CULTURALLY PROFICIENT LEADERSHIP: TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN URBAN, TITLE I SCHOOLS

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This study examined elementary teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s level of cultural proficiency. Practices for Developing a Culturally Competent School Environment, a survey Camille Smith and adapted by Dr. Mack T. Hines, was completed from a sample size of 119 teachers. The survey contained 35 items, including six constructs: valuing diversity, assessing the culture, managing the dynamics of difference, institutionalizing cultural knowledge and resources, adapting to diversity and inclusiveness. Teachers rated their principal using a Likert scale which consisted of 1 = never uses, 2 = rarely uses, 3 = sometimes uses, 4 = frequently uses, and 5 = always uses.

Teachers of various races, ages and years with their principal participated in this study. The study reveals that these variables do not make a statistically significant difference in the teachers’ perception of how proficient they are in valuing diversity, a assessing his/her own culture and institutionalizing cultural knowledge. This quantitative study reveals the variances of statistical significance of teacher demographics: age, gender, years served under current principal and accountability rating of the school. Cultural proficiency is important to the development and maintenance of the necessary relationships among students, teachers, principals and the school community.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

American public schools in the 21st century were more diverse than previous ones due to a massive influx of students from diverse cultures and ethnicities (Riehl, 2000). Policy makers, local school boards, and communities continued to challenge principals to create a culture that was responsive to the needs of a diverse student population (Lindsey, Nuri-Robins & Terrell, 2009). It is essential that the principal is culturally proficient and leads with a respect for diversity. This study focused on the cultural proficiency of elementary principals as seen through the eyes of teachers.

Urban schools classified as having culturally proficient leadership are those whose organizational structures are created by embracing the cultural norms and values of stakeholders of the schools (Lindsey et al., 2009a). However, research should examine whether principals met this challenge. In particular, elementary principals should be evaluated on their ability to implement strategies which develop culturally proficient schools. According to Lindsey et al. (2009b), “cultural proficiency is a way of being, a worldview, and a perspective that are the basis for how one moves about in our diverse society” (p. 166). Cultural proficiency included the “policies and practices of an organization or the values and behaviors of an individual that enable that organization or person to interact effectively with clients, colleagues, and the community using the essential elements of cultural competence: assessing culture, valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, adapting to diversity and institutionalizing cultural knowledge” (Lindsey et al., 2009b, p. 166).

The review of literature on urban school leadership focused on its importance for the effectiveness of school operations, improved teaching and learning, and increased
student achievement (Roley, 2008). Students who experienced minimal school achievement dropped out during their high school years. When looking at graduation and dropout rates, African-Americans were three times as likely as their White peers to drop out (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Lan and Lanthier (2003) found that dropout prevention indicated that students need an environment that encourages learning and provides students with multiple opportunities for success. School leadership played an integral role in cultivating a climate promoting student learning that increases high school completion rates and decreases dropout rates (MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009).

The achievement gaps and completion rates were affected by the relationships that principals have with the school community. Practicing cultural proficiency created a community of learners (Littky, Diaz, Dolly, Hempel, Plant, Price, & Grabelle, 2004). Consequently, the superintendent’s role was complex and accountable to the multicultural issues that affect the academic achievement of the students in our schools today (White, 2007). Educational leaders of academically successful districts with populations of demographically diverse students recognized that the achievement gap had multiple causes and must be confronted with varied approaches, including training educators to understand the cultural differences of the students they teach (Rothman, 2001).

A series of correlational studies have shown that school climate was directly related to academic achievement. The evidence found in the literature demonstrates that this was true for the elementary schools (Sherblom, Marshall, & Sherblom, 2006; Sterbinksky, Ross, & Redfield, 2006), and for all levels of schooling (MacNeil et al., 2009).
With over 5,141,880 students (Texas Education Agency, 2013-14), most of the students in Texas were Hispanic (51.8%) and White (29.4%), and more than half were economically disadvantaged. Another report found that the average freshmen high school graduation rate for the United States was 74.9% (United States Department of Education, 2010). According to Steinberg and Kinchloe (2004), "students in urban areas are two times as likely to leave before graduation, and dropouts are 30-60% in some U.S. urban schools" (p. 55). Only 51% of African American students and 52% of Hispanic students in the U.S. graduate. In Texas, 2.2% of the students in 2013 dropped out of high school.

The decision to leave school was not made spontaneously, and when students finally arrived at the point where they left school they were ending a slow process of disengagement that accumulated over a period of time (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Wulsin, 2008; Gallagher, 2002; Lee & Burkam, 2003; Smyth & Haltam, 2001; Wolk, 2009). Wolk (2009) found that many students decided by the eighth grade to leave school but they just wasted time until they finally left. These students often experienced the desire to drop out of school long before their high school years.

Students at risk of dropping out of school could be identified as early as the first grade (Lee & Burkam, 2003). Patterson, Hale, and Stressman (2007) argued that cultural conflicts between schools and family, racist teachers and administrators, lack of motivation and not being committed or valuing education were reasons why some students dropped out of school. Even though many of these circumstances were prevalent at the secondary level, they were also seen in elementary schools. Therefore, a strong foundation in addressing students' needs and diversity at the elementary level
was necessary to increase student motivation and strengthen relationships between educators and students.

Lee and Burkam (2003) found that the relationship between students, teachers and administrators was a determining factor for a student to drop out. Therefore, it was important to establish meaningful relationships between all stakeholders of the school environment and maintain a level of inclusiveness when establishing educational goals. It has been shown that the more collaborative and collegial the schools culture the better the student performance, thus resulting in students who were more likely to stay in school (Patterson et al., 2007). Students who were educated in a caring, structured learning environment experienced more success than being schooled in a culturally unresponsive campus. Klem and Connell (2004) suggested that providing a caring school environment, relationship building, and personalization as interventions positively increased student academic performance. When considering school reform, strong relationships between and among students and teachers were important elements in student achievement (Darling-Hammond, Ancess, & Ort-Wichterle, 2002). These strong relationships between teachers and students were formed because of the leadership practices used among principals.

Culturally proficient leaders provided teachers and staff members with diversity training and cultural knowledge. These principals ensured that the school's campus improvement goals reflect cultural learning and afforded teachers and staff the opportunity to examine their own assumptions and stereotypes of various cultural groups. Such professional training should also provide teachers with the knowledge and skills they needed to interact effectively in cross-cultural situations (Banks,
Cookson, Gay, & Hawley, 2001; Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 1999) and to deliver instruction that ensured all students have equal opportunities to experience both academic and social success (Banks et al., 2001). This type of professional training reduced discipline problems and lowered student dropout rates (Banks et al., 2001; Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2009; Steele, 1992).

This study examined elementary teachers’ perceptions of their principals as culturally proficient leaders. A Likert scale, comprised of a 35-item survey, was distributed to teachers in an effort to analyze their principal’s proficiency in the following areas: valuing diversity, assessing their culture, managing the dynamics caused by difference, institutionalizing cultural knowledge, adapting to diversity, and inclusiveness.

Background of the Study

Ensuring that all populations achieved at each grade and content level was essential, meaning many principals were required to serve as cultural workers. Hence, school leaders must understand their own respective cultures, as well as the values and experiences of that culture (Roberts, 2010). During the past decade, there had been a thrust in the integration of tiered and differentiated instruction in urban classrooms across America. This instruction ensured that the uniqueness of students was addressed during the design and delivery of lessons (Gay, 2000). Culturally proficient leadership mirrored this same level of responsiveness.

Since urban schools were becoming increasingly diverse, it was essential that principals acquired a deeper understanding of cultural proficiency and the impact that it has on campus achievement. Within the complex leadership role of the superintendent
was the goal of closing the achievement gap and building cultural proficiency in diverse school districts among the teachers, community members, administrators, and parents of the district (Lindsey, Roberts, & Campbell-Jones, 2005). As an instructional leader, the principal also played an essential role in closing the achievement gap (Wagner, 2008). Campus leadership that addressed and embraced the many cultures on the campus became essential due to the growing diversity in urban schools.

Problem Statement

Texas’ educational efforts to address the need for culturally proficient leadership among principals was minimal in meeting challenges of the diverse needs of students and staff members. The role of multicultural education has taken on several meanings within the past several decades. Such terms and phrases as “diversity,” “multicultural education,” or “cultural awareness in education” have transformed to more in-depth meanings such as “cultural competency” or “cultural proficiency” (Lindsey et al., Terrell, Robins, & Lindsey, 2010). Campus leaders and administrators must become knowledgeable in how to respond culturally to this diverse population of students and apply practices correlated to culturally relevant instruction and leadership (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

A paradigm shift was needed to reframe equity and inclusion as a problem to be solved and to understand and embrace differences (Lindsey et al., 2009a). This paradigm shift allowed educators to view their roles in meeting the needs of underserved students rather than helping underachieving students (Nuri-Robins, Lindsey, Lindsey, & Terrell, 2002).
Specifically, most educators, unlike their students, were European American, middle class females and the cultural differences between the educators and their students made them strangers within the dynamics of the daily school environment (Hawley & Nieto, 2010). Campus diversity was growing in the state of Texas. Now more than ever, Title I schools serviced a wide range of students, including African-American, Asian, English language learners (ELL), students with special needs and other student populations. Additionally, the teaching staff of these schools became more diverse. An examination of principals’ level of cultural proficient leadership should be explored because the principal sets the tone of the campus. Principal leadership impacted several aspects of campus daily functioning, including student achievement which influenced the way a teacher teaches (Cox, 2011). Teaching practices impacted learning, accountability ratings and discipline referral submissions. Offering teachers the opportunity to voice their perceptions of their principals as being culturally proficient allowed principals to analyze those perceptions and ultimately, make the necessary adjustments to address the inclusive environment they serve.

It was essential that principals developed an environment that was inclusive and accepting of the various cultures that were present within the campus. Administrators in public schools were now facing student populations more diverse than at any other period in our public school history (Riche, 2000). Therefore, it would be beneficial for professional development in the area of cultural proficiency, specifically, the essential elements of culturally proficiency for school leaders (Lindsey et al., 2010). Due to the increase in campus diversity among teachers and students, administrators must examine their skills, knowledge, attitudes, experiences, and dispositions in order to
meet the challenge of fostering a culturally responsive and diversity-sensitive environment. According to Marx (2002), by the year 2050, the United States will become a “nation of minorities,” with less than half of the population being non-Hispanic White. Principals must face cultural issues which may require a great deal of self-reflection, professional development and a paradigm shift of current campus procedures and practice (Jones, 2002). The current body of literature did not offer research regarding correlation between principals’ use of the essential elements of cultural proficiency and school accountability ratings at the elementary level.

Principals must strive to establish a school culture in which all students could learn and succeed. The issue of race continued to be pervasive in American culture (Kuykendall, 2004). Kuykendall (2004) asserted that educators have to assess their own feelings about students who were racially and culturally different from their own race and culture. An action plan may be developed by using teachers’ perception and self-reflection of assessing their own feelings about culture to enhance the overall functioning of the campus. It became necessary to analyze the perceptions of teachers because they were relevant to the success and growth of the school. Fullan (2005) contended that teacher perceptions were one of the leading concerns that principals face.

Research Questions

This study answered the following overarching question: What were elementary school teachers’ perceptions of their principals as culturally proficient leaders in the area of the essential elements of cultural proficiency (valuing diversity, assessing culture, managing the dynamics caused by difference, institutionalizing cultural knowledge,
adapting to diversity and inclusiveness)? In order to answer the overarching question, this study posed these specific questions:

1. To what extent did teachers perceive their principals effort to demonstrate the essential elements of cultural proficiency?

2. What is the relationship between teacher variables (i.e., race, age and years with principal) and these perceptions of their principal’s demonstration of the essential elements of cultural proficiency?

3. How do culturally proficient ratings of principals differ by school accountability ratings?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to measure the essential elements of cultural proficiency (Lindsey et al., 2005) perceived by elementary school teachers and compare the rating of its constructs to various aspects of the campus. Luper (2011) examined teachers' perceptions of the extent to which high school principals are culturally proficient. Additionally, he examined the contexts of how variables may influence teachers' perceptions of their principals. This study compared the cultural proficiency ratings of principals to their school’s 2014 accountability rating by the Texas Education Agency. A data analysis was conducted to determine if there was a statistical significance between the teachers’ perceptions of the principals as being culturally proficient and the years served on the campus with the principal, including age and race.

The school climate was cultivated by the cultures and beliefs that each teacher
brought to the campus. They must examine how the different contexts of how these variables influence their perceptions of the principal's ethnicity and leadership (Morgan-Brown, 2004). School leaders must be able to interact with people from a variety of cultures and devise strategies that enhance education in diverse settings in order to manage the diversity that exists within their organization (Rothstein-Fisch & Trumbull, 2008; Williams, 2003). The proficiency illustrated the level of value that a principal placed on teachers and how a campus climate was created. The level of proficiency was perceived differently across gender, race and other groups. Therefore, principals were the most significant influences of the culture and climate of schools (Burns, 1978; Schein, 1992). Their leadership actions influenced the perceptions of teachers. Carter (1995) and Delpit (2003) have denoted that this perception was culturally constructed by ethnic and personal beliefs and experiences. Thus, the research of this study could enhance our understandings of how race influences teachers' perceptions of the principal's cultural leadership. Second, teachers brought their various cultures and ethnicities to the school. Consequently, they must examine the different contexts of how these variables influenced their perceptions of the principal's ethnicity and leadership (Morgan-Brown, 2004; Pettigrew, Jemmott, & Johnson, 1984). The purpose of this study was to examine elementary school teachers' perceptions of their principals as culturally proficient leaders.

Significance of the Study

There were several standards developed by organizations to ensure that principals understood the necessary competencies to effectively address diversity. The
Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) designed standards for educational leaders and principals to use as a guide toward leadership of equity and excellence. A leader who was culturally proficient could better manage and provide effective leadership in schools (Lindsey et al., 2009a; Madhlangobe, 2009). There were strong indications from these national organizations, as well as other researchers, that needed to be explored, examined, and developed (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1993; Lindsey et al., 2009a).

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) created an assessment process that assessed similar skills. During the 1990s the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) reviewed the qualifications for the principalship. The NPBEA included most of the major national organizations that represent education administrators from state superintendents to principals, including professors who prepare school administrators. One of the members, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), developed a set of standards for school leaders which are widely used. The CCSSO led the effort to identify a new set of standards for principals. This group was known as the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC).

The six standards that were created by ISLLC were designed to influence the preparation of principals, guide states in the development of their own state principal standards, and serve as a tool for licensure or evaluation. These standards addressed a principal's need to promote the success of all students through the following:

- The creation and implementation of a shared school vision
The nurturing and sustaining of a culture and instructional program conducive to learning and staff development

The ensuring of the management of school operations to produce a safe and effective learning environment

The collaboration with families and the diverse communities schools serve

The promotion of integrity, fairness, and ethical behavior

The interaction with larger political, social, legal, and cultural contexts of schooling (Sergiovanni, 2001, p.20)

These standards helped to shape educational practices and educational planning (Lindahl & Beach, 2009). Johnson and Uline (2005) found the standards help leaders to gain knowledge, perform consistency, and close achievement gaps. The Educational Testing Service (ETS) developed an assessment for licensure that was based on the ISLLC standards for its ISLLC member states. A number of states used this ETS-developed School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) as criteria to grant a license to principals.

There were strong indications from these national organizations, as well as other researchers, that cultural proficiency continued as an area that needed to be explored, examined, and developed (Lindsey et al., 2009a). This study sought to highlight how a teacher’s race, age, gender and years of experience and the amount time spent with their principals impacted their ratings of principals in the area of culturally proficient leadership. Additionally, an analysis of the principal ratings was conducted by the various accountability ratings. It unveiled the level of cultural proficiency among principals in Title I schools located in a large, urban area.
Limitations

This study focused on cultural proficiency ratings of teacher perceptions of their principals. Participants who were relatively new to the campus may have limited, in-depth knowledge of their principal. Research showed that teachers’ perceptions of their principals were influenced by their years of experience with the principal (Morgan-Brown, 2004). Some of the participants may not have spent enough time to evaluate the level of proficiency in cultural leadership efficiently. The research tool for this study was based on a Likert scale which did not allow participants to construct and provide their own responses. Another limitation was the small sample size. The goal was to survey elementary teachers from various geographical locations in a large, urban school district in Texas.

Delimitations

The following delimitations which focus on study parameters, apply to this study (Heppner & Heppner, 2004).

1. Only schools with a grade configuration of grades pre-K through 5 were included in the study.

2. The findings were generalized to populations that are similar to those in the study.

Definition of Terms

• Beliefs - Constructions of attitudes that guide behavior. Beliefs could be inferred from what the individual says or does (Rokeach, 1968). These
beliefs could be discerned through the educators’ verbal statements, pedagogical choices, and classroom behaviors (Sigel, 1985)

- Cultural blindness - Behaving as though differences among cultures did not exist (Lindsey et al., 2005)

- Cultural competence - Interacting with members of other cultural groups in ways that recognized and valued their differences, expanded knowledge and resources, and ultimately caused one to adapt behaviorally (Lindsey et al., 2005)

- Cultural destructiveness - Negating, disparaging, or purging cultures that were different from one’s own (Lindsey et al., 2005)

- Cultural incapacity: Assuming the superiority of one’s own culture (Lindsey et al., 2005)

- Cultural pre-competence - Recognizing that a lack of knowledge, experience, and understanding of other cultures limited one’s ability to interact effectively with members of those cultures (Lindsey et al., 2005)

- Cultural proficiency - Honoring the differences among cultures, viewing diversity as a benefit, and interacting knowledgeably and respectfully with members of other cultural groups in a way that was beneficial for all cultures and ethnicities (Lindsey et al., 2005)

- Culture - A group’s program for survival and adaptation to its environment. Culture consisted of knowledge, concepts, and values shared by group members through systems of communication. Culture also consisted of the shared beliefs, symbols, and interpretations within a group (Garcia, 1999)
• Dispositions - Dispositions were similar to professional beliefs or values systems, but they were more than that. Dispositions extended to professional modes of conduct and the ways in which beliefs and attitudes were displayed by teachers’ actions in and out of the classroom. Teachers with positive professional dispositions tended to act in ways that elevated the profession of teaching in the eyes of others. (Ros-Voseles, & Moss, 2007)

• Dropout - A student enrolled in Grades 7–12 who does not return to public school the following fall; was not expelled; and did not graduate, receive a general educational development (GED) certificate, continued school outside the public school system, began college, or died (U. S. Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics, 2010)

• Elementary schools - Campuses that served pre-K-5 students.

• Engagement: The amount of interest and effort students expended in school (Marks, 2000)

• Professional development - The opportunity to expand knowledge in areas related to curriculum, instruction, pedagogy and campus leadership. It was the degree to which teachers valued continuous personal development and school-wide improvement. Teachers sought ideas from seminars, colleagues, organizations, and other professional sources to maintain current knowledge, particularly current knowledge about instructional practices (Gruenert & Valentine, 1998)

• Race - A "concept that was derived from a genetic designation based on phenotypic characteristics (i.e., physical features such as skin color and hair
texture)" (Sheets & Hollins, 1999, p. 7). The term race denoted large groups of people distinguished from one another by their physical appearances

- Racial identity - "A sense of group of collective identity based on one’s perception that he/she shared a common racial heritage with a particular group" (Helms, 1990, p. 3)

- Social justice - Equal participation of all groups in a society that was mutually shaped to meet their unique needs. Social justice included a vision of society that was equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure (Adams, Bell & Griffin, 1997)

- Sociocultural theory - Particular ways of thinking, acting, and speaking occurred as an individual participates with others in activities that constituted daily life within a cultural community (Vygotsky, 1978)

Summary

The principal, as the school's chief leader, initiated the improvements and sets the tone for change in the school climate that fostered high achievement. Research showed that principals need to be culturally proficient to lead in diverse urban schools effectively. This study examined elementary teachers' perceptions of their principals as culturally proficient leaders. A Likert scale, composed of a 35-item survey, was distributed to teachers in an effort to analyze their perceptions of the principal's proficiency in the following areas: valuing diversity, assessing his/her own culture, managing the dynamics caused by difference, institutionalizing cultural knowledge, adapting to diversity, and inclusiveness. Descriptive and comparative statistics were
used to analyze and disaggregate the data collection. The data revealed how school districts organized future professional development opportunities for pre-K-5 schools in the area of culturally proficient leadership.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter was to examine the conceptual background and current literature related to the study of culturally proficient leadership. Many studies described attributes of effective principals at all levels. However, there was limited research concerning the perceptions that elementary teachers have regarding their principal’s level of leadership in cultural proficiency. Studies from the field of cultural competence in health care and public schools were reviewed to obtain a broader perspective of the idea of cultural proficiency. This review is a compilation of information gathered from educational journals, electronic databases, books and dissertations, including the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC).

Accountability measures should be used to ensure that principals engaged in culturally proficient school practices (Smith, 2004). However, there was a limited body of research that examined how campus administrators were perceived by their teachers as being culturally proficient. The significance of examining the perceptions of teachers was essential. Carter (1995) and Delpit (2003) denoted that this perception was culturally constructed by ethnic and personal beliefs and experiences. There have been studies which concluded that there was a difference in how teachers of different ethnicities and genders rated their principals (Hines & Kritnosis, 2008).

This literature review was divided into five segments. The first section examined the conceptual framework of the essential elements of cultural proficiency exhibited in schools. The second section provided an overview of the demographic composition of a large, urban school district in Texas, including the ethnic, lingual, and socioeconomic
representation of students, teachers, and administrators. Following the established conceptual framework and demographics, the review provided research of Teachers’ Perceptions of Principals, particularly elementary principals and culture in schools. The review included models for professional development in cultural proficiency, descriptions and results of the studies in culturally proficient leadership and practices through multiple perspectives and concludes with an assessment of the literature.

Conceptual Framework

This research was grounded in the conceptual underpinnings of cultural proficiency. This approach responded to an environment shaped by its diversity derived from the seminal work of Cross, Bazron, Dennis, and Isaacs (1989) on cultural competence theory. Cultural proficiency was rooted in cultural competence initiatives, originally based on programs or systems of health care (Cross et al., 1989). These researchers developed a framework of foundational principles and guidelines for revising policies and practices that would improve the quality of care to non-White children in the mental health field. Cultural competence was defined in multiple ways but professionals from many service industries and academic disciplines clearly agreed that it provided an important perspective and skill for professional practice (Perez & Luquis, 2008; Vaughn, 2008; Whaley & Davis, 2007). Schim, Doorenbos, and Borse, (2005) found that cultural competence focuses on understanding knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors based on diverse, relevant, cultural experiences.

Cross et al. (1989) believed that cultural competence also implies having the capacity to function effectively as an individual and an organization within the cultural
context of beliefs, behaviors, and needs. A number of authors added that cultural competence is an ongoing process (Cross et al., 1989; Campinha-Bacote, 2002; Burchum, 2002; Andrews & Boyle, 2003; Giger & Davidhizar, 2004). This process was embraced by Lindsey, Nuri-Robins, and Terrell (1999) and they introduced the concept to the field of education. The research of Cross et al. (1989) empowered Lindsey, Roberts and Campbell-Jones (2005) to incorporate the cultural competence model into the education field, specifically in pre-K-12 schools. Lindsey et al. (1999) reiterated the term “cultural proficiency” rather than “cultural competence and developed the cultural proficiency model. Lindsey, Robins and Terrell (2003) emphasized that culturally proficient leaders were effective in working across lines of racial, ethnic, gender, language, and special needs groups and were similarly effective working among the organizational cultures (e.g., grade-level groupings, departments, parent groups) that exist within schools.

Lindsey, Nuri-Robins, Lindsey and Terrell (2002) believed that cultural proficiency described the behaviors of individuals and organizations characterized by the five essential elements of the ability to assess culture, value diversity, manage the dynamics of difference, adapt to diversity and to institutionalize cultural knowledge. Hines and Kritsonis (2008), Samuels (2010) and Smith (2004) also incorporated inclusiveness as a construct to determine cultural proficiency. This component was included in the survey devised by the Vancouver Ethnocultural Advisory Committee (2002) of the Vancouver Ministry of Children. Inclusiveness embraced different opinions and perspectives from both inside and outside the school community and utilized these diverging outlooks throughout the decision making process (Smith, 2004). This study
utilized the five essential elements and the inclusiveness construct.

This study analyzed the perceptions that teachers have of their principals as being culturally proficient at the elementary level in urban schools. Many believed a person’s perceptions influenced the manner in which he or she exerts his or her power (Campbell-Whatley & Comer, 2000). The beliefs, attitudes and experiences individuals encountered often shaped the dynamics of their position in an organization, as well as, in their personal lives (Norte, 1999). The power of the principal took various forms that are enacted in a continuous relationship with the human experience (Norte, 1999).

Principals must be able to engage and interact with people from various backgrounds and ethnicities. The ability to include various stakeholders to achieve campus goals was essential. Researchers found that measures should be incorporated to ensure that all stakeholders were involved as programs and practices were implemented in organizations.

In the context of a school, principals sustained the most significant influences of the culture and climate (Burns, 1978). Teachers were impacted by the practices that principals employ. Consequently, they developed perceptions of their principal’s leadership effectiveness in building and sustaining an educational environment that demonstrated understanding of the dynamics of diversity. Delpit (2003) noted that this perception was culturally constructed by ethnic and personal beliefs and experiences. Many of these experiences were influenced by socialization norms, family values, and job experiences. Lindsey et al. (2009a) stated that the best path toward effectively responding to cultural diversity within the educational setting was “cultural proficiency.” Villegas and Lucas (2007) viewed cultural proficiency as sociocultural consciousness.
This concept was defined as the awareness that a person’s worldview was not universal but was profoundly influenced by life experiences, as mediated by a variety of factors, including race, ethnicity, gender, and social class (Villegas & Lucas, 2007). According to Lindsey et al. (2003), culture included “Everything you believe and everything you do that enabled you to identify with people who are like you and that distinguished you from people who differ from you. Culture is about groupness. A culture included a group of people identified by their shared history, values, and patterns of behavior” (p. 41). By understanding the role of culture and embracing diversity to achieve campus goals, principals demonstrated the conceptual framework for culturally proficient practices: assessing cultural knowledge, “valuing diversity,” managing the dynamics of difference, adapting to diversity, cultural knowledge (Lindsey et al., 2009a) and inclusiveness (Hines and Kritsonis, 2008).

**Teachers’ Perceptions of Principals**

Teachers’ assessment of leadership, particularly school leadership among principals continued to be critical to the success of the campus. Empirical research supported the use of teacher perception to assess principal leadership behaviors (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1996). Research indicated teachers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of a principal’s leadership impacted student achievement. Egley and Jones (2005) found a correlation between leadership behaviors and student achievement. Their study found a relationship between the elementary teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s leadership behaviors and the accountability rating of the school. O’Donnell and White (2005) found teacher ratings of principals to have
significant positive relationships with both mathematics and reading achievement. The findings from these studies suggested that the leadership skills of the principal and teacher perceptions may potentially improve student achievement.

Woods and Weasmer (2004) found that some principals attempted to refrain from addressing challenges in the workplace and shied away from confronting teachers with problems they observed. The lack of addressing such issues impeded the progress of campus goals. Supovitz, Sirinides and May (2010) conducted a study of teacher perceptions of principal leadership and peer influence. These researchers found a correlation between principal leadership and student outcomes. They found that teachers’ opinions of their principal were potentially more accurate than self-assessments among campus leaders. Day, Sammons, Hopkins Leithwood & Kington (2008) found that school staff perceived the leadership to be “the major driving force which underpins their schools’ increased or sustained effectiveness and improvement” (p. 84). Kelley, Thornton, Devos and Daugherty (2005) conducted a study which established a statistically significant relationship between teachers’ perception of their principal’s effectiveness and school climate. They found that principals should understand the perceptions of teachers in an effort to create a positive atmosphere and student outcomes.

Leadership as perceived by the teaching faculty in a school became a critical component of school culture (Hallinger & Leithwood, 1996; Karakose, 2008). Brown and Wynn (2007) found that a teacher’s perception of the principal’s cultural leadership capacity was influenced by the subjects taught, gender and the years of experience that a teacher had acquired. Yavuz and Bas (2010) conducted a study surveying the
perceptions that teachers had of their elementary principals. These researchers stated school principals should: (1) adopt supportive and encouraging roles for both teachers and students; (2) communicate effectively with students; (3) contribute directly to the development of the students by participating actively in the instruction process; and (4) reward successful students in different ways. This tailored approach should be geared towards the population that each campus serves. Campus populations were rapidly changing among teachers and students in urban schools. Despite the changes in demographics of the students in the educational system, there had been few changes in the education system, and the focus continued to be the Americanization of the students through the public schools (Spring, 2010).

Student Demographics of Texas

The United States Department of Education's (USDE) decision to adopt a federal standard for reporting census data and the Texas Education Agency’s compliance to report accurate student demographic data supported using race and ethnicity as a critical area of concern by redefining demographic terms (Texas Education Agency, 2014). In the Texas Education Agency (TEA, 2014) report, Enrollment in Texas Public Schools 2013-2014, data represented significant changes in diverse student populations over a ten year period. Table 1 explains the percentage of change in student populations: African American student population increased 1.5%, Hispanic student population increased 8%, and American Indian student population increased 1%. There were three student groups whose population was not reported in 2003-2004: Asian, Pacific Islander and multiracial. However, in 2013-2014, the Asian student
population was reported as 3.7%, Pacific Islander student population as .1% and Multi-racial as 1.9%. The White student population decreased by 9.2% (TEA, 2014).

Table 2 outlines the percentage and number of students enrolled in Texas public schools by ethnicity. Hispanic students had the largest increase in 2013-2014 and accounted for 51.8% of the total student population. White students accounted for 29.5% and African Americans accounted for 12.7%. The lowest student population included: Asian (3.7%), multi-racial (1.9%), American Indian (.4%) and Pacific Islander (.1%).

Table 1

Demographic Changes in Texas Public Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>2003-2004</th>
<th>2013-14</th>
<th>Percent of Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>616,050</td>
<td>652,719</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>189,906</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>6,801</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1,894,108</td>
<td>2,668,315</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>14,350</td>
<td>20,225</td>
<td>-.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>1,676,987</td>
<td>1,517,293</td>
<td>-9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-racial</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>96,666</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Texas Education Agency, 2014
Table 2

*Enrollment in Texas Public Schools*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Number of Total Students 2013-2014</th>
<th>Percent of Total Students 2013-2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>652,719</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>189,906</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>6,801</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2,668,315</td>
<td>51.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>20,225</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>1,517,293</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-racial</td>
<td>96,666</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,151,925</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Texas Education Agency, 2014

The Role of Culture in Schools

Culture varied from school to school; however, the power of its diversity was important to understand to be embraced. Lindsey et al. (2003) defined culture broadly to include all shared characteristics of human description, which included age, gender, geography, ancestry, language, history, sexual orientation, and physical ability, as well as occupation and affiliations. Freire (2005) made known that culture was the process of external adaptation and internal integration:

It has been with the social invention of language, with which we have talked about the world, that we extended the natural world, which we hadn’t made, into the cultural and historical worlds, which have been our products, and that we have become animals who have been permanently inscribed in a process of learning and seeking—to which necessarily have been joined teaching and knowing, which in turn can’t ignore freedom, which was not a gift but was,
rather, something indispensable and necessary, a sine qua non for which we must have fought incessantly—having made up part of our way of being in the world. (p. 124)

Schein (2004) described culture as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration. Schein (2004) argued that culture needed to be a stabilizer, a strong constant that has been difficult to change. The process of culture creation and development must avoid the dysfunction of having to stay the same, and focus on and encourage the development of a culture that emphasized being learning oriented, adaptive, and flexible.

School leaders must be mindful the thought processes, perceptions and, ultimately, the cultures that were present in the school as they provided in-depth knowledge of individuals’ values. Schein (2004) provided insights about learning leadership and learning culture:

The learning culture must have assumed that the work could be managed, that it was appropriate for humans to have been proactive problem solvers, that reality and truth must have been pragmatically discovered, that human nature was basically good and in any case mutable, that both individualism and groupism have continued to be appropriate, that both authoritarian and participative systems have been appropriately based on trust, that the best kind of time horizon has been somewhere between far and near future, that the best kinds of units of time have been medium-length ones, that simple linear casual logic in favor of complex mental models will have become more critical to learning. The learning leader and the learning culture must therefore have been built on the assumption that the world was intrinsically complex, nonlinear, and over determined. (p. 396)

A school leader analyzed the culture in a variety of ways, through a culture audit of the campus.
Cultural Audits

Wagner (2008) established the value of culture audits in determining the quality and health of school cultures and recommended using a five step auditing process that included interviews, observations, surveys, checklists, and presentations to community stakeholders. Culture audits examined how diverse cultural perspectives were rejected in the values and behaviors manifested in the overall school culture (National Center for Cultural Competence, NCCC, 2005). NCCC (2005) identified specific practices that were indicative of cultural proficiency. This institution used cultural audits as organizational assessments to gauge cultural sensitivity and cultural inclusiveness. Audits usually involved document reviews, focus groups, interview and surveys with organizational members (NCCC, 2005). Other examples of cultural audits would be self-assessments, school-wide assessments and inventories that could be found in the materials prepared for school leaders by Lindsey et al. (2003) and Lindsey, Martinez, and Lindsey (2007).

Researchers agreed that school culture was an important, yet often overlooked, component of school improvement (Freiberg, 1998; Peterson & Deal, 1998). The dynamics of the school culture was due to the multiplicity of ethnic and racial diversity. For this reason, organizational culture assessments were essential to ensure the development of cultural competence in schools (Lindsey et al., 2003). Many researchers found it valuable to develop and conduct cultural audits to enhance the climate and progression of campus operations and student achievement. Reed, Bustamante, Parker, Robles-Pina and Harris (2007) developed a course model for developing culturally proficient leaders which was based on cultural proficiency in
school leadership. It was created based on the findings that few graduate schools offer university course work grounded in cultural proficiency for aspiring campus leaders or professional development for those in the field of educational leadership. Reed et al. (2007) implemented the program during the course of a two-year period and recommended principals to conduct a culture audit to assess the culture of the campus.

The Institute for Educational Leadership (2005) agreed with this approach to guiding schools to success with equity in mind. Their publication, *Preparing and Supporting Diverse, Culturally Competent Leaders: Practice and Policy Considerations* (2005), highlighted the ability of some principals with a natural talent for identifying and addressing the inequities within a school. Whereas, others benefited from preparation programs that were aligned with the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), specifically, the fifth standard: “…an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner” (p. 48). Reed et al. (2007) found it beneficial to use a culture audit to assess school culture by examining policies, programs, practices, artifacts, history, traditions, events and quantitative data. The culture audit contained two phases and focused on specific previously identified domains for observation (Bustamante, 2005). Figure 1 provides domains of focus that are aligned to cultural proficiency and may be used to conduct culture audits in schools (Bustamante, 2005).
Figure 1. “Culture audit” domains of focus.

Culture audits served as powerful data collection instruments for identifying problematic issues and developing viable solutions for schools.

Cultural Competence in Schools

Cultural competency became a prevalent topic in education and particularly in service learning, where cultural immersion was a daily standard (Meaney, Bohler, Kopf, Hernandez, & Scott, 2008). Cultural competency served as an educational tool and contextual way of life for professionals wanting to gain diversity skills in modern day society (Pope-Davis, Coleman, Ming-Lui & Toporek, 2003). Culturally competent educational organizations valued diversity in both theory and practice and made teaching and learning relevant and meaningful to students of various cultures (Klotz, 2006). This idea of a culturally competent school was further supported by Banks’
(2002) seminal work in describing multicultural schools and echoed in recent work that analyzed systematic and organizational cultural competence (Pederson & Carey, 2003; Sue & Constantine, 2005). While individual cultural competence was crucial, school leaders must also be concerned with the “big picture” of the cultural competence of the entire school environment (Lindsey et al., 2003).

Lee (2001) described the culturally responsive school which was supported by the notion of culturally proficient schools and school leaders proposed by Lindsey, Robins, and Terrell (2003) and Lindsey, Roberts, and Campbell-Jones (2005). Culturally proficient schools had high levels of achievement for all students, minimal failures or dropouts, equitable enrollment in gifted and advanced placement classes, fewer and more valid referrals to special education, fewer discipline problems, and teachers who feel empowered. Further, because diversity in a culturally proficient school was viewed as a resource and not as a barrier to teaching, learning, and interacting, students and families were validated for what they bring. They felt welcomed and valued, resulting in greater parent and community involvement.

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2010), more than four out of ten public school students were racial and ethnic minorities, yet about 9 out of every 10 teachers were White and from nonimmigrant background. Nuri-Robins, Lindsey, Terrell, and Lindsey (2002) argued that a paradigm shift was needed to reframe equity and inclusion as a problem to be solved in viewing equity and inclusion as an opportunity to understand and embrace differences. This paradigm shift allowed educators to view their roles as meeting the needs of underserved students rather than helping underachieving students (Nuri-Robins et al., 2002).
Cultural Proficiency

Organizational theorists (Lindsey et al., 2003) further developed the concept of cultural competence by suggesting that team members not only need to understand difference but also respond positively to diversity among groups. Lindsey et al. (2003) defined cultural proficiency as “esteeming culture, knowing how to learn about individual and organizational culture, and interacting in a variety of cultural environments” (p. 85). Lindsey et al. (2009a) described cultural proficiency as “a way of being, a worldview, and a perspective that are the basis for how one moves about in our diverse society” (p. 5). Cultural proficiency was an inside-out approach that made explicit the values and practices that enabled both individuals and schools to interact effectively across cultures (Lindsey et al., 2003).

Becoming culturally proficient raised awareness of the gap between a person’s expressed values and how he or she was actually perceived and experienced by clients, colleagues, and the community. To achieve proficiency, educators must align their values and educational philosophies with their daily practices to create learning communities among and between educators, students, and their families (Hines & Kritsonis, 2008). According to Lindsey, Nuri Robins, and Terrell (1999), cultural proficiency referred to the policies and practices of an organization or the values and behaviors of an individual that enabled that agency or person to interact effectively in a culturally diverse environment. Cultural proficiency demonstrated the “ripple effects” of one’s intercultural sensitivity, as cultural proficiency was reflected in the way an organization treats its employees, its clients, and its community (Lindsey, Nuri Robins, & Terrell, 2009b). Cultural proficiency was a way of being, a worldview, and a perspective
that was the basis for how one moved about in our diverse society and enabled people to engage successfully in new environments (Lindsey, Nuri-Robins, & Terrell, 2009b).

Cultural proficiency described the behaviors of individuals and organizations characterized by the five essential elements of the ability to assess culture, value diversity, manage the dynamics of difference, adapt to diversity and to institutionalize cultural knowledge (Lindsey et al., 2003). Cultural Proficiency provided a comprehensive structure for principals to discuss and address issues facing the school. Cultural proficiency provided an approach for surfacing educators’ assumptions and values that undermined the success of some student groups. It examined how to include and honor the cultures, educational strengths and needs of all students in the educational process (Lindsey et al., 2009b).

At this stage, a person honored the differences among cultures, saw diversity as a benefit, and interacted knowledgeably and respectfully among a variety of cultural groups (Lindsay et al., 2003).

Cultural proficiency involves the ability of individuals, groups, or organizations to: (a) consciously assess attitudes, values, and behavior toward people from diverse cultures; (b) mediate inevitable intercultural conflicts and tensions; (c) learn from and adapt to the multiple perspectives, experiences, and values that individuals and groups bring to organizations and situations; and, (d) communicate effectively and appropriately with others who do not share the same culture, ethnicity, language, or other salient variables. (Lindsey et al., 2003)

Cultural proficiency continued as an "ongoing and unfolding process" where individuals demonstrated their ability to learn about cultures and to "interact effectively with a variety of cultural groups" (Nuri-Robins et al., 2002, p. 124).
Tools of Cultural Proficiency

The cultural proficiency model provided four tools that could be used in various educational settings to identify the individual's and the organization's attitude towards acquiring knowledge of other cultures (Lindsey et al., 1999, 2003, 2005). The tools of cultural proficiency for elementary principals were beneficial to understand and apply at the campus level. The Lindsey et al. (2009a) model based on the work of Cross et al. (1999), created tools of cultural proficiency to assist campus leaders with cultivating an inclusive environment which include the following:

- The guiding principles: The underlying values of this deceptively simple approach
- The continuum: The language for describing both healthy and counter-productive policies, practices, and individual behaviors
- The essential elements: The behavioral standards for planning and measuring growth toward cultural proficiency
- The barriers: The obstacles that impede the process of developing cultural proficiency (Lindsey et al., 2009b, p.12)

The Principles Cultural Proficiency

Lindsey et al. (2009b) developed The guiding principles of cultural proficiency. The guiding principles include:

Culture is a predominant force in society, people are served in varying degrees by the dominant culture, people have individual and group identities, diversity within cultures is vast and significant, each cultural group has unique cultural needs, the best of both worlds enhances the capacity for all, the family is the primary system of support in the education of children, schools systems must recognize marginalized populations have to be at least bicultural and this creates a distinct sets of issues to which the school must respond, and inherent in cross-cultural interactions are dynamics that must be acknowledged, adjusted to, and accepted. (Lindsey et al., 2009a, p.5)
According to Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005), guiding principles provided a moral philosophical framework for educational leaders to examine and understand their own beliefs about education of students from cultural groups different from theirs. Lindsey et al. (2009) stated that once educational leaders examined and understood their own beliefs, the guiding principles helped them examine the core values of their school. By establishing and examining the core values, principals provided effective school leadership that catered to all involved members of the school and created a systemic approach to educating children. According to Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005), guiding principles provided a moral philosophical framework for educational leaders to examine and understand their own beliefs about education of students from cultural groups different from theirs. Argyris (1990) asserted that the guiding principles provided a framework for the examination of the core values of schools and how espoused theory and theory in action differ when schools were undergoing academic self-study. These tools included the barriers, social constructs that assisted in overcoming resistance to change; the guiding principles, underlying values of the approach; the continuum, the language that described both healthy and nonproductive policies, practices, individual values and behaviors; the essential elements, and behavioral standards for measuring and planning for growth toward cultural proficiency (Lindsey et al., 2009a).

The Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency

Lindsey et al. (2009b) listed the third cultural proficiency tool as the five essential elements of cultural competence. Terrell and Lindsey (2009) posited that the essential elements are the standards for culturally competent values, behaviors, policies, and
practices. Further, the essential elements existed at the cultural competence point of the continuum and were used to guide intentional leadership practice. Lindsey et al. (2009b) provided the following list of essential elements of cultural competence:

- **Assess culture**: Claim your differences. Recognize how your culture affects others. Describe your own culture and the cultural norms of your organization. Understand how the culture of your organization affects those with different cultures.

- **Value diversity**: Name the difference: Celebrate and encourage the presence of a variety of people in all activities. Recognize differences as diversity rather than as inappropriate responses to the environment. Accept that each culture finds some values and behaviors more important than others.

- **Manage the dynamics of difference**: Frame the conflicts caused by differences. Learn effective strategies for resolving conflict, particularly among people whose cultural backgrounds and values differ. Understand the effect that historic distrust has on present-day interactions. Realize that you may misjudge others’ actions based on learned expectations.

- **Adapt to diversity**: Change to make a difference. The way things are done to acknowledge the differences that are present in the staff, clients, and community. Develop skills for intercultural communication. Institutionalize cultural interventions for conflicts and confusion caused by the dynamics of difference.

- **Institutionalize cultural knowledge**: Train about differences. Incorporate cultural knowledge into the mainstream of the organization. Teach the origins of stereotypes and prejudices. For staff development and education, integrate into your systems information and skills that enable all to interact effectively in a variety of intercultural situations (p. 121).

**Assessing Culture**

Hines and Kritsonis (2008) believed culturally proficient practices were actions principals could take to demonstrate that they are assessing the culture. These included exposing faculty to staff development on addressing diverse student populations and handling formalities to ensure that faculty and visitors were welcome to
Hines and Kritsonis (2008) found that disseminating demographic information to enhance faculty members’ awareness of the relevance of cultural diversity and encouraging staff to obtain certification in specifically designed academic instruction were practices that promote cultural proficiency. Hines and Kritsonis (2008) noted practices included creating academic intervention programs that met the needs of diverse students by assessing barriers to core curriculum for culturally diverse students, showing sensitivity to cultural differences during performance evaluations of faculty members, and developing programs with opportunities for consultation with a diverse parent group.

Lindsey et al. (2003) described culturally proficient principals as individuals who were aware of their own culture and the effect it might have on the people in a work setting. These researchers found that principals who attained a level of cultural proficiency chose to learn about the culture of their campus and teachers, and staff members to interact with, conflict with, and enhance one another.

**Value Diversity**

Hines and Kritsonis (2008) found several practices that principals demonstrated that value diversity. Designating funding and human resources to address issues that relate to cultural diversity, using language in documents and statements that acknowledge cultural diversity of students and providing instruction that addresses the background of diverse students were among many tactics noted with elementary principals. Also, ensuring that school policies were sensitive to the cultural makeup of the school, making decisions that were inclusive of diverse perspectives and
communicating ability to function effectively in cross cultural situations were exhibited to embrace and value diverse populations. Others included: evaluating the extent to which curricular and institutional practices addressed the linguistic and cultural differences of students, developing policies with stakeholders who represented the cultural makeup of students and creating school activities that appealed to demographically mixed groups of students. These researchers believed providing training that developed faculty and staff members’ confidence to function in cross cultural situations, providing leadership in creating policy statements that included diversity and establishing diverse advisory groups were strategies that value diversity within a school setting. Lindsey et al. (2003) noted culturally proficient principals welcomed a diverse group of educators and appreciated the challenges of diversity.

Managing the Dynamics of Difference

The following culturally proficient practices were actions principals could take to show that they were managing the dynamics of difference:

- Providing faculty and staff members with conflict resolution training
- Developing complaint resolution processes that have been communicated to parents
- Creating conflict resolution services for students (Hines & Kritsonis, 2008, pp. 15-16)

Lindsey et al. (2003) illuminated the need for principals to recognize that conflict was a normal and natural part of life. They stressed that culturally proficient leaders develop skills to manage conflict in a positive manner and understood that what appeared to be clashes in personalities might in fact be conflicts in culture.
Adapting to Diversity

According to Hines and Kritsonis (2008) culturally proficient practices that adapt to diversity included: evaluating faculty members’ ability to display culturally proficient behaviors, accommodating diverse cultural norms that might exist in the school and ensuring that school policies promoted and advocated for culturally proficient behaviors among faculty and staff members. Lindsey et al. (2003) provided insight into the culturally proficient principal as one who committed to continuous learning that was necessary to deal with the issues caused by differences. This action included the skill to enhance practices through the guiding principles of cultural proficiency.

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge

Hines and Kritsonis (2008) observed that principals should institutionalize cultural knowledge in an effort to promote cultural proficiency. This step might be achieved by making provisions for teachers to receive training on making curriculum modifications in accordance to the cultural and linguistic makeup of students. They ensured that all groups of students and teachers were aware of how their cultural norms and behaviors influenced the climate of the school by maintaining school activities conducive to working with and learning in cross cultural situations. Lindsey et al. (2003) investigated the need for culturally proficient principals. The campus leader influenced the culture of the campus so that its policies and practices were informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency. Cultural knowledge could be institutionalized by the principal by taking the advantage of teachable moments to share cultural knowledge teachers and staff members. Lindsey et al. (2003) believed culturally proficient principals created
opportunities for diverse groups to learn about one another and to engage in ways that honor who they were and challenge them to be more.

Inclusiveness

The following culturally proficient practices were actions principals could take to show that they were demonstrating inclusiveness:

- Providing inclusive environment that acknowledges the diversity of students
- Organizing diverse members into interview panels for hiring new faculty/staff members
- Creating a school environment that inspires students and teachers to acknowledge other cultures while retaining the uniqueness of their ethnic identity
- Ensuring that extracurricular activities were inclusive of community members are from ethnic groups
- Connecting students and staff to external organizations and resources that represent cultural diversity (Hines & Kritsonis, 2008, pp. 15-16)

Researchers King, Sims and Osher (2001) noted five essential elements that helped increase a system’s ability to be considered culturally competent if the following elements were seen at every level in the delivery of services. Systems were considered competent when they demonstrated that they (a) valued diversity, (b) had the capacity for cultural self–assessment, (c) were conscious of the dynamics inherent when cultures interact, (d) institutionalized cultural knowledge, and (e) developed adaptations to service delivery reflecting an understanding of diversity between and within cultures.

The Barriers to Reach Cultural Proficiency

There were many challenges that individuals faced to reach levels of cultural
Acknowledging these barriers was an important step in moving towards cultural proficiency. Overcoming barriers to cultural proficiency was Terrell and Lindsey’s (2009) fourth tool from the cultural proficiency tool kit. Terrell and Lindsey (2009) identified three common barriers and descriptions of behaviors associated with each barrier. The Pacific Education Group provided recommendations to principals and districts on how to address inequity issues in public schools. The founder, Glenn Singleton believed the process must examine privilege and entitlement of White America (Sparks, 2002). This work entailed the introspection of Whites to examine their own assumptions, beliefs, culture, power, and position in America and the role these factors continued to play in the perpetuation of racism in this country (Sparks, 2002; Weissglass, 2001). In order to address institutional racism, Singleton and Linton (2006) suggested that schools needed to develop educational equity plans that required everyone in a school community to participate in this equity-centered approach of exploring White privilege in order to create a culturally competent learning environment (Sparks, 2002).

According to Terrell and Lindsey (2009), the barriers, when presented in their behaviors or the practices in their schools, existed together in combination, not as isolated events. The three barriers were the following: (a) resistance to change, (b) embedded systems of oppression, and (c) a sense of privilege and entitlement. Table 3 illustrates the explanations of these behaviors which were associated with the lack of cultural proficiency.
### Table 3

**Barriers to Cultural Proficiency**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resistance to Change</td>
<td>Many educators and schools often struggle with change that involves issues of culture. For those who are resistant, change often is experienced as an outside force that judges current practices as deficient or defective. Whether accurate or not, an adversarial relationship exists between those forcing the change and the members of the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems of Oppression</td>
<td>That racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, and classism exist is without refute, historically and currently. Data are on the side of documenting and describing the ill effects of such systems. Being able to understand oppression as a systemic issue apart from personal behavior is important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Sense of Privilege and Entitlement</td>
<td>Systems of oppression have two effects – on those who are harmed and to those who benefit. Those harmed from systemic oppressions respond from an emotional connection as well as well informed of practices that impact them negatively. Many of those who benefit from historical and current practices are oblivious to the negative effects of systemic oppression because they can choose not to see.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Smith (2004) conducted a study to determine school factors that contributed to the underachievement of students of color. This study identified how culturally proficient principals addressed these deficit-thinking factors. This low level of education threatened these students' economic and social integration into mainstream America (Smith, 2004). Misguided perceptions of students of color were often demonstrated
through a lack of respect and acceptance for cultural diversity (Howard, 2002); low expectations for underachieving students (Steele, 1992); poor teacher/student relationships (Sadowski, 2001); and a sense of privilege that prevented needed changes from occurring in schools (Gordon, Piana, & Keleher, 2000; Weissglass, 2001).

According to Lindsey et al. (2005), all of the tools, the continuum, the essential elements, the guiding principles, and the barriers did not and could not exist in isolation independent of each other. They were an interrelated process on the journey to becoming a culturally proficient individual. The focus of the tools was on changing the behaviors of the individual so that they served the needs of the students regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, faith, ableness, class, and socioeconomic levels (Lindsey et al., 2005). The utilization of these tools provided structure for principals to address diversity and multiculturalism on the campus. Figure 2 illustrates the Conceptual framework for cultural proficient practice. The figure represented how the tools of cultural proficiency provided a conceptual framework for analyzing individual values in combination with the school or district policies and practices (Lindsey, Robbins, & Terrell, 2009b).
The Cultural Proficiency Continuum portrays people and organizations who possess the knowledge, skills, and moral bearing to distinguish among healthy and unhealthy practices as represented by different worldviews:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One that depicts unhealthy practices:</th>
<th>Differing World Views</th>
<th>One that depicts healthy practices:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Cultural Destructiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Cultural Precompetence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cultural Incapacity</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Cultural Competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cultural Blindness</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Cultural Proficiency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resolving the tension to do what is socially just within our diverse society leads people and organization to view selves in terms Unhealthy and Healthy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers to Cultural Proficiency</th>
<th>Ethical Tension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serve as personal, professional, and institutional impediments to moral and just service to a diverse society by being:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Resistant to change,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unaware of the need to adapt,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not acknowledging systemic oppression, and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Benefiting from a sense of privilege &amp; entitlement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Guiding Principles of Cultural Proficiency

Provide a moral framework for conducting one’s self and organization in an ethical fashion by believing that:

• Culture is a predominant force in society,
• People served in varying degrees by dominant culture,
• People have individual and group identities,
• Diversity within cultures is vast and significant,
• Each cultural group has unique cultural needs, and
• The best of both worlds enhances the capacity of all.
• The family, as defined by each culture, is the primary system of support in the education of children.
• School systems must recognize that marginalized populations have to be at least bicultural and that this status creates a unique set of issues to which the system must be equipped to respond.
• Inherent in cross-cultural interactions are dynamics that must be acknowledged, adjusted to, and accepted.

Source: Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, p. 60.

Figure 2. The conceptual framework for culturally proficient practices.
Culturally Proficient Leadership in Urban Schools

In the age of accountability and high-stakes testing, many principals experienced daunting tasks dealing with increasing test scores in all sub-groups. However, it was essential that elementary principals understood the process in achieving this goal by using culture as a leverage point to ensure that all students were improving and reaching high levels of success. This process could be achieved through principal certification course work, staff development and other professional development opportunities (Spillane, 2006), including ethical leadership (Shaprio & Stefkovich, 2005), collaborative leadership (Glaser, 2005), culturally proficient leadership (Lindsey et al., 1999), and moral leadership (Sergiovanni, 1992). Each provided valuable direction for effective leadership in education.

Principals must create a climate and implement strategies to change a culture of excellence and equity for all students. This factor was further reiterated by Fullan (2005) in his statement, “Leading in a culture of change means creating a culture (not just a structure) of change” (p. 44). Lindsey, Nuri-Robbins, and Terrell (2009a) described the actions effective educational leaders take in assessing the existing climate of the school or district and providing the support for making adjustments to changes:

- Culturally proficient leaders helped the school’s faculty and staff assess its culture and determine how the school affects the students and its community
- Culturally proficient leaders developed strategies for resolving conflict effectively and for addressing the dynamics of difference within the school
- Culturally proficient leaders shaped the school’s formal and non-formal curricula to include information about the heritages, lifestyles, and values of all people in society. (p. 54)
Principals must understand that “schooling is a cultural process” (Pai, Adler & Shadiow, 2006). These principals served as models for teachers and led adaptations in the curriculum and facilitated changes in instructional delivery methods for diverse learners. The educational leader embraced the guiding principles of cultural proficiency and demonstrated, as suggested in Lindsey, Roberts, and Campbell-Jones, *The Culturally Proficient School*:

Understanding and acknowledging the principles and choosing to manifest them through behavior demonstrated culturally proficient leadership by aligning leadership actions with the principles of cultural proficiency and communicated a strong message throughout the school's community in valuing diversity and fully expecting that every individual will do the same. Indeed, the guiding principles were attitudinal benchmarks that enabled the assessment of progress toward acknowledging and valuing differences. While this assessment yielded crucial information, it was insufficient by itself in providing the development of culturally proficient behaviors. (p. 52)

Culturally proficient leaders valued each member of the learning community and ensured that procedures and practices adhered to the various cultures and groups (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2006; Lindsey et al., 2003; Lindsey et al., 2005; Nuri-Robins et al., 2002). The role of the principal ensured that this philosophy permeates throughout the campus and positively impacts campus operations. Literature in educational leadership highlighted the fact that school leaders influenced school culture (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000).

Gregory (2009) advocated for culturally competent workplaces and safe places for all school administrators, teachers, students, and schools by reminding educators that their practices and behaviors impacted student learning environments. These practices must be apparent in the classroom to provide students with a safe, nurturing learning environment. Research on effective schools consistently pointed out that
students were more successful when they were engaged in a positive school environment (Marzano, 2003). In order to engage students in the learning process, it was critical for teachers to develop a positive rapport with students and understand who students were as individuals. This cultural responsiveness provided students with a level of motivation to, not only participate in learning activities, but to become engaged. The most effective educators must connect to young people’s developing social and emotional core (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Villegas & Lucas, 2007) by offering opportunities for creativity and self-expression. These ideas drew parallels in many aspects of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2000).

Smith (2004) conducted a study which focused on cultural proficiency among principals in California. The 11 participating principals serviced high performing schools in high poverty neighborhoods. This researcher used Lindsey et al.’s theories to create a 35-item culturally proficient survey. She used this tool to measure the perceptions of principals’ use of effective culturally proficient practices and the frequency of these practices in the school environment. Her findings indicated that principals frequently demonstrated practices in valuing diversity, assessing the school culture and managing the dynamics of differences. Accountability measures should be used to ensure that principals engage in culturally proficient school practices (Smith, 2004).

Hines and Kritsonis (2008) conducted a study which examined the interactive effects of the race and gender of teachers’ on their perceptions of the culturally proficient leadership of Caucasian American principals. The survey measured the perceptions of principals' culturally proficient leadership practices. He found Caucasian American teachers gave the highest ratings of Caucasian American principals' culturally
proficient leadership. The post hoc findings indicated differences were found between African American and Caucasian American teachers or Hispanic and Caucasian American teachers (Hines & Kritsonis, 2008). The findings, (see Table 4) from the Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) showed there were significant differences between Caucasian, African-American and Hispanic teachers in valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, inclusiveness, assessing the culture, adapting to diversity, and institutionalizing cultural knowledge and resource (Hines & Kritsonis, 2008).

Table 4

Results of MANOVAs on Differences in Subscale Scores by Teacher Ethnicity (N = 112)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale/Participant Status</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.817</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuing Diversity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.628</td>
<td>.04*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian American</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.711</td>
<td>.05*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Caucasian American</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing the Dynamics of Difference</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.028</td>
<td>.037*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian American</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing the Culture</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.510</td>
<td>.010*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian American</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continues)
Table 4 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale/Participant Status</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adapting to Diversity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian American</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge and Resources</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.703</td>
<td>.00*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian American</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Hines & Kritnosis, p. 9

Luper (2011) examined the perceptions of Texas high school teachers rating principals as culturally proficient leaders. This study focused specifically on how campus-related factors impacted the perceptions of teachers. The results of this study supported the need for leadership skills and policy development to assist campus leaders in incorporating culturally proficient practices which will increase academic achievement. Additionally, the results indicated that principals were in need of training in the following areas: Adapting to and managing the dynamics of differences and providing teachers with conflict-resolution skills. Luper (2011) recommended that professional development departments conduct similar district-wide proficiency assessments as a first step in helping educators understand the cultural proficiency conceptual framework. An additional strategy to improve cultural proficiency scores would be the development and implementation of a rating systems using the tenets of cultural proficiency for improved leadership practices (Luper, 2011).

Pfaller (2010) conducted a study which examined culturally proficient school
leadership actions that helped promote a measurable narrowing of the achievement gap in five southeastern Wisconsin urban schools. He collected data from structured interviews with principals to examine culturally proficient beliefs and practices. There were eight themes which emerged from this descriptive case study: achievement gap & leaders role, teacher preparation, values & beliefs, relationships, honor & respect, courage & change, assumptions & stereotyping and expectations. Figure 3 symbolizes the theoretic model that was used for this study and exemplified the needed components for culturally proficient school leadership that emerged from the research (Pfaller, 2010).

![Theoretical Model of Figure 3](image)

**Source:** This theoretical model of Figure 3 is borrowed from the ancient “Medicine Wheel” embraced by Indigenous Peoples of American Indian Nations (Meadows, 2002).

**Figure 3.** Beliefs, knowledge, commitment, honor and respect.
The purpose of this study was to identify and illuminate critical components needed for culturally proficient leadership in schools. The four core quadrants supported by the foundations of key components to represent culturally proficient leadership, were symbolically displayed in a balanced format and an endless circle of growth and learning (Pfaller, 2010). The conclusions were significant and reflected in the learning gap being narrowed for students of color and showed that culturally proficient school leadership practices can impact the learning gap (Pfaller, 2010).

Lindsey et al. (2005) described the theoretical underpinnings and elements of a culturally proficient school culture. They described a culturally proficient school culture as “the policies and practices of a school or the values and behaviors of an individual that enables the school or person to interact effectively in a culturally diverse environment. Cultural proficiency was reflected in the way a school treats staff, students, parents, and community” (p. 146).

Professional Development in Culturally Proficient Leadership

In *The Culturally Proficient School: An Implementation Guide for School Leaders*, Lindsey, Roberts and Campbell-Jones (2005) provided a model for principals to utilize as they led their campus toward cultural proficiency. This model challenged school administrators to examine the issues and inequities that were persistent on the campus. When leaders chose to confront these issues and dealt with them directly, they understood their effects on student learning. These leaders were moving their schools toward culturally proficient practices (p. xviii). An essential component of this model was the cultural proficiency receptivity survey, developed by Lindsey, Nuri-
Robins, and Terrell (2009), which examined principals receptivity and core beliefs. The Cultural Proficiency Receptivity Scale was not an assessment, rather a guide that was designed to assist educators through a self-reflection process. Cecil County Public Schools in Elkton, Maryland found this tool to be useful for educators. The Office of Staff Development created an assessment using a Likert scale for principals to analyze their own receptiveness of their cultural proficiency. Table 5 provides the specific statements that were included in the Culturally Proficient Receptivity Survey.

Table 5

*Culturally Proficient Receptivity Survey*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Receptivity Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I believe that all children and youth learn successfully when informed and caring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers assist them and make sufficient resources available to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to do whatever is necessary to ensure that the students for whom I am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responsible are well-educated and successful learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am committed to creating both an educational environment and learning experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for our students that honor and respect who they are.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am willing to ask myself uncomfortable questions about racism, cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preferences, and insufficient learning conditions and resources that are obstacles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to learning for many students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am willing to ask questions about racism, cultural preferences, and insufficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning conditions and resources that may be uncomfortable for others in my</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school or district.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that all students benefit from educational practices that engage them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in learning about their cultural heritage and understanding their cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>background,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that all students benefit from educational practices that provide them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with hope, direction and preparation for their future lives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continues)
Table 5 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>It is important to know how well our district serves the various cultural and ethnic communities represented in our schools, and it is also important to understand how well served they feel by the educational practices in our schools.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important to know how the various cultural and ethnic communities represented in our schools view me as an educational leader and to understand how well my leadership serves their expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our district and schools are successful only when all subgroups are improving academically and socially.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural discomfort and disagreements are normal occurrences in a diverse society such as ours and are parts of everyday interactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that lack of cultural understanding and historic distrust can result in cultural discomfort and disagreements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe we can learn about and implement diverse and improved instructional practices that will effectively serve all our students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe we can use disaggregated data to understand more precisely the achievement status of all students in our schools, and that we can use that information to identify and implement effective instructional practices for each of them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a leader, it is important for me to be able to communicate across cultures and to facilitate communication among diverse cultural groups.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This assessment was embedded with the core principles of the cultural proficiency model, which are:

- Culture was a predominant force in people’s lives
- The dominant culture served people in varying degrees
- People had both personal identities and group identities
- Diversity within cultures was vast and significant
- Each individual and each group had unique cultural values and needs (Lindsey, Lindsey, Nuri-Robins, & Terrell, 2006, p. 20)

These principles were the values that informed the five essential elements of cultural proficiency (Nuri-Robins et al., 2002). This survey provided principals with an approach
to reflect and examine their awareness of how they embraced and dealt with diversity.

To assist leaders with their assessment, the authors provided a cultural proficiency continuum (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1999; Lindsey et al. 2009b). The continuum assessed how cultural differences were addressed by schools. It was constructed with six stages:

- **Cultural destructiveness:** negating, disparaging, or purging cultures that are different from your own
- **Cultural incapacity:** elevating the superiority of your own cultural values and beliefs and suppressing cultures that are different from your own
- **Cultural blindness:** acting as if differences among cultures do not exist and refusing to recognize any differences
- **Cultural precompetence:** recognizing that lack of knowledge, experience, and understanding of other cultures limits your ability to effectively interact with them
- **Cultural competence:** employing any policy, practice, or behavior that uses the essential elements of cultural proficiency on behalf of the school or district
- **Cultural proficiency:** honoring the differences among cultures, seeing diversity as a benefit and interacting knowledgably and respectfully among a variety of cultural groups (p. 54)

As principals provided staff development opportunities in leading the campus toward cultural proficiency, Lindsey et al. (2005) reiterated that cultural proficiency involved an approach that focused on those who were inside of the school and encouraged them to reflect on their own value systems and individual understanding.

Gardiner and Enomoto (2006) conducted a study examining the real-world experiences of practicing principals as they dealt with the multicultural issues facing their schools. The researchers described how principals exhibited multicultural leadership skills. According to Bennett (2001), multicultural education rested on four
broad principles, namely: “(a) cultural pluralism; (b) ideals of social justice and the end of racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice and discrimination; (c) affirmations of culture in the teaching and learning process; and (d) visions of educational equity and excellence leading to high levels of academic learning for all children and youth” (p. 173). The findings suggested that although multicultural preparation was lacking for these principals, some did engage in work that promoted diversity in their daily activities. This study revealed some principals maintained high expectations for all; however, other principals were unaware of the connection between valuing diversity and student achievement. Professional development, particularly when requested by principals themselves, could be helpful. Principals, together with university faculty, might work with their staff to consider how educational law and policy have marginalized certain groups of students (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006).

As issues of equity, excellence, and social justice were addressed in the schools, principals were more likely to be successful if they received consistent reinforcement and support from their district-level administrators. As a component of professional development, urban school principals examined their own ethnic background, values and beliefs. An example of the next step in this process would be engagement in professional development to learning about the history, cultures, and languages of the Native American tribes in the region and learning to speak Spanish if there was a significant Hispanic population (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006).

Culturally competent leaders institutionalized cultural knowledge by providing training about diversity and incorporated that cultural knowledge into the school organization (Smith, 2004). They made sure that the school's professional development
program included cultural diversity training that helped staff examine their own assumptions and assisted them in understanding how institutionalized knowledge within schools had perpetuated stereotypes about racial and ethnic groups (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 1999). Such professional training should also be provided to teachers with the knowledge and skills they need to interact effectively in cross-cultural situations. Banks, Cookson, Gay, Hawley et.al., (2001) demonstrated how to deliver instruction that ensured all students had equal opportunities to experience both academic and social success (Banks et al., 2001). This type of professional training reduced discipline problems and lowered student dropout rates (Banks et al., 2001; Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 1999). These learning opportunities enhanced the relationships between administrators, teachers, parents and students, and ultimately promoted student achievement for all students. As principals participated and implemented professional development, it was essential that a clear focus was outlined for successful implementation. The principal must set parameters for the development of successful school culture (Riehl, 2000). This was attained by supporting this vision with resources, time, and acknowledgement; modeling the way through behavior and actions; promoting learning at every level; supporting professional learning communities and professional development; and focusing on results (Fullan, 2005).

Blended Solutions is a professional development resource that focuses on culturally responsive education. It provided professional development to teachers and administrators. One of its components was the culturally proficient leadership module for principals. This module assisted school leadership teams to develop plans increasing effectiveness of practices in diverse school settings. It provided principals
with strategies that were practical and engaging for schoolwide implementation. Table 6 details the activities and resources provided in the culturally proficient leadership module.

Table 6

**Culturally Proficient Leadership Module**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developing Awareness</th>
<th>Building Knowledge</th>
<th>Translating into Practice</th>
<th>Reflecting</th>
<th>Building Capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Proficiency Continuum self-assessment for administration and staff on Survey Monkey</td>
<td>Analysis of School Community using the Cultural Proficiency Continuum</td>
<td>1-2 hour professional development on communication strategies as a culturally proficient leader and role playing to manage differences and conflict</td>
<td>1-2 hour professional development on institutionalizing cultural knowledge</td>
<td>Publishing artifacts on culturally proficient leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructing Cultural Autobiographies</td>
<td>CSRE training on Culturally Responsive Education</td>
<td>Conduct a Welcoming School Walkthrough</td>
<td>Analyzing Welcoming School Walkthrough results and develop action plans for areas of growth</td>
<td>Development of a culturally proficient leadership coaching model/network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of a Cultural Interview</td>
<td>3-4 hour professional development on overcoming barriers to Cultural Proficiency</td>
<td>Site visits to model schools highlighting best practices in Culturally Proficient Instruction</td>
<td>Facilitated (NCORES) National Center Culturally Responsive Education Systems leadership academies</td>
<td>Development of a school/district based case study on culturally proficient leadership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Murphy (1999) suggested that university programs were not sufficiently preparing educational leaders and were in need of change. Reed et al. (2007) developed a course to include interdisciplinary and activities which focused on integrating diversity and leadership theory, assessing school culture, and strategically implementing “real life” action plans in schools. It was developed for a graduate educational leadership program at a state university. The objectives of this course were:

1. Recognize biases and the potential for discrimination in all people
2. Develop an awareness of their own attitudes, values, and behaviors toward different groups
3. Collect data on school culture through observations, document analysis, and review of existing school data
4. Use a model of cultural proficiency for school improvement

5. Design an action plan to improve cultural proficiency in their school or organization. Understand the roles of formal and informal leadership in promoting cultural proficiency

6. Explore culturally appropriate approaches to teaching, learning, and community outreach (Reed et al., 2007)

The Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC), provided guidelines for university principal preparation programs. These standards ensured that programs were preparing school leaders with skills to serve campuses with diverse student populations. Reed et al. (2007) believed these standards focused on the development of school leaders who understood school culture; examined their own assumptions, beliefs, and practices; and communicated appropriately and effectively with community stakeholders. Therefore, it was important that principal preparation programs and professional development departments of school districts provided aspiring and in-service principals with the necessary skills to lead diverse populations. After the development and implementation of the course, Reed et al. (2007) asserted that aspiring and practicing school leaders, who had the opportunity to enroll in the course, ended the semester with an awareness of self and an enlightened perception of the school leader’s role regarding the inclusion of all students, teachers and staff, and parents in the school community.

Summary

This literature review investigated the conceptual background and current literature related to the study of culturally proficient leadership.
Within this chapter, key research journal articles and books were reviewed to support the focus of the study. Topic areas that were directly related to the purpose of this study included: an overview of the demographic composition of a large, urban school district in Texas including the ethnic, lingual, and socioeconomic representation of students, teachers, and administrators, the essential elements of cultural proficiency and culturally proficient schools and leadership practices. The review of literature also provided research of teachers’ perceptions of principals, particularly elementary principals and culture in schools and professional development in culturally proficient leadership for principals.

Each campus was unique because of the cultures that were present within the entire school community. Hines and Kritsonis (2008) denoted that teachers bring their various cultures and ethnicities to the school. Consequently, they must examine the different contexts of how these variables influence their perceptions of the principal’s ethnicity and leadership (Morgan-Brown, 2004). It was essential that researchers and practitioners understood the perceptions of teachers concerning the level of cultural proficiency among their elementary principals. Luper (2011) examined teachers’ perceptions of the extent to which principals were culturally proficient, as measured in the following six areas: valuing diversity, assessing their culture, managing the dynamics caused by difference, institutionalizing cultural knowledge, adapting to diversity, and inclusiveness. She analyzed the perceptions of six high schools in a large, urban school district, and found that the principal who was rated culturally proficient by teachers led an exemplary campus, as defined by the Texas Education Agency. This study provided an elementary school perspective. The results of this
study could be used to plan for effective organizational management, including the implementation of educational practices that impacted teacher morale and student achievement. Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) concluded, “Just as leaders can have a positive impact on achievement, they also can have a marginal, or worse, a negative impact on achievement” (p. 5). There was a growing body of research regarding educational leadership in urban areas. However, this literature did not provide a wealth of research in culturally proficient leadership and the perceptions from elementary teachers regarding supervisors at the campus level.

The results from this study analyzed the perceptions that elementary teachers had of their principals as being culturally proficient. Chapter 3 describes the methodology and procedures that guided this study. Chapter 4 reports the findings of the study and data analysis. Chapter 5 summarizes the findings and discussed conclusions from this research study.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study utilized a predesigned survey to collect data. The survey instrument was developed by Dr. Camille Smith and revised by Dr. Mack T. Hines. The survey was entitled Practices for Developing a Culturally Competent School Environment. I received permission to use Practices for Developing a Culturally Competent School Environment from Dr. Hines and the sole copyright holder, Dr. Smith (see Appendix B and C).

The school district Internal Review Board issued a letter of approval to collect data from participating elementary school teachers. After receiving permission from the University of North Texas Internal Review Board (IRB), elementary teachers were asked to complete an electronic version of the survey. This survey was uploaded to Survey Monkey® (www.survey monkey.com), an online data collection program. The entire teaching staff of 52 schools in a large school district in Texas was asked to complete the survey in regard to their participating principal. The survey contained two parts: 1) demographic information of each participant, and 2) thirty-five items with a 5-point Likert scale. This scale ranged from never uses = 1, rarely uses = 2, sometimes uses = 3, frequently uses = 4, and always uses = 5.

Research Questions

This study answered the following overarching question: What were elementary school teachers’ perceptions of their principals as culturally proficient leaders in the area of the essential elements of cultural proficiency (valuing diversity, assessing culture,
managing the dynamics caused by difference, institutionalizing cultural knowledge, adapting to diversity and inclusiveness)? In order to answer the overarching question, this study posed these specific questions:

1. To what extent did teachers perceive their principals effort to demonstrate the essential elements of cultural proficiency?

2. What is the relationship between teacher variables (i.e., race, age and years with principal) and these perceptions of their principal’s demonstration of the essential elements of cultural proficiency?

3. How do culturally proficient ratings of principals differ by school accountability ratings?

General Perspective

This quantitative study utilized surveys to collect data from the respondents. Comparative and descriptive statistics provided an analysis of elementary school teachers’ perceptions of their principals as culturally proficient leaders.

Research Context

According to the demographic data compiled (TEA, 2014), this urban, school district served a diverse population of more than 156,000 students.

Student demographics: Ethnicity

In 2013-2014, African Americans constituted 25% of the student populations, Hispanic 68.2%, White 4.6%, American Indian .4%, Asian 1.1%, Pacific Islander 0.1%,
and 0.5% with two or more ethnicities (TEA, 2014).

**Student demographics: English language learners progress indicator**

The data for 2013-2014 indicated that there were 64,495 of students whose home language was a language other than English and 71% of these students showed progression in English proficiency (TEA, 2014).

**Student demographics: Socioeconomic**

The number of students qualifying for free and reduced meals in 2013-2014 was 89.2% (TEA, 2014).

**Teacher demographics: Ethnicity**

The representation of the ethnicity of the teachers in the school district in 2013-2014 included African American 36.1%, Hispanic 26%, White 33.1%, American Indian .4%, Asian 2.6%, Pacific Islander .1% and Multi-racial 1.8% (TEA, 2014).

**Teacher demographics: Education**

The percentage of teachers in this urban, school district held a Bachelors was 65.7%. Teachers who earned degrees beyond a bachelor’s degree was 32.2%, with 30.7% earning a master’s degree and 1.5% earning a doctorate degree (TEA, 2014).

**Teacher demographics**

**Years of Teaching Experience.** The district employed approximately 9,829
teachers during the 2013-2014 school year. The percentage of beginning teachers was 13.1%, 1-5 years (25.8%), 6-10 years (21.6%), 11-20 years (24%) and more than 20 years (15.5%) (TEA, 2014).

Teacher demographics: Gender

There were 9,829 teachers during the 2013-2014 school year: 29.2% males and 70.8% females (TEA, 2014).

Table 7

Enrollment in Urban, School District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Number of Total Students 2013-2014</th>
<th>Percent of Total Students 2013-2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>36,621</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2,061</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>112,360</td>
<td>60.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>7,722</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-racial</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>160,253</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Texas Education Agency, 2014

Research Participants

This study involved elementary teachers within a large, urban school district in Texas. Approximately 2,500 teachers were asked to participate among 52 schools in
the study via email. One-hundred and thirty-three teachers responded to receive the information and agreement to participate; however, 121 completed the survey in its entirety. The participants served within 52 schools with varying accountability ratings per the Texas Education Agency: Met Standard or Improvement Required. The participants served elementary schools whose demographic information were similar. The campuses had over 50% free and/or reduced lunch and 50% were economically disadvantaged. Table 8 provides the accountability rating, number of respondents, campus size, percent of economically disadvantaged students and mobility rate.

Table 8

_Campus Demographics of Study_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>Campus Size</th>
<th>% of Econ. Dis.</th>
<th>Mobility Rate</th>
<th>Accountability Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>981</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>Improvement Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>94.3</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>98.5</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,081</td>
<td>97.4</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>97.6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Improvement Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>98.3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>96.9</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>Improvement Required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continues)
Table 8 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>Campus Size</th>
<th>% of Econ. Dis.</th>
<th>Mobility Rate</th>
<th>Accountability Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>572</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>98.7</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>99.4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>659</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Improvement Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>97.4</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>659</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>99.2</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1,006</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>828</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>98.4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>98.6</td>
<td>13.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>92.3</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>Improvement Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>92.3</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>Campus Size</th>
<th>% of Econ. Dis.</th>
<th>Mobility Rate</th>
<th>Accountability Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>778</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>642</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>441</td>
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<td>11.6</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Improvement Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>96.7</td>
<td>17.7</td>
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<td>42</td>
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<td>402</td>
<td>4396</td>
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</tr>
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<td>43</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>526</td>
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<td>18.3</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>784</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
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<td>358</td>
<td>84.1</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>97.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>Improvement Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>859</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Met Standard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The school with the lowest student enrollment consisted of 363 students, while the campus with the largest student enrollment was 1,081. The majority of the teachers served campuses with at least 90% of their students who were considered economically disadvantaged. The participating campuses in this study had mobility rates ranging from 7 to 36%. Among the teachers who rated their principals in the 50 schools, seven schools did not meet the standard, per TEA, which placed them on the improvement required list and 43 met the standard.
Eighty-two percent of the teachers who responded to the survey were from campuses who met standard and 14% served improvement required campuses. Perceptions of these teachers were still included in the summary data where possible. In addition, five teachers completed the 35 question survey but had some missing demographic data. These perceptions were included for analyses in the overall mean. This sample size included the following races: White (31.68%), Black (30.83%), Hispanic (28.57%), Asian (2.26%) and multiple races (6.77%). The largest age group that responded were those teachers whose age ranged from 40-49 years, which was 28.57% of the teachers. The lowest respondents were those teachers who were 60 years and older. Also, 84.21% of the respondents were female and 15.7% were male. First year teachers represented 10.53% of those that participated in the study, while nearly half of the respondents had 10 or more years of teaching experience. In addition to analyzing the teachers’ race, gender, age group and years of teaching experience, their school’s accountability rating and teachers years served under their current principal were considered as independent variables. Teachers who were under their principal for more than 8 years were 2.26% of the study, while 46.62% of the respondents reported to have been with their principals between 2-4 years. The survey data may be potentially skewed due to the variances in respondents in each school. Most schools had 6 respondents or less, but school 49 had 22 respondents.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

Dr. Camille Smith created a cultural proficiency survey which was revamped by Dr. Mack T. Hines III (Hines & Kritsonis, 2008). Dr. Hines used this tool to explore
teachers’ perceptions of principals’ culturally proficient leadership practices that were based on the following essential elements of cultural proficiency:

- Assessing culture
- Valuing diversity
- Managing the dynamics of difference
- Adapting to diversity
- Institutionalizing cultural knowledge
- Inclusiveness

This framework was developed by Dr. Smith and Dr. Hines. Permission was granted to use the cultural proficiency materials that are provided in Cultural Proficiency: A Manual for School Leaders (Lindsey et al. 2009a, p. 18). Dr. Hines granted approval to use his revised version of Practices for Developing a Culturally Competent School Environment (see Appendix C). Additionally, the sole copyright holder of the original instrument, Dr. Smith, gave permission (see Appendix B).

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument consisted of two parts. The first section solicited demographic information from the participating teachers, including age, gender, ethnic background, years of teaching, 2014 campus accountability rating and years with current principal. The second section included Smith’s (2004) 35-item Likert-type questionnaire which illustrated teacher perceptions of their principal’s leadership as culturally proficient in conjunction with the essential elements. Inclusiveness was another construct that was assessed (Smith, 2004; Hines & Kritsonis, 2008; Vancouver
Ethnocultural Advisory Committee, 2002).

The survey consisted of six constructs, consisting of six constructs, including valuing diversity (12 items), assessing the culture (7 items), managing the dynamics of difference (4 items), institutionalizing cultural knowledge and resources (4 items), adapting to diversity (3 items), and inclusiveness (5 items). The participating teachers used a 5-point Likert scale to assess their perceptions of their principal’s frequency of utilizing culturally proficient strategies. The tool’s scale ranged from never uses = 1, rarely uses = 2, sometimes uses = 3, frequently uses = 4, and always uses = 5.

Table 9

*Instruments Used to Collect Data for Research Questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Questions</th>
<th>Method of Data Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent do teachers perceive principals to demonstrate the Essential</td>
<td>Survey – Likert scale responses regarding the level of cultural proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements of Cultural Proficiency?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the relationship between teacher variables (i.e., race, age and years</td>
<td>Survey—Likert scale responses regarding the level of cultural proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with principal) and teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s demonstration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of the essential elements of cultural proficiency?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do culturally proficient ratings of principals differ by school accountability ratings?</td>
<td>Survey—Likert scale responses regarding the level of cultural proficiency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10

*Constructs of Cultural Proficiency Survey*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Survey Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valuing diversity</td>
<td>1, 10, 12, 13, 16, 22, 24, 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29, 30, 31 and 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing the culture</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 19, 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing the dynamics of difference</td>
<td>14, 21, 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalizing cultural knowledge and</td>
<td>6, 8, 15, 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapting to diversity</td>
<td>17, 28, 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>11, 23, 26, 27, 35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Reliability and Validity*

Dr. Mack T. Hines’ instrument was validated by the review of a panel of professors who taught courses on culturally proficiency (Hines & Kritsonis, 2008). This group of researchers and practitioners provided suggestions for improving the readability of various survey items. The survey was then completed by 34 teachers. This resulted in an overall .74 alpha coefficient that proved the internal consistency of the tool (Hines & Kritsonis, 2008).

*Procedures Utilized*

The process of obtaining approval to conduct research was initiated by submitting an Institutional Review Board Application to the school district. This application involved several accompanying documents including:

- Research proposal
- Access to confidential data
After the approval was granted at the school district level, the Institutional Review Board of the University of North Texas granted approval to collect the data.

Next, I conducted an open records request of the targeted teachers’ school district account. An email was sent to teaching staff members requesting their personal email address to receive a research packet. It provided an explanation of the study, the definition of cultural proficiency and a requested for consent to participate. This communication included confidentiality statements regarding their responses. Participants were asked to submit the survey, outside the work day, within three weeks of receipt with a follow-up reminder after the first week. Survey Monkey® (www.surveymonkey.com), a data collection software program, was used to collect data. Data from this study were retrieved from the built-in Survey Monkey® database.

The first 10 participants received a gift card of their choice (e.g. Starbucks, Friday’s, etc.) for their expedient and timely completion of the survey. The survey included a reminder of how valuable their responses are to educational research.

Data Analysis

Statistical Packages for Social Services (SPSS®) was used to analyze the survey responses. Descriptive statistics and a multivariate analysis of variance were utilized to analyze data. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) determined
significance of the difference in gender, age, years of experience, years with current
principal, school accountability ratings and race of the teachers’ responses to the six
survey subscales. Finally, a follow-up analysis of variance (ANOVA) on each individual
subscale was conducted.

Research Question 1 was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The means and
standard deviations were calculated for each survey question (n = 35) and data were
presented by construct, question, and total cultural proficiency score in order to conduct
a full examination of teachers’ perception of their principals as culturally proficient. The
total cultural proficiency score was calculated by totaling the mean ratings of the
questions on the survey and averaging the responses. Research Question 2 was
analyzed using an ANOVA test to determine if there were any significant differences in
the cultural proficiency score between teacher demographics *(i.e. race, age, gender
and years with current principal). Research Question 3 was analyzed using an ANOVA
test to determine the significant differences in the total cultural proficiency score by
school accountability rating determined by the Texas Education Agency.

Summary

Cultural proficiency leadership is defined as the ability to create school
environments that facilitate and acknowledge the cultural diversity of students and
teachers. According to Lindsey et al. (2005), principals achieved this goal by engaging
all stakeholders in valuing diversity, assessing the culture, managing the dynamics of
differences, institutionalizing cultural knowledge and resources, adapting to diversity,
and inclusiveness.
This particular study used descriptive and comparative statistics for elementary school teachers serving various schools in a large, urban district in Texas. Section I of the questionnaire collected demographic data including gender, race, years under current principal and Texas Education Agency rating. An examination of the teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s use of culturally proficient practices (the dependent variable) was conducted based on the information that was gathered from the data. A Likert scale rating (1-5) based on the six essential elements of cultural proficiency was used to measure the perceptions of the participating teachers. The scores of each construct were analyzed and are discussed in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER 4
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers’ perception of their principals’ demonstrations of the essential elements of culturally proficiency. Specifically, this researcher investigated teachers’ perceptions of principal’s demonstration of cultural proficiency in the following areas: valuing diversity, assessing his/her own culture, managing the dynamics caused by difference, institutionalizing cultural knowledge, adapting to diversity, and inclusiveness.

Results of Study

As depicted in Table 11, the sample included more female (66%) than male (34%) respondents with the majority of ethnic backgrounds composed of African Americans (34.5%), Whites (31.9%), and Hispanics (25.7%). Of this population, 8.9% of the participants were from multiple races. From an age perspective, 21 (18.6%) participants were between the ages of 21 and 29; 32 (28.3%) participants were between the ages of 30-39; 32 (28.3%) were between the ages of 40 and 49; 21 (18.6%) participants were between the ages of 50-59 and 7 (6.2%) participants were over the age of 60.

The school accountability ratings demographics showed that 18 (18%) participants worked in schools that were categorized as “Improvement Required” The remaining 82 (82%) participants were in schools that were categorized as “Met Standard” With regards to years with principal, nearly 47% of the participants reported that they were in their first year of working with their principal (n = 53). Slightly less than
five percent of the participants indicated that they have completed only one year of service with their principal \((n = 5)\). Whereas 41 (36.3\%) participants completed 2-4 years of service with their principal, 11 (9.7\%) participants had been with their principal for between 4-8 years. The remaining 3 (2.7\%) participants reported that they had been with their principal for more than eight years.

Table 11

*Demographic Characteristics for Survey Respondents \((N = 113)\)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From multiple races</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age Groups</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-29</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 or older</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years of Experience with Principal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 years</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-8 years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 8 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Accountability Rating</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement Required</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met Standard</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 1

Research Question 1: What are teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of
the essential elements of cultural proficiency?

Teachers were asked to provide their perceptions of their principals’ frequency with demonstrating the essential elements of cultural proficiency. Teachers were asked to rate the frequency of 35 items related to the essential elements of cultural proficiency using a 5-point Likert scale. Analysis of the data was completed as detailed in Chapter 3. When the individual tasks were ordered by mean scores, the ranges were from 2.54 “Creating conflict resolution for students” to 4.43 “Creating a climate that has high academic expectations for all students.” The mean distribution of the elements are provided in Table 12.

Table 12

Mean Distribution of the Survey Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Creating a climate that has high academic expectations for all students.</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Handling formalities to ensure that faculty and visitors are welcome to the school.</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Using language in documents and statements that acknowledge cultural diversity of students</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Ensuring that school policies are sensitive to the cultural makeup of the school.</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Creating academic intervention programs that meet the needs of diverse students.</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Providing inclusive environment that acknowledges the diversity of students.</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Maintaining school activities conducive to effectively working with and learning in cross cultural situations.</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Making decisions that are inclusive of diverse perspectives.</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Providing instruction that addresses the background of diverse students.</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Encouraging staff to obtain certification in specifically designed academic instruction.</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Creating school activities that appeal to demographically mixed groups of students.</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Ensuring that extracurricular activities are inclusive of community members are from ethnic groups.</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continues)
Table 12 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 Creating a school environment that inspires students and teachers to acknowledge other cultures while retaining the uniqueness of their ethnic identity.</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Making provisions for teachers to receive training on making curriculum modifications in accordance to accordance to the cultural and linguistic makeup of students.</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Disseminating demographic information to enhance faculty members’ awareness of the relevance of cultural diversity.</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Ensuring that school policies promote and advocate for culturally proficient behaviors among faculty and staff members.</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Accommodating diverse cultural norms that may exist in the school.</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Accessing barriers to core curriculum for culturally diverse students.</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Exposing faculty to staff development on addressing diverse student populations.</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Evaluating the extent to which curricular and institutional practices address the linguistic and cultural differences of students.</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Communicating ability to function effectively in cross cultural situations</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Designating funding and human resources to address issues that relate to cultural diversity.</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Organizing diverse members into interview panels for hiring new faculty/staff members.</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Developing policies with stakeholders who represent the cultural makeup of students.</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Establishing diverse advisory groups.</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Showing sensitivity to cultural differences during performance evaluations of faculty members</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Providing leadership in creating policy statements that are inclusive of diversity.</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Developing programs with opportunities for consultation with a diverse parent group.</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Ensuring that all groups of students and teachers are aware of how their cultural norms and behaviors influence the climate of the school.</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Evaluating faculty members’ ability to display culturally proficient behaviors.</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Developing complaint resolution processes that have been communicated to parents.</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 Connecting students and staff to external organizations and resources that represent cultural diversity.</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 Providing training that develops faculty and staff members’ confidence to function in cross cultural situations.</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 Providing faculty and staff members with conflict resolution training.</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 Is there variability in conflict resolution for all students?</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 2

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between teacher variables (i.e., race, age, years with principal) and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of the essential elements of cultural proficiency?

Subscale 1: Valuing Diversity

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine if differences existed in teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of valuing diversity for the races. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of valuing diversity for the races, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.879$, $F(1, 217) = 3.606$, $p < .05$.

A MANOVA was also conducted to determine if differences existed between in teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of valuing diversity for the age group. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences related to age and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of valuing diversity, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.917$, $F(1, 217) = 2.383$, $p > .05$.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if differences existed between years with principal and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of valuing diversity. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences related to race and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of valuing diversity, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.886$, $F(3, 215) = 3.364$, $p > .05$. 
Subscale 2: Assessing His / Her Own Culture

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if differences existed between race and teachers' perceptions of principals' demonstrations of assessing his/her own culture. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences related to race and teachers' perceptions of principals' demonstrations of assessing his/her own culture, Wilk's $\lambda = 0.831$, $F(3, 215) = 1.655, p > .05$.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if differences existed between age and teachers' perceptions of principals' demonstrations of assessing his/her own culture. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences related to age and teachers' perceptions of principals' demonstrations of assessing his/her own culture, Wilk's $\lambda = 0.855$, $F(4, 214) = 1.039, p > .05$.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if differences existed between years with principal and teachers' perceptions of principals' demonstrations of assessing his/her own culture. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences related to race and teachers' perceptions of principals' demonstrations of assessing his/her own culture, Wilk's $\lambda = 1.855$, $F(4, 214) = 1.039, p > .05$.

Subscale 3: Managing the Dynamics Caused by Differences

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if differences existed between race and teachers' perceptions of principals'
demonstrations of managing the dynamics caused by difference. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences related to race and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of managing the dynamics caused by difference, Wilk’s $\lambda = 1.265$, $F(4, 214) = 1.059$, $p > .05$.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if differences existed between age and teachers' perceptions of principals' demonstrations of managing the dynamics caused by difference. The findings from MANOVA indicated that age was statistically significant, Wilk's $\lambda = 0.856$, $F(1.217) = 3.264$, $p < .05$.

As a follow-up to MANOVA, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on each dependent variable that included the following significant items: 21. Developing complaint resolution processes that have been communicated to parents and 32. Creating conflict resolutions services for students. Conversely, the remaining item of this construct (14) was not significant. Although ANOVA revealed that the means were significantly different, the effect size was small (partial $\eta^2 = 0.032$ and 0.035) for Items 21 and 32 respectively. In other words, age by itself accounted for only 3% of the overall variance.

Tukey's Significant Difference (HSD) post hoc test was conducted to identify the specific differences between age ranges and managing the dynamics of difference (see Table 15). The test revealed statistically significant differences on questions pertaining to managing the dynamics of difference were found between the following age ranges: 20-29 and 40-49.
Table 13

Analysis of Variance for Student Engagement (N = 219)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Between Subjects’ Effects</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>df</td>
<td>Error df</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>Partial η²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 21</td>
<td>7.159</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>0.008*</td>
<td>0.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 32</td>
<td>7.758</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>0.006*</td>
<td>0.035</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05.

Table 14

Means and Standard Deviations of Age and Managing the Dynamics of Difference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Engagement</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-29</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>1.55</td>
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<td>40-49</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>1.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 or Older</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-29</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 or Older</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15

Tukey Post Hoc Findings for Student Engagement Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>21-29</th>
<th>30-39</th>
<th>40-49</th>
<th>50-59</th>
<th>Over 60</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.000*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.007*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistical significance between ethnic groups for student engagement.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if differences existed between years with principal and teachers' perceptions of principals' demonstrations of managing the dynamics caused by difference. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences related to race and teachers' perceptions of principals' demonstrations of managing the dynamics caused by difference, Wilk's $\lambda = 0.778$, $F(4, 214) = 1.539$, $p > .05$.

Subscale 4: Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if differences existed between race and teachers' perceptions of principals' demonstrations of institutionalizing cultural knowledge. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences related to race and
teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of institutionalizing cultural knowledge, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.585$, $F (4, 214) = 2.302$, $p > .05$.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if differences existed between age and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of institutionalizing cultural knowledge. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences related to age and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of institutionalizing cultural knowledge, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.475$, $F (4, 214) = 1.271$, $p > .05$.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if differences existed between years with principal and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of institutionalizing cultural knowledge. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences related to race and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of institutionalizing cultural knowledge, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.456$, $F (4, 214) = 1.219$, $p > .05$.

Subscale 5: Adapting to Diversity

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if differences existed between race and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of adapting to diversity. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences related to race and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of adapting to diversity, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.655$, $F (4, 214) = 1.519$, $p > .05$.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if
differences existed between age and teachers’ perceptions of principals’
demonstrations of adapting to diversity. The findings from MANOVA indicated that age
was statistically significant, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.486$, $F (1, 217) = 2.654$, $p < .05$.

As a follow-up to MANOVA, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on
each dependent variable that included the following significant items: 17. Evaluating
teachers’ ability to display culturally proficient behaviors. 17 and 28. Accommodating
diverse cultural norms that may exist in the school. Conversely, the remaining item of
this construct (33) was not significant. Although ANOVA revealed that the means were
significantly different, the effect size was small ($\eta^2=0.041$ and 0.045) for Items 17
and 28 respectively. In other words, age by itself accounted for only 4% of the overall
variance.

Tukey’s Significant Difference (HSD) post hoc test was conducted to identify the
specific differences between age ranges and perceptions of adapting to diversity (see
Table 18). The test revealed that statistically significant differences on questions
pertaining to adapting to diversity were found between the following age ranges: 20-29
and 40-49.

Subscale 6: Inclusiveness

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if
differences existed between race and teachers’ perceptions of principals’
demonstrations of inclusiveness. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were
no statistically significant differences related to race and teachers’ perceptions of
principals’ demonstrations of inclusiveness, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.831$, $F (4, 210) = 1.325$, $p > .05$. 
A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if differences existed between age and teachers' perceptions of principals' demonstrations of inclusiveness. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences related to age and teachers' perceptions of principals' demonstrations of inclusiveness, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.815$, $F(4, 213) = 2.039$, $p > .05$.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if differences existed between years with principal and teachers' perceptions of principals' demonstrations of inclusiveness. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences related to race and teachers' perceptions of principals' demonstrations of inclusiveness, Wilk’s $\lambda = 1.715$, $F(2, 210) = 2.541$, $p > .05$.

Table 16

Analysis of Variance for Student Engagement (N = 219)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Error df</th>
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*p < .05.*
Means and Standard Deviations of Age and Adapting to Diversity

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<td>60 or Older</td>
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<tr>
<td>60 or Older</td>
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<td>1.47</td>
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Tukey Post Hoc Findings for Student Engagement Items

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<td>Over 60</td>
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<th>Over 60</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Over 60</td>
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*Statistical significance between ethnic groups for student engagement.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if differences existed between age and teachers' perceptions of principals'
demonstrations of adapting to diversity. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences related to age and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of adapting to diversity, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.515$, $F(4, 214) = 1.258$, $p > .05$.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if differences existed between years with principal and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of adapting to diversity. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences related to race and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of adapting to diversity, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.113$, $F(4, 214) = 1.632$, $p > .05$.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between school’s accountability rating and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of the essential elements of cultural proficiency?

Subscale 1: Valuing Diversity

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if differences existed between the school’s accountability rating and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of valuing diversity. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences related to the school’s accountability rating and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of valuing diversity, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.455$, $F(4, 214) = 2.139$, $p > .05$. 
Subscale 2: Assessing His / Her Own Culture

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if differences existed between the school’s accountability rating and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of assessing his/her own culture. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences related to the school’s accountability rating and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of assessing his/her own culture, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.857$, $F(4, 214) = 1.930$, $p > .05$.

Subscale 3: Managing the Dynamics Caused by Difference

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if differences existed between the school’s accountability rating and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of managing the dynamics caused by difference. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences related to the school’s accountability rating and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of managing the dynamics caused by difference, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.662$, $F(4, 214) = 1.465$, $p > .05$.

Subscale 4: Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if differences existed between the school’s accountability rating and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of institutionalizing cultural knowledge. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences related to the school’s accountability rating and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of
institutionalizing cultural knowledge, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.355$, $F(4, 214) = 1.239, p > .05$.

Subscale 5: Adapting to Diversity

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if differences existed between the school’s accountability rating and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of adapting to diversity. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences related to the school’s accountability rating and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of adapting to diversity, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.657$, $F(4, 214) = 1.336, p > .05$.

Subscale 6: Inclusiveness

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to determine if differences existed between the school’s accountability rating and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of inclusiveness. The findings from MANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences related to the school’s accountability rating and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of adapting to diversity, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.257$, $F(4, 212) = 1.426, p > .05$.

Summary

Chapter 4 presented the findings for the three research questions. The first research question examined teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of the essential elements of cultural proficiency. The findings showed that the mean scores ranged from 2.54 “Creating conflict resolution for students” to 4.43 “Creating a climate
that has high academic expectations for all students.”

The second research question investigated if teacher perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of cultural proficiency were influenced by race, age, and years of experience with principal. A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was used to analyze the individual effects of the independent variables of race, age, and years with principal on the dependent variable of valuing diversity. MANOVA results revealed no statistically significant differences among teachers on valuing diversity among races, ages, and years of experiences with the principal.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was used to analyze the individual effects of the independent variables of race, age, and years with principal on the dependent variable of assessing his/her own culture. MANOVA results revealed no statistically significant racial, age, and years differences among teachers on assessing his/her own culture.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was used to analyze the individual effects of the independent variables of race, age, and years with principal on the dependent variable of managing the dynamics of difference. MANOVA results revealed that age was statistically significant, Wilk’s λ = 0.856, F (1, 217) = 3.264, p < .05.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was used to analyze the individual effects of the independent variables of race, age, and years with principal on the dependent variable of institutionalizing cultural knowledge. MANOVA results revealed no statistically significant racial, age, and years differences among teachers on institutionalizing cultural knowledge.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was used to analyze the individual
effects of the independent variables of race, age, and years with principal on the
dependent variable of managing adapting to diversity. MANOVA results revealed that
age was statistically significant, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.655$, $F (4, 214) = 1.519$, $p > .05$.

The third research question investigated if teacher perceptions of principals’
demonstrations of cultural proficiency were influenced by accountability rating. A one-
way multivariate analysis of variance was used to analyze the individual effect of the
independent variable of accountability rating on the dependent variable of valuing
diversity. MANOVA results revealed no statistically significant accountability ratings
differences among teachers on valuing diversity.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was used to analyze the individual
effect of the independent variable of accountability rating on the dependent variable of
assessing his/her own culture. MANOVA results revealed no statistically significant
accountability ratings differences among teachers on assessing his/her own culture.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was used to analyze the individual
effect of the independent variables of accountability rating on the dependent variable of
managing the dynamics caused by difference. MANOVA results revealed no
statistically significant accountability ratings differences among teachers on managing
the dynamics caused by difference.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was used to analyze the individual
effect of the independent variables of accountability rating on the dependent variable of
institutionalizing cultural knowledge. MANOVA results revealed no statistically
significant accountability ratings differences among teachers on institutionalizing cultural
knowledge.
A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was used to analyze the individual effect of the independent variables of accountability rating on the dependent variable of adapting to diversity. MANOVA results revealed no statistically significant accountability ratings differences among teachers on adapting to diversity.
CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore elementary school teachers' perception of their principals as culturally proficient of a large, urban Texas public school district. Each school's demographic information was analyzed to make a determination of variables that were statistically significant and insignificant. These factors are based on scholarly literature and outlined in Practices for Developing a Culturally Competent School Environment which is an instrument created by Smith (2004) and later revised by Hines and Kritsonis (2008). Hines and Kritsonis (2008) revamped this instrument as the Culturally Proficient Leadership Scale. It is a survey which includes a 35-question questionnaire using a Likert scale. This scale evaluates the extent to what teachers perceive their principals as culturally proficient. Hines and Kritsonis (2008) revised version is disseminated to over 2,500 teachers among 52 elementary, Title I schools. One-hundred and twenty teachers respond to the survey.

This chapter encompasses the results and findings of the study. Additionally, it addresses the research questions, conclusions and future research recommendations. Table 17 indicates the statistical significance of the research questions and summary of results. Table 18 illustrates the statistical significance of the independent variables for each of the essential elements of cultural proficiency.
Table 19

Summary of Results / Significance for each Research Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To what extent do teachers perceive principals to demonstrate the essential elements of cultural proficiency?</td>
<td>Descriptive analysis provided below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How do culturally proficient ratings of principals differ among teacher demographics (i.e. age, race and years under current principal)?</td>
<td>Significant/Insignificant (depends on the variable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How do culturally proficient ratings of principals differ by school accountability ratings?</td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This research reveals the perceptions that elementary school teachers have of their principal's level of demonstrated cultural proficiency. Principals were rated in the following constructs: valuing diversity, assessing his/her own culture, managing the dynamics of difference, institutionalizing cultural knowledge, managing and adapting to diversity and inclusiveness. The highest mean score was creating a climate that has high expectations for all students and the lowest mean score was for creating conflict resolution for students. Based on the teacher's responses, there is no statistically significant differences in how teachers perceive their principal's cultural proficiency based on gender, race and years with principal, including the school's TEA accountability rating.
Table 20

Significance of Subscales

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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuing Diversity</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing His/Her Own Culture</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing the Dynamics of Difference</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing and Adapting to Diversity</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Discussion of the Results

This research study analyzes elementary school teachers’ perceptions of their principals as culturally proficient leaders and generated several points of discussion. Variables include the teachers' age, race and years with their current principal. This study reveals there are no statistically significant differences in how teachers perceive their principal's cultural proficiency based on gender, race and years with principal. The outcome suggests that age has a significant difference in how teachers rate their principals. Higher culturally proficient ratings are given by middle-aged teachers in the areas of managing the dynamics of difference and managing and adapting to diversity. This may suggest that middle-aged individuals have acquired ample interaction with culturally diverse populations longer than those who are in their early twenties. For one to understand the attributes of a leader who manages diverse populations would be one who is aware of his/her own culture and demonstrates a level of understanding of other
cultures. Furthermore, these middle-aged teachers have the ability to recognize specific culturally proficient behaviors that are aligned to the constructs: Managing the dynamics of difference and managing and adapting to diversity.

In Texas, the performance index that determines the accountability ratings of elementary schools includes: Student achievement, student progress, closing performance gaps and post-secondary readiness. The 2014, TEA required elementary schools to meet targets on three of four of the indexes. Both, Improvement Required (IR) and Met Standard schools are represented in this study. However, there are more schools that earn the Met Standard rating, per TEA, which may skew the results. Sixty-two percent of the schools receive Met Standard as their accountability rating.

This study shows there is not a significant difference in the principal ratings for their cultural proficiency level based on school accountability. Egley and Jones (2005) find there is a correlation between leadership behaviors and academic achievement. Academic achievement of students is aggregated in the formulation of accountability ratings of schools and is the main area that is calculated into the total school rating. Other findings from the studies that are discussed in the review of literature reveal that effective principals’ leadership and addressing teacher perceptions of their principal’s leadership may improve student achievement. However, in Texas, culturally proficient leadership ratings and teacher survey data of their principal’s leadership are not calculated in TEA school accountability ratings. Therefore, it is understandable that this study finds no statistical significance in the principal ratings on school accountability due to the components that are used to calculate school accountability ratings in Texas.
Texas needs to consider other school performance indicators to determine school accountability ratings, such as teachers' perceptions of their principal's demonstration of cultural proficient leadership. Studies reveal there is a link between a principal's leadership practice and accountability. The research study of Wright (2009) shows the districts whose superintendent exercised cultural proficiency had achievement gaps that were narrower than those districts who did not embrace the essential elements of cultural proficiency. Superintendents, themselves, demonstrate cultural proficiency and are strategic in district-wide implementation, school ratings may increase. Ultimately, the achievement gap among student subpopulations would decrease. Therefore, policy makers at the state and district level may want to consider including culturally proficient leadership practices in the accountability rating of schools.

Research Question 1: To what extent do teachers perceive principals to demonstrate the essential elements of cultural proficiency?

Research Question 1 examines teachers' perceptions of principals' demonstrations of the essential elements of cultural proficiency. The findings show that the mean scores range from 2.54 “Creating conflict resolution for students” to 4.43 “Creating a climate that has high academic expectations for all students.” The highest scores are in the following areas:

- Creating a climate that has high academic expectations for all students
- Handling formalities to ensure that faculty and visitors are welcome to the school
- Using language in documents and statements that acknowledge cultural diversity of students

These results suggest that principals demonstrate their ability to execute culturally
proficient leadership skills which do not necessarily require deep knowledge of one’s culture. For example, a principal may promote a climate that has high academic expectations by creating a data wall which illustrates STAAR scores for each sub-population of the school. Or, he/she may be intentional about greeting teachers at their classroom door or personally taking a newly enrolled student’s parent on a school tour. Also, newsletters and other forms of communication may be provided in English and Spanish. However, these actions are primarily surface-level leadership behaviors that simply acknowledge diversity.

In order for a principal to demonstrate cultural proficiency in an authentic manner, beyond lower/surface level practices, he/she needs to examine his/her own assumptions, beliefs and values. This requires self-honesty and reflection on these beliefs of other cultures. This may be time-consuming for some, but it is necessary to take the time to understand various cultures to be an effective leader of school. Schools are rich with diversity and opportunities to learn about other cultures. The organizational theorists (Lindsey et al., 2003) assert that it is essential to learn about the cultures of others and understand how to interact effectively in a multicultural environment. This practice requires an intentional look at one’s own belief system of multiculturalism and executing behaviors that support others. The participants in this study may then score their principals higher in the constructs that require more in-depth knowledge and demonstration of cultural proficiency. These constructs include: managing dynamics of difference and inclusiveness.

Luper (2011) found varying cultural proficiency ratings by high school teachers. Luper (2011) discovered high school principals are perceived more proficient in the
following Essential Elements:

- Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge
- Assessing the Culture
- Valuing Diversity

These constructs require principals to take a more self-reflective approach to leading, and they call for exhibiting behaviors that are more complex than merely acknowledging diversity. These elements are linked to leadership practices which address diversity in meaningful ways and see a benefit rather than a detriment to achieving campus goals.

This research indicates that teachers score their principal the lowest in areas which require an in-depth approach to leadership. These items are:

- Connecting students and staff to external organizations and resources that represent cultural diversity.
- Providing training that develops faculty and staff members’ confidence to function in cross cultural situations.
- Providing faculty and staff members with conflict resolution training.
- Ensuring variability in conflict resolution for all students

These actions are demonstrated by the principal’s taking an unbiased approach to understanding the root of one’s cultural identity and drawing parallels of how one coexists with other members of the school. These behaviors are proactive and require a culturally sensitive approach to campus management of a diverse population.

The results reveal that teachers perceive their principals more culturally proficient in areas that do not necessarily require an inward motivation to leadership. For example, a less in-depth, cultural approach may not be needed to formulate processes
that promote high expectations for students. However, a principal will have to understand nuances of various cultures in an effort to support and develop a system for conflict resolution. This illustrates the difficulty for a principal to reach high levels of cultural proficiency if he/she lacks a deep understanding of the Essential Elements of Culturally Proficiency. Furthermore, principals are less likely to achieve this leadership skill if the Essential Elements are not incorporated in an authentic, on-going basis.

In reference to how the teachers rank leaders, the difference between cultural awareness and cultural proficiency is evident. Cultural awareness is a more superficial approach to simply acknowledging that diverse populations exist. Cultural proficiency allows one to totally embrace diversity and demonstrate its benefit to develop a cohesive environment for all. For some principals, a paradigm shift and a mindset change may be necessary to reach high levels of cultural proficiency, and self-reflection is the initial step. Once the personal, self-reflection is addressed, it is advantageous for the principal to conduct thoughtful planning and organizational structures to demonstrate cultural proficiency. This practice includes the development of school policies and behaviors enabling cross-cultural interactions among all members of the school community in a positive manner.

In his study, Hines and Kritsonis (2008) found significant differences between in Caucasian, African-American and Hispanic teachers in valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, inclusiveness, assessing the culture, adapting to diversity, and institutionalizing cultural knowledge and resources. The results from his study suggest that race does matter in the perceptions that one may have of another’s frequency in demonstrating culturally proficient leadership.
Based on the teachers’ scoring trend, principals receive the higher scores in areas showing lower levels of cultural proficiency. Principals are ranked higher in areas that do not necessarily require a deep execution of cultural proficiency. For example, ensuring that handouts and other forms of communication are provided in English and Spanish is a simple cultural accommodation. Principals who distribute bilingual communication are demonstrating cultural proficiency on a lower level. In comparison, the lower the score rank, the higher the need for principals to address diversity and exercise the essential elements of cultural proficiency. For example, principals receive lower scores in mediating conflict resolution. A principal is required to have a deep understanding of his/her own culture and the cultures in conflict in order to reach an amicable solution.

This study shows that principals may struggle with school leadership behaviors that require high levels of cultural proficiency. Therefore, this school district may consider offering principal professional development opportunities in the following areas: (a) connecting with students, (b) providing cross-cultural training, (c) conflict-resolution training and (d) variability in conflict-resolution for all students.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between teacher variables (i.e., race, age, years with principal) and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of the essential elements of cultural proficiency?

Research Question 2 investigates if teacher perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of cultural proficiency are influenced by race, age, or teachers’ or years of experience with principal. A one-way multivariate analysis of variance analyzes the individual effects of the independent variables of race, age, and years with principal on
the dependent variable of valuing diversity. MANOVA results reveal no statistical
significance among the teachers’ race, age, and years with principal regarding how they
scored their principals on valuing diversity. The participants included Hispanic, White,
Black and Multi-race from various age ranges and years under their current principal.
Their responses show that these independent variables do not impact the ratings
provided in the construct: Valuing Diversity.

Luper (2011) found there were no significant differences among the teachers’
age and race in her study of high school principals’ cultural proficiency. It is interesting
that both studies reveal similar characteristics. From these studies, one may assert that
race does not matter in the rating. Hines (2008) found that African-American and
Hispanic teachers rated White principals lower than other races.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance analyzes the individual effects of
the independent variables of race, age, and years with principal on the dependent
variable of assessing his/her own culture. MANOVA results reveal no statistically
significant race, age, and years differences among teachers on assessing his/her own
culture.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance analyzes the individual effects of the
independent variables of race, age, and years with principal on the dependent variable
of managing the dynamics of difference. MANOVA results reveal that age is statistically
significant, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.856$, $F (1, 217) = 3.264$, $p < .05$.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance analyzes the individual effects of the
independent variables of race, age, and years with principal on the dependent variable
of institutionalizing cultural knowledge. MANOVA results reveal no statistically
significant racial, age, and years differences among teachers on institutionalizing cultural knowledge.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance analyzes the individual effects of the independent variables of race, age, and years with the principal on the dependent variable of managing and adapting to diversity. MANOVA results reveal that age is statistically significant, Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.655$, $F(4, 214) = 1.519$, $p > .05$.

Teachers of various races, ages and years with their principal participate in this study. The study reveals that age shows a statistically significant difference in the teachers’ perception of how proficient they are in managing the dynamics of difference and adapting to diversity. Hines and Kritsonis (2008) showed there were significant differences between in Caucasian, African-American and Hispanic teachers in valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, inclusiveness, assessing the culture, adapting to diversity, and institutionalizing cultural knowledge and resources.

In regards to all of the independent variables (race, age and years with principal) the majority of respondents look at the items through a race neutral lens. Teachers are not critical of how their principal values the various aspects of diversity (i.e. Hispanic, Black, White, economically disadvantaged, etc.) with their leadership practices. Regardless of the respondents’ age, people have a hard time understanding that the ability to value diversity is linked to understanding their own culture and the cultural knowledge of others. This is a process that takes time. Similar to age, the years that teachers are with their principal have no significance to how they rate their principals in these areas. As with age, the years that the teachers are with their principal may be
such that the familiarity with their principal creates a level of normalcy and bias as to how teachers view their principal's demonstrations and actions.

Among all of the teachers who participated in this study, half were either with their principal for one year or it was their first year on the campus with that principal. This shows that they may not have had as many experiences with their principal as did the longer-term teachers who participated in the study. Thirty-six percent of the teachers were with their principals for 2-4 years, nine percent of the teachers were with their principal for 4-6 years, and only two percent of the teachers were with their principals for more than eight years. These percentages may not necessarily provide a fair and accurate rating due to the discrepancies between teachers’ length of contact. The survey results may have been drastically different if more teachers with experience with their principals participate in the survey.

Therefore, it is essential that school districts make a concerted effort to provide teachers and students with stability by retaining principals at their current campus and offer support for effectiveness. Transient principals and teachers will never have the opportunity to establish meaningful, working relationships if there is instability. Furthermore, teachers may demonstrate an accurate assessment of their principal’s execution of the essential elements of cultural proficiency if they have prolonged contact.

Research Question 3: How do culturally proficient ratings of principals differ by school accountability ratings?

Research Question 3 investigates if teacher perceptions of principals’ demonstrations of cultural proficiency are influenced by accountability rating. A one-way
multivariate analysis of variance analyzes the individual effect of the independent variable of accountability rating on the dependent variable of valuing diversity. MANOVA results revealed no statistically significant accountability ratings differences among teachers on valuing diversity.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance analyzes the individual effect of the independent variable of accountability rating on the dependent variable of assessing his/her own culture. MANOVA results reveal no statistically significant accountability ratings differences among teachers on assessing his/her own culture.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance analyzes the individual effect of the independent variables of accountability rating on the dependent variable of managing the dynamics caused by difference. MANOVA results reveal no statistically significant accountability ratings differences among teachers on managing the dynamics caused by difference.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance analyzes the individual effect of the independent variables of accountability rating on the dependent variable of institutionalizing cultural knowledge. MANOVA results reveal no statistically significant accountability ratings differences among teachers on institutionalizing cultural knowledge.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance analyzes the individual effect of the independent variables of accountability rating on the dependent variable of adapting to diversity. MANOVA results reveal no statistically significant accountability ratings differences among teachers on adapting to diversity.
The study reveals that school accountability ratings do not have a bearing on how teachers perceived their principals as being culturally proficient leaders in each of the essential elements. The essential elements of cultural proficiency are not aggregated in the Texas Public School’s Accountability System. However, other research studies show that schools excel in student achievement if the effective leadership practices are employed. Pfaller (2010) found that the achievement gap in Wisconsin urban schools were narrowed among the schools whose principals demonstrated culturally proficient leadership practices. It may be advantageous to include essential elements of cultural proficiency in principal evaluations. Indicators for principal effectiveness and success may all be linked to the essential elements of valuing diversity, assessing his/her culture, managing dynamics of difference, adapting to diversity, institutionalizing cultural knowledge and inclusiveness. The current accountability system in Texas does not include the Essential Elements or any leadership practices that lead to school success. This system is only comprised of student data comprised of STAAR scores and other student performance data.

Smith (2004) asserted in her findings that principals in high performing schools located in high poverty neighborhoods demonstrate cultural proficiency at a high frequency. Her study revealed that teachers believe that their principals’ level of cultural proficiency is higher in valuing diversity and assessing the dynamics of difference. The principals in this study participated in professional development in cultural proficiency. Therefore, university programs and school districts may consider it necessary to offer coursework and training that is rooted in the concept of cultural proficiency. This may increase a principal’s awareness all the elements involved in cultural proficiency.
Moreover, teachers and principals will have a common frame of reference of culturally proficient practices in elementary schools and their importance to the success of students.

Research Implications

Due to the varying ratings this study demonstrates for the principals and the low participation in the study, teachers and principals need the opportunity to participate in professional development that focuses on the essential elements of cultural proficiency. Perhaps there is a lack of understanding among teachers of the important ways that cultural proficiency impacts the work environment, school climate and overall school culture. Additionally, there may be a need for principals to obtain professional development in the areas of cultural proficiency and its impact on teacher perceptions and student achievement. Therefore, school districts may consider expanding their level of support by including opportunities for professional growth in culturally proficient leadership to increase educators’ awareness of diversity which may lead to cultural proficiency.

This research study reveals important implications. First, principals of diverse schools need to gain an understanding of how their teachers perceive their level of cultural proficiency and how often they use its practices. This implication is made by varied low to moderate ratings that are provided by the teachers. One step would be for the principal to incorporate practices that can promote a more inclusive environment among the teaching staff. This benefits the overall climate of the campus. Equally, principals may have the opportunity to conduct a self-assessment using this study’s
research tool and draw comparisons of how they perceive themselves in relation to the teachers’ perceptions. These practices can develop a healthy dialogue between the teachers and principal in an effort to gain a deeper understanding of how culture impacts the climate of the campus and the role of the principal in serving as the catalyst for all stakeholders to reach cultural proficiency.

There needs to be a process for school districts to follow that encourages participation in educational studies. There was a very small percentage of teachers who participated in the study compared to the large number invited. Teacher leaders or educational leadership advocates could devise a plan for increasing participation that would take advantage of peer relationships. Also, principals may infuse research-based practices in the district’s current initiatives that are known to benefit schools. This proactive approach to support research in practice may spark the interest of teachers and create a sense of ownership in educational research by increasing their participation in research studies.

The school district in this study has been impacted by a large educator (principal and teacher) turnover in recent years. This fact may have altered the responses that teachers provided to rate their principals. One may assert that the teachers are uncertain of how their responses would impact their employment. If teachers believe their employment is stable and they have the confidence and trust in their employer, they may feel more comfortable participating in research studies that analyze their principal’s effectiveness and leadership.

Culturally proficient leadership may not be a concept that is a priority in the school district where these teachers serve. There may be principals that demonstrate
cultural proficiency at their individual campuses, but a districtwide initiative to reach
cultural proficiency and demonstrate culturally proficient practices is does not receive
district support. If the superintendent of schools embraces culturally proficient practices
and ensures these ideals are executed, it is possible that there could be more high-
performing principals and schools. Furthermore, school districts may need to consider
embedding the essential elements of cultural proficiency into principal evaluations.
Teachers’ perceptions may be included as a percentage of the total evaluation score
may increase high performing principals and schools.

Wright (2009) found that superintendents who embraced diverse backgrounds
used culturally proficient practices. In his study, he analyzed eight superintendents who
develop meaningful relationships with school personnel and members of the broader
learning community. These district leaders ensured that culturally proficient practices
are embedded in the professional development that is offered to the teachers and staff
members in their district. Consequently, these districts’ achievement gap narrowed
among student sub-populations, such as those identified by ethnicity, students receiving
special education services and economically disadvantaged.

Recommendations for Future Research

This quantitative study uses a Likert-scale, survey to determine teachers’
perception of their principal as being culturally proficient. Hence, a longitudinal study
may reveal specific leadership behaviors that impact teachers’ perception during a
lengthy period of time. Additionally, it may reveal concrete examples of demonstrated
leadership behaviors that are aligned to each of the Elements of Cultural Proficiency.
This quantitative study reveals the variances of statistical significance of teacher demographics: age, gender, years served with the current principal, accountability rating of the school, and years of experience. A larger sample size of teachers with a significant amount of years of experience with their current principals may provide a more conclusive outcome for each of the essential elements of cultural proficiency. Teachers who have more experience with their principal will have the ability to adequately evaluate and provide a more accurate rating.

Future research is also needed which addresses whether or not culturally proficient principals narrow the achievement gap among African-American students and their White counterparts. Noguera (2003) found that individuals perceive the achievement gap is permanent and will continue to widen. However, future research may unveil how principals who demonstrate cultural proficiency may decrease the achievement gap among various student sub-populations.

A study which correlates the success of principals who receive intensive training in cultural proficiency and those who do not receive this training may empower principal preparation programs to include a component of this concept.

Suggestions for Educational Practitioners

The results of this study indicate that the participant’s age has an impact on perception. This variable is important to deepen principals’ understanding that building relationships is important and that it takes time for them to develop. Therefore, it would be advantageous for principals to develop a rapport with all teachers. This may form meaningful relationships among teachers and principals which will guide principals on a
journey towards cultural proficiency. For example, a principal may conduct a self-
reflection of how his/her culture influences teachers’ perceptions.

A teacher’s school’s accountability rating, their race, and gender show no
significant difference in how teachers perceive their principal’s cultural proficiency level. However, the Texas Accountability rating does not include leadership behaviors to
determine a school’s rating. Studies show that leadership is important to the success of
the school. Egley and Jones (2005) find a correlation between leadership behaviors
and student achievement. Their study demonstrates a relationship between the
elementary teachers' perceptions of their principal's leadership behaviors and the
accountability rating of the school. Therefore, it is important for principals to display
cultural proficiency in the diverse, inclusive environments in which they serve.

Conclusion

There is not a one-size-all approach to leading schools. This is even more the
case in schools with a diverse teaching staff. If a principal is in the business of serving
as a leader in a diverse elementary school, it is beneficial to embrace cultural
proficiency. Culturally proficient leadership affords principals with the opportunity to
acknowledge and value diversity. This is important as teachers collaborate for the
education of children. According to Lindsey et al. (2005), elementary principals reach
this goal by demonstrating the essential elements of cultural proficiency: valuing
diversity, assessing the culture, managing the dynamics of differences, institutionalizing
cultural knowledge and resources, adapting to diversity, and inclusiveness. One can
only imagine how schools would perform if teachers perceived their elementary
 principals as being culturally proficient leaders.
This chapter provides an overview of this study on elementary teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s level of cultural proficiency. It is essential that principal preparation certification programs infuse leadership practices that impact culturally diverse environments. Additionally, school district leadership must ensure that professional development opportunities are available for principals in the area of cultural proficiency.

The essential elements of cultural proficiency may be implemented to improve the culture and climate of a school. Such leadership practices may be used as a model for teachers as they interact with their students. Cultural proficiency is important to the development and maintenance of the necessary relationships among students, teachers, principals and the school community. Such proficiency is especially important with the growing student diversity in our schools. As school districts review student data, STAAR scores and other factors that are aggregated into school accountability ratings used to determine principal effectiveness, it would be wise to include other factors, such as culturally proficient leadership, that may have increasing significance in our educational system.
APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHER
**Research Question:** Are there differences in teachers’ perceptions of elementary principals as culturally proficient leaders?

The purpose of this study is to analyze teachers’ perceptions of their school principal as a culturally proficient leader. Cultural proficiency is defined as the extent to which an educator of a specific cultural background is able to effectively lead, interact, and connect with members of different cultures with the goal of improving student academic achievement, specifically in certain groups of students (minority and lower socioeconomic).

Your participation is greatly appreciated.

1. My participation: YES or NO

2. What school do you serve as a teacher?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adelle Turner Elementary</th>
<th>L.O. Donald Elementary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alex Sanger Elementary</td>
<td>Larry G. Smith Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. H. Macon Elementary</td>
<td>Lenore Kirk Hall Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayles Elementary</td>
<td>Leslie A. Stemmons Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birdie Alexander Elementary</td>
<td>Margaret B. Henderson Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casa View Elementary</td>
<td>Maria Moreno Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Elementary</td>
<td>Mark Twain Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Gill Elementary</td>
<td>Martha Turner Reilly Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Webster Elementary</td>
<td>Martin Weiss Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edwin J. Kiest Elementary</td>
<td>Reinhardtt Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felix G. Botello Elementary</td>
<td>Richard Lagow Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederick Douglass Elementary</td>
<td>Ronald McNair Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilbert Cuellar Sr. Elementary</td>
<td>Rufus C. Burleson Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry B. Gonzalez Elementary</td>
<td>Seagoville Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.N. Ervin Elementary</td>
<td>Seagoville North Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James S. Hogg Elementary</td>
<td>T. G. Terry Elementary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### List of Elementary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jimmie Tyler Brashear Elementary</th>
<th>Thomas Tolbert Elementary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John F. Peeler Elementary</td>
<td>Umphrey Lee Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John H. Reagan Elementary</td>
<td>Victor H. Hexter Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John W. Carpenter Elementary</td>
<td>W.A. Blair Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julius Dorsey Elementary</td>
<td>William M. Anderson Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kleberg Elementary</td>
<td>Wilmer-Hutchins Elementary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. What is the school's 2013-2014 TEA Accountability Rating?
   - [ ] Met Standard
   - [ ] Improvement Required

4. What is your race?
   - [ ] Black or African-American
   - [ ] Hispanic
   - [ ] American Indian or Alaskan Native
   - [ ] Asian
   - [ ] Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
   - [ ] From Multiple Races

5. What is your age?
   - [ ] 21-29
   - [ ] 30-39
   - [ ] 40-49
   - [ ] 50-59
   - [ ] 60 and older

6. What is your gender?
   - [ ] Male
   - [ ] Female

7. How many years have you been a teacher?
   - [ ] First Year
   - [ ] 1-3 years
   - [ ] 3-5 years
   - [ ] 5-8 years
   - [ ] 10-15 years
8. How long have you been a teacher under your current principal?
   ___ First Year
   ___ 1 year
   ___ 2-4 years
   ___ 4-8 years
   ___ More than 8 years
APPENDIX B

PERMISSION LETTER FROM DR. CAMILE SMITH
Re: Request for Permission to Use Research Instrument

Yes, you do have my permission to use the Research Instrument in my dissertation. I hope it will be useful. I wish you all the best.

Sincerely,
Dr. Camille A. Smith

Greetings, Dr. Smith.

Thank you so much for your contribution to organizational leadership. Your work has guided my research framework in culturally proficient leadership in elementary schools.

Please accept this as a request to use your cultural proficiency survey for the completion of my dissertation. I would like to use it to analyze teachers' perceptions of their elementary principal in the Dallas Independent School District.

My colleague, Dr. Willene Owens-Luper, used your tool to analyze high school principals, and I would like to add to the research literature with an elementary perspective.

If you have any questions regarding my dissertation or would like to provide any feedback, please contact me at xxx-xx-xxxx or via email at xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Any information and/or insight would be greatly appreciated!

I'm look forward to meeting you at the Cultural Proficiency Institute in August and a December 2015 graduation...it has been a long time coming!

Respectfully,

Royond P. Hendrix, M.Ed.
xxx-xx-xxxx cell
School Administrator
Doctoral Candidate
APPENDIX C

PERMISSION LETTER FROM DR. MACK T. HINES
Survey Revision was 2007.
Dr. Hines

From: Royond P. Hendrix
To: mack hines
Sent: Wednesday, May 16, 2012 7:44 PM
Subject: Re: Request for Permission to Use Research Tool

Dr. Hines:

I appreciate the quick response in giving permission to use the revised tool. Please let me know when you revised the tool. I will definitely provide you with the findings of my dissertation. Thanks again for your time.

Cheers,
Royond P. Hendrix

On May 16, 2012, at 5:13 PM, mack hines <5hines1971@yahoo.com> wrote:

Hello, Royond Hendrix.

I am providing you with permission to use my cultural proficiency survey, which was revised from Dr. Camille Smith's tool, to complete your dissertation study. I would like a copy of the findings from your research once you have finished your work.

Again, thank you.

I look forward to meeting you this year.

Sincerely,

Dr. Hines
From: Royond Hendrix
To: Dr. Hines
Sent: Wednesday, May 16, 2012 12:22 PM
Subject: Request for Permission to Use Research Tool

Greetings, Dr. Hines.

Thank you so much for your contribution to organizational leadership. Your work has guided my research framework in culturally proficient leadership in elementary schools.

Please accept this as a request to use your cultural proficiency survey, which was revised from Dr. Camille Smith's tool, for the completion of my dissertation. I would like to use it to analyze teachers' perceptions of their elementary principal in the Dallas Independent School District.

My colleague, Dr. Willene Owens-Luper, used your tool to analyze high school principals, and I would like to add to the research literature with an elementary perspective.

If you have any questions regarding my dissertation or would like to provide any feedback, please contact me at xxx-xx-xxxx or via email at xxxxxxx. Any information and/or insight would be greatly appreciated!

I'm look forward to meeting you at the Cultural Proficiency Institute in August and a December 2015 graduation...it has been a long time coming!

Respectfully,

Royond P. Hendrix, M.Ed.
xxx-xx-xxxx cell
School Administrator
Doctoral Candidate
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Ladson-Billings, G. (2000). Reading between the lines and beyond the pages: A cultural relevant approach to literacy teaching. In M. A. Gallego & S. Hollingsworth (Eds.). *What counts as literacy: Challenging the school standard* (pp. 139-152). New York: Teachers College Press.


