PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICE OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN INDIANA PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS

by

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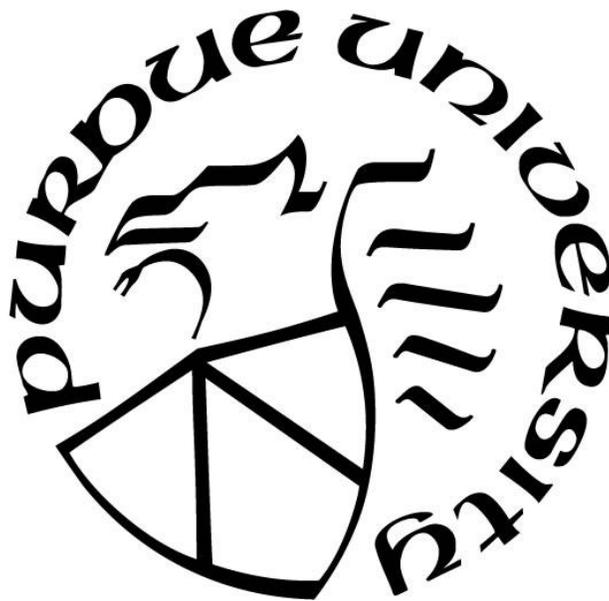
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I would like to dedicate this dissertation to three special people in my life- my mother, my father and my beautiful wife.

Mom and Dad, you have been there with me through every season of my life. You made sacrifices to bring us to the United States and modeled what true love looked like. I dedicate this dissertation to you and thank you for everything that you have done for me.

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand Indiana High School principals' perceptions and practices of cultural competence in their schools. The projected changes in the demographics of the United States (US) school age population will result in traditionally underserved ethnic minority students being the majority in US schools in the next few years. Despite the billions of dollars that have been spent to close the achievement gap (TAG) between Whites and traditionally underserved ethnic minority students, TAG persists. The achievement gap has attracted the attention of educators and policy makers due to its connections to societal inequalities and the underrepresentation of non-White students in colleges and universities across the country. Scholars have proposed that cultural dissonance, incompatibilities between a school's culture and that of its students, may be a reason for TAG. As a result, cultural competence may be a vehicle that institutions can use to reduce cultural dissonance and close TAG. This study used a phenomenological framework and utilized semi-structured interviews to obtain data from 10 Indiana High School Principals whose schools had at least a 40% traditionally underserved ethnic minority population. The data were analyzed using Lindsey et al's (2009) *5 Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency* as well as 15 indicators of cultural competence that were gleaned from their research. Open coding was conducted using a framework described by Tesch (1990) to identify emergent themes from the principals' commentaries. Results showed that principals demonstrated high proficiencies in assessing their cultures, valuing diversity, and adapting to diversity within their institutions. Growth, however, is required in their abilities to manage the dynamics of difference within their institutions and their propensity for institutionalizing cultural knowledge. In this study, four themes emerged from the interviews that principals found to be central to their perceptions and practices of cultural competence, they are: (a) having a strong mission and vision, (b) providing platforms for students to showcase their cultures, (c) developing a culture of intentionality, and (d) having a

strong data culture. Additionally, three assertions were evident from the interviews: (1) principals should construct a mission and vision with all students in mind and the contents of the mission and vision should be created by an advisory group whose demographics are representative of the institution, (2) a fundamental part of building a culture of intentionality is avoiding assumptions, and (3) principals need to develop a systematic way of gathering, analyzing and making decisions from the data they gather. These themes and assertions could prove useful to principals who are looking to use cultural competence to affect change within their institutions.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The United States (US) student population is experiencing demographic changes driven by the immigration of Asian and Latino students, the slower growth rate of Black students, and the decline of White students as a percentage of the total student population (Colby, 2015). The US Census Bureau (2017) predicts that by 2020, more than half of the population aged $0 - 17$ will be represented by ethnic and racial minority groups. This impending demographic shift has attracted the attention of educators and policy makers who are concerned about the persistent achievement gap (TAG) that exists in the US between ethnic/racial minorities and their White counterparts (Howard, 2010). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as the Nation's Report Card, tracks achievement gaps between different racial/ethnic groups. The NAEP (2017) showed that between 2005 and 2015 (a ten year period), the differences in reading scores between Latino and Latina and White students remained between 24-26 points for fourth grade students, 21-25 points for eighth grade students, and 20-21 points for twelfth grade students. Additionally, the NAEP reported that the reading score gap between Whites and Blacks persisted at 26– 29 points for fourth grade students, 26-28 for eighth grade students, and 26-30 points for twelfth grade students between 2005 and 2015. Lastly, the reading score gap between Whites and American Indian and Alaskan Native in this same period of time remained between 25-29 points for fourth grade students and 22-25 points for eighth grade students. The statistics from the NAEP show a marked difference in achievement between Blacks, Latino and Latina students, American Indian and Alaskan Native and their White counterparts, and these trends are worrisome because of TAG's impact on broader societal inequalities, which will be discussed in more detail in subsequent paragraphs.

One key reason TAG is concerning is because student achievement at the K-12 level is linked to success in college admissions and the labor market (Reardon, Greenberg, Kalogrides, Shores, & Valentino, 2013). Specifically, disparities in the academic achievements of Whites, Blacks, Latinos and Latinas, and American Indian and Alaskan Native play a key role in the under enrollment of ethnic minorities in colleges and universities compared to Whites (Reardon et al., 2013). The disproportionate matriculation of traditionally underserved groups into colleges and universities, especially selective ones, could explain the differences in the earnings of Whites compared to ethnic minority groups in the US. As a result, closing TAG could begin to resolve the social and economic disparities in the US (Reardon et al., 2013).

In 2002, President George W. Bush attempted to close TAG between ethnic/racial minority groups and Whites by signing the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (Reardon, 2012). To do this, four main principles were applied to NCLB: strong accountability, increased flexibility and local control of schools, implementation of proven teaching methods based on scientific research, and more choices for parents, especially those from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Reardon et al., 2013). According to NCES (2011), achievement for all students has improved over the years, but despite this general increase, TAG between ethnic minorities and their White counterparts persists (Hussar & Bailey, 2011). While NCLB has resulted in some gains for all students, Valencia (2015) contends that TAG still persists in spite of the billions of dollars that have been spent on remedial actions and interventions.

In an extensive review of the literature on TAG, Valencia (2015) found numerous models that have been implemented to address it over the years, which will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2, the Literature Review. Importantly, the persistent TAG in the US suggests that the approaches used to address inequalities in the US educational system are not as effective as

many hoped they would be (Spanner-Morrow, 2017). Valencia suggests that some of the proposed interventions are flawed due to their attempts to provide quick fixes, their tendency to be reductionist in their approaches, and their propensity to put too much responsibility on children and their families.

John Ogbu (2008), an anthropologist and authority on topics ranging from the race gap, TAG, and minority education, encourages researchers to look at TAG from a larger societal perspective to identify forces that discourage traditionally underserved minority student engagement. Noguera (2009) and Mathis (2005) believe that when schools address and understand systemic societal inequalities, which are rooted in the United States' history of discrimination, they can begin learn how to meet the cultural and non-academic needs of minority students and those of low socioeconomic status, which could lead to the closing of TAG.

If one were to look at social policies that emerged in response to systemic racial/ethnic disparities in the US, particularly in schools, their impacts on minority student education have been profound (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2009). To illustrate the evolution and effect of social policies pertaining to issues of diversity, Lindsey et al. (2009) documented societal responses to ethnic/racial problems over the past few decades. They describe that prior to the 1950s, there was segregation, which is defined as "legal separation of cultural and racial groups in the US" (p. 8). In the 1950s, however, the *Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education* case resulted in the end of segregation (called desegregation). Desegregation gave minority students access to facilities and resources that were concentrated in White schools. Lindsey et al. go on to state that the 1960s was a phase of social activism that resulted in students of color being given the similar opportunities as White children—the authors term this the era of equal access and equal rights.

For example, laws were put in place that barred federally funded programs from discriminating against students on the basis of race, color, national origin and gender. Federal funds were withheld from any school district that violated the equal access and equal rights statutes (Noltemeyer, Mujic, & Mcloughlin, 2012). Moreover, school systems' "desegregation plans had to include desegregation of teachers and students, and equalization of educational opportunities, facilities, and curriculum" (Frankenberg & Orfield, 2007, p. 3). Lindsey et al. maintain that the 1970s were marked by a period of equal benefits and multiculturalism where people of color strove to extend the societal benefits they had fought for in previous decades to their workplaces and schools. For example, people of color encouraged schools to move away from an assimilationist approach to teaching, where pedagogy and curriculum were designed for Eurocentric populations, to a more multicultural one that took the diversity of students into account. The authors explain that in the 1980s, companies focused on diversity management and offered their employees trainings to equip them with tools on how to handle issues pertaining to diversity, such as ethnicity, language, gender, sexual orientation disability and age. Lastly, Lindsey et al. state that in the 20th and 21st centuries cultural competency and the highest form of cultural competency, called cultural proficiency, have been considered as effective factors in the management of diversity. At the heart of cultural competency and proficiency is the realization that schools and other institutions reflect dominant culture within our society—White (Eurocentric), middle class views, values and belief systems—and may disadvantage students or employees from other cultures because they may not understand, value or subscribe to the prevailing culture's standards and ways of being (Brace, 2011). Lindsey et al. (2009) state that understanding the cultural perspectives, as well as creating ever evolving systems, policies and practices to support diversity, can facilitate the success of diverse populations within institutions.

Cultural competency and cultural proficiency in the educational context refer "to how well a school's policies, programs, practices, artifacts, and rituals reflect the needs and experiences of diverse groups in the school and outer school community" (Bustamante, Nelson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2009, p. 798). Lindsey et al. contend that the best way to address diversity within schools is cultural competency and cultural proficiency, especially as we anticipate what society will be in the future. Cultural competency and proficiency "focuses chiefly on both the school's culture…as well as the values and the behavior of individuals" (Lindsey et al., 2009, p. 23). For the education system to better serve non-White students, educators must strive to become culturally competent and proficient by assessing the cultural differences that exist in their schools, embracing cultural differences by viewing them as assets to the school environment, instructing community members on how to respond to differences, and shifting and consistently reviewing school structures, policies and systems to respond to differences in a healthy and effective way (Brace, 2011; Lindsey et al., 2009)**.**

After 20 years of consulting with numerous schools, Lee (2001) described what he termed *culturally responsive schools*, which is a similar concept to cultural competence. Lee found that culturally responsive schools embrace and value diversity by building a sense of community around cultural diversity, establishing and maintaining high academic standards and expectations for all students, implementing a curriculum that incorporates and reflects different cultures, equipping students and staff with the tools to deal with racial/cultural tensions, intentionally and actively hiring committed educators of diverse backgrounds, supporting continuous staff training and development, forming authentic partnerships with parents in the educational process and being sensitive to and understanding their cultural needs, and having an

extended definition of cultural diversity that encompasses sexual orientation, religious traditions, age groups and learning differences.

Lee's (2001) notion of culturally responsive schools was further developed by Lindsey et al. (2009) who described *culturally proficient schools*. Lindsey et al. explain that in *culturally proficient schools* "schools and educators accept and respect differences; carefully attend to the dynamics of difference; continually assess their own cultural knowledge and beliefs; continuously expand their cultural knowledge and resources; and variously adapt their own belief systems, policies, and practices" (p. 120). Lindsey et al. provide a framework schools can use to assess their cultural competence, look at diversity as an asset and not a deficit, learn about different cultures, change policies and practices to become more inclusive and reflective of the diversity that exists with an institution, and use schools as agents of change to allow diverse populations to thrive.

Cultural competency and proficiency in the educational context can, therefore, be an effective strategy in closing TAG (Coggins & Campbell, 2008).

Statement of the Problem

The problem this study addresses is TAG between non-White and White students, especially in light of the rapidly changing demographics in the US education system. Educators have to be equipped and prepared to support the needs of students of diverse backgrounds, and it is essential for leaders to be proactive in knowing how to manage the diversity within their schools to facilitate positive outcomes for their institutions that are in line with federal and state accountability standards (Minkos et al., 2017; Polat, Arslan, & Ölçüm, 2017).

Lindsey et al. (2009) explain that schools cannot become culturally responsive or proficient without effective leadership. Education leadership theorists assert that when school leaders examine their school cultures, they are better able to locate inequities within their organizations and become aware of practices that hinder student performance (Bustamante, Nelson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). As a result, effective school leaders have an in-depth understanding of their school cultures and continually identify barriers that lead to the underachievement of individuals based on identifiers such as race or ethnicity, gender, ability, sexual orientation, among many other characteristics (Deal, 1999; Fullan, 2001). Indeed, studies show that culturally responsive educational leadership has favorable effects on academic achievement and student engagement (Banks & Banks, 2004; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Johnson, 2003). Unfortunately, many school leaders have trouble identifying and promoting inclusivity within their schools, especially when their school cultures or personal biases reinforce inequitable practices, and this may play an important role in explaining TAG between traditionally underserved groups and their White counterparts (Bustamante, Nelson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2009; Valencia, 2015).

Nelson, Bustamante, Wilson and Onwuegbuzie (2008) state that schools often use equity audits to identify inequities in the educational environment of students. The authors explain that "equity audits involve using quantitative indicators to systematically examine teacher quality and programmatic inequities in schools" (p. 209). Nelson et al. contend that although equity audits reveal inequities between diverse groups of students within a school, they don't capture the subtle biases and characteristics that lead to an exclusive school culture. The authors suggest that subtle discriminatory practices, which are often missed in equity audits, can affect the performance of diverse students within a school community. Nelson et al. explain that equity

audits are not bad but provide an incomplete picture of cultural competence. The authors suspect that equity audits should be used as one aspect of assessing the cultural competence of an organization. In place of equity audits, schools should undergo cultural audits, which is a more widespread approach to evaluating how schools respond to the academic and cultural needs of members of a school community (Nelson, 2008). When performing a cultural audit, information is obtained from multiple sources to determine "how well organizational policies, programs, practices, rituals, artifacts, and traditions reflect the perspectives of diverse groups" (Nelson, 2008, p. 209). Sources of data can be "interviews, surveys, observation checklists, analysis of documents and pre-existing data" (Nelson, 2008, p. 209). Cultural audits provide a way for schools to look at multiple facets of school life as a means for incorporating cultural knowledge into their policies and practices and facilitating the closing of TAG within their institutions.

This work around cultural competence is important because the US is becoming increasingly diverse. In 1999, Whites made up 72% of the population and it is projected that by 2050, they will make up 53% of the population. By 2060, Whites will make up less than 50% of the population and by 2100, they will only make up about 40% of the population (Brace, 2011). With the changing demographics, the persistent TAG in the US and federal accountability standards holding institutions responsible for closing TAG, it is essential for educators to create environments where diverse students can thrive (Brace, 2011; Honig, 2008; Lindsey et al., 2009). Educational leadership scholars indicate that school culture often mirrors the larger culture in which they exist (Bustamante et al., 2009). In the 20th and 21st centuries, cultural competency and proficiency have been considered as the way forward in addressing issues relating to diversity (Lindsey et al., 2009).

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The primary goal of this qualitative study was to investigate principals' perceptions and practice of cultural competence in Indiana public high schools. To achieve this goal, purposeful sampling was used to identify schools that had a traditionally undeserved ethnic minority population of at least 40% and a phenomenological framework was used to gather data from semi-structured interviews with Indiana high school principals. The interviews allowed the researcher to understand how Indiana public high school principals perceived cultural competence within their schools and how they used culturally competent practices to affect student engagement and achievement, especially for traditionally underserved ethnic minority populations. The qualitative data were inductively coded using Tesch's (1990) framework to extract pertinent themes and assertions from the interviews.

Research Questions

This study sought to gain insights into the following research questions:

1. What are Indiana public high school principals' perceptions of cultural competence in their schools?

2. What culturally competent practices, if any, do Indiana public high school principals use in their schools?

Significance of the Study

In Indiana public high schools, student achievement can be measured in terms of graduation rate, dropout rate, achievement on the 10th grade Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-plus (ISTEP+) assessment, which includes Math, English Language Arts

(ELA) and Science, performance on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and high school graduate's participation in and pass rates on Advanced Placement (AP) Exams. When looking at data trends in Indiana public high schools over the past five years, achievement gaps that have existed in the context of the student achievement indicators described above continue to persist (Tables 1 – 9). This study maintains that cultural competence could be a key element in trying to close TAG within the state of Indiana. Furthermore, this study can be used by educators to gain important insights into practices and programs related to cultural competence that schools are currently implementing. The practices and programs described in this study may prove to be effective in increasing the engagement and achievement of diverse populations within high schools all over the state. The following sections will include a detailed description of achievement gaps in the context of the five main student achievement indicators described above.

Graduation rate

Over the past five years (2013-2018), the state of Indiana has seen an overall decline in graduation rates for each ethnic/racial group except for Blacks and Asians (IDOE, 2018). When looking at TAG in terms of graduation rates over the past five years, there has been an overall increase in the achievement gap between Whites and ethnic/racial minority populations (+0.3%). In this same time period, the graduation rate gap between Blacks and Whites and Whites and Hispanics still persists, but has slightly declined by 3.3% for the White-Black gap and 0.7% for the White-Hispanic gap. The graduation rate gap has increased between Whites and Multiracial students (0.4%) as well as between Whites, American Indian (+3.3%) and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander students (+5%) in this time frame (Table 1).

Table 1 Graduation Rate Achievement Gaps Between White and Traditionally Underserved Ethnic Minority Students in Indiana Over the Past Five Years			
Graduation Rate			
TAG Ethnicities	2013 Gap	2018 Gap	TAG Increased or Decreased
White-Black	13.7%	10.4%	-3.3% (Decreased)
White-Hispanic	5.9%	5.2%	-0.7% (Decreased)
White-Multiracial	4.8%	5.2%	+0.4% (Increased)
White-American Indian	3.4%	6.7%	+3.3% (Increased)
White-Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.2%	5.2%	+5% (Increased)
White-Total Minorities	4.8%	4.5%	+0.3% (Increased)

Source: IDOE

Note: Asian student population statistics were included in the "total minorities" number, but they were not individually assessed because their graduation rates were higher than that of Whites.

Drop out rate

The past five years has seen an overall decrease in the dropout rate for all ethnic/racial groups in the state of Indiana with the exception of Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander populations (IDOE, 2018). In general, over the past five years, TAG in the context of dropout rates between Whites and ethnic/racial minorities has decreased (-0.3%). Furthermore, TAG has decreased for Blacks (-1.1%) and Multiracial populations (-0.5%), but slightly increased for Hispanics (+0.1%) and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (+2.2%) in this same time period (Table 2).

Table 2 Drop Out Rate Between White and Traditionally Underserved Students in Indiana Over the Past Five Years

	Drop Out Rate		
TAG Ethnicities	2013 Gap	2018 Gap	TAG Increased or Decreased
White-Black	5.5%	4.4%	-1.1% (Decreased)
White-Hispanic	2.1%	2.2%	+0.1% (Increased)
White-Multiracial	2.7%	2.2%	-0.5% (Decreased)
White-American Indian	1.8%	1.4%	-0.4% (Decreased)
White-Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.2%	2.4%	+2.2% (Increased)
White-Total Minorities	2.0%	1.7%	-0.3% (Decreased)

Source: IDOE

Note: Asian student population statistics were included in the "total minorities" number, but they were not individually assessed because their dropout rates were lower than that of Whites.

ISTEP+ 10th Grade

The 10th grade ISTEP+ ELA/Math and Science was first administered to students in the 2015-2016 school year. Over the course of two years, all ethnic/racial groups have shown an increase in pass rates for the 10th grade ISTEP+ ELA/Math, with the exception of the Hispanic student population (IDOE, 2018). Furthermore, data trends from 2016 to 2018 suggest that TAG in the context of 10th grade ISTEP+ ELA/Math between Whites and traditionally underserved student groups is widening (+0.5%). For specific ethnic/racial groups during this two-year time frame, the ISTEP+ Math/ELA gap has increased for Blacks (+2%) , Hispanics (+2.9%), Multiracial students (+1.4%), and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (+0.1%). Although

ISTEP+ Math/ELA gap remains between Whites and American Indians, there has been a

narrowing of TAG for this population (-4.5%) in the past two years (Table 3).

Table 3 The Achievement Gap for 10th Grade ISTEP+ ELA/MATH Pass Rate Between
White and Traditionally Underserved Students in Indiana Over the Past Two Years

ISTEP+ 10th Grade Math/ELA Pass rate			
TAG Ethnicities	2016 Gap	2018 Gap	TAG Increased or Decreased
White-Black	25.3%	27.3%	+2% (Increased)
White-Hispanic	17.5%	20.4%	+2.9% (Increased)
White-Multiracial	9.5%	10.9%	+1.4% (Increased)
White-American Indian	9.9%	5.4%	-4.5% (Decreased)
White- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	10.7%	10.8%	+0.1% (Increased)
White-Total Minorities	9.6%	10.1%	+0.5% (Increased)

Source: IDOE
Note: Asian student population statistics were included in the "total minorities" number, but they were not individually assessed because their ISTEP+ pass rates were higher than that of Whites.

When looking explicitly at the pass rate on the 10th grade ISTEP+ Math over the past two

years, all ethnic/racial groups have improved their performance, with the exception of Native

Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders (IDOE, 2018). Even though the performance for most groups

has increased, TAG has increased for Blacks (+2%), Hispanics (+2.6%), Native Hawaiian or

Other Pacific Islander (+8.4%), and Multiracial students (+1.4%). The only exception has been a

narrowing of TAG for the American Indian population (-7.7%). Overall, there has been an

increase in TAG between White and traditionally underserved populations on the 10th grade

ISTEP+ Math (+1.4%) (Table 4).

Table 4 The Achievement Gap for 10th Grade ISTEP+ Math Pass Rate Between White and Traditionally Underserved Students in Indiana Over the Past Two Years

ISTEP+ 10th Grade Math Only Pass rate			
TAG Ethnicities	2016 Gap	2018 Gap	TAG Increased or Decreased
White-Black	26.4%	28.4%	+2% (Increased)
White-Hispanic	17.9%	20.5%	+2.6% (Increased)
White-Multiracial	10.1%	11.5%	+1.4% (Increased)
White-American Indian	12.2%	4.5%	-7.7% (Decreased)
White- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	13.8%	22.2%	+8.4% (Increased)
White-Total Minorities	10.1%	11.5%	+1.4% (Increased)

Source: IDOE

Note: Asian student population statistics were included in the "total minorities" number, but they were not individually assessed because their ISTEP+ Math pass rates were higher than that of Whites.

For the pass rate on the 10th grade ISTEP+ ELA, the performance of all ethnic/racial minority groups has declined with the exception Asian and White students (IDOE, 2018). As a result, TAG in this area has increased for Blacks (+3.7%) , Hispanics (+2.7%), Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (+4.5%), and Multiracial students (+1.8%). TAG between Whites and American Indians over the past two years persists, but unlike the Math pass rate, there has been a widening of TAG for this population in the area of ELA (+3.6%). Overall, there has been an increase in TAG between White and traditionally underserved populations on the 10th grade ISTEP+ ELA (+2.8%) (Table 5).

Table 5 *The Achievement Gap for 10th Grade ISTEP+ ELA Pass Rate Between White and Traditionally Underserved Students in Indiana Over the Past Two Years*

ISTEP+ 10th Grade ELA Only Pass rate			
TAG Ethnicities	2016 Gap	2018 Gap	TAG Increased or Decreased
White-Black	28.4%	32.1%	+3.7% (Increased)
White-Hispanic	17.7%	20.4%	+2.7% (Increased)
White-Multiracial	7.5%	9.3%	+1.8% (Increased)
White-American Indian	6.7%	10.3%	+3.6% (Increased)
White-Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	9.8%	14.3%	+4.5% (Increased)
White-Total Minorities	11.3%	14.1%	+2.8% (Increased)

Source: IDOE
Note: Asian student population statistics were included in the "total minorities" number, but they were not individually assessed because their ISTEP+ ELA pass rates were higher than that of Whites.

Over the past two years, the pass rate on the 10th grade ISTEP+ Science has declined across the board for all ethnic/racial minority groups. The achievement gap tells a similar story to that of the Math test; TAG for the 10th grade ISTEP+ Science has increased for Blacks (+0.5%) , Hispanics (+2.7%), Native Hawaiians or Other Pacific Islanders (+6.1%), and Multiracial students (+1.1%). Much like the Math pass rate, TAG between Whites and American Indians over the past two years persists, but trend data over the past two years suggest that TAG is narrowing (-2.9%). Overall, there has been an increase in TAG between White and traditionally underserved populations on the 10th grade ISTEP+ Science (+0.7%) (Table 6).

Table 6 *The Achievement Gap for 10th Grade ISTEP+ Science Pass Rate Between White and Traditionally Underserved Students in Indiana Over the Past Two Years*

ISTEP+ 10th Grade Science Pass rate			
TAG Ethnicities	2016 Gap	2018 Gap	TAG Increased or Decreased
White-Black	38.4%	38.9%	+0.5% (Increased)
White-Hispanic	23.6%	23.7%	+2.7% (Increased)
White-Multiracial	11.8%	12.9%	+1.1% (Increased)
White-American Indian	5.6%	2.7%	-2.9% (Decreased)
White-Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	3.7%	9.8%	+6.1% (Increased)
White-Total Minorities	13.8%	14.5%	+0.7% (Increased)

Source: IDOE

Note: Asian student population statistics were included in the "total minorities" number, but they were not individually assessed because their ISTEP+ Science pass rates were higher than that of Whites.

SAT

From 2012 to 2017, data from the IDOE details that all ethnic/groups have improved their performance on the SAT. However, an achievement gap exists in the composite scores between Whites and traditionally underserved populations. Although an achievement gaps still persist, data trends suggest that TAG is narrowing or staying constant for each ethnic/racial minority group, namely Blacks (-23), Hispanics (-5), Multiracial (0), Native Hawaiians or Other Pacific Islanders (-31), and American Indian (0). Overall, there is a decline in TAG between Whites and traditionally underserved groups with regard to the SAT composite score (-12) (Table 7).

Table 7 *The Achievement Gap for the SAT Composite Scores Between White and Traditionally Underserved Students in Indiana Over the Past Five Years*

	SAT Composite		
TAG Ethnicities	2012 Gap	2017 Gap	TAG Increased or Decreased
White-Black	182	159	-23 (Decreased)
White-Hispanic	108	103	-5 (Decreased)
White-Multiracial	50	50	0 (Same)
White-American Indian	54	44	-10 (Decreased)
White-Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	50	19	-31 (Decreased)
White-Total Minorities	63	51	-12 (Decreased)

Source: IDOE
Note: Asian student population statistics were included in the "total minorities" number, but they were not individually assessed because their SAT composite scores were higher than that of Whites.

Graduates particpating and passing an AP Exam

From 2012 to 2017, there has been an overall increase in the number of ethnic/racial group graduates participating in an AP Exam. The only exception to this is Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander students (IDOE, 2018). The achievement gap in terms of White graduates taking the AP Exam compared to Blacks (+0.1%), Multiracial students (+1.7%) has increased, with the exception of American Indian (-3.5%) and Hispanic students (-0.9%). In general, the TAG between Whites and ethnic/racial minorities over the course of 5 years has increased (+5.4%)

Table 8 *The Achievement Gap for Graduates Participating in an AP Exam Between White and Traditionally Underserved Students in Indiana Over the Past Five Years*

Graduates Taking AP Exam			
TAG Ethnicities	2012 Gap	2017 Gap	TAG Increased or Decreased
White-Black	16.7%	16.8%	+0.1% (Increased)
White-Hispanic	9.7%	8.8%	-0.9% (Decreased)
White-Multiracial	5.1%	6.8%	+1.7% (Increased)
White-American Indian	14.5%	11%	-3.5% (Decreased)
White-Total Minorities	-2.4%	3.1%	+5.4% (Increased)

Source: IDOE

Note: The Asian student populations as well as the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders were included in the "total minorities" number, but they were not individually assessed because the number of graduates participating in an AP Exam were higher than that of Whites.

Data from the IDOE shows that all ethnic/racial groups have seen an increase in the number of graduates passing an AP exam. In spite of these general increases across the board, TAG in graduates passing an AP exam has widened. Specifically, TAG has increased for Blacks (+2.4%), Hispanics (+1.3%), Multiracial students (+1.7%) and American Indians (+1.5%).

Table 9 *The Achievement Gap for Graduates Passing an AP Exam Between White and Traditionally Underserved Students in Indiana Over the Past Five Years*

Graduates Passing AP Exam			
TAG Ethnicities	2012 Gap	2017 Gap	TAG Increased or Decreased
White-Black	13.3	15.7	2.4 (Increased)
White-Hispanic	7	8.3	1.3 (Increased)
White-Multiracial	5.1	6.8	1.7 (Increased)
White-American Indian	3.2	4.7	1.5 (Increased)
White-Total Minorities	3.6	1.2	-2.5 (Decreased)

Source: IDOE

Note: The Asian student populations as well as the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders were included in the "total minorities" number, but they were not individually assessed because percentage of graduates passing an AP Exam were higher than that of Whites.

From the data, it is evident that TAG in various student achievement indicators is widening. When it comes to graduation rates, dropout rates, the ISTEP+, and graduates participating and passing an AP Exam, the general trends indicates TAG is widening. This study is significant because it gave important insights into practices that school leaders can use to affect change within their schools.

The other significance of this study stems from Ndiang'ui (2013) work in which he points out that the relationship between management strategies related to diversity and performance at the high school level has not been well researched. As a result, this study added to the limited literature on diversity management, cultural competence and student achievement at the high school level.

Becker and Baumol (1995) state that scholars in the field of economics suggest that education is a production function. In this production function, there are a set of inputs and processes that lead to a specific output. The function can be modeled as follows: output = inputs + processes. For example, if we take student achievement as an output, schools invest resources into students and expose them to practices or programs—which the model above terms processes or process factors—that expand their knowledge base and give them a certain level of human capital. In other words, processes are things the school has control over, like class size, school size, teacher experience and leadership practices (Mobley, 2009). Caldas (1993) highlights that factors affecting a student's achievement that a school has no control over, like parent education, socioeconomic diversity, ethnic diversity, cultural diversity and physical or mental ability, are considered inputs. Caldas discovered that input factors were responsible for 68% of the differences in student achievement, while process factors accounted for 2%, for schools at the elementary level, and 6.3% for schools at the secondary level. Furthermore, of the process factors tested, student attendance had the biggest impact on student achievement. The research study performed by Caldas illustrates the importance of looking into input and process factors that affect student achievement. In that regard, it is important to assess whether cultural competency is a process factor that may affect student performance, especially at the K-12 level, since it has been shown that cultural competency can be an important factor when it comes to student performance and achievement (Bustamante et al., 2009).

In this study, the dependent variable (or output factor) is the achievement of vulnerable and traditionally underserved populations of students, which may be influenced by the process factor of cultural competency. As a result, the production function for this study is:

Student achievement (**output)** = factors outside the control of schools **(input factors**) + factors within the school's control **(process factor**—cultural competency).

Leithwood et al. (2009) state that change is inevitable for any school, but those that are able to resist major setbacks are proficient in evaluating data, adept at identifying and immediately addressing organizational failures, and are proactive rather than reactive in their approach to issues. Additionally, Leithwood et al. believe that for administrators to be effective in leading schools, there must be a long-term commitment to the process of growth and development, an ability to take ownership of what and how students are learning, and a continual inspection of data to identify variables that may contribute to students' lack of success. Lastly, a major desire of mine is that this work will provide important evidence as to whether cultural competency could be an important way to address TAG in the US, especially as we prepare for demographic shifts.

Limitations of the Study

The major limitation of this qualitative study is that only the perspectives of school leaders were taken into account. Other stakeholders within the community may have provided a more complete picture of cultural competency.

Definition of Terms

Achievement gap: The discrepancy in achievement between minority students of color and their white counterparts. Achievement not only refers to performance on standardized testing, but also refers to factors such as grade retention, holding capacity and matriculation to college (Valencia, 2015).

Asian: The Indiana Department of Education describes as persons whose people originated from the Far East , Southeast Asia, and Indian subcontinents that include Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand and Vietnam.

American Indian or Native Alaskan: The NCES (2017) describes this group of people as individuals that originated in North and South America and have a connection or affiliation to representative tribes. This definition is congruent to that of the Indiana Department of Education.

Black: The NCES (2017) describes black as an individual that has origins in any black racial group within Africa. This definition is congruent to that of the Indiana Department of Education.

Culture: Bustamante et al. (2009) define culture as "a learned meaning system of shared beliefs, values, norms, symbols, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that members of a group use to make sense of their world and foster a sense of identity and community" (p. 796).

Cultural competency: In the school context, cultural competence "refers to how well a school's policies, programs, practices, artifacts, and rituals reflect the needs and experiences of diverse groups in the school and outer school community" (Bustamante, Nelson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2009, p. 798).

Data: There are many different definitions of data depending on the organization one is part of. In this study, data is defined as any information that is available on a student (Hamilton et al., 2009)

Diversity: Diversity can be defined as the existence of social and cultural differences that are visible or not visible (Wilson, 2016). Diversity can be talked about in different contexts. In this study, diversity will be viewed largely from the perspective of ethnic diversity, cultural diversity, socioeconomic diversity, and diversity of ability.

Hispanic or Latino/Latina: NCES (2017) describes Latino/a as individuals of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central America, and includes individuals from other Spanish cultures or origins. This definition is congruent to that of the Indiana Department of Education.

Multiracial: Defined as having two or more racial ancestries.

Rural: An area that is not urban or an area that exist outside of Urban territories (US Census Bureau, 2017).

Traditionally Underserved Ethnic Minority Populations: Include Blacks, Hispanics, American Indians or Native Alaskans, and Asians.

Urban: Urban areas have a population of either 50,000 or more (urbanized area), or have a population between 2500 and 50,000 (urban clusters) (US Census Bureau, 2017).

Vulnerable student populations: The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) describes vulnerable student populations as students with disabilities, English learners, delinquent children, children in foster care, homeless children, migrant children and military children. This study will focus on students with disabilities and English learners.

White: NCES (2017) describes Whites as individuals whose roots originated from the people of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

Summary

Chapter 1 gave context to this study by highlighting the fact that the student demographics in the US are changing and public school student populations will become increasingly diverse (Colby, 2015; Kena et al., 2016). The persistent TAG that exists in the US makes the impending demographic shift worrisome, especially in light of the billions of dollars that have been spent to try and solve TAG (Valencia, 2015). School leaders play an essential role

in creating safe and inclusive environments for diverse students (Minkos et al., 2017). A key strategy schools and its leaders can use to affect school cultures and potentially address TAG is cultural competence and cultural proficiency (Lindsey et al., 2009). This study highlighted practices, policies, and strategies schools can use to shift their cultures towards cultural competency, which could affect the achievement of students, especially vulnerable and traditionally underserved populations within their institutions.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Various indicators show that all students have improved in their academic achievements over the past few decades (Brace, 2011; Valencia, 2015). Despite these improvements, however, a significant achievement gap persists between students of color and their White counterparts (Brace, 2011; National Center for Education, 2007). With the changing demographics in the US, it is projected that school age minorities will soon become the majority in the next few decades, which makes the existent achievement gap troublesome because of our nation's inability to close TAG after numerous policy initiatives costing billions of dollars (Colby, 2015; Valencia, 2015). There are a number of reasons that may contribute to the underperformance of minority students compared to their White peers, such as systematic racism, healthcare deficiencies, housing, underprepared teachers, and unequal distribution of qualified teachers (Brace, 2011; Teel & Obidah, 2008). A lack of cultural competence, how well a school's mission, curriculum, instruction, teacher composition, conflict management, student interaction and assessments meet the needs of diverse students, may also provide an explanation as to why minorities underachieve compared to Whites. The purpose of this study was to comprehend how principals understand cultural competence and determine what practices and programs they implement to affect cultural competence and student achievement within their institutions. The specific research questions include:

1. What are Indiana public high school principals' perceptions of cultural competence in their schools?

2. What culturally competent practices, if any, do Indiana public high school principals use in their schools?

To address the questions posed above, this literature review discusses the changing demographic shift in the US student population, TAG, and cultural competence. The sections pertaining to the demographic changes and TAG were important to this study because they provided insights into the significance of the study. Discussions on cultural competency were important to understanding what cultural competence is and the manner in which it can influence the daily lives of students. This literature review demonstrates that cultural competence can be viewed as a possible mechanism to closing the TAG in the US.

Changing demographic of the US student population

The US Census Bureau predicts by 2030, fifty percent of the population aged 1 – 17 will be from ethnic and racial minority groups (Colby, 2015). The driving force behind this changing demographic is the immigration of Asian and Latino students, the slower growth rate of Black students, and the decline of White students as a percentage of the total student population. It is important to note that the student enrollment of American Indian/Alaskan Native in elementary and secondary schools has remained relatively consistent over the past decade (NCES, 2017). Figure 1 compares the racial composition of the US K-12 student population from1968 to 2010. In 1968, eighty percent of public school students were White, fourteen percent were Black, five percent Latinos, and Asians and American Indians made up less than one percent of the population. In 2010, fifty four percent were White, fifteen percent were Black, twenty two percent were Latinos/as, five percent were Asian and one percent was American Indian/Alaska Native (Bitterman, Gray, & Goldring, 2013).

Racial composition of the US K-12 student population in 2010 compared to 1968
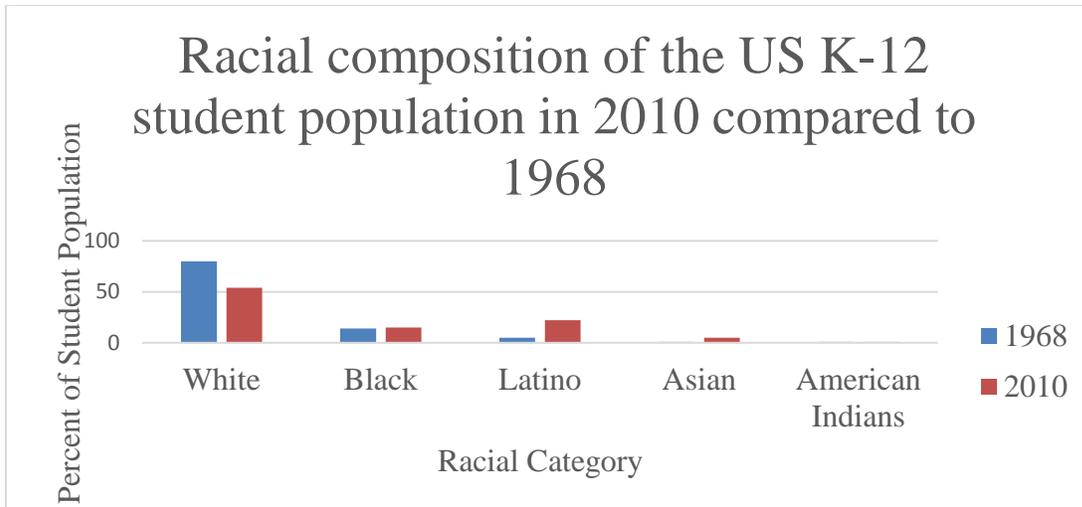
*Figure 1.*Racial composition of the US K-12 student population in 2010 compared to 1968 (Bitterman, Gray, & Goldring, 2013).

Before talking about managing diversity, cultural competence and closing TAG between different demographics of students, a detailed discussion on immigrant populations that are coming to the US and changing the demographics of the educational system will follow.

Immigration in the US

Hernandez, Denton and McCartney (2009) explain that in 1910, there was a wave of immigration in which 97% of the migrant population came from Europe and Canada. The authors go onto highlight that from 1915 – 1945, there was a significant drop in immigration due to the Great Depression, World War I, World War II, and national origin quotas imposed by the US on countries in Southern and Eastern Europe. Hernandez et al. describe that the eventual abolishment of the national origin quotas and the need for agricultural workers in the early to mid 20th century resulted in an overall rise in immigration. In the 1960s, the immigrant population numbered 320,000 and this number increased to 1 million in the 1970s (National Academies of Sciences, 2017). Even though the immigrants were predominantly White and

Christian during the mid-twentieth century, American society perceived them as having a unique

identity, culture and race, and regarded them as foreigners and a threat to national identity and

culture (Hernandez et al., 2009). An assessment of the 1980 Census data suggested that the fears

faced by US society were unfounded because of the immigrants' successful assimilation into

American culture (Lieberson, Waters, & National Committee for Research on the 1980 Census.,

1988). During the period of increased immigration in the mid 20th century, the percentage of

European immigrants dropped from 87% to 56% and the percentage of Latin American and

Asian immigrants rose from 3% to 25% (Hernandez et al., 2009; Valencia, 2015). The new wave

of immigration posed unique challenges to US society because the population was not White like

the European immigrants and their cultural practices were different from that of the mainstream

society (Hernandez et al., 2009). The 2000 Census data revealed that 62% of immigrant families

were from Latin America, 22% were from Asia and approximately two percent of the immigrant

population were from Africa and Canada. At this time, the European immigrant population had

declined to just 14% (Hernandez et al., 2009). As shown in Figure 2, in 2013, the number of

immigrants in the US numbered 46 million with 28% of foreign born individuals living in the US

coming from Mexico (National Academies of Sciences, 2017). Furthermore, Figure 2 illustrates

the breakdown of the new immigrant to the US in 2013 by demonstrating that 47.1% of

immigrants come from Asia, 29.5% from Latin America, 12.5% from Europe, 6.2% from Africa,

and other regions from around the world totaled 4.7% (Jensen, Knapp, Borsella, & Nestor,

2015).
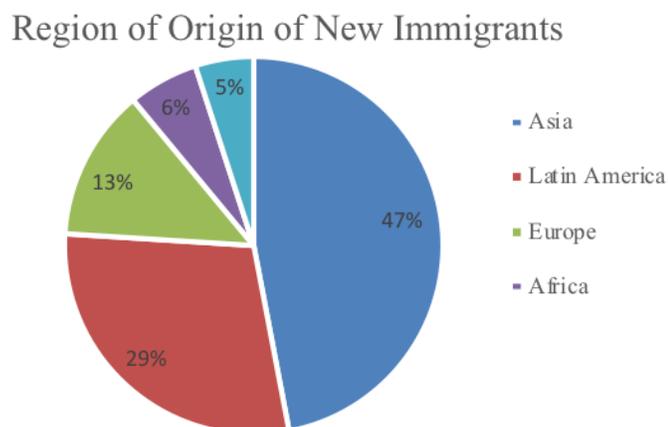
Figure 2. Region of Origin of New Immigrants (National Academies of Sciences, 2017)

Immigrant student transition to US schools

Many immigrant and minority adolescents battle to succeed in the US educational system. Peguero & Bondy (2011) explain that proficiency in the language of instruction, student-teacher relationships and intrinsic motivation stemming from an affirmation of culture, language and individuality are significant contributors to the academic success of immigrant students. When first generation immigrant youth arrive in the US, they have more positive attitudes towards education, have higher aspirations and are more optimistic about the future compared to native students (Olsen, 1997; Peguero & Bondy, 2011). However, they severely underachieve on standardized tests and grades, have greater dropout rates and lower college enrollment compared to their native counterparts. Interestingly, for many immigrant groups, the longer they stay in the US, the greater the decline in their academic goals and aspirations (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Peguero & Bondy, 2011; Perreira, Harris, & Lee, 2006).

Immigrant students feel disempowered when they enter US schools. Many school institutions believe that equal opportunities are given to all students, as a result it is assumed that failure is the responsibility of the individual rather than the educational structures within which

the individual exists. As a result, immigrant students are made to feel like they unable to have a high level of achievement because of their deficiencies (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). Furthermore, immigrant students are set up for failure when they enter US schools because they marginalized and isolated academically from the main school population. They are discouraged from using and further developing their home language and generally don't have many opportunities for cross-cultural exchanges with native students, which is important for language acquisition and cultural translation (Peguero & Bondy, 2011). When immigrant students are placed into English-only classes, they often experience frustration, failure and rejection from non-immigrant students. Furthermore, teachers misinterpret their inadequacies in the classroom as a lack of motivation and ability. Fluency in the English language is often used as a benchmark for success and academic ability, while minimizing the root causes of their lack of participation and involvement (Olsen, 1997; Peguero & Bondy, 2011). Native teachers find it hard to change their teaching to accommodate the immigrant population because of the demands of standardized testing (Olsen, 1997; Peguero & Bondy, 2011).

Summary

Immigration has been a significant part of US history (Hernandez et al., 2009). Assimilation of immigrant populations into US society has posed many challenges, especially as it pertains to integration of immigrant youth into the education system (Hernandez et al., 2009; Peguero & Bondy, 2011). The demographics in the US student population are changing in the favor of ethnic minorities and this trend is problematic in light of TAG that persists between ethnic minorities and their White counterparts (Colby, 2015; Valencia, 2015). In the following section, a discussion of TAG, its potential causes and solutions will be discussed.

The Achievement Gap

Over the years there has been extensive documentation on TAG. When individuals talk about TAG, they refer to the discrepancy in achievement between minority students of color and their White counterparts. Achievement not only refers to performance on standardized tests, but also refers to factors such as grade retention, holding capacity and matriculation to college, which will all be defined in the sections that follow (Valencia, 2015). Lyman & Villani (2004) indicate that Black and Latino/a students are behind their White counterparts by about 4 years. Specifically, by the time Black and Latino/a students finish high school, their reading and math levels will be equivalent to that of a White eighth grade student. With impending changes to the student demographics of the US student population, a more concerted effort must be made to manage diversity within schools to ensure that different populations of students are reaching their full academic and social potentials (Coggins & Campbell, 2008). The achievement gap trends, especially those that indicate a widening gap, are a cause for concern due to their direct correlation with societal inequalities (Reardon et al., 2013). The following section discusses the persistent TAG in the US in the context of standardized tests, grade retention, holding capacity and matriculation into college, and their implications pertaining to larger societal inequalities.

Achievement on standardized tests

Achievement on standardized tests are one way to look at TAG (Teel & Obidah, 2008). Research by Board (2010) reported that in 2010, approximately 1.6 million students took the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). In the year 2000, the mean score difference in Critical Reading between Whites and Latino/a students was 75 points. In 2010, the difference was 74 points. In 2000, the difference in mean scores for Mathematics between Whites and Latino/a was 70 and in

2010, the difference was 69 points. The results show a pretty consistent achievement gap on the SAT between Whites and Latino/as over the past decade. Board goes on to document that for Black students in the year 2000, the difference in mean scores for Critical Reading compared to their White counterparts was 94 points and in 2010, the difference was 99 points. In Mathematics, the difference in the mean scores between Blacks and Whites in the year 2000 was 104 points and in 2010, 108 points. Board highlights that trends show a slight widening in TAG between Blacks and Whites on the SAT. Moreover, over the past two decades Latino/a students seem to be doing better than Black students on achievement tests, even though TAG persists.

Due to the importance of standardized tests, like the SAT, to the college admissions process, disparities in the achievements of Whites, Blacks and Latinos and Latinas on these assessments play a key role in the under enrollment of ethnic minorities in selective colleges and universities compared to Whites (Reardon et al., 2013). The disproportionate enrollment of traditionally underserved groups in colleges and universities, especially selective ones, could explain the differences in the earnings of Whites compared to ethnic minority groups, especially Blacks, in the US.

TAG in the context of grade retention

Grade retention refers to a student that repeats a grade for a variety of reasons. Specifically, a student may be held back if they show learning difficulties, like reading below grade level (Valencia, 2015). A recent report put out by the Texas Education Agency in 2011-12 shows that 3.9% of Latino and Latina students enrolled in Texas Public Schools experienced grade retention. Additionally, Black students enrolled in Texas Public Schools had a 4.2% grade retention compared to 2% of White students. As a result, there is a 2 to 1 ratio in the percentage of Latino and Latina and Black students being held back compared to White students (Texas

Education Agency, 2018). Multiple research studies and reports have shown that when compared to their peers who are promoted, pupils that are held back fall behind in achievement, especially in Mathematics, have socioemotional and behavioral issues, make few or no substantial gains in their academics and continue to fall behind (Holmes, 1989; Hong & Yu, 2007; Jimerson & Ferguson, 2007; Roderick, 1994).

TAG in the context of holding power

Another metric used to demonstrate TAG in the US education system is holding power or the ability of a school to hold a student until they complete their full course of study. In 1980, 29.1% White students, 54.5% Latino and Latina students and 48.6% of Black students did not complete their full course (Valencia, 2015). In 2012, however, 7.5% of White students, 35% Latino and Latina students and 14.3% of Black students dropped out before completing their full course of study (Snyder, 2013). The trend shows that there has been a decline in the number of students that don't complete their full course of study. However, the percentage of minorities that drop out compared to their White counterpart is significant. The consequences of students dropping out from school are low wage jobs and there is a correlation between students who drop out and violations of the law and incarceration (Valencia, 2015).

TAG in the context of matriculation into college

Matriculation into college is another factor that illustrates TAG. The ability to attend and graduate from college is seen as important to economic success and social mobility (Valencia, 2015). In fact, over the past few decades there has been a stratification of the work force in the US into two tiers. Nearly half of the available jobs required a college degree and the other half did not (Valencia, 2015). In 2000, 65% of White, 52.9% Latino and Latina and 54.9% Black

students who completed high school enrolled in 2 or 4-year colleges. In 2010, 70.5% of White, 59.7% of Mexican/Latino and Latina, and 62% of Black students who completed high school enrolled in 2 or 4-year colleges. Longley (2018) showed that the expected earnings for a working adult over the course of their life-time is $1.2 million for a high school graduate, $2.1 million for a Bachelor's degree, 2.5 million for a Master's degree and $3.4 million for a PhD. The previous point verifies that matriculation into college can have significant economic rewards for individuals (Longley, 2018).

Summary

The section above explained TAG in the context of standardized tests, grade retention, holding power and matriculation to college. TAG is problematic because of its correlation to societal inequities and upward social mobility, especially as it pertains to the success of different groups in the labor market (Reardon et al., 2013). Valencia (2015) points out that the persistent TAG is concerning due to the billions of dollars that has been spent to try and close TAG. The next section will explore various reasons for TAG in the US.

Explaining the achievement gap

Valencia (2015) proposes explanations for TAG that are based on the ideology of deficit thinking. Valencia explains that deficit thinking has been engrained in America's consciousness throughout its history and has manifested itself profoundly in race relations that have extended to the education system. Menchaca (1997) contends that the history of deficit thinking can be traced back to the early 18th century where polygenists, who believed there were varied origins for humankind, maintained that White (Europeans) were at the top of racial hierarchies and Blacks were at the bottom. Menchaca goes on to explain that in the 19th century, physicians and

researchers performed experiments to determine the cranial capacity of different races and found Whites had the largest cranial capacity while Blacks had the smallest. Valencia goes on to assert that deficit thinking is part of our nation's subconscious and as a result, the natural tendency is to blame the victim and reason that academic and social deficiencies in minority students are a result of their ethnicities, cultures and family values.

An example of deficit thinking can be seen in the disproportionate referrals of African American boys to special education. Ruffin-Adams and Wilson (2012) acknowledge the disproportionate representation of African America boys in special education. The authors highlight three main areas involved in the uneven referrals of African American males to special education. Firstly, they assess special education referral processes; secondly, they investigate the role of African American families, particularly mothers, in the referral process; and thirdly, identify ways educational leaders can partner with African American families to ensure correct placement and referrals for their children. Using a fictionalized story, Ruffin-Adams and Wilson convey authentic ways African American mothers navigate the referral and placement systems for special education and highlight the interactions they have with educational leaders throughout the process. As part of their study, the authors use an integrated conceptual framework that includes aspects of black feminist thought, critical race theory and Foucault's theories of power.

To expound on the framework of power and explain the referral of African American males to special education, the authors define the politics of containment, which refers to power structures, such as racial segregation and surveillance, that keep members of society in spaces of disempowerment or empowerment based on race, gender and class. By referring African American boys to special education programs, the authors explain that the politics of containment are in play because the closeness of a subordinate group (minorities) to the superior

group (Whites) can create tension, a lack of comfortability, and harm to the superior group. For example, Ruffin-Adams and Wilson explain that African American students can be perceived by individuals within the superior group as loud and may cause class disruptions that affect the learning of other students. As a result, the heightened surveillance of African American boys' academic achievements and behavior will likely lead to the identification of discipline issues that may lead to unwarranted referrals based on implicit biases against these groups of individuals. Ruffin-Adams and Wilson point out that in terms of the black feminist thought, there is an inherent bias towards African American females (including mothers) to portray them and their kids as unworthy, deficient and unintelligent. As a result, there is a tendency to undermine their views and exclude them from the special education referral process. In general, Ruffin-Adams and Wilson explain that schools and discipline practices maintain the social order. In other words, special education programs perpetuate the feeling of otherness that many African American families already feel and promote the politics of containment on African Americans to reinforce the power structures of society.

Valencia (2015) highlights the work of John Ogbu (2008) who was an anthropologist and authority on topics ranging from the race gap to minority education. Ogbu encourages researchers to look at TAG from a larger societal perspective that include societal discriminations, institutional practices and inequalities, as well as student attitudes, behaviors and responses to an educational system that favors White students and uses them as the standard for educational practices and policy. Valencia cautions teachers by explaining they often interpret the inattentiveness by students of color as a lack of interest and commitment to education. Valencia explains that educators often fail to acknowledge that institutions rarely put

these students in a position to succeed because they fail to provide culturally responsive teaching that takes into account the background of these pupils.

Summary

There are various reasons explaining TAG. Valencia (2015) points out at the heart of TAG is deficit thinking, in other words, regarding minority groups as inferior compared to Whites, who are considered the superior group in this example. Deficit thinking has been part of our nation's subconscious for many years and amongst many other reasons, may point to why there is a persistent TAG in the US education system. Despite numerous efforts to close TAG, it is still present. The next section addresses different approaches to TAG and gives insights into why these approaches may or may not be working.

Approaches to closing the achievement gap

Valencia (2015) explains there are three common approaches highlighted in the literature to close TAG: curricular intervention, an equal opportunity educational approach, or a systemic analysis approach. In the next section, another approach to closing the achievement gap is added to the list and is termed authentic partnerships. Each one of these strategies will be discussed below.

Narrow curricular intervention

Often, curricular intervention involves educators narrowly defining a deficit shown by minority students of color in a curriculum and tailoring interventions to address those specific curricular shortcomings. For example, Akhavan (2007) in her book, *Accelerated Vocabulary Instruction: Strategies for Closing the Achievement Gap for All Students,* describes what she

calls the vocabulary gap, which, she believes, directly correlates to TAG. Her book highlights different strategies that teachers can use to improve their students' vocabulary and close the vocabulary gap (and by extension the achievement gap). These strategies include "creating word rich environments", "making connections to words", "engaging students with explicit instruction," and "accelerating vocabulary development through wide reading" (p. 11). In a book authored by Larry Bell (2005) called 12 *powerful words that increase test scores and help close the achievement gap*, he highlights "12 powerful words" that educators can use in their curriculums to improve test scores and close TAG. Specifically, he encourages teachers to use these words on assessments, songs, fictitious stories, puzzles etc. Unfortunately, no studies or empirical evidence have been conducted to prove that his interventions work. Valencia points out that narrow curricular interventions employ a reductionist approach that fail to take into account societal inequities and systemic structures that have disadvantaged students of color for many years, which may render these interventions ineffective.

Equal education opportunities

In his review of the literature, Valencia (2015) points out that another popular approach to closing TAG involves reform strategies that expose students of color to "equitable and challenging learning opportunities" (p. 16). Valencia points out that a good body of work that illustrates this concept of providing equal educational opportunities is a longitudinal study conducted by Beecher and Sweeney (2008). In their investigation, they highlight an 8-year project that turned around a failing elementary school, called Central Elementary School (CES). To put this work into context, CES was a failing school located in the Northeast in a high performing suburban school corporation that had eleven schools. Their enrollment consisted of 75% Black, Latino/Latina and Asian American students. Additionally, 45% of the students were

on Free/Reduced Lunch and 30% of the student population were English Language Learners. In order to facilitate the school's turn around, CES moved from a remedial program approach that sought to address students' learning deficits to an enrichment and differentiated curriculum model. The school assembled a school wide enrichment team that comprised of both teachers and parents, and all the teachers went through trainings on how to implement and incorporate the new curriculum into their classrooms. CES showed a significant reduction in TAG with all students of color showing significant improvements over the course of 8 years. The authors explain that the reduction in TAG "resulted from children's active engagement and investment in their own learning, parent's involvement in their children's school lives, and teachers' commitment to their students " (Beecher, 2008, p. 528). Rather than providing remedial interventions for students, the school implemented a differentiated curriculum that set high expectations and challenged all students.

Systemic analysis approach

Authors that champion this approach to closing TAG are of the mindset that the inequalities of the larger society reflect inequalities and oppression in the educational system (Valencia, 2015). A pivotal work by Noguera (2009), called *The Achievement Gap: Public Crisis in Education*, asserts that in order to solve TAG, policy makers must come to terms with the fact that systemic structures in society have led to the inequalities of our education system. Furthermore, Noguera explains there are three facets that must be addressed in order to close the achievement gap; they are: equal funding for all schools, a renewed commitment to desegregation and integration of public schools and attending to the non-academic needs of students of low socio-economic status, like adequate nutrition and health care.

Valencia (2015) goes on to highlight a work published by Mathis (2005) who points out fallacies that are often used to show that school reform, without regard for larger societal inequalities, can diminish TAG. First, Mathis asserts that successful schools that have managed to close TAG within their institutions are used as a model for what hard work and determination can accomplish. By showcasing these examples, policy makers are led to believe that larger societal inequalities should not be the focus of reforms. Secondly, Mathis explains that the common discourse in our country is that solving TAG is the remedy for many failing schools. As a result, a lot of professional development resources and workshops are given to educators with the hope of providing quick fix tools and interventions to solve TAG. With so much focus on curricular interventions, larger societal issues may be ignored (Mathis, 2005).

Authentic partnerships

To close TAG, Ruffin-Adams and Wilson (2012) highlight the need for leaders to make authentic partnerships between schools and families a priority and part of their core work. The authors explain that a leader should seek to understand aspects of each family's life and background and model this for faculty and staff. Increased involvement of families includes a sharing of power (involves the inclusion of many voices in a child's life), an emphasis on advocacy and parental engagement in a way that makes them feel valued. They also highlight the need for frequent and early communication when educators suspect a child is in need of special education services. The authors state it cannot be up to one person to lead the development of authentic partnerships; a true commitment to developing authentic partnerships would be to channel resources to create programs, professional learning communities (that include families), and professional development opportunities for both special education and non-special education practitioners.

Summary

Numerous attempts have been made over the years to close TAG. Many interventions fail because of their reductionist approach and others putting too much responsibility on students and their families (Valencia, 2015). It is clear that new approaches to closing TAG are needed (Coggins & Campbell, 2008). The next section explores the possibility of using cultural competence as a way to close TAG.

Cultural Competency as a way to close the achievement gap

The persistent TAG in the US suggests that the approaches being implemented to address inequalities in the US educational system are not as effective as many hoped they would be (Spanner-Morrow, 2017). New approaches are needed to address the persistent TAG (Coggins & Campbell, 2008). Lindsey et al. (2009) contend that the best way to address diversity within schools, and by extension TAG, is cultural competency and cultural proficiency. Cultural competency and cultural proficiency in the education context refer "to how well a school's policies, programs, practices, artifacts, and rituals reflect the needs and experiences of diverse groups in the school and outer school community" (Bustamante et al., 2009, p. 798).

Using Cultural Competence to Empower Students

Students in subordinate groups (including immigrant students) are either empowered or disempowered as a result of their interactions with educators within schools. The relationship of teacher and student is never neutral, but one in which relations of power, also represented in the wider society, are reinforced or challenged (Cummins, 1986). Pupils often perceive teachers as their mentors, role-models and sources of support and encouragement, making them essential to

their academic achievement, motivation, cognition, emotional and social development (Peguero & Bondy, 2011). Ethnicity and culture are important factors when assessing student-teacher relationships because ethnic minority students look to their teachers to gain a sense of self and use their teachers' perception of them to assign value to their person (Peguero & Bondy, 2011; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). Ethnic minority youth report that they experience discrimination from their teachers in the areas of attention, guidance, care, and support compared to their White counterparts (Peguero & Bondy, 2011). As a result, ethnic minority students feel victimized and alienated and exhibit behavioral, social, emotional and academic problems (Whitted & Dupper, 2008)

There are four categories that are instrumental to the empowerment and disabling of immigrant and minority students. These four categories include: (1) incorporation of minority and immigrant students' language and culture into the school curriculum, (2) immigrant and minority parental and community involvement in their children's education, (3) classroom instruction that promotes intrinsic motivation by encouraging students to actively use language to construct their knowledge and (4) individuals involved in the assessment of immigrant and minority students become advocates for the students. A discussion of these four aspects of student empowerment will be discussed below.

Incorporation of language and culture into the school curriculum

The value of incorporating a student's culture and language can be best understood in what Bourdieu (1986) defines as *cultural capital*. *Cultural capital* is the characteristic attitudes and capabilities that enable a person of a particular background and social status to continually redefine their socially constructed position through their interactions with others. In other words, by valuing the heritage and language of a student, one increases their cultural capital, thereby

empowering them (Bernhard, 2010). Hopkins, Martinez-Wenzl, Aldana & Gandara (2013) were interested in investigating the paradox that exists between the academic and social optimism of foreign-born students when they arrive in the US, and the eventual poor outcomes, like high dropout rates, low graduation rates and low college enrollment of Latino men. The findings of this study suggest that the young males faced obstacles of language and social integration, but really thrived in classes that were bilingual. Bilingual instruction enabled students to feel valued and affirmed, which provided opportunities for them to participate in academic and non-academic programs within their school. The cultural resonant caring pedagogy demonstrated by staff allowed personal relationships to develop allowing the staff to challenge the students and have high expectations for them. The previously motioned study demonstrates how cultivating capital (in other words, affirming and valuing students and empowering them in the process) is important to the success of students, especially minority students and those from other cultures (Hopkins, Martinez-Wenzl, Aldana, & Gándara, 2013).

Immigrant and minority parental and community involvement

Parental involvement in a child's schooling is a strong predictor of educational success. Children benefit from parental participation in two main ways. First, parents that are involved in a child's education demonstrate the importance of education to their children. Secondly, parents are able get to know their child's teachers and administration to better advocate or intervene on their behalf (Domina, 2005; Turney & Kao, 2009). Hispanic and Asian immigrant parents are less likely to be involved in their children's schooling compared to native born White parents (Nord & Griffin, 1999). Immigrant parents have the desire to be involved in their children's schools, but have limited participation due to cultural challenges (Carreon, Drake, & Barton, 2005). Parents of immigrant students often have limited English skills and therefore lack the

ability to monitor their children's progress and understand their experiences (Suarez-Orozco, Pimentel, & Martin, 2009). Teachers that are part of the dominant culture interpret the non-involvement of immigrant parents as a devaluation of their child's education. Children would benefit if schools were willing to tap into the knowledge of immigrant parents and understand their goals, priorities and cultures. This would not only make immigrant parents feel welcome, but educators would understand and reward different ways in which immigrant children are showing strength and competence (Bernhard, 2010; Turney & Kao, 2009). Structures must be provided to give newcomer parents with support and enable them to find their voices. Even though immigrant parents may not speak the dominant language or be highly educated, they have a lot to contribute (Bernhard, 2010).

Often, an educator's pre-service training in education and childhood development has narrow developmental age specific milestones that usually don't account for discrepancy of background. Immigrant and minority children growing up with a different set of priorities are often seen as lacking and behind in their age-specific goals. By understanding an immigrant or minority parent's perspective, teachers will be able to better assess student development and assess whether observed milestones are consistent with students of diverse cultural backgrounds (Bernhard, 2010).

Auerbach and Olivos (2012) explain many educational institutions are under the assumption that parents will be visible on site, accessible to teachers, and be able to provide the support systems to ensure their child's success. Since the dominant culture defines what effective parent involvement looks like (the model behavior), there is an inherent bias in favor of the dominant culture. Auerbach and Olivos introduce the concept of biculturalism where individuals coexist in two distinct social environments—their primary culture and the dominant mainstream

culture. Auerbach and Olivos scrutinize the relationship between school administrators and bicultural parents and highlight reasons that lead to inauthentic partnerships. Furthermore, Auerbach and Olivos advocate for what they term a paradigm shift, rather than an accommodating approach to these bicultural families. Educators often have a deficit view of African American and bicultural students and families compared to their white counterparts. One thing that Auerbach and Olivos mention is that biases exist on a continuum that ranges from deficit to additive (which is more positive). Bicultural parents are often placed on the deficit side while White parents are placed on the additive side.

Classroom instruction encouraging students to construct their knowledge

When institutions value diversity by exhibiting behaviors such as promoting multilingual language use in classrooms, students are able to co-construct their knowledge and take charge of their learning, rather than passively reproducing the information that is given to them (Bernhard, 2010; Freire, 1970). Active language use by immigrant students requires dialogue rather than repetition or memorization (Freire, 1970). Furthermore, the assessment of students should be advocacy driven. What this means is that there should be systems in place to understand how the educational environment is impacting a student, rather than focusing exclusively on their performance or output. In essence, advocacy calls for an environment where interactions within the school context are looked first and discussed so that students are not perceived through a biased cultural lens. In this way, students will not be labeled as "problems", but different, and those differences can be seen as opportunities to learn and adapt rather than issues to solve (Cummins, 1986; Lindsey et al., 2009). This eliminates deficit thinking described above and advocates for cultural competency.

The perspectives of immigrant teachers

Many US public school teachers are required to teach immigrant students but lack the training and necessary skills to meet their needs (Adair, 2011). Teachers describe language as the primary area for which they feel most unprepared when working with immigrant children, especially in the early education settings (Genishi & Goodwin, 2008; Soto, 2002). Interviews with 21 immigrant and 24 non-immigrant teachers conducted by the Children Crossing Borders (CCB) Project reveals different approaches immigrant and nonimmigrant teachers use in instructing immigrant students. The teachers in the study stated that bilingual teachers were best able to support immigrant children because they could connect and comfort students in their home language. The educators also agreed that a child's home language is an essential part of connecting with their family and shaping their cultural identities. The immigrant teachers explained that pushing an English-only curriculum on immigrant students, especially those in early childhood classrooms, would cause them to withdraw from not being able to express themselves- their feelings and ideas- thereby resulting in a loss of esteem for their home language and culture (Soto, 1997, 2002). Immigrant teachers suggest that when an immigrant student uses their home language, it should never be considered wrong or needing correction, rather the students should be allowed to progress gradually towards their goal of becoming proficient in English. Furthermore, they held the belief that children should be co-constructors of their knowledge rather than consumers of criticism and correction (DeVries, Zan, Hildebrandt, Edmiaston, & Sales, 2002). The immigrant teachers explained that children feel most comfortable when they are able to express themselves from time to time in their home language. As students leave the early childhood setting, the need for English language competency increases, making it more crucial for students to become proficient. Therefore, immigrant

teachers explain that it is crucial for early childhood teachers not to correct a child's home language but augment their learning by adding English to it. Immigrant teachers expressed concern that this approach of not forcing English on their students made it hard to assess progress. However, when video footage was shown to these immigrant teachers of their classrooms, they were encouraged at the progress their students had made with English (Adair, 2011). Due to the relationships the students had with teachers (or adults within their schools), they were comfortable taking risks and made positive strides towards language proficiency.

Understanding the immigrant populations will allow schools to better support them. Due to federal and state accountability standards, schools have to not only work to accommodate the needs of minority students, but allow them to flourish and reach their full academic and social potentials. One of the main goals of policies over the past few decades is to understand and close TAG between minority students of color and their Caucasian counterparts.

Examples of culturally competent practices in schools

Illes (2017) in her study highlights school districts like the San Jose Unified School District and Castro Valley Unified School District in California, Portland Public Schools, in Oregon Montgomery Public Schools in Maryland and Washtenaw Intermediate School District in Michigan have drafted equity plans that serve as their guiding documents to promote inclusivity within their school districts. These equity plans tend to focus on channeling financial resources to train teachers, provide professional development opportunities, and initiate programs that foster an inclusive environment within their districts.

There are some examples of school K-12 districts that have created diversity offices in response to increasing diversity within their districts and have been successful in improving the

performance of minority students.   An overview of the programs in Guilford County Schools

and Portland Public Schools is shared in the sections that follow.

Guilford County Schools

Healy (2016) describes Guilford County Schools (GSC) in North Carolina who formed a

district diversity office in 2006 after analyzing data that showed minority students were

underachieving compared to their Caucasian counterparts in different areas of academic life.

Moreover, their data demonstrated faculty and staff exhibited implicit biases that resulted in

decreased expectations for underserved minority groups. In response to this discourse, a diversity

office was created to provide teachers, staff and administrators with professional development

opportunities to help them recognize and diminish their implicit biases. Specifically, in order to

allow the faculty to reflect on their biases, GSC began putting structures in place to enable

teachers to talk about social justice issues, like Black Lives Matter, in their classrooms.

Moreover, GSC has worked hard to raise awareness of issues pertaining to race, ethnicity and

class by instituting a program called Equity Wednesdays "Lunch and Learn". GSC has seen an

increase in the enrollment of students that identify as LBTQ and has worked hard to provide

support services and safe spaces to these students. Additionally, GSC sends counselors, social

workers, support staff and teachers to an annual conference that equips them on how to

understand, value and respect students that are dealing with issues pertaining to sexual

orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

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Portland Public Schools

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Healy (2016) describes Portland Public Schools (PPS), Oregon, who developed a

diversity office in 2011 after the state board of education instructed them to look into race and

the achievement gap. After conducting their study, PPS found that their school system did not

provide adequate support to students from underserved groups. As a result, they implemented a

program that provided mentorship and social support to minority students that is an offshoot of

The My Brother's Keeper Success Mentor Initiative, which is a program that aids African

American males in achieving their full potential both socially and academically. Specifically, in

the program, young African American males are paired with a mentor and meet with them three

times a week during the school year. The goal of the program is to increase the attendance rates

of these students, motivate them, advocate for them and navigate different situations with them.

Healy explains that PPS has created an equity tool that serves as a bookmark and serves as a

litmus test teachers can use to determine whether their actions are contributing or taking away

from inclusion throughout the school. Specifically, this tool encourages teachers to consider how

policies, programs and initiatives are affecting students of various backgrounds, whether teachers

have included diverse stakeholders in the decision-making process, the possible barriers that

exist to the success of a program and steps they can take to avoid or mitigate potential

consequences .

PPS worked hard ensure their faculty mirrored the demographics of the student body.

Starting in 2013, PPS adopted a policy that encouraged for increased recruitment of historically

underserved candidates. As a result of their efforts, minority employees have increased by about

27% (Healy, 2016b).

The previous section provided examples of strategies different school systems have

undertaken to manage diversity within their districts. It is important to note, however, that

interventions and reform strategies must be implemented thoughtfully. In fact, federal and state

mandates are requiring school systems to base their interventions and decisions on evidence and

data. Therefore, it is essential for schools to formulate a systematic approach, based on evidence, to justify initiatives that are implemented.

Using data and evidence to make decisions pertaining to cultural competence

Honig and Venkateswaran (2012) assert that federal and state policies have mandated that school systems use data to inform practice and improve educational environments. The standards based reform movement of the 1980s and 1990s advocated for central offices to compare student performance to federal, state and local standards and use those outcomes to improve practices and the educational environments for pupils (Honig, 2008). It is essential for schools to comply with federal and state mandates when it comes to adopting practices and interventions that improve the performance of different demographics of students. In order for schools to be informed as to the requirements of law pertaining to evidence or data-based decision making, a discussion of recent policies will occur below.

Policy context for data driven decision-making pertaining to cultural competence

In the past, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), by way of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), demanded that any programs receiving funding from NCLB be grounded in "evidence", "scientifically based research", and "data driven" (Honig, 2008). Currently, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), enacted on December 10th, 2015, has changed the "scientifically based research" verbiage of NCLB to "evidence-based interventions" with the goal of improving and increasing the impact of educational programs, especially those pertaining to student performance. Furthermore, ESSA demands that state and local programs prioritize evidence based interventions, especially those that fall under Title I, II, III and IV(Hewitt, 2017).

For example, Title I School Improvement Programs (Under Section 1003) require a greater degree of evidence based interventions that are supported by strong evidence (termed tier 1), which are interventions "supported by well-designed and well implemented randomized control studies", moderate evidence (called tier 2), which are interventions supported by "one or more well-designed and well-implemented quasi experimental studies", and/or promising evidence (called tier 3), which are interventions "supported by one or more well designed and well-implemented correlational studies (with statistical control for selection bias). According to ESSA, other Title I, II, III, IV program interventions can supported by less stringent tier 4 evidence (known as studies that "demonstrate a rationale") that showcase "practices that have a well-defined logic model or theory of action, are supported by research, and have some effort underway by a (State Education Agency) SEA or Local Educational Agency (LEA), or outside research organization to determine their effectiveness" (Hewitt, 2017). ESSA also demands that state and district systems use data to hold school systems accountable and provide parents and different stakeholders information on how different subgroups of students are performing in order to ensure transparency and close the achievement gap, which are some of the main goals of the law (Education, 2016).

With the demands on school systems to use data to drive school improvement, it is essential that central office and school administrators to become proficient in collecting and analyzing data to not only comply with the law, but ensure they are making good decisions pertaining to cultural competence. A major objective of this study was to provide school systems with research based evidence pertaining to cultural competence. In addition, this study will provide tools that schools can use to better manage diversity within their institutions.

Conceptual framework: Cultural competence and proficiency continuum

Lindsey et al. (2009) provide a framework for cultural competence and cultural proficiency for schools and school leaders based on the work of Cross, Bazron, Dennis & Isaacs (1989). At the foundation of cultural competence and proficiency is an understanding that different worldviews exist. The cultural worldview spectrum ranges from "seeking to eliminate other cultures to seeking to interact with other cultures in a way that builds on the best of both worlds" (p. 57). Individuals who judge other peoples' cultures as inferior, as opposed to just different, invite problems into an organization, especially if it is diverse, and hold a cultural worldview that is detrimental to cultural competency and proficiency. On the other end of the spectrum are individuals that approach other cultures with an attitude of learning and strive to interact with them in a way that breeds interdependence and trust.

Lindsey et al. (2009) describe a cultural proficiency continuum with six points that highlight "ways of seeing and responding to difference" (p. 6). The cultural proficiency continuum is displayed below in Figure 3.

| Cultural Destructiveness | Cultural Incapacity | Cultural Blindness | Cultural Precompetence | Cultural Competence | Cultural Proficienc |
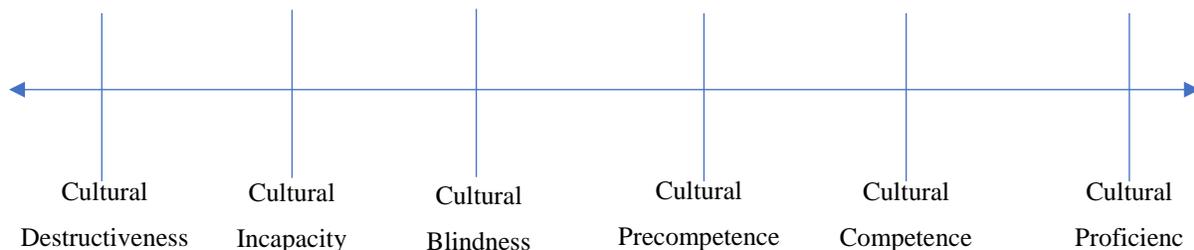
Figure 3: Cultural Proficiency Continuum
Source: Lindsey et al. (2009)

Looking at Figure 3 and going from left to right, the first three points on the continuum, *cultural destructiveness, cultural incapacity,* and *cultural blindness* are characterized by

"unhealthy values, behaviors, policies, and practices that emerge from barriers to cultural proficiency" (p. 6). At the other pole of the continuum, there is *cultural pre-competence, cultural competence and cultural proficiency* and these three points are considered transformative and reflective of positive behaviors and practices towards other cultural groups. In order to better understand the framework, a discussion of the six points along the cultural proficiency continuum will follow.

Cultural destructiveness

Lindsey et al. (2009) explain that organizations that are culturally destructive have the propensity to act in a way that eliminates and devalues other cultures in schools and the broader school community. An extreme example of cultural destructiveness in a non-school context happened when Native Americans were taken from their dwellings and enrolled in westernized boarding schools with the hope of "educating them" and ridding them of their cultural heritage to make them conform to westernized ways of being (Brace, 2011; Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989). Other examples of cultural genocide include holocaust where German Nazis sought to exterminate people groups, like Jews, Gypsies, Gay Men and Lesbians. Additionally, the ethnic cleansings that took place in Central Africa between the Hutus and the Tutsis serve as examples of educational maltreatment for students who are culturally different from the majority.

In the school context, cultural destructiveness can take the form of English-only policies in schools that prevent different groups from using their native language as a form of communication, or dress codes that exclude specific styles worn by specific ethnic groups, or programs that place specific ethnic groups in programs that keep them at low level and prevent them from taking higher level courses.

Cultural incapacity

Cultural incapacity involves an individual or organization looking at other cultures other than their own (the dominant culture) as inferior. Individuals or organizations do not actively have the goal of being culturally destructive, but engage in behaviors that trivialize other cultures and easily give into popular stereotypes of individuals and cultures. For example, individuals within an organization may believe that all African Americans are poor or on some type of financial assistance. Furthermore, organizations may have decreased expectations for minority students and potentially hold the mindset that hired minority faculty will serve as role models to minorities rather than all children (Cross et al, 1989; Brace, 2011; Lindsey et al., 2009).

Cultural blindness

Close to the center of the continuum is cultural blindness. Individuals or organizations at this level of the continuum do not acknowledge other cultures and have the view that culture should not and does not play a role in the experiences individuals have within a school. As a result, individuals or organizations are of the mindset that there is no need for differentiated interactions with individuals of other cultures. Individuals that are colorblind think that ways of being, especially in the dominant culture, are universally applicable to all people and people groups. By ignoring the cultural background of individuals, organizations do not benefit from the cultural strengths and perspectives individuals bring to an organization. By encouraging individuals to assimilate to the dominant culture within an organization, implicit biases as well as biased practices, policies and attitudes are maintained. For example, in the school context cultural differences can be interpreted as disobedient, noncompliant or deficient (Cross et al, 1989; Brace, 2011; Lindsey et al., 2009).

Cultural pre-competence

This point in the continuum is characterized by a desire for individuals or organizations to serve diverse populations well. At this level, individuals or organizations are aware of their shortcomings and make the necessary efforts to improve them. Lindsey et al. (2009) state that this stage is crucial one because "at this level of development, you and the school can move in a positive, constructive direction, or you can falter, stop, and possibly regress" (p. 7). Brace (2011) indicates that pre-competency can be characterized by experimentation, such as hiring diverse faculty. Cross et al. (1989) cautions that in the pre-competence phase there can be a false sense of accomplishment, setbacks that may cause stagnation, and tokenism—for example, hiring minority faculty and staff and using that as a measure of the cultural competence of the organization.

Cultural competence

Lindsey et al. (2009) describe cultural competence as "aligning your personal values and behaviors and the school's policies and practices in a manner that is inclusive of cultures that are new or different from yours and the school's and enables healthy and productive interactions" (p. 7). A hallmark of cultural competence is a school providing professional development for faculty and staff to equip them with tools on how to have effective cross-cultural interactions. At this level is a recognition that within cultures are subgroups that have distinct characteristics. Organizations look to these subgroups to understand nuances within the larger cultural group and receive advice on how to best serve them (Brace, 2011; Cross et al., 1989).

Cultural proficiency

Lindsey et al. (2009) explain that cultural proficiency involves "holding the vision that you and the school are instruments for creating a socially just democracy; interacting with your colleagues, your students, their families, and their communities as an advocate for lifelong learning to serve effectively the educational needs of all cultural groups" (p. 7). Brace (2011) explain that organizations and individuals at this level of the continuum build on cultural competency by engaging in and actively conducting research on how to meet the needs of other cultures. These agencies are instruments for change in greater society and engage larger systems to try and impact the cultural experiences of students inside and outside their schools.

Non-linear nature of continuums

Lindsey et al (2009) contend that cultural proficiency continuum serves as a roadmap on which diversity practitioners, educators and leaders can place themselves to identify where they are on their individual or organizational journeys to cultural proficiency. Although the cultural proficiency continuum is useful, it is important to note that the linear nature of continuums can be misleading (Acheson & Schneider-Bean, 2019). According to Acheson & Schneider-Bean (2019), when it comes to intercultural development, the lived experiences of individuals and organizations can result in organizations being on the left side of the continuum, which is characterized by unhealthy practices that exert barriers to cultural proficiency, in some aspects and on the right side of the continuum, which exemplifies healthy practices, in other aspects. Acheson and Schneider-Bean contend that in times of crisis, stress, moments of conflict and when unfamiliar situations present themselves, an organization or individual can revert back to behaviors that reinforce barriers to cultural proficiency. The usefulness of the cultural

proficiency continuum, however, is it allows educators and organizations to have common language and a lens through which they can recognize healthy and unhealthy practices.

The essential elements of cultural proficiency

In order to move along the cultural proficiency continuum, Lindsey et al. (2009) indicate there are 5 essential elements. They include: assessing your culture, valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, adapting to diversity and institutionalizing cultural knowledge.

Assessing your culture

Organizations and their leaders must assess their cultures. In other words, they must be cognizant of the culture of the school and district as well as the culture of their students and families. Cultural competency is an "inside-out response to the issues that emerge in a diverse environment" (Lindsey et al., 2009, p. 127). In order for a school to assess their culture, they must ask questions that illuminate how the environments within the school function as barriers to healthy interactions between the school's culture and that of students and their families (Lindsey et al., 2009). Not only is cultural competency about knowing the demographics within a school, but also understanding how different cultural groups affect the culture of a school as well as other groups that co-exist within the institution (Lindsey et al., 2009).

Upon taking a cultural audit of one's school, it is essential to bench the assumption that cultural groups within the school will subscribe to the values, behaviors and belief systems of the institution. It is therefore important to educate students and their families on the "cultural norms of each classroom, school, or district, so that people whose cultural norms differ will know how they must adapt to the new environment" (Lindsey et al., 2009, p. 128). In addition, by being open to and recognizing how a school's values, behaviors, practices and belief systems affect

diverse students and their families, adjustments can be made to enable people to feel comfortable and welcomed (Lindsey et al., 2009).

Valuing diversity

Secondly, agencies or individuals must value diversity by embracing differences and look at diversity as adding value rather than subtracting. The way in which an organization values diversity is by understanding the fact that there are disparities in the methods individuals of diverse cultures use to communicate, interact with authority, and approach education. In schools, valuing diversity means "developing policy statements on diversity and ensuring that the school's and district's mission and goal statements address the issues that emerge in diverse environments" (p. 128). Policies will serve as the lens through which curriculum, professional development and programs address the needs of students.

Managing the dynamics of difference

Lindsey et al. (2009) explain that managing diversity is bound to lead to conflict. In schools, faculty and staff must mediate disagreements and conflicts, but don't necessarily have the tools to successfully manage and mediate those conflicts. As a result, schools must engage their faculty and staff in trainings and professional development that will best equip them on how to mediate conflicts. Furthermore, trainings must include an understanding of the historical context of different groups and how present-day interactions reflect a groups' historical truths.

Adapting to diversity

Lindsey et al (2009) suggest that a relationship works best when individuals are willing to change and adjust to each other. In a culturally competent and proficient organization, the

dominant culture must examine its core culture and decide what they will keep and what they will change. However, changes must be filtered through the mission statement and policies that articulate the cultural expectations to faculty and staff. Individuals that are part of the non-dominant culture must also be encouraged to go through a similar assessment of their core culture, but when this is achieved, the school community "makes space for them and changes to adapt to their unique needs" (p. 130). This model encourages everyone to adapt and change, and continually revisit their school and district policies to accommodate new members to the community.

Institutionalizing cultural knowledge

Culturally competent and proficient schools are characterized by "focus groups, interviews, training, and journeys into the surrounding community" (p. 130). The capacity to grow and attain knowledge for better intercultural interactions are part of the fabric of the institution. Faculty and staff know how to engage new cultures, ask important questions and incorporate the information into their classrooms and schools. Cultural competent behaviors and practices are not add-ons, but central to the work of all employees within an institution.

Application of conceptual framework to study

The six points on the cultural proficiency continuum and the five essentials of cultural proficiency serve as the theoretical framework for this study (Cross et al., 1989; Lindsey et al., 2009). Through the interviews, this study determined whether any of these elements on the continuum or essential elements are present in the schools.

Conclusion

This literature review addressed four main topics. This chapter began with a discussion on the changing demographic in the US educational system and then discussed the persistent TAG within the US. These topics put the significance of this work in context. With TAG persisting, new approaches to addressing TAG are needed. The third section defined cultural competence and looked at ways in which cultural competence impacted student achievement. Finally, there was a detailed discussion of the Cultural Proficiency Continuum provided by Lindsey et al. (2009), which is based on the work of Cross et al. (1989). As explained in the final part of the last section, the cultural proficiency continuum serves as the theoretical framework for this study, particularly the qualitative study.

In the following Chapter, the research methodology for this study will be discussed in detail. Chapter 3 includes a discussion of the qualitative research design, data sources, participants and data analysis methods.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Culturally competent schools value diversity theoretically and in practice (Klotz, 2006). Lee (2001) and Lindsey et al. (2009) suggest that culturally competent schools promote inclusivity in their policies, instruction, practices, mission statements, professional development and programming. With the changing demographics in the US school-age population and increased federal and state accountability structures to close TAG, a school's ability to establish and sustain an inclusive environment that is welcoming for all students regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, and ability, can positively affect student achievement (Nelson, 2008). Scholars suggest that cultural competence is an effective way to reduce TAG between traditionally underserved students and their White counterparts (Coggins & Campbell, 2008; Lindsey et al., 2009). This chapter outlines the purpose of this qualitative study together with the research questions, rationale for the research methodology chosen, data collection methods, and data analysis.

Purpose of study

The purpose of this study was to gain important insights into how Indiana public high school principals perceive cultural competence in their schools and how they use culturally competent practices in their schools, if any, to affect student engagement and achievement, especially for traditionally underserved populations.

Research questions

As a reminder, the purpose of the qualitative study was to gain insights into how Indiana public high school principals perceive cultural competence in their schools. Research questions include:

1. What are Indiana public high school principals' perceptions of cultural competence in their schools?

2. What culturally competent practices, if any, do Indiana public high school principals use in their schools?

Research design

Creswell (2014) proposes a framework for research in which he encourages investigators to look at three basic parameters: (1) The worldview or paradigm of the study (how knowledge is constructed) (2) The type of research design related to the worldview, and (3) the methodology the investigator will use to obtain data pertaining to a specific research question. The paradigm this study adopts is a constructionist worldview, which relies on the perspectives of individuals to explain a phenomenon and is rooted in the fact that the lived realities of individuals vary and are fluid. Patton (2015) asserts that constructionists "seek to capture diverse understanding and multiple realities about people's definitions and experiences of the situation" (p.122). Furthermore, the constructionist paradigm underscores the importance of understanding the historical and cultural norms that exist or have existed in an individual's context, taking into account their interactions with diverse individuals, and considering where an individual works and lives to ascertain the manner in which they obtain meaning in different situations (Creswell, 2014).

The qualitative aspect of this study employs a research design that focuses on how people construct their realities and interpret their worlds (Merriam, 2009). Merriam suggests that the strategies and approaches institutions employ for programming are not fixed, but fluid. Therefore, a universal explanation for how schools perceive and practice cultural competence would not be appropriate—the worldview that subscribes to a universal or fixed truth aligns with the postpositivist paradigm. As Merriam (1995) points out, the purpose of qualitative research is not to necessarily obtain data that is generalizable to many, but to understand phenomena at a deeper level. Qualitative research does not necessarily subscribe to a positivistic viewpoint, rather it often assumes that "reality is constructed, multidimensional, and ever-changing. There is no such thing as a single, immutable reality waiting to be observed and measured" (Merriam, 1995, p. 54). A qualitative research approach is closely tied to the constructionist paradigm because it "studies, documents and analyzes, and interprets how human beings constructs and attach meanings to their experiences" (Patton, 2015, p. 13). As a result, Patton asserts that qualitative inquiry is useful in gathering "perspectives on what happens within systems, and how what happens has implications for those involved" (p. 13). The qualitative approach will give important insights into the organizational systems and strategies that pertain to how Indiana public high schools manage diversity, perceive cultural competence and implement culturally competent practices.

The research methodology that was used in this study is phenomenology. At the heart of phenomenology is an attempt to understand how people perceive, understand and experience a specific phenomenon, situation, or event (Bogdan, 1998; Patton, 2015). Patton (2015) explains that phenomenology captures and describes how individuals perceive, describe, feel, judge,

remember, make sense of, and talk about a phenomenon. To comprehend the phenomenological approach at a deeper level, a discussion of its history will occur in the next section.

The History of Phenomenology

Van Manen (1990) describes phenomenology as the study of lived experiences or the life world. Edmund Husserl is known as the father of phenomenology (Laverty, 2003). Husserl's initial work was in mathematics where he studied calculus of variations. He became fascinated with the field of philosophy and abandoned his goals of teaching science to study philosophy (Jones, 1975; Laverty, 2003). Edmund Husserl was interested in articulating "pure phenomenology" and establishing a universal foundation for philosophy and science. Husserl was very critical of the field of psychology explaining that it was flawed in trying to apply the natural sciences to issues pertaining to humans; he stated that psychology involves living subjects that are not reacting in prescribed or predetermined ways to external stimuli (Husserl, 1964; Laverty, 2003). Rather, individuals are reacting in a unique way to their perception of different stimuli—that is, their experiences must be "described, explicated, and interpreted" (Patton, 2015, p. 116). Furthermore, he believed that researchers who focused on external and physical stimuli that correlated to expected responses miss important variables and create an artificial situation absent of context and a true understanding of the individual's experiences (Jones, 1975). Husserl's phenomenology begins with the principle of "bracketing" which states that scientific knowledge commences with an impartial description of its subject matter and discourages the researcher from incorporating preliminary "theories, explanations, hypotheses and conceptualizations onto the subject" (Wertz, 2005, p. 168). Osborne (1994) describes bracketing as identifying one's presumptions regarding phenomena and setting aside those assumptions to see the phenomena as it really is (Osborne, 1994). Setting aside assumptions and

biases allows the researcher to understand the world of the subject as it is lived and to see things as they are.

Due to the use of a phenomenological approach, the focus of this study was individual perspectives that provided important insights into high school principals' understanding and implementation of cultural competence.

Data Sources

Merriam (1995) explains that qualitative research operates under the premise "that reality is constructed, multidimensional and ever changing" (p. 54). In other words, there is no such thing as an immutable truth and unchanging reality . In this study, data was collected from conversational semi-constructed interviews.

Conversational semi-constructed interviews

Mishler (1978) believes that making sense of the world is subjective and meaning must be constructed from the social context in which it occurs. Interviews are the dominant method for phenomenological data collection. Bevan (2014) proposes that it is important to ensure that one's interview method is implemented in a way that will allow data to be obtained in a phenomenological manner (Bevan, 2014). Phenomenological researcher Giorgi (1997) emphasizes that interview questions must be broad and open ended to enable participants to have the opportunity to express themselves and their perspectives. Benner (1994) recommends that the vocabulary used in the interview should reflect language that is not too complex or theoretical. From his perspective, this will enable the interview to flow and avoid the participant being confused by theoretical terms. Furthermore, he encourages the interviewer to listen actively and ask clarifying and probing questions. Interview questions are included in Appendix A.

Participants and sampling

Prior to recruiting participants, the researcher sought approval for the study from Purdue University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). For this study, purposeful sampling was used to identify Indiana public high school principals who led schools whose student population was at least 20% Black and/or Hispanic. Furthermore, the school was required to have a traditionally underserved ethnic population of at least 40%. This level of diversity would potentially encourage schools to reflect on the engagement and achievement of diverse populations within their schools, especially in light of federal and state accountability standards. The sample size of ten was chosen as a result of the recommendation by Creswell (2014) who states that phenomenological research often involves using three to ten participants. Even though diverse samples may provide a broader range of experiences that capture the essence of a phenomenon, a few individuals can articulate their experiences and uncover the core elements of the phenomenon (Starks & Trinidad, 2007).

To recruit participants, email messages were sent to 44 district superintendents to gain permission to interview principals in their school corporations. Following approval from 16 district superintendents, personalized emails were sent to 36 high school principals within their school corporations and 10 principals from 8 school districts agreed to interviews. No compensation was provided to the participants, but the researcher offered to share interview transcripts and the results of the study with them.

Due to the use of a phenomenological approach, the focus of this study was individual perspectives that provided important insights into the cultural competency of their schools. In light of different individuals being interviewed, the contexts and demographics of each school

and individual were different. To provide contextual overviews, Table 10 provides information

pertaining to the Principals who were interviewed as well as some information on their schools.

Table 10 Demographic Information of Principals

Principal	District	Grade Level	Gender	Ethnicity/Race	Years in Education	Years as Principal in Current Building	Traditionally Underserved Ethnic/Racial Population
Principal A	Blue	9-12	Male	White	17	1	42.5%
Principal B	Green	9-12	Male	White	30	7	60.3%
Principal C	Orange	9-12	Male	White	16	3	40.9%
Principal D	Yellow	9-12	Male	White	41	20	60.8%
Principal E	Yellow	9-12	Male	White	25	4	53.0%
Principal F	Red	10-12	Female	White	20	7	72.1%
Principal G	Red	10-12	Female	White	20	5	66.4%
Principal H	Indigo	9-12	Male	White	15	6	53.9%
Principal I	Brown	9-12	Male	White	24	8	74.2%
Principal J	Gray	9-12	Male	Black	15	2	69.0%

Data collection

Once participants were selected for the study, semi-constructed interviews (Appendix A) were used to interview the ten high school principals. Intreviews were conducted over the phone and audiotaped for precision and accuracy. Interviews lasted between 30 to 75 minutes and were transcribed using scribie.com, a professional transcriptionist service. In order to enusre further accuracy, interview transcripts were sent to the participants so they could verfiy them for accuracy.

Data analysis and strategies

After semi-structured interviews, interviews were analyzed using *5 Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency* described by Lindsey et al. (2009) and were also analyzed using 15 indicators of cultural competence, which encompass *5 Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency*, and are provided as a tool by Lindsey et al. to guide an institution's understanding and practice of the *5 Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency.*

An inductive coding procedure was used to categorize data to identify key emergent themes and make assertions. Creswell (2014) describes coding as "the process of organizing data by bracketing chunks and writing a word representing a category in the margins" (p. 198). Specifically, the coding procedure adopted for this study was described by Tesch (1990) who stated that it is important to do the following:

1. Get a sense of the whole interview by reading transcripts very closely and writing preliminary thoughts in the margins.

2. Pick one of the interviews and ask questions that relate to the underlying connotations of the interview. It is important to write thoughts in the margin.

3. Go through all the interviews and assemble a list of topics that were gathered from all the interviews. Similar topics should be gathered and organized into columns with different headings.

4. Take the list of topics and go back through the interviews. The topics should be abbreviated and made into codes that will be used to label portions of the text. Tesch explains that this may lead to the emergence of new categories or themes.

5. Use descriptive words to tie congruent topics together and grouping them into major categories. When the categories are formed lines can be drawn to demonstrate the relationship between the different categories.

6. Construct abbreviations for each category and alphabetize them.

7. Go through interview transcripts and gather different sections of text that pertain to specific categories.

8. If necessary, recode data as the investigator performs the analysis (Creswell, 2014; Tesch, 1990, pp. 142-149).

Limitations

A major limitation in the qualitative portion of my study was my small sample size. While ten participants were an adequate number according to Creswell (2014), having a larger sample to pull data from may have provided more insights and themes that could have made my qualitative inquiry richer. Additionally, this study looked at the perspective of principals of schools and did not consider other viewpoints from different stakeholders within the district, like superintendents and teachers.

Threats to Validity

For the qualitative portion of this study, specifically the interviews, there was a lack of triangulation with different sources of data—since I was relying on interviews to obtain my data. One way I attempted to circumvent this threat to validity was to send my findings to my peer, a fellow doctoral student, and have them examine and review my major findings so they could make any comments about my interpretations and themes in my research. Furthermore, I presented my findings to a colleague that holds a PhD in Sociology to verify that my findings made sense and my interpretations were sound.

An additional threat to the validity of my study is confirmation bias. As a former leader of a diversity program, I have personal beliefs on how cultural competency should be implemented within an organization. When conducting interviews or interpreting data from schools, I was careful not to insert my voice by making biased suggestions or making assumptions about diversity discourses affecting different stakeholders within a district. Furthermore, I attempted to guard against being overenthusiastic or "blinded" to alternative views when I heard philosophies that aligned with my belief systems.

Conclusion

In this study, a phenomenological approach was chosen to understand the manner in which schools perceived and used cultural competency and culturally competent practices to affect the performance of vulnerable and traditionally underserved populations within their institution. This research is impactful because it fills a void in the literature pertaining to culturally competent practices at the high school level, especially in the state of Indiana.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This research study sought to understand Indiana high school principals' perceptions and practice of cultural competence within their schools. Chapter 4 includes data from interviews conducted with 10 Indiana high school principals. Interviews ranged from 30 – 75 minutes, were conducted over the phone and were recorded and transcribed using a professional transcription service. To analyze the data, a priori themes from the *Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency* articulated by Lindsey et al. (2009) were used to understand Indiana high school principals' perceptions and practice of cultural competence in their schools. These essential elements of cultural proficiency include assessing culture, valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, adapting to diversity and institutionalizing cultural knowledge. Interviews were also analyzed using 15 indicators of cultural competence that encompass all the essential elements of cultural proficiency. Open coding was used to identify emergent themes that resulted from the interviews.

Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency Revisited

To understand the *5 Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency*, this section will include a recapitulation of the essential elements, which include assessing culture, valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, adapting to diversity and institutionalizing cultural knowledge. As a reminder, the 10 principal interviews were analyzed using these five essential elements of cultural proficiency.

Assessing Culture

When a school culture is assessed, a leader recognizes the beliefs, values, behavioral norms, and customs within a school and how they affect diverse populations within the institution (Lindsey et al, 2009). Another component of assessing a school culture is not only being knowledgeable about the demographics within an institution, but also being aware of how different populations affect and influence each another (Lindsey et al, 2009). Assessing one's school culture is an inside out process that starts with recognizing one's culture and identifying potential barriers that may impact the experiences of different constituencies within an institution. Furthermore, Lindsey et al. contend that it is essential to make the values, beliefs, norms and customs of a school visible and clear so that those who don't share them will know how to acclimate to their environment. Valuing Diversity

Lindsey et al. (2009) explain that valuing diversity goes beyond tolerating diversity. Rather, valuing diversity involves accepting that diversity, appreciating the diverse perspectives and experiences they bring to the school environment, and "…creating programs, developing appropriate policies, and establishing standards for performance and learning (Lindsey et al., 2009, p.128). Additionally, valuing diversity involves channeling financial and human resources into making the curriculum, staff trainings and school programs more inclusive for all constituencies. Valuing diversity entails giving different stakeholders an opportunity to bring and showcase their cultural ways of being into the educational setting and thereby making them feel safe and accepted into the community.

Managing the Dynamics of Difference

According to Lindsey et. al (2009), conflicts that arise in schools may be a lack of cultural understanding between people with different beliefs, norms and customs. The authors explain that administrators, teachers and staff members are given the charge of mediating conflicts between students in their schools and in order to successfully do that, they need to gain the knowledge and learn the skills to effectively resolve conflicts. These conflict resolution skills are attained by recognizing that conflict is inevitable and providing resources to train different constituencies and have open discussions regarding how to manage the dynamics of difference.

Adapting to Diversity

Lindsey et al. (2009) contend that culturally competent schools retain the characteristics that allow the diverse populations to thrive at their school, "while also releasing habits and rituals that are no longer necessary or that are not productive…" (p. 129). When the demographics of a school change and individuals are invited to be part of the community, it is important to value and accept them into the community by shaping policies and practices that will transform the school and make them feel included rather than asking them to change and reflect the dominant culture.

An important part of adapting to diversity is having a good data culture and using that data to adapt to the diversity that exists within an institutions. Mandinach (2012) provides a solid framework, called the data driven decision-making framework, for using data to make decisions and inform practices within an institution. In this study, the manner in which schools use data will be analyzed using this framework. Mandinach states that data in its raw state (without

context) is meaningless. Light, Wexler & Heinze (2004) when referring to data state "[data] do[es] not have meaning in and of itself, and can exist in any form, usable or not" (p. 3). For example, a school may collect student performance scores on a high stakes test, like ISTEP. Data in this form and in itself, like raw scores or hard numbers, have no meaning. At this level, the data is organized in a particular way, maybe according to standard racial/ethnic identifiers. The skills needed at the data level, include the ability to collect data using a variety of technological tools and organizing it in a way to make sense of it (Mandinach, 2012). According to the framework provided by Mandinach, after data is collected, it has to be transformed into information.

Information is defined as processed data or data that has been put in a particular context in order to give it meaning. Furthermore, information gives insight into connections between the data and a particular context. For example, a school could collect scores on student performance on a high stakes test, like ISTEP, and organize the data according to standard racial and ethnic identifiers. At the information level, the school would analyze the data by looking at mean scores, trends and/or score distributions of each group. Furthermore, the information is summarized in some sort of report showing how students in each group performed on an assessment, like the ISTEP. At the information level, however, there is no plan for future action, just a dissemination of information (Mandinach, 2012). Additionally, at the information level, individuals or group entities must be able to analyze data and summarize it in an understandable way for a variety of stakeholders to consume (Mandinach, 2012).

Information is then transformed into knowledge. Knowledge is conceptualized as the "collection of information deemed useful, and eventually used to guide action" (Mandinach & Honey, 2008, p.20). For example, a school may compare the scores of the different racial and

ethnic groups and notice differences in mean scores overall for individual students or specific classrooms. In the knowledge realm, the school will have to prioritize what is most important and act on it. Through these actions, the school has acquired a base of knowledge that will drive their decisions and interventions. Moreover, at the knowledge level, individuals or group entities must be able to synthesize data and be able to prioritize what is important and use it to guide various interventions.

After gaining knowledge, a decision is made that will be implemented and whose impact will be assessed. To add to the example we have been using throughout this section, a school may decide to talk to different individuals within a district, institute a policy that facilitates frequent collection and analysis of data for a particular population of students, implement a mentorship program that will support a specific population of students, work with curriculum leaders to differentiate or individualize instruction for students, and then assess the outcomes of those decisions. It is important to note, however, that the proposed continuum is an iterative one where the impact of certain decisions may require the school to go back and repeat earlier steps in the decision making process (Mandinach, 2012). For example, schools may want to look more closely at disciplinary data, transportation data, parental engagement data etc. for a certain population to see whether there are any correlations between other variables and assessment scores.

Institutionalize Cultural Knowledge

Lindsey et al. (2009) advise schools that are looking to institutionalize cultural knowledge is to have ongoing conversations and professional development that will enable different stakeholders to have successful cross-cultural interactions. Additionally, teaching individuals about the origin of racism and sharing knowledge on how to overcome them.

Principal Interviews In the Context of the Five Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency

This section includes an analysis of all principal interviews (A – J) using a priori themes from the 5 essential elements of cultural proficiency, namely assessing culture, valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, adapting to diversity and institutionalizing cultural knowledge. Prior to looking at the interviews in the context of the themes related to the essential elements of cultural proficiency, demographic information for the schools over the past five years will be explained and examined. The interviews will be further analyzed and summarized using 15 indicators of cultural competence described by Lindsey et al (2009).

Prinicipal A

Principal A is a White male that has been in education for 17 years. He started his career as a Spanish teacher and soccer coach and was passionate about teaching different aspects of Hispanic culture and their experiences as immigrants. The schools where Principal A previously taught were mostly Caucasian, but he maintained a passion for teaching Spanish and Hispanic students. At his current school, he served as an assistant principal for one year and is now the principal.

Principal A's school is in Blue corporation, which is located in a rural region of northwest Indiana. For the 2018-2019 school year, Blue corporation's enrollment was less than 1000 students and over the past five years, the corporation has seen a 1% decline in their total enrollment. Despite this marginal decline in enrollment over the past five years, ethnic/racial enrollment trends show a 11.8% decline in the White population, a 0.4% increase in the Black population, a 1.1% decrease in the Multiracial population and a 12.6% increase in the Hispanic

population. Over the past four years, Blue corporation has improved from a C grade to a B grade according to state accountability measures (IDOE, 2018). Table 11 shows the demographic changes for Principal A's school over the past five years.

Table 11 *Demographic Changes for Principal A's School Over the Past Five Years*					
Year	% Hispanic	%Black	%White	Total Enrollment	School Grade
2013-2014	23.3%	N/A	73.5%	100-500	C
2018-2019	37.2%	0.8%	57.5%	100-500	B (2017-2018)
Source: IDOE					

Over the past 5 years, Principal A's school has seen some demographic changes despite not seeing a significant increase in their total enrollment. Specifically, the Hispanic population has increased by 13.9%, the Black population has increased by 0.8%, and the White population has declined by 16%, which is congruent with national demographic trends. Despite an increase in diversity over the past 5 years, Principal A's school has seen an overall improvement in their annual report card grade from a C to a B (Table 11). The following sections will include a discussion of the 5 essential elements of cultural competence as described by Principal A.

Assessing Culture

Principal A explained that at his school, most of the English Language (EL) students come from El Salvador and not Mexico, which, he says, the students are very particular about. Additionally, in his previous institutions, Principal A saw a self-imposed divide between kids that were born in the United States and those that came to the United States after they were born. They also separated themselves based on how well they spoke, read and wrote Spanish. These stratifications caused conflict between the students and this has made Principal A very sensitive

to dynamics within the Hispanic student populations. An essential aspect of assessing a school's culture is knowing how different cultures interact with one another, which Principal A is particularly sensitive to and demonstrated proficiency for in his previous schools.

According to Principal A, the mission and vision of his school is that every student can learn and every student is important. In order to create and maintain a school culture that lives up to the mission and vision of the school, Principal A is intentional about hiring teachers that are willing to invest in kids and those that love children. The more Principal A hires faculty and staff that are invested in the students, the more the students start to display the behavior that is being modeled for them. As a result, Principal A indicated that the culture of his school is counter to the one he had at his previous institutions. For example, at his current school if one student can't speak English because they have just come to the country, another student that has been around since their youth and can speak fluent English and Spanish will be seen helping the new student navigate their new environment, especially when it comes to translating what the teacher is saying in class.

When Principal A looks at his school's culture, he recognizes that their school places a high value on education. From what he has experienced, the Hispanic families in their school community don't place high value on education compared to the school or teachers. Principal A explained that the parents of his students don't place a high value on education because they did not graduate from high school and a lot of families have agricultural occupations where they need their kids to work in the fields and this, at times, results in them missing school.

Principal A highlighted the fact that they try not to group the kids and define them under one cultural banner. They recognize that each student has a unique cultural experience due to the fact that they may have lived in their native countries for differing amounts of time and are

trying navigate what it means to have their cultural background in a new context. As a result, it is important to look at each kid as an individual with unique beliefs and values. Principal A contends that even though it is important to look at each child as unique, it takes a lot of time and effort for teachers and staff to learn about each individual student and subsequently help them in the best possible way.

When defining cultural competence, Principal A describes it as the "understanding of your own beliefs and then being able to use that knowledge to discern the cultural differences of others".

Valuing Diversity

Principal A impresses on his staff to form positive relationships with students in order to learn about their cultures. Their school gives students the ability to form clubs, like the Latino Culture Club, where they discuss their culture with the school community. Teachers and staff are encouraged to research and learn about the cultures of the students they teach and share this information with each other. In classrooms, Principal A gave the example of students talking about the foods they eat in their cultures and making those foods for their classmates. In addition, mothers in the community make traditional foods and bring them into the school setting, even staff meetings. Principal A states: "…when you're bringing the food in…you are bringing that part of the culture. It opens the students up and opens people up to talk more about their culture…". The mothers also bring in traditional drinks to the community. When talking about the drinks, Principal A indicated "…they sell out of those so quickly and it's not just the kids from El Salvador that are buying them, it's all the kids at our school…knowing that a Caucasian kid is willing to eat and buy and help support the Latino Culture Club truly shows that students are in it to help each other".

Principal A's school has formed a partnership with their local community college and they do many activities with the Latino community in their town. Principal A fosters this partnership by allowing the Latino Culture Club students to miss school and participate in events that "showcase Latino culture in our community so that they can see outside the school where their culture has impacted [their] community".

The school hosts an English Learner (EL) night where the goals are to try and educate parents on the value of education, understand how to help them better, provide information on things the school doing to help their children and equip parents with tools on how to help their children. Principal A gave an example of guidance they would give a parent during one of their EL nights. He stated that if a parent goes to a math parent-teacher conference and the parent indicates "I don't know Geometry and I don't know Calculus; how can I help my kid?". At one of these EL nights, teachers will indicate to those parents that they can contribute by making sure their child has their notes out while they are doing homework, make sure that their child is looking at examples and most importantly, that their child is completing their work. Additionally, parents can email or call the teacher to check and see whether their child is being proactive and approaching the teacher when they need help.

In order to be better able to connect with families, especially those from diverse backgrounds within the corporation, Principal A's school has a food pantry exclusively for families in their corporation. Principal A explained that the food pantry is a great way to meet families and a large proportion of the families that attend the food pantry struggle with English. Since Principal A speaks Spanish, he is able to foster authentic relationships by translating for the families. Principal A and his staff make a point to help families carry out their groceries to

their vehicles and that also allows them to build relationships with different stakeholders in the community.

Principal A has seen the value of hiring staff that are from the community. For example, he highlighted that one of the staff members that interprets and translates for families that don't speak English well is from the community. Principal A explains:

"…she grew up here and every one of those parents that she calls knows her well because she lives in this community and her kids are going to school and so she has a very deep relationship where all those people, they all know her, they all like her, they all appreciate what she is doing and she really makes parents knowledgeable about events and also the classes, so I guess those are the ways that we really try and get into the lives of the parents and the families".

Principal A explained that he is intentional about applying for grants and channeling financial resources into making their support systems great for their students and families. Principal A stated that they put their money where their mouths are and channel finances into their EL and poverty population.

Managing the Dynamics of Difference

Principal A explains that for their school, an essential part of managing the dynamics of difference is having a strong mission and vision that the faculty and staff buy into and subsequently model for their students. Principal A stated "I really think our students have bought in because our staff bought in first in caring about each other". Principal A mentioned that there are some instances where discriminatory actions persist and to deal with those behaviors, they go straight to their handbook, which includes sections that speak directly to harassment and racism. Principal A highlighted the fact that more discriminatory actions have come from parents and

these parents model bad behavior for their children. Principal A gave the example of kids and parents that were in an argument with some Hispanic students during a football game. The parents and kids used racial slurs toward the Hispanic students and were immediately thrown out. While Principal A acknowledges that both parties (The Hispanic students and non-Hispanic students and parents) had some ownership in the disagreement, the non-Hispanic students and parents had "deep-rooted racism in them". In fact, the non-Hispanic parents continued to use those racial slurs in follow up conversations. Principal A's major point is that creating programs to educate and inform parents are just as important as programs for students. Educating parents and establishing partnerships with them can reinforce the mission and vision of the school.

Principal A did not speak to any particular resources he uses to train his staff on how to resolve conflicts. Although they don't have many discriminatory infractions amongst the students, it may be important for him to proactively train his staff on how to handle conflicts. One important aspect that Principal A does mention is having clear policies in place that address the school's stance on racism and discrimination.

Adapting to Diversity

With the growing Hispanic population at Principal A's school, they have adapted their practices to make sure Hispanic families have a voice and feel valued. For example, when parents call in, they have a full-time interpreter whose job is to make and take phone calls. If a teacher would like to make a phone call to a parent that does not speak English, they give all the information to the interpreter and they make the call. In addition, the interpreter translates every document that they send to parents in Spanish. During parent-teacher conferences, Principal A puts resources into hiring four interpreters, in addition to himself since he speaks Spanish, and they interpret for parents and teachers to ensure good and efficient communication. All signs,

such as "don't open the door for anybody" are in English and Spanish. In fact, teachers have posters and signs in English and Spanish in their classrooms.

Principal A also recognizes that a lot of parents/guardians within their community are transient due to their migrant worker status and don't have frequent access to Wi-Fi or email addresses. As a result, Principal A has instituted a requirement where each teacher makes at least three phone calls home every week and they also make contact with parents whose children have an F in their classes.

When talking about their data culture and how they use data to make decisions, Principal A states that they look at data from the WIDA test and use the information from that data to support their ELL population. Additionally, they look at the data for migrant families within their schools. Specifically, they look at academic data and do standards-based tests, especially in English and Math, to see whether students are at grade level in order to cater their learning to enable them to be successful on state mandated tests. For example, through professional development sessions they have taught their teachers to use Google Translate in order to communicate key vocabulary terms to their students. They have used other technological resources to provide closed captioning on videos for students to allow them to better understand and master content. Additionally, they have invested in other technology tools, like Achieve 3000, which allows teachers, like a science teacher for example, to assign a text or article and the program provides students with different levels of that same article without compromising the integrity of the article or the core content. Therefore, if a student is struggling with English, they can use the technology to help them understand and master the content contained within it. They also have technological tools called READ 180 and a system called System 44, which helps low English speakers work on reading and learning English.

In order to raise test scores, they use an 8-Step Process geared towards raising test scores in English. To implement the 8-Step Process their school has what is called success periods where ELL students go to a class twice a day that focuses on learning English. The rest of the time, the ELL students are in mainstream classes and have aids that go into those classes and help students that don't speak English well.

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge

Principal A mentioned that in order to get to know their Hispanic population well, they have done things like attend church services and other community events. In addition, their professional development is geared towards equipping their teachers with the knowledge and skills to have successful cross-cultural interactions with diverse stakeholders in their community. Another thing they do, which was mentioned before, is to invite parents into the school setting and allow them to share their culture. Their pursuit of technological tools to aid their students in becoming more proficient in English, while valuing their home language, speaks to Principal A's commitment to cultural competence. It is evident that they are a school that is not only willing to talk the talk, but walk the walk.

Analysis of Cultural Competence

   The section below contains an analysis of Principal A's interview in the context of the 15

indicators of cultural competence.

Figure 4. Analysis of Principal A Interview
(Source of figure: Lindsey et al. (2009))

Indicator of Cultural Competence	Observed in the Interview	Essential Element of Cultural Competence
1. Recognizes how their culture affects others	YES	
2. Able to describe their culture and cultural norms of their organization	YES	**Assess Culture**
3. Understands how the culture of their organization affects those with different cultures	YES	
4. Celebrates and encourages the presence of a variety of people in all activities	YES	
5. Recognizes differences as diversity rather than inappropriate responses to the environment	YES	**Value Diversity**
6. Accepts that each culture finds some values and behaviors more important than others	YES	

Figure 4 continued

7. Learn effective strategies for resolving conflict, particularly among people whose cultural backgrounds and values differ	NO	
8. Understand the effect that historic distrust has on present-day interactions	NO	**Managing the Dynamics of Difference**
9.		
10. Realize that they may misjudge others' actions based on learned expectations	YES	
11. Change the way things are done to acknowledge the differences that are present in the staff, clients and community.	YES	
12. Develop skills for intercultural communication.	YES	**Adapting to Diversity**
13. Institutionalize cultural interventions for conflicts and confusion caused by the dynamics of difference	YES	

Figure 4 continued

14. Incorporate cultural knowledge into the mainstream of the organization	YES	
15. Teach the origins of stereotypes and prejudices	**NO**	**Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge**
16. For staff development and education, integrate into your systems information and skills that enable all to interact effectively in a variety of intercultural situations	YES	

In the interview with Principal A, he successfully showcased 12 of the 15 indicators of cultural competence. The areas that their school can improve on is in managing the dynamics of difference by intentionally teaching his staff how to resolve conflicts that may arise at their school, whether it's between students or the parent body, and instructing his staff on unconscious biases or stereotypes they may harbor against different demographics of students.

Principal B

Principal B is a White male that has been in education for about 30 years. After graduating from college, he taught for four years at the high school level and became an Athletic Director at that same institution for four more years. He became an Assistant Principal at the middle school level for four years and then became an elementary school principal for two years. Principal B went into central office and did a variety of jobs and ended up as Assistant Superintendent in charge of Secondary Education. After some time, he was asked to take over as

the high school principal at his current school and within the same corporation where he served in the central office.

Principal B's school is in Green corporation, which is located in an urban region of northern Indiana. For the 2018-2019 school year, Green corporation's enrollment was between 6500 and 7000 students. Over the past five years, the corporation has seen a 1.3% increase in their total enrollment. From the 2013/2014 school year to the 2018/2019 one, ethnic/racial enrollment trends show a 6.3% decline in the White population, a 0.1% decline in the Black population, a 0.6% increase in the Multiracial population and a 5.7% increase in the Hispanic population. Over the past four years, Green corporation has maintained a B grade on state accountability measures (IDOE, 2018). Table 12 shows the demographic changes for Principal B's school over the past five years.

Table 12 *Demographic Changes for Principal B's School Over the Past Five Years*

Year	% Hispanic	%Black	%White	Total Enrollment	School Grade
2013-2014	45.7%	2%	48.9%	1000-2000	B
2018-2019	53.4%	1.7%	39.7%	1000-2000	B (2017-2018)

Source: IDOE

Over the past five years, their Principal B's school has seen some demographic changes; their Hispanic population has increased by 7.7% and the Black and White population has decreased by 0.3% and 8.2%, respectively. In the past five years, the school has also seen a gradual increase in enrollment, but has maintained their B school grade (Table 12).

Assessing Culture

When describing his school's culture, Principal B explained that they believe that they are a "School of One". They believe that "each kid matters" and every child should have "a caring adult that really plays a role in their education and in their lives". To facilitate a structure that ensures no student falls through the cracks, students have a 90-minute period every other day where they meet with a teacher to go over their grades, discuss their socio-emotional health, apply for college and make sure they have a plan for making up work or getting the support they need to work through their issues. Additionally, if a child misses school for a time, they go to what is called a resource room and they are retaught the material that they missed. Principal B stated that if I were to ask teachers in his building about their school culture, they would tell me that it is "really, really kid centered and it's all about making relationships with kids". In their school, they think of their students as growing adults that should be treated with respect, which exemplifies the high value they place on relationships because respect grows from knowing each child well.

When discussing their interactions with students from other cultures, Principal B mentioned that they are invested in learning the cultures of their students and at the same time recognize that students are learning their school's culture and that of greater American society. However, when thinking about the Hispanic population within their school, which makes up just over 53% of their population, Principal B explains that the majority of their kids and families are functionally bilingual because they have been in the United States for an extended period of time. While language barriers are becoming less of an issue when it comes to the success of diverse populations within their school, poverty and socio-economic level is more predictive of how the students do academically. In spite of this fact, language and culture continue to be a

factor in a child's success at their school. For example, Principal B explained that if a child struggles with English and is being taught hard concepts in Chemistry where instruction is in English, the most important thing for that child is not to spend time trying to synthesize their knowledge in English and add the complexity of language to the equation, but rather, it is important for the child to focus on the concept and process it in whatever language comes to them the easiest. In this example, Principal B exemplifies an important aspect of assessing culture, which is knowing and understanding how different expectations or aspects of a school culture can affect an individual from a different culture. In fact, when Principal B was asked to define cultural competence, he explained that fundamentally, it is important to keep an open mind by recognizing that children and adults come from different cultures and understand that they might see the world differently. Another key point he raised is the importance of comprehending how "we reflect our culture on them", which the example above, involving the Chemistry class, highlights.

Principal B emphasized the importance of hiring individuals that are able to perpetuate the culture you want to see within an institution. Principal B tries to hire individuals that will love the kids, get them to graduate and teach them appropriately. Principal B emphatically stated: "if you are nasty to kids or you can't figure out that a kid who comes from different culture is still just a kid, and you can't figure that out, then you really don't need to work here". He goes on to say "you can teach in an all-white district if you want to…in our setting you need to value diversity, you need to value different demographic groups that we deal with…". Principal B clearly showcases that his school's culture is one that values diversity and this is reflected in his hiring practices.

When describing the neighboring school districts to the north and south of his corporation, Principal B indicated that they are almost all white. Since Principal B has been part of his corporation for 25 years, he mentioned that in the late 90s and 2000s as the district was becoming more diverse, there was a lot of white flight to the neighboring corporations. Recently, they have not seen much white flight even though the neighboring corporations have maintained a predominately White population. Principal B explained: "occasionally we will lose a family to those [corporations] because they don't want their kids to be around those other kinds of kids". Principal B is not bothered by this because he believes that his school is more reflective of the world we live in and the skills they try and impress on their students will make them productive global citizens. He stated that "going to an all-white school is not very reflective of the world", which demonstrates that Principal B sees diversity as an asset and does not have a deficit view of diversity, especially cultural diversity. In spite of their diversity compared to the neighboring school corporations, Principal B stated "our graduation rate is similar to theirs…we have better International Baccalaureate test scores than one of those schools that is north of us".

Principal B is clearly thoughtful about his schools' culture and recognizes how its values, norms and customs impact different populations within his building.

Valuing Diversity

To stick with the theme of hiring practices that was discussed earlier, Principal B emphasized that he wants to hire individuals that value diversity and those that are willing to invest in relationships with the students. An important aspect of valuing diversity according to Lindsey et al (2009) is to "celebrate and encourage the presence of a variety of people in all activities" (p. 126). As part of his goal for hiring, Principal B wants to attract individuals that

reflect the demographics of students in their school, which captures the essence of encouraging the presence of a variety of people within an institution.

In order to allow students to showcase their cultures and have opportunities for self-expression, the school puts on a multicultural youth and talent show. He tries to affirm the identity of students from different cultures by giving them the opportunity to go to Chicago to be part of cultural activities that are happening in the city. Additionally, they have formed a partnership with their local college and allow the students to interact with college students from different ethnic cultures. At school functions, like dances, the school invites a Mariachi band to play and entertain the students, which demonstrates their commitment to showcasing different cultures. Furthermore, parents are encouraged to come in and talk to classes about their cultures and experiences.

From a curricular standpoint, their music department is intentional and conscious about choosing musical selections from the cultures of students they serve. Since their school is a big Fine Arts school, they encourage their students to make art that reflect their cultures and the school does a good job of showcasing the student's work throughout the building. Principal B stated that since a lot of their kids are from Central America, they display fabrics from Central America and even depictions of life in Central America. Since their school is an International Baccalaureate school, their curriculum incorporates global perspectives and trains their students to be open minded and accepting of other points of view. As mentioned before, when working with children that don't speak English well, Principal B stated "we actually encourage them to not speak English if they are dealing with really, really difficult material. We want then to make meaning in Spanish…if they are worried about trying to translate the language, they can't grasp the material".

Principal B talked very fondly of their soccer program stating that they have a very multicultural team that is well supported by the community. He stated: "it is not uncommon for them to draw 300 or 400 people a night to a game". When describing the students' attitudes towards the soccer team Principal B made the following statement: "they are just a kid who goes to my school". While this may be a good thing in many different contexts, Lindsey et al. (2009) would caution this statement because of the potential colorblindness that it implies. Lindsey et al. state "cultural blindness is the belief that color and culture make no difference and that all people are the same" (p. 117). While the previous statement does not reflect the general attitude and perspective of Principal B, it is important to recognize that individual differences of students are important. In fact, Principal B stated during the interview that "there is a huge difference between our kids from Mexico and our kids from Guatemala…Honduras, but the language is similar". The previous statement suggests the beliefs and values that Principal B exemplifies.

Lindsey et al (2009) contend that part of valuing diversity is "accept[ing] that each culture finds some values and behaviors more important than others" (p.126). Principal B explained that their Hispanic students have a huge issue with tardiness to school. Principal B understands the behavior because he states that Hispanic culture places a high value on relationships. For example, Principal B explained that if Hispanic students know that a class starts at 8:30am and they are having coffee with their friends, they may only leave their conversation at around 8:40am to get to class. Since Principal B and a lot of his staff have been raised and educated in the American system, they value and expect timeliness. As a result, Principal B states that part of being a culturally competent school is recognizing that Hispanic students and parents may value relationships more than being on time and he and his staff have to be knowledgeable about their own culture and be open minded to other people's ways of

being. As Principal B reflected on this example, he explained that he and his teachers have to be cautious about characterizing these tardy Hispanic students as problems, unintelligent, disrespectful, but rather realize that their cultural values may be different. As a result, knowing and understanding cultural values (both American and non-American value systems) can allow for effective problem solving. Another example Principal B pointed out was how Hispanic students often call their teachers "Mr." or "Mrs." rather than saying the title (Mr. or Mrs.) and the last name. Principal B points out that in the Hispanic culture the previously described way of addressing an adult is polite, but in American culture that may be perceived as rude. Valuing diversity in this context is about continually having a mutual understanding of diverse cultures and working from a place of understanding to reach common goals.

Another good example of how Principal B values diversity is their intentionality around hiring a bilingual staff. He mentioned that they have a bilingual college coach that works with White and Latino students on their college applications and generally equips them with tools that will prepare them for college. They have a Parent Liaison on staff that serves as an intermediary to communicate anything related to discipline, academics and socio-emotional health. For example, if a child skips school and communication needs to go to a family that does not speak good English, the Parent Liaison will make the call and communicate with the parents. Additionally, the Guidance Counselor, Director of ELL and Registrar are bilingual and this allows for effective communication with families. During parent-teacher conferences, the first table that parents see when they walk in is an interpretation table where they can take an adult that is bilingual to different classrooms and talk to teachers about their child's progress. Principal B emphasized that "when people know that you respect them enough to go out of your way to make meetings meaningful and to respect them as parents, respect them as kids, that means a

lot". Through their actions Principal B's building thoughtfully and respectfully show parents and kids that they care and value them.

Managing the Dynamics of Difference

Principal B stated that managing the dynamics of difference starts with relationships. If a discriminatory action occurs, Principal B is serious about addressing it immediately. For example, Principal B explained that if a kid wears a confederate flag belt buckle or a confederate flag shirt, the first thing he does is call the child into his office and he feels comfortable doing that because he or his Assistant Principals have likely fostered a relationship with that child. Principal B's approach to speaking with that kid is to affirm them and educate them as to why their behavior may be problematic. He would say something like "you have every right to wear that…but when you wear that, there is a big chunk of our community, our staff and our kids who are offended by that…you don't have to be offended by it, but it offends other people…please don't wear it again or if you do, cover it up". Principal B explains that he has found this method to be very effective with the students in his building. Sometimes, however, a student does not comply and they continue to remind the child of their behavior and the "why" behind their reasoning. If a child continues to ignore their requests, it becomes an issue of disrespect to the administration and adults in the building who have had conversations with a child. They then call the child's parents and ask for their partnership. The last resort will be to remove that child from the general school environment and place them in an alternative setting. When speaking about discrimination, Principal B highlighted "we just literally don't let it happen…if we become aware of it, we just don't tolerate it". Interestingly, Principal B explained that most of their conflicts are same race conflicts over relationships or misunderstandings about personal space and property.

Another way that Principal B tries manage the dynamics of difference is to build empathy within their kids. Their school has a program called Unified Sports, which is like the Special Olympics. What happens in this program is they pair up special education students with general education students and they compete in sports together. They teach the students that it is not appropriate to disrespect or make fun of their special needs teammates, much like it is not okay for Hispanic kids to make fun of and use derogatory terms towards White kids and vice versa. As a result, proximity to individuals that are different and building structures for relationship allows empathy to develop, which then discourages inappropriate behavior. Principal B summarized his approach well when he stated "we talk to kids, discipline them, and most importantly, we try to educate them. That's our job. Our job is not to punish them, but to tell them why it's not okay".

Adapting to Diversity

An important aspect of adapting to diversity is revising the way things are done in order to acknowledge the diversity that exists within a school. Principal B explained that only 3% of his staff are teachers dedicated to ELL classes. Rather, they invest resources into hiring collaborators that are fluent in Spanish and whose job it is to go into classrooms and work with students whose first language is something other than English. It is important to Principal B that ELL students are not secluded, but exist as part of the general population in mainstream classes. As a result, the goal is not to isolate students who don't speak English well, but make sure they feel part of the school community, which goes back to their mission of being a "school of one".

Principal B described a program called the Parent Transition Night where they have eighth grade students and parents in the corporation visit the high school. During that evening, they have a Parent Liaison translating for parents that don't speak English well. The Parent Liaison speaks into a mouthpiece and parents have an ear piece and receive the audio of the

translation. This occurs for most parent meetings. This thoughtful act shows their school's commitment to parents and allows the school to foster positive relationships with them.

As far as their data culture is concerned, Principal B's school collects data that provides information pertaining to the EL proficiency of each child that has a language other than English spoken in their home. The data provides information and knowledge as to whether a child needs direct EL support, meaning they are in an EL classroom specifically to learn English or whether they get placed in general classrooms with collaborators. The EL teachers meet with ELL students to discuss their grades and provide them with resources. They also look at data from language acquisition tests to determine whether a child may need accommodations for standardized testing. Principal B gave the example of one of his former students that is now a teacher. His former student took his teaching licensure test seven or eight times before he passed. The issue was that his former student's spoken English was great, but his reading, analytical and processing skills (pertaining to English) were not great and it took him a long time to get through the test. After he applied for accommodations where he received an extra hour, he passed the test right away. While the data culture at Principal B school is sound, he did not explain a system where they evaluate whether their programs are effective in reaching students, which is an essential part of data-driven decision making.

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge

In an effort to better reflect on their practices and learn about other cultures, they invite individuals that have matriculated from their schools to give feedback as to the good and bad aspects of their program, especially relating to cultural competence. They provide their staff professional development on modifying lessons for different types of students and use feedback from diverse students to guide aspects of their trainings. Additionally, they provide guidance on

the cultural values of students that attend their school and continually reflect on their own cultures and how they could project their cultural expectations on their kids.

Another thing they do is have good vertical alignment with regard to how they communicate with parents in elementary and middle school. For example, parents know that counselors and teachers will reach out to them, and every school in the corporation has a Parent Liaison. These institutional structures are effective for parent's knowledge and knowing what to expect as they move from institution to instruction.

Analysis of Cultural Competence

The section below contains an analysis of Principal B's interview in the context of the 15 indicators of cultural competence.

Figure 5. Analysis of Principal B Interview
(Source of figure: Lindsey et al. (2009))

Indicator of Cultural Competence	Observed in the Interview	Essential Element of Cultural Competence
1. Recognizes how their culture affects others	YES	
2. Able to describe their culture and cultural norms of their organization	YES	**Assess Culture**
3. Understands how the culture of their organization affects those with different cultures	YES	
4. Celebrates and encourages the presence of a variety of people in all activities	YES	
5. Recognizes differences as diversity rather than inappropriate responses to the environment	YES	**Value Diversity**
6. Accepts that each culture finds some values and behaviors more important than others	YES	

Figure 5 continued

7. Learn effective strategies for resolving conflict, particularly among people whose cultural backgrounds and values differ	YES	**Managing the Dynamics of Difference**
8. Understand the effect that historic distrust has on present-day interactions	**NO**	
9. Realize that you may misjudge others' actions based on learned expectations	YES	
10. Change the way things are done to acknowledge the differences that are present in the staff, clients and community.	YES	**Adapting to Diversity**
11. Develop skills for intercultural communication	YES	
12. Institutionalize cultural interventions for conflicts and confusion caused by the dynamics of difference	YES	
13. Incorporate cultural knowledge into the mainstream of the organization	YES	**Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge**
14. Teach the origins of stereotypes and prejudices	**NO**	
15. For staff development and education, integrate into your systems information and skills that enable all to interact effectively in a variety of intercultural situations	YES	

During the interview, Principal B showcased 13 of the 15 indicators of cultural competence. The areas that may need growth or attention are ones that are involved with managing the dynamics of difference and also institutionalizing cultural knowledge. It is important for faculty and staff to understand the origins of stereotypes and bias and make it a basic part of their training. This is important for them because it will provide them with context and a foundation when interacting with individuals of different cultures.

Principal C

Principal C is a White male that has been in education for 16 years and is completing his 3rd year in his current building. He began his career as a social studies teacher and then served as a high school Athletic Director for nine years. Prior to being principal at his current institution, he was a high school Associate Principal for two years. Principal C explained that he has been in mostly urban school settings and has been part of schools with a significant free and reduced lunch population (low socioeconomic status).

Principal C's school is in Orange corporation, which is located in an urban region of east central Indiana. For the 2018-2019 school year, Orange corporation's enrollment was between 5000 and 5500 students and over the past five years, the corporation has seen a 20% decline in their total enrollment. In this same time period (5 years), ethnic/racial enrollment trends show a 6.1% decline in the White population, a 2.1% increase in the Black population, a 2.1% increase in the Multiracial population and a 1.9% increase in the Hispanic population. It may be important to note that the Asian and American Indian populations have remained constant whereas the Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander population has increased by 0.1%. The corporation grade over the past four years has decreased from a C to a D (IDOE, 2018). Table 13 shows the demographic changes for Principal C's school over the past five years.

Table 13 Demographic Changes for Principal C's School Over the Past Five Years					
Year	% Hispanic	%Black	%White	Total Enrollment	School Grade
2013-2014	2.8%	24.1%	61.2%	<1000	B
2018-2019	5.6%	24.4%	59.1%	1000-2000	C (2017-2018)
Source: IDOE					

As Table 13 shows, Principal C's school has seen small changes in their demographics over the past five years. Specifically, the Hispanic population has increased by 2.8%, the Black population has decreased by 0.3% and the White population has decreased by 2.1%. The significant change has been an increase in enrollment by just over 400 students. Principal C explained that his passion is to work in schools with a high population of traditionally underserved students where he can feel and see the impact of his work. By impact he means working with families that are troubled or have issues and working with them to see success and also allow their kids to meet their academic goals.

Assessing Culture

When describing his school, Principal C stated that they have a lot of diversity both racially and ethnically, but also from a socio-economic standpoint. For example, they have students whose parents are doctors, lawyers and college professors going to school with students that are very poor. A lot of the time, these students from poor families experience barriers beyond their control that don't allow them to be successful academically whereas the more affluent families have resources that can help their kids thrive.

Principal C explained that the culture of his school is centered on caring for and loving their students. Another key element of the culture is recognizing that students enter their building with baggage and behaviors that teachers experience may not necessarily be non-compliance or

rebellion, but may have a deeper root. As a result, the administration tries to model the expected behavior for faculty and staff to guide them on how to treat the students. Principal C believes that a good indicator of a healthy culture and climate is retention; he proudly stated that in his time at his school, he has retained all his building administrators and following a period of high turnover with the staff when he first arrived, turnover has been minimal over the past couple of years.

As an administrative team, they have a strong attendance record at extracurricular activities because they have the goal of supporting their families and students outside of the school setting. In the school setting, they place high value on teachers interacting with students in the hallways during passing periods and also in class. In essence, they place high value on relationships. The teachers and staff really care about their students and want them to be successful in meeting their goals.

Principal C highlighted that they "are not running a prison, but running a school". This means that they are not militaristic when it comes to teaching and interacting with their kids. Principal C recognizes that holding kids accountable is part of having a strong culture, but it is important to recognize that there may be something in the kids' background or things they are experiencing that could hinder them from fulfilling the requirements teachers have for them. As a result, a key word that Principal C used in describing their culture was flexibility. Principal C contends that flexibility can be achieved when there is a level of trust between the administration and teachers; if teachers and staff feel supported, feel good about where they work, and understand a clear vision, flexibility can be achieved.

An important aspect of their culture that Principal C highlighted was one that was "staff friendly". Their administrative team works hard to ensure that their "best resource", which are

teachers, are not bogged down with menial and unnecessary tasks, but can focus on teaching and learning. This is one way in which trust develops and a culture of flexibility is earned.

When Principal C talks about flexibility, he gave the following example. For some kids, attendance is a problem. Academically, however, these kids are mastering their expected standards. From Principal C's perspective, flexibility for these students can be justified. The school has an online platform where students can complete their work online and don't necessarily have to be in the physical classroom. Therefore, attendance is not the focus, but a child's learning and their mastery of school and state standards. At times, the grades students earn reflect their level of participation in class rather than what they know, which, from Principal C's perspective, should not be the focus. This shift in philosophy has been difficult for many of the veteran teachers. The veteran teachers at the school want students in the seats of their classes and want to impart their knowledge to the students. Principal C's perspective is that this approach does not necessarily reach all students and flexibility allows for more students to be reached. Principal C values his veteran teachers and explained that they are not overtly opposed to this idea of flexibility. However, their body language and general demeanor can sometimes explain their attitudes towards the culture of flexibility. Principal can see their perspectives when he says "they've seen a lot of things over the course of their careers…they've seen a lot of things come and go-the programs, initiatives…" and this may feed into their skepticism.

Principal C is clear that they set high expectations for their students and they believe all students can achieve those high expectations. They also recognize that their school cannot be so rigid and put all the work on the students- it has to be a partnership. An important aspect of a partnership is making sure the school understands family dynamics and supports families on their educational journeys. As a result, Principal C and his staff work hard to assess what a

family's situation is when they arrive at the school. For example, they look at what a family's value of education is and what barriers exist that could potentially hinder a child's success. Taking time to find out why a student may not be able to go to school, uncover medical issues present in the home, looking into whether a child is working to support their family, or if a child is looking after siblings because their parent is working long hours goes a long way in shaping how families and children feel about the school. Sometimes families feel a level of intimidation when they walk into the school building. This intimidation may stem from bad experiences they may have had in the past, maybe when they were in school, or they may feel like their level of education is not high enough and they may be looked down on. Principal C has tried very hard to counteract these emotions in families. One way they do this is using Positive Referrals where administrators take time to make phone calls to parents or legal guardians when their child does good things. Principal C stated that "families have started to realize that we will meet the wherever they are, and as long as they are willing to put forth the effort we are asking for, we will make sure that some of our non-traditional ways of educating them are opportunities for them…".

For a lot of the students, especially those high poverty areas, the value of education is not modeled for them, especially in their home lives. It is difficult to motivate students whose families don't value education because they are not exposed to the end result or the benefits of what hard work can accomplish. Principal C and his staff work hard to make students aware and make sure they understand "what the end game is". Principal C stated: "our goal is to graduate as many students as possible. Our community does not benefit from students who don't have a high school diploma". Rather than trying to force feed college down the throats of students within their school, they focus on giving them tools and skills to graduate from high school and expose

them to options they can pursue, like going into a specific career field, a two-year college or a

four-year college. Principal C's school is an early college high school that is fully endorsed by

the state. This means they offer dual credit options to their students by partnering with their local

community college. Last year, 30 students walked across their stage earning both a high school

diploma and an Associate's degree.

Principal C did a good job explaining different aspects of his school culture. He was

particularly sensitive to how different stakeholders affected one another and has put some

systems in place to make sure families, staff and students feel supported. When talking about his

school, he knows that their performance on standardized test scores needs to improve, especially

given their C score on their Indiana report card, and the buy in to the culture from veteran

teachers is also needed.

Valuing Diversity

Principal C mentioned that it is important for his teachers and staff to realize that they

bring some level of implicit bias when interacting with students of different backgrounds. In

other words, there are cultural incompatibilities and a level of cultural dissonance that cause

individuals to subconsciously make value judgements about a different culture's behavior

compared to one they are familiar with. In order to effectively address and deal with the implicit

biases, there has to be an acknowledgement that they exist and an openness to confronting them.

Principal C gave the example of Eurocentric cultures that place high stock in a firm handshake

and looking somebody in the eye as a symbol of respect. However, in some cultures, not looking

at somebody in the eye is a sign of respect. If we judge the action at face value through our

biased cultural lens, we will perceive the student and the actions as problematic rather than

different. Principal C states that when you are raised in a certain culture, especially a Eurocentric

one, and that is the only culture you are exposed to or the only culture that has been modeled for you, when someone goes into an urban school setting with multiple cultures, ethnicities, races and background, it is essential to not assume that students walking into the building need to adapt to your culture. Being open to and aware of cultural differences may make teachers more sensitive to children's backgrounds and may start to realize culturally competent practices that motivate diverse students. In fact, Principal C contends that educators must be willing to adapt to the cultures of students they educate.

To exemplify ways in which educators can adapt to the cultures of their students, Principal C told a story. There was a family who recently moved from to their school from Nicaragua via Costa Rica because of political unrest in their country. The father of the family had recently started a doctoral program at the local university and the family had arrived in the city with very little. After an initial screening, the counselors and teachers worked with the family to determine that the family's daughter was to be placed in the eighth grade. After a few weeks, the father met with Principal C and indicated that the school may have placed the girl in the wrong grade because she had seen and mastered most of the material she was learning. It could have been easy for the central office administrators to say that in America a certain age equates to a certain grade. Their approach was to re-evaluate the girl and she ended up being moved to the ninth grade. In American educational culture, a grade someone is in is determined in large part by their age. However, in other countries and cultures this may not be the case. Principal C went on to say "we can't be so rigid to say that you're going to have to adapt to us. Let us work together to do what's best for the student".

In order to effectively value diversity, Principal C highlighted the importance of communication. At Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, the staff is often educated

on the value systems of different cultures and the school makes it a high priority for teachers to attend those meetings. Specifically, when they have IEP case conferences they find coverage for teachers so they can participate in the conferences. When teachers sit in those meetings, their eyes are opened to the realization that they don't know everything a student is going through when they walk through the doors of their classroom. As an administrative team, their school tries very hard to communicate with teachers about things their students may be going through personally, whether it is medical or family-related issues. Principal C stated that there are weekly emails exchanged with staff members giving them information about their students' circumstances and very often the teacher had no idea a child was having that particular experience. Principal C believes that having open lines of communication "changes their compassion level" for a child. In fact, he mentions that "it changes their flexibility and it changes their motivation level to try and see if they truly can't get that student to be successful". This reiterates the stance that when an educator gains the full perspective of what may be going on with a child, they can't be too rigid and inflexible with their expectations because circumstances that are sometimes beyond a child's control influence their motivation and ability to be successful.

Principal C's school has a great relationship with juvenile justice system in their community. They work very closely with the juvenile magistrate and juvenile probation officers. When students make poor choices outside of the building, they share information with the county and city law enforcement to work with those kids to make sure they still have access to a quality education. According to Principal C, valuing diversity may mean that you meet a child not halfway, but three quarters of the way because they have to see that you believe in them, trust

them, and love them. By doing the previously mentioned things, the success of the child will certainly increase.

In order to showcase the cultures of the school, they have an organization that is open to any student, especially those from different cultures. This organization puts on events, especially for major celebratory occasions, like Black History Month, or national holidays. Principal C recognizes that this is an area that they can do better in—that is, showcasing different cultures within their school. They have a group for students that may identify as LGBTQ. This group often has conversations with the school administration on how to make the climate and environment at their school more open, aware and accepting. To facilitate being an open and caring environment the school has signs posted that read "This is a safe place. We want you to feel safe here". Principal C emphasized that this proposed safety is not from a security standpoint, but a cultural standpoint. Principal C proudly highlighted that he is very pleased with the way his teachers and staff are willing to give students a voice in different clubs and activities and the administration is willing to give those kids a platform to spread their message of inclusion throughout the building.

Principal C described a program they have at their school where they open up their cafeteria to different community groups that want to come in and interact with their students. During the 30-minute lunch period, organizations educate students on their programs by walking around the cafeteria and engaging the kids. On average, about 12 – 13 different community organizations attend this program. For example, representatives come from the local library, the local university and community college, health organizations and socio-emotional support organizations to alert the kids of different services they provide throughout the city. Some organizations provide resources that students can use in the event they are having home issues,

personal challenges or would just like to meet with a mentor or friendly individual every few months. Principal C remarked that this particular format is successful because it is non-disruptive and the students see that these community organizations want to build positive relationships with them and interact with them outside of the classroom environment. Principal C makes a point of thanking each community organization individually and he reported that these organizations leave with a positive impression of their school and the education the students are receiving.

When Principal C's school puts on programs for parents, they make sure to check with other schools within their corporation and also have conversations with stakeholders in the community to make sure they are avoiding big community events. For example, holding events on Wednesday evenings is tough because a lot of individuals in their community attend church services on Wednesdays. As a result, they either schedule events for another day or schedule it early enough that individuals can still make it to church.

One event that was recently held by the school was a Parent Transition night where they invited parents and students from the two middle schools in their corporation. When they scheduled the event, they didn't just put it on the calendar, but sought input from the community before scheduling it. On this night, students and parents can make schedule requests for the following year and talk to them about graduation requirements. They also discuss earning credits and classes that are available to the students. Teachers are present and put up displays around the student center and students were able to walk and observe the displays to get a taste of the curriculum of the different classes.

It is evident that Principal C welcomes the diversity within his institution and creates opportunities for them to be inclusive. He is intentional about involving different and diverse

stakeholders in the planning and decision making of the institution and puts systems in place to give them a voice.

Managing the Dynamics of Difference

Principal C recognizes that conflict is part of any organization and emphasizes to students that if they see something discriminatory, they should say something. Principal C is of the mindset that students are "the best police of bullying…for one another". Students at the school have really bought into that culture and do a good job of carrying it out. When Principal C started at his school, the students that got discriminated against were those students with IEPs in mainstream classrooms because their learning differences and disabilities did not allow them to learn at the same level as everyone. The thing that Principal C speaks proudly of is the fact that although discrimination still exists, students in the general population are protective of those students that are in self-contained classrooms because they are non-verbal or have disabilities. Principal C pointed out that the population where he sees the most conflict is between African American females. He states that social media has added complexity to the relationships students have with each other because it is very easy to be mean and nasty when you can hide behind a screen and don't necessarily have to confront a person face to face, which could tamper a person's reaction. When individuals that are in conflict see each other at school they decide to handle the conflict in person, which leads to major conflicts because the person is not only responding to what was said, but also reacting to everyone's comments pertaining to what was said. In many families, especially those in low socioeconomic status situations, what Principal C has found is that the conflict that has been modeled for them is cussing, screaming, and physical confrontations. The question Principal C is always asking himself is: how do we handle the

situation from a culturally sensitive position and what resources do we have to try solve the conflict?

When strategizing ways to handle conflicts, Principal C avoids making general statements to his teachers that sound like "we need to do a better job with this". Rather, he handles conflicts on a case by case basis and reaches out to the community to find resources that will equip them to be able to resolve conflicts that arise. For example, in order to gain advice on how to resolve conflicts between African American females, Principal C has proposed bringing in African American leaders and parishioners from local churches to advise them on how to best reach the African American females.

Principal C's school has developed an alternative program to suspension and expulsion. The goal of the program is to remove students from the distractions and drama they encounter in the traditional school setting. In this program, the day runs from 8-11am or 12-3pm and students are contained in a classroom that has its own outside entrance and exit. There is a licensed teacher in the classroom that works with the students on earning their credits using an online platform. When a student is referred to the program, the parents are not told that it is being used as a punishment or a consequence to their behaviors, rather the conversation is framed in a way that highlights an alternative response to a pattern of behavior that is resulting in the child being unsuccessful in the regular school setting. Another aspect of the alternative to suspension and expulsion is a mentoring program. The school partners with students from the local university and they come in and help tutor the students academically, but also try and work through any problems they are experiencing. The director of the alternative program is good about keeping the mentors in the loop and working with the appropriate resources to find the root cause of issues students are experiencing. Finding the appropriate resources for a child involves having

frank and honest conversations with families and being aware of the cultural components, like privacy, that may be at play when talking with these families. The goal of the interventions is to make sure that the child is equipped with the knowledge and skills to transition effectively into the traditional school setting. When students transition back to the general population, they start back with a blended schedule that consists of them participating for part of the day in the alternative program and the other part in the traditional school setting. Often times, students and families see a lot of success in the alternative program that they resist transitioning back into the traditional school setting. As a result, the school works with the students and the families by instituting a blended schedule. Moreover, the student is given the opportunity to continue the programs that they had in the alternative program. In the three years that the school has done this program, they have received overwhelming support from the parent community because often times, a student's behavior at school is often replicated at home. In fact, the typical response from a parent whose child has been referred to the alternative program is "thank you, I'm just so happy you have not kicked them out of school. I am happy you are not expelling him. Thank you for giving them a chance by trying to find an environment that will work for them". The alternative program is solutions minded. When trying to correct behavior, Principal C stated that they "try to have a menu of options for [their] parents".

At the end of the day Principal C does not believe that students get up every day "with the intent to come into school and be as bad as they possibly can be". Rather, the school is trying to bring out their best every single day. If parents can see that they are valued and the school is committed to partnering with them, rather than handing out punishment and telling them what to do, the buy in from families will be much stronger. At the end of the day, the goal is for a child

to be connected with resources that will help them deal with the root cause of a situation and make sure the behavior does not repeat itself.

Adapting to Diversity

As mentioned before, Principal C values flexibility in his school because students may be experiencing some difficulties that result in them not being able to meet various school expectations. Before Principal C got to his institution, students were given one 50-minute period in a seven period day to access the online platform that enabled them to do work online in the event they missed classes. When Principal C arrived at the school, he did not understand why students were only given 50 minutes to use the online platform to make up work they missed and earn credits towards various courses. At his former school, their online platform was available to students 24/7, which gave students the flexibility to get their work done. When he dug a little deeper, he discovered that the reasoning behind limiting the time students could access the online platform was because teachers and former administrators believed that if unsupervised, the students would cheat. Principal C believes in a culture of trust and so urged the school board and central office to make the online platform available to students 24 hours a day and seven days a week. After some time, they agreed to it. In a short period of time, Principal C explained that the number of credits students are earning has "gone through the roof". While the question of whether students are cheating the system with increased access and availability of the online system still stands, Principal C counters the argument by indicating that students are passing classes with a B or a C and not passing with 100%, which may indicate some level of integrity. Principal C went on to state that these students "are mastering the standards and we are not penalizing them for not being able to be in class because their circumstances have unfortunately dictated that attendance is going to be their problem".

According to Principal C it is important for secondary education institutions to adapt in a way that tertiary institutions have. Specifically, at the university level many institutions are using online platforms to reach a wider array of students. Principal C stated that the brick and mortar traditional model of education is being augmented by adding online platforms to give opportunities to a larger number of students and in their context, those students whose life circumstances don't allow them to go to school. Principal C also made the point that he has a lot of intelligent teachers who would like to go back to school to get their advanced degrees. Due to their job commitments and busy schedules, they rely on online platforms rather than quitting their jobs and spending two or four years pursuing an advanced degree. As a result, Principal C asked "why can't we do that at the high school? Why should the first time that our students encounter that level of flexibility be after they have attained their high school diploma?" If schools are inflexible, they are preventing students from getting their high school diploma and lessening the student population that is available for matriculation into universities. Principal C maintained that he is more interested in what a student knows compared to whether they are present every day. Furthermore, Principal C added the following:

"I want our students and families to also know that there is a certain level of motivation that comes from knowing that the folks who ultimately can control your success level see that and want to meet you where you are and want to be flexible to allow you to be successful as opposed to just constantly being rigid…when we are dealing with a population that unfortunately has a lot of trauma in their lives and see folks give up on them constantly, the easy thing for them to do, because it is modeled for them, is to give up themselves and we try really hard to make sure that our families realize that we are not going to give up on them. It may take us some very unique ways to get them across the stage, but the last thing we are going to do is give up on them".

Part of adapting to diversity is having a good data culture and using that data to drive change and decision making. Principal C takes academic, behavioral, discipline and attendance data and breaks it down gender, race and grade level. A lot of the time they focus on their failure rates and where they are with attendance rates and discipline data. When the data starts to overlap, for example, demographics of students that have a high failure rate are being disciplined more or have problematic attendance, it points to resources they need to access and trainings they need provide their staff in order to not perpetuate troubling trends. Principal C is part of a Juvenile Detention organization whose goal is to lower the number of juvenile detention placements. The organization uses a lot of data to see which demographics are being placed in juvenile detention and this breakdown of the data reveals biases that may exist. Principal C shares their discipline, attendance and failure rates with the organization to determine whether their data mirrors what they are seeing in the greater community. Principal C reported that the data at his institution mirrors the greater community data of disproportionate referrals for different demographics of students. As a result, Principal C has looked at those patterns and adjusted their behaviors and policies, which has resulted in decline in the overall discipline referrals. For example, when Principal C first arrived at their institution, there was cell phone policy that stated that if students are seen with their cell phones, it would be confiscated and a discipline referral would be made. Teachers and administrator were overwhelmed by trying to enforce the policy and were spending an inordinate amount of time making referrals. They decided to adjust the policy, which has reduced the number of discipline referrals and the punishment of specific demographic populations within the school.

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge

To confirm their commitment to diversity and cultural competence, one of the Assistant Principals at the school serves as the district Director of Diversity and he is responsible for programming that continually educates the district on how to refine their practices to be more inclusive. In fact, the central office gives schools in their corporation guides with cultural competence activities. Principal C takes a part of his monthly faculty meetings to talk through a scenario with their faculty. Principal C puts up a scenario, but does not reveal a child's full story. As time goes on, he exposes more of the child's context and the teachers spend time talking through how their approaches can be modified to solve different problems that come up, especially as more of the story is revealed. The goal of the cultural competence activities is to give teachers something to draw back on if a situation arises. Principal C mentioned how sometimes there is resistance from the veteran teachers. Sometimes they think they have seen enough in their career that they would never have to worry about scenarios that require cultural competence. However, there are some situations where a veteran teacher will experience something and come back and thank Principal C for providing them with the knowledge and skills to deal with a certain situation. Principal C believes that everyone should be engaged with culturally competent practices and makes sure that his staff is engaged when talking through different scenarios.

Another structure they use to obtain cultural knowledge is PLCs and department chair meetings. The staff has weekly PLCs where they have ongoing conversations about different techniques and approaches they have used in their classrooms to be more inclusive. Department chair meetings are used to discuss common practices and philosophies that their departments can use to be more inclusive of diverse populations in their school.

As mentioned before, Principal C has formed meaningful partnerships with the juvenile justice system, local churches, universities and community colleges and other organizations that can be resource to provide them with the knowledge and skills to effectively reach the various populations within their institution.

Analysis of Cultural Competence

The section below contains an analysis of Principal C's interview in the context of the 15 indicators of cultural competence.

Figure 6. Analysis of Principal C Interview
(Source of figure: Lindsey et al. (2009))

Indicator of Cultural Competence	Observed in the Interview	Essential Element of Cultural Competence
1. Recognizes how their culture affects others	YES	
2. Able to describe their culture and cultural norms of their organization	YES	**Assess Culture**
3. Understands how the culture of their organization affects those with different cultures	YES	
4. Celebrates and encourages the presence of a variety of people in all activities	YES	
5. Recognizes differences as diversity rather than inappropriate responses to the environment	YES	**Value Diversity**
6. Accepts that each culture finds some values and behaviors more important than others	YES	

Figure 6 continued

7. Learn effective strategies for resolving conflict, particularly among people whose cultural backgrounds and values differ	YES	**Managing the Dynamics of Difference**
8. Understand the effect that historic distrust has on present-day interactions	**NO**	
9. Realize that you may misjudge others' actions based on learned expectations	YES	
10. Change the way things are done to acknowledge the differences that are present in the staff, clients and community.	YES	**Adapting to Diversity**
11. Develop skills for intercultural communication	YES	
12. Institutionalize cultural interventions for conflicts and confusion caused by the dynamics of difference	YES	

Figure 6 continued

13. Incorporate cultural knowledge into the mainstream of the organization	YES	
14. Teach the origins of stereotypes and prejudices	**NO**	**Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge**
15. For staff development and education, integrate into your systems information and skills that enable all to interact effectively in a variety of intercultural situations	YES	

Principal C mentioned 13 of the 15 indicators of cultural competence. The areas that were lacking included understanding why individuals from diverse backgrounds may have a fundamental distrust of institutions and may be hesitant to form authentic partnerships with individuals within the organization. To better equip teachers and staff on how to form authentic partnerships with individuals from different ethnic backgrounds, it is important for them to understand the origins and stereotypes, how they become internalized and displayed in the interactions with different populations.

Principal D

Principal D is a White male in his 41st year of education and has been leading his building for 20 years. He started his career teaching Earth Science, Life Science and Physical Science at the middle school/junior high level for just over 12 years. He then became a middle school Assistant Principal for 5 years and then became a middle school principal for 2 years. Principal D has been a high school principal for about 20 years.

Principal D's school is in Yellow corporation, which is located in an urban region of northern Indiana. For the 2018-2019 school year, Yellow corporation's enrollment was between 12,500 and 13,000 students and over the past five years, the corporation has seen approximately a 3.8% decline in their total enrollment. In this same time period (5 years), ethnic/racial enrollment trends show a 5.3% decline in the White population, a 0.6% increase in the Black population, a 0.3% increase in the Multiracial population and a 4.4% increase in the Hispanic population. It may be important to note that the Asian population has increased by 0.1%, the American Indian population has remained constant whereas the Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander population has decreased by 0.1%. The corporation grade over the past four years has decreased from a B to a C (IDOE, 2018). Table 14 shows the demographic changes for Principal D's school over the past five years.

Table 14 *Demographic Changes for Principal D's School Over the Past Five Years*

Year	% Hispanic	%Black	%White	Total Enrollment	School Grade
2013-2014	30.0%	14.7%	48.0%	1500-2000	B
2018-2019	40.9%	12.5%	39.2%	1500-2000	B (2017-2018)
Source: IDOE					

Table 14 indicates that Principal D's school has gone through some demographic changes over the past five years. The White population has dropped by 8.8%, the Black population has dropped by 2.2%, and the Hispanic population has increased by 10.9%. Despite their demographic changes, the school has maintained its B school grade.

Assessing Culture

When asked about the culture of his school, Principal D described it as collaborative and one where everyone supports each other. Principal D went on to explain that they provide a lot of

structure when it comes to student behavior and student expectations in their building. Principal D believes that if there is no structure for the kids and expectations are low for them, their expectations of themselves will also be low and the school environment will suffer. Principal D stated "if you raise the bar for them, they will raise their expectations as well". When things are structured for the students, teachers and administrators are able to deal with situations that present themselves because expectations have been clearly set. Principal D and his administrative team consistently communicate the rules and expectations in assemblies and classrooms.

When talking about the diverse populations at his school, Principal D stated that they respect other cultures and together with his staff, make sure they honor them "for their gains and for their leadership and for their accomplishments". Principal D explained that for their school, cultural competence means being good listeners. According to Principal D, it is important to listen and approach students from different cultures and backgrounds with an attitude of learning because sometimes they come from tough situations that influence the ways they behave. Listening entails trying to understand the experiences particular students have had. Principal D tries to perpetuate a culture where people are quick to listen and learn.

Upon learning and understanding the different situations students are in, Principal D's school tries to identify resources that can help them work through their situations. At times, however, parents show resistance and don't want anything to do with the school or any help or suggestions they provide. For example, they may say the following: "this is my business and I am going to take care of it and I don't need you to mess with it". The desire of these parents is to maintain their privacy even though their children are hurting and need help. Principal D and his

staff work hard to show parents and guardians that they are invested and concerned about their child's success not only at school, but in life.

Valuing Diversity

Principal D explained that he has seen a rise in the number of Hispanic students that have enrolled in their school and the Hispanic population has been particularly sensitive to the current political climate. For example, the Hispanic students have experienced or have close connections with individuals that have faced the ills of detention holding centers as well as the increased scrutiny of Hispanics given the rhetoric around the proposed border wall with Mexico. Principal D stated "there is a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PSTD) problem with a lot of these kids. These kids have seen murders, they have seen rape, they have seen all kinds of things on their trek and in their home countries". In order to help the students, work through some of their socio-emotional issues, the school has partnered with an organization called the Hispanic Coalition and obtained a grant to provide resources, like counseling, to help them work though their experiences and any issues they have. Principal D also mentioned that a lot of their Black kids have experienced "bad things" and so they also work hard to refer them to mental health providers to equip them with resources and tools to work through their problems. One of the challenges that they are facing is finding the resources to support these students in house. However, with the funding climate of their school and district, the lack of funds does not allow them to pursue services that could be available to the students on a continual basis. Through his example, Principal D has done a good job of listening to the needs of the Hispanic and Black students within his school and has welcomed them and provided resources for them to work out their socio-emotional issues.

Their teachers work hard to showcase the cultures of their students in classes. At times, parents are invited in to come and talk about their cultural traditions, experiences, and provide meaning for why their cultures do things a certain way. During parent-teacher conferences, they use their foreign language department to translate for parents as well as their bilingual secretary who is essential to making sure that parents are able to effectively communicate their needs.

Communication with parents is also an important part of making them feel valued. If a student, especially in their freshman year, is performing at a C or lower parents are called in to have an in-person conference. When the parents come in, they welcome them, speak with them and show them that the school is willing to partner with them to improve their child's achievement or behavior. Principal D explained that they have a very low suspension rate and they try to impress on their community that they don't kick kids out of school, but look for alternate ways and resources to help them become more successful.

In order to make sure he is reaching different populations within the school, Principal D has a Parent Principal Advisory Council, which is made up of a group of parents whose demographics are representative of the student population. Principal D meets with them monthly to process information and brainstorm programming for their school population.

Although Principal D does a good job of providing resources to his students, it is important for him and his school to build better structures that allow the students to showcase their cultures. This could take the form of student organizations.

Managing the Dynamics of Difference

When students experience or witness discriminatory actions, they have a software program that allows them to anonymously report those events. When a report is received, there is instantaneous follow up. The administrators spend a lot of time building relationships with the

students and so the kids feel comfortable approaching them to report any issues that arise. Principal D is confident that if any discriminatory actions are going on, they will know about it because that is the kind of culture they have created.

As mentioned before, Principal D works hard to encourage his staff to listen to student's perspectives and dig deeper to find the root cause of situations rather than superficially judging behavior. The ultimate goal is not to punish a student, but work hard to find solutions and resources that will help the child be successful academically and behaviorally.

When managing the dynamics of difference, it is important to continually assess certain biases and assumptions about a group. In general, there are no programs to help the faculty and staff learn how to deal with conflict and check their assumptions and biases. While it is important to listen and hear about the root cause of different behaviors, if the information is filtered through stereotypes and assumptions the response can be problematic.

Adapting to Diversity

An important part of adapting to diversity is having a good data culture that informs decision making and adaptation of practices and policies. Principal D explained that they worked with an organization for two years and have implemented data teams. At their school, they have about 80 data teams and each of these teams are in specific content areas. The school sets specific goals and the team looks at data to try and figure out the best way to reach those goals. For example, for a math department, if they are doing factoring, their goal could be for 70% of students to be proficient at factoring equations. Their school does not set goals for specific demographics, but for the entire student population. Since their school is diverse, the high expectations are for all students, which ultimately encompasses a lot of the traditionally underserved populations.

From a cultural perspective, there are clear learning and achievement goals for their ELL population. The data teams look at data from this population and look at ways to adapt their practices and curriculum to reach the students and meet their goals. Principal D recognizes that an important aspect of reaching the ELL population is factoring in cultural aspects that motivate them and make them feel valued. In order to use data to make informed decisions, the administrators and teachers get a report every four weeks and they look at that data to assess how they can improve their practices. The data they receive could be how close the department is to reaching to their goals, pre-survey or post survey data on specific content, or perceptions and recommendations on what needs to be done for each individual child to help them move forward in a certain area.

Institutionalizing cultural knowledge

In order to ensure that the whole staff is versed on how to reach diverse populations with their school, the has undergone training on strategies and practices that will allow them to reach the ELL population.

While it is great to see that Principal D strives to equip his faculty and staff with skills to reach the ELL population, professional development for teachers that is targeted toward cultural knowledge must also be included. Part of institutionalizing cultural knowledge is consistently looking at how practices and policies are affecting different stakeholders and revising practices and policies accordingly.

Analysis of Cultural Competence

The section below contains an analysis of Principal D's interview in the context of the 15 indicators of cultural competence.

Figure 7. Analysis of Principal D Interview
(Source of figure: Lindsey et al. (2009))

Indicator of Cultural Competence	Observed in the Interview	Essential Element of Cultural Competence
1. Recognizes how their culture affects others	YES	
2. Able to describe their culture and cultural norms of their organization	YES	**Assess Culture**
3. Understands how the culture of their organization affects those with different cultures	**NO**	
4. Celebrates and encourages the presence of a variety of people in all activities	YES	
5. Recognizes differences as diversity rather than inappropriate responses to the environment	YES	**Value Diversity**
6. Accepts that each culture finds some values and behaviors more important than others	**NO**	

Figure 7 continued

7. Learn effective strategies for resolving conflict, particularly among people whose cultural backgrounds and values differ	YES	**Managing the Dynamics of Difference**
8. Understand the effect that historic distrust has on present-day interactions	**NO**	
9. Realize that you may misjudge others' actions based on learned expectations	**NO**	
10. Change the way things are done to acknowledge the differences that are present in the staff, clients and community.	**NO**	**Adapting to Diversity**
11. Develop skills for intercultural communication	YES	
12. Institutionalize cultural interventions for conflicts and confusion caused by the dynamics of difference	YES	

Figure 7 continued

13. Incorporate cultural knowledge into the mainstream of the organization	YES	
14. Teach the origins of stereotypes and prejudices	**NO**	**Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge**
15. For staff development and education, integrate into your systems information and skills that enable all to interact effectively in a variety of intercultural situations	**NO**	

Principal D's responses reflected 8 of the 15 indicators of cultural competence. Although Principal D is able to effectively listen to students and understand the root causes of different behaviors, his responses suggest that his commitment to structure is important, but may override students' cultural values, norms, and customs in favor of them behaving in a prescribed way. It may be important to put systems in place to understand students' cultural values and revisit school policies with these values in mind. Principal D provides resources to kids, such as counseling, when they have issues, but does not indicate that there are any systems in place to train teachers on understanding the historical root causes of discrimination. Understanding these historical perspectives may enable administrators and teachers to for authentic partnerships with students and families.

The strength of Principal D's ability to assess culture is his stated investment in learning about the cultures and experiences of students and families, especially those of diverse backgrounds. The weakness is that he is not as reflective in evaluating the effect that his school's

culture has on different stakeholders. Furthermore, Principal D described his school's culture as one of respect, part of assessing school culture is knowing how different populations interact with one another. There was no exploration of how diverse populations interact with one another and influence one another. This is an important aspect of assessing culture that Principal D did not touch on.

Principal E

Principal E is in the 4th year leading his building. In addition, he also served as an Assistant Principal at the school for about 10 years. Principal E started his career as a high school Math teacher and taught for about 8 years. He then transitioned into leadership roles by serving as a Mathematics department chair and Dean of Students.

Principal E's school is in Yellow corporation, which is located in an urban region of northern Indiana. For the 2018-2019 school year, Yellow corporation's enrollment was between 12,500 and 13,000 students and over the past five years, the corporation has seen a 3.8% decline in their total enrollment. In this same time period (5 years), ethnic/racial enrollment trends show a 5.3% decline in the White population, a 0.6% increase in the Black population, a 0.3% increase in the Multiracial population and a 4.4% increase in the Hispanic population. It may be important to note that the Asian population has increased by 0.1%, the American Indian population has remained constant whereas the Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander population has decreased by 0.1%. The corporation grade over the past four years has decreased from a B to a C (IDOE, 2018). Table 15 shows the demographic changes for Principal E's school over the past five years.

Table 15 *Demographic Changes for Principal E's School Over the Past Five Years*

Year	% Hispanic	%Black	%White	Total Enrollment	School Grade
2013-2014	21.7%	11.6%	56.3%	1500-2000	C
2018-2019	30.2%	13.8%	47%	1500-2000	B (2017-2018)

Source: IDOE

Principal E's school has undergone and is undergoing some demographic shifts. Specifically, in the past five years, they have experienced a decline in total enrollment, but have seen an 8.5% increase in the enrollment of Hispanic students, a 2.2% increase in the enrollment of Black students and a 9.3% decrease in the enrollment of White students. Over last 5 years, the school has seen an improvement in their school grade from a C to a B (Table 15). The following sections will highlight the manner in which Principal E's school assesses culture, values diversity, manages the dynamics of difference, adapts to diversity and institutionalizes cultural knowledge.

Assessing Culture

According to Principal E, their culture is rooted in three basic words "All Means All". This philosophy is in line with the "No Child Left Behind" concept, which values each child and invests resources toward the success of every child, regardless of their background, socioeconomic level, religion, ability and other identifiers. Principal E states that every child at his school is important and one of their major goals is to make sure their students graduate. As a result, their school is invested in making sure that students have support systems in place to achieve the goal of graduating. According to Principal E, when a student graduates, it opens up doors for them to advance themselves and their families.

Principal E stated that at times he struggles with the mindset of his staff, especially veteran or older teachers. Their mindset at times is one where they believe the students have to abide by the culture of the school and may not be sensitive or receptive to a mission and vision that encourages them to meet the kids where they are and understand their particular contexts or situations. These teachers think that kids' cultural realities and opportunities are similar to theirs and other students in the school, especially the White students, and interpret situations according to their cultural lenses without being sensitive to the cultural realities of the students they teach. Historically, this inflexible mindset has been an issue, but over the past couple of years the school has done a great job of living and walking out their vision of "All means All". Principal E believes that one way to shift the mindset of the staff and make better connection with diverse students is to hire staff whose demographics are representative of the students they serve.

When living out their mission and vision of "All Means All", it is important that all kids have access to all programs regardless of their background—be it socioeconomics, race, ethnicity or post high school goals. Principal E is especially proud of the fact that they have given more students access to general education classes and provided them with support systems to succeed in those environments. It is a school goal to encourage all clubs, sports, music and theatre groups to mirror the demographics of the school so that each entity plays a role in making the school more inclusive and representative of the student voice. With the regard to achievement, Principal E explained that their school's Hispanic achievements rates are really good and are starting to mirror the achievements of the White population. The one population they are still struggling with, in the context of achievement, is their African American population.

Principal E stated that from his perspective, cultural competence starts with listening and understanding someone else's values, behaviors, and norms. He went on to state that when trying

to listen and understand someone's culture, it is important to recognize and not focus on your own values. Principal E highlighted that "you really have to listen and seek to understand where people are coming from..." because people have different proportions of their culture that they value and display. When discussing barriers to cultural competence at their school, Principal E mentioned that they have a low percentage of parents coming into the high school, especially for parent-teacher conferences. He stated that in middle school parents are a little more involved in their child's education, but with electronic access to grades and email communications, parents don't feel the need to walk into the physical brick and mortar building. Unfortunately, they only have 40% of their students represented at parent-teacher conferences, which means 60% of their population does not come in and have a face to face conversation with the teachers.

At their school, when it comes to achievement and general success, they have found that they struggle more with parents and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. As a result, an obstacle that they are invested in surmounting is educating parents on the value of education and trying to break the cycle of poverty that families have been in for a long time. Their current approach is to get these families in the building to have conversations with them on why their child's success is essential for the future.

In talking with Principal E about his culture, he talked a lot about cultural norms amongst the staff and parents, in essence, the adults. It would have been beneficial for him to talk about what the student culture was like and how they perpetuated the mission and vision of the school. Although some of these elements will show up later, it was interesting to see that the focus of the conversation was about the adult world.

Valuing Diversity

Another important aspect of Principal E's philosophy is that he and his staff strive to "treat everybody fairly, treat everybody equally, and have the intrinsic value that believes all kids can learn no matter what happens". It is also important to recognize that educators cannot have the mentality of "we want everyone to resort to being like us" rather "we need to be like our kids". Principal E recognizes that a lot of families are in tough situations and they have to be invested in educating parents and guardians on "how to do school" and model what it means to support their child. According to Principal E, an important part of valuing diversity and being a culturally competent school is to "shift towards the kids". He explained that the place where educators, especially as his school, get themselves in trouble is when they try to say: "kids, you need to be like us". Another essential part of valuing diversity, according to Principal E, is meeting the kids where they are and meeting the parents where they are.

At parent-teacher conferences, the Hispanic students are empowered and serve as translators for parents and guardians. In fact, these students also serve as translators for elementary and middle school conferences in their school corporation. This allows the students to feel valued and shows the parents that the school is invested in hearing their voice and meeting them where they are. In order to foster relationships between the administrators, staff, students and parents, an Assistant Principal is assigned to a specific grade. That Principal stays with the grade all four years and moves up with the grade. That way, students and parents are able to form authentic and long-term relationships with the principals. In the same vain, each student is assigned to an advisor that they meet with for 30 minutes every day. These advisors get to know the students well, form relationships with them and stay with that student from freshman year till they graduate.

In order to celebrate the diversity within their school, Principal E explained that there is an International Day. One Saturday a year from about 10am – 2pm, students bring in food and have stations where the community can learn about the different foods and culture the food comes from. They also have a vibrant Black Student Union. Under the strong leadership of one of their staff members, the group puts on events the whole year and have specialized programming for Black History Month and other national celebrations. In addition, African American students are given the opportunity to affirm their identities by participating in marches and parades and poetry nights where African American students are able to share their stories and their culture. The staff leader frequently educates the administration about events that are going on and the importance of those events to the students.

Managing the Dynamics of Difference

Due to the changing demographics in the corporation and school, Principal E is dedicated to hiring staff that reflects the diversity of the students and those that speak Spanish and are bilingual. According to Principal E, this will help facilitate successful communication with students and parents.

Their district has also shown their commitment to the African American population by hiring a "District Graduation Facilitator". The District Graduation Facilitator is an African American woman who was born, raised and lives in the community. Her responsibility is connecting with the African American families in their district to ensure their kids graduate. She is able to connect them with resources that cater to their needs. There is also another employee who works with families on attendance issues; she makes home visits eight hours a day and tries to talk with families on how to create support systems to make sure their kids attend school.

When students face discriminatory actions, they have an online system they use to report any actions performed against them or someone else. There are also helplines kids and parents can call to anonymously share information. When they receive information from the online system or the helpline, the administrative team acts very quickly. In addition, the social worker, counselors and administrators have an open-door policy and make it clear to the students that they are always available.

Principal E's school corporation has obtained a grant that enables counselors to go into classrooms frequently to talk about mental health issues. Part of the education is continually alerting the kids that if they are a victim of discrimination, like if somebody says anything disparaging about their family because of the color of their skin, they know where to go and how to act. As a result of all their education around discrimination, stakeholders have common language and messaging on how to navigate those situations.

Adapting to Diversity

At Principal E's school, they get a lot of students from Central America; specifically, students from El Salvador and Nicaragua. In the past, most of their Hispanic students came from Mexico. These students have limited English skills and a challenge the school is facing is trying to find out how to effectively educate them, especially in general educational classrooms. They are asking the questions, "what does real instruction look like for kids that don't speak English? How do you we teach those kids?" What they are discovering is that in order to reach the ELL population, teachers don't necessarily have to have all the specialized skills to reach these students, but they have to have strong instructional skills because at the end of the day, and in the words of Principal E, "good teaching is good teaching". The administrators and teachers continually reflect on their pedagogy, like how they are using assessments and instructing their

classes, and think about how it is benefiting all students, not just the ELL students. Most often, teachers and administrators are finding they don't have to take anything away from what they are already doing, but must continually "adding to their repertoire" to reach students.

With regard to how their school uses data to make decisions pertaining to diverse populations within the school, Principal E explained that they collect academic, attendance, and behavioral data. Principal E explained that they use academic data to inform their instruction, adapt their pedagogical practices, and begin programs. Principal E expounded on this point by saying "our programs that we developed, the classes that we developed are all based on data". Principal E gave the example of programs of how they used data to eliminate programs and practices that have not been in the best interest of the kids. For example, when kids came to the high school, they were grouped according to their ability levels. As a result, certain groups were not eligible to take certain classes because they did not have a high enough level of achievement in the eighth grade. A few years ago, they started to look at the data and they saw that putting low-achieving students together as well as those were at high risk of failing academically brought the level of achievement down for these populations. In response to this, they changed their practices and gave kids access to diverse classes and spread them out so that they had "additional mentorship from their peers in their classes".

In their school, every Assistant Principal is assigned a grade level and together with an assigned counselor go over the grades and break it down by demographics for that specific grade. It is also required that they look at data student by student to identify specific problem areas. Every nine weeks the administrators and counselors meet to do a gap analysis in order to identify any gaps in achievement for different populations and brainstorm solutions to those achievement gaps.

Principal E stated that using data to make informed decisions has been a game changer for their school. In fact, last year, they had the highest graduation rate in school history. They have also decreased the number of students obtaining general diplomas and increased Core 40 attainment. Principal E attributed their success to their use of data. In fact, he explained that they have a war room where they have data on all the students. Right now, they are focusing of seniors. In the war room, they have data on all the seniors with an 8 x 10 picture of them. Principal E emphasized that seeing the student's faces "makes things personal". Nobody has access to the room except the Vice Principal and counselor. Every two weeks, they go into the room and have a status update on every student that is at risk of graduating.

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge

The school district has made a commitment to diversity by hiring a Director of Inclusion. Through the office of inclusion, the school has had prominent speakers talk to the students and staff about different cultures and experiences. For example, they have had speakers who were active during the civil rights movement, a Holocaust survivor, and a woman that had survived civil war in Africa. When speakers come, student groups are empowered to facilitate programming that would impact the student body, sometimes for the whole month.

The school has weekly PLCs and discuss student achievement, which involves discussing different cultural aspects that motivate and eventually lead to the achievement of diverse populations. The district also hires experts in the field of diversity and inclusion to train the staff on how to have successful cross-cultural interactions and relationships with different stakeholders in the community, especially students.

Analysis of Cultural Competence

The section below contains an analysis of Principal E's interview in the context of the 15

indicators of cultural competence.

Figure 8. Analysis of Principal E Interview
(Source of figure: Lindsey et al. (2009))

Indicator of Cultural Competence	Observed in the Interview	Essential Element of Cultural Competence
1. Recognizes how their culture affects others	YES	
2. Able to describe their culture and cultural norms of their organization	YES	**Assess Culture**
3. Understands how the culture of their organization affects those with different cultures	YES	
4. Celebrates and encourages the presence of a variety of people in all activities	YES	
5. Recognizes differences as diversity rather than inappropriate responses to the environment	YES	**Value Diversity**
6. Accepts that each culture finds some values and behaviors more important than others	YES	

Figure 8 continued

7. Learn effective strategies for resolving conflict, particularly among people whose cultural backgrounds and values differ	YES	**Managing the Dynamics of Difference**
8. Understand the effect that historic distrust has on present-day interactions	**NO**	
9. Realize that you may misjudge others' actions based on learned expectations	YES	
10. Change the way things are done to acknowledge the differences that are present in the staff, clients and community.	YES	**Adapting to Diversity**
11. Develop skills for intercultural communication	YES	
12. Institutionalize cultural interventions for conflicts and confusion caused by the dynamics of difference	YES	

Figure 8 continued

13. Incorporate cultural knowledge into the mainstream of the organization	YES	
14. Teach the origins of stereotypes and prejudices	**NO**	**Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge**
15. For staff development and education, integrate into your systems information and skills that enable all to interact effectively in a variety of intercultural situations	YES	

Principal E fulfilled 13 of the 15 indicators of cultural competence. The areas that were not addressed in the interview were similar to the other principals. Principal E provided no evidence that teachers and staff were educated on the historical experiences of individuals from different cultures. As a result, they may not have the historical contexts to effectively interact with diverse stakeholders or resolve conflicts that may happen.

Principal F

Principal F is a White female that has been in education for 20 years. She had no intention of teaching high school and always wanted to be a college professor in Religious Studies. After waiting tables for some time, she went back and got her teaching license and started teaching high school English in the southern part of the United States. Interestingly, one of the schools she taught in was a private Muslim school. After teaching high school for some years, she went on to teach in a technical college in the western United States. Following her time in the western United States, she took a job at her current school in Indiana as an instructor

in their night school, which is part of an alternative program they offer at the school. Shortly

after that, she started teaching English at the school for about six years and became the English

department chair, the Assistant Principal for four years and then became Principal. This is her 7th

year as the leader in her building.

Principal F's school is in Red corporation, which is located in an urban region in central

Indiana. For the 2018-2019 school year, Red corporation's enrollment was between 16,000 and

16,500 students and over the past five years, the corporation has seen a 3.4% increase in their

total enrollment. In this same time period (5 years), ethnic/racial enrollment trends show a 10.6%

decline in the White population, a 5% increase in the Black population, a 0.2% decrease in the

Multiracial population and a 5.8% increase in the Hispanic population. It may be important to

note that the Asian population has decreased by 0.2% and the American Indian and Native

Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander populations have remained constant. The corporation grade

over the past four years has decreased from a B to a C (IDOE, 2018). Table 16 shows the

demographic changes for Principal F's school over the past five years.

Table 16 *Demographic Changes for Principal F's School Over the Past Five Years*

Year	% Hispanic	%Black	%White	Total Enrollment	School Grade
2013-2014	18.4%	37.0%	37.8%	3000-3500	C
2018-2019	29.2%	36.4%	27.9%	3000-3500	B (2017-2018)

Source: IDOE

As Table 16 indicates, over the past five years, Principal F's school has experienced

demographic changes in their student population. Specifically, their Hispanic population has

increased by 10.8% and the White and Black population has decreased by 9.8% and 0.6%,

respectively. The total enrollment of the school has also increased and there has been an

improvement in the school grade over the past five years. The next section will include an

analysis of Principal F's perceptions and practices of cultural competence using the *5 Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency*.

Assessing Culture

When discussing the culture of her school, Principal F stated that their school is about "treating everybody with respect and dignity"; students are expected to treat each other and their teachers with dignity and respect and vice versa. Principal F makes it clear that treating people with respect and dignity means listening to them and being critical thinkers when trying to understand where people are coming from.

At their school, they have high expectations for all students and provide support systems to all students to reach those high expectations. Principal F explained that at their school nobody is expected to fail and every student is expected to succeed at a high level. To do this, they strive to give their students opportunities by giving them access to extracurricular options and courses. Around 10 years ago, Principal F's school stopped gatekeeping and determining what courses different students had access to based on their previous achievements. Principal F stated that "students can self-select into AP and Honors courses" and this access has played a key role in their success as a school because all students are given an opportunity to succeed at the highest level.

One of the school's fundamental beliefs is that students don't learn at the same pace and so it is important to build structures that support that fact. For example, they offer students multiple ways to learn material, implement rolling deadlines for all their assignments and have instituted a policy that if a student earns 60% - 64% in a class, they don't receive an F, but an automatic incomplete. After the incomplete is given, the student is given an opportunity to do a

final teacher-directed assignment in order to pass the class. These flexible structures attempt to make sure that students are mastering the content and have the support to succeed.

As a school, they preach excellence. Principal F stated "we believe in excellence and we are excellent in all that we do". This expectation of excellence has translated into their football team winning the past two state championships, the bowling team winning two consecutive state championships, their chess team winning a state championship, their debate team winning a state championship, and their band's color guard has won state two years in a row. They don't believe that some students are capable of excellence, but all students and so have high expectations for all their pupils.

When students come into their school with diverse value systems, behavioral norms, and customs, Principal F and her staff see that diversity as an opportunity rather than an obstacle. Obstacles need to be overcome, but opportunities are grasped and embraced. In fact, the more diverse the school has gotten both ethnically and socioeconomically, the more successful they have been in their performance in different areas. According to Principal F, this goes against typical trends that are seen across the country (typically, more diverse schools drop in their achievement) and their improvement shows that their school sees diversity as an opportunity rather than an obstacle.

Value Diversity

When talking about cultural competence, Principal F emphasized that their school and district has moved away from the concept of cultural competence in favor of cultural responsivity. This is because their goal as a school is not to just understand different cultures, but have the knowledge and the skills to respond and interact effectively with different cultures, which falls in line with looking at those interactions with diverse cultures as opportunities.

In order to learn about the values systems, beliefs, customs and norms of other cultures, they offer a platform for organizations to showcase their cultures and also provide an organized way they can hold each other accountable. One of the groups they have at their school is called "Giant Kings". This group is made up of Black and Latino boys that are led by the Head of Student Services at the school. The organization has been in existence for 12 years and when they meet, the boys get together, talk and push each other to pursue excellence. Principal F calls their approach to inspiring excellence in each other "positive peer pressure". These boys have some of the highest GPAs in the school and also have a 100% graduation rate. In addition, they have a group called Girls to Women, which is an African American female organization, an African Student Association (ASA), and a Muslim Student Association since they have a growing Muslim population at their institution. Since Principal F has taught in a Muslim school before, she shows this population they are valued by providing them a place to pray and also makes sure that teachers understand the details of religious practices and events, like Ramadan. For example, if a student isn't feeling well during Ramadan, she makes sure to communicate with the teachers that they are probably not feeling well because they are fasting. To educate the school on different customs and events, student organizations host many information meetings with the school community. For example, the Muslim Student Association had an after-school event talking about the hijab. Additionally, the ASA recently put on a fashion show for the school community to showcase the difference between East African and West African fashion, music and foods.

At the district level, there is a district equity team that meets once a month and finds ways to continually engage families. To engage families, the school participates in a family night for ELL families, which are made up of mostly Hispanics and Nigerians. During this district-wide

family night event, every school in the corporation has a table and hosts different activities like face painting and other activities. Other schools in the corporation host International Festivals where they showcase food, fashion and music during different times of the year and all families are invited to attend. Principal F explained that these events are important to meet families and learn from them. Principal F explained that it has become increasingly difficult to get families to the school for parent-teacher conferences because of the accessibility they have to online grades and virtual communication, such as email. As a result, having events that will engage families are important to get them into the physical school building.

Principal F also described her hiring practices during the conversation. She explained that she tries to hire staff that "enjoy diversity" and stays away from hiring staff that are looking to do "missionary work". "Missionary workers" are individuals that come into their school to do two years of urban education and then move on to suburban schools. Teachers that are interested in missionary work typically have low expectations for students "because they feel sorry for them" and she states "that is not who we are, whatsoever". Principal F states that she wants to hire teachers that value diversity and want to learn about different cultures. Many teachers that work at the school bring their own children to attend the school, Principal F included, even though they may live in different areas. Their goal is for their students to be exposed to the cultural diversity at their school. The culture of inclusion is so ingrained in their staff, but Principal F recognizes that since they have new staff members every year, she continually needs to reiterate the mission and vision of the school.

Managing the Dynamics of Difference

In order to help students manage the dynamics of difference, the school has a class called Impact that occurs 25 minutes a day for students. In this class, students are taught habits for

success as well as 21st century skills that will make them successful in high school and beyond. In the class, the curriculum is built around habits of success including healthy relationships and lessons on discrimination and how to confront and report it.

Fortunately, not many discriminatory actions have occurred at the school because of their established culture of acceptance. In addition, the students approach each other with an attitude of learning and genuinely want to hear from each other and take care of any inappropriate behaviors that occurs. For example, there was student last year that was running for junior prince for Homecoming. The young man had tweeted something about his opponent who was homosexual—he said something like "vote for a real man". The statement that was made was unkind and inappropriate. The young man that made the statement was heavily criticized and "almost victimized" on Twitter. The administrators talked to the boy and he immediately took the post down, apologized for it, and on his own accord, withdrew his name from the ballot. The students realized that he messed up and the students shut it down, even before the administrators could get a hold of the situation. Principal F proudly stated that "their culture of acceptance has made it so that the students have a voice in that process", especially for discriminatory actions.

Adapting to Diversity

In Principal F's 17 years at the school, she has seen the demographics at the school drastically change. Their school used to be 70% White and also used to be 30% free and reduced lunch. Presently, they are majority-minority with over 70% of their school being from traditionally underserved ethnic populations and 75% being on free and reduced lunch. In that same amount of time (17 years), their school ratings and achievements have improved, their dual credit opportunities have increased from 40 dual credits to 7000 dual credit college credits available. The AP classes have increased from two to 28 AP classes. Their graduation rate was

65% and now it is over 90%, which is one of the highest in their county. The way they have adapted to diversity is to look at diversity as an asset rather than an obstacle and also by increasing different populations' access to different opportunities. To identify students that don't self-select into higher level courses because of low confidence and self-doubt, Principal F and her team look at data, such as the PSAT, and pursue students to encourage them to take advanced classes that they previously would not have considered.

As far as their data culture goes, that is, how they use the data to make decisions and adapt their practices, they break down their achievement data according to different demographics and look for gaps in achievement. A troubling trend they have noticed in their school is that White males on free and reduced lunch are the lowest achieving demographic and so they are intentional about putting supports in place to raise the achievements of this population. They also look at discipline data to make sure there aren't any biases or gaps. If there are, they ask questions and strategize ways to change their practices. The past two years, they have partnered with an organization called the Children's Policy and Law Initiative (CPLI), who looked at their disparities in discipline and suggested they read the book Trauma-Informed Schools. The book highlights brain research that suggests certain behaviors are aligned with trauma and if discipline policies are punitive, they are not successful in changing behaviors. This caused them to look at their discipline and ask questions that pertain to whether they are just punishing kids or acting in a way that would change their behaviors.

Principal F's school have about 200 teachers in their building and sometimes they get frustrated at the behavior of the kids. At times, they want the child removed from class and so trying to tell the teacher that a child's reaction is deeply rooted in their brain, particularly the amygdala, is a hard sell for those teachers. As a result, looking at data, brain research and having

meaningful conversations is the strategy Principal F is using to try and get their teachers to amend their practices. One proposal that Principal F has is trying to look at having amygdala reset stations, which would look like a room where a student can go to calm down and de-escalate. This would be in contrast to a student going to the dean's office or going to what they used to call the holding room, which is a room that a child would go to if a situation had escalated and they needed a moment to calm down.

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge

In order to learn about different cultures and obtain skills to have successful cross-cultural interactions with different stakeholders, the teachers are reading three books and one of them is termed "Cultural Responsivity and The Brain". Additionally, their school had a cultural responsivity team that led book studies and conversations pertaining to how to effectively interact with diverse students and create an inclusive culture.

During their staff meetings, they often watch videos and talk about cultural responsivity. Recently, they watched a video about stereotypes and biases individuals have towards Black students. The video emphasized the importance of overcoming stereotypes and learning Black history and names of important Black figures and their stories, especially those that should be household names, but aren't. Their staff is also organically putting together a list of resources and books they believe everyone interested in diversity and inclusion should know about.

As a leadership team, they have been trained over the past two years in a program called "Undoing Racism". The program has done a good job in educating the leadership on concepts such as Black Wall Street and historical facts and realities of the African American experience. Principal F summarized the need for knowledge when she stated "if I don't know it and our staff

doesn't know it, then we are not teaching it because we teach what we know and then our

students don't get to learn it".

Analysis of Cultural Competence

The section below contains an analysis of Principal F's interview in the context of the 15 indicators of cultural competence.

Figure 9. Analysis of Principal F Interview
(Source of figure: Lindsey et al. (2009))

Indicator of Cultural Competence	Observed in the Interview	Essential Element of Cultural Competence
1. Recognizes how their culture affects others	YES	
2. Able to describe their culture and cultural norms of their organization	YES	**Assess Culture**
3. Understands how the culture of their organization affects those with different cultures	YES	
4. Celebrates and encourages the presence of a variety of people in all activities	YES	
5. Recognizes differences as diversity rather than inappropriate responses to the environment	YES	**Value Diversity**
6. Accepts that each culture finds some values and behaviors more important than others	YES	

Figure 9 continued

7. Learn effective strategies for resolving conflict, particularly among people whose cultural backgrounds and values differ	YES	**Managing the Dynamics of Difference**
8. Understand the effect that historic distrust has on present-day interactions	YES	
9. Realize that you may misjudge others' actions based on learned expectations	YES	
10. Change the way things are done to acknowledge the differences that are present in the staff, clients and community.	YES	**Adapting to Diversity**
11. Develop skills for intercultural communication	YES	
12. Institutionalize cultural interventions for conflicts and confusion caused by the dynamics of difference	YES	

Figure 9 continued

13. Incorporate cultural knowledge into the mainstream of the organization	YES	
14. Teach the origins of stereotypes and prejudices	YES	**Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge**
15. For staff development and education, integrate into your systems information and skills that enable all to interact effectively in a variety of intercultural situations	YES	

Principal F's school provided evidence that they were fulfilling 15 of the 15 indicators of cultural competence. Their interview responses indicate that they intentionally reflect on their practices as they pertain to assessing their culture, valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, adapting to diversity and institutionalizing cultural knowledge.

Principal G

Principal G is a White female that has been in education for 20 years. She began her career teaching middle and high school science and then went into administration. She was an Assistant Principal at a freshman center for a long time and then became a Principal at that same center for a couple of years. She then moved to her current school where she has been Principal for the past five years.

Principal G's school is in Red corporation, which is located in an urban region in central Indiana. For the 2018-2019 school year, Red corporation's enrollment was between 16,000 and

16,500 students and over the past five years, the corporation has seen a 3.4% increase in their total enrollment. In this same time period (5 years), ethnic/racial enrollment trends show a 10.6% decline in the White population, a 5% increase in the Black population, a 0.2% decrease in the Multiracial population and a 5.8% increase in the Hispanic population. It may be important to note that the Asian population has decreased by 0.2% and the American Indian and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander populations have remained constant. The corporation grade over the past four years has decreased from a B to a C (IDOE, 2018). Table 17 shows the demographic changes for Principal G's school over the past five years.

Table 17 *Demographic Changes for Principal G's School Over the Past Five Years*

Year	% Hispanic	%Black	%White	Total Enrollment	School Grade
2013-2014	13.9%	37.8%	39.9%	100-500	A
2018-2019	27.8%	31.5%	33.6%	100-500	B (2017-2018)
Source: IDOE					

Principal G's school is a small early college program school that has between 100-500 students. Over the past five years, the demographics of the school have changed. Specifically, the Hispanic population has increased by 13.9% and the Black and White student populations have decreased by 6.3%. Over the past four years, the school grade has dropped from an A to a B (Table 17).

Assessing Culture

As mentioned before, Principal G's school is an early college program where students have to submit an application and undergo an interview to be accepted into the school. Their

school corporation has freshman academies and students are eligible to apply for admission into Principal G's school for 10 – 12th grade. Principal G's school has formed a recruitment committee made up of teachers and students who go out to all the schools, specifically targeting sixth graders, and do presentations to advertise the school and showcase their programs. In fact, they also bring in kindergartners and do activities with them as well. The messaging for the younger grades involves letting them know that Principal G's school will provide opportunities for them to have a career, go to college and give them post-secondary training in specific areas. As they speak to older students, specifically those that are closer to eighth grade, they emphasize that students can get an Associate's degree for free and also let them know they can complete half their undergraduate degree while still in high school. Students who are rising 10th graders complete an online application and are interviewed. Interestingly, their parents also have to complete part of the application and are involved in the interview process.

Many people are under the misconception that the students that apply and get accepted into Principal G's school are honors students that take mostly advanced placement courses. In response to the misconception, Principal G stated "we don't get that kind of student here really…they are a minority…we accept students of all ability levels". Principal G explained that most of the students that attend her school are "middle of the road kids that do have to be able to handle the rigor of college classes", but these students have resources and an extremely supportive environment that enable them to succeed. Principal G went on to explain that even if a student has discipline problems, they will still accept that child because "they don't have those discipline problems once they are here. It's very hard to be disrespectful to a person who actually knows you and knows your name".

Principal G places high value on relationships. She proudly said "I usually know all the students' names by the time they graduate—I can tell you where they are going to school, what their job is, and what their interests are". The students feel empowered to e-mail Principal G and stop by to speak with her about issues that may be going on. Principal G highlighted that they have a "family culture" even to the point where they call their staff, students, parents and all the community "family". Principal G's philosophy emphasizes the importance of treating every single person in the school like they are equal—whether they are custodians, para professionals, teachers, secretaries, or a principal, they are all equal. Principal G explained that the students often cannot tell the difference between the adults in the building because teachers, paraprofessionals, custodians and administrators are equal participants in a child's education. This is exemplified by the fact that custodians sponsor clubs and activities at the school.

Their school does not have extracurricular activities, but they do partner with other schools in their corporation to give their students extracurricular options. They also don't have a music or theatre program. Rather, they have clubs and activities that meet during the school day and use these clubs and activities as a way to train and equip student leaders.

The school partners with a local university and some staff members that teach or work at the university also teach classes and tutor at the school. Additionally, the school attracts many retired teachers who teach classes, tutor or provide additional support to the students. Principal G states that although the adjunct teachers and tutors don't get paid a lot of money, they "love educating kids and they love seeing them successful". They love the culture of the school and have bought into the concept that they are family. In fact, Principal G stated that the kids probably don't realize who the adjunct teachers are because to them everyone is equal and they are family.

Recently, they have seen a lot of Nigerian and Hispanic families enter the school. In addition, they are seeing more legacy students coming through their doors. As a result, they have maintained their diversity because of these legacy families as well as the Nigerian and Hispanic families, which, according to Principal G, keeps the culture at the school very rich. The school continues to adapt their practices to highlight the diversity that exists within their institution and support their constituents.

Principal G pointed out that since students intentionally choose to attend their high school rather than go to the large high school in their district, they are attracted to their smaller school environment and a lot of the time it is because they are unique in some way. Principal G explained that "kids who would normally or possibly not graduate from high school at all, kids who would normally be harassed because of their different beliefs or the different way they look or the different way that they express themselves…they fit in very well here and no one looks at them any different because everybody here is different". She went on to say "our kids are a little bit needier and more emotional than most kids maybe because they are better connected with their feelings". Due to the fact that different is normal at their school, Principal G experiences very little discrimination.

At their school, there is very little turnover of teachers and staff. As a result, a lot of their staff is Caucasian and middle class. Despite that, the staff works very hard to learn about diverse students at the school. Principal G believes that if their staff was more diverse, they would be able to make deeper connections with the students.

Valuing Diversity

When talking about cultural competence, Principal G stated that it meant being knowledgeable and accepting of practices that will support students and their cultural

backgrounds. In addition, cultural competence means students to bring their cultural values, customs and norms into the educational setting so that feel comfortable connecting with people at the school.

Principal G mentioned that they have a growing Nigerian population and so they have reached out to their district title 3 office, which supports cultural initiatives and families in their district, to obtain resources to support their increasingly diverse population. As a result, they have connected with an adult education program that has an ELL program. They have partnered with the organization to offer families a Parent Resource Night where they are bringing in representatives to talk to immigrant families and educate them on how to effectively navigate the US educational system. They have found that a lot of immigrant families need support in different areas of their lives, but don't know how to obtain or identify those support systems. To support their growing Nigerian population, they are hiring a Nigerian translator who will be present to ensure that information is transferred to the families effectively.

Principal G and her staff are also intentionally talking to teachers about the backgrounds of their Nigerian kids so that when they enter their school, they have a foundation to pull from. For example, many of the Nigerian families are not in the United States with them. Instead, they are staying with relatives. Knowing this fact can help teachers navigate how to create support systems for these students.

For the Hispanic population, they offer programs that are unique to students that are not native English speakers. For example, the school has a medical translators program where students, especially Hispanic students, gets a translator certification. Students that go through this program have an opportunity to get a high wage part-time job at hospitals while they are in school or when they graduate. They sponsor a chapter of a Spanish National Honors Society and

this year instead of celebrating Black History Month, they celebrated Afro-Latino figures that many people don't realize were mixed.

To showcase the cultures of students in their school, they have an International Club. This year, instead of doing a Valentine's Day dance, they did an international dance where students selected the music and the music they selected was culturally diverse. In addition, students feel comfortable showcasing different dances from their cultures. Additionally, members of the club go out and get food from different cultures and offer a free buffet to the students.

In their curriculum, they offer elective liberal arts courses where students have the ability to study different cultures. For example, they have two levels of Sociology, different Psychology courses and Philosophy classes. In their history curriculum, they try and incorporate different cultural narratives not just US culture and history. In addition, their school does overseas trips (about three per year) and this has been an effective way to engage parents and engage in conversations about different cultures. Furthermore, they are also able to visit countries that their students are from to authentically learn about the values and customs of students in their populations that are from different countries around the world.

In order to educate students on different topics, each students takes an advisory course. The advisory course is broken down into grade-level themes according. In the sophomore year, themes of the course are focused on socio-emotional learning, habits of mind and cultural literacy (this will be explained in more depth later). In their junior year, the students focus on SAT and ACT preparation and testing. In addition, part of their programming is teaching students how to be successful once they graduate. They learn about professional attire and that has a cultural component as well because different students have different perceptions of what

professional attire entails depending on their cultural backgrounds and beliefs. The students participate in interviews and the school brings members from the community to help students with their interview skills as well as the preparation of their resumes. As a result of this preparation, they have a high number of students that have jobs when they graduate. In their senior year, they focus on college scholarships and college applications. Principal G proudly stated that 100% of their students apply to college and 96% of students completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Last year, their senior class of about 121 obtained around 3 million dollars worth of scholarship money. Outside of the advisory course for seniors, the school hosted a FAFSA support night to help families navigate the nuances of the FAFSA application.

In the state of Indiana, adjunct professors at a school don't have to be licensed teachers in the state of Indiana. Therefore, family members of students that have advanced degrees are able to teach at the school. These adjuncts come into the school to teach one, two or three courses and are able to see their child's education from a unique vantage point. Moreover, the adjunct professor bring diversity, diverse expertise and depths of knowledge.

Managing the Dynamics of Difference

In order to help students navigate the dynamics of difference, they have a course called an advisory course. The course is themed by grade level. For example, the sophomore class focuses on socio-emotional learning and habits of mind needed for success in high school and beyond. They also focus on effective study skills, collaboration and communication. Part of the curriculum is committed to students learning about other cultures and providing opportunities for students to share their cultures. This allows the school to teach the mission and vision of the school to students in their first year at the school.

In order to identify and confront discriminatory actions at their school, the students have a Bullying club. The club does activities to educate the students body on different topics pertaining to bullying and discrimination and the student leaders have created videos that are being used district wide. The school has an anonymous bully box where individuals can report any concerns they may have. Principal G mentioned that they hardly get anything in the box because they are a very supportive culture. As mentioned before, most students at the school are unique and so being different is the norm.

Adapting to Diversity

The school has had to adapt their practices to accommodate different families and also provide incentive for them to attend school events. A big challenge the school has been facing is getting parents into the building for parent-teacher conferences. In an age where parents can access student information and grades online, they don't feel a need to attend conferences. Additionally, the school recently hosted a parent application night where families were educated on applying and attending the school. What the school has found is that for certain cultures the whole family is involved in the decision making as to whether their child will attend the school or not. As a result, it is important for the whole family to be present when the child applies and as a result, the school needs to provide resources to accommodate the whole family. One strategy they have employed to engage families is to partner with the YMCA, the park system and other organizations and invite them to events so that there are resources available for families, like summer camps and programs for younger kids. They have also partnered with organizations that help parents with their FAFSA applications.

Another way they are hoping to engage parents is through the application process for the school. Their strategy is to invite students and their parents to an application and interview night

where parents can be part of the interview process. At this night, they will instruct parents and students on the things they need to do in the eighth and ninth grade to position themselves to put in a strong application for the child to attend the school in the 10th grade. Therefore, the school sets the tone that emphasizes a partnership with the parents even before the child steps through the door. As mentioned before, many families, especially Hispanic families, see their commitment to the school as a family commitment and setting a tone that emphasizes that they are valued will go a long way in facilitating a successful partnership.

As far as using data to adapt their practices and make decisions, they break their data down in terms of the diverse populations in their school. They examine the data as a whole staff (of about 20 teachers) and discover any gaps in achievement. Their data has shown that the largest underperforming population is White males in their school and district. As a result, they are creating targeted programs to make sure they are addressing the needs of this population. They also have a cultural competence committee and a literacy committee that looks at data and breaks it down according to different demographic groups. The different committees set goals and they look at trends to see what the hindrances are to different populations achieving those goals. For example, they give a test called the Scholastic Reading Inventory that tests students reading grade level. The goal is for their students to achieve 1300+ on the test, which indicates that students are at a college reading level and they are able to handle college-level textbooks.

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge

Principal G's school does a cultural competency professional development sequence and Principal G empowers teacher leaders to participate in the professional development. Additionally, their school has professional development time every day for one hour in the morning. During these morning meetings, their entire staff meets to talk about the needs of the

students and reflect on their personal belief systems and values to see whether they are looking at situations from their cultural points of view.

Their district has also put on an "Undoing Racism" and White Privilege workshops for their leaders and certain staff members, which focuses on self-reflection, personal biases and unconscious privileges that one may contain. Two-day workshops are also offered to teachers during the year—one of those times being Spring Break—and the district covers the cost. After teachers and leaders go through the district workshop where they learn how to break down barriers through journaling and other activities, they in turn bring the training to their building staff. Another resource they have district wide is an Equity Committee, which is made up of 75 to 100 teachers, counselors, and administrators. This committee meets twice a year to provide resources for teachers and administrators in all buildings.

Analysis of Cultural Competence

The section below contains an analysis of Principal G's interview in the context of the 15 indicators of cultural competence.

Figure 10. Analysis of Principal G Interview
(Source of figure: Lindsey et al. (2009))

Indicator of Cultural Competence	Observed in the Interview	Essential Element of Cultural Competence
1. Recognizes how their culture affects others	YES	
2. Able to describe their culture and cultural norms of their organization	YES	**Assess Culture**
3. Understands how the culture of their organization affects those with different cultures	YES	

Figure 10 continued

4. Celebrates and encourages the presence of a variety of people in all activities	YES	
5. Recognizes differences as diversity rather than inappropriate responses to the environment	YES	**Value Diversity**
6. Accepts that each culture finds some values and behaviors more important than others	YES	
7. Learn effective strategies for resolving conflict, particularly among people whose cultural backgrounds and values differ	NO	
8. Understand the effect that historic distrust has on present-day interactions	YES	**Managing the Dynamics of Difference**
9. Realize that you may misjudge others' actions based on learned expectations	YES	

Figure 10 continued

10. Change the way things are done to acknowledge the differences that are present in the staff, clients and community.	YES	**Adapting to Diversity**
11. Develop skills for intercultural communication	YES	
12. Institutionalize cultural interventions for conflicts and confusion caused by the dynamics of difference	YES	
13. Incorporate cultural knowledge into the mainstream of the organization	YES	**Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge**
14. Teach the origins of stereotypes and prejudices	YES	
15. For staff development and education, integrate into your systems information and skills that enable all to interact effectively in a variety of intercultural situations	YES	

Principal G's school shows 14 of the 15 indicators of cultural competence. The one area that Principal G did not mention was teaching their staff and administrators how to effectively resolve conflicts. The reason that Principal G may not have mentioned it is because their school does not face a lot of discriminatory actions because the students and parents are very supportive of the school environment and perpetuating the mission and vision of the school. However, it may be important to be proactive in this area, rather than reactive, because an institution cannot

predict who they will be serving from year to year and when their staff will need the skills to dissolve conflicts that arise.

Principal H

Principal H is a White male that has been in education for 15 years and his 15th year in his school corporation. He started out as physical education and health teacher for seven years. He then transitioned to administration as a high school dean of students for two years, spent half a year as a middle school principal and then transitioned to the high school principal. He has been a leader at the high school for 6 years.

Principal H's school is in Indigo corporation, which is located in an urban region in northwest Indiana. For the 2018-2019 school year, Indigo corporation's enrollment was between 2000 and 2500 students and over the past five years, the corporation has seen a 2% increase in their total enrollment. In this same time period (5 years), ethnic/racial enrollment trends show a 6.4% decline in the White population, a 3.6% increase in the Black population, a 1.2% decrease in the Multiracial population and a 2.2% increase in the Hispanic population. It may be important to note that the Asian population has decreased by 0.3% and the American Indian population has decreased by 0.2%. The corporation grade over the past four years has remained constant at a B (IDOE, 2018). Table 18 shows the demographic changes for Principal H's school over the past five years.

Table 18 *Demographic Changes for Principal H's School Over the Past Five Years*

Year	% Hispanic	%Black	%White	Total Enrollment	School Grade
2013-2014	25.2%	18.1%	53.7%	500-1000	C
2018-2019	23.6%	25.4%	46.1%	500-1000	A (2017-2018)

Source: IDOE

As Table 18 shows, Principal H's school size ranges from 500-1000 and enrollment has remained stable over the past five years. The school has seen some demographic shifts in this same time frame. Specifically, the Hispanic population has decreased by 1.6%, which counters national trends, the Black population has increased by 7.4% and the White population has decreased by 7.6%. In the last four years or so, Principal H has made some significant gains in their school grade—they have improved from a C to an A.

Assessing Culture

Principal H describes his culture as positive. He tries to instill in his students that it is important to treat people with respect and help one another out, especially if someone "falls down". Principal H expects his students to follow the rules and guidelines that are laid out for them and if the rules aren't followed, consequences are handed down based on clearly stated school policies. Even when kids are given consequences, they are used as a teaching tool, and a learning experience for the child, to build character and ensure they don't make the same mistake again.

Sometimes student come into the school and have a different set of values and norms that they are accustomed to. Although there is learning curve, Principal H reported that after the new students become rooted within the school and the culture of respect and support, their values and norms, which are different to that of the school, start to dissipate. In fact, some of the older kids take the newer kids under their wing and say "listen, this is how it runs here. You have a lot of people who care about you and you got administrators that really care about you. Listen to them because they are not going to steer you the wrong way".

Principal H recognizes that the school is undergoing demographic and socioeconomic shift—there has been a big influx of Hispanic and African American students. In the midst of the

demographic shifts, Principal H highlighted that a challenge he is facing is "maintaining a positive culture, a positive attitude, and a respectful one". What he is very proud of is the fact the students and the adults interact with each other in a respectful way.

In the past six years, there has been some turnover of teachers and a lot of veteran teachers "from the old days" have moved on and they have started hiring new teachers that are buying into the school's culture and allowing the old mindsets, which were barriers to cultural competence, to dissipate. When they hire a teacher, they look for individuals that get along with all kids within their school, not just some of the kids. They want to employ teachers that are going to make an attempt to learn about all their kids. Principal H stated when talking about his staff "it's your 5%" meaning "95% are really good and it's the 5% that are always negative about something".

One of the barriers to engaging and forming relationship with parents from diverse backgrounds, especially those that are new to the school, is that they are consistently on guard. Principal H explains that this defensiveness may have stemmed from negative experiences in the past. When they get to know the school and its culture, the barriers are alleviated. Another challenge that Principal H stated is understanding diverse students, who they, what they are going through and what they bring to school every day.

Value Diversity

When defining cultural competence, Principal H emphasized the importance of thoroughly understanding people values, customs, and behavioral norms. Principal H explained that it is important to understand "different cultures, the different lifestyles, the different values…". It is important not only to look at the values and norms of specific subgroups, but also look at those values compared to other groups and the school.

Principal H realizes that they don't do enough to learn about the cultures of the students in their school, but he emphasized that they try hard to encourage their faculty and staff to form relationships with students and through those relationships learn about the cultures of the kids in their building. According to Principal H, another area they really need to improve on is creating platforms for students to showcase their cultures. Principal H talked about how teachers have incorporated aspects of different cultures into their curriculums and encouraged students to showcase their cultures. However, they don't have any formal programming as a school to showcase the cultures of the different students, which is an area they hope to grow in the future.

During parent-teacher conferences, the school does not proactively provide supports for the teachers, but rather relies on the teachers to let the administrators know what they need in order to connect or provide them with the appropriate resources. If parents come into the school and don't speak English, thus presenting a language barrier, the administrators provide resources to the parents and teachers to make sure those barriers are overcome. Therefore, most of the time they address situations and barriers on a case by case basis.

In the past five years, the school has done many things to make diverse populations feel valued and make sure they are aware of resources that can support them. For example, the school has been intentional about making different populations aware of post-secondary scholarships. In fact, the school has taken Hispanic students to Chicago for Latino scholarship fairs and they have also taken a group of diverse students to Urban League scholarship fairs. The important thing is giving students accessibility to options.

Principal H contends that part of valuing diversity is forming connections and making oneself available for those relationships to form. As a result, they make a concerted effort to promote events in the community and make them accessible to everyone in the community.

Principal H and his administrative team make sure they are present at all the events, be it an athletic event, a choir concert, or a "spaghetti dinner type night". Principal H stated "if you are not visible then you are not invested". Furthermore, the best way to build bridges and make relationship is to be present, visible and accessible. When the parents see that you are invested and approachable, they are more willing to make a connection—at the grassroots level.

Managing the Dynamics of Difference

Principal H talked about a situation where a student was very upset at something or someone and the situation was escalating. Principal H explained that because he had a relationship with the child involved, he was able to interject, calm the student down, and dissolve the situation. Principal H was not sure the student would have calmed down for anyone else, but because they had built a relationship the situation could have been a lot worse. Managing the dynamics of difference is about relationship. In his experience, kids will go to who they trust and it is important to proactively build that trust and form relationships.

When students are confronted with or see discriminatory actions, they have the option of reporting it using an online anonymous reporting system. However, as mentioned before, students are likely to go to somebody they trust before they decide to make anonymous reports on the online system.

It is Principal H's goal that every student knows the attitude of the adults in the building is " I am here for you, I care about you deeply, you are going to have to listen, you are going to have to do what you need to do and we are going to help you…if I have to drag you, if I have to pull you across the finish line, if I have to kick you across the finish line or you walk willingly, we are going to get you to where we need to be, together". The point of the last statement is they are a supportive community built on trust and collaboration.

Adapting to Diversity

When talking about their data culture, Principal H explained that they look at academic-related data, especially from state mandated tests and other assessments like the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) test. They also look at the disciplinary data as well as the free and reduced lunch data as they pertain to behavior and achievement. The school makes a concerted effort to identify if there are any gaps in achievement and act accordingly by looking at ways to close those gaps. For example, Principal H is proud of the fact that they have increased access to Advanced Placement courses for all students, especially traditionally underserved populations. Even though they have had a diverse population for a long time, they have never had an African American in the top 10 in terms of academics. Based on what they saw in the data, they eliminated prerequisites to higher level classes and Advanced Placement classes and for the first time in his 15 years at the school, they have two African-Americans in the top 10. The school is so proud of the achievements of these students and Principal H proudly explained that they will be putting up the pictures of these students on the wall in a specific hallway along with the other students that made the top 10. Seeing the pictures of the top achievers, especially African American students, will inspire students who walk by their pictures every day to know "I can be on there too".

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge

Not much is done in this area besides state mandated trainings and individual requests of teachers.

Analysis of Cultural Competence

The section below contains an analysis of Principal H's interview in the context of the 15

indicators of cultural competence.

Figure 11. Analysis of Principal H Interview
(Source of figure: Lindsey et al. (2009))

Indicator of Cultural Competence	Observed in the Interview	Essential Element of Cultural Competence
1. Recognizes how their culture affects others	YES	
2. Able to describe their culture and cultural norms of their organization	YES	**Assess Culture**
3. Understands how the culture of their organization affects those with different cultures	YES	
4. Celebrates and encourages the presence of a variety of people in all activities	YES	
5. Recognizes differences as diversity rather than inappropriate responses to the environment	YES	**Value Diversity**
6. Accepts that each culture finds some values and behaviors more important than others	YES	

Figure 11 continued

7. Learn effective strategies for resolving conflict, particularly among people whose cultural backgrounds and values differ	**NO**	**Managing the Dynamics of Difference**
8. Understand the effect that historic distrust has on present-day interactions	YES	
9. Realize that you may misjudge others' actions based on learned expectations	YES	
10. Change the way things are done to acknowledge the differences that are present in the staff, clients and community	YES	**Adapting to Diversity**
11. Develop skills for intercultural communication	**NO**	
12. Institutionalize cultural interventions for conflicts and confusion caused by the dynamics of difference	**NO**	

Figure 11 continued

13. Incorporate cultural knowledge into the mainstream of the organization	NO	
14. Teach the origins of stereotypes and prejudices	NO	**Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge**
15. For staff development and education, integrate into your systems information and skills that enable all to interact effectively in a variety of intercultural situations	NO	

During the interview, Principal H addressed 8 out of the 15 indicators of cultural competence. The areas of weakness included adapting to diversity and institutionalizing cultural knowledge. Principal H tends to not create institutional-wide systems and trainings to resolve conflicts and effectively communicate with diverse constituents at the school. Rather, their school relies on the teachers developing individual relationships with the students and leveraging those relationships to learn about different cultures and resolve conflicts. While this can be an effective method to understand different cultures, it may be important to train teachers and equip them with tools to effectively resolve conflicts when they arise. Part of the training should include teaching constituents about stereotypes and biases that have been engrained in the subconscious of many societies.

Principal I

Principal I is a White male in his 24th year of education. He began his teaching career as a high school social studies teacher and coach. He has served in his current corporation for 23 years; as a high school history and social studies teacher, a Dean of Students for one year, a Freshmen School Principal for five years and is currently in his eighth year as the leader of his building.

Principal I's school is in Brown corporation, which is located in an urban region in central Indiana. For the 2018-2019 school year, Brown corporation's enrollment was between 16,000 and 16,500 students and over the past five years, the corporation has seen a 7% increase in their total enrollment. In this same time period (5 years), ethnic/racial enrollment trends show a 9.6% decline in the White population, a 4.3% increase in the Black population, a 1.5% decrease in the Multiracial population and a 6.1% increase in the Hispanic population. It may be important to note that the Asian population has deceased by 0.3% and the American Indian population has remained constant. The Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander populations have remained constant as well. The corporation grade over the past four years has decreased from an A to a C (IDOE, 2018). Table 19 shows the demographic changes for Principal I's school over the past five years.

Table 19 *Demographic Changes for Principal I's School Over the Past Five Years*

Year	% Hispanic	%Black	%White	Total Enrollment	School Grade
2013-2014	14.1%	39.9%	38.5%	2000-2500	B
2018-2019	21.6%	44.3%	25.8%	2500-3000	B (2017-2018)

Source: IDOE

In the past five years, his school has seen an increase in enrollment of about 300 students. Demographically, there has been an increase in the Hispanic population by 7.5%, and increase in the Black population by 4.4% and a decrease in the White population by 12.7%. In spite of the changes in demographics, the school has maintained a consistent grade of B over the past four years. A discussion of the essential elements of cultural competency and proficiency as they pertain to Principal I's school will follow.

Assessing Culture

Principal I began by stating their mission statement, which is "Achieving Excellence, Building Character and Serving Others". In addition, Principal I explained that their school has a lot of tradition, but they value diversity and different perspectives in the classroom. Another important aspect of their culture is serving their greater community through their school.

In terms of the types of students that attend the school, Principal I stated that "we serve students that live in ten million-dollar homes… [and also serve students in] one of the highest crime rates in their county and the student sit in our classrooms together. That is the beauty of it". When talking about the diversity in his school, Principal I gave an analogy. He explained that the school is like a piece of literature. He stated that when "you read a piece of literature, you are going to listen for and share the multiple perspectives that the students bring to that piece of literature". Principal I explained that each student brings their own life experiences and perspectives to their learning and it is important to listen and learn from them. These are lessons that have been handed down to him from his predecessors.

Principal I does not see diversity as a problem, but appreciates the diverse perspectives and experiences as different with no assigned value. He acknowledges that the different perspectives and experiences people have can, in fact, have a negative and positive impact on

their learning and their learning environment. The positive is that diverse perspectives allow for rich conversations and discussions in the classrooms. On the negative end of things, Principal I has noticed that individuals can isolate themselves and not engage, which can have detrimental effects academically and socially. Principal I wants every student to know that "every place is a safe place and so although you may not look like the others in the classroom and you may not have the resources available to you when you leave the classroom, you are valued in that classroom…you are also very intelligent, which can be measured in many different ways". Principal I wants to make sure that students feel welcome and comfortable with one another while challenging themselves and holding each other accountable to excellence. For example, sometimes students opt out of rigorous courses and when approached they say "I can't be there with those rich or White kids". Principal I and his staff will leverage their relationships with those students and encourage them to take risks and challenge themselves. Principal I wants his students to bring their full selves to the school environment, but recognizes that people can bring different vantage points and experiences that may hinder them from thriving in that environment. However, addressing misconceptions, showing the students they are valued and capable of excellence can go a long way. In short, "relationships matter".

When talking about the "life experiences" of the kids at their school, Principal I described two types of students. There are students where life has been tough and they know how to navigate life's circumstances very well because they have to. There is another group of students that have to navigate the expectations of their parents. They are under pressure from their parents to get a specific grade and they don't necessarily care whether they are learning the material in classes or not. Focusing on the grade is problematic because students may miss out on real learning, which involves learning from one another, being challenged by each other, and being

supportive of one another. Principal I continually emphasizes that he wants his educational

practices to be student centered and one where his staff and students are learning from the

population of students they serve.

Principal I has been part of his corporation for 23 years and has been in his building for a

long time as well. He is starting to educate children of parents that he taught. As a result, many

parents feel comfortable coming into the school to talk to him and share their concerns because

they know he is a good listener. Principal I believes that being a good listener is an important

part of serving the community. A practice that Principal I performs each day is to ask himself

whether he has served his students and bettered his community—he encourages his staff do the

same reflective practice. Another practice is for them to ask whether they have achieved their

goals and objectives for the day. In general, Principal I emphasized that their job is to serve the

students, help them achieve their dreams, and help them navigate life especially in light the

increased socio-emotional issues faced by the children in this generation.

Valuing Diversity

When talking about cultural competence, Principal I explained that his fundamental

understanding of that term boils down to one question: do we know the students we serve? He

added to that by saying "once I know the students I serve, am I able to overcome any bias that I

might have?" According to Principal I, when individuals approach someone with a different

background, one has to be cognizant of the bias and stereotypes they have, which can present a

barrier to how they are seeing and engaging with that person.

In order to educate their students about people form diverse cultures, they are intentional

in their curriculum about their choice of books and articles they read and how they frame

discussions around those pieces of literature. Principal I indicated that it is important to make

sure the readings are aligned with the standards that are set, but they should not dictate it. To illustrate this point he gave an example of a social studies teacher. Principal I emphasized the importance of the teacher asking the question of whether they are serving the students that are sitting in front of them. For example, do they hear the voice of someone that looks like them (especially in the interpretation of a reading)? Do they hear the voice of someone who has had the experiences that they have had?

Principal I pointed out that he grew up in a homogenous Caucasian town in Indiana and what he has learned about from his experience in urban educational environments is there is "cultural competency within each race". What this means is that due to the lived experiences of different individuals, they bring a certain perspective towards an issue. Sometimes, people dismiss those perspectives because they don't understand it or connect with it and so they don't know how to make sense of it. Therefore, they may dismiss an author or a particular perspective because they are interpreting it from their own cultural lenses, value systems, biases and stereotypes. Having diversity in classrooms and having individuals present that can speak from an author's perspective as well as their authentic experiences can go a long way in making a classroom environment culturally competent. He emphasizes to his staff that actions such as choosing a certain number of books by African American authors, reading their books, and checking off superficial checklist items is not being culturally competent. Rather, valuing different perspectives and engaging in meaningful dialogues is what the overarching value system should be.

In order to showcase the different cultures and backgrounds, the students have a strong Black Student Union that was formed about three years ago with the help of teachers. The idea for the club formed out of a class on Black America, which they still offer. Additionally, in order

to educate the community and support the kids, they did a lot of work before the 2016 election and organized different activities to hear from their immigrant students, or their "DACA students", to listen to their voice. To further educate the community, they invited legislators, such as Senator Donnelley, who were accompanied by gentlemen that spoke about their experiences with ICE. The initiative to hear from the DACA students, legislators, and individuals that have had different experiences with ICE was led by their Assistant Principal, because they were sensitive to the fears and concerns of students, especially around the time of the election. The school has continued to support 34 DACA students. Principal I explained that he has formed great relationships with these students and they feel empowered to share their experiences and hear directly from the administration as to how they plan to support them. A few years ago, the school hired a bilingual counselor to support them with the resources to process their situations.

The school has other organizations and clubs that support students. For example, there is a club where students discuss transgender topics. Principal I stated that "you can walk into our school and be whoever you are and you are going to find someone like you and have somebody to speak with about what experiences you are you through". At their school, they are comfortable talking about a variety of topics, even if it's with a stranger. Their view is "we can't exclude kids if we want learning to occur".

When it comes to welcoming and engaging families, they are intentional about offering an environment where parents feel valued. Principal I explained that they have a good turn out during parent-teacher conferences because they are mindful of when they schedule their conferences. They offer evening sessions for those who can come and they also offer day sessions for people that work second shift.

As far as hiring practices, Principal I would like to see his staff and administrative team reflect the demographics of the student population so that families and students that walk into the school can have somebody they feel comfortable talking to and connecting with.

Managing the Dynamics of Difference

When asked about how he managed discriminatory actions, Principal I gave an example of a recent situation that occurred at his school. There was a substitute teacher that came into the building and started conversing with the students about the "N" word and its use. Due to the fact that this teacher did not have relationship with the kids, they went to administrators and teachers that had relationships with to express their concerns. The students indicated that the teacher was trying to tell them the difference between the use of the endings "er" or "a" on the N-word. Once the students reported concerns, Principal I addressed it immediately indicating that these conversations cannot happen without having a relationship with the students and knowing their contexts.

At a recent county Principal's meeting, they talked about students wearing the Make America Great Again (MAGA) hats and what that represented for students in their corporation. The problem was not necessarily whether the students supported President Trump or somebody else, it was more about their intention behind wearing the hats and how it made students in their population feel. They also talked about the Tinker case that allowed students free speech in public schools. According to Principal I, managing the dynamics of difference, especially in light of the MAGA hats is about dialogue and open communication. Communication and dialogue is important because, as Principal I put it, "our children are vulnerable". Children listen to media, they watch adults very closely, they listen to their parents, and often times, value the thoughts of their parents. Allowing for discussions about tough issues can be challenging and uncomfortable,

but when those discussions happen in a structured and controlled manner, people can learn from one another and hear the personal experiences of different people. As teachers and educators, Principal I stated that they have to be aware and observant and talk through situations to understand the "why" behind different actions. From Principal I's viewpoint, it is justified to ask students to discontinue behavior and issue potential disciplinary consequences if statements or actions are disruptive to the educational environment of other students.

Adapting to Diversity

In order to adapt to the changing demographics, Principal I has been intentional about hiring staff that reflect the demographics of the students they serve. Currently, 46% of their teachers and support staff are African American, which reflects the African-American student demographic at their school and this has been positive in reaching the Black population in their school.

In order to better reach the diverse stakeholders in their community, Principal I would like to get out into the community, especially the apartment complexes where some of their families live, and engage parents and allow them to talk to him about their child's schooling. Being out in the community will show the parents that he is invested and he values them.

When it comes to their data culture, they use what they call short cycle, mid-cycle and long cycle data to guide their PLC conversations, especially as it pertains to talking about the progress of their students. They also use progress data from their benchmark reading assessments and break the data down according to demographics. When they receive the disaggregated results, the staff has conversations and start to look at practices and tools to help their students grow as readers. They also break down their students' grades according to different content areas and classes the students take and Principal I gets reports specific for the Hispanic population and

also the African American population. Principal I and his staff look at disaggregated ISTEP and graduate qualifying exam data and look for trends and gaps in achievement. Principal I reported that they are disturbed by the trend that White students on Free and Reduced lunch outperform paid African American males on state assessments and they are continuing to work to implement practices that will reduce this trend. A bright spot that their data shows is that honors and AP courses are more reflective of the demographics within their building, which is very different from what it used to be. In the past, AP classes were full of White students.

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge

In their building, they have PLCs where they discuss pedagogy and the way their curriculum supports their students from diverse background. The administrators and staff have done a lot of work with Glen Singleton's Courageous Conversations—a training program that strives to bring racial equity into schools through structured conversations. As a result of this training and frequent conversations, Principal I explained "it's easy to have conversations about race…I do not struggle with that in this building. We don't walk into meetings where people are scared to death to talk about the elephant in the room". Having difficult and courageous conversations about race, equity and achievement, courageous conversations if you will, are embedded into their school culture. Principal I can walk into a PLC and feel comfortable asking questions like "How are the Black students doing in your class" or "Talk to us about your African American males". In order to serve students and allow for their growth, administrators and teachers cannot be afraid to talk about race and other factors affecting the achievement of students.

Analysis of Cultural Competence

The section below contains an analysis of Principal I's interview in the context of the 15 indicators of cultural competence.

Figure 12. Analysis of Principal I Interview
(Source of figure: Lindsey et al. (2009))

Indicator of Cultural Competence	Observed in the Interview	Essential Element of Cultural Competence
1. Recognizes how their culture affects others	YES	
2. Able to describe their culture and cultural norms of their organization	YES	**Assess Culture**
3. Understands how the culture of their organization affects those with different cultures	YES	
4. Celebrates and encourages the presence of a variety of people in all activities	YES	
5. Recognizes differences as diversity rather than inappropriate responses to the environment	YES	**Value Diversity**
6. Accepts that each culture finds some values and behaviors more important than others	YES	

Figure 12 continued

7. Learn effective strategies for resolving conflict, particularly among people whose cultural backgrounds and values differ	YES	**Managing the Dynamics of Difference**
8. Understand the effect that historic distrust has on present-day interactions	YES	
9. Realize that you may misjudge others' actions based on learned expectations	YES	
10. Change the way things are done to acknowledge the differences that are present in the staff, clients and community	YES	**Adapting to Diversity**
11. Develop skills for intercultural communication	YES	
12. Institutionalize cultural interventions for conflicts and confusion caused by the dynamics of difference	**NO**	

Figure 12 continued

13. Incorporate cultural knowledge into the mainstream of the organization	YES	
14. Teach the origins of stereotypes and prejudices	**NO**	**Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge**
15. For staff development and education, integrate into your systems information and skills that enable all to interact effectively in a variety of intercultural situations	YES	

Principal I showcased 13 of the 15 indicators of cultural competence. Principal I relies on

teacher relationships with the students to resolve conflicts. While this may be effective, teachers

may need to have tools and guidelines that will equip them to have effective conversations when

conflicts arise with students. Part of that knowledge should be instructing teachers on the origins

of stereotypes and biases they may bring to particular situations.

Principal J

Principal J is a Black male that has been in education for 15 years. He is currently in his

second year as the leader of his building. He started his career as a special education teacher

where he taught children with emotional disabilities in a self-contained classroom that contained

between 8 – 20 students. Principal J described his time as a special education teacher as the best

experience of his educational career because he "got to see growth and [he] got to see immediate

gratification of the work [he] did". The students had an opportunity to earn their way out of the

program. After being a special education teacher for a number of years, he went into

administration as a Dean of Students where he dealt primarily with discipline and attendance,

which was tough since he dealt a lot with the negative aspects of student behavior. He then served as an Assistant Principal for five years in his current building and became Principal.

Principal J's school is in Gray corporation, which is located in an urban region in northern Indiana. For the 2018-2019 school year, Gray corporation's enrollment was between 17,000 and 17,500 students and over the past five years, the corporation has seen a 12.5% decrease in their total enrollment. In this same time period (5 years), ethnic/racial enrollment trends show a 6.9% decline in the White population, a 2% increase in the Black population, a 1.1% increase in the Multiracial population and a 4.1% increase in the Hispanic population. It may be important to note that the Asian population has deceased by 0.3% and the American Indian population has remained constant. The Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander populations has increased by 0.1%. At the time this dissertation is being written, Gray corporation is contesting their corporation accountability grade (IDOE, 2018). Table 20 shows the demographic changes for Principal J's school over the past five years.

Table 20 *Demographic Changes for Principal J's School Over the Past Five Years*

Year	% Hispanic	%Black	%White	Total Enrollment	School Grade
2013-2014	20.0%	28.3%	43.0%	1000-1500	C
2018-2019	24.0%	34.5%	31.0%	1000-1500	B (2017-2018)

Source: IDOE

Principal J's enrollment is between 1000 and 1500 students and has remained relatively constant over the past 5 years. Despite this consistent enrollment, the demographics of the school have changed. Specifically, the Hispanic population has increased by 4%, the Black population has increased by 6.2% and the White population has decreased 12%. With all the demographic changes that have occurred in their school, they have maintained a B school rating over the past

four years. A discussion of the essential elements of cultural competence as described by Principal J will follow.

Assessing Culture

In their school corporation, there is open enrollment for high school students. This means that students entering ninth grade can either attend their assigned high school, which is based on their residence, or apply to attend another high school in their corporation, including charter and magnet schools. As a result, the high schools are competing for the same students and according to the funding model in the state, more students amounts to more funding. Principal J's school is an engineering school and so he has more boys than girls. In fact, about 70% of his students are boys. In addition, they have an exchange program where every other year they receive students from Germany. Right now, they have 15 foreign exchange students. They also have students from Africa that live in their county, but moved from Africa. As a result, there are a lot of cultural differences and nuances, which the immigrant population is getting used to.

When describing his personal philosophy and the values he tries to instill in his students and staff, he describes the importance of respect, love, loyalty and honesty. Even more so, they run their school according to the R.O.A.R model, which stands for Respect, Ownership, Attitude, and Responsibility. He tries to continually remind the students of the R.O.A.R model and it is the lens through which they interpret and encourage behaviors.

Principal J sees his role as helping to build his staff up and encourage them as they teach students. His biggest passion, however, and an action he is very intentional about is having direct relationships with his students. His approach centers around letting students know they have a voice and have trusted adults they can go to in the building, which, he says, is a big responsibility for the adults.

Valuing Diversity

When describing cultural competence Principal J emphasized that it is about being intentional about knowing the students they serve and being cognizant of the environment they create for those kids.

One thing that Principal J commented on is being aware of the language individuals use when interacting with people from different cultures. He mentioned that sometimes people try and use another culture's slang in order to connect with them, which may be offensive to that person from a different culture. In general, it is important not to lead with stereotypes of another culture and use a stereotypical filter to view diverse individuals.

In the same way, people of a certain culture and background must be aware of their environment and how their ways of being can easily offend others without proper context and education. For example, Principal J explained that it is common for African Americans to say "How are you doing there, baby?", "How are you doing, sweetie?" or "Everything alright, sweetie?" and culturally, this may not be offensive to Black people. However, when used in a different setting, like a school, it may be offensive to different cultures and races because they don't understand the context, intentions and meanings behind those words. Some may perceive it as though a person is trying to hit on them or make an advancement towards them. It is important to use moments where misunderstanding occur as a learning tool.

Principal J wishes that there was more professional development money to train teachers on how to have successful cross-cultural interactions and learn about the cultures of other students. Principal J recognizes that assigning a book for faculty to read and discuss may not be good enough to enlighten faculty to the ways of being of other cultures. Despite not having a lot of funding, Principal J is trying to create structures where students can be more involved in

educating teachers about their cultures and be used more in the decision making in the building, which shows them they are valued.

In order to give students opportunities to showcase their cultures, they have talent shows where students are able to perform musically and display their other talents. In fact, sometimes students will email Principal J their music and he will share it with the entire building. Principal J has gone to a model where he has empowered student grade level officers. These officers are responsible for planning events, like the pep rally and Senior Spirit Week. This structure gives students a voice and enables their diverse voices to shape the culture of the school.

In order to reach their Hispanic families, they provide a bilingual specialist as a resource for the students and parents. Additionally, they empower teachers and students to serve as a resource for teachers, and other students and families to make sure that language is not a barrier for parental and student engagement. Principal J also has a desire of providing sign language interpreters and translators for families that may need it.

Principal J ensures that he is present at all the events and uses social media to promote the events and advertise that he will be at those events. Whether it is a basketball game, bowling match, Quiz Bowl meets, Science Olympiad or Robotics, he is present. He also has an open-door policy and welcomes parents to come and talk to him and is very intentional about answering every phone call and email that comes his way. Even when parents are irate and upset, he is intentional about listening to them and letting them know that they are heard.

In order to engage families in their community, they held a "Trunk or Treat" for children in the community. They served about 200 -300 families at the event. Additionally, they had an event to celebrate Day of the Dead, which is a Hispanic celebratory event. They had Latino music playing and had people walking around in circles dancing. Principal J plans to do more of

these events to make sure that different stakeholders realize that their school "is not just a school building, but it is a community site".

Principal J values each child at his school and encourages them to contact him directly by e-mail if anything is on their minds. If one were to walk in his building, Principal J can be seen high-fiving students and singing "Happy Birthday" to them to let them know that once they walk into the building they are valued and the most important entity at the school. He also makes this clear to families.

Managing the Dynamics of Difference

When talking about managing the dynamics of difference, Principal J gave an example. There was a situation where a teacher was trying to instruct her students and there were a group of students that were not in compliance. She pointed at the group of students and said "you guys are acting like a bunch of clowns" and indicated that she "can't teach with these clowns". Unfortunately, the group she pointed at was a group of minority male students and one of them perceived her to be racist. Although the teacher's intention was not to be racist, Principal J took the time to talk to the teacher about how her actions looked from their perspective. Calling the minority students clowns made them feel less than valued and made them feel like she was racist. As a result, an important aspect of managing dynamics of difference is seizing teachable moments and working through them with different constituents. Additionally, perspective taking is an important exercise that can be used to build empathy and realize how unintended actions can cause damage and harm. Although this is an isolated incident, data trends show that there is an over representation of minority students being suspended and expelled, which indicates that the teachers need more training on how to have successful cross-cultural interactions.

Another trend that Principal J has encountered is that their high achieving White and Black students don't receive consequences and are not frequently redirected for things like dress code. However, lower achieving students receive more consequences than other students, especially high achieving students. This has prompted Principal J to have conversations with is staff about empathy and what it feels like to be discriminated against. While the faculty and staff don't seem to be acting based on race and ethnicity, they react to behavior that they see as unacceptable, which they may be interpreting through a biased cultural lens. For example, Principal J talked about the fact that African Americans are a lot more vocal and animated than a kid that is not African American and so are they receiving consequences for their cultural ways of being? Principal J encourages his teachers to be mindful when dealing with students and also to be consistent while keeping their cultural ways of being in mind.

Adapting to Diversity

When considering their data culture, Principal J pointed out that he looks at discipline data and breaks it down according to grade, race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status and special education. He also looks at graduation data and ISTEP scores and disaggregates the data. Again, even though their overall suspension and expulsion numbers have decreased, they are seeing an over representation of minority students being suspended and expelled.

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge

Due to funding restrictions, nothing intentional is done besides case by case teachable moments and general discussions.

Analysis of Cultural Competence

The section below contains an analysis of Principal J's interview in the context of the 15 indicators of cultural competence.

Figure 13. Analysis of Principal J Interview
(Source of figure: Lindsey et al. (2009))

Indicator of Cultural Competence	Observed in the Interview	Essential Element of Cultural Competence
1. Recognizes how their culture affects others	YES	
2. Able to describe their culture and cultural norms of their organization	YES	**Assess Culture**
3. Understands how the culture of their organization affects those with different cultures	YES	
4. Celebrates and encourages the presence of a variety of people in all activities	YES	
5. Recognizes differences as diversity rather than inappropriate responses to the environment	YES	**Value Diversity**
6. Accepts that each culture finds some values and behaviors more important than others	YES	

Figure 13 continued

7. Learn effective strategies for resolving conflict, particularly among people whose cultural backgrounds and values differ	**NO**	**Managing the Dynamics of Difference**
8. Understand the effect that historic distrust has on present-day interactions	YES	
9. Realize that you may misjudge others' actions based on learned expectations	YES	
10. Change the way things are done to acknowledge the differences that are present in the staff, clients and community	**NO**	**Adapting to Diversity**
11. Develop skills for intercultural communication	**NO**	
12. Institutionalize cultural interventions for conflicts and confusion caused by the dynamics of difference	**NO**	

Figure 13 continued

13. Incorporate cultural knowledge into the mainstream of the organization	**NO**	
14. Teach the origins of stereotypes and prejudices	**NO**	**Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge**
15. For staff development and education, integrate into your systems information and skills that enable all to interact effectively in a variety of intercultural situations	YES	

Principal J showed evidence of 9 out of 15 indicators of cultural competence. While funding has been an issue for Principal J, he tends to rely on individual situations to try and teach his staff about how to communicate with diverse stakeholders in their community. It may be important for Principal J to be proactive in creating systems that will facilitate good and effective cross-cultural communication, rather than spending a lot of energy addressing situations on a case by case basis (a reactionary approach). There was no evidence of a process to look attain feedback or review practices that could eventually lead to revised policies.

Open Coding of High School Interviews to Identify Emergent Themes

Using a coding method described by Tesch (1990), emergent themes from the interviews were identified. Tables 21 – 29 showcase open coding for the interviews that were conducted.

Open Coding for High School Interviews

Table 21 presents data from interview question number 1, which asked participants how they would describe the cultures of their school. Following the table detailing principals'' responses, a brief synopsis of the principals' responses will follow.

Table 21 *Open Coding for Principal Interview Question 1*

Principal A	Principal B	Principal C	Principal D	Principal E
- Believe that every student can learn and that every student is important. - Students are open and willing to help other students. - Teachers love the kids and invest in them **-** Have a hiring culture: look for teachers and staff that love kids and are willing to invest in them. - "We at our school are very good at never trying to group students…this school is very good at looking at each kid as an individual where all of them have a different cultural belief, cultural background value…". -"Love kids, get them to graduate and teach them how to live appropriately".	**- "**We believe we are a school of one…where each kid matters" - Have a culture where "each kid has a caring adult that really plays a role in their education and in their lives". - "We are really kid centered and it's all about making relationships with kids" - The culture of the building is "one of high relationship value, placing high values on relationships". - Culture where they talk about a global view of things. They talk about being open-minded and accepting others' points of view. - "Majority of our kids don't look at each other in brown and white anymore…they are just a kid who goes to my school".	**-** Centers around "caring for and loving [their] kids". - Principal challenges staff to "love our students". -The culture is one rooted in respect. -Administrative team models behavior they want to see in their staff. -Administrative is visible at extracurriculars and families outside of the school day. -In the building "teachers [are] interacting with students during passing periods and in class. -Staff truly cares about the students and want them to be successful - Set high expectations for students because I think our students. -Want to make sure that in having those expectations, students realize that all the work is on them. Teachers have to partner with them. - School culture believes in flexibility for the students. -Flexibility is earned when you have a culture of trust amongst the staff. -Strong retention of staff and administrators.	**-**Have a culture that is very "collaborative and supportive of one another". -Building provides a lot of structure for student behavior and student expectations. -Principal has the belief that "if you raise the bar for them [students], they will raise their expectations as well". - "We respect other cultures and we make sure that we honor those people in [different cultures] for their gains and for their leadership and for their accomplishments…our teachers do a very good job of recognizing that within the classroom". - Their school teaches respect ahead of time—in assemblies and in the classroom. -"…each student's going to find their little niche where they belong, so they feel like they are engaged in the school and they fit in somewhere".	-Conduct themselves according to the statement "All means All". - "Every kid is important". -This means all kids "have access to programs regardless of their background, whether it's a poverty background and whether it's just parents that have no understanding of post-secondary options". -Believe that they need their kids to graduate because if they graduate, it opens doors up for them. Administrators, teachers and staff have to build support systems to help students and paint a realistic picture of them walking across the stage.

Table 21 continued

Principal F	Principal G	Principal H	Principal I	Principal J
- "One of the first things we are about is treating everybody with respect and dignity…and we expect to do the same for each other and to the adults in the building". -Believe in a culture where they listen to students and want them to be critical thinkers. -They do not expect any body to fail and expect each student to succeed at a very high level. -Give students the ability to self-select AP and honors classes and also use data to encourage students to take high level course they may not have thought about before. - "We don't believe students learn at the same pace, and in the same way, so we do offer them multiple ways of learning the material". - "We believe in excellence and we're excellent in all we do".	- "We have a family culture…we call our students, parents, all the community, they are family". - Leads with the philosophy that "you treat every single person in the school like they are equal". - Explained that custodians, paraprofessionals, teachers and secretaries are all equal participants in the children's education. - "Just like as a principal, I am no different and so honestly the students cannot tell the difference between paraprofessionals and teachers". - "Results in a great culture where out custodians sponsor clubs and activities". -"Everybody works together for the child…all this together has developed that general belief in our building that we are family".	-They try to "maintain a positive culture, a positive attitude, and a respectful one…" - They want to instill in their kids lessons that will enable them to "treat people with respect, treat them good, be there for one another, help each other up when you fall down, and respect is the overlying tone that we try to push". - There is a culture where current students take newer students under their wing and help them align with the values of the school and recognize that there are people that really care for them and people that will steer them in the right direction for life.	- "We follow our mission statement…and that is achieving excellence, building character and serving others". - "We believe in high academic achievement, but embedded in that is building character and then serving one another". - "We value diversity at our school, we value different perspectives that are in each of our classrooms…" - At the core of their culture is being a school that serves their kids and their community. - "we want students to learn from one another, and be challenged by one another, but then also be supported by one another in the absence of a teacher". - "I want our educational practices to continue to be student centered and we need to take advantage of the population of students that we serve". - "We want to make sure students feel welcome and feel comfortable with one another".	- His values include respect, love, loyalty and honesty. - Conduct themselves according to the R.O.A.R model, which stands for Respect, Ownership, Attitude, and Responsibility. -Student centered culture where student voice is encouraged. -Relationships with adults in the building are emphasized.

From the interview data for the first question, most principals had a strong mission and vision for their institutions. It is evident that most of the principals believe in a child centered approach to education where high value is placed on relationships, loving children, respecting others and investing in them. Principal C asserts that investing in students looks like engaging them in the hallways during passing periods as well as in the classroom. He goes on to explain the importance of his administrative team being present not only in the academic setting, but also extracurricular activities. Some principals addressed the importance of the administrative team modeling behavior for the faculty and staff who would subsequently model behavior for their students. Another essential aspect of school culture that some principals pointed out was removing barriers to students accessing higher-level courses, such as AP and honors courses, and building a culture of trust, which breeds flexibility in discipline and achievement. Principal D talked about the importance of having structure and high expectations for all students, which would ultimately result in students raising their personal expectations.

Table 22 represents the open coding for question 2, which states: "How do your students' cultures (beliefs, values, customs, behavioral norms) impact their educational experiences at your school?".

Table 22 *Open Coding for Principal Interview Question 2*

Principal A	Principal B	Principal C	Principal D	Principal E
- Barriers exist because "all students do not value education as much as the staff does…because we have a high Hispanic culture where there are parents who grew up in other countries that don't have as high of an educational value as what we are trying to instill in the kids". - They have "quite a few parents that didn't graduate from high school and so that kind of lowers the value of education as well". - We're a rural community where a lot of families are in agriculture…sometimes there's a need and some kids will miss school to go help on the farm". - "The cultural background of being Hispanic or Salvadorian is different than what it would be if they actually lived in that country…if these kids were actually in El Salvador right now, I think their culture would be different than what their culture is here". - Principal states that tardiness to school is a real issue for some of their students.	-Over the past few decades, as the school started getting diverse, teaching was impacted because teachers did not know how to support kids that did not speak English well. -The school found that students were struggling to grasp difficult material when they were forced to speak exclusively in English. - A few decades ago, the general consensus was "you're in America, speak English all the time…it doesn't matter what you are trying to learn, speak English".	-Barrier exists when "there is no value of education that is modeled for our students, especially in their home lives, it's very difficult to get students motivated to do things without them seeing the end result or the benefit of doing that". - Attendance for some students can be a problem. - Recognize that there may be students that have younger siblings they are raising because they are from a single-family home and their parent/guardian may be working to support their family". -At times, can be tension with veteran teachers who want students "in those seats and they want them listening to what I have to say". - Often they deal with a population that "unfortunately has a lot of trauma in their lives and see folks constantly giving up on them. The easy thing for them to do, because it has been modeled for them, is to give up themselves…"	-Principal did not have an answer for this question, but reiterated the values of respect for all cultures.	- "We get a lot of Salvadorian students, Nicaraguan students…and they don't speak English..." and the constant question the school addresses is "what does real instruction look like for kids that don't speak English?"

Table 22 continued

Principal F	Principal G	Principal H	Principal I	Principal J
-Their personal philosophy is they look at students' cultures not as obstacles, but as opportunities. -People often have the attitude that the more diversity you have, the lower the achievement. However, their school has shown the opposite trend-the more diverse they have gotten the higher the achievements have been.	-Recently, they have seen an influx of different demographics of students, but don't perceive the presence of diverse cultures as obstacles, but opportunities.	-With students that are new to the district, there is a learning curve for getting them up to speed learning the culture of the school because of their past experiences, values and behavioral norms.	-Acknowledges there are positive and negative experiences to students having diverse cultures. On the positive side, diverse cultures "allow [them] to have rich conversations and discussions. -Sometimes students that have different cultures self-segregate and it is essential for them to recognize the resources that are available to them and it is also important for them to know that "every place is a safe place".	-Cultural ways of being can be interpreted through biased and stereotypical lens. -Students, faculty and staff have to mindful as to how they communicate and interact in the school environment. -Actions of teachers may be perceived as racist or non-sensitive.

From interview question number 2, many principals did not have a deficit view of the diverse cultures of their students, but rather perceived them as opportunities. Many of the principals recognized the hurdles language barriers posed for teachers and intentionally reflected on how to reach students that did not speak good English and intentionally thought about what

good instruction for these children looked like. Another major barrier that principals confronted was the fact that many families did not place a high value on education and so did not model it for their students. For example, Principals C and A explained how attendance was an issue for many of the children because some of the students had to help their parents with work or were looking after siblings. Lastly, another hurdle that was pointed out by Principal H was how to help guide new students in recognizing and eventually buying into their school's culture of respect and honor for everyone. Subsequent paragraphs will speak to solutions to some of these barriers.

Tables 23 include open coding for question 3, which states: "How would you describe cultural competence? What are some barriers to cultural competence at your school?

Table 23 *Open Coding for Principal Interview Question 3*

Principal A	Principal B	Principal C	Principal D	Principal E
Cultural Competence - **"**Having an understanding of your own beliefs, and then being able to use that knowledge to discern he cultural differences of others" **Barriers** -Kids from the same country may have lived in the US for different number of years and so "every single kid does have a different cultural background and a different cultural experience". -Every kid has a different understanding of who they are, where they are from and where they are trying to be, which may be hard for teachers to discern without proper skills.	**Cultural Competence** - "…Means that we understand kids and adults come from different cultures…[and] we understand they may see the world differently". -Principal recognizes the need to be open-minded and respectful of differences and to be cautious about reflecting dominant culture onto diverse individuals. **Barriers** -Principal states there are sometimes teachers that struggle to being open to a kid's culture and value system, but those teachers don't last long at the school.	**Cultural Competence** -Being open to realizing that we may have biases to different students from specific cultures. – Having an understanding that different cultures may be different from our own. -There should not be an assumption that students need to adapt to the dominant culture. -Trying to understand and find out the factors in the culture and background of the students that motivate them. **Barriers** -Sometimes veteran teachers resist cultural competence initiatives because "they have seen a lot of things come and go--the programs, initiatives". -The attitude of the veteran teachers sometime impacts the work of cultural competence.	**Cultural Competence** -Principal emphasized that cultural competence is about being good listeners. -Principal emphasized that cultural competence is about understanding why a student is acting in a certain way. -Trying to understand the experiences a particular student has had. **Barriers** -Resistance from parents with regard to being open to sharing their experiences. - "They don't want anybody in their business". -Cuts in funding has resulted in the school losing teachers to surrounding districts.	**Cultural Competence** -Cultural competence involves listening and understanding where other people are coming from. -It is important not to focus on your own values. - "Cultural competency is the antagonist to 'we want everyone to resort to being like us…cultural competency is we need to be like our kids…we shift towards the kids'". - Problems arise when schools have the perspective of "kids, you need to be like us". - "We have to meet the students where they are and meet the parents where they are". **Barriers** -Parent involvement in parent-teacher conferences is about 40%. -Trying to figure out how to teach parents that have been in a cycle of poverty for a long time and implement strategies to break the cycle of poverty. -Engage parents of poverty students in conversations as to the value and importance of Education.

Table 23 continued

Principal F	Principal G	Principal H	Principal I	Principal J
Cultural Competence	**Cultural Competence**	**Cultural Competence**	**Cultural Competence**	**Cultural Competence**
- "How you respond and interact with different cultures…it's more than the knowledge of a different culture".	-Principal indicates that it is the knowledge of practices that support students of different backgrounds and making room for cultural differences so that they are able to better connect.	-Principal indicates that cultural competence is about having a deep and thorough knowledge of other cultures, different lifestyles and different values and behavioral norms.	-Basic definition is "do we know the students we serve…and am I able to overcome any bias that I might have?" -Cultural competence is about knowing students and making sure that they see individuals that reflect their perspectives in the curriculum.	-Being intentional with knowing the environment that is created for different stakeholders and knowing how to deal with students the school serves.
Barriers				**Barriers**
-Barriers are seen as opportunities and cultural competence and responsivity is embedded in the culture of the school. -School is continually learning new ways to engage different populations.	**Barriers** -The majority of the staff is Caucasian and middle class. -The students would better connect if they had faces that looked like them.	**Barriers** -Some of the old and veteran teachers that are not accustomed to "the way things are now" and are more negative. -Some of the older teachers know how to get along with some of the kids, but not all the kids.	**Barriers** -The inherent biases we have for cultures that are different from our own. - Individuals choosing three African-American authors and thinking they have been compliant with cultural competency.	-Don't have enough money to train teachers on how to have successful cross-cultural interactions.

Interview question number three asked principals to reflect on how they would define cultural competence and the articulate any barriers to cultural competence at their schools. Most principals indicated that cultural competence was about having a thorough understanding of other cultures, especially those they serve at their schools, and why students may be behaving in a certain way. Importantly, many principals discussed the importance of being aware of their

own cultures and biases and being wary about projecting their beliefs, values, and ways of being on their students. Principal F and G went one step further by saying that cultural competence is more than just being knowledgeable about other cultures, but having the skills and awareness pertaining to how we respond to other cultures as well as being knowledgeable about practices that, in the words of Principal C, motivate students. Furthermore, Principal E contends that cultural competence requires individuals to meet children and parents where they are and even shift practices and policies to accommodate the kids' values and behavioral norms. Principal I asserts that cultural competence includes making sure that the curriculum reflects the voice and population that a school serves, which comes from understanding diverse populations within a school. Principal I goes on to imply that some teachers have the mindset that if they do certain things in their curriculum, they can check a box and feel like they have been compliant with cultural competence.

When it comes to barriers to cultural competence at their school, Principal A points out that it is important to still see children as having individual cultures, rather than grouping them together. Principals B, C and H highlight that sometimes veteran teachers demonstrate resistance to the work because they have seen initiatives and programs come and go or they don't have the skills or desire to connect with different students. Principal F continued to talk about not having a deficit view of diversity, but rather ingraining cultural competence into a school's culture and looking for new ways to engage different populations within a school. Principal G asserts the importance and difficulty of hiring faculty and staff that reflects the students that are present in a school because this would facilitate students being able to establish better connections within a school. Principal E highlighted the difficulty they are experiencing with engaging parents, especially those on the poverty line. These parents often don't appreciate people being "in their

business" and present barriers to the school's desire to educate them and partner with them in attempting to find ways to break the cycle of poverty in their lives.

Table 24 consist of open coding responses to interview question number 4, which states: "what do you and your staff do, if anything, to learn about the cultures of students in your school?".

Table 24 *Open Coding for Principal Interview Question 4*

Principal A	Principal B	Principal C	Principal D	Principal E
-Teachers communicate with students and develop positive relationships in order to learn about their cultures -Have Latino culture club where students can discuss their culture and try to bring their culture into the school setting. -Faculty and staff do research on their own to look up where students come from and then reviewing it with their peers. -Professional development sessions to learn English Language Learner strategies. -Enable parents to come in and share their cultures. -Partner with the local community college and participate in events. -Latino culture club partners with Latino community at the local community colleges to see how Latino culture is impacting the community.	-They are hiring younger faculty and staff whose worlds are smaller and they communicate with kids all over the world. -Look to hire faculty and staff that reflect their students. -Have professional development activities throughout the year on who to work effectively with different populations. -Being willing to listen to the students and to engage alumni to determine where adjustments can be made in order to be better. -Travel to Chicago to get exposed to multi-cultural activities that pertain to different cultures.	-Weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) where they have ongoing conversations about students from different cultures. -Have student-led groups that showcase the cultures of students in the school. -Make sure that staff is available for IEP meetings where they discuss ways to meet a student's needs and in those sessions culture or circumstances are often discussed. -Have a good relationship with the juvenile justice system in the community to understand what is happening with kids outside of school, especially if they make poor choices. -Communication with faculty and staff giving them information about students, which they often have no idea about. -Engage local organizations like churches to better understand diverse populations, especially African American populations in their school.	-Principal emphasized the importance of listening to children and engaging parents -Developed a good relationship with a Hispanic Coalition program that allows them to understand their students better.	-Have a weekend program that happens once a year, almost like a banquet, where students bring in food and there are stations where individuals can learn about the food and cultures of students. -Have student groups like a Black Student Union that educate the community.

Table 24 continued

Principal F	Principal G	Principal H	Principal I	Principal J
-Have different student-led groups that educate the community on the different cultures. -Faculty and staff engage in three book studies that help them learn about other cultures. -Professional development sessions for administrators and staff. -Utilize staff meetings to watch videos on different cultures and have discussions.	**-**Have professional development every day and have a professional development sequence that provides tools on how to work with diverse populations. -Have a partnership with an adult learning ELL program that provides their community with resources pertaining to the immigrant population. -Have student-led clubs that allow students to share their cultures with the community.	**-**Conversations amongst faculty and staff. -Professional Development. -Forming meaningful relationships with the students and learning about their values, beliefs and behavioral norms.	-Conversations in PLCs about different cultures and races. -Administration, faculty and staff have been trained in courageous conversations and frequently have conversations pertaining to race.	-Done on a case by case basis as situations arise. Again, the lack of funding doesn't allow this to happen in a systematic way. - Empowering kids to educate teachers and have a voice.

In order to learn about the cultures of different populations within a school, many

principals talked about the importance of having student-led groups and giving them the ability

to teach the community about their cultures. When principals talked about groups, they talked

about student-led affinity groups that were made up of a homogenous cultural/racial population

that have the ability to have open discussions and plan ways to showcase their talents to the

community. Principals A, D, and H highlighted the importance of developing relationships with

students and using those relationships to understand the beliefs, values, and behavioral norms for certain students. Principals talked about the importance of having systems in place to engage in conversations about different cultures, whether it be PLCs, faculty meetings, IEP meetings or informal conversations. Most principals discussed having intentional professional development sessions pertaining to learning about different cultures and also learning how to engage diverse students within a school. Principal B discussed engaging alumni of different cultures to discuss areas where adjustments and modifications can be made. Principals C, D, and G discussed the importance of establishing connections within the greater community, in their case the Juvenile system, churches, community ethnic organizations, and ELL adult learning programs, to use them as resources for understanding the experiences and circumstances of children within their community. Principal B talked about the importance of hiring teachers that reflected the students in order to better advocate and understand the experiences of those students.

Table 25 presents data pertaining to interview question number 5, which states: "what do you do, if anything, to showcase the cultures of students in your school?".

Table 25 *Open Coding for Principal Interview Question 5*

Principal A	Principal B	Principal C	Principal D	Principal E
-Staff inviting parents to the school to bring ethnic foods into classrooms and staff meetings. -Latino culture club does different events to showcase their culture.	-Have a multi-culture youth talent show where they give them an opportunity to showcase dances and other activities. -Music department conscious about selecting music from different cultures. -Invite musical performances, like Mariachi bands to come in and play at dances. -The fine arts allows students to make and showcase art that reflects their culture. -Soccer team are mostly ethnic minorities and have a lot of support from the community. -Show respect to the home language of a child because "if they have a working grasp of how their language works, they do better in school".	-Have a multiethnic student group that celebrates different cultures present in their building. -Have clubs such as the multiethnic and LGBTQ group and staff gives them the opportunity to have a voice and share it with the community.	-Individual teachers give opportunities for students their cultures during unit projects etc. -Parents are invited in the building to talk about different cultures or experiences.	-Student-led groups that are given platforms to showcase their talents. -Students, especially the Black Student Union, are able to go to marches, parades, and have poetry nights where they share their stories and their culture.

Table 25 continued

Principal F	Principal G	Principal H	Principal I	Principal J
-Have many student groups that showcase their cultures to the community. -For Muslim students, the school ensures that they have a place to pray and talk about their beliefs and values.	-Have student groups that are given the ability to showcase their cultures. -Offer programming like a medical translators program that enables them to get certified for medical translation. -Students from diverse groups are able to select music that reflects their culture for dances etc. -Partner with a local adult education ELL program and hold a resource night for parents educating them on the immigrant population. -Have an advisory course that students are required to take for three years where they learn different topics including different cultures.	-Individual teachers do this in their classrooms. -Programming around different events like Black History Month.	-Have a Black Student Union that showcases their culture. -Have open discussions where students can share their viewpoints; like during the election where DACA students were able to share their perspectives. -Have invited guests come and speak to them about their personal experience. For example, individuals came to speak about their experiences with ICE.	-Have talent shows where students can showcase talents. -Student run pep rallies that allow them to have a voice. -Students share music with Principal, which he shares with the whole building.

For question 5, most principals stated that student-led clubs were given an opportunity and platform to showcase their cultures. Furthermore, some principals highlighted that extending invitations to parents in the community was another avenue they utilized to showcase the cultures of different constituencies within their school. Principal B, D and H talked about using the curriculum to showcase the cultures of students, especially in the Fine Arts and individual unit projects. Principal F pointed out that another avenue they use to show respect and honor to the Muslim students, albeit in a public way, is to provide spaces and places for them to pray and educate their community about their experiences and traditions. Principal G described a program where they provide medical translation certifications to their students so that they not only have access to higher wage work, but can utilize their skills outside of the walls of the school and in their communities. Principal I talked about how they are intentional in inviting guest speakers from backgrounds that reflect their student body to talk about issues that are affecting them, like immigration law and their interactions with law enforcement (ICE).

Table 26 represent open coding for question number 6, which states: "How have you identified and confronted discriminatory actions in your school?".

Table 26 *Open Coding for Principal Interview Question 6*

Principal A	Principal B	Principal C	Principal D	Principal E
-Principal states that whenever they deal with discriminatory actions they "go straight to the handbook because there is a section about harassment and racism". - "Discriminatory actions have come more from parents". -When a kid acts in a discriminatory way, the principal says it is clear that it stems from the parents. -They have very few discriminatory actions between students.	-Principal states that if they see or have a discriminatory action reported, they have conversations with the student, bring the parents in and in most instances that takes care of the situation. -They don't let discriminatory actions happen and they don't tolerate it. -When discriminatory actions happen the administration or teachers talk to the child, discipline them and educate them. -"Our job isn't to punish them…our job is to tell them why it is not okay".	-Culture that their school has worked hard to develop is one where "if you see something, say something". -The best people to confront and address discrimination are the students themselves. -Principal states they avoid making blanket statements to teachers like "we need to do a better job with this", rather they handle situations on a case by case basis and partner with the particular teacher. -Developed an alternative to suspension and expulsion program where children that may be in constant drama are sent to a self-contained classroom where they are able to remove themselves from conflict and do their coursework online. -Being solution minded and presenting options for parents. -Try to peel back the layers to a behavior to try and find the root cause and provide resources for them to deal with it. -When conflict happens, the goal is to be open, honest and want families and parents to know they are here for them.	-Have a software program that allows children to report bullying. -After a report there is instantaneous follow up. -They have a separate areas for adults and students and students feel comfortable going into the adult area to report something. - Administration has a very good rapport with the kids and so the students trust them and have no problem telling them things.	-Have help lines where students and parents can anonymously share information, especially if they are a victim or know somebody else who is a victim. -The information from the anonymous helplines is shared with the counseling department and administrators. -They handle any information immediately. -Important for principal, social worker, counselors and administrators to have an open-door policy. -Counselors are frequently in classrooms talking about issues, especially as they pertain to mental health, which could stem from discrimination. -Frequently in front of the kids telling them that it is never okay if they are a victim of discrimination, especially if somebody says something disparaging about one's family or skin color. -Very intentional about equipping their students with language and messaging to guard them against being victims of discrimination.

Table 26 continued

Principal F	Principal G	Principal H	Principal I	Principal J
-They have a class every day for 25 minutes that teach students lessons about healthy relationships, healthy habits for success and also embed lessons on discrimination -The school has a culture of acceptance and students have been good about shutting down any discrimination. -Empower students to have a voice to go against discrimination. -Looking at researched based interventions like amygdala reset stations to help resolve disciplinary issues.	-They have a bullying club that creates resources, like videos, for bullying education. -The school has a bully box where students can anonymously submit concerns. -Have very little discrimination at their schools.	-Have a system to self-report or anonymously report concerns. -Often kids go to trusted adults in the building to report concerns. -The staff feels empowered to bring student concerns to the administration.	-Administration does not tolerate discrimination. -Instill trust in the kids by being a resource and being open to listening to them and confronting issues they bring. -The administration and teachers are aware, observant and are willing to have tough conversations with individuals pertaining to discrimination. -Willing to address actions with discipline and consequences. -Have a consortium of principals that get together and talk about how to handle discrimination in their schools.	-Nothing formal, but students feel empowered to share their experiences with adults in the building. -Situations are handled and treated as learning opportunities for a student or adult.

In this question, principals addressed their approaches to identifying and addressing discriminatory actions in their schools. Many principals talked about having a system where students and parents could anonymously report cases of discriminatory actions. Principal A discussed the importance of having policies in their handbook that speak directly to harassment and racism and leaning on these policies when violations occurred. Principal B talked about the

significance of not only disciplining those who perform discriminatory actions, but also educating them on why their actions were wrong. In the same vain, Principal C expressed the need to peel back the layers of an issue and find the root cause of that issue so that resources can be provided to that child and their family to aid them in dealing with problems that are uncovered. Principal A highlighted that often parents can be the cause of the behaviors in a child and so allowing parents to be part of conversations pertaining to an issue is important and presents an opportunity to explain the school's values and expectations. Principals D, H and I explained that it is paramount to build trust amongst the students and make sure they know that your door is open to them to report discriminatory actions when they see them. Principal F talked about developing a culture where students can find their voice and be empowered to shut down discriminatory actions when they arise. Principal G explained that they have a Bully Club where students make videos and provide resources for the community on how to address and confront bullying and discrimination in its many forms. Principals E and F highlighted classes and programs they have to preemptively equip students with the skills and knowledge they need to report and confront discrimination, especially as victims. Principal C and F indicated the importance of being solution minded and thinking about alternatives to suspension and expulsion that will not only remove a child from a situation, but also allow them to attain the resources they need to learn from their mistakes and continues their education.

Tables 27 presents open coding for question number 7, which states: "What support systems do you provide to help teachers have successful cross-cultural interactions with different stakeholders in your school community?"

Table 27 Open Coding for Principal Interview Question 7

Principal A	Principal B	Principal C	Principal D	Principal E
-Professional development. -ELL nights that have the goal of equipping the community with skills to teach and help diverse populations in the school. - There are translators and interpreters that teachers can use to effectively communicate with parents and other community members. -"…we have technology that we have taught teachers through professional development...Google Translate has improved over the past several years, and so we've made sure every teacher can use Google Translate to get key vocabulary words to our school…" -"We have done closed captioning in videos for students…" -Every document that they put out to parents is translated into Spanish.	-Spend resources to hire collaborators whose sole job it is to go in classrooms and work with students whose first language is something other than English. -Intentionally hire bilingual staff that work with students and teachers.	-Principal makes sure he communicates with teachers to give them information on what is happening with a child so that the teacher has a larger context to interpret behavior. -Make sure they are intentional about finding coverage for teachers so that they can be present at IEP meetings, where they often discuss different cultural aspects of a child's culture. -Have ongoing discussions as part of PLCs and also discuss vignettes and case studies in faculty meetings so that the faculty can attain the necessary skills to have successful cross-cultural interactions.	- Invest in staff that are knowledgeable when it comes to supporting the ESL population (especially ESL providers). -The whole staff has undergone training on how to instruct the ESL population.	-During parent-teacher conferences Hispanic students have been empowered to translate for parents and teachers at the school. -Intentionally recruit and hire individuals that are bilingual. -Apply for grants that will enable them to get trainings about how to have successful cross-cultural relationships. -PLCs meet weekly to discuss successful educational practices.

Table 27 continued

Principal F	Principal G	Principal H	Principal I	Principal J
-Staff and administrators do three book studies to learn new ways to have successful cross-cultural interactions. -Staff puts together resources and share them with the school, especially "books they think everybody should know". -All administrators are trained in the program called "Undoing Racism". -Use instructional videos during faculty meetings to engage the faculty and staff. -Have a cultural competence and culturally responsive team that continually looks at ways to guide teachers as they engage with students and families.	-District offers an "Undoing Racism" workshop that provides the ability for staff to reflect on themselves. -All administrators went through a two-year Undoing Racism and White Privilege training and those resources are used by the administrators to train their staff. -There is a district equity committee that consist of teachers, counselors, and administrators and they go through professional development and bring resources and activities back to their buildings to train the staff. - Provide translators at different events.	-Participate in mandated trainings for the state. -Have a dialogue with teachers to assess their needs and provide them with resources.	-Principal has been intentional about hiring a diverse staff that has different backgrounds and experiences. -Continually have conversations amongst themselves and also talk with their kids.	-Have translators that are available during the school week. They also empower teachers and students to serve as translators. -Principal has an open-door policy and does not turn down parents that want to talk to him. He also replies all emails. -Is present at all events and markets the events and makes sure the community knows he will be present. -Host a Trunk and Treat event and other cultural events where they invite the whole community to show them they are valued.

Question 7 asked principals whether they were intentionally doing anything to equip the teachers to have successful cross-cultural interactions with different stakeholders in the community. Principals A, B, D, E, and G highlighted how they provide translators at parent-teacher conferences and other events to facilitate successful cross-cultural interactions. Principal E explained that they train and empower their students to be translators for the teachers and parents at conferences. Principal C emphasized the importance of communication with the teachers to provide them with deeper contexts they can use to interpret the behavior of kids. He also highlighted the importance of finding coverage for teachers so that they can take part in IEP conversations involving the kids so that can learn about how to take cultural perspectives in to consideration when helping a student. Principals A, C, E, F, and G detailed some professional development opportunities that are made available to the staff to facilitate successful cross-cultural interactions. Principal G talked about a model where administrators and staff are trained and equipped with resources pertaining to cultural competence and they in turn take these resources and train the staff in their buildings. Principals B, D, and E stressed the importance of hiring a bilingual staff that can aid teachers and students with their buildings.

Tables 28 present open coding for question 8, which states: "What data do you collect pertaining to diverse populations in your school and how is the data used to make decisions pertaining to the needs and achievements of these populations?"

Table 28 *Open Coding for Principal Interview Question 8*

Principal A	Principal B	Principal C	Principal D	Principal E
-They collect data from the WIDA test. -Due to their high migrant population, they keep data on the migrant population. -Academic and standard based data to determine where the students are in different subject areas. -Apply for grants that will help invest in staff or other areas that can improve the performance of diverse populations.	-They know the English proficiency of each kid and the determines whether they get direct EL support. - Support means they are placed in an EL classroom or get paired up with adult and bilingual collaborators. -Use grades and conference with EL teachers to assess how they can support and meet the needs of their kids. -Children that come into the school are given an initial screener, which helps determine the types of services they receive and what type of accommodations they are given.	-Break down every data point by gender, race, and grade level. -Focus on failure rates, attendance rates, and discipline data. -The data is used to identify patterns that help them determine how to provide better resources, like staff. -Have a program with Juvenile system in their county where they share and look at data and talk about any biases so that initiatives can be put in place. -Allows them to look at data and assess how they are handling things in their building by talking to teachers, looking at their policies. -Use community partners like local churches, juvenile justice system, and other community organizations to assess how to intervene on behalf of the kids.	-Have 80 data teams in specific content areas. -The school sets department specific proficiency goals and data teams in specific content areas continually look at the data and devise strategies for achieving those goals using PLCs. -Have school-wide goals for graduation and general goals for students to feel like they belong and feel like they fit in somewhere. -Get a report every four weeks that can include a goal in a specific content area and whether that goal was achieved. The report can include a pre or post survey pertaining to values, accomplishments or perceptions of school culture.	-They have behavioral, academic and attendance data. -Data is used to inform instruction, but also used t develop or get rid of progr and classes for the student -All assistant principals are assigned a grade level and together with an assigned counselor go through the data student by student. -When the data is broken down, they try to identify gaps in behavioral, academic and attendance data. -Every nine weeks, they do a gap analysis. -It is important for them to individualize data. -They have a "war room" where they have data for seniors that are at risk for graduating and have status updates on those students every two weeks.

Table 28 continued

Principal F	Principal G	Principal H	Principal I	Principal J
-Look at graduation rates and discipline data to assess whether there are any gaps. -Brought in training programs to help them gain the knowledge and skills on how to address disparities in the data. -In response to the data, they have done book studies, looked at their policies and devised plans to implement brain-based interventions.	-Collect data and break it down in terms of diverse populations. -Collect data pertaining to graduation rate. -Look at achievement data break it down and examine the data as a staff to identify trends. -Use the data to create targeted programs for different populations that are struggling. -Have a test called Scholastic Reading Inventory that determines the reading level of the students and set goals for students to reach a certain level. -Look at trends in data pertaining to literacy. -Cultural competency and literacy committee looks at and discusses data.	-Look at academic related data relating to state assessments like the NWEA. -Look at disciplinary data and Free and Reduced Lunch data and try and do a gap analysis to see where disparities exist. -Create programs to try and address those disparities.	-Have a software programs that provides data to guide conversations in their PLCs. -Look at literacy data and try to break that down by demographics. -Get data on for the entire school based on classes and certain content areas and break that down according to demographics. -Reports are generated that are specific for the Hispanic population or African American students to assess how well they did or are doing in a certain content area.	-Discipline and academic data. The data is disaggregated and decisions are made from there on.

In general, and as Principal E points out, data can often be broken down into three main categories behavioral, attendance and academic data. Most principals talked about the importance of collecting data, identifying trends and doing a gap analysis to find whether there are any discrepancies in terms of demographics. An important theme that stands out is the need to have a systematic way and schedule to look at data. Specifically, Principal E talked about a model where an assistant principal is assigned a specific grade and they, together with a counselor, go through the data and provide a report every nine weeks. Principal D highlighted receiving a data report every four weeks with information that varied from the cultural climate of the school to academic performance of different constituencies within the building. Principals D and F explained how they use data to inform their policies and programs they offer the students and Principal C talked about using data to pin point services in the community that can be used to help different populations within their school. Principals B, D, and G discussed the involvement of data teams that are charged with looking at data in a systematic way. Principal F explained their use of data to drive professional development in form of book studies for their staff. Principals D and I stated that data is often used to guide conversations in their PLCs.

Tables 29 presents open coding for question 9 and 10, which states: "How do you establish genuine relationships with families and caregivers of the diverse students in your school?" and "In what ways do you involve families and caregivers of diverse students in the school setting? Can you give a specific example?"

Table 29 *Open Coding for Principal Interview Question 9 and 10*

Principal A	Principal B	Principal C	Principal D	Principal E
-School sponsors a community food pantry for families that have kids in the school corporation -At the food pantry, a common practice is for staff to carry a family's grocery items to their vehicle with the purpose of building relationships. -They intentionally try to hire bilingual interpreters that live in the community. One of their translators is from the community, lives in the community and their kids go to the school and so the woman does a very good job of communicating with parents/guardians about events and classes. -Staff get the Hispanic mothers to make food and drink from their cultures and have them bring the items to school for teachers and students to purchase. This gives the opportunity for	-During parent-teacher conferences, families are able to "grab an adult who will walk around with them to different teachers" and interpret and translate for them. -There is also live translation where parents can wear an ear piece and listen. -Through their actions the school sends the message that they respect and care for parents and their kids and always want to make sure meetings that parents are invited to are meaningful for them and also make sure they know that the school is thoughtful about providing an environment where they feel cared for.	- "We try hard to make sure that our parents aren't just hearing from us when things happen that are bad…our administrators really take time out to make phone calls home when good things happen…we have a thing called Positive Referrals". -It is important to counteract the feeling some parents have when they walk into a school building. Some parents feel intimidated, undereducated, looked down upon, and inferior when they walk into school buildings. -There is an advisory team of teachers whose job it is to identify, reward, and celebrate positive behaviors so that administrative team can communicate	-The principal has a Parent Advisory Council that is representative of the diverse student population and they meet once a month. -In the ninth grade "any student who is not performing at a C or higher, we call those parents in, we have conferences, we welcome them, we talk to them, we try to get them on our side…" and also try and partner with the school in trying to motivate and engage their child.	-The sophomore principal always rotates to be the junior principal in the subsequent year and then becomes the senior principal after that. Parents/guardians get to know a principal and stay with them from sophomore to senior year. -Students have a 30-minute advisory period every day and stay with the same advisor all four years. Parents can also develop relationships with the advisor.

parents to talk about their culture. Caucasian and Hispanic students buy the food and drink and through their actions show they are committed to supporting the Latino Culture Club and their parent community.	- The school's attitude is: "So you don't speak English? That does not mean we are rude to you. We figure out ways to communicate with you…we figure out how to treat them well…and try to break down as many barriers as we can". -Relationships are established in elementary, middle and high school in a similar manner and so parents expect counselors and teachers will communicate with them. Additionally, each school has an EL parent liaison that parents can reach to. -Parents are invited to guest speak in classes, especially as it pertains to talking about their cultures.	those positives home. -When communicating with parents about a potential disciplinary situation, they always try to start with a positive, explain the negative behavior and partner with the parents to try and figure out consequences. -Having alternative programs to suspension or expulsion allow parents to feel as though you are invested in their child's growth. -Have a parent night where middle schoolers and their parents are invited to the high school and the students are able to make schedule requests, hear about graduation requirements, discuss earning credits and learn about courses.		

Table 29 continued

Principal F	Principal G	Principal H	Principal I	Principal J
-They have a district-wide family night once a year for new ELL families. Each school has a table and they have face painting and people bring their families. -There are international festivals at the school that are used to engage students and kids.	-The school is connected to an adult education program and they have an ELL program. The school is partnering with them to offer a Parent Resource night where different individuals have been invited to talk about the immigrant population. -To build connections and get parents into the building to have face-to-face interactions with the staff, the Principal brings resources to the school, like programs from the YMCA, to engage the whole family. -Other programs that the Principal has brought to the school are FAFSA nights that prepare students to receive financial aid for college. -In the state of Indiana adjunct professors don't have to be licensed teachers and so family members that have advanced degrees are invited to teach one, two or three classes. -Overseas trips are a good way to connect with families and give students authentic learning experiences.	-The Principal and his assistants make it a priority to be visible at events and engage parents at those events- at the grassroots level. "-If you are not visible, you are not invested".	-They provide a welcoming environment at parent-teacher conferences. -They cater their parent-teacher conference time to make sure parents that work different shifts can attend. -Desire to intentionally hire bilingual staff so that parents who want to support their children will have somebody to talk to. -Principal has been there for a long time and for some kids, the principal had their parents in class. -Place a high value on relationships with parents.	- Cultural events and parent-teacher conferences. - Has an open-door policy to engage parents and students. Has not yet turned down a meeting.

In order to establish authentic connections with parents/guardians or families within the school community, it is important to find meaningful ways to engage them inside and outside of the school setting. Principal A explained that their school corporation has a food pantry that serves families in their school community and they utilize this program to engage diverse parents/guardians. For example, Principal A articulated that teachers engage families by carrying out their groceries to their cars and connect with them through conversations. Most principals indicated that it is important to use parent-teacher conferences as a way to engage families. At these conferences, principals talked about having bilingual translators or live translation and mentioned the significance of making sure parents are able to communicate their desires and concerns, especially if there is a language barrier. Principal C stated that at times, parents of traditionally underserved ethnic populations feel inferior, undereducated and unimportant when they walk into the school building—he indicated that this may be a result of past experiences, interactions, or subtle messaging that parents/guardians have internalized. As Principal B asserted, showing respect, thoughtfulness and care when engaging parents is essential to making them feel comfortable and valued. Principal H articulated a good example of this when he stated that he and his assistants make it a priority to be visible at events and extracurricular activities in order to converse with parents and show them that they are invested in them. Principal C emphasized that fostering a positive relationship with parents and guardians entails having positive communications with them and not only reaching out when something negative happens—a practice they call Positive Referrals. Principal D explained he has monthly meetings with a Parent Advisory Council whose diversity and demographic composition reflects that of the student body—he is able to gain meaningful insights that he can take back to his staff. Principal E described a model where his assistant principals are assigned to a specific grade and

move up with them as they progress through high school. Similarly, each student has an advisor that they meet with every day for 30 minutes and that advisor stays with a student throughout high school. The previous example exemplifies the importance of implementing structures that allow parents/guardians to foster strong relationships with faculty and staff. Principal F and G discussed the challenge of getting parents into their buildings because of their access to grades and other data using technology. As result, Principal G is intentional about developing programming for the entire family during parent events through partnerships with the YMCA or other local organizations. To better engage parents during the school day, Principal A discussed investing in cultural food and drink events that are hosted by parent/guardians so that meaningful partnerships and dialogues can be formed with them. Principal H discussed giving opportunities to family members of students, especially those from diverse backgrounds, to be adjunct professors and teach classes at her school. Principal I emphasized the importance of continuity and vertical alignment with elementary and secondary institutions with regard to the manner in which parents are communicated with.

Emergent Themes

Following a detailed analysis of the 10 interviews, several themes emerged. The themes include: (a) a strong mission and vision, (b) making platforms available for students to celebrate diversity, (c) a culture of intentionality, and (d) a strong data culture.

A Strong Mission and Vision

When the principals were asked to describe their school cultures, most of them started by talking about concrete mission and vision statements they had for their schools. Many principals emphasized the importance of not only making the mission and vision of the school the

foundational basis for the school's conduct, but also accentuated the necessity of creating a culture where students bought into the mission and vision of the school and carried it out on a daily basis. For most of the principals, the mission and vision of their schools were student centered, emphasized high expectations for all students, strove for the creation of an environment of respect and one where there could be successful intercultural relations, underscored the importance of student accessibility to programs and classes, and focused on a culture of learning when it came to interacting with stakeholders of diverse backgrounds. Furthermore, having a strongly articulated mission and vision gave teachers an understanding of what was expected of them and provided a frame of reference through which they could structure their classrooms and curricula and interpret different situations that arose.

The mission and vision statements did not imply that diversity was a liability to the organization, but rather a strength and emphasized that all students were capable of success and perpetuating an environment of inclusion. The mission and vision statements encouraged intergroup/interracial/interethnic communication and unity within the organization and that expected behavior was modeled by many administration and teachers.

Making Platforms Available for Students to Celebrate Diversity

Most principals provided an opportunity for their students to express themselves and showcase their cultural values and customs. Student led groups were able to educate the wider community on different topics that were important to them and their identities. Giving students a platform to engage their communities gave them a sense of pride in themselves and brought the wider school community together because diverse students as well as those from the dominant group were able to have intercultural interactions. Principal A articulated it well when he said that students, especially traditionally underserved ethnic minorities, are trying to find a way to

make sense of their worlds in a new culture, which may be different from the one they are used to, while trying to navigate their home or native cultures. Allowing students to bring their identities into the educational environment can go a long way in making them feel safe and valued. Some research studies have shown that leaders demonstrate their value of diversity by celebrating individuals and creating an environment that is safe for differences (DeSensi, 1995; Morrison, 1992; Rynes & Rosen, 1995; Thomas, 1992).

A Culture of Intentionality

Having a culture of intentionality includes organizations being proactive in managing diversity by structuring and revisiting their policies and practices and consulting diverse voices inside and outside their organizations as they build and rebuild their missions, visions and strategic initiatives. Organizations that perpetuate a culture of intentionality do not wait for issues to emerge, but are proactive in facilitating conversations and professional development for different stakeholders in their community (Fink, 2003; Golembiewski, 1995).

During the interviews, Principals talked about intentionally modeling inclusive behaviors and practices for the students so that they could create a student culture of inclusion. Some mentioned being intentional about engaging community organizations outside of the school to attain more knowledge about specific populations and working to learn how to better connect with them and resolve conflicts. As mentioned before, having a culture of intentionality with regard to cultural competence includes not waiting for negative situations to happen, but having conversations with teachers and staff on how to handle conflict, communicate with parents and form authentic partnerships with them. Additionally, intentionally reflecting on personal biases and perceived stereotypes are important to being aware of the lens through which we view individuals and students that are different from us.

In a culture of intentionality, professional development opportunities relating to valuing and managing diversity are given to employees, and any negative attitudes associated with initiatives pertaining to diversity by the dominant group within the organization are addressed (Golembiewski, 1995; Thomas, 1992). In addition, creating a culture of intentionality involves intentionally hiring employees that subscribe to a clear mission and vision of an organization and those that are willing to perpetuate the cultural goals of the institution. Additionally, hiring individuals that love kids and those that are willing to teach all students, learn from all students and form relationships with all students, not only a certain type of student, will allow for authentic connections and partnerships.

Principals were also intentional about making parents and families feel valued by trying to form authentic partnerships with them. Some principals talked about allowing parents to partner with them in assigning consequences for their child's behavior, having a say as to when parent-teacher conferences and having a system to invite them to be part of the school setting. Additionally, principals talked about hiring translators or empowering teachers, staff and students to serve as translators to make sure that parents' voices could be heard. Principal A talked about how he encouraged teachers to reach to parents at least three times a week due to their limited access to the Internet and email. In an intentional culture, communication lines are not rigid, but diverse voices of different stakeholders within organization are consulted before decisions are made. A culture of intentionality hinges on stakeholders being intentional rather than reactionary to the diversity that may exist within an institution.

A Strong Data Culture

Many of the principals that were interviewed had a systematic way of looking at data and disaggregating it to see trends or distributions. One principal collected data from cultural audits

of their environment and had meaningful discussions with staff members on how to improve the environment. Principals also talked about having a set time frame to receive reports in order to identify trends. Principal I talked about getting short, mid, long cycle grades in order to identify patterns and gaps according to demographics. An important, overarching theme, however, was individualizing data for each student and developing a system for tracking this individualized data over time. Principal E talked about a War Room concept where they had individual grades and pictures of students that were at risk of not graduating. Data was looked at every two weeks and reviewed by an Assistant Principal and counselor. Principal D talked about having data teams in specific content areas and their job was to look at data to make sure that students were on pace to achieve certain benchmarks and goals. Looking at data allowed teachers, as part of PLCs, and administrators to reflect on their practices and adapt their approaches to ensure the success of different populations.

Research conducted by Education Development Center's Center for Children and Technology (EDC/CCT) sought to understand how building level personnel, especially teachers and administrators, used data to drive decisions. They found that building level administrators used high stakes test data to identify trends in performance pertaining to different classes and used grades to understand their schools' strengths and weaknesses . This finding was confirmed in another study performed by Ikemoto and Marsh (2007). After building level administrators identified general patterns in performance, they distributed funds to initiate professional development programs and other interventions to improve instruction and student achievement. Teachers, in contrast, tended not to rely on a single data source to assess the achievement of their students and make decisions on targeted interventions. Rather, teachers used multiple sources of data, such as homework assignments, formative and summative assessments, and circumstantial

information to make decisions pertaining to student learning (Mandinach, Honey & Light, 2006). Encouraging a strong data culture and intentionally instructing teachers on how to use data is essential to adapting practices and reaching diverse populations.

Assertions

The Principals' interviews and narratives gave important insights into their perceptions and practices of cultural competence at their institutions. After a thorough analysis of their commentaries and the resulting emergent themes, three assertions were made. Firstly, the mission and vision of an institution should be constructed with all students in mind and should be created by an advisory group whose demographics are representative of the institution. Secondly, in a culture of intentionality assumptions must be avoided. Lastly, institutions need a systematic way to gather and analyze data.

Assertion #1 – The mission and vision of an institution should be constructed with all students in mind and should be created by an advisory group whose demographics are representative of the institution.

When trying to build a culturally competent institution, one potential danger is creating a mission and vision that keeps only certain demographics of students in mind. This approach can be divisive and may result in individuals, especially from the dominant group, having negative attitudes towards programing that pertains to cultural competence; individuals may perceive these initiatives as biased and favorable towards a certain group (Golembiewski, 1995; Thomas, 1992).

Constructing a mission and vision that caters to a specific demographic of students may imply an inadequate assessment of an institution's culture. Creating an effective mission and vision involves deep consideration of how it serves and impacts all cultures within an institution.

For example, if a mission and vision emphasizes "respect", it is important to recognize that respect looks different to diverse cultures. For example, Principal C stated that in some cultures, a sign of respect is to not look at somebody in the eyes when they are talking. However, a more Eurocentric concept of respect involves a firm handshake and eye contact. Therefore, understanding what respect looks like in different cultural contexts is important to evaluating the success of a mission and vision. Furthermore, if a teacher or staff member does not interact with or have specific demographics of students in their classes, they may feel as though the requirements contained within the mission and vision may not apply. For example, if a mission and vision implies that students need to see themselves in the curriculum and ensure their voices are represented when analyzing texts, then if a certain demographic is not present in a class, that may lead a teacher to feel as tough a piece of literature or analytical angle is not needed. To address this, Principal I from this study said that it is important to equip all students with the knowledge and skills to participate in an increasingly diverse and globalized society because at the end of the day, diversity is representative of the world we live in. Furthermore, Principal I stated that cultural competence is more than having and fulfilling a checklist of items, it is engrained into every aspect of school life regardless of whether that diversity is present or not. Lindsey et al. (2009) contend that culturally competent and proficient institutions construct a mission and vision that caters to all students and all demographic groups present within an institution.

The construction of a vision and mission cannot be done by a few individuals, but must be a community effort. The voice and perspectives of different stakeholders, who represent the demographics within the institution, must be present in order to craft a mission and vision that truly serves all students. The presence of diverse voices will allow an institution to authentically

assess and understand the school's culture and will encourage an environment that, according to Lindsey et al. (2009), promotes "challenging assumptions and translating perspectives, perceptions, values and goals…" (p. 53) of the different constituents within a school. These voices should not only be present in the construction of the mission and vision, but also the continual evaluation and re-evaluation of the inherent values and beliefs contained with the mission and vision. There must be a system in place to take audits of the institution's culture and revise policies and practices accordingly. For example, Principal D talked about having a Parent Advisory Council, which represents the demographics of the student body, that he meets with monthly. Principals A and C mentioned going into their communities and forming partnerships with organizations as well as inviting them into the school setting to better understand how to reach and serve different populations according to the school's mission and vision.

As Principals in this study emphasized, a good mission and vision can be constructed by keeping the following elements in mind: educators should realize that good instruction is good instruction—an educator does not have to take away from what they are already doing, but add to their pedagogy for the purpose of reaching different populations in their classrooms. Educators need to believe that all students are capable of high degrees of achievement, especially with the proper resources. Educators should break down barriers to achievement by giving students access to different course options (especially honors and AP courses), eliminating meaningless prerequisites and achievement requirements that make students eligible for certain high level courses. Moreover, they should encourage students to step out of their comfort zones and take risks that will allow them to realize their true potentials. Educators must continually show students the end result of what hard work can produce and show them that they have some level of control over their futures. Moreover, and as Principal B did, it could be important to invite

successful alumni of different backgrounds back to the school to talk to students about their

journeys and give advice to administrators on their school culture and support of diverse

students. Educators must be committed to teaching families to value education since the family

is the unit of support for many students of different cultures. Lastly, educators must strive to

provide adequate resources for students and their families to, in some contexts, break their cycle

of poverty and achieve their stated academic and familial goals. If a mission and vision

incorporates all or some of the previously stated elements, progress and notable gains in student

achievement, engagement and well-being can be made.

Lastly, all students and teachers must be given an opportunity to carry out the mission

and vision. A common theme that emerged from the Principal interviews was the buy in from all

students and their ability to hold each other accountable to the cultural expectations of their

school. Furthermore, teachers were empowered to lead the way in modeling behavior for all their

students.

Assertion #2- In a culture of intentionality, assumptions must be avoided

When looking considering the *5 Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency*, assumptions

within each element should be avoided.

Assessing Culture

When assessing one's culture, it is not enough to assume that different stakeholders have

heard and internalized the mission and vision of an institution. Rather, a culture of intentionality

involves consistent communication of a mission and vision to students, teachers, administrators,

and parents. The mission must be reflected on different communications and other forms of

messaging to the community. When assessing a culture, one cannot assume that teachers and

students will reflect on how they are contributing to the culture and climate of their institution or reflect on how they are transforming their actions to perpetuate the values of the organization. In a culture of intentionality, structure is given to when and how conversations around cultural competence happen, whether it be PLCs, frequent student led discussion forums or cultural audit surveys.

In a culture of intentionality, teachers are given opportunities to find and learn culturally competent practices that can assist them in adding to their curricula or classroom environment in order to provide them with pedagogical skills and techniques to better serve different populations. One cannot assume teachers will know where to find these resources and how to incorporate them into their learning environments and curriculums.

In a culture of intentionality, one cannot assume that parents and guardians will feel comfortable enough to come into the school environment and share their views, experiences and concerns. In a culture of intentionality, parents and guardians and are invited into the school setting and programming is constructed in a way that makes them feel valued.

Valuing Diversity

In order for diversity to be valued, Principals stated the importance of hiring faculty and staff that value diversity and love kids. It is easy to assume that when a candidate says the right words and superficially agrees to the values of cultural competency, they mean it. In the interview process and the subsequent calling of references, a culture of intentionality asks candidates and their references to give examples of how they have demonstrated culturally competent values and illustrate the manner in which they have committed to growth in the area of cultural competence. Being intentional in the hiring process rules out what Principal F called missionary educators- people that want to teach in urban and diverse settings to boost their

resumes and then move on to another job in less diverse suburban schools. Principal F pointed out that missionary educators usually have low expectations for students of diverse backgrounds and may use biased and stereotypical lenses to view and interpret the behaviors of their students.

One cannot assume that the mere presence of diversity within an institution will yield successful intercultural communications, interactions, and relationships. Rather, in a culture of intentionality programming is initiated that promotes intercultural interactions. Conversations and events should be held where diverse stakeholders are purposefully invited and ones where dialogue is structured. Principals in this study initiated conversations and events around food, dance, dress and music, which provided rich insights into the experiences of individuals and provided a basis of connection with other cultures, since these elements are cross culturally relevant.

It is important to not assume that students' cultural identities are affirmed at home, but institutions should make a concerted effort to show students the impact of their cultures outside of the walls of the school—that includes seeing examples of success in their communities. Furthermore, Principals discussed partnerships with institutions of higher education, giving students time away from school to go an attend local or regional cultural celebrations, and giving students opportunities to go to local marches and advocacy events.

In an institution that values diversity, diversity is not seen as a liability, but an asset to the organization. Principal F mentioned that she sees differences as opportunities rather than problems. Individuals that are not part of the dominant cultural group are not asked to blindly assimilate and conform to the established norms of the dominant group, rather institutions seek to learn about a student's values, norms, behaviors and customs and adapt some of their institutional practices to incorporate those values (Cox, 1991; Fink, 2003). It is important to not

assume that students know what is expected of them and know how to navigate the culture of their schools- they have to be taught this through an orientation program or family nights. Principal C spoke about the importance of teachers and administrators being present at these informational or orientation events so that they can speak authentically about what is expected of students. Intentionality around learning and understanding the culture and background of a student is necessary as well as making the cultural expectations of an institution are clear. In essence, both parties are forced to learn and adapt rather than the responsibility being placed exclusively on an individual or the institution.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that even though somebody belongs to a particular ethnic group, it is essential to recognize their nuanced ways of being and see their individuality. Principal A in this study recognized that students often have a bicultural existence and are continually navigating what it means to maintain their native culture in a different societal context. Trainings on how to work with specific cultures provide a foundation for an educator to understand the general values of a culture and how to respond to them, but the generalities should not be applied blindly because this leads to stereotyping. Rather, an educator must realize that there are subcultures within the general culture and those nuances need to be discovered as a teacher learns about a student. For example, the general consensus is that the American culture is very individualistic. While this may be true, everyone in America does not subscribe to this way of being even though the majority of people may do so.

Managing the Dynamics of Difference

When managing the dynamics of difference, institutions cannot assume that since discriminatory acts don't occur often at an organization, which many of the Principals said, they don't need to equip their staff and be proactive in making sure they are ready to dissolve,

confront and respond to situations that occur. In a culture of intentionality, institutions know that conflict is inevitable and they don't have to wait for conflict to happen, but train their staff on how to resolve conflicts and have a system for parents, teachers and students to report concerns.

Adapting to Diversity

When adapting to diversity, an intentional culture looks to hire faculty and staff that reflects the demographics of the student body. This involves intentionally looking at hiring processes to make sure that an institution is looking in the right places to find candidates. A diverse staff will give administrators and staff important insights into ways they can adapt practices to be more inclusive of the diversity that is present within an organization.

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge

It should not be assumed that financial resources will be available to provide professional development opportunities for teachers and staff. In a culture of intentionality, financial resources are proactively allocated to cultural competency professional development. Additionally, PLCs and faculty meetings times should be dedicated to developing cultural competent practices.

Assertion #3- Institutions need a systematic way to gather and analyze data

In order for institutions to maintain culturally competent practices, a systematic way to look at data and collaborate on it is important. One way to do this is to establish professional learning communities (PLCs) of teachers that can talk about what data to gather, how to process it, and share instructional strategies (Datnow, 2014). Another method that could be used to

collect data is Learning Walks with curriculum coaches, administrators and teachers to understand, evaluate and document classroom practices within the school (Marsh et al., 2005).

Many Principals in this study modeled strong data cultures and provided insights into systems they use to gather and analyze data. Taken together, many principals unintentionally utilized a framework for data driven decision making, described by Mandinach (2006), that could be a model for other Principals. The model is as follows: schools should decide on specific tools they will use to gather and organize data. In this study, Principal D had data teams that systematically collected academic data from classes in different content areas. Principal E assigned an Assistant Principal to each grade and together with a counselor, collected data and generated a report every nine weeks. After the data is gathered, there should be a plan for organizing the data. For example, Principals disaggregated the data to look at the achievement of different demographics of students.

After gathering and organizing the data, Mandinach & Light (2008) explain that the data is turned into information. That is, the data is put into a specific context. For example, the data could be organized in a way that identifies whether there are achievement gaps in specific content areas or whether a particular population is falling behind certain benchmark goals. Some Principals in this study looked at discipline data and found an over representation of students from a specific demographic group that were suspended or expelled. At the information stage it is important to produce a summary report of the findings from the data in a particular context, like saying, "there is an overrepresentation of White males on free and reduced lunch receiving discipline referrals compared to other demographics". This report should be made available to administrators, teachers and staff within a building in order for meaningful discussions, in PLCs or at faculty meetings, to take place.

Mandinach & Light (2008) explain that from information, data is turned into knowledge. An institution must be able to synthesize data to find unique patterns and trends. For example, "high-achieving Black students get lower discipline referrals than lower-achieving Black students". Synthesizing information means looking for trends and patterns both within and between demographic groups and prioritizing the ones that need to be addressed. Gaining knowledge from the information also means finding the reasons for specific data trends. It could be that a certain demographic is being referred for discipline because of implicit biases individuals have towards a certain population or a lack of understanding of cultural values that different individuals of diverse cultures display. As a result, interventions and trainings can be put in place to address different misconceptions.

After gaining knowledge and decisions are made on to how to address a specific issues, it is important to carefully consider how to implement a specific program, like the timing, the specific people that will be involved, and whether there could be partnerships with other schools in the district. Most importantly, the impact of the interventions and programs must be assessed so that there is an assessment of what aspect of the framework to revise, be it the gathering of data, the contexts of the data or the obtaining of knowledge from that data.
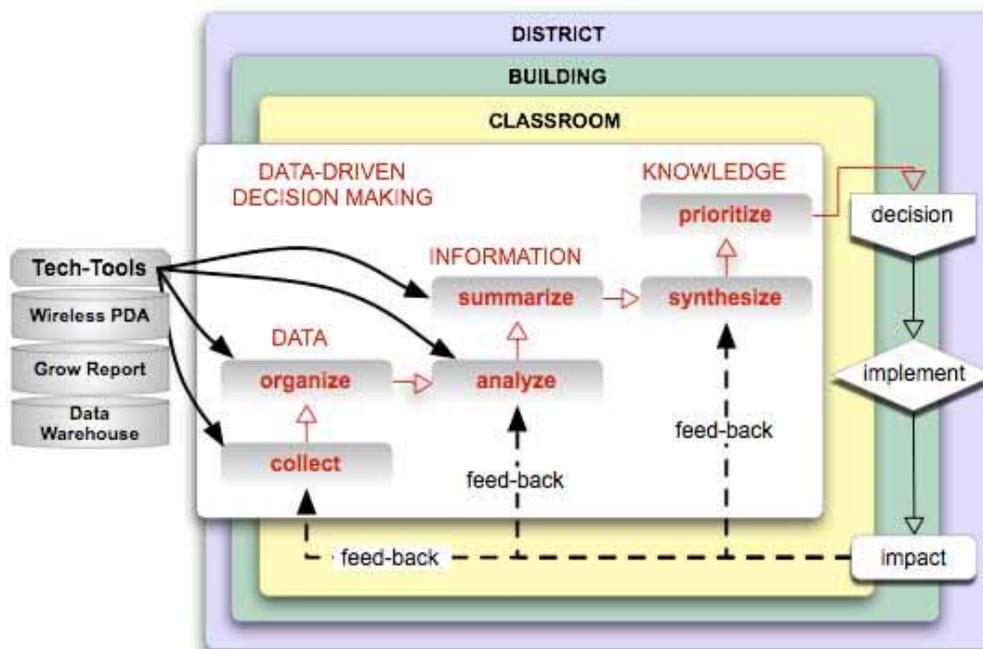
Figure 14. Diagram illustrating the data driven decision-making process framework that will be used to evaluate the data driven decision making processes of diversity management offices. (Mandinach, 2006).

Summary

For this chapter, the researcher used a priori themes, called the *5 Essential Elements of Cultural Competence*, to analyze the principal interviews. Ten principals from a variety of demographics and schools were interviewed and data was collected on their perceptions and practices of cultural competence at their schools. Their interviews were analyzed using 15 indicators of cultural competence outlined by Lindsey et al. (2009), which encompass all the essential elements of cultural competence, namely assessing culture, valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, adapting to diversity, and institutionalizing cultural knowledge. Open coding was then used to identify overarching themes in addition to the essential elements of

cultural competence. They were: (a) a strong mission and vision, (b) making platforms available for students to celebrate diversity, (c) a culture of intentionality, and (d) a strong data culture.

There are three assertions that can aid Principals in building culturally competent organizations:

1. Principals should construct a mission and vision with all students in mind and should be created by an advisory group whose demographics are representative of the institution.

2. A fundamental part of building a culture of intentionality is avoiding assumptions.

3. Principals need to develop a systematic way of gathering, analyzing and making decisions from the data they gather.

The assertions above are reinforced by the Principals' commentaries as well as research studies. Chapter 5 will discuss recommendations and conclusions that were gleaned from this study.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The first part of this chapter will briefly review the context of this study, the methodology and research questions. The second part will address how the findings from this study confirms or adds to current research and theories pertaining to cultural competence. The third part will speak to future studies that could emerge from this study and the last part will include some concluding thoughts.

Brief Introduction and Study Design

The United States is experiencing demographic changes and data trends show that by the year 2020, traditionally underserved ethnic minority students will become the majority school aged population in the US (US Census Bureau, 2017). These demographic changes are gaining the attention of policy makers and researchers because of the persistent achievement gaps that exist between White and traditionally underserved ethnic minority students both nationally and in the state of Indiana. Lindsey et al. (2009) suggest that in the 20th and 21st century cultural competence may be an approach educators can implement to close the achievement gaps within institutions. Lindsey et al's advocacy for cultural competence stems from a body of literature that suggests that cultural dissonance, or incompatibilities between a school's culture and that of traditionally underserved ethnic minority students, could be a reason for the achievement gap (Nieto, 1999; Teel & Obidah, 2008). As a result, the goal of this study was to understand Indiana high school principals' perceptions and practices related to cultural competence in their schools.

In this study, purposeful sampling was used to recruit 10 Indiana high school principals whose schools contain a Black or Hispanic population of at least 20% and an overall traditionally

underserved ethnic minority population of between 40 - 80%. Semi-structured interviews were

conducted and Principals were asked a total of ten interview questions. A phenomenological

framework was used to present and analyze data using Lindsey et al.'s (2009) *5 Essential*

Elements of Cultural Proficiency as well as 15 indicators of cultural competence. Open coding

was used to discover emergent themes from the interviews using Tesch's (1990) framework.

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are Indiana public high school principals' perceptions of cultural competence in
   their schools?

2. What culturally competent practices, if any, do Indiana public high school principals use
   in their schools?

This Study in the Context of Existing Literature and Theories on Cultural Competence

Research Question #1

Research question #1 sought to understand Indiana public high school principals'

perceptions of cultural competence in their schools. When analyzing the principals' interviews, it

is evident that the majority of them excel in assessing their cultures, valuing diversity and

adapting to diversity within their schools. Specifically, and as Figure 3 demonstrates, most

principals mentioned practices that were in accordance with most of the indicators of cultural

competence as they pertain to the *5 Essential Elements of Cultural Competence*. However, the

areas they can improve on are certain aspects associated with managing the dynamics of

difference and institutionalizing cultural knowledge. The indicators that were not addressed by

many principals were #7 ("learn effective strategies for resolving conflict, particularly among

people whose cultural backgrounds and values differ"), #8 ("understanding the effect that

historic distrust has on present-day interactions"), and #14 ("teach the origins of stereotypes and prejudices"). Specifically, only six principals addressed #7, five principals addressed #8 and only two principals addressed #14.

Analysis of Principal Interviews

Indicator of Cultural Competence Aligned With Their Target Essential Element of Cultural Competence
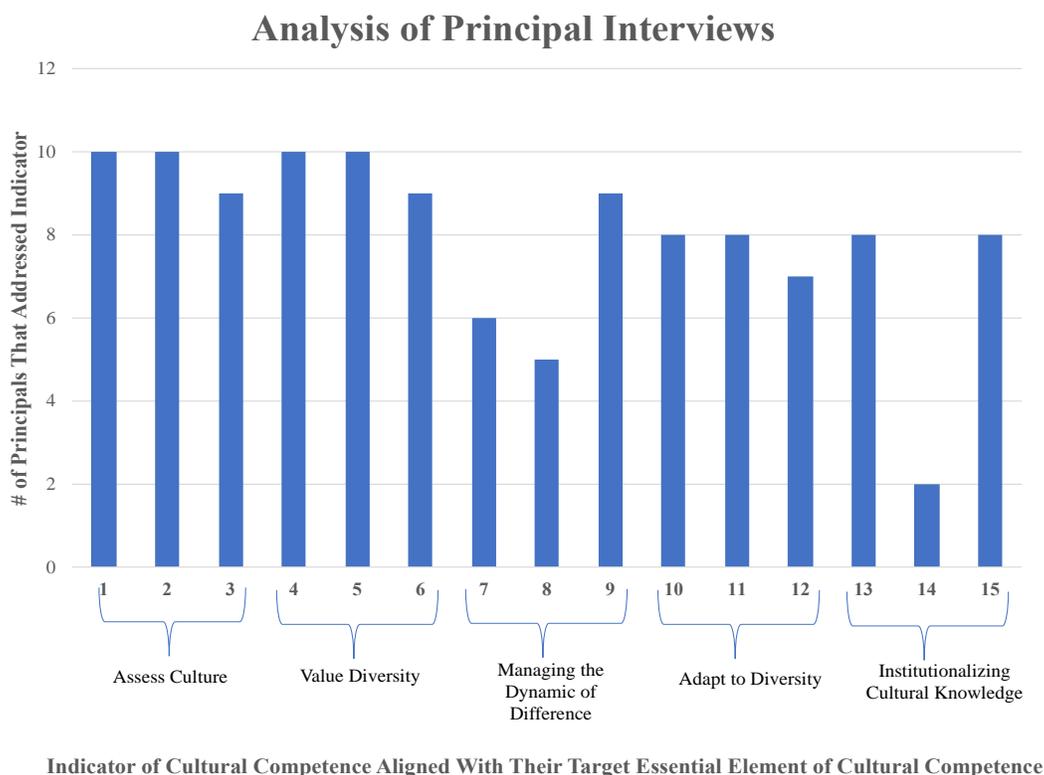
Figure 15. Principals' Reponses to Indicators of Cultural Competence

Many of the principals who did not mention the way they sought to learn effective strategies for resolving intercultural conflicts were reactionary when it came addressing intercultural conflicts or relied on the fact that someone in their buildings would have enough of a relationship with a child to connect with them and intervene. However, those principals that did mention #7 were proactive in reaching out to their communities to learn how to resolve intercultural conflicts and were proactive in training their staff and equipping them with tools to address conflicts. Principals that fulfilled indicator #7 did so by going through case studies or

scenarios during faulty meetings and also using brain-based research and data to adapt their practices. Fink (2003) and Golembiewski (1995) define what a proactive environment looks like when it comes to managing diversity. The authors contend that proactive environments are ones where institutions don't wait for issues to emerge, but are proactive in training their staff and offering professional development for a variety of topics.

Indicators #8 and #14 go hand in hand because they intentionally give context to the history of marginization in our society and how those histories influence the percpetions and actions of different demographics. Some Principals were intentional about teaching their staff about the context of racism and discrimination in our nation and worked to address any stereotypes and biases their teachers had. Other Prinicpals mentioned the inherent distrust some families had when they first walked into their buildings and how the school needed to work hard to make them feel safe and valued. Lindsey et al. (2009) sites the reasearch of Delpit (1988) who stated there are two prominent responses when individuals encounter situations with the dominant culture—tranditionally underseved populations are more sensitve to discrepencies in power and are more likely to peform threat appraisals when they are in that environment. Those indviduals that are part of the dominant culture are less likely to be aware of their power. As mentioned before, a culture of intentionality in educating teachers on the story of discrimination in this country allows them to reflect on their positions of power and how they may inherently dienfranchise people because of their privilege.

Lindsey et al. (2009) and Cross (1989) describe institutions that value diversity and recognize they still have much to learn as precompetent. Precompetent organizations are ones that try and behave in appropriate ways and start building structures to grow in areas where they are weak. The authors would classify the Principals that clearly value diversity, but fall short in

areas pertaining to managing the dynamics of difference and institutionlizing cultural knowledge as exhibiting cultural precompetence. Lindsey et al. contend that "at the point of cultural competence, schools and educators accept and respect differences; carefully attend to the dynamics of difference; continually assess their own cultural knowledge and beliefs; continuously expand their cultural knowledge and resources; and variously adapt their own belief systems, policies and practices" (p. 120).

Througout the interviews, it was evident that the principals were always looking for ways to improve their practices. Even though many were proficient in talking about their school cultures, valuing diversity and adapting to diversity, they frequently saw room for growth. This study is significant because it adds to the limited literature on cultural competence in the high school context. Additionally, it focuses on understanding cultural competence in school-wide context rather than in individual classrooms.

Research Question #2

The second research questions states: what culturally competent practices, if any, do Indiana public high school principals use in their schools? In order to address the second research question, open coding was done to identify emerging themes. The first prominent theme that emerged from the principal interviews was having a strong mission and vision. With diverse values, belief systems, behaviors and customs being present at a school, having a common mission and vision guides student behavior and actions, and also allows employees to align their curricular and behaviors with that mission and vision. When an individual walks into a school and is able to identify a mission and vision that preaches inclusion, it may, in part, allow them to feel invested and diminish preconceived barriers. However, having a mission and vision is not enough, but a leader must continually assess their school culture to determine whether different

stakeholders are advancing the vision of the institutions. As a result, assessing barriers to the mission and vision of a school and finding ways to surmount those barriers is important (Gurley, Peters, Collins, & Fifolt, 2015).

The second theme that emerged was "making platforms available for students to celebrate diversity". Most principals placed high value on giving students an opportunity to share their cultures with their communities in a public manner. Allowing students to express themselves enables them to feel connected to their school and allows them to engage in intercultural relations and dialogues that open the door to understanding and learning about different cultures. As one of the Principals discussed, it is important to not see these opportunities as check box items where a school claims to be culturally competent because they have put on a few events. Rather, it is important to go beyond that and create partnerships in the community and spend resources in sending students to cultural events that are happening outside of the school wall so that they can see the impact of culture in their community.

The third theme was creating a culture of intentionality. A culture of intentionality encompasses many values, norms and behaviors. However, joint intentionality between individuals has been shown to advance and even speed up collective cultural objectives (Angus & Newton, 2015). As a result, being intentional about modeling inclusive behaviors for students and staff will perpetuate inclusivity within an organization. Intentionally hiring individuals that will buy into and carry out the mission and vision of an organization will go a long way in fulfilling the mission and vision of an organization. Being intentional about professional development around cultural competence and enabling faculty and staff to reflect on their practices, as part of PLCs especially, goes a long way in allowing for an inclusive culture within an organization. Principals in this study were aware that a culture of intentionality is necessary

and as one of them said, and I paraphrase, if we don't intentionally learn how to be inclusive and grow in cultural competence, then how can we educate students to do the same?

The last theme was developing a strong data culture. At the forefront of government policy agendas is the desire to close the achievement gap, particularly for traditionally underserved populations and at risk groups within the US (Datnow, 2014). As a result, federal and state governments have implemented policies that require administrators and teachers be able to collect, use, and analyze data to make informed decisions in order achieve desired outcomes-particularly closing the achievement gap (Datnow, 2014). Lachat and Smith (2005) assert that successful use of data is essential to creating effective schools and state that data driven decision making is vital to not only raising test scores, but changing teachers' attitudes and school cultures, especially those pertaining to low performing and at-risk students.

In one study, teachers were asked to respond to a survey gauging their use of data. Many indicated they rarely sought out school or district wide data on their own, but relied on other people or formal data teams to collect, disaggregate, and present data in ways that they could understand and use (Honig & Venkateswaran, 2012; Means, 2009). Without formal data professionals, schools that desire to use data to drive decision making often don't know what data to use or how to access it (Lachat & Smith, 2005). Moreover, educators are overwhelmed with information from a variety of sources and this data is often not presented in format that is easily understood or usable to teachers (Lachat & Smith, 2005; Ellen Beth Mandinach et al., 2008). By not using data, teachers miss out on being able to set and refine their goals, improve instruction, identifying students that need targeted interventions, and miss out on being able to have meaningful conversations with students, teachers, parents and different stakeholders within their communities (Datnow, 2014). In terms of equity, the lack of engagement with data results

in a failure to challenge teachers' and administrators' biases and assumptions they may have for particular populations of students. For example, a study performed by Lachat and Smith (2005) showed that the examination of data is essential to counteracting false assumptions teachers may hold. In their study, teachers examined data that showed that the low achievement of different demographics of students was not related to their attendance as previously thought, but rather to the quality of instruction. Bertrand and Marsh (2015) conducted a study that showed that teachers who often focus on using student characteristics as an explanation for low achievement, did not reflect on their own practices, but rather, "reinforced a culture of low expectations" within their institutions. Although data use can be very helpful to promoting equity, there can also be some unintended consequences. One of the main driving forces behind policies advocating for school systems to use data is for "education researchers, policy makers and practitioners to understand and change educational equities" (Artiles, 2011). By way of their accountability systems, NCLB and ESSA implemented policies with the goal of achieving educational equality for students from diverse backgrounds and ability levels. In the data context, policies call for practitioners and school systems to disaggregate outcome data along racial, linguistic, ability level lines (Artiles, 2011). Although these federal programs strive to erase the achievement gaps among the different subgroups, it also highlights the differences that do exist. Although organizing data by subgroup is helpful in improving teacher quality, increasing access to resources for different groups, and holding school systems accountable, this subgrouping may reinforce the "historical deficit narrative of race and disability" (Artiles, 2011).

Artiles (2011) explains that the sense-making of data by teachers and administrators is made more complex by their attitudes and beliefs toward different populations of pupils, especially special education, English language learners (ELL) and traditionally underrepresented

students of diverse ethnic/racial backgrounds. The result is implicit biases and attitudes educators have towards different subgroups of students that stem from the sociohistorical narratives that associate poverty, lack of family support, poor literacy and language skills, and other deficient characteristics with minority and special education students (Artiles, 2011). Betrand and Marsh (2015) state "this complex intersection of implicit beliefs—reflecting broader discourses—about the ability and socially constructed difference may influence the ways in which teachers interpret and act on data…" (p. 862). In order to work towards counteracting implicit biases and attitudes towards minority populations, Betrand and Marsh suggest that initiatives be designed to allow teachers time to reflect on how they make sense of data.

Many Principals in this study exhibited strong data cultures and had systematic approaches to looking data, having conversations about the data and making decisions that related to improving practices.

The emergent themes and assertions are ones that individuals reading this study can apply to their schools. Additionally, the practices outlined in this study are ones that are also supported in the literature and the qualitative nature of this study could allow institutions to read the interviews of those individuals that have the same demographics as they do and learn ways to implement the recommended practices. When using the principles outlined in this study, it is important to keep the following assertions, which were gleaned from the interview data, in mind. They are:

1. Principals should construct a mission and vision with all students in mind and should be created by an advisory group whose demographics are representative of the institution.

2. A fundamental part of building a culture of intentionality is avoiding assumptions.

3. Principals need to develop a systematic way of gathering, analyzing and making decisions from the data they gather.

Implications and Directions for Future Research

As I conducted the research for this study, the more I realized that it would be important to speak to different stakeholders, like teachers, students and parents/guardians to understand their perceptions of cultural competence within their institutions. Gaining multiple perspectives would make the research rich and deeper insights could be gained. Additionally, a longitudinal study that includes observations of the school environments could potentially provide rich data that could enhance qualitative findings from the interview.

There is a need for more quantitative studies pertaining to cultural competence at the level of the organization (Nelson, 2008). This study provides good qualitative insights, but could potentially be supplemented by quantitative findings. Nelson, Bustamante, Wilson and Onwuegbuzie (2008) contend that few studies provide insights into cultural competence at the level of the organization, which is the total organizational environment—its policies, programs, practices, rituals, artifacts, and traditions. Rather, studies tend to focus on particular groups or individuals within institutions, like teachers (Evola, 2012; Murff, 2017; Nelson, 2008). Furthermore, this study can be enhanced by looking at whether principals who did well on fulfilling the indicators of cultural competence have actually seen improvement in their school's achievement gaps amongst different demographics of students in their schools.

The limited research pertaining to organizational cultural competence that does exist is in the field of counseling and psychology and not education (Nelson, 2008). Nelson et al. state that in the field of school leadership, there have been limited attempts to empirically assess cultural

competence in schools beyond equity audits (described earlier) and to make correlations between cultural competence in schools and student achievement.

Conclusion

As student demographics continue to shift in the US, it is paramount for educators attain the knowledge and skills to engage and learn from diverse populations, which could lead to their success both academically and socially. Principals in this study, showed proficiency in assessing their school cultures, valuing diversity and adapting to the diversity within their institutions. The areas that they were the weakest in were managing the dynamics of difference and institutionalizing cultural knowledge. Specifically, most showed low proficiency in teaching their staff the historical contexts of discrimination in society and understanding how the legacies of discrimination influence the behaviors of stakeholders in their community. The emergent themes from their interviews include (a) having a strong mission and vision, (b) making platforms available for students to celebrate diversity, (c) creating a culture of intentionality, and (d) a strong data culture.

This study provided in depth insight into cultural competence. However, the skills and practices outlined in this study will serve all stakeholders as they contribute to a globalized society. Culturally competent students will carry the torch of equity and justice that will change society for the better.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPALS

Cultural competence interview questions

1. How would you describe the culture (the general beliefs and values) of your school? (connected to research question 1; connection to framework: assessing culture)

2. Do you think your students' cultures (beliefs, values, customs, behavioral norms) impact their educational experiences at your school? If so, how? (connected to research question 1; connection to framework: assessing culture)

3. How would you describe cultural competence and what are some barriers to cultural competence at your school? (connected to research question 1; connection to framework: assessing culture)

4. What do you do, if anything, to learn about and showcase the cultures of the students in your school? (connected to research question 2; connection to framework: valuing diversity)

5. How have you identified and confronted discriminatory actions in your school? (connected to research question 2; connection to framework: manages the dynamics of difference and institutionalizes cultural knowledge)

6. What support systems do you provide to help teachers have successful cross-cultural interactions with different stakeholders in your school community? (connected to research question 2; connection to framework: manages the dynamics of difference)

7. Where do you and your staff go to learn about cultures that are different from your own? (connected to research question 2; connection to framework: adapts to diversity)

8. What data do you collect pertaining to diverse populations in your school and how is the data used to make decisions pertaining to the needs and achievement of these populations? (connected to research question 2; connection to framework: adapts to diversity)

9. How do you establish genuine relationships with the families and caregivers of the diverse students in your school? (connected to research question 2; connection to framework: institutionalizes cultural knowledge).

10. In what ways do you involve families and caregivers of diverse students into the school setting? Can you give specific examples? (connected to research question 2; connection to framework: institutionalizes cultural knowledge).

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear Superintendent:

My name is Pascal Losambe and I am currently a PhD Candidate at Purdue University and my research examines practices pertaining to cultural competence in Indiana public high schools. I have preselected your school corporation for this study because of its ethnic/racial diversity as well as its achievements on the state-issued accountability report card. This research study is timely and important in light of the projected demographic shifts occurring in the student population in the state of Indiana and the country as a whole.

I am writing to ask your permission to reach out to high school principals in your school corporation to inquire whether they would be willing to participate in a 30 – 60-minute interview with me. The interview will consist of 10 open-ended questions and the results will remain confidential and will be presented as summary data. The risks to the participants are minimal since the results of the interview will be confidential and no individual, school or district will be identified in the report, except through a pseudonym known by me, the researcher, and the participant.

Your voice matters and I sincerely thank you in advance for your consideration--it will make a difference to the lives of many students, teachers, researchers, parents/guardians, and districts that will be reached and impacted by this research.

If you would like any additional information regarding this study, please contact me or my committee chair, Dr. Marilyn Hirth (mahirth@purdue.edu).

Thank you for considering this research opportunity!

Pascal Losambe
Doctoral Candidate
Department of Educational Studies
Purdue University
Email: llosambe@purdue.edu

Dear Principal:

My name is Pascal Losambe and I am a PhD candidate at Purdue University in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies department. My dissertation research examines perceptions and practices pertaining to cultural competence in Indiana public high schools. Your school, _____, has been preselected for this study because of its ethnic/racial diversity as well as its achievements on the state-issued accountability report card. Your superintendent, _____, has given me permission to reach out to you to ask for your participation in this research study. Your insights will play an important role in increasing school leaders' understanding and exposure to culturally competent practices, especially in light of the changing student demographics in Indiana.

Your participation in this study includes engaging in a 30-60-minute interview consisting of 10 open-ended questions. Your responses will remain confidential and the results will be presented as summary data. The risks to you are minimal since the results of the interview will be confidential and no individual, school or district will be identified in the report, except through a pseudonym known by me, the researcher, and you, the participant.

By agreeing to participate in the study, you will be giving your consent for the researcher or principal investigator to include your responses in their data analysis. Your participation in this research study is strictly voluntary, and you may choose not to participate without fear of penalty or any negative consequences.

Upon completion of the study, you will gain new insights from the research findings and your contributions, and the study's general results, may benefit other administrators, cultural competency scholars, and faculty and staff looking to incorporate or enhance cultural competence in their educational programs.

If you would like any additional information regarding this study, please contact me or my committee chair, Dr. Marilyn Hirth (mahirth@purdue.edu).

Thank you for considering this research opportunity!

Pascal Losambe
Doctoral Candidate
Department of Educational Studies
Purdue University
Email: llosambe@purdue.edu

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION TO USE LINDSEY, ROBINS & TERELL (2009) FRAMEWORK AND RESOURCES

RL

Randall Lindsey <randallblindsey@gmail.com>
Thu 4/11/2019 1:23 PM
Loseke P Losambe

Dear Mr. Losambe,

Please know you have permission to use relevant materials from our book to support your dissertation research study.

My requests are for complete citations as appropriate and that you share your findings with us. This is the way we keep our work fresh and relevant.

Please feel free to contact me at any time during your study.

My and my colleagues good wishes go with you.

Randy

VITA

LOSEKE P. LOSAMBE

EDUCATION

2019   PURDUE UNIVERSITY

PhD student in Educational Leadership, May 2019

Dissertation Title: *Principals' Perceptions and Practice of Cultural Competence in Indiana Public High Schools.*

2011   BOSTON COLLEGE

Master of Science in Biology, May 2011

Thesis Title: *Toll-like Receptor (TLR) Mediated Immune Activation of Monocytes is Increased During Acute SIV Infection and AIDS.*

2007   MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

Bachelor of Arts in Molecular Biology and Biochemistry, May 2007

Thesis Title: *S. mutans Bacteriocin Expression is Modulated by the SloR metalloregulator*

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2017- Present   Columbus Academy, Columbus, OH- Dean of Students and Science and History Faculty

2015 – 2017   Canterbury School, Fort Wayne, IN- Diversity Director, Science Faculty and Track and Field Coach

2011-2015   Collegiate School, Richmond, VA – Science Teacher, Sophomore Class Lead Advisor, and Track/Field coach