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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

A MIXED METHODS STUDY
OF CULTURALLY PROFICIENT PRACTICES
IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Pamela S. Simone

June, 2012

Linda Jungwirth, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Pamela S. Simone

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mom and dad. Thanks for instilling in me the desire to learn.

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First, I would like to thank God for His love and guidance through this journey. I thank God for allowing me to be of service to the students and believe in them as He believes in me. Second, I would like to thank my husband, Pat. I appreciate your support, love, and commitment. I could not have completed this doctorate without you. I look forward to the future with you, enjoying each moment that we are together.

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To my sister, Penny, and brothers, Todd, Greg, and Jay, although we may be miles apart, I always felt your love and support for me. I am truly blessed that you are in my life. Thank you!

VITA

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ABSTRACT

The problem addressed in this study was that leaders at an urban elementary school had not examined the implementation of culturally proficient practices, nor the challenges, barriers, or support needed for implementation. The purpose of the study was to inform instructional and leadership practices involving culturally proficient instruction. This was a mixed methods study with 24 teachers involving the examination of responses to 3 data collection instruments as well as document analysis of school policy, vision, mission, leadership team structures, and the teacher handbook. Three questions were answered through the study: (a) What culturally proficient instructional practices, if any, do teachers report implementing in classrooms in an elementary school in Nevada? (b) What challenges and or barriers, if any, do these teachers perceive in implementing culturally proficient instruction? and (c) What support do these teachers perceive is needed, if any, for implementing culturally proficient instructional practices? Findings indicated that participating teachers (a) embraced the equity comprising cultural proficiency and related instructional practices, (b) identified challenges/ barriers to culturally proficient practices, and (c) identified 3 categories of support that may enhance culturally proficient practices. Conclusions of the study reflect that teachers have implemented cultural proficiency and culturally proficient instructional practices. They are, however, faced with challenges and or barriers and are in need of continued administrative support. Furthermore, the teacher handbook is silent on culturally proficient policies and practices. Four recommendations were identified for policy and practice: (a) increasing the leadership focus involving culturally proficient practices, (b) focusing leadership on transformational perspectives to benefit stakeholders, (c) promoting opportunities to examine stereotypes and conflict resolution, and (d) revising

the teachers' handbook to include culturally proficient policies and practices. Three recommendations were identified for future study: (a) continued study at the school to determine additional areas wherein leadership support is needed, (b) the implementation of action research to examine espoused values of cultural proficiency and culturally proficient instruction in relation to instructional practices, and (c) continued study in the implementation of cultural proficiency and culturally proficient instruction to identify applications of theory and practice specifically beneficial for the Individual Educational Program (IEP) students.

Chapter 1. The Problem

Introduction to the Problem

Today's classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse, and projections indicate the trend will continue (Kiemele, 2009). The unprecedented growth in diversity was predicted in the 1980s, yet early professional conversations primarily leaned toward an emphasis on the diversity of languages (Fullan, 2003). It was during the early 1990s that educators first became aware of the critical need to diversify curricula and instructional practices in reflection of a broader range of diversity (Fullan, 2003). Kiemele (2009) proposed that the diverse nature and critical role of schools collectively underscore the importance of establishing culturally proficient practices and related programs within schools. Banks (2006) additionally spoke of the urgency for American educators to become culturally conscious, competent, and confident. It is both morally imperative and economically wise to provide education that is relevant, meaningful, and congruent with students' diverse classes, languages, and cultural beliefs (Banks, 2006). Much of this thinking occurred before legislative mandates, such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) of 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, 2008), although NCLB legislation holds educators responsible for ensuring continued learning improvements of the diverse population of children in today's classrooms.

State legislation has also substantially affected priorities and processes within the educational realm by identifying expectations and establishing related programs intended to improve educational practices for all students (Nevada Department of Education, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 1965; U.S. Department of Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, 2008; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, 2010). District-based mandates, mirroring

legislative priorities, have also provided policies and procedures for use in establishing local accountability and measuring changes in student performance in response to the interventions. At times governmental forces can result in mandated expectations with limited financial support at the local level. Under these conditions, leadership skills of school principals are essential.

Today's school leaders face uncertainties their predecessors did not experience. A glimpse back in time, however, suggests numerous strategies that may be effective in meeting students' needs. For example, in response to perhaps more general challenges occurring in the late 1970s, Bloom (as cited in McEwan, 1998) encouraged school principals to focus on parameters within the school environment that could be manipulated: (a) promoting a positive school culture, (b) developing home-school relationships, (c) allocating needed time and resources to educational priorities, (d) providing staff development training in effective modes of instruction, and (e) becoming strong instructional leaders. Senge (1990) later emphasized that leaders, if they are to become effective, must be able to elicit commitment from organizational members to learn the skills and strategies instrumental in achieving the mission. Robbins and Alvy (1995), as well as Kiemele (2009), additionally recommended the crucial role of self-reflection in the repertoires of leaders. These collective practices could perhaps be succinctly summarized in the words of Reeves (2006), who described effective leaders as those who deeply enjoy and understand the "antecedents of excellence" (p. 8). One example of an antecedent of excellence within the field of education is that of cultural proficiency, a research based approach that supports inclusive behaviors and practices for the benefit of all students (R. B. Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2003). As described by R. B. Lindsey, Graham, Westphal, and Jew (2008), a commitment to cultural proficiency

reflects educators' dedication to lifelong learning, social justice, and advocacy that can be observed between teachers and students within the general education setting and the inclusive setting designed for students with disabilities served through the Individual Educational Program (IEP).

In an elementary school within the local urban setting, an emphasis on cultural proficiency was formally initiated for the purpose of enhancing instruction and improving the academic performance of all students. Related staff development was specifically designed to increase teachers' awareness, knowledge, and skills in the provision of culturally proficient instruction. All 31 teachers received four training sessions in culturally proficient instructional practices during the 2011-2012 school year; 24 of the 31 volunteered to participate in the study. Two factors provided the rationale for this study. First, no exploration and analysis of the implementation of culturally proficient instruction, nor the perceived challenges, barriers, and support needed for implementation, had been conducted. The second factor was that the analysis of student achievement data revealed inequitable student outcomes. This study was the initial quantitative examination of the implementation of culturally proficient practices and a qualitative examination of teachers' response to questions related to the challenges, barriers and support needed for implementing culturally proficient instructional practices at an elementary school. The purpose of this mixed methods study was to inform instructional and leadership practices within the school setting through the examination of quantitative data around teachers' responses to questions related to culturally proficient instruction and qualitative data around teachers' perceptions of the challenges, barriers, and support needed for implementing culturally proficient practices.

Based on population, the school wherein this study was conducted was located within the second largest city of a southwestern state (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The facility became operational at the beginning of the 2004-2005 academic year. The principal set the tone of the school culture and built the many foundations that ultimately established school traditions. Schlechty (2001) emphasized that school leaders should not take this responsibility lightly by stating that school culture “will have profound effects on life in the organization and relationships between the organization and its larger environment” (pp. 164-165). In recognition of this truism, three priorities were identified for the school: (a) relationships and communication practices; (b) culture and related processes such as discipline, expectations, and rules; and (c) value of others and their diversity.

The first priority involved the establishment of effective relationships between teachers and students. To establish this precedence, the school principal believed educators must first identify and understand their personal beliefs, values, and biases regarding students. Visualizing teacher-student relationships along a continuum, communication became a leadership priority. Of particular priority in the communication process was the importance of teachers (a) establishing a common vocabulary, (b) experiencing open dialogue to gain understanding and quality discussion for use in making decisions, and (c) developing awareness and consciousness of how one’s actions affect others. Schlechty (2001) reported that administrators would be wise to consider using established programs, when appropriate, rather than to develop and implement interventions that have minimal research-based context. Similarly the principal identified parallels between the identified beliefs and the work of D. B. Lindsey, Jungwirth, Pahl,

and Lindsey (2009) regarding culturally proficient practices for use in establishing this first priority of school culture.

The second priority involved identifying and communicating priorities for schoolwide discipline, expectations, and rules. The school principal believed that establishing a school culture that was both respectful to all and conducive to the overall learning experience was essential. This concept is succinctly reflected in the work of Fay and Funk (1995) and promoted through aspects of a school management approach emphasizing love and logic®. The program incorporates seven core beliefs: (a) the dignity and self-respect of both teachers and students are protected; (b) students are guided to solve their problems without creating problems for others; (c) students have the responsibility to make decisions and accept the consequences; (d) misbehaviors are met with logical consequences, as opposed to punishment, whenever feasible; (e) misbehaviors are viewed as opportunities to prepare for real-world experiences rather than personal attacks on faculty or staff; (f) students are encouraged to request one-on-one conferences when they feel consequences for misbehaviors have been unfair; and (g) misbehaviors will be referred to community authorities when warranted. This program, therefore, was deemed useful in establishing a positive and respectful school culture.

The school principal additionally identified and implemented the Be Kind . . . program (Josh Stevens Foundation, 2012) to support schoolwide discipline, expectations, and rules. The program was developed by parents of a young child known for his kindness. The purpose of the program is to “remind children that there is a whole wide world in need of more acts of kindness” (Josh Stevens Foundation, 2012, The foundation section, para. 4). The Be Kind . . . program is essentially comprised of “You’ve Been Caught Being Kind” cards for teachers and administrators to distribute to children when

observing acts of kindness (Josh Stevens Foundation, 2012, The foundation section, para. 4). In the school serving as the research site, random rewards with the cards were effective in promoting positive behaviors and supporting the learning climate (School principal, personal communication, February 11, 2012).

The third priority involved combating prejudice and stopping those who may have been intent on hurting or violating the civil rights of others. This priority is crucial when considering the personal experiences of special education students. Once again, the school principal identified and implemented an established program for reflecting and promoting core beliefs. Through the work of the Anti-Defamation League (2007), the No Place for Hate® program was identified to establish a students' mission statement for the collective purpose of (a) minimizing aggressive and negative behaviors, (b) promoting multicultural learning, (c) encouraging students to serve as allies to others, (d) promoting kindness, (e) teaching about related issues, (f) demonstrating respect within the learning environment, and (g) understanding that all students can make a difference in the culture of the learning community. The collective mission integral to the No Place for Hate® program was identified as an effective approach for establishing the third priority of the school culture in an effort to value the diversity throughout the school climate (School principal, personal communication, February 11, 2012).

Problem Statement

The school under study was established with a focus on social justice and the value of diversity, with all teachers undergoing training in the foundational principles and essential elements of cultural proficiency and culturally proficient instructional practices for the purpose of achieving equitable outcomes for all students climate (School principal, personal communication, February 11, 2012). As noted in R. B. Lindsey et al.'s

(2003) model, culturally responsive teaching was defined by Robins, Lindsey, Lindsey, and Terrell (2002) as “a way of teaching in which instructors engage in practices that provide equitable outcomes for all learners” (p. 6). After a review of student performance data, equitable outcomes were not evident within the school, warranting an examination of instructional strategies to support student achievement.

Given there had been no examination of the implementation of culturally proficient instructional practices nor the perceived barriers, challenges, or support required for full implementation, the purpose of this mixed methods study was to inform instructional and leadership practices within the school setting through the examination of quantitative data around teachers’ responses to questions related to culturally proficient instruction and qualitative data around teachers’ perceptions of the challenges, barriers, and support needed for implementing culturally proficient practices. Inequitable student outcomes within and across multiple subgroups was evidenced by the writing performance of fifth-grade students on standardized tests, providing a clear rationale for examining the implementation of culturally proficient instructional practices to support equitable student outcomes and for exploring the challenges, barriers, and support needed for implementation of culturally proficient instruction and practices. This analysis of disaggregated performance data by subgroup indicated that students with disabilities served through the IEP had historically demonstrated proficiency levels below the minimal expectations prescribed in state standards.

As noted in a review of district improvement goals, writing performance remained a concern throughout both the middle and high school experience. Members of the School Planning Team initially identified a concern about the discrepancies of student performance across subgroups at the school when analyzing scores from the Analytic

Trait Writing Assessment, which was administered to students in Grade 5. The assessment was a component of the Nevada Proficiency Examination Program, developed at the state level to measure performance of state-mandated expectations (Nevada Department of Education, 2010). Four subtests (ideas, organization, voice, and conventions) comprised the assessment.

Averaged data collected from the Analytic Trait Writing Assessment over the recent 3-year period, for example, indicated that 57.4% of fifth-grade students were nonproficient in writing. Scores additionally reflect that 91.3% of IEP students demonstrated nonproficient skills. As a result, members of the School Planning Team identified writing performance as an area of priority concern. Team members also reported a lack of student-teacher collaboration, or conferring, regarding students' writing samples as a contributing factor to poor writing performance.

Overall student performance on the Analytic Trait Writing Assessment was calculated and indicated by whole group as well as by subgroup. Performance was indicated using four levels: (a) Emergent/Developing (ED), reflecting the lowest range of achievement; (b) Approaches Standards (AS), indicating performance does not demonstrate grade-level achievement; (c) Meets Standards (MS), reflecting that performance demonstrates grade-level achievement; and (d) Exceeds Standards (ES), indicating that performance exceeded grade level standards. Performance on the battery is reported in Table 1.

Since the school opened at the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year, the principal and members of the school's leadership team had promoted culturally proficient instruction for the purpose of establishing a culture of excellence and equity in student outcomes throughout the school community (School principal, personal communication,

February 11, 2012). The 31 teachers in the general education classrooms, both those inclusive of IEP students and those without, participated in staff development relating to culturally proficient instruction during the 2011-2012 school year. The value of cultural proficiency was well established in the literature as an effective educational model for achieving equity in student outcomes (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2003). The problem addressed in this mixed methods study was that school leaders had not examined the implementation of culturally proficient practices, nor the challenges, barriers, or support needed for implementation. This study examined teachers' self-reported level of implementation of culturally proficient practices and teachers' perceptions of the challenges and barriers, and the support needed for implementation of culturally proficient instructional practices.

Table 1

Student Performance: Analytic Trait Writing Assessment

Year	Whole group %	IEP subgroup %
2009	31.5	7.7
2010	49.2	9.4
2011	47.1	9.1

Note. Table reflects the percent of students in Grade 5 meeting or exceeding grade-level standards. Rounded to the nearest tenth.

Research Questions

This mixed methods study was designed for implementation within an urban elementary school. Three central questions were identified for the investigation. Results were analyzed, interpreted, and compared to the literature to discover findings for informing refinement of teachers' instructional practice and leadership actions to remove

barriers and provide additional support for implementation of culturally proficient instruction within the school:

1. What culturally proficient instructional practices, if any, do teachers report implementing in classrooms in an elementary school in Nevada?
2. What challenges and or barriers, if any, do these teachers perceive in implementing culturally proficient instruction?
3. What support do these teachers perceive is needed, if any, for implementing culturally proficient instructional practices?

Quantitative data were gathered through the beliefs and competence surveys (see Appendices A and B) to answer Research Question 1. Qualitative data were gathered through an open-ended questionnaire (see Appendix C) to answer Research Questions 2 and 3 and to expand the quantitative results used to answer Research Question 1.

Importance of the Study

Because a similar study had not been conducted in the school setting, limited understanding existed of the implementation of culturally proficient instructional practices or teachers' perceptions regarding the challenges, barriers, and support needed for implementation of culturally proficient instruction. Culturally proficient practices were actively promoted and supported within the school culture for enhancing (a) relationships between teachers and students, (b) collaboration between teachers and students, (c) instructional practices, and (d) equity in academic performance of students (School principal, personal communication, February 11, 2012). The purpose of this mixed methods study was to inform instructional and leadership practices within the school setting through the examination of quantitative data around teachers' responses to questions related to culturally proficient instruction and qualitative data around teachers'

perceptions of the challenges, barriers, and support needed for implementing culturally proficient practices.

Clearly, culturally proficient practices, the challenges and barriers to implementation, and the support needed for implementation were worthy of thorough examination in an effort to provide teachers the needed knowledge, skills, and support for implementing culturally proficient practices. Findings derived from this study may inform leadership as to actions that may remove barriers and provide support for challenges relating to the implementation of culturally proficient instruction so that students' diverse needs may be more effectively met. Results of the study may also contribute to the professional literature regarding culturally proficient instruction and leadership actions to support implementation of culturally proficient practices.

Delimitations

The scope of the study was limited by design. First, this research was restricted to only one school facility, and no effort was made to generalize findings to any other school of the same or differing population. Findings may be useful, however, in informing other schools with the same or differing populations as to culturally proficient instructional practices. The second delimitation was that results were not differentiated by ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or disability qualifications in protection of participants' identity.

Limitations

The following eight limitations were identified:

1. The researcher developed the beliefs inventory and open-ended questionnaire.

A review by experts, as well as field testing, was conducted to determine whether revisions should be made in the wording of these instruments. These

processes were expected to identify and limit researcher bias and to establish clarity and appropriateness of items.

2. Experiences, emotions, judgments, and preferences of participants occurring beyond the scope of the study may have influenced reported perceptions.
3. As frequently noted in applied research studies (Glesne, 2005), the possibility existed for both researcher and participant bias.
4. Staff development training involving cultural proficiency was provided to participants during School Year 2011-2012. This mixed methods study was not designed, however, to explore teachers' perceptions relating to the perceived value of the training. The study was designed to inform instructional and leadership practices within the school setting through the examination of quantitative data around teachers' responses to questions related to culturally proficient instruction and qualitative data around teachers' perceptions of the challenges, barriers, and support needed for implementing culturally proficient practices.
5. The integral procedures of the study did not include a component for examining changes in student performance or for measuring performance changes that may have been attributable to culturally proficient instruction.
6. In light of school district regulations, the researcher did not conduct observations or evaluations in participants' classrooms.
7. Determining theories of action, or actual instructional practices, was beyond the scope of the study; procedures were limited to the analysis of self-reported data, or espoused theories, for use in identifying participants' instructional practices.

8. The researcher did not have the opportunity to observe participants' instructional practices to determine whether their theories of action aligned with espoused theories.

Assumptions

Three assumptions were made at the onset of the study. The first was that the sample was adequate in identifying themes and patterns to inform findings. The second was that participants would share their reflections, perceptions, and experiences with honesty and transparency. The third was that the findings derived from the study would be credible.

Definition of Terms

Several terms and operational variables pertaining to this study may require clarification. These are provided in the following text.

Adequate yearly progress (AYP) refers to the measurement of systematic achievement, mandated in NCLB legislation, requiring that improved academic achievement be demonstrated annually by each specified demographic subgroup (U.S. Department of Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, 2008).

R. B. Lindsey et al. (2008) described *cultural proficiency* as a research based approach that “is demonstrated by educators’ commitment to lifelong learning, to social justice, and to advocacy” (p. 191).

As noted in Lindsey’s model, *culturally proficient instruction*, supported by culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 1997, 2002, 2003), was defined by Robins et al. (2002) as “a way of teaching in which instructors engage in practices that provide equitable outcomes for all learners” (p. 6).

Descriptive quantitative data are typically gathered using very limited interaction with participants yet provide verifiable numbers for use in examining and quantifying specific variables (Mills, 2007). Using these data, descriptive statistics can be derived. In this study, descriptive statistics were calculated to identify the percentage, mean, standard deviation, and median of participants' responses to survey items.

The *essential elements* of cultural proficiency reflect the following five values and practices: (a) "assessing cultural knowledge," (b) "valuing diversity," (c) "managing the dynamics of difference," (d) "adapting to diversity," and (e) "institutionalizing cultural knowledge" (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008, p. 36).

Five *guiding principles* of cultural proficiency have been identified: (a) "culture is a predominant force in people's and organization's lives," (b) "people are served in varying degrees by the dominant culture," (c) "people have group identities and individual identities," (d) "diversity within cultures is vast and significant," and (e) "each cultural group has unique cultural needs" (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008, pp. 22-23).

Inclusion is the practice of providing all instruction for IEP students within the general education classroom (Spring, 2002). As differentiated by Spring (2002), inclusion is a step beyond mainstreaming, as students are not removed from the general education classroom to receive instruction in a special education classroom.

Instructional settings wherein inclusion is incorporated as an integral component of curriculum, instruction, and assessment are *inclusive classrooms* (Benninghof & Singer, 1995).

Instrumentation included (a) a beliefs survey based on cultural proficiency's five essential elements; (b) a competency survey from the cultural proficiency literature; (c)

an open-ended questionnaire; and (d) document analysis of school policy, vision, mission, leadership team structures, and the teacher handbook.

Qualitative data are used to “capture the human meanings of social life as it is lived, experienced, and understood by the participants” (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2005, p. 201).

The *sample size* of this study was 24 ($N = 24$); the sample was a subset of the 31 teachers assigned to general education classrooms from kindergarten through Grade 5. Six of the 31 classrooms (one at each grade level) were inclusive of IEP students. No distinctions were made in this study between teachers of general education classrooms and those of inclusion classrooms. Participation in this study was strictly voluntary and anonymous.

The role of the *School Planning Team* in the school setting was to analyze academic and behavior data to identify (a) areas of priority concern; (b) root causes of the concern; and (c) solutions, action plans, and monitoring plans to address the concerns.

Student-teacher collaboration during writing instruction involves a teacher conducting an individual, one-on-one conference with each student for the purpose of discussing and revising the student’s writing assignment.

Triangulation is the process of finding “regularities in the data” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 374). In the study, triangulation was achieved through three types of data: (a) quantitative data acquired through the beliefs and competence surveys, (b) qualitative data acquired through the questionnaire, and (c) qualitative data acquired through document and artifact analysis.

Organization of the Study

The dissertation consists of five chapters. The preliminary chapter provides background to both the school and the problem the study was designed to address. Chapter 2 is dedicated to an in-depth analysis from the review of the literature; the chapter includes discussion regarding culturally proficient practices, instructional practices, professional development, and effective school leadership. Chapter 3 presents a detailed description of the (a) research approach and design; (b) participants; (c) instrumentation; (d) procedures; (e) data collection, analysis, and interpretation; (f) dissemination of results derived from the study; and (g) methodological assumptions. Chapter 4 is dedicated to the presentation of data and findings derived from the analyses. In Chapter 5, the researcher presents a summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Relationship of the Researcher to the Study

The researcher held the position of inaugural principal at a nearby elementary school in the research setting. In this position, the researcher had emphasized the importance of embedding cultural proficiency within school practices in order to establish a positive environment conducive to learning. To date, school culture was safe, trusting, and collaborative as noted in numerous interactions between teachers in grade-level meetings, parent meetings, and faculty meetings. Furthermore, teachers used data to inform instruction and support a culture of continuous improvement.

Chapter 2. Review of Relevant Literature

The literature review is dedicated to the interrelationship between four primary topics. The first topic is cultural proficiency, the leadership emphasis that was established in the research setting for enhancing school culture and improving student performance. The second topic involves instructional practices; within this section the examination includes the topics of federal legislation, inclusion, differentiation, and culturally proficient instruction. The review of the literature then addresses the topics of professional development and effective school leadership; an emphasis on leadership integrity is embedded in the final section on effective leadership. A summary of the text is then provided to conclude the chapter in preparation to transition to Chapter 3.

Implementing this mixed methods study provided a rare opportunity to examine the implementation of culturally proficient practices and teachers' perceptions of the challenges, barriers, and support while implementing culturally proficient instruction in the school setting. Through the integral procedures of the study, cultural proficiency was explored for the purpose of discovering findings for informing instructional and leadership practices within the school setting. At the onset of this study, members serving on the School Planning Team believed that an in-depth understanding of the implementation, challenges, barriers, and support regarding culturally proficient instruction at the school could be acquired through the implementation of this study.

Although this was a mixed methods study, the integral components of the research primarily involved qualitative inquiry exploring teachers' perceptions of the challenges, barriers, and support needed for implementing culturally proficient instructional practices. A study of perceptual viewpoints, as were collected during the implementation of this study, has innate weaknesses that are acknowledged in the

literature. The researcher accepted these challenges as a possible influence on the study. Geertz (as cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 2006) described the concept of qualitative inquiry as an “attempt to gain entry into the conceptual world of . . . subjects” (p. 23). Bogdan and Biklen (2006) additionally emphasized that qualitative researchers must focus on the “historical context of the institutions” in order not to “lose sight of [the] significance of participants’ perceptions” (p. 5). Strike, Haller, and Soltis (1998) succinctly stated, “What people take to be true is often colored not just by what is reasonable to believe, but by their interests and biases” (p. 129). This phenomenon, involving the intersection of interests and biases, distinguished the study as one wherein the applicability in the school setting overshadowed the potential weaknesses.

Simply stated, this endeavor was a study of teachers’ reported implementation of culturally proficient instructional practices and their perceptions of the challenges, barriers, and support regarding the implementation of culturally proficient instruction. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) emphasized the influence and merit of culture within school communities by virtue of the belief that, “by definition, every school has a culture,” that culture “is a natural by-product of people working in close proximity,” and that “it can be [either] a positive or negative influence on a school’s effectiveness” (p. 47). Hanson (2001) espoused a belief that mirrored the words of Strike et al. (1998) by stating, “Schools also have their own unique cultures that are shaped around a particular combination of values, beliefs, and feelings [emphasizing] what is of paramount importance to them” (p. 641). By implementing this mixed methods study in the school setting, matters of importance, in the eyes of teachers, were recognized and understood. The knowledge gained through this research will inform teachers’ and leaderships’

efforts to continually shape the culture into an educational environment that is inclusive and supportive of all students.

Cultural Proficiency

Cross (1988) succinctly defined cultural proficiency as congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that support effective relationships and work occurring within cross-cultural settings. Emphasizing that cultural proficiency is a developmental process, Cross purported that room for improvement always exists within an organization. To depict this concept, Cross identified five points along a continuum. The first is cultural destructiveness, the most negative of all five points. The second is cultural incapacity, wherein bias, racial superiority, discrimination, and oppression exist. The third, and midpoint along the continuum, is cultural blindness. This ethnocentric stage is characterized by universal application of approaches that, in reality, ignore cultural strengths and encourage assimilation. Cultural precompetence, characterized by acceptance and respect for differences, is the fourth point along the continuum. At this stage of development, self-assessment regarding cultural awareness and responses is ongoing throughout the organization. The fifth point is advanced cultural competence, which indicates an advanced, proficient level of competence. Cross emphasized that this point is achieved only if individuals at all levels of the organization contribute to the process.

Cultural proficiency has application within the contexts of organizational leadership (Cross, 1988; Vavrusa, 2008), educational leadership (Cruzeiro & Morgan, 2006; Kiemele, 2009; R. B. Lindsey et al., 2003; Parkhurst, 2008), and instructional practice (Chamberlain, 2005; Cooper, Kurtts, Baber, & Vallecorsa, 2008; Robins et al., 2002; Trent, Kea, & Oh, 2008). Numerous articles and texts regarding specific

components of cultural proficiency provided a framework for the leadership's emphasis on cultural proficiency in the research setting: (a) *Culturally Proficient Learning Communities: Confronting Inequities Through Collaborative Curiosity* (D. B. Lindsey et al., 2009), (b) *Cultural Proficiency: A Manual for School Leaders* (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2003), (c) *Culturally Proficient Inquiry: A Lens for Identifying and Examining Educational Gaps* (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008), (d) *The Culturally Proficient School: An Implementation Guide for School Leaders* (R. B. Lindsey, Roberts, & Cambelljones, 2005), (e) "Cultural Proficiency: Changing the Conversation" (R. B. Lindsey, Robins, Lindsey, & Terrell, 2009), (f) *Culturally Proficient Instruction: A guide for People Who Teach* (Robins et al., 2002), and (g) *Culturally Proficient Instruction: A Guide for People Who Teach*, 2nd ed. (Robins, Lindsey, Lindsey, & Terrell, 2006). These publications expanded the earlier work of Cross (1988).

Given the multiplicity of the nature of cultural proficiency, a plethora of terms have been used to describe and expound upon the concept. R. B. Lindsey et al. (2008) encouraged discussion of cultural proficiency within the educational realm by stating it is "a mindset for educators who are dedicated to effective cross-cultural practices" (p. xi). Throughout *Culturally Proficient Inquiry: A Lens for Identifying and Examining Educational Gaps* (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008) are abundant descriptions designed to enable readers to grasp the full meaning of cultural proficiency. In the following text, the researcher offers discussion from this book with the intent of capturing and promoting the essence of the model.

A central belief comprising cultural proficiency is that "change is an *inside-out* process in which a person is . . . a student of his own assumptions" (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008, p. 20). Building upon this tenet, cultural proficiency was developed as a

comprehensive and systematic framework for promoting discussion among educators regarding school culture and related practices. The model consists of four tools to assist in cultural performance.

Tools of cultural proficiency. The tools provide a framework for use in analyzing personal values and behaviors as well as the policies and practices within the school community (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008). The tools of the model are the (a) guiding principles, (b) barriers, (c) continuum, and (d) essential elements. Each is identified and discussed in the following text.

Tool 1: Guiding principles. This resource was designed as a framework to assist in identifying core values relating to diversity (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008). Its use can also inform practice in responding to the needs of students. Five guiding principles have been identified: (a) “culture is a predominant force in people’s and organization’s lives,” (b) “people are served in varying degrees by the dominant culture,” (c) “people have group identities and individual identities,” (d) “diversity within cultures is vast and significant,” and (e) “each cultural group has unique cultural needs” (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008, pp. 22-23).

Tool 2: Barriers. Three barriers were identified by (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008). The first is the resistance to change. The second is systems of oppression, and the third is a sense of entitlement. These barriers, along with other damaging behaviors, can all be minimized through a focus on culturally proficient inquiry. The inquiry approach involves a self-reviewing, fact-finding process designed to investigate the school’s effectiveness in meeting the needs of all students.

Tool 3: Continuum. Within the continuum is language for use in describing and assessing values and behaviors of individuals as well as practices and policies within

organizations (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008). Movement along the continuum is indicative of shifts in thinking and represents the paradigm from intolerance and or tolerance for diversity through the “transformation for equity” (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008, p. 22). Cross (1988) initially developed a continuum consisting of five points. These were delineated by cultural (a) destructiveness, (b) incapacity, (c) blindness, (d) precompetence, and (e) competence. R. B. Lindsey et al. (2008) later developed an expanded continuum consisting of six points indicating movement in cultural (a) destructiveness, (b) incapacity, (c) blindness, (d) precompetence, (e) competence, and (f) proficiency. The salient difference between the two models is that R. B. Lindsey et al. identified a point along the continuum for cultural proficiency that may be achieved after individuals accomplish the point representing cultural competence as described by Cross and R. B. Lindsey et al.

As described by R. B. Lindsey et al. (2008), cultural destructiveness, the first point along the continuum, is one’s efforts to eliminate vestiges of the cultures of others. Cross (1988) stated this is the lowest of all stages, representing collective, destructive attitudes and practices to both cultures and the individuals within those cultures. Cultural incapacity, the second point, involves efforts to undermine the culture of others (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008). Cross described cultural incapacity as the point at which biases, feelings of racial superiority, discrimination, and oppression exist. Cultural blindness, the third point along the continuum, is the refusal to acknowledge the culture of others (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008). Cross stated that this stage is characterized by approaches that ignore cultural strengths and encourage assimilation.

Cultural precompetence, the fourth point along the continuum, is awareness of what one does not know about working in diverse setting and, additionally, conveys that

a person values the diversity but is unsure of how to meet the diverse needs within the organization (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008). Cross (1988) indicated that cultural precompetence involves ongoing self-assessment regarding cultural awareness and responses throughout the organization. Cultural competence, the fifth point, is viewing the two facets of personal life and professional performance as interactive; cultural competence moves to valuing and knowing the needs and working to meet those needs (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008). Cross stated that cultural competence is achieved only if individuals at all organizational levels contribute, as this stage indicates an advanced, proficient level of competence. Cultural proficiency, the sixth point along the continuum developed by R. B. Lindsey et al. (2008), involves individuals embracing a proactive stance to value and meet the needs of individuals representing all cultures.

Tool 4: Essential elements. The five essential elements of cultural proficiency were identified as standards to establish expectations of individual values or behaviors and organizational practices and policies (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008). Elements reflect the following skills: (a) assessing cultural knowledge, (b) valuing diversity, (c) managing the dynamics of difference, (d) adapting to diversity, and (e) institutionalizing cultural knowledge (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008). Rubrics are divided into the four contexts of (a) curriculum and instruction, (b) assessment and accountability, (c) parent and community communication and outreach, and (d) professional development (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008).

Descriptions of each element were provided by R. B. Lindsey et al. (2008). The first element, assessing cultural knowledge, integrates the awareness of others' cultures and one's reactions to those cultures to increase cross-cultural effectiveness. Valuing diversity, the second element, involves the inclusiveness of those whose experiences and

viewpoints are different. Managing the dynamics of difference, the third element, involves accepting conflict within cultural contexts as a normal process. The fourth element, adapting to diversity, is being flexible and willing to shift behaviors, policies, and practices, as well as connecting to background experiences throughout the curriculum. The final element is institutionalizing cultural knowledge; this element involves cultural learning as a salient component of ongoing professional development (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008). Progress towards attainment of these elements can be determined through ongoing reflection and inquiry using rubrics.

A culture's ability to sustain competence in valuing community diversity is best achieved through the implementation of effective organizational policies and practices succinctly described within the four contexts of (a) curriculum and instruction, (b) assessment and accountability, (c) parent and community communication and outreach, and (d) professional development (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008). Within the context of the curriculum and instruction, the expectation is that organizational members would "enthusiastically embrace a districtwide responsibility for closing learning and achievement gaps" (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008, p. 83). Two policies and practices were established within the context of assessment and accountability. First, members of the organization would be expected to "advocate for policies, practices, and structures at the district and state levels that ensure assessment alternatives, accommodations, and accountability systems are valid, reliable, fair, and equitable for all demographic student subgroups" (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008, p. 87). The second expectation is that organizational members would ensure the provision of "ongoing structures and resources for analyzing appropriate school and student data to close learning and achievement gaps" (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008, p. 87).

Within the context of parent and community communication and outreach, the expectation is that organizational members would welcome parent and community groups to provide “ongoing meaningful contributions to decisions, policies, and practices that serve the diverse needs of the community” (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008, p. 90). Within professional development, the final context, the expectation is that “professional learning opportunities [would] lead to improving community welfare and interdependence” (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008, p. 94). Progress towards both attainment and sustainment of competence in diversity can be determined through the inquiry process.

The inquiry process. R. B. Lindsey et al. (2008) promoted the use of four rubrics for the purpose of bringing awareness and change from the inside rather than through external forces such as organizational audits. All rubrics have the five essential elements of cultural proficiency as the vertical axis; the horizontal axis presents the continuum ranging from destructiveness, incapacity, and blindness to precompetence, competence, and proficiency. The rubrics provide descriptors of practice for the following four areas: (a) curriculum and instruction, (b) assessment and accountability, (c) parent and community communication and outreach, and (d) professional development. A panel of six educational experts reviewed the rubrics and provided input that was later incorporated within the continuum of cultural competence (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008).

Collaboration. An effective practice incorporated within a culturally proficient setting is professional dialogue, a reflective process used to achieve understanding of others’ diverse perceptions (Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009). Effective dialogue supports both the collaboration and learning processes within professional communities

(Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009). As emphasized by Robins et al. (2006), “To value diversity is to collaborate” (p. 34).

Vavrusa (2008) described collaboration as one of the critical behaviors of effective leaders. A review of the research provides several additional definitions of collaboration that could be visualized as falling along a continuum. DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many (2006), for example, described collaboration as a process involving individuals working interdependently to achieve common goals. Marzano et al. (2005) similarly described collaboration as an effective level of interaction among faculty members. Gruenert (2005), however, described a collaborative culture as one wherein “teacher development is facilitated through mutual support, joint work, and broad agreement on educational values” (p. 43). Of particular application within this research study is the belief that the quality of collaboration is directly affected by the organizational culture, as participative dialogue brings a depth and richness to educational practice (Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009).

Although the definitions may vary slightly, the consensus is that collaboration involves communication, sharing, and self-reflection. Hildebrand (2007) emphasized that, for collaboration to be effective, trust must be embedded throughout the organization. Buchholz and List (2009) promoted the development of a “culture of inquiry” (p. 38), focused on both collaboration and self-reflection, as crucial practices within a culturally proficient environment. Vavrusa (2008) also encouraged leaders to embrace inquiry, stating that the need for change or renewal often stems from self- and collaborative assessment.

Instructional Practices

Federal legislation. Mandates to achieve equity in academic and educational outcomes for all students have evolved from successive legislation such as the (a) Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (U.S. Department of Education, 2002), (b) Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Library of Congress, 1973), (c) 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act (U.S. Department of Education, Special Education & Rehabilitative Services, 2000, 2007), (d) NCLB of 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, 2008), and (e) Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004 (U.S. Department of Education, 2004a, 2004b). Governmental mandates central to these laws have significantly affected educational practices in public schools through requirements to provide (a) instructional accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities limiting the opportunity or ability to learn (U.S. Department of Education, 2004a, 2004b); (b) educational services in the least restrictive environment to permit disabled students, to the extent possible, to participate in instruction with their same-age peers (U.S. Department of Education, 2004a, 2004b); and (c) practices involving standards-based assessment designed to ensure that all students are learning (Valli & Buese, 2007). The following chronological overview provides a brief historical background and establishes the conceptual basis for the inclusive practices established within the school setting.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was, in retrospect, the precursor of NCLB (U.S. Department of Education, 1965). Through this legislation, federal funding was distributed for the purpose of promoting research, collaboration, and innovative programs in efforts to minimize the influence of various risk factors and improve student performance (Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley, & Goodlad, 2004; U.S.

Department of Education, 1965). Although the effects of the legislation were limited in comparison with NCLB, the need to address related concerns was established as a foundation for future efforts (Goodlad et al., 2004).

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was initially perceived as pertaining only to reasonable architectural accommodations for disabled individuals not eligible for special education services (Campbell, 2004). The central requirement of this law is that the disabilities must substantially limit major life activities, and education was identified as a major life activity (Library of Congress, 1973). Eligible students, therefore, extend beyond those receiving special education services to include students in the general education classroom in need of instructional accommodations such as preferential seating, peer assistance, untimed tests, or repeated testing (Library of Congress, 1973). Provisions of this legislation provide disabled students an equal opportunity for participating in learning experiences with their nondisabled peers.

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 was the first to define today's least restrictive environment policy (U.S. Department of Education, Special Education & Rehabilitative Services, 2000, 2007). The legislation also required that a free and appropriate education be provided to children ages 5 to 18 with disabilities. The final major component of the Act was the requirement to develop and implement an IEP for each student with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, Special Education & Rehabilitative Services, 2000, 2007).

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2002) was reauthorized and expanded in 2001 as NCLB. Through NCLB, mandates were established for the (a) improved performance of all subgroups of minimal size; (b) development of state academic standards; and (c) demonstration of adequate yearly

progress (AYP) through annual, standardized testing within the core academic areas (U.S. Department of Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, 2008). By the end of the 2013-2014 school year, NCLB requires that all children demonstrate the ability to read on grade level as indicated in state standards (U.S. Department of Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, 2008). Unlike the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (U.S. Department of Education, 1965), NCLB incorporates governmental sanctions should continual improvements in student performance not be demonstrated.

A reauthorization of the 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act, IDEIA requires the provision of a free and appropriate education for all students with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, 2004a, 2004b). As a result of IDEIA, four distinct mandates exist; these include the (a) provision of due process should a disability be suspected, (b) development and participation of planning and placement teams, (c) development and systematic monitoring of an IEP for each disabled student, and (d) provision of services and aids to assure provision of an educational experience in the least restrictive environment to the extent possible (U.S. Department of Education, 2004a, 2004b). Key components of IDEIA minimize unwarranted placements of students in self-contained, special education classrooms. Collectively, the mandates within the 1975 Education for all Handicapped Children Act (U.S. Department of Education, Special Education & Rehabilitative Services, 2000, 2007) and IDEIA (U.S. Department of Education, 2004a, 2004b) perpetuated inclusive practices (Campbell, 2004).

Inclusion. Based on mandates embedded within IDEIA, students diagnosed with disabilities that impede the learning process are qualified to receive special education services (U.S. Department of Education, 2004a, 2004b). Numerous researchers support inclusion, the practice of including the majority of IEP students within the general

education environment, by stating the belief that the students derive greater benefit in inclusive classrooms than in self-contained settings (Cortiella & Wickham, 2008; Farrington, 2008; Martzen, Ryndak, & Nakao, 2010; Roberts, Keane, & Clark, 2008; Sapon-Shevin, 2008). Gay (2003) emphatically emphasized the importance of inclusive instructional practices by describing inclusion as one of the key principles of democracy.

Roberts et al. (2008) specifically emphasized that the general education classroom is the most appropriate placement for special education students with learning disabilities, because they are able to both access grade-level curriculum and experience typical peer interaction. Cortiella and Wickham (2008) similarly stated that students with cognitive disabilities benefit from exposure to grade-level content in the general education classrooms. Martzen et al. (2010) also supported placements within the general education environment for students with emotional disabilities because of the propensity to demonstrate fewer behavioral issues. A successful experience within an inclusive setting, however, is dependent on teachers' attitudes, perceptions, skills, and training (Gay, 2002; Hart & Whalon, 2008; Harvey, Yssel, Bauserman, & Merbler, 2010).

Acedo (2008) clearly emphasized the belief that inclusion lacks clarity by stating that "inclusive education is not without uncertainties, disagreements, and contradictions" (p. 6). In agreement, Gay (2002) emphasized that the physical appearance of most students with learning disabilities is no different than that of their nondisabled peers and, consequently, teachers frequently expect similar behaviors and academic outcomes within the inclusive environment without any differentiation of instruction. Acedo, as well as Parkhurst (2008), further described inclusion as one of the salient concerns facing education. A formidable challenge regarding the provision of inclusive educational practices is the ongoing need to identify effective instructional modifications and

accommodations to improve academic achievement of students with disabilities (Baglieri & Knopf, 2004; Seo, Brownell, Bishop, & Dingle, 2008).

Students with learning disabilities frequently have additional weaknesses in working memory and are impaired in their abilities to inhibit irrelevant information; the weaknesses cause difficulty in the ability to reject inappropriate or incorrect information during instruction (Censabella & Noël, 2005). Thus, in addition to identifying and implementing accommodations and modifications, general education teachers in inclusive classrooms may also be faced with the challenge of counteracting inhibition impairment of a select number of students (Censabella & Noël, 2005). Because of the numerous challenges innate to inclusion, Baglieri and Knopf (2004) expressed the belief that the inclusive classroom can become an arena in which students with disabilities are marginalized if effective instructional practices are not utilized. The differentiation of instruction, through accommodations and modifications, serves as one stopgap for avoiding this possibility (Baglieri & Knopf, 2004; Simpkins, Mastropieri, & Scruggs, 2008; Sternberg & Zhang, 2005).

Differentiation. Differentiation of instruction requires an intentional decision of the teacher to provide instruction using a different approach or on a different knowledge level for the purpose of affording individual students the opportunity to learn in a way that is specifically suited to each (Tomlinson, 2000; Ysseldyke & Tardrew, 2007). King-Shaver (2008) described differentiated instruction as the deliberate designing of an academic lesson, teaching style, or both, with the intention of meeting the needs of individual students. Beloshitskii and Dushkin (2005), as well as Patterson, Connolly, and Ritter (2009), expanded the description of differentiation by stating that students' learning styles should be embedded within the instructional process. Differentiation can

also be used to provide adaptive skills and knowledge often essential for the future success of IEP students (Sternberg, 2006) and to provide alternatives for demonstrating mastery of lesson objectives (Anderson, 2007).

The practice of differentiating instruction is clearly supported in the literature. Hall (2002), as well as Boutelle (2008), endorsed the use of differentiated instruction as a flexible and engaging method of providing instruction to improve student achievement. Similar arguments, identifying differentiated instruction as an approach that (a) increases student interest, (b) promotes active participation, (c) improves behaviors, (d) increases time on task, and (e) minimizes inappropriate behaviors, are also noted in the literature (Obiozor, 2010). Painter (2009) further stated the belief that the differentiation of instruction is effective for promoting grade-level achievement.

In an inclusive classroom, specific accommodations and modifications are frequently determined collaboratively by the classroom teacher and members of an interdisciplinary team comprised of the special education teacher, parent/s, psychologist, school administrator, and other individuals responsible for the success of individual students (Ferreri, 2009). Voltz, Sims, Nelson, and Bivens (2008) stated that differentiation is one skill virtually every teacher will eventually need. With the continued trend of including IEP students in general education classrooms, Seo et al. (2008) additionally emphasized the need for teachers to maintain a positive socioemotional climate within the classroom. Culturally proficient instruction is reflective of this emphasis (Gay, 2003; R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008).

Culturally Proficient Instruction. R. B. Lindsey et al. (2008) identified five essential elements of culturally proficient instruction. The first is the practice of assessing cultural knowledge to determine the “extent to which curriculum provides opportunities

for educators and students to learn about self and others” (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008, p. 81). This element establishes the expectation that teachers will provide regular opportunities for students to contribute their knowledge and perspectives about lesson topics and to then use that knowledge in instructional planning.

The second essential element of culturally proficient instruction is the practice of valuing diversity to determine the “extent to which curriculum reflects diversity” (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008, p. 81). This element establishes the expectation that teachers will select, develop, and implement curricula reflecting diverse perspectives and languages as well as the accurate portrayal of historical events and cultural groups.

The third essential element of culturally proficient instruction is the practice of managing the dynamics of difference to determine the “extent to which curriculum promotes multiple perspectives” (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008, p. 82). The first expectation regarding this element is that teachers will provide challenging curricular options that incorporate inquiry and higher order thinking skills for the purposes of personalizing connections and evoking multiple perspectives. The second expectation is that struggling students will be provided ongoing, timely, and personalized support by peers, teachers, and parents.

The fourth essential element of culturally proficient instruction is the practice of adapting to diversity to determine the “extent to which cultural knowledge is integrated into the curriculum” (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008, pp. 82-83). This element establishes the expectation that teachers will integrate and infuse content that is culturally relevant while differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all students.

The fifth essential element of culturally proficient instruction is the practice of institutionalizing cultural proficiency to determine the “extent to which values and

policies support culturally responsive curriculum” (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008, p. 83). The first expectation regarding this element is that teachers will enhance curriculum with instructional approaches and resources to maximize the learning of all students. The second expectation is that teachers will ensure students’ successes are articulated vertically and horizontally across both grades and subjects. The ongoing collaboration embedded within the professional learning community (PLC) model clearly supports this essential element (Chappuis, Chappuis, & Stiggins, 2009; DuFour et al., 2006; Wells, 2008). Teachers in the school setting are actively engaged in self-reflective practices inherent to the PLC model involving both cultural proficiency and culturally proficient instruction.

Professional Development

The professional learning community model. The PLC reform model is perceived as both a staff development and school reform model (National Staff Development Council, 2001; Reeves, 2002). The popularity of the PLC model has continuously increased over the past decade based on findings indicating the reform model (a) improves the quality of instruction by contributing to teachers’ learning (DuFour et al., 2006; Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009; Sargent & Hannum, 2009; Sturko & Gregson, 2009), (b) reduces teachers’ isolation (Hord, 2008), (c) increases student achievement (DuFour et al., 2006; Sargent & Hannum, 2009; Sturko & Gregson, 2009), (d) shifts the school culture toward a more inclusive environment (DuFour et al., 2006; Shen, Zhen, & Poppink, 2007; Wells, 2008), and (e) improves the inquiry process (Baron, 2007; DuFour et al., 2006; Hord, 2008). Wells (2008) additionally reported that teachers participating in a PLC are provided the opportunity to build leadership capacity.

The establishment of a PLC is essential for school improvement (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; DuFour et al., 2006).

Hord (2008) first coined the term *professional learning communities*. An explanation of the concept, Hord simply broke the phrase into its simplest form and defined each by stating, “The three words explain the concept: Professionals coming together in a group – a community – to learn” (p. 10). When adding a professional standard in support of the PLC model, representatives of the National Staff Development Council (2001) expanded Hord’s description of the PLC by defining the reform model as a learning community wherein educators meet regularly to collaboratively learn, plan, and problem solve. DuFour et al. (2006), as well as Garmston and Wellman, (2000, 2009), expanded the definition to include a focus on common goals that ultimately impacts classroom practices. Agreement exists that the PLC reform model draws from the perspective of constructivism (DuFour et al., 2006; Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009; Honig & Ikemoto, 2008), for learning is viewed as a subjective process the learner constructs through both assimilation and accommodation (Jacobsen, Eggen, & Kauchak, 2006; Meece, 2002; Schunk, 2004).

The importance of teachers and administrators being guided by a shared vision and engaging in continuous learning was additionally emphasized by DuFour et al. (2006). Allocating ample time for participation in the PLC is another crucial component for success (Hewson & Adrian, 2008; Wood, 2007). Louis, Marks, and Kruse (1996) also underscored the importance of shared norms and values, a focus on student learning, collaboration, public practice, and reflective dialogue. Effective leadership is essential to the PLC reform model (DuFour et al., 2006; Sturko & Gregson, 2009; Wells, 2008).

Sturko and Gregson (2009) further stated that a PLC will not be effective without the support of school leaders even if intensive teacher training is provided.

The history of the PLC model. Implementation of the PLC model began in the 1980s when team teaching and open classrooms were common (Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 2001; Hord, 2008). Hord (2008) described team teaching as the forerunner to the shift from teacher isolation to a more collaborative approach. Another precursor to the PLC model, which is still practiced, is the learning team model (Hord, 2008). Learning team members meet during common planning time to develop common assessments, analyze data, and identify interventions for students who are not meeting grade level standards (Chappuis et al., 2009; Reeves, 2002, 2006). Learning teams, however, typically do not provide opportunities for extensive collaboration (Chappuis et al., 2009; DuFour et al., 2006), critical to sustaining improved instruction. It is through collaboration that teachers (a) develop alternative ideas and strategies, (b) demonstrate improved morale and motivation, and (c) become more committed and effective (Hord, 2008).

In the initial implementation of the PLC model, teachers began sharing instructional strategies by observing in classrooms and collaborating reflectively (Hord, 2008). The adoption of academic standards, however, was the impetus to more extensive change (Hord, 2008; Reeves, 2002). Because of standards implementation, teachers and administrators recognized the need for exemplary practices focused on student achievement (Hord, 2008). Today's PLC reform model, consequently, focuses on research and exemplary practice to inform educators of effective approaches for improving student achievement (DuFour et al., 2006; Hord, 2008; National Staff Development Council, 2001; Sargent & Hannum, 2009; Wells, 2008).

Essential components of the PLC model. One PLC reform model, as described by DuFour et al. (2006), is comprised of four components. The first of these is the need to establish the foundation, which is comprised of the mission, vision, values, and goals. The meaning of each foundational aspect is explored through related questions designed to establish priorities, provide a sense of direction, identify the required collective commitments, and support the collaborative processes within the PLC model. The mission is defined by asking, “Why do we exist?” (DuFour et al., 2006, p. 23). Five related elements were identified to describe the importance of (a) clearly articulating learning outcomes to all stakeholders; (b) systematically monitoring the attainment of learning outcomes regarding all students; (c) providing effective, research-based interventions to support students who are not attaining learning outcomes; (d) continually assessing school practices, programs, and policies to determine their effects on student learning; and (e) working collaboratively with faculty members regarding the achievement of learning outcomes for all students (DuFour et al., 2006).

The vision is defined by asking, “What must we become in order to accomplish our fundamental purpose?” (DuFour et al., 2006, p. 24). The related element describes the importance of systematically assessing ongoing efforts and making meaningful decisions to reduce potential discrepancies (DuFour et al., 2006).

Shared values are defined by asking, “How must we behave to create the school that will achieve our purpose?” (DuFour et al., 2006, p. 25). Three elements were identified, reflecting that values are (a) embedded in school culture, (b) evident to incoming staff as well as to stakeholders outside the school facility, and (c) influential on policies, procedures, and practices of teachers, leaders, and the learning organization as a whole (DuFour et al., 2006).

Goals are defined by asking, “How will we know if all of this is making a difference?” (DuFour et al., 2006, p. 26). Four elements were identified describing how (a) performance goals guide the routine school practices, (b) goals are clearly linked to the shared vision, (c) attained goals are celebrated, and (d) goals are expanded after attainment (DuFour et al., 2006).

The second essential component of DuFour’s PLC model is comprised of guiding questions (DuFour et al., 2006). Four questions are identified by determining (a) the objectives students should master, (b) the manner by which educators will know whether students have learned the objectives, (c) an alternative approach for students who do not master identified objectives, and (d) the approach that will be taken to extend the learning opportunity after students master the objectives (DuFour et al., 2006). Williams, Cate, and O’Hair (2009) recommended asking additional questions for the purpose of critiquing practices through inquiry and discourse.

The third essential component of this PLC model consists of monitoring the learning experience, which DuFour et al. (2006) described as an essential process within the PLC model. DuFour et al. (2006) and Reeves (2002, 2006) recommended the use of common classroom assessments for efficiency, equity, and effectiveness. Additional recommendations entail teachers (a) demonstrating how each assessment item is aligned with state standards, (b) specifying the target proficiency or standard for each assessment item, (c) correlating formative assessment items with standardized tests, and (d) measuring student achievement using a minimal number of key concepts or skills on a frequent basis (DuFour et al., 2006; Reeves, 2002). To support teachers as they develop common assessments, DuFour et al. (2006) urged school leaders to ensure teachers are

familiar with standardized tests by providing ample opportunities to review historical student performance, grading rubrics, and examples of test items.

The fourth essential component of DuFour's PLC model consists of providing systematic interventions, or differentiated follow-up (Graham & Ferriter, 2008), for the purpose of improving student performance (DuFour et al., 2006). This component naturally evolves through the processes of collaboration, a focus on teaching and learning processes, and performance assessment occurring within the PLC model (Giles & Hargreaves, 2006). DuFour et al. (2006) emphasized that the effective use of the PLC model results in timely, systematic support occurring during the traditional school day. Williams et al. (2009) additionally stated that individualized interventions are identified as an ongoing step in the embedded inquiry and discourse processes.

Dimensions of the PLC model. The five basic dimensions of the PLC model, originally identified by Hord (2008), occur through the collaborative working relationships of participants (DuFour et al., 2006; Good & Brophy, 2007; Hord, 2008). The first dimension consists of the shared beliefs, values, changes, and improvements comprising the common purpose within the school (Hord, 2008); DuFour et al. (2006) described these dimensions as imperative for an effective PLC. The second dimension involves shared leadership through which power, authority, and decisions are distributed throughout the learning organization (Hord, 2008). Lambert (1998, 2003) and Marzano et al. (2005) similarly endorsed shared leadership as the most effective intervention a school leader could establish. The third dimension involves the provision of the needed time and resources for the integral support processes, including both structural and physical conditions, of the PLC and emphasizes the importance of trust (Hord, 2008); DuFour et al. emphasized that these resources must be provided by school leaders. The fourth

dimension consists of the guided force of collective, intentional learning and its application within the learning environment (Hord, 2008); effective practices within this dimension involve the careful examination of student data as emphasized by DuFour et al. The fifth, and final, dimension is the collective, intentional transfer of learning comprising the PLC process that ultimately brings school-wide learning improvements (Hord, 2008). DuFour et al. clearly endorsed the belief that the learning improvements would be apparent in classroom practices (DuFour et al., 2006).

Underlying principles of the PLC model. As described by Good and Brophy (2007), the PLC reform model is based on four beliefs. The first is that each learner is unique regarding prior knowledge, experiences, and the construction of learning. The second belief is that learning is a developmental process involving both active participation and reflection; the third underlying belief is that social interaction is a crucial factor for identifying shared meanings. The fourth, and final, principle is that each person's learning experience is internally controlled. Each of these underlying principles is reflected in effective professional development (DuFour et al., 2006; Good & Brophy, 2007).

Because the PLC model is applicable as both a staff development and school reform model (National Staff Development Council, 2001; Reeves, 2002), its use is expected to bring numerous improvements to educational practice. Of specific interest to this applied research study, PLC practices are expected to (a) contribute to teachers' learning (DuFour et al., 2006; Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009; Sargent & Hannum, 2009; Sturko & Gregson, 2009), (b) increase student achievement (DuFour et al., 2006; Sargent & Hannum, 2009; Sturko & Gregson, 2009), and (c) shift the school culture toward a more inclusive environment (DuFour et al., 2006; Shen et al., 2007; Wells,

2008). Because a PLC includes a focus on common goals, DuFour et al. (2006), as well as Garmston and Wellman (2000, 2009), additionally stated that classroom practices should ultimately be impacted. Similarly, at the elementary school within the local setting, an emphasis on cultural proficiency was initiated for the purpose of enhancing instruction and improving the academic performance of special education students. The purpose of this mixed methods study is to inform instructional and leadership practices within the school setting through the examination of quantitative data around teachers' response to questions related to culturally proficient instruction and qualitative data around teachers' perceptions of the challenges, barriers, and support needed for implementing culturally proficient practices. Related professional development was specifically designed to increase teachers' awareness, knowledge, and skills related to culturally proficient instruction.

Effective professional development. Representatives of the National Education Association (NEA) Foundation (2010) cited isolation as the primary factor that impedes improvement in teachers' instructional skills. The crucial tasks of improving instruction and increasing student achievement, as well as incorporating cultural proficiency within inclusive classrooms, warrant the provision of effective professional development (DuFour et al., 2006; Gay, 2003; R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008). Central to the topic of professional development, which has as its overriding purpose the fostering of "lasting change in the classroom" (Chappuis et al., 2009, p. 56), are the explicit standards developed by members of the National Staff Development Council (2001). Historically, professional development began as a brief, passive activity; yet effective professional development has matured to incorporate the additional components of intensive follow up and support (Chappuis et al., 2009; National Staff Development Council, 1995).

Consequently, central to the professional development process are embedded activities such as book studies, study groups, action research, collaboration, mentoring, and peer coaching (National Staff Development Council, 1995, 2001). The collective process of professional development, designed for the purpose of improving the learning of all students, is guided by 12 standards and organized into the three categories of context, process, and content.

National staff development standards. Context standards address the “organization, system, or culture in which the new learnings will be implemented” (National Staff Development Council, 1995, p. 1). The three standards incorporate the topics of learning communities, leadership, and resources to establish the expectations that (a) adults will be organized into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district, (b) school and district leaders will guide the continuous process of instructional improvement, and (c) resources will be provided to support adult learning and collaboration (National Staff Development Council, 2001).

Process standards describe how knowledge and skills will be acquired (National Staff Development Council, 1995). The first of six standards focuses on the topic of data-driven instruction for the purpose of establishing expectations that disaggregated student performance data will be used to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress in student learning, and help sustain continuous improvement in student learning. The remaining five standards incorporate the topics of evaluation, research, developmental learning strategies, and collaboration to establish expectations that (a) multiple sources of information will be used to guide improvement in student learning, (b) educators will apply results acquired from applied research in decision making, (c) intentional learning strategies will be used in instructional practice, (d) knowledge regarding human learning

and change process will be applied in instruction, and (e) educators will acquire the knowledge and skills to collaborate (National Staff Development Council, 2001).

Content standards describe the skills and knowledge that effective educators must either possess or acquire through professional development (National Staff Development Council, 1995). The first of three standards emphasizes equity by establishing the expectations that educators will understand and appreciate all students; create safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments; and establish high expectations for student learning. The second standard focuses on quality teaching and establishes expectations that (a) educators will gain content knowledge, (b) research based instructional strategies will be used to improve student learning, and (c) various types of classroom assessments will be appropriately used to monitor student learning. The third standard accentuates family involvement by establishing the expectation that educators will be provided the knowledge and skills to involve families or other stakeholders in the educational processes (National Staff Development Council, 2001).

Components of effective professional development. Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) reported that sustained and intensive professional development is crucial for improving academic achievement. To be effective, however, professional development must be (a) collaborative, (b) connected to practice, (c) focused on the teaching and learning of specific academic content, and (d) connected to school improvement goals (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). These criteria clearly reflect several of the standards developed by members of the National Staff Development Council (2001). Darling-Hammond et al. additionally reported that effective professional development reduces isolation among faculty through the embedded component of collaboration; this approach is clearly supported in the literature (Buchholz & List, 2009; Conderman & Johnston-

Rodriguez, 2009; DuFour et al., 2006; Gay, 1997, 2002; Hildebrand, 2007; Marzano et al., 2005; Reeves, 2006). The value of collaboration is also emphasized within the cultural proficiency model (D. B. Lindsey et al., 2009; R. B. Lindsey et al., 2005; Robins et al., 2006) and the PLC model (DuFour et al., 2006).

Gay (2002) identified two components of professional development that are imperative within an inclusive environment. The first, necessitated by differing demographics between teachers and students, is the need for educators to learn and appreciate the influences of culture and socialization on students' learning experiences and behaviors. The second component is that instructional practices involve culturally responsive teaching by skillfully reflecting the cultural heritages, experiences, and perspectives of students throughout the instructional experience. Much as Cross (1988) and R. B. Lindsey et al. (2008), Gay (2002) further emphasized the profound effects of teachers' critical cultural consciousness in efforts to develop the attitudes and skills of cultural competency. Gay (1997) additionally recommended the incorporation of instructional modeling for improving teachers' skills in cultural responsiveness. Through effective leadership, culturally proficient instruction can be supported within the learning organization (D. B. Lindsey et al., 2009; R. B. Lindsey et al., 2005; Robins et al., 2006). Traits of effective leadership are addressed from a variety of resources within this chapter.

The adaptive schools approach. The Adaptive Schools model was designed for the purpose of developing both organizational and professional capacity for facilitating and developing collaborative groups in order to be adaptive in a world of change (Center for Adaptive Schools, 2011; Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009; McBride, 2008). As Garmston and Wellman (2000) defined the term adaptive, its use focuses on the abilities

to clarify, identify, and change form in response to a changing environment. Roots of Adaptive Schools are derived from (a) constructivism (Honig & Ikemoto, 2008; Patton & Griffin, 2008); (b) biology (Center for Adaptive Schools, 2011); (c) cognitive coaching, designed to change and improve thinking processes (Costa & Garmston, 2002); (d) Pathways to Understanding (Lipton & Wellman, 2000); (e) systems thinking (Senge, 1990); and (f) the change process (Fullan, 2001; Patton & Griffin, 2008). The Adaptive Schools model provides the structures and processes for meaningful discussions and helps develop, nurture, and sustain a functioning PLC to ultimately improve student learning (Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009). Agreeing that adults learn best from personal experiences, McBride (2008) additionally emphasized the applicability of the Adaptive Schools approach for training novice administrators.

Lewis, French, and Steane (1997) identified five attributes found in cultures of collaboration; these contribute to the framework of Adaptive Schools. The first is shared norms and values, or agreement concerning topics, goals, and standards of importance. The second involves a collective focus on student learning and emphasizes the analysis of assessment data to guide instructional practice. Collaboration, both horizontal and vertical, is the third attribute. The fourth attribute is deprivatized practice, which intentionally dissolves the historical isolation of the teaching profession. The incorporation of reflective dialogue as an energizer within the professional culture is the fifth attribute. The role and influence of these attributes are, to varying degrees, supported in the Adaptive Schools literature (Garmston & Wellman, 2000; Honig & Ikemoto, 2008; Patton & Griffin, 2008).

In addition to the five attributes identified by Lewis et al. (1997), several essential components collectively contribute to the Adaptive Schools model. The first, as described

by Garmston and Wellman (2000, 2009), is the organizing theme of adaptivity, intended to clarify identity, which is guided by four questions: (a) Who are we? (b) Whom do we aspire to become? (c) Why are we doing this? and (d) Why are we doing this, this way? Answering these questions in a collaborative manner helps to minimize professional isolation while developing a cultural phenomenon among individuals engaged in common goals (Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009). Numerous researchers have additionally identified several tools of adaptivity; Honig and Ikemoto (2008) emphasized the belief that tools should “actualize the task” (p. 349) at hand. Grossman, Smagorinsky, and Valencia (as cited in Honig & Ikemoto, 2008) divided tools into those that are conceptual, such as principles, frameworks, and ideas, and those that are practical, which include practices, strategies, and resources providing immediate use.

Garmston and Wellman (2000) offered additional tools that support the Adaptive Schools model. The first of these involves conversation; Garmston and Wellman differentiated between dialogue and discussion. Dialogue, a reflective process during which group members seek to acquire others’ perspectives, occurs for the purpose of gaining understanding. Garmston and Wellman underscored the importance of dialogue by stating that understanding is central to student learning. Discussion, an interchange reflecting convergent thinking, occurs to support quality decision making (Garmston & Wellman, 2000).

Another tool that further develops the Adaptive Schools model involves processes of explicit, collaborative group norms; this tool is drawn from the field of cognitive coaching (Costa & Garmston, 2002; Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009). Garmston and Wellman (2000, 2009) stated that these seven norms are essential in supporting practices of collaboration integral to the Adaptive Schools model. As described by Garmston and

Wellman, the first involves promoting a spirit of inquiry; this norm is also supported in culturally proficient instruction (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008). Garmston and Wellman emphasized that the dynamic of inquiry, which involves exploring others' perceptions and beliefs for the purpose of developing understanding, is an important aspect of both dialogue and discussion. The second group norm is that of pausing during communicative exchanges, which is most applicable during the dialogue, discussion, and decision-making processes (Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009). Paraphrasing, the third group norm, aids in both dialogue and discussion by clarifying others' communication to contribute to understanding.

The fourth group norm is probing through inquiry during dialogue and discussion; this norm contributes both clarity and precision to group thinking (Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009). Garmston and Wellman (2000, 2009) identified the contribution of ideas as the fifth group norm and described this norm as central to meaningful dialogue and discussion. The sixth group norm involves being conscious of both self and others during dialogue and discussion; Garmston and Wellman suggested that the effective application of this norm includes recognizing individuals' learning styles and incorporating those preferences in planning, facilitating, and participating in both conversations and meetings. The seventh, and final, group norm is that of presuming positive intentions; once again, skillful application of this norm contributes to the quality of dialogue and discussion (Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009).

The final tool of the Adaptive Schools model, as described by Garmston and Wellman (2000, 2009), involves the five energy sources of efficacy, flexibility, craftsmanship, consciousness, and interdependence (p. 29). These energy sources are maximized through (a) listening for understanding, (b) using the norms of collaboration

to guide group interactions, (c) choosing dialogue and discussion to effectively advance the work of the learning community, and (d) focusing continually on opportunities that lend themselves to adaptivity (Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009). The Adaptive Schools approach provides crucial resources to support effective school leadership and improved performance for all students in the learning organization (Center for Adaptive Schools, 2011; Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009).

The provision of professional development is supported through the (a) Adaptive Schools Model (Center for Adaptive Schools, 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009), (b) cultural proficiency model (Cross, 1988; D. B. Lindsey et al., 2009; R. B. Lindsey et al., 2005; Robins et al., 2006), and (c) PLC model (DuFour et al., 2006; Hord, 2008). Effective professional development reduces teacher isolation, improves teachers' instructional skills, and increases student achievement (DuFour et al., 2006; Gay, 2003; Hord, 2008; NEA Foundation, 2010). The intricate processes of professional development are guided by 12 standards, organized into the three categories of context, process, and content, designed by representatives of the National Staff Development Council (1995, 2001). Reflective of these standards are criteria developed by Darling-Hammond et al. (2009), emphasizing that professional development must be (a) collaborative, (b) connected to practice, (c) focused on the teaching and learning of specific academic content, and (d) connected to school improvement goals.

The value of collaboration is emphasized within the (a) cultural proficiency model (D. B. Lindsey et al., 2009; R. B. Lindsey et al., 2005; Robins et al., 2006), (b) PLC model (DuFour et al., 2006), and (c) Adaptive Schools model (Center for Adaptive Schools, 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009).

Effective instructional practices must also reflect teachers' critical cultural consciousness in the attitudes and skills involving cultural competency (D. B. Lindsey et al., 2009; R. B. Lindsey et al., 2005; Robins et al., 2006). Through the use of the Adaptive Schools approach, culturally proficient instruction can be promoted throughout the learning organization to improve academic achievement of students with disabilities served within inclusive general educational classrooms (Center for Adaptive Schools, 2011; Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009; McBride, 2008). Effective leadership, however, is a crucial component of student success (Layton, 2003; Reeves, 2006).

Effective School Leadership

Layton (2003) emphasized the importance of quality leadership by citing the increasing demands for academic achievement of all students, including those with disabilities. Representatives of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) endeavored to capture the essence of leadership by developing national leadership standards in 1996 and revising them in 2008 (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996, 2008). The standards are used as guidelines for policy development and practice at both the state and local district level, as they encapsulate the components of effective school leadership. The revised standards are only slightly changed from the initial version and are still succinctly communicated through guiding principles and related functions (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996, 2008). Reeves (2006) later identified specific skills, or "complementary dimensions" (p. 33), of educational leaders that closely align with the ISLLC standards. The following text first presents the current ISLLC standards, guiding principles, and functions pertinent to this research study. Reeves' complementary dimensions are then presented and then analyzed in relation to the ISLLC standards.

Leadership standards. Seven principles were identified to provide direction for the revised policy standards. These principles state that ISLLC standards would (a) reflect the centrality of student learning; (b) acknowledge the changing role of school leaders; (c) recognize the collaborative nature of leadership; (d) improve the quality of the profession; (e) inform assessment and evaluation systems for school leaders; (f) demonstrate integration and coherence; and (g) emphasize the concepts of access, opportunity, and empowerment for the benefit of all members within the school community (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008). An analysis of the standards reveals that seven principles are embedded throughout the standards.

Standard 1 states, “An education leader promotes the success of every student by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008, p. 14). Related functions pertinent to this study indicate that effective school leaders will (a) collaborate, (b) develop and implement a shared vision, (c) collect and use data to promote organizational learning, and (d) promote continuous and sustainable school improvement (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008, p. 14).

Standard 2 states, “An education leader promotes the success of every student by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008, p. 14). Related functions pertinent to the study indicate that effective school leaders will (a) nurture and sustain a culture of collaboration and high expectations, (b) create a personalized learning environment, (c) supervise instruction, (d) monitor student progress, and (e) develop the instructional and leadership capacity of staff (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008, p. 14).

Standard 3 states, “An education leader promotes the success of every student by ensuring management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008, p. 14). The related function pertinent to this study indicates that effective school leaders will ensure a focus on quality instruction and student learning (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008, p. 14).

Standard 4 states, “An education leader promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008, p. 15). The first related function pertinent to the study indicates that effective school leaders will promote the understanding and appreciation of the diverse cultural, social, and intellectual resources within the community. The second function relative to the study states that leaders will develop the capacity for distributed leadership (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008, p. 15).

Standard 5 states, “An education leader promotes the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008, p. 15). Related functions pertinent to the study indicate that effective school leaders will (a) ensure accountability for each student’s academic and social success, (b) model principles of reflective practice and ethical behavior, (c) safeguard the values of equity and diversity, and (d) promote social justice (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008, p. 15).

Standard 6 states, “An education leader promotes the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008, p. 15). The related

function pertinent to the study indicates that effective school leaders will advocate for children.

Complementary leadership skills. Reeves (2006) identified seven skills that reflect the standards and functions contained in the ISLLC standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008); each is significant to the study. The first skill involves identifying and committing to visionary leadership. Reeves, drawing from the work of Kouzes and Posner, described this skill as the ability to challenge the status quo and articulate a compelling vision and action steps to help achieve the identified vision. Lambert (1998, 2003) similarly stated that it is critical for school leaders to understand the collective value of the school vision and to apply the necessary skills for contributing to the integral processes required to achieve the vision. The second skill involves developing relationships within the organization. Again citing Kouzes and Posner, Reeves emphasized the importance of school leaders (a) listening; (b) respecting confidences; (c) practicing empathy; (d) providing attention, feedback, and support; (e) exhibiting passion for the school mission; and (f) modeling commitment to the staff. Reed (2010) concurred that the dynamics involved in professional relationships are directly affected through listening, feedback, support, and empathy.

The third skill was identified as the complex ability to provide systems leadership (Reeves, 2006). A school leader who has developed this skill understands the complexity and potential effects of interactions throughout the school community to the degree that the related dynamics can be effectively explained to staff members (Reeves, 2006). Lambert (2003) similarly emphasized that principals must be “committed to the central work of self-renewing schools” (p. 4). The fourth skill involves self-reflection; Reeves (2006) described the related activities as imperative for effective leadership: (a) thinking

about lessons learned, (b) documenting conflicts between values and practice, and (c) noticing trends that emerge over time. Reeves likened self-reflection to the “gulf between the theoretical abstractions of academic leadership development programs and the daily lives of leaders” (p. 50). Reed (2010) underscored the importance of self-reflection by embedding related practices throughout coaching relationships between novice and veteran leaders.

Reeves (2006) emphasized the importance of collaboration when identifying the fifth leadership skill. Three points were developed for promoting leaders’ ability to understand the value of collaboration. First, Reeves reminded principals that employees should be treated as volunteers. The second point underscored the importance of collaboration by stating that decisions will only be implemented if effective collaboration has occurred. The third point accentuates the belief that sustained, systemic improvement will only occur through purposeful interactions within the organization (Reeves, 2006).

The collective skills of analyzing problems, understanding the interactions between complex variables, and achieving related conclusions were identified as the sixth leadership skill (Reeves, 2006). To acquire these skills, Reeves recommended that school leaders practice the ability to identify and persistently ask pertinent questions. Similar to this skill is the ability to succinctly communicate within the complexity of the organization; this is the final of the seven skills identified by Reeves (2006). To underscore the challenges affecting this expectation, Reeves cited the immense spectrum of audiences, including staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders, and encouraged leaders to develop skills in written language in order to communicate with all stakeholders in a concise and timely fashion. Vavrusa (2008) concurred that written

communication is essential for leaders. Communication, however, is perceived and experienced through the lens of culture (Parkhurst, 2008).

The importance of providing quality leadership in the school setting, given the need to increase students' academic achievement and ensure equitable student outcomes, cannot be overstated. National leadership standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996, 2008) clearly communicate guiding principles and related functions of school leaders. Reeves' (2006) essential skills, based on the ISLLC leadership principles and functions, create a succinct description of the quality leadership needed to support teachers as they provide instruction in inclusive classrooms. These functions of school leaders specifically resonate with those of the PLC model, the Adaptive Schools model, and cultural proficiency. Collectively, these components will serve to inform the study by providing a framework for comparison with teachers' perceptions of the challenges, barriers, and support needed for implementing culturally proficient practices in the research setting.

Culturally proficient leadership. The need to embed cultural proficiency within leadership is clearly communicated in the diverse contexts of ethnicity and language (Moyer & Clymer, 2009; Parkhurst, 2008). As depicted by R. B. Lindsey et al. (2005), challenges in the school setting are both varied and significant. R. B. Lindsey et al. challenged leaders to be culturally proficient by providing "equitable opportunities and resources to learn, culturally sensitive instruction, expectations and assumptions about student performance, and [the]willingness to learn new ways of being with students" (p. 9). Students' unsatisfactory performance is a primary concern as well. Within the cultural proficiency framework are resources, such as the guiding principles, inquiry approach,

continuum, and essential elements, that are effective for addressing these and other challenges in classroom instruction (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2005).

As a preface to an in-depth study of culturally proficient leadership, R. B. Lindsey et al. (2005) provided a cultural receptivity scale introducing important concepts for use in guiding leaders through a process of self-reflection. The scale presents 15 statements and a Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. These items communicate the priorities culturally proficient leaders are expected to model:

1. I believe that all children and youth learn successfully when informed and caring teachers assist them and make sufficient resources available to them.

2. I want to do whatever is necessary to ensure that the students for whom I am responsible are well-educated and successful learners.

3. I am committed to creating both an educational environment and learning experiences for our students that honor and respect who they are.

4. I am willing to ask myself uncomfortable questions about racism, cultural preferences, and insufficient learning conditions and resources that are obstacles to learning for many students.

5. I am willing to ask questions about racism, cultural preferences, and insufficient learning conditions and resources that may be uncomfortable for others in my school or district.

6. I believe that all students benefit from educational practices that engage them in learning about their cultural heritage and understanding their cultural background.

7. I believe that all students benefit from educational practices that provide them with hope, direction, and preparation for their future lives.

8. It is important to know how well our district serves the various cultural and ethnic communities represented in our schools, and it is also important to understand how well served they feel by the educational practices in our schools.

9. It is important to know how the various cultural and ethnic communities represented in our schools view me as an educational leader and to understand how well my leadership serves their expectations.

10. Our district and schools are successful only when all subgroups are improving academically and socially.

11. Cultural discomfort and disagreements are normal occurrences in a diverse society such as ours and are parts of everyday interactions.

12. I believe that lack of cultural understanding and historic distrust can result in cultural discomfort and disagreements.

13. I believe we can learn about and implement diverse and improved instructional practices that will effectively serve all our students.

14. I believe we can use disaggregated data to understand more precisely the achievement status of all students in our schools, and that we can use that information to identify and implement effective instructional practices for each of them.

15. As a leader, it is important for me to be able to communicate across cultures and to facilitate communication among diverse cultural groups. (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2005, pp. 52-53)

R. B. Lindsey et al. (2005) encouraged leaders to use the guiding principles of cultural proficiency as a model for providing culturally effective leadership within the learning environment. Likewise, the initial essential elements, restated as leadership

standards, are expounded upon and presented for leaders' use. Through an ongoing, combined emphasis on these principles and standards, self-reflection, modeling, and communication, leaders are expected to grow in their personal cultural competency while encouraging faculty members to progress through their own personal journeys in mastering the continuum of cultural proficiency. By using the culturally proficient materials in their entirety, principals will ultimately be leading with moral intent by setting the tone for the value of diversity, which is, without question, their leadership responsibility (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2005). The skillful use of culturally proficiency and related skills is also believed to provide crucial support to effective, sustained leadership practices (Hord, 2008).

Effective leadership within collaborative learning communities. In *Culturally Proficient Learning Communities: Confronting Inequities Through Collaborative Curiosity* (D. B. Lindsey et al., 2009), emphasis was made on the intentional aspect of learning communities. The need to provide support, nurturing, and purposeful leadership was also underscored. Hord (2008) initiated these tenets by highlighting the crucial factors of sharing in the power, authority, and decision making within a PLC (p. 11). In agreement, D. B. Lindsey et al. (2009) stated, "traditional culture and structure within our educational system presents barriers to shared leadership" (p. 46); D. B. Lindsey et al. urged principals to transform their identity to "co-learner[s], instructional leader[s], and contributor[s] to the learning community" (p. 46). To assist in providing culturally proficient leadership, R. B. Lindsey et al. (2005) identified five essential elements, or standards, for culturally proficient leadership behavior.

The elements are intended for the use of leaders as they commit to the changes necessary to become culturally proficient. Through the elements, expectations are

established that leaders will (a) assess their cultural knowledge for the purpose of informing policy and practice; (b) value diversity by demonstrating esteem, respect, and adaptability; (c) manage conflict through leverage and facilitation; (d) adapt to diversity through “systemwide accountability for continuous improvement and responsiveness to community” (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2005, p. 82); and (e) integrate cultural knowledge and provoke changes to policies, procedures, and practices (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2005, p. 82). A review of the five basic dimensions of the PLC model, originally identified by Hord (2008), expounds on the factors comprising effective, supportive school leadership.

Dimension 1 consists of the shared beliefs, values, changes, and improvements comprising the common purpose of a school (Hord, 2008). Dimension 2 involves shared leadership through which power, authority, and decisions are distributed (Hord, 2008). Dimension 3 involves the provision of the needed time and resources for the integral support processes, including both structural and physical conditions, of the PLC and additionally emphasizes the importance of trust (Hord, 2008). Dimension 4 consists of collective, intentional learning and its application within the learning environment (Hord, 2008). Dimension 5 involves the collective, intentional transfer of learning comprising the PLC process through which school-wide learning improvements are realized (Hord, 2008). Lambert (1998), another respected leader in the field of leadership and education, similarly described effective, sustained educational leadership as the ability to “enable participants to learn themselves toward a shared sense of purpose . . . [through] collaboration” (p. 8). Lambert’s work is organized into five assumptions forming a conceptual framework for building leadership capacity.

Lambert’s (1998) conceptual framework begins by defining the term *leadership*, in Assumption 1, as the “reciprocal learning processes that enable participants to

construct and negotiate meanings leading to a shared purpose of schooling” (pp. 8-9). Assumption 2 emphasizes the collective nature of both leadership and learning toward a direction of shared purpose (Lambert, 1998, p. 9). In Assumption 3, Lambert clearly states that all members in the learning community have both the potential and the right to “actively participate in the decisions” (p. 9) of the organization. Assumption 4 is dedicated to an additional highlighting of the belief that leading must be a shared endeavor if organizational goals are to be achieved (Lambert, 1998, p. 9). Closely resembling the work of D. B. Lindsey et al. (2009) and Hord and Sommers (2008), Assumption 5 emphasizes the redistribution and realignment of both power and authority. Components of this final assumption state that principals must release authority to staff and that staff must learn to “enhance personal power” (Lambert, 1998, p. 9) to fully achieve shared learning. The application of these five assumptions, as with culturally proficiency, must be applied with integrity.

Leading with integrity. The examination of effective leadership would not be complete without also discussing the role of integrity in leadership (Ambery & Steinbrunner, 2007). The concept of integrity between educators and stakeholders was succinctly described through three core values identified by representatives of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (2005). The first core value, trust, was described as an appreciation and support for the bond between children and their families; emphasized in this value is the belief that individuals of all ages achieve their full potential within relationships that are based on trust and respect. The second core value espouses respect for the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of all stakeholders, including children, families, and educators. This value accentuates the belief that educators should appreciate childhood as both unique and valuable among the life stages

and that educational practice should be based on the knowledge of how children develop and learn. This value is reflective of the process standards espoused by the National Staff Development Council (1995). The third core value, respect, entails an appreciation of diversity in children, families, and colleagues and is reflective of both ISLLC standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008) and tenets of cultural proficiency (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2005).

Integrity has been similarly described by numerous researchers. Ysseldyke and Tardrew (2007), for example, reported that fidelity is synonymous with integrity. Long (2009) described integrity as the ability to “inspire others to fully commit to the task, mission, and vision” (p. 16). Kennedy (2006) described integrity as a different way of thinking about practice by basing practice on beliefs and values. Bass and Bass (2008) underscored the importance of integrity by stating, “The virtue of integrity is at the core of character and ethical leadership” (p. 222). Leadership integrity, determined by credibility and trustworthiness, was also described as “the virtue of leaders who do what they say they will do, who keep promises, admit their mistakes, and follow through on their commitments” (Bass & Bass, 2008, p. 222).

Reybold, Flores, and Riojas-Cortez (2006) proposed a university based professional development model for the purpose of connecting educational theory to practice with integrity. The model reflects tenets espoused by representatives of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (2005) as well as updated position statements by members of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2010). The five conceptual components of the model were developed for the purpose of (a) merging professional development in both professional and ethical standards, (b) aligning diverse competencies of faculty members with institutional

mission, (c) supporting guiding principles for undergraduate education of teachers, (d) contextualizing faculty development, and (e) challenging the process through reflective discourse (Reybold et al., 2006).

The work of White and Wallace (as cited in Johannesen, Valde, & Whedbee, 2008) may be less theoretical and more readily applicable to leaders. Through intensive research efforts, White and Wallace developed a framework for auditing organizational integrity. As one component of their work, six habits of leadership integrity were identified. The first is the habit of solving ethical problems directly and reflectively. This habit is supported by three commitments; the first involves: (a) taking an ethical viewpoint, (b) being willing to address ethical problems, and (c) incorporating ethical standards in identified priorities. The second commitment is to (a) use responsive and responsible processes when ethical problems arise, (b) consider the means used to solve problems as important as the goal of arriving at resolutions, and (c) accept both negative and positive consequences of ethical decisions. The third commitment for this habit involves leaders accessing and dedicating all needed resources to solving ethical problems; this may include the resources of time, information, human capital, and funding. The fourth commitment is to seek and explore alternative courses of action prior to making ethical decisions (Johannesen et al., 2008).

The second habit of leadership integrity is to interact responsibly. Four commitments support this habit; the first is to treat others with fairness and respect. The second commitment is to (a) show respect for others' views, (b) strive to trust others, and (c) endeavor to be worthy of others' trust. The third commitment is to openly communicate by freely sharing feelings and ideas when communicating. The fourth

commitment is to invite dissent by encouraging others with diverse ethical views to voice their opinions (Johannesen et al., 2008).

The third habit of leadership integrity is to model integrity. This habit is supported by two commitments. The first is to ensure ethical role models are placed throughout the organization. The second commitment is to create an environment wherein risk taking involving ethical decisions is encouraged (Johannesen et al., 2008).

The fourth habit of leadership integrity involves sharing organizational purposes and direction. Two commitments were identified to support this habit. The first is for leaders to clearly state the ethical values and to ensure those values are reflected in the organizational mission and goals. The second commitment is to establish accountability for ethical behaviors, communications, decisions, planning, and participation (Johannesen et al., 2008).

The fifth habit of integrity is to value stakeholders' perspectives; this is supported by considering others' viewpoints and preparing for anticipated consequences regarding decisions (Johannesen et al., 2008). The sixth, final, habit is for leaders to practice consistent personal integrity. The related commitments are to (a) know and respond to situations in an ethical manner, (b) ensure the values of the organization and its members are consistent, and (c) to act with courage when conflicts in ethics occur (Johannesen et al., 2008).

In theory, the literature clearly supports the incorporation of integrity within leadership (Ambery & Steinbrunner, 2007; Kennedy, 2006; National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2005; Reybold et al., 2006; Ysseldyke & Tardrew, 2007). It is the work of White and Wallace (as cited in Johannesen et al., 2008), however, that outlines a method of practical application for the theory. The six habits of leadership

integrity, along with the embedded commitments, clearly describe the range of responsibilities leaders are expected to assume when practicing with integrity. These habits are engrained throughout the organization and affect the myriad of leaders' responsibilities and practices.

Within the research setting, students' writing performance was unsatisfactory. The numerous resources within the cultural proficiency framework were promoted as effective tenets for addressing performance challenges as well as others that may evolve (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008). As encouraged by R. B. Lindsey et al. (2005), cultural proficiency is central to the leadership initiative provided in the school. The emphasis on cultural proficiency has been further supported through the practical application of the three core values of leadership integrity identified by representatives of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (2005), the third of which emphasizes an appreciation of diversity. These values are reflective of both ISLLC standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008) and tenets of cultural proficiency (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2005). Collectively, these factors served to inform the study by providing a framework for comparison with teachers' perceptions of the challenges, barriers, and support needed for implementing culturally proficient practices in the research setting.

Summary

This chapter was dedicated to an examination of the literature regarding the four primary topics of cultural proficiency, instructional practices, professional development, and effective school leadership. The review of literature was conducted in preparation for applied study of the perceptions of the challenges, barriers, and support needed for implementing culturally proficient practices in the research setting. By implementing this study, matters of importance, in the eyes of teachers, were recognized and understood

within the research setting. The knowledge gained through this research will inform efforts to continually shape the culture into an inclusive and supportive educational environment that benefits all students. The following text provides a brief overview of central themes that surfaced during the examination of the literature.

Cultural proficiency. Cross (1988), emphasizing the developmental nature of cultural proficiency, identified six related points along a continuum beginning with cultural destructiveness, the most negative point, through cultural competence, a level of proficient competence. Cross emphasized that this highest level is achieved only if individuals in all areas of the organization contribute to the integral processes of developing cultural proficiency. The process of reviewing the literature revealed that cultural proficiency has application within the contexts of organizational leadership (Cross, 1988; Vavrusa, 2008), educational leadership (Cruzeiro & Morgan, 2006; Kiemele, 2009; R. B. Lindsey et al., 2005; Parkhurst, 2008), and instructional practice (Chamberlain, 2005; Cooper et al. 2008; R. B. Lindsey et al., 2005; Trent et al., 2008).

Two primary components were identified to support the implementation of cultural proficiency. The first consists of the tools involving (a) five guiding principles, (b) three common barriers, (c) a 6-point continuum indicating progression from cultural destructiveness to cultural proficiency, and (d) five essential elements of values and behaviors (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008). The second component was a set of rubrics developed for use in the inquiry process, which was designed to bring internal awareness and change (Lindsey et al., 2008). The rubrics have the five essential elements of cultural proficiency as their vertical axis, while the horizontal axis presents the continuum ranging from destructiveness to proficiency. Descriptors of practice for four areas are described in each rubric: (a) curriculum and instruction, (b) assessment and

accountability, (c) parent and community communication and outreach, and (d) professional development (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008).

As Hord (2008) emphasized, an effective practice within a culturally proficient setting is that of collaboration, or professional communication; several esteemed researchers expressed agreement with this tenet (Conderman & Johnston-Rodriguez, 2009; DuFour et al., 2006; Gruenert, 2005; Marzano et al. 2005; Robins et al., 2006; Vavrusa, 2008). Hildebrand (2007) emphasized the role of trust within collaboration. Buchholz and List (2009) promoted the development of a “culture of inquiry” (p. 38) as crucial within a culturally proficient environment. Vavrusa (2008) also encouraged leaders to embrace inquiry, stating that the need for change or renewal often stems from self- and collaborative assessment.

Instructional practices. Mandates to improve educational opportunities for all students have evolved from successive acts of legislation. Related governmental directives have significantly affected educational practices in public schools by requiring (a) instructional accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities that limit their opportunities or abilities to learn (U.S. Department of Education, 2004a, 2004b); (b) educational services in the least restrictive environment to permit disabled students, to the extent possible, to participate in instruction with their same-age peers (U.S. Department of Education, 2004a, 2004b); and (c) practices involving standards-based assessment designed to ensure that all students are learning (Valli & Buese, 2007).

Based on mandates embedded within IDEIA, students diagnosed with disabilities that impede the learning process are qualified to receive special education services (U.S. Department of Education, 2004a, 2004b); related services are frequently provided within an inclusive classroom environment. Gay (2003) emphatically emphasized the

importance of inclusive practices. Numerous other researchers supported inclusion by stating the belief that the students derive greater benefit in inclusive classrooms than in self-contained settings (Cortiella & Wickham, 2008; Farrington, 2008; Martzen et al., 2010; Roberts et al., 2008; Sapon-Shevin, 2008).

Inclusive practices were viewed by other researchers, however, as controversial. Acedo (2008), for example, emphasized the belief that inclusion lacks clarification by virtue of uncertainties, disagreements, and contradictions. Both Acedo and Parkhurst (2008) further described inclusion as one of the salient concerns facing education. Gay (2002) discussed the additional concern emphasized that students with learning disabilities typically appear no different than their nondisabled peers and, consequently, teachers err in expecting similar behaviors and academic outcomes within the inclusive environment. Another challenge regarding inclusive educational practices is the ongoing need to identify effective instructional modifications and accommodations for students with disabilities (Baglieri & Knopf, 2004; Seo et al., 2008). General education teachers in inclusive classrooms may also be faced with the challenge of counteracting disabled students' inhibition impairment (Censabella & Noël, 2005).

The practice of differentiating instruction was clearly supported in the literature for improving students' educational experiences (Baglieri & Knopf, 2004; Boutelle, 2008; Hall, 2002; Obiozor, 2010; Painter, 2009; Simpkins et al., 2008; Sternberg & Zhang, 2005). Instructional differentiation requires an intentional decision of teachers to provide instruction that is specifically suited to each student (Tomlinson, 2000; Ysseldyke & Tardrew, 2007). King-Shaver (2008) described differentiated instruction as the deliberate designing of an academic lesson, teaching style, or both, with the intention of meeting the needs of individual students. Students' learning styles should also be

embedded within the instructional process (Beloshitskii & Dushkin, 2005; Patterson et al., 2009). Differentiation can additionally be used to provide adaptive skills (Sternberg, 2006) and to provide alternatives for demonstrating mastery of lesson objectives (Anderson, 2007). Because accommodations and modifications are necessary for IEP students to achieve academic success, Voltz et al. (2008) stated that differentiation is one skill virtually every teacher will eventually need.

With the continued trend of including IEP students in general education classrooms, the need for teachers to maintain a positive socioemotional climate within the classroom is apparent (Seo et al., 2008). Culturally proficient instruction is reflective of this emphasis (Gay, 2003; R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008). Five essential elements of culturally proficient instruction, as identified by R. B. Lindsey et al. (2008), were identified. These elements collectively establish expectations of teachers within a culturally proficient classroom.

Professional development. The PLC model, which began in the 1980s (Grossman et al., 2001; Hord, 2008), is effective in both school reform and professional development (National Staff Development Council, 2001; Reeves, 2002). The reform model (a) improves the quality of instruction by contributing to teachers' learning (DuFour et al., 2006; Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009; Sargent & Hannum, 2009; Sturko & Gregson, 2009), (b) reduces teachers' isolation (Hord, 2008), (c) improves student performance and achievement (DuFour et al., 2006; Sargent & Hannum, 2009; Sturko & Gregson, 2009), (d) shifts the school culture toward a more inclusive environment (DuFour et al., 2006; Shen et al., 2007; Wells, 2008), (e) improves the inquiry process (Baron, 2007; DuFour et al., 2006; Hord, 2008), and (f) provides teachers the opportunity to build leadership capacity (Wells, 2008). Based on these expected

effects, the establishment of a PLC is essential for school improvement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; DuFour et al., 2006).

Several contextual factors were identified to support the implementation and continued development of the PLC reform model. First, teachers and administrators should be guided by a shared vision and engage in continuous learning (DuFour et al., 2006). Second, ample time for participation in the PLC must be allocated (Hewson & Adrian, 2008; Wood, 2007). Louis et al. (1996) also underscored the importance of shared norms and values, a focus on student learning, collaboration, public practice, and reflective dialogue. Effective leadership is essential to the success of the PLC reform model (DuFour et al., 2006; Sturko & Gregson, 2009; Wells, 2008).

Four components establish the foundation of the PLC reform model. These consist of establishing the foundation, asking questions, monitoring the learning experience, and providing systematic interventions to improve student performance (DuFour et al., 2006). Five basic dimensions, occurring through the working relationships of participants (DuFour et al., 2006; Good & Brophy, 2007; Hord, 2008), have also been identified for the PLC model. These include (a) the shared beliefs, values, and vision of the school (DuFour et al., 2006); (b) shared leadership, wherein decisions are distributed throughout the learning organization (Hord, 2008); (c) the provision of the needed time and resources for supporting the processes of the PLC (Hord, 2008); (d) the levels of trust in professional relationships within the learning environment (Hord, 2008); and (e) the collective, intentional learning of the PLC process (Hord, 2008).

The PLC reform model is additionally based on four beliefs. The first is that each learner is unique regarding prior knowledge, experiences, and the construction of learning; the second is that learning is a developmental process involving both active

participation and reflection (Good & Brophy, 2007). The third underlying belief is that social interaction is a crucial factor for identifying shared meanings; the fourth belief is that each person's learning experience is internally controlled (Good & Brophy, 2007). Each of these underlying principles is reflected in effective professional development (DuFour et al., 2006; Good & Brophy, 2007).

Representatives of the NEA Foundation (2010) cited isolation as the primary factor that impedes teachers' instructional skills. The needs to increase collaboration, improve instruction, and increase student achievement warrant the provision of effective professional development (DuFour et al., 2006; Gay, 2003; R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008). Central to the topic of professional development are the 12 explicit standards developed by members of the National Staff Development Council (2001). The standards, organized into the three categories of context, process, and content, were described in the preceding text.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) reported that both sustained and intensive professional development is crucial for improving academic achievement. To be effective, however, professional development must be (a) collaborative, (b) connected to practice, (c) focused on the teaching and learning of specific academic content, and (d) connected to school improvement goals (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). These criteria clearly reflect several of the standards developed by members of the National Staff Development Council (2001). The value of collaboration is additionally emphasized within the cultural proficiency model (D. B. Lindsey et al., 2009; R. B. Lindsey et al., 2005; Robins et al., 2006) as well as the PLC model (DuFour et al., 2006).

Gay (2002) identified two components of professional development that are imperative within an educational environment. The first is the need for educators to learn

and appreciate the influences of culture and socialization on learning behaviors. The second premise is that instructional practices must involve cultural responsiveness. Gay (1997) additionally recommended the incorporation of instructional modeling to improve teachers' skills in cultural responsiveness. The effects of teachers' critical cultural consciousness in efforts to develop the attitudes and skills of cultural competency are also crucial (Gay, 2002). With effective leadership, culturally proficient instruction can be supported throughout the learning organization (D. B. Lindsey et al., 2009; R. B. Lindsey et al., 2005; Robins et al., 2006). The Adaptive Schools model is designed for the purpose of supporting ongoing collaboration and professional development throughout the learning organization (Center for Adaptive Schools, 2011; Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009; McBride, 2008).

Lewis et al. (1997) identified five attributes found in cultures of collaboration. These are (a) shared norms and values, (b) a collective focus on student learning, (c) both horizontal and vertical collaboration, (d) deprivatized practice, and the incorporation of reflective dialogue. Essential components of collaborative cultures were also identified. The first is the organizing theme of adaptivity (Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009; Honig & Ikemoto, 2008). The second component involves collaborative conversation; for this component, Garmston and Wellman (2000, 2009) succinctly differentiated between dialogue and discussion. The third essential component within cultures of collaboration involves the seven processes of explicit, collaborative group norms (Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009).

Garmston and Wellman (2000, 2009) additionally identified several conceptual and practical tools of adaptivity that help to strengthen the Adaptive Schools model. The first is open, ongoing professional conversation; the second involves the seven processes

of collaborative group norms, several of which are supported in cultural proficiency practices (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008). The final tool of the Adaptive Schools model involves energy sources. Effective use of energy sources results in group efficacy, flexibility, craftsmanship, consciousness, and interdependence and collectively supports both organizational and professional capacity (Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009). The review of the literature underscored the belief that the Adaptive Schools approach provides crucial resources to support effective school leadership and improve performance for all students in the learning organization as espoused by representatives of the Center for Adaptive Schools (2011) as well as Garmston and Wellman.

Effective school leadership. Representatives of the ISLLC developed six national leadership standards in 1996 and revised them in 2008 (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996, 2008). The standards, serving as guidelines for policy development and practice at both the state and local district levels, were enumerated in the previous text. Reeves (2006) later identified seven complementary leadership skills that reflect the standards and functions contained in the ISLLC standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008); each was significant to the study.

The need to embed cultural proficiency within leadership was clearly communicated in the literature (Moyer & Clymer, 2009; Parkhurst, 2008; R. B. Lindsey et al., 2005, 2008). Within the cultural proficiency framework are resources, such as the guiding principles, inquiry approach, continuum, and essential elements, effective for leading teachers as they address the myriad of challenges incurred within the inclusive classroom (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008). A cultural receptivity scale, presenting 15 important concepts for use in guiding leaders through a process of self-reflection, is also included within the cultural proficiency framework (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2005). Each of

those concepts was enumerated in the text. By using the culturally proficient materials in their entirety, including the five essential elements for culturally proficient leadership, school leaders will ultimately be leading with moral intent by setting the tone for the value of diversity, which is, without question, their leadership responsibility (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2005).

The five basic dimensions of the PLC model, originally identified by Hord (2008), expound on the factors comprising effective, supportive school leadership: (a) the shared beliefs, values, changes, and improvements; (b) shared leadership; (c) the provision of the needed time and resources; (d) the integral processes of collective, intentional learning; and (e) the collective, intentional transfer of learning through which school-wide learning improvements are realized (Hord, 2008). Lambert (1998) also contributed to the thinking and understanding of effective, supportive leadership by identifying five assumptions that collectively form a conceptual framework for building leadership capacity.

In Assumption 1, leadership was defined as the “reciprocal learning processes that enable participants to construct and negotiate meanings leading to a shared purpose” (Lambert, 1998, pp. 8-9). In Assumption 2, the nature of both leadership and learning toward a direction of shared purpose was identified (Lambert, 1998, p. 9). In Assumption 3, Lambert (1998) clearly stated that all members in the learning community have both the potential and right to be active participants in organizational decisions (p. 9). In Assumption 4, the belief that leading must be a shared endeavor was emphasized (Lambert, 1998, p. 9). In Assumption 5, the redistribution and realignment of both power and authority were underscored.

The examination of effective leadership was completed by determining the role of integrity in leadership. The concept of integrity between educators and stakeholders was succinctly described through the three core values of trust, respect for all stakeholders, and respect for diversity (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2005). The second core value is reflective of the process standards espoused by the National Staff Development Council (1995); the third core value is reflective of both ISLLC standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008) and tenets of cultural proficiency (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2005). Several definitions of integrity were provided; these included references to fidelity (Ysseldyke & Tardrew, 2007), inspiration (Long, 2009), trust (Ambery & Steinbrunner, 2007), and a different way of thinking (Kennedy, 2006).

The work of White and Wallace (as cited in Johannesen et al., 2008) was described in detail, as it relates to leadership with integrity. White and Wallace developed a framework for auditing organizational integrity, and six habits of leadership integrity were identified: (a) solving ethical problems directly and reflectively, (b) interacting responsibly, (c) modeling integrity, (d) sharing organizational purposes and direction, (e) valuing stakeholders' perspectives, and (f) practicing consistent personal integrity (Johannesen et al., 2008). Each habit was described and expounded by citing explicit commitments. This topic concluded the review of the literature. An analysis of the literature review was useful in informing the methodology and in understanding the related complexities of the study. Making connections to the literature strengthened the findings derived from the study. Chapter 3 describes the methodology for the study along with the rationale for both the qualitative and quantitative processes.

Chapter 3. Methodology and Procedures

This was a mixed methods study with 24 teachers involving the examination of responses to two surveys and an open-ended questionnaire as well as document analysis of school policy, vision, mission, leadership team structures, and the teacher handbook. The purpose of the study was to inform instructional and leadership practices within the school setting through the examination of quantitative data around teachers' responses to questions related to culturally proficient instruction and qualitative data around teachers' perceptions of the challenges, barriers, and support needed for implementing culturally proficient practices.

The findings from the study may inform instructional and leadership practices within the school and contribute to the professional literature relating to culturally proficient practices. By implementing the study, a better understanding was realized regarding the infusion of cultural proficiency within the school setting. The need to examine the implementation of culturally proficient practices and the challenges, barriers, and needed support for implementation of culturally proficient instructional practices provided the impetus for conducting the research study. Examination of students' unsatisfactory writing performance provided additional urgency for conducting the research study.

Three central questions provided the foundation for this investigation. Data were analyzed, interpreted, and compared to the literature to discover findings for informing instructional and leadership practices:

1. What culturally proficient instructional practices, if any, do teachers report implementing in classrooms in an elementary school in Nevada?

2. What challenges and or barriers, if any, do these teachers perceive in implementing culturally proficient instruction?
3. What support do these teachers perceive is needed, if any, for implementing culturally proficient instructional practices?

The study design involved 24 teachers within the school setting providing instruction to students in kindergarten through Grade 5. Data were collected through (a) a beliefs survey based on cultural proficiency's five essential elements; (b) a competency survey from the cultural proficiency literature; (c) an open-ended questionnaire; and (d) document analysis of school policy, vision, mission, leadership team structures, and the teacher handbook. Findings will serve as the initial development of the body of knowledge regarding the implementation of culturally proficient practices in the school setting. Findings may also assist in discovering critical perspectives of teachers within the school setting and inform instructional and administrative leadership as culturally proficient practices are implemented in schools. Findings are also expected to contribute to the professional literature regarding culturally proficient educational practices and areas of challenges, barriers, and support in implementing culturally proficient instruction within the school setting.

The following text begins with elaboration regarding the appropriateness of a mixed methodology in the examination of educational practices within the research setting. This is followed with an in-depth discussion of the research design and support for the selected design in light of the purposes identified for the study. The remaining text is used to provide a detailed description of the procedures involved in the study.

Research Approach and Design

Mills (2007) encouraged the use of mixed methods when the researcher desires to “gain a broader understanding of [a] complicated relationship” under investigation (p. 5). As similarly reported by Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen (2004), narrative descriptions gathered through the collection of qualitative data contribute balance and expanded meaning of participants’ perceptions noted through the analysis of quantitative data. The use of mixed methods also incorporates the inherent strengths of both quantitative and qualitative designs, as the approach provides the opportunity for the elaboration or clarification of results for the purpose of supporting, developing, or informing the other.

This study examined quantitative descriptive data and qualitative perceptual data acquired through two surveys and an open-ended questionnaire as well as document analysis of school policy, vision, mission, leadership team structures, and the teacher handbook. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003) stated that “qualitative approaches take the position that the worth of an educational program depends heavily on the values and perspectives of those doing the judging” (p. 562). The study design was closely aligned with this description. Although the study used primarily qualitative data, quantitative data were used as descriptive statistics to inform the study in relation to Research Question 1 regarding the culturally proficient instructional practices, if any, teachers reported implementing in their classrooms. Quantitative data were also used for informing the study in relation to Research Question 2, regarding challenges and/or barriers in implementing culturally proficient instruction and Research Question 3, involving perceptions of needed support in implementing culturally proficient instruction.

A qualitative study is categorized as a nonexperimental method, which is the most common research approach used in educational settings (Charles & Mertler, 2006; Gall et

al., 2003). The research incorporated triangulation, through which multiple data sources, collection strategies, and time periods are compared to determine any patterns that may be evident in the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Triangulation was included through (a) two surveys; (b) one open ended questionnaire; and (c) document analysis of school policy, vision, mission, leadership team structures, and the teacher handbook. In addition, findings were compared to the literature review to increase the credibility of the findings.

School and Setting

All 31 teachers of kindergarten through Grade 5 employed in the school setting participated in four professional-development training regarding cultural proficiency and culturally proficient instruction. Of the 31 who participated in the training, 24 volunteered to participate in the study. The training was provided during the 2011-2012 school year. Topics discussed during these meetings included the (a) school vision; (b) continuum of cultural proficiency Cross (1988); (c) introduction to cultural proficiency; and (d) practice of stereotyping, during which teachers spoke of the importance of being aware of differences and not labeling students. The 31 teachers ranged from 29 to 69 years of age, and all had obtained unprovisional state teaching licensure. A variety of teaching experience, ranging from 3 to 28 years, had been acquired by the teachers. Twenty-five teachers were Caucasian, two were African American, two were Hispanic, and the remaining two were of Asian and multiracial ethnicity.

Participants

The criterion for participation in the study was that teachers had previously participated in the professional-development training; consequently, all 31 teachers were

invited to participate. Of the 31, 24 volunteered for participation in the study.

Participation in the study was both voluntary and anonymous.

Human Subjects Consideration

Federal laws pertaining to applied research studies, supported and protected through Institutional Review Board processes, were strictly upheld in the study. As noted in the following text, participants' anonymity, confidentiality, and safety were closely guarded. Participants were clearly informed that volunteering to participate in the study would in no way jeopardize their employment status or performance evaluations.

To achieve and maintain this standard of safety, any possible risk that participants could have encountered were minimized to the extent possible. This was ensured using two safeguards. First, the researcher avoided any involvement in participant recruitment, as the guidance counselor assigned to the researcher's school recruited participants and provided clear communication regarding the voluntary nature of the research and any possible risks throughout the recruitment process. The second safeguard was that Google Forms, a secure web survey tool, was used to ensure that the data collection was anonymous.

To ensure credibility of the research, provide safety for participants, and remove any perceived pressure or fear, the following distinct precautions were taken in addition to the use of Google Forms for the data collection. The guidance counselor assigned to the researcher's school recruited teachers. During recruitment, the guidance counselor assured teachers that (a) participation was strictly voluntary, (b) they could withdraw from the study at any time, (c) they could decline answering any of the questions on the three data collection instruments without impact on their employment status or performance evaluations, and (d) the use of Google Forms ensured their responses to the

data collection instruments would be anonymous. The guidance counselor distributed a copy of the letter of consent during recruitment; the website address was provided within the letter (see Appendix D). The letter of consent was also posted in the beginning of the online survey. Participants clicked “accept” in lieu of their signature on a letter of consent; this process, as opposed to acquiring informed consent through signature, ensured teachers’ anonymity as participants in this study. The guidance counselor answered questions the teachers posed. These factors helped reduce any perceived threat relating to participants’ employment status or performance evaluations.

Instrumentation

The data collection included (a) a beliefs survey based on cultural proficiency’s five essential elements (see Appendix A); (b) a competency survey from the cultural proficiency literature (see Appendix B); (c) an open-ended questionnaire (see Appendix C); and (d) document analysis of school policy, vision, mission, leadership team structures, and the teacher handbook.

Data were derived from four sources for use in answering Research Question 1: (a) the anonymous beliefs survey; (b) the anonymous competency survey; (c) the anonymous open-ended questionnaire; and (d) document analysis of school policy, vision, mission, leadership team structures, and the teacher handbook. Data will be derived from three sources for use in answering Research Question 2: (a) the anonymous competency survey; (b) the anonymous open-ended questionnaire; and (c) document analysis of school policy, vision, mission, leadership team structures, and the teacher handbook. Data will be derived from the anonymous open-ended questionnaire and document analysis of school policy, vision, mission, leadership team structures, and the teacher handbook to answer Research Question 3. Table 2 provides a graphic of the

alignment between the research questions and research instruments along with the source that informed the question and instrument.

Table 2

Data Collection Alignment

Research question	Instrument	Source
1	Beliefs survey Competence survey Questionnaire	D. B. Lindsey et al., 2009 Cross, 1988 R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008 Chappuis et al., 2009 DuFour et al., 2006
2	Competence survey Questionnaire Document/artifact analysis	Cross, 1988 R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008 Garmston & Wellman, 2000, 2009 Conderman & Johnston- Rodriguez, 2009
3	Questionnaire Document analysis	Hildebrand, 2007 Buchholz & List, 2009 Vavrusa, 2008 R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008 D. B. Lindsey et al., 2009

Beliefs survey. The researcher developed the instrument (see Appendix A) and aligned the items in reflection of the five essential elements of cultural proficiency. R. B. Lindsey et al. (2003) published a similar belief survey aligned to the guiding principles for culture proficiency; the researcher reframed the initial survey for the purpose of checking alignment between beliefs about instruction and behaviors reported as instructional practices (see Table 3). In choosing appropriate verbs, beliefs were reframed as beliefs/behaviors that support culturally proficient instruction per the essential elements rubric for curriculum and instruction.

Table 3

Congruence of Data Collection Instruments

Original instrument	Research study instrumentation
Essential elements of cultural proficiency (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008) Beliefs survey (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2003)	Beliefs survey (Simone, 2011)
Competence survey (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2003)	Competence survey (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2003)
Essential elements of cultural proficiency (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008)	Open-ended questionnaire (Simone, 2011)

The beliefs survey contains a total of 40 items designed to explore perceptions regarding the topics of (a) assessing cultural knowledge, (b) valuing diversity, (c) managing the dynamics of difference, (d) adapting to diversity, and (e) institutionalizing cultural knowledge. A quantitative response option is provided; the Likert rating scale provides the opportunity for participants to select (1) *disagree*, (2) *uncertain*, (3) *somewhat agree*, (4) *agree*, or (5) *strongly agree* (see Appendix A). The instrument was expected to require approximately 15 minutes for completion. Responses were used, in part, to answer Research Question 1 of the study which asks, “What culturally proficient instructional practices, if any, do teachers report implementing in classrooms in an elementary school in Nevada?”

Expert panel review and field test. Although the survey topics are reflective of the research literature, the instrument is the original work of the researcher. To establish the appropriateness of items, the instrument was submitted to experts in the field of cultural proficiency, university professors, researchers, and professionals in the field for review and feedback (D. B. Lindsey, R. B. Lindsey, R. D. Terrell, and L. D. Jungwirth). After reviewing the draft of the instrument, experts expressed that the reframing of

statements to reflect the respondents' assumption of responsibility for their own behaviors was a breakthrough. To (a) establish the clarity of wording after making revisions indicated by the experts; (b) ensure the clarity of directions; (c) examine the language for potential bias; and (d) establish the needed time for completing the survey, the researcher field tested the instrument with two randomly selected teachers from a nearby school who did not participate in the study. A preliminary process such as this is expected to increase the degree of trustworthiness, confirmability, credibility, and dependability of findings acquired through an applied research study (Guba, 1981; Merriam, 1998; Mills, 2007). In a meeting occurring specifically for this purpose, teachers were asked to review the instrument and identify any wording that may have been cumbersome, vague, or redundant. Feedback reflected the belief that items were appropriate as drafted.

Competence survey. The instrument, designed by R. B. Lindsey et al. (2003) for the purpose of measuring teachers' beliefs regarding the five essential elements of cultural proficiency, was used in this study with permission from the authors. As noted in the beliefs survey, the instrument was designed to explore perceptions regarding the topics of (a) assessing cultural knowledge, (b) valuing diversity, (c) managing the dynamics of difference, (d) adapting to diversity, and (e) institutionalizing cultural knowledge. The authors previously field tested the survey in a school district and validated the instrument with an expert panel. These points increased the credibility of the instrument and supported its use in the study.

Each section of the competence survey provides several positive statements to which teachers are asked to respond using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *rarely* to *usually* (see Appendix B). The instrument consists of a total of 31 items and was

expected to require approximately 15 minutes for completion. Responses were used, in part, to answer Research Question 1 of the study which asks, “What culturally proficient instructional practices, if any, do teachers report implementing in classrooms in an elementary school in Nevada?” and Research Question 2 which asks, “What challenges and/or barriers, if any, do these teachers perceive in implementing culturally proficient instruction?”

Open-ended questionnaire. The researcher developed the questionnaire, which consists of 13 open-ended items, using the essential elements of cultural proficiency as a framework (see Appendix C). Consequently, as noted in the beliefs survey and the competence survey, the instrument was designed to explore perceptions regarding the topics of (a) assessing cultural knowledge, (b) valuing diversity, (c) managing the dynamics of difference, (d) adapting to diversity, and (e) institutionalizing cultural knowledge. Participants were encouraged to freely expound upon their responses. It was anticipated that completion of the questionnaire would require approximately 30 minutes. Responses were used, in part, to answer all three research questions of the study. Research Question 1 asks, “What culturally proficient instructional practices, if any, do teachers report implementing in classrooms in an elementary school in Nevada?” Research Question 2 asks, “What challenges and or barriers, if any, do these teachers perceive in implementing culturally proficient instruction?” Research Question 3 asks, “What support do these teachers perceive is needed, if any, for implementing culturally proficient instructional practices?”

Expert panel review and field test. To establish the appropriateness of items, the questionnaire was submitted to three experts of cultural proficiency for review and feedback. To (a) establish the clarity of wording after making revisions indicated by the

experts, (b) ensure the clarity of directions, (c) examine the language for potential bias, and (d) establish the needed time for completing the survey, the researcher field tested the instrument with the same two randomly selected teachers from a nearby school. A preliminary process such as this is expected to increase the degree of trustworthiness, confirmability, credibility, and dependability of findings (Guba, 1981; Merriam, 1998; Mills, 2007). In a meeting occurring specifically for this purpose, teachers were asked to review the instrument and identify any wording that may have been intrusive, cumbersome, vague, or redundant. Feedback reflected the belief that items were appropriate as drafted.

Document and artifact analysis. A document analysis was conducted on the school policy, vision, mission, leadership team structures, and the teacher handbook. The school's practice of structured teaching planning time regarding implications of cultural proficiency were documented and analyzed. The collective analyses were used to assist in identifying findings regarding the three research questions central to the study: (a) "What culturally proficient instructional practices, if any, do teachers report implementing in classrooms in an elementary school in Nevada?" (b) "What challenges and or barriers, if any, do these teachers perceive in implementing culturally proficient instruction?" and (c) "What support do these teachers perceive is needed, if any, for implementing culturally proficient instructional practices?"

Procedures

Procedures integral to this mixed methods study included (a) recruiting participants; (b) administering the anonymous beliefs survey, competence survey, and questionnaire via Google Forms, a secure web survey tool that allows for anonymous entry and for participants to skip questions if they so choose; (c) acquiring the school's

teacher handbook describing the practice of structured teaching planning time regarding implications of cultural proficiency; (d) analyzing and interpreting data; (e) generating findings, conclusions, and recommendations; and (f) disseminating results. Each of these procedures is described in detail within the following text.

Participant selection. In light of federal law, ensuring voluntary participation is crucial. Protections also have been identified to protect teachers' anonymity and confidentiality should they volunteer for participation. Details regarding the voluntary nature of participation are outlined within the *Participant Recruitment and Acquisition of Informed Consent* section of text. The sample group consisted of 24 teachers who were assigned to general education classrooms ranging from kindergarten through Grade 5. No teacher was excluded, as all teachers had participated in the cultural proficiency training at the school.

Participant recruitment and acquisition of informed consent. Participant recruitment occurred after receiving permission from both the Pepperdine and school district Institutional Review Boards. To ensure credibility of the research, provide safety for participants, and remove any perceived pressure or fear, the guidance counselor assigned to the researcher's school recruited teachers for participation in the study. Recruitment occurred outside the contracted work day in the school library. A recruitment flyer was placed in teachers' school mailboxes 1 week prior to recruitment (see Appendix E).

During the recruitment session, the school guidance counselor assured teachers that participation was voluntary and anonymous. She also clearly presented the parameters of the study, such as the problem, purpose, and questions (see Appendix F). The guidance counselor further informed teachers that they could have withdrawn from

the study at any time and that they could have declined answering any of the questions on the three data collection instruments without impact on their employment status or future performance evaluations. She distributed a copy of the letter of informed consent which was also posted at the beginning of the online data collection instruments. She stated that the indication of informed consent, as well as the data collection, would occur online using Google Forms, a secure web survey tool. She further provided the link to the web survey tool. The guidance counselor assured teachers that the use of this online resource protected the anonymity of participants, because no signatures or internet protocol (IP) addresses would be collected. Teachers were informed that (a) the data collection instruments would be accessible immediately after the recruitment meeting, (b) they had 2 weeks in which to complete the instruments, (c) they were not to discuss their responses with others until the data collection is complete, and (d) all data would be destroyed after 3 years passed after the completion of the study. Teachers were then given the opportunity to ask any questions they had, but none were asked. The recruitment meeting was then concluded.

Data Collection

The data collection included (a) an anonymous beliefs survey (see Appendix A); (b) an anonymous competency survey (see Appendix B); (c) an anonymous open-ended questionnaire (see Appendix C); and (d) document analysis of school policy, vision, mission, leadership team structures, and the teacher handbook. The administration of the two anonymous surveys and the anonymous open-ended questionnaire occurred via Google Forms, a secure web survey tool (see Appendix G). Data from the school's policy, vision, mission, leadership team structures, and teachers' handbook were acquired

during the final phase of the study to provide triangulation to the data analysis and add credibility to the findings.

Administering the surveys and questionnaire. The Google Forms online resource was uploaded the day prior to the day that participants were recruited and remained accessible for a period of 2 weeks. In light of the approximate 60 minutes the combined data collection may have required, participants were asked to complete their responses within 3 days of the initial recruitment. The prerogative to continue with participation, however, remained an option until the conclusion of the 2-week period. Participants maintained the freedom to not respond to any items of their choice or to withdraw from the study at any time by exiting from the web survey tool.

Procuring documents. A document analysis was conducted on the school policy, vision, mission, leadership team structures, and teacher handbook. The researcher acquired this information from the school principal.

Data Analysis, Interpretation, and Dissemination

Quantitative data derived from responses to the beliefs survey (see Appendix A) and competency survey (see Appendix B) provided descriptive statistics for informing the study (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). As described in Chapter 4, analyses identified the percentage, mean, standard deviation, and median regarding each possible selection to every item. Google Forms included analysis tools for this purpose.

Qualitative data were derived from responses to the open-ended questionnaire (see Appendix C) as well as the analysis of the school's teacher handbook describing the practice of structured teaching planning time regarding implications of cultural proficiency. Gay et al. (2005) emphasized the importance of the researcher's intricate involvement in the interpretation and explanation of qualitative data. In light of this

recommendation, the researcher carefully analyzed qualitative data. Patterns and themes emerged from all phases of the data analysis; these were compared with the literature in light of the research questions (see Table 4). Computer software was not utilized for this analysis. More detailed descriptions of these processes are provided in the text below.

Table 4

Data Collection Alignment

Research question	Data source	Summarized findings	Connection to the literature	Conclusions	Recommendations
1	Beliefs survey Competence survey Questionnaire				
2	Competence survey Questionnaire Document/artifact analysis				
3	Questionnaire Document analysis				

Analysis and interpretation of data from the surveys. Descriptive statistics were calculated, using analysis tools in Google Forms, for the purpose of identifying the percentage, mean, standard deviation, and median regarding each possible selection to every item. Results were then interpreted for use for the following purposes: (a) answering Research Question 1 of the study, (b) identifying patterns and trends, and (c) comparing findings with the literature. Research Question 1 asks, “What culturally proficient instructional practices, if any, do teachers report implementing in classrooms in an elementary school in Nevada?” Findings were documented and used as the basis for supporting conclusions and recommendations.

Analysis and interpretation of data from the questionnaire. As Creswell (2003) recommended, the researcher (a) began the analysis of data as they were collected, (b) continually reflected on the data, and (c) frequently asked analytic questions regarding the data. To begin the analysis, the researcher used Microsoft Word software

for documenting and organizing responses to each item. Next, the data were inductively analyzed to create analytic files in further development of their organization.

To accomplish this task, salient categories and topics were identified. Bogdan and Biklen (2006) suggested the use of codes such as “words, phrases . . . subjects’ ways of thinking, and events” (p. 172-175) but also indicated that each study is unique and, therefore, would have codes specifically relating to the phenomena of that respective study. Creswell (2003) reported that, depending on the depth of responses, data units may even be coded and used multiple times.

As recommended by Creswell (2003), results derived from the coding process were then grouped into a smaller number of meaningful themes; Glesne (2005) referred to these themes as “data clumps” (p. 135). The next step involved interconnecting the themes into narratives to form general descriptions of participants’ perspectives. Results were then interpreted for use in (a) answering the three research questions of the study, (b) identifying patterns and trends, and (c) comparing findings with the literature. Findings were documented and used as the basis for supporting findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Analysis and interpretation of data from documents. The researcher (a) began the analysis as data were collected, (b) continually reflected on the data, and (c) frequently asked analytic questions regarding the data. The researcher first documented and organized results using Microsoft Word software. Next, the data were inductively analyzed to create analytic files by identifying salient categories and topics. Results derived from the coding process were then grouped into a smaller number of meaningful themes. The next step involved interconnecting the themes into narratives to form general descriptions. Results were interpreted for use in (a) answering the three research

questions of the study, (b) identifying patterns and trends, and (c) comparing findings with the literature. Findings were documented and used as the basis for supporting conclusions and recommendations.

Dissemination of results. Results derived from this study will be disseminated using two primary methods. First, an article will be published for the purpose of contributing to the professional literature. Beyond this, however, Creswell (2003) reported that “generalizeability play[s] a minor role in qualitative study” (p. 195). Given this belief, the researcher intends to disseminate results garnered from this study to individuals in the research setting. It is envisioned at this time, consequently, that results will be shared with the (a) school principal’s district-level administrator through the provision of a copy of the final dissertation report, (b) school principal through the provision of a copy of the final dissertation report, (c) members of the School Planning Team through a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation, and (d) faculty members in the research setting as a component of ongoing staff development.

Summary

This mixed methods study examined the implementation of culturally proficient instructional practices as reported by teachers. The purpose of the study was to inform instructional and leadership practices within the school setting through the examination of quantitative data around teachers’ responses to questions related to culturally proficient instruction and qualitative data around teachers’ perceptions of the challenges, barriers, and support needed for implementing culturally proficient practices. Participants were limited to the 24 teachers in the research setting who volunteered for participation. All teachers in the school setting held unprovisional state licensure.

The triangulated data collection was guided by the three research questions and contained perceptual data acquired through two surveys and an open-ended questionnaire as well as a review of school documents. Analysis tools in Google Forms were used to analyze quantitative data acquired from the beliefs survey and competency survey. As recommended by Gay et al. (2005), the researcher personally analyzes and interpreted qualitative data. Credibility was increased, however, through conversations with administrative colleagues and other professionals in the field. Based on the collective results derived from the study, conducting the study will inform instructional and leadership practices through the examination of quantitative data around teachers' responses to questions relating to culturally proficient instruction and qualitative data around teachers' perceptions of the challenges, barriers, and support needed for implementing culturally proficient practices. Understanding these responses and perceptions will be useful in identifying recommendations for influencing instructional and leadership practices in support of implementing culturally proficient instruction. Chapter 4 presents the presentation of data and report of findings derived from the analyses. A summary of findings and a presentation of conclusions and recommendations are presented in Chapter 5 as the concluding chapter of this dissertation.

Chapter 4. Presentation of Data and Report of Findings

Overview

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to inform instructional and leadership practices within the school setting through the examination of quantitative data around teachers' responses to questions related to culturally proficient instruction and qualitative data around teachers' perceptions of the challenges, barriers, and support needed for implementing culturally proficient practices. The study involved the participation of 24 teachers responding to a beliefs survey, competence survey, and open-ended questionnaire. The overarching objective of the study was to inform refinement of teachers' instructional practice and leadership actions in removing barriers and providing additional support for the implementation of culturally proficient instruction within the urban elementary school. Three questions were answered through the integral procedures of the study:

1. What culturally proficient instructional practices, if any, do teachers report implementing in classrooms in an elementary school in Nevada?
2. What challenges and or barriers, if any, do these teachers perceive in implementing culturally proficient instruction?
3. What support do these teachers perceive is needed, if any, for implementing culturally proficient instructional practices?

Research Question 1: Culturally Proficient Instructional Practices

The researcher gathered quantitative data through the beliefs and competence surveys and qualitative data through the open-ended questionnaire to answer the first research question: "What culturally proficient instructional practices, if any, do teachers report implementing in classrooms in an elementary school in Nevada?" All three data

collection instruments were based on the five essential elements of cultural proficiency identified by R. B. Lindsey et al. (2008) reflecting five integral skills: (a) assessing cultural knowledge, (b) valuing diversity, (c) managing the dynamics of difference, (d) adapting to diversity, and (e) institutionalizing cultural knowledge. Archived documents were not applicable for use in answering this research question.

The beliefs survey contains a total of 40 positive statements and a Likert rating scale providing the opportunity for participants to select (1) *disagree*, (2) *uncertain*, (3) *somewhat agree*, (4) *agree*, or (5) *strongly agree* (see Appendix A). The competence survey provides 31 positive statements to which teachers are asked to respond using a 5-point Likert scale to select (1) *rarely*, (2) *seldom*, (3) *sometimes*, (4) *often*, or (5) *usually* (see Appendix B). The researcher interpreted responses to the competence survey to reflect the responses of *sometimes*, *often*, and *usually* as affirmations. The questionnaire consists of 13 open-ended items designed to gather qualitative data; participants were encouraged to freely expound upon their responses. All 24 participants responded to each item on both surveys, but not all participants responded to each item on the questionnaire. Because of rounding to the nearest whole, percentages occasionally total in excess of 100; this is beyond the control of the researcher.

In reflection of the instrument design, the collective analyses of results were first organized according to the five essential elements of cultural proficiency (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008) for presentation in the following text. The sixth section of text is dedicated to presenting results regarding the infusion of cultural proficiency within teachers' classroom practices; these results were reflective of the five essential elements of cultural proficiency (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008).

Assessing cultural knowledge. Seven items on the beliefs survey were designed to collect related data. Survey items and results are presented in the order listed on the instrument; descriptive statistics are presented in Table 5:

1. I anticipate how diversity of cultures can enhance my instructional practices. All participants agreed with this statement, with 23 (96%) expressing strong agreement and 1 (4%) indicating agreement.
2. I believe that my classroom expectations can affect students' academic performance. All participants agreed with this statement, with (a) 12 (50%) strongly agreeing, (b) 9 (38%) agreeing, and (c) 3 (13%) somewhat agreeing.
3. I anticipate how diversity of cultures may cause conflict between me and my students. Overall agreement with this statement is 96%, with (a) 9 (38%) strongly agreeing, (b) 9 (38%) agreeing, (c) 5 (21%) somewhat agreeing, and (d) 1 (4%) expressing uncertainty.
4. I anticipate how diversity of cultures may affect relationships between me and my students. All participants agreed with this statement, with 17 (71%) expressing strong agreement and 7 (29%) indicating agreement.
5. I believe that rules (written and unwritten), norms, and climate collectively reflect my relationships with students. All participants agreed with this statement, with (a) 12 (50%) strongly agreeing, (b) 9 (38%) agreeing, and (c) 3 (13%) somewhat agreeing.
6. I anticipate how diversity of cultures can enhance my students' academic performance. All participants agreed with this statement, with (a) 12 (50%) strongly agreeing, (b) 9 (38%) agreeing, and (c) 3 (13%) somewhat agreeing.

7. I seek to learn about the cultures of my students to enhance the quality of collaboration with students. Overall agreement with this statement is 96%, with (a) 11 (46%) strongly agreeing, (b) 9 (38%) agreeing, (c) 3 (13%) somewhat agreeing, and (d) 1 (4%) disagreeing.

Table 5

Assessing Cultural Knowledge: Responses to the Beliefs Survey

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mdn</i>
I anticipate how diversity of cultures can enhance my instructional practices.	4.96	0.20	5.0
I believe that my classroom expectations can affect students' academic performance.	4.38	0.71	4.5
I anticipate how diversity of cultures may cause conflict between me and my students.	4.08	0.88	4.0
I anticipate how diversity of cultures may affect relationships between me and my students.	4.71	0.46	5.0
I believe that rules (written and unwritten), norms, and climate collectively reflect my relationships with students.	4.38	0.71	4.5
I anticipate how diversity of cultures can enhance my students' academic performance.	4.38	0.71	4.5
I seek to learn about the cultures of my students to enhance the quality of collaboration with students.	4.21	0.98	4.0

Note. $N = 24$. The Likert rating scale provided participants the opportunity to select from (1) *disagree*, (2) *uncertain*, (3) *somewhat agree*, (4) *agree*, or (5) *strongly agree*.

Seven items on the competence survey were designed to collect related data.

Items are presented and discussed in the order listed on the instrument; descriptive statistics are presented in Table 6:

1. I am aware of my own culture and ethnicity. All participants affirmed this statement, with (a) 9 (38%) indicating usually, (b) 11 (46%) indicating often, and (c) 4 (17%) indicating sometimes.
2. I am comfortable talking about my culture and ethnicity. All participants affirmed this statement, with 17 (71%) indicating usually and 7 (29%) indicating often.
3. I know the effect that my culture and ethnicity may have on the people in my work. The overall affirmation rate of this statement is 96%, as 1 (4%) indicated seldom. The remaining participants affirmed this statement by (a) 7 (29%) indicating usually, (b) 8 (33%) indicating often, and (c) 8 (33%) indicating sometimes.
4. I seek to learn about the culture of this organization. All participants affirmed this statement, with (a) 9 (38%) indicating usually, (b) 9 (38%) indicating often, and (c) 6 (25%) indicating sometimes.
5. I seek to learn about the cultures of this organization's employees. The overall affirmation rate of this statement is 96%, as 1 (4%) indicated seldom. The remaining participants affirmed this statement by (a) 7 (29%) indicating usually, (b) 10 (42%) indicating often, and (c) 6 (25%) indicating sometimes.
6. I seek to learn about the cultures of this organization's clients. The overall affirmation rate of this statement is 96%, as 1 (4%) indicated rarely. The remaining participants affirmed the statement by (a) 9 (38%) indicating usually, (b) 11 (46%) indicating often, and (c) 3 (13%) indicating sometimes.
7. I anticipate how this organization's clients and employees will interact with, conflict with, and enhance one another. The overall affirmation rate of this

statement is 96%, as 1 (4%) indicated seldom. The remaining participants affirmed this statement by (a) 7 (29%) indicating usually, (b) 10 (42%) indicating often, and (c) 6 (25%) indicating sometimes.

Table 6

Assessing Cultural Knowledge: Responses to the Competence Survey

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mdn</i>
I am aware of my own culture and ethnicity.	4.21	0.72	4
I am comfortable talking about my culture and ethnicity.	4.71	0.46	5
I know the effect that my culture and ethnicity may have on the people in my work.	3.88	0.90	4
I seek to learn about the culture of this organization.	4.13	0.80	4
I seek to learn about the cultures of this organization's employees.	3.96	0.86	4
I seek to learn about the cultures of this organization's clients.	4.13	0.95	4
I anticipate how this organization's clients and employees will interact with, conflict with, and enhance one another.	3.96	0.86	4

Note. $N = 24$. The Likert rating scale provided participants the opportunity to select from (1) *rarely*, (2) *seldom*, (3) *sometimes*, (4) *often*, or (5) *usually*.

Two items on the questionnaire were designed to collect related data. The first question asks: Describe in what ways, if at all, you learn about the cultures of your students. Although 24 participants responded to the questionnaire, 22 provided responses related to the topic. Responses consisted of short answers and multiple sentences. Analysis of responses generated numerous community-building and curriculum activities.

Respondents described numerous interactive activities throughout the year designed to assist children in getting acquainted with each other and with the teacher (see

Table 7). Respondent F stated, “Cultural activities help me to further engage students as time goes on. I really want to know important facts about my students and their families.”

Respondent J reported, “Discussing cultural practices help me make connections.”

Respondent M stated, “Children are very open and sincere when asking questions of each another.”

Table 7

Learning About Students’ Cultures: Questionnaire Responses

Strategy	Activity
Community building	Community and team-building activities Open conversations about cultures and interests Conducting interviews Playing games Classroom/student interviews Who-I-Am activities Daily conversations Text-to-self and text-to-world connections Basal reader stories All-about-me activities Be Kind activities Culturally proficient instructional activities Discuss similarities and share unique differences Share about lives, customs, beliefs, and traditions Learn about students’ home life and families Talk about after-school activities Get acquainted with parents Talk about likes/dislikes, families, and friends Ask parents to fill out a questionnaire Dialogue among students to foster understanding Speaking up concerning discriminatory policies or practices Survey students Morning time before the bell Community circles
Application of Curriculum	Conducting online research about different cultures Write to share cultures/experiences

Note. $n = 22$.

The second question pertaining to assessing cultural knowledge asks: Describe in what ways, if at all, you teach students the effect that their culture and ethnicity may have on those around them. Although 24 participants responded to the questionnaire, 14 responses related to assessing cultural knowledge. Responses consisted of short answers and multiple sentences. Analysis of responses generated numerous strategies regarding community building and curriculum activities.

Respondents described numerous interactive activities throughout the year designed to assist children in learning the potential effects of their ethnicity and culture (see Table 8). Respondent A reported, “I work the entire year on respecting ourselves and others.” Respondent E stated, “Tolerance is a message I consistently teach.” Respondent G emphasized, “Culture is one area that we talk about in length.” Respondents L and N reported that they do not purposely teach about the effect of students’ culture on others.

Table 8

Teaching About Cultural and Ethnic Effects: Questionnaire Responses

Strategy	Activity
Community building	Teaching respect of ourselves and others Guidance counselor - classroom lessons Create a positive, inclusive learning environment Teach students to be respectful and sensitive Activities that teach children new things about each other Discuss culture, biases, and prejudices Discuss cause and effect Open conversations about ethnicities Playing games Teacher modeling about differences All-about-me activities Be Kind and character education activities Culturally proficient instructional activities
Application of curriculum	Modeled reading about differences we all have Literature-based discussions Discussions biases of different cultures have

Note. $n = 14$.

Valuing diversity. Nine items on the beliefs survey were designed to collect related data. Survey items and results are presented in the order listed on the instrument; descriptive statistics are presented in Table 9:

1. I create opportunities for us to be more collaborative in my classroom. All participants agreed with this statement, with 14 (58%) strongly agreeing and 10 (42%) agreeing.
2. I work to develop a collaborative learning community within my classroom. All participants agreed with this statement, with 20 (83%) strongly agreeing and 4 (17%) agreeing.
3. I make conscious effort to teach my students the cultural expectations within my classroom. All participants agreed with this statement, with (a) 12 (50%) strongly agreeing, (b) 9 (38%) agreeing, and (c) 3 (13%) somewhat agreeing.
4. I appreciate the challenges that diversity brings to my instructional practices. Overall agreement with this statement is 96%, with (a) 11 (46%) strongly agreeing, (b) 9 (38%) agreeing, (c) 3 (13%) somewhat agreeing, and (d) 1 (4%) disagreeing.
5. I believe that what improves some students' academic performance may minimize that of others. All participants agreed with this statement, with (a) 12 (50%) strongly agreeing, (b) 9 (38%) agreeing, and (c) 3 (13%) somewhat agreeing.
6. I share my appreciation of diversity with my students. All participants agreed with this statement, with 15 (63%) strongly agreeing and 9 (38%) agreeing.

7. I welcome the opportunity to develop relationships with a diverse group of students into my classroom. All participants agreed with this statement, with 20 (83%) strongly agreeing and 4 (17%) agreeing.
8. I believe that positive views regarding diversity have the potential to positively affect students' academic performance. Overall agreement with this statement is 96%, with (a) 9 (38%) strongly agreeing, (b) 9 (38%) agreeing, (c) 5 (21%) somewhat agreeing, and (d) 1 (4%) expressing uncertainty.
9. I appreciate the opportunities that diversity brings to my instructional practices. Overall agreement with this statement is 96%, with (a) 11 (46%) strongly agreeing, (b) 9 (38%) agreeing, (c) 3 (13%) somewhat agreeing, and (d) 1 (4%) disagreeing.

Table 9

Valuing Diversity: Responses to the Beliefs Survey

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mdn</i>
I create opportunities for us to be more collaborative in my classroom.	4.58	0.50	5.0
I work to develop a collaborative learning community within my classroom.	4.83	0.38	5.0
I make conscious effort to teach my students the cultural expectations within my classroom.	4.38	0.71	4.5
I appreciate the challenges that diversity brings to my instructional practices	4.21	0.98	4.0
I believe that what improves some students' academic performance may minimize that of others.	4.38	0.71	4.5

Note. $N = 24$. The Likert rating scale provided participants the opportunity to select from (1) *disagree*, (2) *uncertain*, (3) *somewhat agree*, (4) *agree*, or (5) *strongly agree*.

(Continued)

Table 9

Valuing Diversity: Responses to the Beliefs Survey

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mdn</i>
I believe that what improves some students' academic performance may minimize that of others.	4.38	0.71	4.5
I share my appreciation of diversity with my students.	4.63	0.49	5.0
I believe that positive views regarding diversity have the potential to positively affect students' academic performance.	4.08	0.88	4.0
I appreciate the opportunities that diversity brings to my instructional practices.	4.21	0.98	4.0

Note. $N = 24$. The Likert rating scale provided participants the opportunity to select from (1) *disagree*, (2) *uncertain*, (3) *somewhat agree*, (4) *agree*, or (5) *strongly agree*.

Eight items on the competence survey were designed to collect related data. Items are presented and discussed in the order listed on the instrument; descriptive statistics are presented in Table 10:

1. I welcome a diverse group of clients and colleagues into the work setting.
All participants affirmed this statement, with (a) 9 (38%) indicating usually, (b) 11 (46%) indicating often, and (c) 4 (17%) indicating sometimes.
2. I create opportunities at work for us to be more inclusive and more diverse. The overall affirmation rate of this statement is 96%, as 1 (4%) indicated seldom. The remaining participants affirmed this statement by (a) 7 (29%) indicating usually, (b) 10 (42%) indicating often, and (c) 6 (25%) indicating sometimes.

3. I appreciate both the challenges and opportunities that diversity brings. All participants affirmed this statement, with 17 (71%) indicating usually and 7 (29%) indicating often.
4. I share my appreciation of diversity with my coworkers. Overall agreement with this statement is 96%. Although 1 (4%) indicated seldom, the remaining participants affirmed the statement by (a) 8 (33%) indicating usually, (b) 11 (46%) indicating often, and (c) 4 (17%) indicating sometimes.
5. I share my appreciation of diversity with other clients. The overall affirmation rate of this statement is 96%, as 1 (4%) indicated seldom. The remaining participants affirmed this statement by (a) 7 (29%) indicating usually, (b) 8 (33%) indicating often, and (c) 8 (33%) indicating sometimes.
6. I work to develop a learning community with the clients I serve. All participants affirmed this statement, with (a) 9 (38%) indicating usually, (b) 11 (46%) indicating often, and (c) 4 (17%) indicating sometimes.
7. I make conscious effort to teach the cultural expectations of my organization or department to those who are new or who may be unfamiliar with the organization's culture. The overall affirmation rate of this statement is 96%, as 1 (4%) indicated seldom. The remaining participants affirmed this statement by (a) 7 (29%) indicating usually, (b) 10 (42%) indicating often, and (c) 6 (25%) indicating sometimes.
8. I proactively seek to interact with people from diverse backgrounds in my personal and professional life. The overall affirmation rate of this

statement is 96%, as 1 (4%) indicated rarely. The remaining participants affirmed the statement by (a) 9 (38%) indicating usually, (b) 11 (46%) indicating often, and (c) 3 (13%) indicating sometimes.

Table 10

Valuing Diversity: Responses to the Competence Survey

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mdn</i>
I welcome a diverse group of clients and colleagues into the work setting.	4.21	0.72	4
I create opportunities at work for us to be more inclusive and more diverse.	3.96	0.86	4
I appreciate both the challenges and opportunities that diversity brings.	4.71	0.46	5
I share my appreciation of diversity with my coworkers.	4.08	0.83	4
I share my appreciation of diversity with other clients.	3.88	0.90	4
I work to develop a learning community with the clients I serve.	4.21	0.72	4
I make conscious effort to teach the cultural expectations of my organization or department to those who are new or who may be unfamiliar with the organization's culture.	3.96	0.86	4
I proactively seek to interact with people from diverse backgrounds in my personal and professional life.	4.13	0.95	4

Note. $N = 24$. The Likert rating scale provided participants the opportunity to select from (1) *rarely*, (2) *seldom*, (3) *sometimes*, (4) *often*, or (5) *usually*.

Two items on the questionnaire were designed to collect related data. The first question asks: Describe in what ways, if at all, you use and display materials that have culturally diverse images. Although 24 participants responded to the questionnaire, 14

provided responses related to valuing diversity. Responses consisted of short answers and multiple sentences. Analysis of responses generated numerous strategies regarding community building and curriculum activities.

Respondents described numerous activities and materials with culturally diverse images (see Table 11). Respondent A reported using a variety of images representing different groups. Respondent B stated, “All cultures are displayed in my room.” Respondent D said, “They can describe how they celebrate the holidays and teach others.” Respondent K reported, “I brought the Chinese symbol for listening into my room because I love the idea that the character for listening includes the eyes, heart, and ears.” Respondent L stated, “I have students’ pictures displayed which represent the variety of

Table 11

Use and Display of Culturally Diverse Images: Questionnaire Responses

Strategy	Activity
Classroom activities	Sharing of holiday festivities Sharing artifacts with students Inviting students to bring their own artifacts to share Display pictures of students Whole-group read alouds about different cultures
Classroom materials	Posters on the wall Display generic pictures of various cultural groups Class library with diverse cultures depicted Advertising magazines Basal reader Current event articles Display of students’ work

Note. $n = 14$.

The second question to the essential element of valuing diversity on the questionnaire asks: Describe in what ways, if at all, you promote activities that value the commonalities and differences among students. Although 24 participants responded to

the questionnaire, 13 provided responses related to valuing diversity. Responses consisted of short answers and multiple sentences. Analysis of responses generated numerous classroom activities and curriculum resources.

Respondents described numerous activities and resources for promoting commonalities and differences (see Table 12). Respondent D said, “Promote activities that value the commonalities and differences among students.” Respondent D reported the use of “character education activities and Be Kind cards” Respondent F said, “We spend time talking about what makes each of us special and unique.” Respondent K reported, “We openly talk about what we enjoy about one another and how we can better ourselves in order to become a better peer.”

Table 12

The Value of Commonalities and Differences: Questionnaire Responses

Strategy	Activity
Classroom activities	Provide lessons on respect, kindness, and tolerance Guidance counselor - classroom lessons Compare/contrast activities Teach students holiday customs and traditions Discussions about being different Team-building activities Character education and Be Kind activities Culturally proficient instructional activities Community building
Curriculum resources	Stories from different countries Books in different languages Thinking maps Class library with topics about diversity Be Kind materials Character education activities

Note. $n = 13$.

Managing the dynamics of difference. Seven items on the beliefs survey were designed to collect related data. Survey items and results are presented in the order listed on the instrument; descriptive statistics are presented in Table 13:

1. I help my students understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may, in fact, be conflicts in personal culture. Overall agreement with this statement is 96%, with (a) 9 (38%) strongly agreeing, (b) 9 (38%) agreeing, (c) 5 (21%) somewhat agreeing, and (d) 1 (4%) expressing uncertainty.
2. I believe that guaranteeing the dignity of a student throughout all phases of my instructional practices involves valuing his/her cultural group. Overall agreement with this statement is 96%, with (a) 11 (46%) strongly agreeing, (b) 9 (38%) agreeing, (c) 3 (13%) somewhat agreeing, and (d) 1 (4%) disagreeing.
3. I recognize that my relationships with students may include conflict. Overall agreement with this statement is 96%, with (a) 9 (38%) strongly agreeing, (b) 9 (38%) agreeing, (c) 5 (21%) somewhat agreeing, and (d) 1 (4%) expressing uncertainty.
4. I help my students understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may, in fact, be conflicts in classroom culture. All participants agreed with this statement, with (a) 12 (50%) strongly agreeing, (b) 9 (38%) agreeing, and (c) 3 (13%) somewhat agreeing.
5. I accept that, the more diverse our classroom becomes, the more my instructional practices must change/grow. All participants agreed with this statement, with 17 (71%) expressing strong agreement and 7 (29%) indicating agreement.

6. I work to develop skills to manage conflict in a positive way. All participants agreed with this statement, with 15 (63%) strongly agreeing and 9 (38%) agreeing.
7. I check myself to see if an assumption I am making about a student is based on facts or upon stereotypes about a group. All participants agreed with this statement, with (a) 12 (50%) strongly agreeing, (b) 9 (38%) agreeing, and (c) 3 (13%) somewhat agreeing.

Table 13

Managing the Dynamics of Difference: Responses to the Beliefs Survey

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mdn</i>
I help my students understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may, in fact, be conflicts in personal culture.	4.08	0.88	4.0
I believe that guaranteeing the dignity of a student throughout all phases of my instructional practices involves valuing his/her cultural group.	4.21	0.98	4.0
I recognize that my relationships with students may include conflict.	4.08	0.88	4.0
I help my students understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may, in fact, be conflicts in classroom culture.	4.38	0.71	4.5
I accept that, the more diverse our classroom becomes, the more my instructional practices must change/grow.	4.71	0.46	5.0
I work to develop skills to manage conflict in a positive way.	4.63	0.49	5.0
I check myself to see if an assumption I am making about a student is based on facts or upon stereotypes about a group.	4.38	0.71	4.5

Note. $N = 24$. The Likert rating scale provided participants the opportunity to select from (1) *disagree*, (2) *uncertain*, (3) *somewhat agree*, (4) *agree*, or (5) *strongly agree*.

Six items on the competence survey were designed to collect related data. Items are presented and discussed in the order listed on the instrument; descriptive statistics are presented in Table 14:

1. I recognize that conflict is a part of life. All participants affirmed this statement, with (a) 9 (38%) indicating usually, (b) 11 (46%) indicating often, and (c) 4 (17%) indicating sometimes.
2. I work to develop skills to manage conflict in a positive way. All participants affirmed this statement, with 17 (71%) indicating usually and 7 (29%) indicating often.
3. I help my colleagues to understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may in fact be conflicts in culture. The overall affirmation rate of this statement is 96%, as 1 (4%) indicated seldom. The remaining participants affirmed this statement by (a) 7 (29%) indicating usually, (b) 8 (33%) indicating often, and (c) 8 (33%) indicating sometimes.
4. I help the clients I serve to understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may in fact be conflicts in personal or organizational culture. The overall affirmation rate of this statement is 96%, as 1 (4%) indicated seldom. The remaining participants affirmed this statement by (a) 7 (29%) indicating usually, (b) 8 (33%) indicating often, and (c) 8 (33%) indicating sometimes.
5. I check myself to see if an assumption I am making about a person is based on facts or upon stereotypes about a group. All participants affirmed this statement, with (a) 9 (38%) indicating usually, (b) 9 (38%) indicating often, and (c) 6 (25%) indicating sometimes.

6. I accept that the more diverse our group becomes, the more we will change and grow. All participants affirmed this statement, with 17 (71%) indicating usually and 7 (29%) indicating often.

Table 14

Managing the Dynamics of Difference: Responses to the Competence Survey

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mdn</i>
I recognize that conflict is a part of life.	4.21	0.72	4
I work to develop skills to manage conflict in a positive way.	4.71	0.46	5
I help my colleagues to understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may in fact be conflicts in culture.	3.88	0.90	4
I help the clients I serve to understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may in fact be conflicts in personal or organizational culture.	3.88	0.90	4
I check myself to see if an assumption I am making about a person is based on facts or upon stereotypes about a group.	4.13	0.80	4
I accept that the more diverse our group becomes, the more we will change and grow.	4.71	0.46	5

Note. $N = 24$. The Likert rating scale provided participants the opportunity to select from (1) *rarely*, (2) *seldom*, (3) *sometimes*, (4) *often*, or (5) *usually*.

Two items on the questionnaire were designed to collect related data. The first question asks: Describe in what ways, if at all, you use effective strategies for intervening in conflict situations relating to diversity issues. The second question asks: Describe in what ways, if at all, you teach students how to appropriately ask others about their cultures and cultural practices.

One item on the questionnaire asked participants the following: Describe in what ways, if at all, you use effective strategies for intervening in conflict situations relating to diversity issues. Although 24 participants responded to the questionnaire, 17 provided responses related to managing the dynamics of difference. Responses consisted of short answers and multiple sentences. Analysis of responses generated numerous strategies and resources for intervening in conflict. Respondents described numerous activities and resources for promoting commonalities and differences (see Table 15). Respondent A indicated the belief that Love and Logic® (Fay & Funk, 1995) effectively addresses universal issues. Respondent G stated that, when a conflict involving diversity occurs, “I work with the students to better understand their position and help them learn from the experience.” Respondent J identified the strategy of “helping students go into the others’ shoes and see how it might feel.”

Table 15

Intervening in Conflict Situations: Questionnaire Responses

Strategy	Activity
Classroom activities	Role play “I messages” Teach “choices” Mediation/problem solving Help students with problem-solving Read alouds Provide lessons on conflict resolution Guidance counselor - classroom lessons No Place for Hate “I feel” statements Be Kind activities Love and Logic®
Curriculum resources	Class library with topics about conflict resolution Conflict resolution instructional materials Love and Logic® materials

Note. $n = 17$.

Another item on the questionnaire asked participants the following: Describe in what ways, if at all, you teach students how to appropriately ask others about their cultures and cultural practices. Although 24 participants responded to the questionnaire, 11 provided responses related to teaching students how to inquire about others' cultures and cultural practices. Analysis of responses generated numerous strategies regarding community building and curriculum activities. Respondents described personal reflections, as well as activities and resources, involving methods for asking others about their culture and cultural practices as presented in Table 16. Respondent C stated, "I have thoroughly addressed the cultural aspect with my students." Respondent E described teaching children to be respectful and appropriate so as not to offend others.

Table 16

Asking Others About Cultural Practices: Questionnaire Responses

Strategy	Activity
Classroom activities	Teaching children to be open and communicative Role play appropriate and inappropriate approaches "I messages" Modeling Creating a welcoming and open classroom environment Help students with problem-solving Assist students in understanding others' feelings Provide lessons on bullying Guidance counselor - classroom lessons
Curriculum resources	Class library with topics about bullying and Cooperation Be Kind materials

Note. $n = 11$.

Adapting to diversity. Eight items on the beliefs survey were designed to collect related data. Survey items and results are presented in the order listed on the instrument; descriptive statistics are presented in Table 17:

1. I realize that, once I embrace the principles of cultural proficiency, the quality of my collaboration with students will improve. Overall agreement with this statement is 96%, with (a) 9 (38%) strongly agreeing, (b) 9 (38%) agreeing, (c) 5 (21%) somewhat agreeing, and (d) 1 (4%) expressing uncertainty.
2. I endeavor not to allow the unsolicited privileges my students might enjoy to affect the quality of my collaboration with them. Overall agreement with this statement is 96%, with (a) 9 (38%) strongly agreeing, (b) 9 (38%) agreeing, (c) 5 (21%) somewhat agreeing, and (d) 1 (4%) expressing uncertainty.
3. I believe that the differences that can exist between students within a cultural group can affect students' academic performance. All participants agreed with this statement, with 14 (58%) strongly agreeing and 10 (42%) agreeing.
4. I work to develop a learning community within my classroom to ensure improved academic performance. All participants agreed with this statement, with 20 (83%) strongly agreeing and 4 (17%) agreeing.
5. I make conscious effort to teach my students the cultural expectations within my classroom so that collaboration can occur in a positive way. All participants agreed, with 15 (63%) strongly agreeing and 9 (38%) agreeing.
6. I seek to enhance the substance and structure of my instructional practices so that they are informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency. All participants agreed with this statement, with 17 (71%) expressing strong agreement and 7 (29%) indicating agreement.
7. I know how to learn about students and cultures unfamiliar to me without affecting my instructional practices in a negative way. All participants agreed, with 23 (96%) expressing strong agreement and 1 (4%) indicating agreement.

8. I am committed to the continuous learning that is necessary to deal with the issues caused by differences and ensure they do not affect the quality of my collaboration with students. Overall agreement with this statement is 96%, with (a) 11 (46%) strongly agreeing, (b) 9 (38%) agreeing, (c) 3 (13%) somewhat agreeing, and (d) 1 (4%) disagreeing.

Table 17

Adapting to Diversity: Responses to the Beliefs Survey

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mdn</i>
I realize that, once I embrace the principles of cultural proficiency, the quality of my collaboration with students will improve.	4.08	0.88	4
I endeavor not to allow the unsolicited privileges my students might enjoy to affect the quality of my collaboration with them.	4.08	0.88	4
I believe that the differences that can exist between students within a cultural group can affect students' academic performance.	4.58	0.50	5
I work to develop a learning community within my classroom to ensure improved academic performance.	4.83	0.38	5
I make conscious effort to teach my students the cultural expectations within my classroom so that collaboration can occur in a positive way.	4.63	0.49	5
I seek to enhance the substance and structure of my instructional practices so that they are informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency.	4.71	0.46	5

Note. $N = 24$. The Likert rating scale provided participants the opportunity to select from (1) *disagree*, (2) *uncertain*, (3) *somewhat agree*, (4) *agree*, or (5) *strongly agree*.

(Continued)

Table 17

Adapting to Diversity: Responses to the Beliefs Survey

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mdn</i>
I seek to enhance the substance and structure of my instructional practices so that they are informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency.	4.71	0.46	5
I know how to learn about students and cultures unfamiliar to me without affecting my instructional practices in a negative way.	4.96	0.20	5
I am committed to the continuous learning that is necessary to deal with the issues caused by differences and ensure they do not affect the quality of my collaboration with students.	4.21	0.98	4

Note. $N = 24$. The Likert rating scale provided participants the opportunity to select from (1) *disagree*, (2) *uncertain*, (3) *somewhat agree*, (4) *agree*, or (5) *strongly agree*.

Five items on the competence survey were designed to collect related data. Items are discussed in the order of the survey; descriptive statistics are presented in Table 18:

1. I realize that once I embrace the principles of cultural proficiency I too must change. Agreement with this statement is 96%; 1 (4%) indicated seldom, and the remaining participants affirmed the statement by (a) 8 (33%) indicating usually, (b) 11 (46%) indicating often, and (c) 4 (17%) indicating sometimes.
2. I am committed to the continuous learning necessary to deal with the issues caused by differences. All participants affirmed this statement; (a) 9 (38%) indicated usually, (b) 11 (46%) indicated often, and (c) 4 (17%) indicated sometimes.
3. I seek to enhance the substance and structure of the work I do so that it is informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency. The overall affirmation rate of this statement is 96%, as 1 (4%) indicated seldom. The

remaining participants affirmed this statement by (a) 7 (29%) indicating usually, (b) 8 (33%) indicating often, and (c) 8 (33%) indicating sometimes.

4. I recognize the unsolicited privileges I might enjoy because of my title, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical ability, or ethnicity. The overall affirmation rate of this statement is 96%, as 1 (4%) indicated seldom. The remaining participants affirmed this statement by (a) 7 (29%) indicating usually, (b) 10 (42%) indicating often, and (c) 6 (25%) indicating sometimes.
5. I know how to learn about people and cultures unfamiliar to me without giving offense. All participants affirmed this statement, with 17 (71%) indicating usually and 7 (29%) indicating often.

Table 18

Adapting to Diversity: Responses to the Competence Survey

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mdn</i>
I realize that once I embrace the principles of cultural proficiency I too must change.	4.08	0.83	4
I am committed to the continuous learning that is necessary to deal with the issues caused by differences.	4.21	0.72	4
I seek to enhance the substance and structure of the work I do so that it is informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency.	3.88	0.90	4
I recognize the unsolicited privileges I might enjoy because of my title, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical ability, or ethnicity	3.96	0.86	4
I know how to learn about people and cultures unfamiliar to me without giving offense.	4.71	0.46	5

Note. $N = 24$. The Likert rating scale provided participants the opportunity to select from (1) *rarely*, (2) *seldom*, (3) *sometimes*, (4) *often*, or (5) *usually*.

Two items on the questionnaire were designed to collect related data. The first question asks: Describe in what ways, if at all, you encourage students to talk about differences without making judgments. Although 24 participants responded to the questionnaire, 15 provided responses. Analysis of responses generated numerous strategies regarding community building and curriculum activities.

Respondents described personal reflections involving methods for teaching students skills in conversing without judging (see Table 19). Respondent E stated that the basal reader provides opportunities to discuss character. Respondent G stated, “I try to instill that everyone’s uniqueness must be respected.” Respondent L emphasized the need to embrace those who are different as opposed to judging. Responses were indicative of participants’ belief that each student is unique. This is attributed to the instructional focus on differentiated instruction and inclusion in efforts to meet the needs of all students.

Table 19

Encouraging Students to Converse Without Judging: Questionnaire Responses

Strategy	Activity
Classroom activities	Community circle Class discussions No Place for Hate® Activities that promote differences Teaching children to be open and communicative Promoting the uniqueness of each child Using literature as a point of discussion Creating a welcoming and open classroom environment Help students with problem-solving Provide lessons on conflict resolution Provide lessons on biases and prejudice
Curriculum resources	Be Kind resources Be Kind materials Class library with topics conflict, biases, and prejudice Social studies curriculum No Place for Hate® materials

Note: n = 15.

A second item on the questionnaire asked participants to respond to the following: Describe in what ways, if at all, you implement policies that promote inclusive relationships in your classroom. Although 24 participants responded to the questionnaire, 15 provided responses related to adapting to diversity. Analysis of responses generated numerous strategies regarding community building and curriculum activities.

Respondents described personal reflections and perceptions, as well as activities and resources, involving methods for promoting inclusion as presented in Table 20. Respondent A described the importance of establishing and enforcing classroom rules. Respondent C emphasized the practice of including students in creating the norms for classroom practices. Respondent G promoted an emphasis on accepting students into the inclusive classroom at the beginning of each school year. Respondent L reported the practices of talking about respect and related behaviors. Respondent N described the importance of giving students time to learn about each other and learning about respect.

Table 20

Promoting Inclusion: Questionnaire Responses

Strategy	Activity
Classroom activities	Include students in developing class norms Focus on relationships in the beginning of each year Establish inclusion as the classroom foundation Be Kind activities Establish a classroom community Class discussions emphasizing collaboration No Place for Hate® Activities that promote relationships Provide lessons relationship building Love and Logic® activities
Curriculum resources	Social studies curriculum No Place for Hate® materials Love and Logic® materials

Note: n = 15.

Institutionalizing cultural knowledge. Nine items on the beliefs survey were designed to collect related data. Survey items and results are presented in the order listed on the instrument; descriptive statistics are presented in Table 21:

1. I believe that, to effectively teach my students, I must create multiple paths to the same objective. All participants agreed with this statement, with 23 (96%) expressing strong agreement and 1 (4%) indicating agreement.
2. I take advantage of teachable moments to improve the quality of collaboration with my students. All participants agreed with this statement, with 17 (71%) expressing strong agreement and 7 (29%) indicating agreement.
3. I believe that each student has unique needs that can be used to enhance my collaboration with them. All participants agreed with this statement, with 20 (83%) strongly agreeing and 4 (17%) agreeing.
4. I believe that each student has unique needs that can be used to improve students' academic performance. All participants agreed with this statement, with 15 (63%) strongly agreeing and 9 (38%) agreeing.
5. I seek to integrate what I have learned about my students to improve my collaboration with them. All participants agreed with this statement, with 20 (83%) strongly agreeing and 4 (17%) agreeing.
6. I work to influence the culture of my classroom so that my collaboration with students is informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency. Overall agreement with this statement is 96%, with (a) 9 (38%) strongly agreeing, (b) 9 (38%) agreeing, (c) 5 (21%) somewhat agreeing, and (d) 1 (4%) expressing uncertainty.

7. I take advantage of teachable moments to improve students' academic experience. All participants agreed with this statement, with 14 (58%) strongly agreeing and 10 (42%) agreeing.
8. I seek to integrate what I have learned about my students to improve their academic performance. All participants agreed with this statement, with 23 (96%) expressing strong agreement and 1 (4%) indicating agreement.
9. I avoid instructional practices I believe may unintentionally discriminate against a student or a group of students in my classroom. Overall agreement with this statement is 96%, with (a) 9 (38%) strongly agreeing, (b) 9 (38%) agreeing, (c) 5 (21%) somewhat agreeing, and (d) 1 (4%) expressing uncertainty.

Table 21

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge: Responses to the Beliefs Survey

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mdn</i>
I believe that, to effectively teach my students, I must create multiple paths to the same objective.	4.96	0.20	5
I take advantage of teachable moments to improve the quality of collaboration with my students.	4.71	0.46	5
I believe that each student has unique needs that can be used to enhance my collaboration with them.	4.83	0.386	5
I believe that each student has unique needs that can be used to improve students' academic performance.	4.63	0.49	5

Note. $N = 24$. The Likert rating scale provided participants the opportunity to select from (1) *disagree*, (2) *uncertain*, (3) *somewhat agree*, (4) *agree*, or (5) *strongly agree*.

(Continued)

Table 21

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge: Responses to the Beliefs Survey

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mdn</i>
I believe that each student has unique needs that can be used to improve students' academic performance.	4.63	0.49	5
I take advantage of teachable moments to improve students' academic experience.	4.58	0.50	5
I seek to integrate what I have learned about my students to improve their academic performance.	4.96	0.20	5
I avoid instructional practices I believe may unintentionally discriminate against a student or a group of students in my classroom.	4.08	0.88	4

Note. $N = 24$. The Likert rating scale provided participants the opportunity to select from (1) *disagree*, (2) *uncertain*, (3) *somewhat agree*, (4) *agree*, or (5) *strongly agree*.

Five items on the competence survey were designed to collect related data. Items are presented in the order listed on the instrument; descriptive statistics are presented in

Table 22:

1. I work to influence the culture of this organization so that its policies and practices are informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency.
Overall agreement with this statement is 96%. Although 1 (4%) indicated seldom, the remaining participants affirmed the statement by (a) 8 (33%) indicating usually, (b) 11 (46%) indicating often, and (c) 4 (17%) indicating sometimes.
2. I speak up if I notice that a policy or practice unintentionally discriminates against or causes an unnecessary hardship for a particular group in this organization's community. The overall affirmation rate of this statement is

96%, as 1 (4%) indicated seldom. The remaining participants affirmed this statement by (a) 7 (29%) indicating usually, (b) 8 (33%) indicating often, and (c) 8 (33%) indicating sometimes.

3. I take advantage of teachable moments to share cultural knowledge or to learn from my colleagues. The overall affirmation rate of this statement is 96%, as 1 (4%) indicated seldom. The remaining participants affirmed this statement by (a) 7 (29%) indicating usually, (b) 10 (42%) indicating often, and (c) 6 (25%) indicating sometimes.
4. I take advantage of teachable moments to share cultural knowledge with this organization's clients. All participants affirmed this statement, with (a) 9 (38%) indicating usually, (b) 11 (46%) indicating often, and (c) 4 (17%) indicating sometimes.
5. I seek to create opportunities for my colleagues, managers, clients, and the communities we serve to learn about one another. The overall affirmation rate of this statement is 96%, as 1 (4%) indicated seldom. The remaining participants affirmed this statement by (a) 7 (29%) indicating usually, (b) 8 (33%) indicating often, and (c) 8 (33%) indicating sometimes.

Two items on the questionnaire were designed to collect related data. The first item on the questionnaire asked participants to respond to the following: Describe in what ways, if at all, you provide opportunities to learn about your culture and those of your students. Although 24 participants responded to the questionnaire, 12 provided responses related to institutionalizing cultural knowledge. Responses consisted of short answers and multiple sentences. Analysis of responses generated numerous strategies regarding community building and curriculum activities.

Table 22

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge: Responses to the Competence Survey

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mdn</i>
I work to influence the culture of this organization so that its policies and practices are informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency.	4.08	0.83	4
I speak up if I notice that a policy or practice unintentionally discriminates against or causes an unnecessary hardship for a particular group in this organization's community.	3.88	0.90	4
I take advantage of teachable moments to share cultural knowledge or to learn from my colleagues.	3.96	0.86	4
I take advantage of teachable moments to share cultural knowledge with this organization's clients.	4.21	0.72	4
I seek to create opportunities for my colleagues, managers, clients, and the communities we serve to learn about one another.	3.88	0.90	4

Note. $N = 24$. The Likert rating scale provided participants the opportunity to select from (1) *rarely*, (2) *seldom*, (3) *sometimes*, (4) *often*, or (5) *usually*.

Respondents described personal reflections and perceptions, as well as activities and resources, involving methods for teaching children about students' and teachers' cultures (see Table 23). Respondent A described the use of Student of the Week for the routine classroom emphasis on one student each week. Respondent C emphasized the incorporation of a family day during which family members share their cultures with students. Respondent G stated, "I don't focus on this as much as I should" and Respondent L stated, "None."

Table 23

Promoting Inclusion: Questionnaire Responses

Strategy	Activity
Classroom activities	“All about Me” posters Student of the Week activities “Getting to Know You” activities Family day “My Name in Print” activities “All About Me Book” Sharing pictures Describing religious practices “Sharing from a Sack” activities Sharing foods during holidays Multicultural festival Partner introductions People hunts
Curriculum resources	Classroom library with cultural diversity books Classroom library highlighting holiday traditions Social studies curriculum

Note: $n = 12$.

The second item on the questionnaire asked participants to respond to the following: Describe in what ways, if at all, you teach students to appropriately acknowledge and value cultural differences among their fellow students. Although 24 participants responded to the questionnaire, 14 provided responses related to institutionalizing cultural knowledge. Responses consisted of short answers and multiple sentences. Analysis of responses generated numerous strategies regarding community building and curriculum activities.

Respondents described personal reflections and perceptions, as well as activities and resources, involving methods for teaching children to acknowledge and value cultural differences (see Table 24). Respondent C said, “I use the basal reader to emphasize multicultural practices.” Respondent G stated, “I model this for our students.”

Respondent K reported, “I model appropriate ways for addressing someone of a different culture.” Respondent L again stated, “None.”

Table 24

Acknowledging and Valuing Cultural Differences: Questionnaire Responses

Strategy	Activity
Classroom activities	Community circle Modeling Classroom discussions about sensitive topics Guidance counselor - classroom lessons Using teachable moments Discussions about bullying Discussions about respect Role playing about personal space and body language “I messages” Role playing
Curriculum resources	Classroom library with cultural diversity books Social studies curriculum Novels Basal reader

Note: n = 14.

Infusing cultural proficiency within teachers’ classrooms. Item 1 of Section VI on the questionnaire asked: Other than those culturally proficient practices you have already identified, what are some other changes, if any, that have occurred in your instruction since acquiring an understanding of culturally proficient instructional practices? Although 24 participants responded to the questionnaire, 12 provided responses related to the topic. Analysis of responses generated numerous strategies involving instructional practices and curriculum resources.

Respondents described personal reflections and perceptions, as well as activities and resources, involving changes in both perceptions and instructional practice as presented in Table 25. Respondent B stated, “I don’t jump to conclusions, and I try to get

to the root of the matter. This is something I didn't always do." Respondent D reported, "For me, a culturally proficient classroom is a differentiated one." Respondent G said, "I have been working toward feeling more comfortable about talking about my own culture openly with others." Respondent J reported, "We don't step around cultural differences." Respondent L stated, "I make an effort to get to know my students better."

Table 25

Changes in Perceptions and Practices in Reflection of Cultural Proficiency Training: Questionnaire Responses

Strategy	Activity
Perceptual changes	Increased awareness of prejudices Increased awareness of the influences of my own culture Increased awareness of cultural ignorance Increased openness as an instructor Increased awareness of biases Increased sensitivity to actions towards students
Changes in practice	Purposely create a differentiated classroom Speaking more of personal culture Avoidance of quick assumptions or conclusions Related changes in both approach and language Speak more about biases and differences Increased effort to reach all students Increased use of a variety of teaching styles Provide at least one cultural activity each month Provide additional lessons in conflict resolution

Note. $n = 12$.

Research Question 2: Challenges and Barriers in Implementing Culturally

Proficient Instruction

The researcher used (a) selective quantitative data collected through the competence surveys a second time when applicable; (b) qualitative data collected through responses to Item 2 of Section VI of the open-ended questionnaire and (c) documents, including the school policy, vision, mission, leadership team structures, and teachers'

handbook, to answer the second research question: What challenges and or barriers, if any, do these teachers perceive in implementing culturally proficient instruction?

Results derived from responses to the competence survey. After analysis of results to the competence survey, the researcher chose responses from six items on the survey for use in answering this research question related to challenges and or barriers:

1. Responses to the following statement reflected a mean agreement rate of 100%: I am comfortable talking about my culture and ethnicity.
2. Responses to the following statement reflected a mean agreement rate of 96%: I know the effect that my culture and ethnicity may have on the people in my work.
3. Responses to the following statement reflected a mean agreement rate of 96%: I realize that once I embrace the principles of cultural proficiency I too must change.
4. Responses to the following statement reflected a mean agreement rate of 100%: I take advantage of teachable moments to share cultural knowledge or to learn from my colleagues.
5. Responses to the following statement reflected a mean agreement rate of 100%: I take advantage of teachable moments to share cultural knowledge with this organization's clients.
6. Responses to the following statement reflected a mean agreement rate of 96%: I seek to create opportunities for my colleagues, managers, clients, and the communities we serve to learn about one another.

Results derived from responses to the questionnaire. Item 2 of Section VI of the questionnaire asks: What are some of the challenges and or barriers you've

encountered when implementing culturally proficient practices in your classroom?

Although 24 participants responded to the questionnaire, eight provided responses to this item. Analysis of responses identified specific challenges and barriers.

Respondents described personal reflections and perceptions involving challenges and barriers (see Table 26). Data were rich and thick, as Bogdan and Biklen (2006) and Guba (1981) described. Respondent A stated, “I am worried to offend some students, so I shorten a discussion before it goes too far. I don’t know what the rules are. We have to watch videos in the beginning of the year about a wide variety of things. Some clarification on lines drawn in this realm would be helpful.” Respondent D stated, “I am aware of resistance from students whose self-belief is extremely entrenched.” Respondent E reported, “I think my own fears about being judged about my own culture have created a barrier for me.” Respondent F stated, “What comes up most is God. I validate what I hear and tell kids to ask their parents.”

Table 26

Challenges and Barriers: Questionnaire Responses

Strategy	Activity
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feelings of discomfort Family background Personal and family belief systems The many facets of cultural diversity Uncertainty about district policy
Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children’s learned behaviors regarding culture Students’ preference to remain outside the group Student resistance Personal fears Students’ reflection of parental biases and prejudices Uncertainty regarding parental support

Note. $n = 8$.

Results derived from the review of documents. The researcher reviewed the school policy, vision, mission, leadership team structures, and teachers' handbook for the purpose of conducting an analysis of documents relating to challenges and or barriers to cultural proficiency. Through the review of these documents, the researcher noted a pattern of discussion promoting multiculturalism as a focus of school practices. The handbook, however, contained no section involving instructional practices that promote multiculturalism and no culturally proficient policies or practices to clarify guidelines for stakeholders. The absence of this documentation constitutes a barrier for culturally proficient instructional practices.

Research Question 3: Support for Culturally Proficient Instructional Practices

The researcher used qualitative data collected through responses to Item 3 of Section 6 of the open-ended questionnaire to answer the third research question: What support do these teachers perceive is needed, if any, for implementing culturally proficient instructional practices?

Results derived from responses to the questionnaire. Item 3 of Section VI of the questionnaire asks: What support, if any, do you perceive is needed for implementing culturally proficient instructional practices? Although 24 participants responded to the questionnaire, 11 provided responses to this item. Responses consisted of short answers and multiple sentences and were rich and thick, as Bogdan and Biklen (2006) and Guba (1981) described. Respondent A shared the need for professional development on “how to bring the awareness of the different cultures within the classrooms and how to bring it in the instruction.” Respondent A additionally stated, “We had professional development, but I kind of forget to focus on it because we're focusing on new things now.”

Respondent E similarly stated, I think we need more conversations and training to assist us in becoming culturally proficient.” Respondent P related teachers’ needs for support to Maslow’s hierarchy, saying “If a teacher is struggling with the basics of teaching, he/she won’t focus as much on cultural proficiency.” Analysis of responses emphasized several areas of need: (a) guidance from the school district on management of classroom discussions involving culture, (b) additional follow-up activities pertaining to culturally proficient instructional practices, (c) more ideas and resources for implementing culturally proficient instruction, (d) meaningful conversations about managing diversity and cultural awareness within the school community as a whole, (e) the allocation of additional time for collegial interaction, and (f) administrative support and understanding.

Results derived from the review of documents. Through the review of the teachers’ handbook, the researcher noted that the PLC model was used at the school. In addition, the teacher’s handbook indicated that multicultural practices were employed throughout the school. The researcher also noted that structured teacher planning time was established in school routines. School policy, as well as the vision and mission, indicated that all students were viable members of the learning community and, as such, must demonstrate respect, such as modeled through the No Place for Hate® program (Anti-Defamation League, 2007), and kindness, promoted through the Be Kind . . . program (Josh Stevens Foundation, 2012).

Summary of Findings

Assessing Cultural Knowledge. Responses to the beliefs survey reflect an overall 98.86% agreement rate. The lowest mean response was to the following statement: I anticipate how diversity of cultures may cause conflict between me and my

students, with a mean response of 4.08 ($SD = 0.88$). The highest mean response was to the following statement: I anticipate how diversity of cultures can enhance my instructional practices, with a mean response of 4.96 ($SD = 0.20$).

Responses to the competence survey reflect an overall 97.71% affirmation rate. The lowest mean response was to the following statement: I know the effect that my culture and ethnicity may have on the people in my work, with a mean response of 3.88 ($SD = 0.90$). The highest mean response was to the following statement: I am comfortable talking about my culture and ethnicity, with a mean response of 4.71 ($SD = 0.46$).

Valuing diversity. Responses to the beliefs survey reflect an overall 98.67% agreement rate. The lowest mean response was to the following statement: I believe that positive views regarding diversity have the potential to positively affect students' academic performance, with a mean response of 4.08 ($SD = 0.88$). The highest mean response was to two statements. The first stated, I work to develop a collaborative learning community within my classroom, with a mean response of 4.83 ($SD = 0.38$). The second stated, I welcome the opportunity to develop relationships with a diverse group of students into my classroom, with a mean response of 4.83 ($SD = 0.38$).

Responses to the competence survey reflect an overall 97.5% affirmation rate. The lowest mean response was to the following statement: I share my appreciation of diversity with other clients, with a mean response of 3.88 ($SD = 0.90$). The highest mean responses were to the following two statements: I welcome a diverse group of clients and colleagues into the work setting, with a mean response of 4.21 ($SD = 0.72$), and I work to develop a learning community with the clients I serve, with a mean response of 4.21 ($SD = 0.72$).

Managing the dynamics of difference. Responses to the beliefs survey reflect an overall 98.29% agreement rate. The lowest mean response was to the following two statements: I help my students understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may, in fact, be conflicts in personal culture, with a mean response of 4.08 ($SD = 0.88$), and I recognize that my relationships with students may include conflict, with a mean response of 4.08 ($SD = 0.88$). The highest mean response was to the following statement: I accept that, the more diverse our classroom becomes, the more my instructional practices must change/grow, with a mean response of 4.71 ($SD = 0.46$).

Responses to the competence survey reflect an overall 98.67% affirmation rate. The lowest mean response was to the following two statements: I help my colleagues to understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may in fact be conflicts in culture, with a mean response of 3.88 ($SD = 0.90$) and I help the clients I serve to understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may in fact be conflicts in personal or organizational culture. The highest mean response was to the following two statements: I work to develop skills to manage conflict in a positive way, with a mean response of 4.71 ($SD = 0.46$) and I accept that the more diverse our group becomes, the more we will change and grow, with a mean response of 4.71 ($SD = 0.46$).

Adapting to diversity. Responses to the beliefs survey reflect an overall 98.50% agreement rate. The lowest mean response was to the following two statements: I realize that, once I embrace the principles of cultural proficiency, the quality of my collaboration with students will improve, with a mean response of 4.08 ($SD = 0.88$) and I endeavor not to allow the unsolicited privileges my students might enjoy to affect the quality of my collaboration with them, with a mean response of 4.08 ($SD = 0.88$). The highest mean response was to the following statement: I know how to learn about students and cultures

unfamiliar to me without affecting my instructional practices in a negative way, with a mean response of 4.96 ($SD = 0.20$).

Responses to the competence survey regarding the essential element of adapting to diversity reflect an overall 97.60% agreement rate. The lowest mean response was to the following statement: I seek to enhance the substance and structure of the work I do so that it is informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency, with a mean response of 3.88 ($SD = 0.90$). The highest mean response was to the following statement: I know how to learn about people and cultures unfamiliar to me without giving offense, with a mean response of 4.71 ($SD = 0.46$).

Institutionalizing cultural knowledge. Responses to the beliefs survey reflect an overall 99.11% agreement rate. The lowest mean response was to the following two statements: I work to influence the culture of my classroom so that my collaboration with students is informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency, with a mean response of 4.08 ($SD = 0.88$), and I avoid instructional practices I believe may unintentionally discriminate against a student or a group of students in my classroom, with a mean response of 4.08 ($SD = 0.88$). The highest mean response was to the following two statements: I believe that, to effectively teach my students, I must create multiple paths to the same objective, with a mean response of 4.96 ($SD = 0.20$), and I seek to integrate what I have learned about my students to improve their academic performance, with a mean response of 4.96 ($SD = 0.20$).

Responses to the competence survey regarding the essential element of institutionalizing cultural knowledge reflect an overall 99.2% agreement rate. The lowest mean response was to the following two statements: I speak up if I notice that a policy or practice unintentionally discriminates against or causes an unnecessary hardship for a

particular group in this organization's community, with a mean response of 3.88 ($SD = 0.90$), and I seek to create opportunities for my colleagues, managers, clients, and the communities we serve to learn about one another, with a mean response of 3.88 ($SD = 0.90$). The highest mean response was to the following statement: I take advantage of teachable moments to share cultural knowledge or to learn from my colleagues, with a mean response of 4.21 ($SD = 0.72$).

Qualitative data: Research Question 1. As noted in Table 4, the researcher gathered quantitative data through the beliefs and competence surveys and qualitative data through the open-ended questionnaire to answer the first research question: "What culturally proficient instructional practices, if any, do teachers report implementing in classrooms in an elementary school in Nevada?" Qualitative data reflect that teachers are committed to (a) community building, using the Be Kind . . . (Josh Stevens Foundation, 2012) and No Place for Hate® (Anti-Defamation League, 2007) programs; (b) use of conversations, discussions, and collegial sharing; (c) open discussions of differences and biases; and (d) modeling. Concerning curriculum activities, teachers incorporate several culturally proficient instructional practices: (a) discussion of causes and effects, as well as current events, during social studies instruction; (b) use of the basal reader along with various genres of literature; and (c) class discussions involving the holidays celebrated by individuals of various cultures (see Table 27).

Qualitative data: Research Question 2. As noted in Table 4, the researcher used (a) selective quantitative data collected through the competence surveys a second time when applicable; (b) qualitative data collected through responses to Item 2 of Section VI of the open-ended questionnaire; and (c) documents, including the school policy, vision, mission, leadership team structures, and teachers' handbook, to answer the second

research question: What challenges and or barriers, if any, do these teachers perceive in implementing culturally proficient instruction?

Table 27

Research Question 1: Data Collection Alignment

Research question	Data source	Summarized findings	Connection to the literature	Conclusions	Recommendations
1	Beliefs survey Competence survey Questionnaire	Teachers are committed to (a) community building; (b) use of conversations, discussions, and collegial sharing; (c) open discussions of differences and biases; and (d) modeling.	Cross (1988) succinctly defined cultural proficiency as congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that support effective relationships and work occurring within cross-cultural settings. In a PLC, teachers are actively engaged in self-reflective practices involving both cultural proficiency and culturally proficient instruction (Chappuis et al., 2009; DuFour et al., 2006; Wells, 2008).	Conclusions drawn from the study reflect that, even though the topic is in its infancy in the research setting, teachers have implemented cultural proficiency and culturally proficient instructional practices.	1. Given the need to examine espoused values of cultural proficiency and culturally proficient instruction in relation to actions and instructional practices, the researcher recommends that teachers at the research site conduct action research. 2. Continued study in the implementation of cultural proficiency and culturally proficient instruction at the school is warranted to identify applications of theory and practice specifically beneficial for IEP students.

Note. Research Question 1 asks, “What culturally proficient instructional practices, if any, do teachers report implementing in classrooms in an elementary school in Nevada?”

Results derived from the competence survey indicate two challenges and barriers. The first is that teachers are not taking full advantage of teachable moments to share cultural knowledge. The second area, with the lower mean response rate, is that teachers are not seeking to create opportunities for their colleagues, managers, and communities to learn about one another. The recommendation of the National Staff Development Council (2001) was that educators meet regularly to collaborate, learn, plan, and problem solve.

DuFour et al. (2006) and Garmston and Wellman (2000, 2009) further stated that educators should focus on common goals that ultimately impact classroom practices. The allocation of time for collaboration, however, is not evident. Results derived from the questionnaire additionally indicate several challenges involving concerns on a personal basis as well as in reference to students and their parents. Critical responses were that teachers were unsure of parental support and district guidelines (see Table 28).

Table 28

Research Question 2: Data Collection Alignment

Research question	Data source	Summarized findings	Connection to the literature	Conclusions	Recommendations
2	Competence survey Questionnaire Document/artifact analysis	Teachers are not taking full advantage of teachable moments to share cultural knowledge. Teachers are not seeking to create opportunities for their colleagues, managers, clients, and the communities to learn about one another. Teachers are aware of challenges involving concerns on a personal basis as well as in reference to students and their parents. Teachers lack assurance of parental support. Teachers lack knowledge concerning relevant district guidelines.	The recommendation of the National Staff Development Council (2001) was that educators should meet regularly to collaborate, learn, plan, and problem solve. DuFour et al. (2006) and Garmston and Wellman (2000, 2009) further stated that educators should focus on common goals that ultimately impact classroom practices.	Teachers are aware of challenges involving concerns on a personal basis as well as in reference to students and their parents. The allocation of time for collaboration is not evident.	As the school leader, the principal must (a) provide teachers with the time to have necessary conversations to focus on stereotypes and conflict resolution, (b) maintain awareness of the many facets of cultural proficiency, and (c) promote community involvement.

Note. Research Question 2 asks, “What challenges and or barriers, if any, do these teachers perceive in implementing culturally proficient instruction?”

Qualitative data: Research Question 3. As noted in Table 4, the researcher used qualitative data collected through responses to Item 3 of Section 6 of the questionnaire and the teachers’ handbook to answer the third research question: What support do these teachers perceive is needed, if any, for implementing culturally proficient instructional practices? Three areas of support were gleaned through the analysis of data. First,

teachers desire clarification on district guidelines pertaining to cultural discussions in the classroom. Second, teachers need more support from each other. Third, teachers need more time for reflection and collaboration as a school community (see Table 29).

Table 29

Research Question 3: Data Collection Alignment

Research question	Data source	Summarized findings	Connection to the literature	Conclusions	Recommendations
3	Questionnaire Document analysis	Teachers desire clarification of district guidelines pertaining to cultural discussions in the classroom. Teachers need more support from each other. Teachers need more time for reflection and collaboration as a school community.	Team learning embraces working collaboratively toward common goals; culturally proficient learning communities can lead to powerful and inclusive collaborative teams in which all voices are sought after, listened to, and valued (D. B. Lindsey, Jungwirth, Pahl, and Lindsey, 2009; Senge, 1990) ISLLC standards support school improvement by (a) reflecting the centrality of student learning; (b) acknowledging the changing role of school leaders; (c) recognizing the collaborative nature of leadership; (d) improving the quality of the profession; (e) informing assessment and evaluation systems for school leaders; (f) demonstrating integration and coherence; and (g) emphasizing the concepts of access, opportunity, and empowerment for the benefit of all members within the school community (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008).	Handbook is silent on issues related to cultural proficiency and culturally proficient instruction. Administration needs to be more active in promoting related thinking and actions. Evidence of administrative priorities should be evident in the teacher handbook.	An increased leadership focus should be provided to assist teachers in (a) increasing awareness and addressing the possibility that diversity of cultures may affect relationships between them and their students, (b) sharing their appreciation of diversity with their coworkers and seeking to interact with people from diverse backgrounds, and (c) enhancing the substance and structure of their instructional practices so they are informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2008)

Note. Research Question 3 asks, “What support do these teachers perceive is needed, if any, for implementing culturally proficient instructional practices?”

Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This mixed methods study was implemented for the purpose of informing instructional and leadership practices within the school setting through the examination of quantitative data around teachers' responses to questions related to culturally proficient instruction and qualitative data around teachers' perceptions of the challenges, barriers, and support needed for implementing culturally proficient practices. The study involved the participation of 24 teachers responding to the data collection integral to the study which included a beliefs survey, competence survey, and open-ended questionnaire. The overarching objective of the study was to inform refinement of teachers' instructional practice and leadership actions in removing barriers and providing additional support for implementation of culturally proficient instruction within the urban elementary school. Three questions were answered through the study:

1. What culturally proficient instructional practices, if any, do teachers report implementing in classrooms in an elementary school in Nevada?
2. What challenges and or barriers, if any, do these teachers perceive in implementing culturally proficient instruction?
3. What support do these teachers perceive is needed, if any, for implementing culturally proficient instructional practices?

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1. The analysis of data indicates salient findings related to the culturally proficient instructional practices teachers report implementing in classrooms. In the following text, findings are categorized according to the five essential elements identified by R. B. Lindsey et al. (2008):

1. Within the category of assessing cultural knowledge, teachers anticipate how diversity of cultures can enhance their instructional practices and are comfortable talking about their culture.
2. Within the category of valuing diversity, teachers (a) work to develop a collaborative learning community within their classrooms, (b) welcome the opportunity to develop relationships with a diverse group of students in their classrooms, (c) welcome a diverse group of clients and colleagues into the work setting, and (d) work to develop a learning community with the clients they serve.
3. Within the category of managing the dynamics of difference, teachers accept that their instructional practices must change/grow as their classrooms become more diverse. Teachers also work to develop skills to manage conflict in a positive way and accept that, the more diverse their group becomes, the more they will change and grow.
4. Within the category of adapting to diversity, teachers know how to learn about unfamiliar students and cultures unfamiliar without affecting their instructional practices in a negative way and how to learn about unfamiliar people and cultures without giving offense.
5. Within the category of institutionalizing cultural knowledge, teachers believe that, to effectively teach their students, they must create multiple paths to the same objective and seek to integrate what they have learned about their students to improve students' academic performance. Teachers also take advantage of teachable moments to share cultural knowledge or to learn from their colleagues.
6. Qualitative data reflect that teachers are committed to (a) community building, using the Be Kind . . . (Josh Stevens Foundation, 2012) and No Place for Hate®

(Anti-Defamation League, 2007) programs; (b) use of conversations, discussions, and collegial sharing; (c) open discussions of differences and biases; and (d) modeling. Concerning curriculum activities, teachers incorporate several culturally proficient instructional practices: (a) discussion of causes and effects, as well as current events, during social studies instruction; (b) use of the basal reader along with various genres of literature; and (c) class discussions involving the holidays celebrated by individuals of various cultures.

Research Question 2. Findings derived from three sources were used to answer the second research question: (a) selective quantitative data collected through the competence surveys, (b) qualitative data collected through responses to the open-ended questionnaire, and (c) analysis of school policy, vision, mission, leadership team structures, and the teacher handbook. The question asks, “What challenges and or barriers, if any, do these teachers perceive in implementing culturally proficient instruction?” The following barriers were noted in the analysis:

1. Teachers are not taking full advantage of teachable moments to share cultural knowledge.
2. Teachers are not seeking to create opportunities for their colleagues, managers, clients, and the communities to learn about one another.
3. Teachers are aware of challenges involving concerns on a personal basis as well as in reference to students and their parents.
4. Teachers lack assurance of parental support.
5. Teachers lack knowledge concerning relevant district guidelines.

Research Question 3. The researcher used qualitative data collected through responses to the open-ended questionnaire and documents to answer the third research

question: What support do these teachers perceive is needed, if any, for implementing culturally proficient instructional practices? Three areas of support were gleaned through the analysis of data:

1. Teachers desire clarification on district guidelines pertaining to cultural discussions in the classroom.
2. Teachers need more collegial support among the faculty.
3. Teachers need more time for reflection and collaboration as a school community.

Conclusions and Discussion

The study was designed to inform instructional and leadership practices within the school setting through the examination of quantitative data around teachers' responses to questions related to culturally proficient instruction and qualitative data around teachers' perceptions of the challenges, barriers, and support needed for implementing culturally proficient practices. The researcher expects that findings will inform leadership as to actions that may remove barriers and provide support for challenges relating to the implementation of culturally proficient instruction so that students' diverse needs may be more effectively met. Results of the study may also contribute to the professional literature regarding culturally proficient instruction and leadership actions to support implementation of culturally proficient practices.

Discussion of findings. Conclusions drawn from the study reflect that teachers have implemented cultural proficiency and culturally proficient instructional practices but are faced with challenges and or barriers requiring continued administrative support if they are to more skillfully embed cultural proficiency throughout their instructional practices. Considering the novelty of cultural proficiency and culturally proficient practices in the school serving as the research setting, the researcher concludes that

teachers have made memorable strides in their daily practices. Teachers understand how the embedding of cultural proficiency can enhance their instructional practices and that their instructional practices must change/grow as their classrooms become more diverse. They work to develop a collaborative learning community within their classrooms by creating multiple paths to the same objective and integrating what they have learned about their students to improve students' academic performance. Teachers are also committed to promoting cultural proficiency throughout the school through professional dialogue and modeling. The silence of the teacher handbook on culturally proficient policies and practices is one barrier that can be minimized through leadership practices.

Results derived from the implementation of the study support the following synthesis of findings:

1. Teachers' collective responses clearly reflect that cultural proficiency and culturally proficient instructional practices have been embraced, to a noteworthy degree, by the 24 participants in the study. The few practices showing small reductions in agreement or variations in practice do not cause concern but do serve as indicators for recommendations at the conclusion of this final chapter.
2. Teachers identified five challenges and or barriers in implementing culturally proficient instruction. Of the five, four may be addressed through collegial sharing inherent to a PLC, as teachers (a) are not taking full advantage of teachable moments to share cultural knowledge; (b) are not seeking to create opportunities for their colleagues, managers, clients, and the communities to learn about one another; (c) recognize challenges involving concerns on a personal basis as well as in reference to students and their parents; and (d) lack assurance of parental support. The final challenge and or barrier teachers identified may be

addressed through staff development, as teachers lack knowledge concerning relevant district guidelines.

3. Teachers identified three areas of needed support for implementing culturally proficient instructional practices. These areas are reflective of the five challenges and or barriers teachers identified, as teachers recognize the need for (a) clarification on district guidelines pertaining to cultural discussions in the classroom, (b) more collegial support among the faculty, and (c) more time for reflection and collaboration as a school community.

Culturally proficient instructional practices. D. B. Lindsey et al. (2009) stated that the five essential elements of cultural proficiency provide standards for the alignment of ethical principles regarding educators' behaviors and school practices. By using the guiding principles as an ethical framework and the continuum to frame practice, the essential elements serve as standards against which educators measure the (a) efficacy of the curriculum, (b) effectiveness of instructional strategies, (c) relevance of professional development, (d) utility of systems of assessment and accountability, and (e) intent of parent and community communications and outreach (D. B. Lindsey et al., 2009).

Applying the lens of cultural proficiency to the five disciplines identified by Senge (1990) within an educational system provides a focus on learning that is conducive for significant change and the success for all students. This attention to diversity and the value others bring to the learning environment is critical in a culturally proficient learning community (Senge, 1990). Team learning embraces working collaboratively toward common goals; culturally proficient learning communities can lead to powerful and inclusive collaborative teams in which all voices are sought after, listened to, and valued (D. B. Lindsey et al., 2009; Senge, 1990).

Challenges, barriers, and support. R. B. Lindsey et al. (2003) identified five institutional processes that have the potential to pose barriers to learning: an awareness of these potential barriers would serve to promote cultural proficiency, create a positive learning environment, and improve student learning. The first institutional process is that of content, with a curriculum that projects only one cultural experience. The second involves delivery and the use of instruction that emphasizes lower-order thinking skills. The third institutional process is that of expectations that include preconceptions based on stereotypical views of learners; the fourth process entails assessment processes that are compliance oriented. The fifth involves resources that are culturally inadequate and serve to maintain inappropriate policies and practices. In the research setting, the use of activities from No Place for Hate® (Anti-Defamation League, 2007), Be Kind . . . (Josh Stevens Foundation, 2012), and cultural proficiency (R. B. Lindsey, Robins, Lindsey, & Terrell, 2006) are appropriate and allow teachers to discuss topics such as cultural diversity, beliefs, and biases.

Robins et al. (2002) identified several characteristics of culturally proficient teachers. First, they establish standards of achievement in the form of learner goals rather than compliance requirements. Second, social justice and moral commitment to each student are evident. Third, the cultural identity of each learner is recognized and used within the learning environment. Culturally proficient teaching strategies include knowing how to (a) achieve benefits from teachable moments, (b) ask questions without offending, and (c) create a welcoming environment for diversity and to change.

Robins et al. (2002) explained that textbooks fail to link historical racism to current practices or to explain the origins of modern racism. Loewen (as cited in Robins et al., 2002) stated that such a link would give students a perspective on “what caused

racism in the past, what perpetuates it today, and how it might be reduced in the future” (p.138). Teachers’ responses to the questionnaire indicated they were using social studies and other textbooks. Cultural destructiveness is something that teachers recognize, and they take the opportunity to bring in different aspects of the topic and the effects to all involved. This can be valuable when that teachable moment comes along.

Robins et al. (2002) reported that those who are culturally blind often do not observe the effects their blindness has on others. Furthermore, they do not realize the sense of invisibility that cultural blindness brings to members of the nondominant cultural group. Teachers at the school serving as the research site are aware of students’ uniqueness, and cultural blindness is not a part of their instruction. Robins et al. additionally stated that “cultural proficiency is not a destination but rather, a way of being” (p. 102). Cultural proficiency means “you have learned how to learn. You have learned how to be a student of culture and a cultural informant to others about the cultural expectations of the environments that you do know well” (Robins et al., 2002, p. 102). This is the researcher’s goal for the elementary school serving as the research site.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

The following four recommendations are based on findings derived from the study:

1. An increased leadership focus should be provided to assist teachers in (a) increasing awareness and addressing the possibility that diversity of cultures may affect relationships between them and their students, (b) sharing their appreciation of diversity with their coworkers and seeking to interact with people from diverse backgrounds, and (c) enhancing the substance and structure of their instructional practices so they are informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency (R.

B. Lindsey et al., 2008).

2. D. B. Lindsey et al. (2009) described the school leader who holds a transformational perspective as one who “focuses on leadership and educational practices to meet the generative opportunities and needs of diverse communities” (p. 16). The transformational perspective is applicable not only to teachers but to support staff, parents, and community volunteers. This collective application is an area the school principal should continue to address as a school leader.
3. As the school leader, the principal must (a) provide teachers with the time to have necessary conversations to focus on stereotypes and conflict resolution, (b) maintain awareness of the many facets of cultural proficiency, and (c) promote community involvement.
4. The school handbook serves as an overview and guide for teachers, parents, and students regarding school policy and practice. The researcher recommends, therefore, that the handbook be revised to include culturally proficient policies and practices to assist in clarifying guidelines for all stakeholders.

Recommendations for Further Study

Three recommendations for further study were identified; all are based on findings derived from the study:

1. Continued study in the implementation of cultural proficiency and culturally proficient instruction at the school is warranted to determine additional areas wherein leadership support is needed over time.
2. Given the need to examine espoused values of cultural proficiency and culturally proficient instruction in relation to actions and instructional practices, the researcher recommends that teachers at the research site conduct

action research.

3. Continued study in the implementation of cultural proficiency and culturally proficient instruction at the school is warranted to identify applications of theory and practice specifically beneficial for IEP students.

This study has implication for the development of professional learning opportunities at the school, district, and college levels. Although an emphasis on academics and student achievement is prevalent, a focus on culturally proficient practices that emphasize awareness, respect, the value of diversity, collaboration, relationships, and conflict resolution is also essential. In regards to academics, differentiated instruction needs to be implemented to meet the needs of all students. This would include all subgroups, and the emphasis would be on student achievement. In order to meet the academic needs of each student, teachers need to be aware of students' uniqueness as both people and learners in order to provide a learning environment that is accessible to all students regardless of background or knowledge base.

With opportunities for the staff to focus on culturally proficient practices and by presenting topics of conversation that may have been uncomfortable for some or that straightforwardly addressed biases, teachers do have an awareness of their own culture and are more willing to accept diversity and better able to build relationships. Teachers make a conscious effort to implement activities to build strong relationships with their students. This relates to assessing cultural knowledge and the teachers' understanding of the importance of the strong relationships throughout the school community.

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APPENDIX A

Beliefs Survey (R. B. Lindsey et al., 2003)

Participation in this research study is voluntary, and you may quit at any time and/or not respond to specific items if you so choose.

This survey will seek your perceptions regarding various phenomena pertaining to cultural proficiency. The purpose of the survey is to help explain influences and practical aspects of the phenomena as they affect school practices and outcomes. Thank you very much for participating in this study!

Directions: First, please read the letter of consent on the first page of this instrument. Click “continue” to indicate your consent to participate in this survey. Then select the number that closely reflects your response to the statements, as follows:

1. Disagree
2. Uncertain
3. Somewhat Agree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Response Scale: 1 (Disagree), 2 (Uncertain), 3 (Somewhat Agree), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree)

I create opportunities for us to be more collaborative in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
I help my students understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may, in fact, be conflicts in personal culture.	1	2	3	4	5
I anticipate how diversity of cultures can enhance my instructional practices.	1	2	3	4	5
I work to develop a collaborative learning community within my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that my classroom expectations can affect students' academic performance.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that, to effectively teach my students, I must create multiple paths to the same objective.	1	2	3	4	5
I make conscious effort to teach my students the cultural expectations within my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
I anticipate how diversity of cultures may cause conflict between me and my students.	1	2	3	4	5
I appreciate the challenges that diversity brings to my instructional practices.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that what improves some students' academic performance may minimize that of others.	1	2	3	4	5
I share my appreciation of diversity with my students.	1	2	3	4	5

Response Scale: 1 (Disagree), 2 (Uncertain), 3 (Somewhat Agree), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree)

I welcome the opportunity to develop relationships with a diverse group of students into my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
I anticipate how diversity of cultures may affect relationships between me and my students.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that positive views regarding diversity have the potential to positively affect students' academic performance.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that guaranteeing the dignity of a student throughout all phases of my instructional practices involves valuing his/her cultural group.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that rules (written and unwritten), norms, and climate collectively reflect my relationships with students.	1	2	3	4	5
I anticipate how diversity of cultures can enhance my students' academic performance.	1	2	3	4	5
I recognize that my relationships with students may include conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
I help my students understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may, in fact, be conflicts in classroom culture.	1	2	3	4	5
I appreciate the opportunities that diversity brings to my instructional practices.	1	2	3	4	5
I accept that, the more diverse our classroom becomes, the more my instructional practices must change/grow.	1	2	3	4	5

Response Scale: 1 (Disagree), 2 (Uncertain), 3 (Somewhat Agree), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree)

I seek to learn about the cultures of my students to enhance the quality of collaboration with students.	1	2	3	4	5
I realize that, once I embrace the principles of cultural proficiency, the quality of my collaboration with students will improve.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that each student has unique needs that can be used to enhance my collaboration with them.	1	2	3	4	5
I work to develop skills to manage conflict in a positive way.	1	2	3	4	5
I endeavor not to allow the unsolicited privileges my students might enjoy to affect the quality of my collaboration with them.	1	2	3	4	5
I take advantage of teachable moments to improve the quality of collaboration with my students.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that the differences that can exist between students within a cultural group can affect students' academic performance.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that each student has unique needs that can be used to improve students' academic performance.	1	2	3	4	5
I work to develop a learning community within my classroom to ensure improved academic performance.	1	2	3	4	5
I make conscious effort to teach my students the cultural expectations within my classroom so that collaboration can occur in a positive way.	1	2	3	4	5

Response Scale: 1 (Disagree), 2 (Uncertain), 3 (Somewhat Agree), 4 (Agree), 5 (Strongly Agree)

I check myself to see if an assumption I am making about a student is based on facts or upon stereotypes about a group.	1	2	3	4	5
I seek to integrate what I have learned about my students to improve my collaboration with them.	1	2	3	4	5
I seek to enhance the substance and structure of my instructional practices so that they are informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency.	1	2	3	4	5
I work to influence the culture of my classroom so that my collaboration with students is informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency.	1	2	3	4	5
I take advantage of teachable moments to improve students' academic experience.	1	2	3	4	5
I know how to learn about students and cultures unfamiliar to me without affecting my instructional practices in a negative way (4-5).	1	2	3	4	5
I seek to integrate what I have learned about my students to improve their academic performance.	1	2	3	4	5
I avoid instructional practices I believe may unintentionally discriminate against a student or a group of students in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
I am committed to the continuous learning that is necessary to deal with the issues caused by differences and ensure they do not affect the quality of my collaboration with students.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B

Competence Survey

Participation in this research study is voluntary, and you may quit at any time and/or not respond to specific items if you so choose.

This survey will seek your perceptions regarding your competency levels in cultural proficiency. Thank you very much for participating in this study!

Directions: First, please read the letter of consent on the first page of this instrument. Click “continue” to indicate your consent to participate in this survey. Then indicate the number that closely reflects your response to the statements, as follows:

1. Rarely
2. Seldom
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Usually

Response Scale: 1 (Rarely), 2 (Seldom), 3 (Sometimes), 4 (Often), 5 (Usually)

I. Essential Element 1 (Assessing Cultural Knowledge)

1. I am aware of my own culture and ethnicity.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I am comfortable talking about my culture and ethnicity.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I know the effect that my culture and ethnicity may have on the people in my work.

1 2 3 4 5

4. I seek to learn about the culture of this organization.

1 2 3 4 5

5. I seek to learn about the cultures of this organization's employees.

1 2 3 4 5

6. I seek to learn about the cultures of this organization's clients.

1 2 3 4 5

7. I anticipate how this organization's clients and employees will interact with, conflict with, and enhance one another.

1 2 3 4 5

Response Scale: 1 (Rarely), 2 (Seldom), 3 (Sometimes), 4 (Often), 5 (Usually)

II. Essential Element 2 (Valuing Diversity)

1. I welcome a diverse group of clients and colleagues into the work setting.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I create opportunities at work for us to be more inclusive and more diverse.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I appreciate both the challenges and opportunities that diversity brings.

1 2 3 4 5

4. I share my appreciation of diversity with my coworkers.

1 2 3 4 5

5. I share my appreciation of diversity with other clients.

1 2 3 4 5

6. I work to develop a learning community with the clients I serve.

1 2 3 4 5

7. I make conscious effort to teach the cultural expectations of my organization or department to those who are new or who may be unfamiliar with the organization's culture.

1 2 3 4 5

8. I proactively seek to interact with people from diverse backgrounds in my personal and professional life.

1 2 3 4 5

Response Scale: 1 (Rarely), 2 (Seldom), 3 (Sometimes), 4 (Often), 5 (Usually)

III. Essential Element 3 (Managing the Dynamics of Difference)

1. I recognize that conflict is a part of life.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I work to develop skills to manage conflict in a positive way.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I help my colleagues to understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may in fact be conflicts in culture.

1 2 3 4 5

4. I help the clients I serve to understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may in fact be conflicts in personal or organizational culture.

1 2 3 4 5

5. I check myself to see if an assumption I am making about a person is based on facts or upon stereotypes about a group.

1 2 3 4 5

6. I accept that the more diverse our group becomes, the more we will change and grow.

1 2 3 4 5

Response Scale: 1 (Rarely), 2 (Seldom), 3 (Sometimes), 4 (Often), 5 (Usually)

IV. Essential Element 4 (Adapting to Diversity)

1. I realize that once I embrace the principles of cultural proficiency I too must change.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I am committed to the continuous learning that is necessary to deal with the issues caused by differences.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I seek to enhance the substance and structure of the work I do so that it is informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency.

1 2 3 4 5

4. I recognize the unsolicited privileges I might enjoy because of my title, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical ability, or ethnicity.

1 2 3 4 5

5. I know how to learn about people and cultures unfamiliar to me without giving offense.

1 2 3 4 5

Response Scale: 1 (Rarely), 2 (Seldom), 3 (Sometimes), 4 (Often), 5 (Usually)

V. Essential Element 5 (Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge)

1. I work to influence the culture of this organization so that its policies and practices are informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I speak up if I notice that a policy or practice unintentionally discriminates against or causes an unnecessary hardship for a particular group in this organization's community.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I take advantage of teachable moments to share cultural knowledge or to learn from my colleagues.

1 2 3 4 5

4. I take advantage of teachable moments to share cultural knowledge with this organization's clients.

1 2 3 4 5

5. I seek to create opportunities for my colleagues, managers, clients, and the communities we serve to learn about one another.

1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire

Participation in this research study is voluntary, and you may quit at any time and/or not respond to specific items if you so choose.

This questionnaire will seek your perceptions regarding various phenomena pertaining to cultural proficiency. The purpose of the instrument is to help explain influences and practical aspects of the phenomena as they affect school practices and outcomes. Thank you very much for participating in this study!

Directions: First, please read the letter of consent on the first page of this instrument. Click “continue” to indicate your consent to participate in this questionnaire. Then answer each question as completely as possible, and feel free to expand upon the questions as you desire.

II. Essential Element 2 (Valuing Diversity)

Describe in what ways, if at all, you...

1. ...use and display materials that have culturally diverse images. (RQ1)

2. ...promote activities that value the commonalities and differences among students.
(RQ1)

III. Essential Element 3 (Managing the dynamics of difference)

Describe in what ways, if at all, you...

1. ...use effective strategies for intervening in conflict situations relating to diversity issues. (RQ1)

2. ...teach students how to appropriately ask others about their cultures and cultural practices. (RQ1)

IV. Essential Element 4 (Adapting to Diversity)**Describe in what ways, if at all, you...**

1. ...encourage students to talk about differences without making judgments. (RQ1)

2. ...implement policies that promote inclusive relationships in your classroom. (RQ1)

V. Essential Element 5 (Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge)**Describe in what ways, if at all, you...**

1. ...provide opportunities to learn about your culture and those of your students. (RQ1)

2. ...teach students to appropriately acknowledge and value cultural differences among their fellow students. (RQ1)

VI. The Infusion of Cultural Proficiency Within Your Classroom

1. Other than those culturally proficient practices you have already identified, what are some other changes, if any, that have occurred in your instruction since acquiring an understanding of culturally proficient instructional practices? (RQ1)

2. What are some of the challenges and/or barriers you've encountered when implementing culturally proficient practices in your classroom? (RQ2)

3. What support, if any, do you perceive is needed for implementing culturally proficient instructional practices? (RQ3)

APPENDIX D

Letter of Consent

Dear Teachers:

Participation in this research study is voluntary, and you may quit at any time and/or not respond to specific items if you so choose. The surveys and questionnaires will seek your perceptions regarding various phenomena pertaining to cultural proficiency. The purpose of the surveys and questionnaire is to help explain influences and practical aspects of the phenomena as they affect school practices and outcomes. Thank you very much for participating in this study. Please read the letter of consent on the first page of this instrument. Letter of Consent Dear Teachers: My name is Pamela Simone, and I am a doctoral student in organizational leadership at Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology, who is currently in the process of recruiting individuals for my study entitled, "A Mixed Methods Study of Culturally Proficient Practices in an Elementary School." The professor supervising my work is Dr. Linda Jungwirth. The study is designed to examine teachers' reporting of their culturally proficient instructional practices and their perceptions of the challenges, barriers, and support needed in implementing culturally proficient instruction. I am inviting all teachers of John R. Hummel Elementary School to participate in my study. Please understand that your participation in my study is strictly voluntary. The following is a description of what your study participation entails, the terms for participating in the study, and a discussion of your rights as a study participant. Please read this information carefully before deciding whether or not you wish to participate.

If you should decide to participate in the study, you will be asked to complete a beliefs survey, competence survey, and open-ended questionnaire via Google Forms, a secure web survey tool. Your responses will be anonymous, as you will not be asked to provide your name on any document. It should take approximately a total of 2 1/2 hours to complete the surveys and questionnaire. Please complete the three data collection instruments over a period of no longer than 3 days. You can access the survey using the following URL:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/viewform?hl=en_US&formkey=dEVUQTINcHVB NVJpRnRLMU9QQnVpLVE6MQ#gid=0

Although minimal, there are potential risks that you should consider before deciding to participate in this study. These risks include your (a) confidentiality, (b) safety, (c) employment, and (d) professional relationship with me. Possible risks will be minimized to the extent possible. This will be ensured by (a) my avoidance of any involvement in participant recruitment; (b) the use of clear communication regarding possible risks during the recruitment process; (c) the implementation of the study occurring after annual teacher performance evaluations are completed; and (d) the use of Google Forms, a secure web survey tool, to ensure the informed consent and data collection processes are anonymous by not requiring participants' names and not collecting participants' IP addresses. Risks will be additionally minimized by keeping analyzed data on my

computer, which can only be accessed with a username and password. In the event you do experience any of these risks, the following is a list of referrals for use in the event that you decide to pursue your concerns in more depth either in lieu of or after consulting with me:

Concerns involving confidentiality: Dr. Linda Jungwirth

Concerns involving safety: Mr. Pat Skorkowsky

Concerns involving employment: Mr. Ryan Yanagi

Concerns involving your professional relationship with the researcher: Mrs. Sheri Davies

Because a similar study has not been conducted in the school setting, the understanding of the culturally proficient instructional practices reported as being implemented in classrooms, as well as your and other teachers' perceptions regarding culturally proficient instruction, is limited. Practices involving cultural proficiency were administratively promoted within the school culture, however, for enhancing (a) relationships between teachers and students, (b) collaboration between teachers and students, (c) instructional practices, and (d) academic performance of students.

Culturally proficient practices, the challenges and barriers to implementation, and the support needed for implementation are worthy of thorough examination. The potential benefits to you for participating in the study are that you and other teachers may gain the needed knowledge, skills, and support for implementing culturally proficient practices. Findings derived from the study may also provide members of the School Leadership Team valuable insight into various influences and dynamics within the school's culture to improve leadership efforts and assist students in deriving expected benefits from the educational experience. Results of the study will additionally provide contribution to the professional literature regarding culturally proficient instruction.

If you should decide to participate and find you are not interested in completing the three data collection instruments in their entirety, you have the right to discontinue at any point without being questioned about your decision. You also do not have to answer any of the questions on the instruments that you prefer not to answer--just leave such items blank.

If you choose to volunteer to participate in this data collection, please submit your responses to all three instruments within 3 days. After the 3 days have passed, the guidance counselor will send a reminder note to all teachers inviting each to complete the data collection instruments. Since participation is voluntary and anonymous, please disregard this second invitation if you have already completed the surveys.

If the findings of the study are presented to professional audiences or published, no information that identifies you personally will be released. The analyzed data will be kept on my computer, which can only be accessed with a username and password. All data will be destroyed after 3 years have passed since the completion of the study.

If you have any questions regarding the information that I have provided above, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address and phone number provided below. If you have further questions or do not feel I have adequately addressed your concerns, please contact Dr. Linda Jungwirth.

Thank you,
Pamela Simone

APPENDIX E
Recruitment Flyer

Invitation to Participate

WHAT: An informational meeting regarding an upcoming research study

WHY: To examine various phenomena pertaining to cultural proficiency at the school

WHEN: _____

TIME: _____

PLACE: The school library

APPENDIX F

Instructions for Participant Recruitment

- I. The guidance counselor will read Items 1-3 as written below:
 1. The problem of the study:

The problem to be addressed in this mixed methods study is that school leaders have not examined the implementation of culturally proficient practices, nor the challenges, barriers, or support needed for implementation.
 2. The purpose of the study:

The purpose of this mixed methods study is to inform instructional and leadership practices within the school setting through the examination of quantitative data around teachers' response to questions related to culturally proficient instruction and qualitative data around teachers' perceptions of the challenges, barriers, and support needed for implementing culturally proficient practices.
 3. The questions of the study:
 1. What culturally proficient instructional practices, if any, do teachers report implementing in classrooms in an elementary school in Nevada?
 2. What challenges and/or barriers, if any, do these teachers perceive in implementing culturally proficient instruction?
 3. What support do these teachers perceive is needed, if any, for implementing culturally proficient instructional practices?
- II. Teachers, participation is strictly voluntary!
- III. Teachers, please know that the indication of informed consent, as well as the data collection, consisting of a beliefs survey, competence survey, and open-ended questionnaire, will occur online using Google Forms, a secure web survey tool. Using this online resource, no signatures or IP addresses will be collected from respondents, assuring that participants will remain anonymous.
- IV. Are there any questions?

APPENDIX G

Online Version of Data Collection Instruments

A Mixed Methods Study of Culturally Proficient Practices in an Elementary School

Participation in this research study is voluntary, and you may quit at any time and/or not respond to specific items if you so choose. The surveys and questionnaires will seek your perceptions regarding various phenomena pertaining to cultural proficiency. The purpose of the surveys and questionnaire is to help explain influences and practical aspects of the phenomena as they affect school practices and outcomes. Thank you very much for participating in this study. Please read the letter of consent on the first page of this instrument. Letter of Consent Dear Teachers: My name is Pamela Simone, and I am a doctoral student in organizational leadership at Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology, who is currently in the process of recruiting individuals for my study entitled, "A Mixed Methods Study of Culturally Proficient Practices in an Elementary School." The professor supervising my work is Dr. Linda Jungwirth. The study is designed to examine teachers' reporting of their culturally proficient instructional practices and their perceptions of the challenges, barriers, and support needed in implementing culturally proficient instruction. I am inviting all teachers of John R. Hummel Elementary School to participate in my study. Please understand that your participation in my study is strictly voluntary. The following is a description of what your study participation entails, the terms for participating in the study, and a discussion of your rights as a study participant. Please read this information carefully before deciding whether or not you wish to participate. If you should decide to participate in the study, you will be asked to complete a beliefs survey, competence survey, and open-ended

questionnaire via Google Forms, a secure web survey tool. Your responses will be anonymous, as you will not be asked to provide your name on any document. It should take approximately a total of 2 1/2 hours to complete the surveys and questionnaire. Please complete the three data collection instruments over a period of no longer than 3 days. Although minimal, there are potential risks that you should consider before deciding to participate in this study. These risks include your (a) confidentiality, (b) safety, (c) employment, and (d) professional relationship with me. Possible risks will be minimized to the extent possible. This will be ensured by (a) my avoidance of any involvement in participant recruitment; (b) the use of clear communication regarding possible risks during the recruitment process; (c) the implementation of the study occurring after annual teacher performance evaluations are completed; and (d) the use of Google Forms, a secure web survey tool, to ensure the informed consent and data collection processes are anonymous by not requiring participants' names and not collecting participants' IP addresses. Risks will be additionally minimized by keeping analyzed data on my computer, which can only be accessed with a username and password. In the event you do experience any of these risks, the following is a list of referrals for use in the event that you decide to pursue your concerns in more depth either in lieu of or after consulting with me: Concerns involving confidentiality: Dr. Linda Jungwirth at (909) 335-1688 or ljungwirth@conveningconversations.com Concerns involving safety: Mr. Pat Skorkowsky at (702) 799-0764 or WPS106@interact.ccsd.net Concerns involving employment: Mr. Ryan Yanagi at (702) 799-5096 or RAYanagi@interact.ccsd.net Concerns involving your professional relationship with the researcher: Mrs. Sheri Davies at (702) 799-0880 or sldavies@interact.ccsd.net Because a similar study has not been conducted in the school setting, the understanding of the

culturally proficient instructional practices reported as being implemented in classrooms, as well as your and other teachers' perceptions regarding culturally proficient instruction, is limited. Practices involving cultural proficiency were administratively promoted within the school culture, however, for enhancing (a) relationships between teachers and students, (b) collaboration between teachers and students, (c) instructional practices, and (d) academic performance of students. Culturally proficient practices, the challenges and barriers to implementation, and the support needed for implementation are worthy of thorough examination. The potential benefits to you for participating in the study are that you and other teachers may gain the needed knowledge, skills, and support for implementing culturally proficient practices. Findings derived from the study may also provide members of the School Leadership Team valuable insight into various influences and dynamics within the school's culture to improve leadership efforts and assist students in deriving expected benefits from the educational experience. Results of the study will additionally provide contribution to the professional literature regarding culturally proficient instruction. If you should decide to participate and find you are not interested in completing the three data collection instruments in their entirety, you have the right to discontinue at any point without being questioned about your decision. You also do not have to answer any of the questions on the instruments that you prefer not to answer--just leave such items blank. If you choose to volunteer to participate in this data collection, please submit your responses to all three instruments within 3 days. After the 3 days have passed, the guidance counselor will send a reminder note to all teachers inviting each to complete the data collection instruments. Since participation is voluntary and anonymous, please disregard this second invitation if you have already completed the surveys. If the findings of the study are presented to professional audiences or published, no information

that identifies you personally will be released. The analyzed data will be kept on my computer, which can only be accessed with a username and password. All data will be destroyed after 3 years have passed since the completion of the study. If you have any questions regarding the information that I have provided above, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address and phone number provided below. If you have further questions or do not feel I have adequately addressed your concerns, please contact Dr.

Linda Jungwirth.

Thank you,

Pamela Simone

Click "continue" to indicate your consent to participate in the surveys and questionnaire.

Continue »

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A Mixed Methods Study of Culturally Proficient Practices in an Elementary School

Beliefs Survey

Participation in this research study is voluntary, and you may quit at any time and/or not respond to specific items if you so choose. This survey will seek your perceptions regarding various phenomena pertaining to cultural proficiency. The purpose of the survey is to help explain influences and practical aspects of the phenomena as they affect school practices and outcomes. Select the number that closely reflects your response to the statements, as follows: 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

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A Mixed Methods Study of Culturally Proficient Practices in an Elementary School

I create opportunities for us to be more collaborative in my classroom. 1. Disagree 2.

Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I help my students understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may, in fact, be conflicts in personal culture. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5.

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I anticipate how diversity of cultures can enhance my instructional practices. 1. Disagree

2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I work to develop a collaborative learning community within my classroom. 1. Disagree

2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I believe that my classroom expectations can affect students' academic performance. 1.

Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I believe that, to effectively teach my students, I must create multiple paths to the same

objective. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I make conscious effort to teach my students the cultural expectations within my

classroom. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I anticipate how diversity of cultures may cause conflict between me and my students. 1.

Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I appreciate the challenges that diversity brings to my instructional practices. 1. Disagree

2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I believe that what improves some students' academic performance may minimize that of

others. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I share my appreciation of diversity with my students. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3.

Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I welcome the opportunity to develop relationships with a diverse group of students into my classroom. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I anticipate how diversity of cultures may affect relationships between me and my students. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I believe that positive views regarding diversity have the potential to positively affect students' academic performance. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I believe that guaranteeing the dignity of a student throughout all phases of my instructional practices involves valuing his/her cultural group. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I believe that rules (written and unwritten), norms, and climate collectively reflect my relationships with students. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5.

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I anticipate how diversity of cultures can enhance my students' academic performance. 1.

Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I recognize that my relationships with students may include conflict. 1. Disagree 2.

Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I help my students understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may, in fact,

be conflicts in classroom culture. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I appreciate the opportunities that diversity brings to my instructional practices. 1.

Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I accept that, the more diverse our classroom becomes, the more my instructional
practices must change/grow. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5.

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I seek to learn about the cultures of my students to enhance the quality of collaboration
with students. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I realize that, once I embrace the principles of cultural proficiency, the quality of my collaboration with students will improve. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I believe that each student has unique needs that can be used to enhance my collaboration with them. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I work to develop skills to manage conflict in a positive way. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I endeavor not to allow the unsolicited privileges my students might enjoy to affect the quality of my collaboration with them. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I take advantage of teachable moments to improve the quality of collaboration with my students. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I believe that each student has unique needs that can be used to improve students' academic performance. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I work to develop a learning community within my classroom to ensure improved academic performance. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I make conscious effort to teach my students the cultural expectations within my classroom so that collaboration can occur in a positive way. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3.

Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I check myself to see if an assumption I am making about a student is based on facts or upon stereotypes about a group. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5.

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I seek to integrate what I have learned about my students to improve my collaboration with them. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I seek to enhance the substance and structure of my instructional practices so that they are informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3.

Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I work to influence the culture of my classroom so that my collaboration with students is informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3.

Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I take advantage of teachable moments to improve students' academic experience. 1.

Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I know how to learn about students and cultures unfamiliar to me without affecting my instructional practices in a negative way. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4.

Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I seek to integrate what I have learned about my students to improve their academic performance. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I avoid instructional practices I believe may unintentionally discriminate against a student or a group of students in my classroom. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I am committed to the continuous learning that is necessary to deal with the issues caused by differences and ensure they do not affect the quality of my collaboration with students. 1. Disagree 2. Uncertain 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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A Mixed Methods Study of Culturally Proficient Practices in an Elementary School

Competence Survey

Participation in this research study is voluntary, and you may quit at any time and/or not respond to specific items if you so choose. This survey will seek your perceptions regarding your competency levels in cultural proficiency. Thank you very much for participating in this study. Indicate the number that closely reflects your response to the statements, as follows: 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Usually

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A Mixed Methods Study of Culturally Proficient Practices in an Elementary School

I am aware of my own culture and ethnicity. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Often
5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I am comfortable talking about my culture and ethnicity. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3.

Sometimes 4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I know the effect that my culture and ethnicity may have on the people in my work. 1.

Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I seek to learn about the culture of this organization. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4.

Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

I seek to learn about the cultures of this organization's clients. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3.

Sometimes 4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I anticipate how this organization's clients and employees will interact with, conflict with, and enhance one another. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I welcome a diverse group of clients and colleagues into the work setting. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I create opportunities at work for us to be more inclusive and more diverse. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I appreciate both the challenges and opportunities that diversity brings. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I share my appreciation of diversity with my coworkers. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3.

Sometimes 4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I share my appreciation of diversity with other clients. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes

4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I work to develop a learning community with the clients I serve. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3.

Sometimes 4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I make conscious effort to teach the cultural expectations of my organization or department to those who are new or who may be unfamiliar with the organization's

culture. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I proactively seek to interact with people from diverse backgrounds in my personal and professional life. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I recognize that conflict is a part of life. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5.

Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I work to develop skills to manage conflict in a positive way. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3.

Sometimes 4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I help my colleagues to understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may in fact be conflicts in personal or organizational culture. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes

4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I check myself to see if an assumption I am making about a person is based on facts or upon stereotypes about a group. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I accept that the more diverse our group becomes, the more we will change and grow. 1.

Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I realize that once I embrace the principles of cultural proficiency I too must change. 1.

Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I am committed to the continuous learning that is necessary to deal with the issues caused

by differences. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I seek to enhance the substance and structure of the work I do so that it is informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5.

Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I recognize the unsolicited privileges I might enjoy because of my title, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical ability, or ethnicity. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4.

Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I know how to learn about people and cultures unfamiliar to me without giving offense.

1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I work to influence the culture of this organization so that its policies and practices are informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3.

Sometimes 4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I speak up if I notice that a policy or practice unintentionally discriminates against or causes an unnecessary hardship for a particular group in this organization's community.

1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I take advantage of teachable moments to share cultural knowledge or to learn from my colleagues. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I take advantage of teachable moments to share cultural knowledge with this organization's clients. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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I seek to create opportunities for my colleagues, managers, clients, and the communities we serve to learn about one another. 1. Rarely 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5.

Usually

1 2 3 4 5

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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A Mixed Methods Study of Culturally Proficient Practices in an Elementary School

Questionnaire

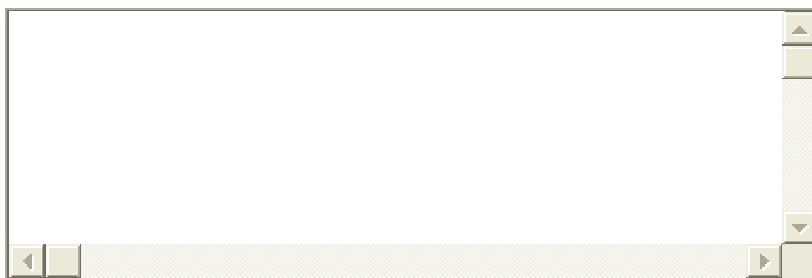
Participation in this research study is voluntary, and you may quit at any time and/or not respond to specific items if you so choose. This questionnaire will seek your perceptions regarding various phenomena pertaining to cultural proficiency. The purpose of the instrument is to help explain influences and practical aspects of the phenomena as they affect the school practices and outcomes. Thank you very much for participating in this study! Answer each question as completely as possible, and feel free to expand upon the questions as you desire.

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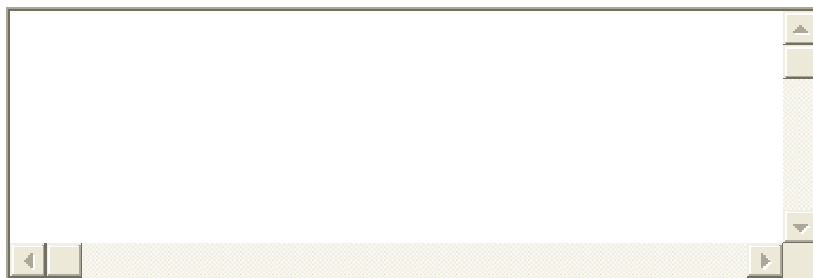
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A Mixed Methods Study of Culturally Proficient Practices in an Elementary School

Describe in ways, if at all, you learn about the cultures of your students.



Describe in ways, if at all, you teach students the effect that their culture and ethnicity may have on those around them.



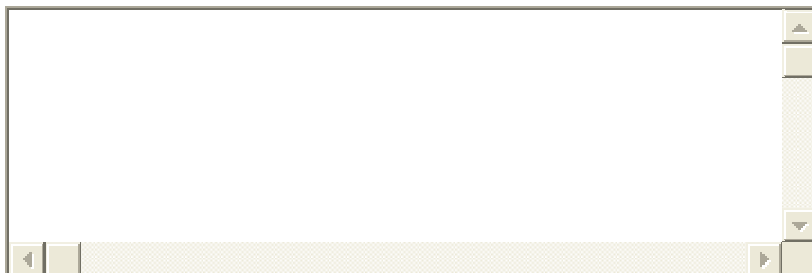
Describe in ways, if at all, you use and display materials that have culturally diverse

images.

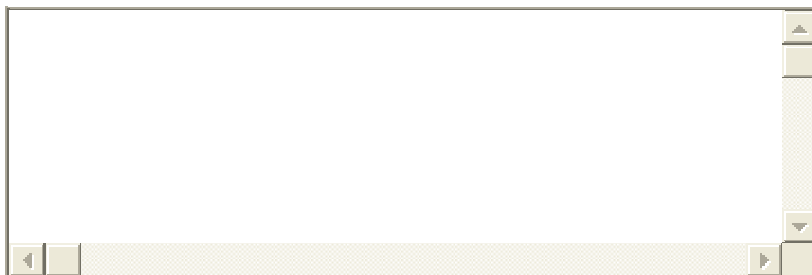
Describe in ways, if at all, you promote activities that value the commonalities and differences among students.

Describe in ways, if at all, you use effective strategies for intervening in conflict situations relating to diversity issues.

Describe in ways, if at all, you teach students how to appropriately ask others about their cultures and cultural practices.



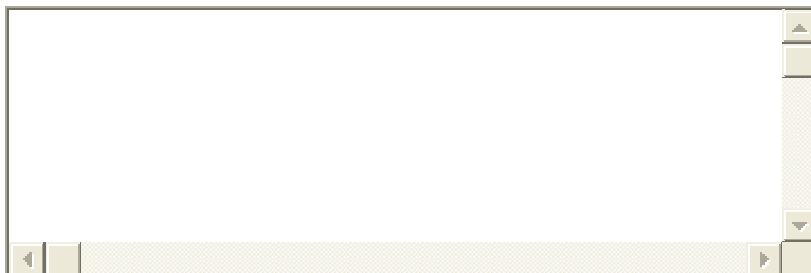
Other than those culturally proficient practices you have already identified, what are some other changes, if any, that have occurred in your instruction since acquiring an understanding of culturally proficient instructional practices?



What are some of the challenges and/or barriers you've encountered when implementing culturally proficient practices in your classroom?



What support, if any, do you perceive is needed for implementing culturally proficient instructional practices?



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