepared for cultural responsiveness?

Culturally Responsive Leadership

The practice of school leadership where students' cultural identities inform educational practices and policy is frequently referred to in varying terms. Culturally responsive leadership (CRL) (Taliaferro, 2011), culturally sustaining leadership (Paris, 2012; Santamaria & Santamaria, 2016), social justice leadership (S JL) (Theoharis, 2007), culturally relevant leadership (Beachum, 2011; Horsford et al., 2011), and culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) (Khalifa et al., 2016) have been used by researchers and practitioners to describe inclusive schooling practices that seek to eliminate marginalization and close the opportunity gap in schools through leadership dedicated to student culture and identity.

Many commonalities exist among these terms and their collective definitions have contributed to the framework of culturally responsive leadership (CRL) which guided this brief. Under this definition, culturally responsive leaders have a strong sense of self and are prepared to practice critical self-reflection about leadership behaviors as they lead. They call in student identity and cultural capital to inform curriculum and school programming, empower the team of educators to critique existing structures and address student opportunity gaps, and engage and build on students' indigenous contexts. For the purpose of this brief, I looked to Bustamante,

Nelson, and Onwuegbuzie’s description of culture (2009), “a learned meaning system of shared beliefs, values, norms, symbols, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that members of a group use to make sense of their world and foster a sense of identity and community”. Using this definition, culturally responsive leaders tend to all broad and varying identities of their constituents.

Preparing Culturally Responsive Leaders

The preparation of culturally responsive leaders is multi-pronged. Researchers have examined practices for preparing principal candidates for the needs of diverse school environments. The body of literature offering a clear image of strategies for cultivating culturally responsive pre-service and in-service leaders is scant (Brown, 2006; Gooden & O’Doherty, 2015; Jones, 2017; Keiser, 2010; Lightfoot, 2003; Murakami Ramalho et al., 2009; Ward, 2018; Ylimaki et al., 2014). The findings from the Pugliese Study, a collection of five university principal preparation program case studies from varying locations across the United States provided further information related to programmatic approaches specifically focused on culturally responsive leadership development. Integral approaches highlighted in the study were strategic district partnerships, the implementation of cohort models, attention to faculty and student identity, and the curricular structure of content related to CRL.

District Partnerships

Anderson and Reynolds (2015) developed a report which assessed state policy directing principal preparation in the United States. Among their findings, Anderson and Reynolds outlined a rationale for five policies impacting principal program approval by the state, and three policies related to individual candidate licensure. Among the five program policies is the university-district partnership, three criteria were identified as elements of university-district partnerships: (a) clinically rich internship, (b) collaboration between the district and university

for recruitment and selection, and (c) district need and program design alignment. All three elements support principal development, and each has the potential to also support CRL development.

As stated in the Pugliese Study, district partnerships support multi-faceted CRL development. Through intentional and strong district partnerships, universities can create a pathway to recruit diverse and promising candidates, learn from their state's districts in regard to what is needed for an effective school leader regionally, foster mentoring relationships for principal candidates and current district leaders, and make connections with hiring teams to support future candidate success. Additionally, future candidates will enter the workforce with a network of likeminded educators who have a history of collaboration together. Furthermore, universities who partner with districts can support continuous education practices for in-service educators, providing professional development and mutual learning opportunities.

When superintendents are supportive of principal preparation, culturally responsive student learning outcomes are greater and more sustainable (Murakami Ramalho et al., 2009; Ylimaki et al., 2014). District partnerships also lead to more fruitful outcomes for internships because interns and leadership share similar agendas (Lightfoot, 2003). Partnered university faculty and district personnel can collaborate on desired outcomes pertaining to cultural competency.

For recruitment. District partnerships can lead to an intentionally diverse pipeline of school leaders. Program developers who partner with district leaders have the opportunity to communicate about who they are looking to admit to their programs. They are also introduced to a large pool of candidates. There is a need for leadership whose identities mirror those of the students in their schools. Student achievement is enhanced when students of color are taught by

educators of shared racial and ethnic backgrounds (Bartanen and Grissom, 2019; Egalite et al., 2015; Gershenson et al., 2016; Gershenson et al., 2018; Grissom and Redding, 2016; Lindsay and Hart, 2017). School leaders of color increase the likelihood of the recruitment and retention of teachers of color as well (Bartanen and Grissom, 2019). Diverse educator identities are beneficial for all students. White students and those who hold socially privileged identities also benefit from diverse representation among their school leaders (Wells et al., 2016). For these reasons, it is important that principal pipelines echo diverse racial and ethnic identities, as well as a broad range of other identities related to culture. District partners can exchange ideas, in both directions, about who future leaders should be.

In addition to diversifying the leader pipeline, intentional recruitment practices through district partnerships also benefit principal preparation programs. Programs with diverse student identities in their cohorts foster cross-cultural dialogue and the ability to navigate and draw from cultural differences. Students in heterogeneous groups are exposed to new ways of knowing and further opportunities for growth. Principal programs with more diversity provide richer learning opportunities for their students. Inclusive of all identities, CRL is developed through systematic and thoughtful learning experiences alongside people of diverse backgrounds (Taliaferro & Sigler, 2012).

To inform program outcomes. Mutually beneficial district partnerships nurture a cycle of exchange between program developers and district leaders. Strong partnerships for CRL development look to districts to provide insight for program development and desired outcomes, they also offer professional development opportunities for practicing educators. Partner districts inform program developers of current needs, and program developers construct curriculum based on this information, existing policy, and current scholarship.

CRL Content

School leadership program developers who aim to prepare culturally responsive leaders must be intentional about introducing opportunities to cultivate CRL in their students throughout the program. In addition to CRL themes threaded throughout curriculum, programs should also create a specific course dedicated to cultural competency and CRL.

Cultural competency course. The creation of a cultural competency course establishes it as a requirement for school leadership development, prioritizing CRL courses alongside instructional leadership, organization and administration, policy, finance, and law etc. while signifying its importance. Indeed, though a cultural competency course is foundational, CRL is integral to all school leadership and should be used as a lens in all areas of leadership development, in every other course.

Threaded throughout. Because CRL is not just one aspect of good leadership, rather it *is* good leadership (Bogotch, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995), effective leader development programs thread CRL development opportunities throughout future school leader curriculum. Aspiring school leaders enter principal preparation programs at different positions in their cultural competency and CRL development. Because of this, one class dedicated to CRL outcomes is not sufficient. Faculty who are culturally competent can tie in themes of CRL into all coursework with attention to culture, oppression, and responsive practices.

Programs that establish themselves as attentive to equitable and culturally responsive also attract principal candidates who desire to grow in CRL and engage as culturally responsive leaders in the future. By threading these themes throughout, and marketing program courses online, programs share their values with prospective students and support the recruitment efforts towards diverse and equity-minded educators.

Cohorts

Cohorts are a common model for arranging principal candidates in their education process. Cohort models allow for the progression of strong relationships among classmates and potential future collaborators in education. Cohorts have the ability to foster strong support networks for students during their studies and after the complete a program. Additionally, cohorts provide frequent and ongoing exposure to ones' peers, thus creating opportunities for progression through discourse. Intimate relationships with classmates can foster deep exploration.

Cohorts that are diverse create an environment to share varying lived experiences and perspectives. Dialogue and communication are common strategies practiced in school leadership training. Cohesiveness, trust, and familiarity in a learning environment supports productive discourse (Lightfoot 2003; Murakami Ramalho et al.,2009; Ward, 2018). University educators who are sensitive to the broad identities in the room, comfortable disrupting oppressive practices and inequity, open to feedback, and connected with themselves and their students can facilitate productive cohort engagement.

Faculty

Faculty identity is an important factor to consider in conjunction with student development, particularly when considering future school leader CRL development (Brown, 2006; Lightfoot, 2003). One cannot call for school leaders dedicated to CRL without considering leaders in higher education settings with a similar mindset and readiness. Diverse faculty committed to CRL are essential for cultivating CRL in principal candidates. Faculty whose research interests are related to culturally responsive educational practices are better prepared to teach courses that foster CRL development in their students. Additionally, student outcomes are better when faculty represent broad identities (Stout et al., 2018).

Accountability Measures

How do policy makers and program developers know if their outcomes are achieved if there is no explicit way to assess it? If we as educators want to impact change, inspire growth, meet desired student outcomes, if we want to prepare principal candidates and in-service principals to be culturally responsive leaders, we must have a method to measure it.

Though programs across the United States may express a desire to prepare principals as culturally responsive leaders, many lack a system for evaluating CRL practices while their students matriculate through the program, and once they are sitting school leaders. Portfolios, summative assessments, and informal alumni check-ins are some methods to assess change (Brown, 2006; Gooden & O’Doherty, 2015; Jones, 2017; Keiser, 2010; Lightfoot, 2003; Ward, 2018). Programs with clear and specific learning outcomes connected to CRL and a system for assessment post-graduation can determine if training approaches are appropriate and effective and adjust if need be.

Policy and Practice Recommendations

Policy makers who cultivate state-wide and national standards for principal preparation are oftentimes disconnected from regional needs (Bogotch, 2011). For this reason, we used existing literature and the Pugliese Case Study, to inform generalizable policy recommendations. Recommendations for the integration of these elements into principal preparation are described below. There are two policy recommendations, five practice recommendations for program developers, and three recommendations for future research.

Recommendations for Policy Makers

While detailed policy for leadership preparation exists from state to state, little explicitly addresses a national need to prepare educators to meet the opportunity gaps of an increasingly diverse student population. Thus, two recommendations are provided here for federal and state

policy makers. The first focuses on district partnerships, the second policy recommendation is related to the requirement of a diversity course.

- University programs must have mutually beneficial and ongoing partnerships with districts in their state. Partnerships will enhance university program curriculum development, provide professional development for educators in the district, and create a pipeline for recruitment both into the university and back out into the district.
- All university programs must require at least one course dedicated to diversity before students may qualify for certification in the state. It is encouraged also. That tenets of CRL are threaded throughout coursework. It is also encouraged that internships take place cross-culturally.

Recommendations for Principal Preparation Program Leaders

State policy provides standards and guidelines for university program development, and yet freedom still exists for program developers to incorporate aspects and practices in their principal preparation programs. For this reason, I provided recommendations for program leaders as they consider ways to ‘fill in the gaps’ not met by their state policy, towards implementing effective practices dedicated to preparing culturally responsive school leaders who are prepared to lead for liberation. Five recommendations are provided for program leaders related to (a), student recruitment (b) cohorts, (c) faculty, (d) curricular requirements and, (e) accountability measures. Furthermore, it is also recommended programs adopt strong district-partnerships and a required diversity course as described in the previous section.

- Intentionally recruit diverse principal candidates who reflect the diverse identities of students in U.S. classroom, including but not limited to language, gender, religion, race, ethnicity, ability, and socioeconomic background, with enhanced consideration of

individuals whose identities have historically been marginalized. Consider the student representation in surrounding districts and recruit principal candidates who reflect those demographics. Additionally, consider the representation among teachers and school leaders and disrupt inequitable representation through recruiting efforts.

- Implement a cohort model. Cohorts that are diverse foster an environment where students can engage in different ways of knowing, interrogate systems with broad perspectives, and foster safety and trust among their co-conspirators. They also create ongoing support networks when principals enter schools.
- Hire diverse faculty. Oftentimes, university programs are heralded for their full-time faculty and research projects. It is recommended that principal preparation programs hire faculty who represent broad identities and experiential knowledge, who are also committed to culturally responsive practices as evidenced by their research or practical application. A heterogeneous group of educators can shed light on a range of ideas and will also mirror the diversity reflected from students, providing student support through visibility. It is also recommended that the group of faculties be small and intimate enough to facilitate ongoing dialogue and streamline program planning amongst team-members.
- It is recommended that in addition to a required diversity course, that students engage with content that will develop their CRL knowledge and ability throughout their schooling. Equity audits, autobiographical reflections, and the practice of strategic planning for the promotion of culturally competent policies and practices are recommended strategies. It is also recommended that program developers create an ‘at a glance’, or scope and sequence that depicts where, when, and the frequency of which students will grow as culturally responsive leaders, hitting these tenets in each course.

The cohort model coupled with a diverse and intimate group of faculties who are dedicated to CRL will support this recommendation.

- Develop accountability measures to assess principals' CRL abilities throughout the program, as a requirement for completion, and while they are leading schools once they have graduated. The accountability system will ensure students not only understand CRL, but integrate it in their leadership, truly leading for liberation and a just society.

Recommendations for Researchers

- Study a reputable program for developing culturally responsive leaders, develop an accountability process to determine the extent that program graduates apply CRL practices once they become principals.
- Replicate the Pugliese multiple case study centering the voices of participants whose identities have historically been marginalized by society.
- Conduct an in-depth study to better understand activities and assignments embedded within courses which directly cultivate CRL.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

My dissertation consisted of three articles. The first article was a systematic synthesis and review of literature that studied the ways in which principal preparation programs prepared school leaders to be culturally responsive. The second article was a multiple case study where I examined the policies and practices of five principal preparation programs in diverse universities across the continental United States. The final article was a policy brief based on the findings from the systematic review and multiple case studies.

In the systematic review, I identified eight studies from 1994 to September 2020 which evaluated approaches to preparing school leaders for CRL. From those eight studies, I identified eight themes related to programmatic approaches and policies and nine subthemes. The eight themes I identified were (a) reflection, (b) discourse, (c) the power of experiential learning, (d) equity auditing, (e) strong models for support, (f) historical understanding, (g) identity matters, and (h) assessing the CRL readiness outcomes and application.

Programs integrated reflection practices as part of the strategies to prepare culturally responsive leaders. Principal candidates engaged in dialogue, experiential learning, and equity audits to develop their CRL. Among the interventions implemented by program developers were strong support scaffolds including cohort models, district partnerships, and mentorship. Principal preparation also included cultivating a historical understanding of student achievement inequities and attention to the role identity plays in the development of CRL.

In the multiple case study, I conducted an in-depth analysis of five universities in the United States. I synthesized the findings from the five universities in a multiple case analysis to identify nine themes and seven subthemes. The themes among multiple cases included (a)

partnerships, (b) faculty, (c) students, (d) recruitment, (e) cohort, (f) program philosophies, (g) efficiency, (h) accountability and (i) standards and policy.

The multiple case study expanded findings from the systematic review, particularly offering more insight and details regarding the benefits of partnerships as they related to CRL development. Partnerships enhanced recruitment processes, curriculum objectives, and networking opportunities.

Additionally, findings about assessment of CRL from the case studies supported the findings from the systematic review. Program chairs acknowledged limited systems in place to assess CRL. The review of literature and multiple case studies uncovered minimal accountability systems in place to determine whether students who complete university programs integrated CRL into their practice once they became school leaders.

The policy brief, which was the third article in this dissertation, drew from a synthesis of findings from the systematic review and multiple case studies. It also included recommendations for policy makers and program developers. Five recommendations were provided for program developers related to (a), student recruitment, (b) cohorts, (c) faculty, (d) curricular requirements and, (e) accountability measures. In addition to the five recommendations for program developers I also recommended policy amendments related to district partnerships and the requirement of a diversity course.

Two main limitations should be considered in relation to this body of work. The first limitation is in the number of articles pertaining to the development of culturally responsive leaders included in the systematic review. The second main limitation is related to the minimal diversity represented among participants in the multiple case studies.

It is recommended that future researchers conduct a systematic review of studies examining the preparation of students related to the concepts of social justice leadership, culturally sustaining leadership, culturally responsive school leadership, culturally responsive leadership, and culturally relevant leadership. An analysis of each leadership theory or approach and synthesis of their practices and paradigms is suggested.

In addition to a subsequent review of literature, it is recommended that future researchers study the phenomenological experience of people whose identities have historically been marginalized in society and education. Students and faculty engaged in principal preparation programs whose identities have historically been oppressed will offer insight into effective practices which lead to liberation. By centering the voices and perspectives of people whose lived experiences share similarities among those who we intend to liberate through CRL we dismantle an inequitable structure and co-construct a roadmap serving the interests of the oppressed.

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APPENDIX A

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

Participant Name:

Affiliated Principal Preparation Program:

Years as Program Chair:

1. How do you define Culturally Responsive Leadership?
2. How important is the aspect of Culturally Responsive Leadership in your principal preparation program?
3. How do you know, please explain?
4. How is the value of Culturally Responsive Leadership training determined?
5. How are learning outcomes for your students as they relate to Culturally Responsive Leadership identified and determined?
6. How are students assessed if have met desired learning outcomes as they pertain to Culturally Responsive Leadership efficacy?
7. What challenges exist in the training of Culturally Responsive Leaders?
8. How are program participants recruited?
9. What strategies do faculty employ to develop culturally responsive leaders in the program?
10. How would you rate your program's efficacy in preparing culturally responsive leaders?

APPENDIX B

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. How do you define Culturally Responsive Leadership?
2. How important is the aspect of Culturally Responsive Leadership in the approaches you take to preparing future principals in the program?
3. What evidence supports this?
4. How do you determine the value of Culturally Responsive Leadership training?
5. How do you identify the learning outcomes you seek for your students as they relate to Culturally Responsive Leadership?
6. How do you assess if your students have met desired learning outcomes as they pertain to Culturally Responsive Leadership efficacy?
7. What challenges do you face in training Culturally Responsive Leaders?
8. How do you recruit program participants?
9. What strategies do faculty employ to develop culturally responsive leaders in the program?
10. How would you rate your program's efficacy in preparing culturally responsive leaders?

APPENDIX C

EMAIL TO UCEA PROGRAM CHAIRS

Dear XX,

I am a doctoral candidate at Texas A&M University under the direction of Dr. Beverly Irby. I am interested in studying UCEA principal preparation programs and the ways in which pre-service principals are trained to be Culturally Responsive leaders. I selected this topic to examine in my dissertation in hopes to identify current practices, policies, and challenges as they relate to preparing leaders for culturally responsiveness as they lead K-12 schools in the United States.

This year has been especially challenging, and time is one of those resources that has been consumed more than ever. I understand if you are unable to participate. If you have time, I am seeking a response to this open-ended questionnaire. Questionnaire completion should not take longer than 20-minutes. I am hoping to have representation from a variety of programs across the five main regions of the United States. Additionally, I am seeking programs representative of large, medium, and small student population. Your responses to the questions will be used in determining whether your program will be included in the interview portion. If selected, I will schedule a 30-45 minute interview to clarify responses to the survey and ask further follow-up questions, if need be, a second 30-minute interview will be scheduled.

Please complete the attached survey by XX, 2021, three weeks from today. I will send follow-up emails before they are due as a reminder. Thank you for your consideration, I look forward to hearing back from you.

Best,

Elisabeth Pugliese

APPENDIX D

STUDY INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT

Project Title: An Analysis of Policy and Practices in Preparing Culturally Responsive Leaders

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Elisabeth Pugliese for her dissertation under the direction of Dr. Beverly Irby, a researcher at Texas A&M University. The information in this form is provided to help you determine if you would like to participate in the study. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to sign the consent form. There is no penalty if you decide you do not want to participate.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the study is to study the perceptions of stakeholders in UCEA principal preparation programs about the meaning of culturally responsive leadership, the role it plays in principal preparation program policies and standards, approaches in which students are prepared to be culturally responsive leaders, and the challenges towards doing so. I selected this topic to study for my dissertation in hopes that I may create a resource for future program developers and policy creators to consider when thinking about standards and requirements for K-12 principal preparation and credentialing.

Why am I being asked to be in this study?

Participants in this study include program chairs, current students, and graduates of principal preparation programs at UCEA member universities across the United States. You are being

asked because you are the program chair at your university and are considered an expert in your field or a student of this program and can give insight into program details.

What are alternatives to being in the study?

You are not required to participate.

What will I be asked to do in this study?

You will be asked to reflect about your principal preparation program and answer an open-ended questionnaire. Your participation in this survey may take 15-30 minutes to complete and may include an optional follow-up interview that lasts 60- minutes and a second brief interview no longer than 30-minutes. If you complete the questionnaire, you will be automatically considered to participate in the follow-up interviews.

If you complete the questionnaire and volunteer for the follow-up interview:

The interview will be held virtually, through GoToMeeting and should only last 30-45 minutes. I will use this time to ask follow-up questions from the initial questionnaire. **I will ask you to sign this consent form as indication that you are willing to be audio or video recorded.**

Will photos, video, or audio recordings be made of me in the study?

I will record our interview session during the study, so the data can be validated only if you give your permission. If you do not consent to this, you will be unable to participate in the study. You will have the option to audio record or audio with video record.

Please initial below indicating your decision to participate:

_____ I give my permission for audio or video recording of me during my participation in this research study.

_____ I **do not** give my permission for audio or video recording of me during my participation in this research study.

Are there any risks to me?

The risk associated with participation in this study may be associated with a breach of privacy or confidentiality. Pseudonyms will be used to replace names of participants and universities. The rich and descriptive nature of a case study may offer opportunity for readers to discern participant identities.

Will there be any costs?

There are no financial expenses related to this study, only our time 😊

Will I be paid in this study?

You will not be financially compensated for participation, but I may pass on a virtual high-five.

Will information from this study be kept private?

Data retrieved from this study will be kept private and stored on password protected devices only available to Elisabeth Pugliese and Beverly Irby. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any published materials. This consent form will be stored securely digitally as well. People who have access to your information include the Principal Investigator and research study personnel. The IRB at Texas A&M University may also have access to records. Information about you and anything you share will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by the law, pseudonyms will be used in all reports outside of study personnel and IRB.

Who can I contact for more information?

The Principal Investigator is Dr. Beverly Irby at Beverly.irby@tamu.edu. If you have a concern or complaint you may contact her. Additionally, if you have questions, you may contact the Protocol Director, Elisabeth Pugliese at billypugliese@tamu.edu

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I agree to be in this study and know that I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. I agree for interviews to be video and/or audio recorded. I understand the

procedures, risks, and benefits to participating. I know that the researcher may not contact me for a follow-up interview but that by completing this form I volunteer to participate in the interview. I can ask more questions at any point to receive further clarification.

NAME

DATE