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The Principal's Role in Expanding Multicultural Understandings in Predominantly White, Rural, Middle School Grades

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The Principal's Role in Expanding Multicultural Understandings in Predominantly White, Rural, Middle School Grades

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Approvals

In the judgment of the following signatures, this Dissertation meets the academic standards that have been established for the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the principal's role in expanding multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades. A review of the literature provided information on three areas: (a) benefits of expanding multicultural understandings, (b) implementing multicultural understandings, and (c) school leaders' role. The literature did not include information to address a prevalent problem in Massachusetts: Principals of rural, predominantly White schools with middle grades typically do not consider expanding multicultural understandings a priority. This explanatory sequential mixed methods study used a closed-response survey and in-depth interviews with principals across Massachusetts. The survey was sent to 167 principals, 17 of whom completed it. Ten of those survey-respondents agreed to participate in an in-depth follow-up interview. Both instruments addressed three guiding research questions: (a) To what degree do principals consider it a priority to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades? (b) What do principals report they are doing to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades? (c) What do principals report are factors and conditions that inhibit and support their efforts to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades? There were six key findings. Guiding Research Question One led to two findings: (a) a school-wide theme of "acceptance-for-all" may not be effective, and (b) it is effective for principals to have direct control over their personal multicultural understandings. Guiding Research Question Two uncovered two findings: (a) principal goals that match school goals promote multiculturalism and (b) principals expressed a desire to more effectively help guide and support teachers in expanding multicultural understandings. Finally, the third guiding research question produced two findings: (a) specific aspects of school culture influence the

expansion of multicultural understandings, and (b) flexible subject-areas support principals fostering multicultural work. These findings led to theoretical and practical implications and recommendations that have the potential to benefit the practice and experiences of administrators, teachers, educational licensure programs, school stakeholders, and middle grade students. Future research could gain more background information on the schools where the principals work, use a larger sample size, collect data from strictly stand-alone middle schools, solicit teacher/student perspectives, or employ a different research method.

Key words: multicultural understandings, principals, middle grades, rural, race, predominantly White, school culture.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Anne M. Chase. As much as this degree was a personal aspiration of mine, I did this for her, too. The diploma may say my name on it, but it also says her name. I knew there would be a day that "Anne" as my middle name would really pay off.

Congratulations, Mom! *We* did it!

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Imagine a town where there are fields of potatoes as far as the eye can see and where there are more cows and chickens than people. The people are friendly and welcoming, and there is that iconic small-town charm that fills the air with peacefulness and a love for tradition. These are the hallmark characteristics that come to mind when thinking of my hometown in Western Massachusetts and this is the first impression of many rural towns in Massachusetts. A more in-depth understanding of these rural communities, however, is not as apparent.

In my hometown, racism marked the conversations daily, but not in a malicious manner. People's remarks were speckled with unconscious racism that lacked malicious intent. Walk into the bar up the street and White farmers talk of their Jamaican farm-workers using racial epithets, but speak of their work with endearment and praise. Go into the schools and White teachers teach predominantly White classes about Columbus without hesitation or remorse and current events are deemed too-politically charged to discuss in the classrooms.

When considering my family background and the influence it has had on my identity, there is no denying the unconscious bias I struggle to diminish even today. I attended a small, all-White school district from preschool through the twelfth grade. I had amazing teachers and felt very supported, but becoming a globalized citizen who gains exposure to other races was not a priority of anyone in my school. My parents decided to play a key role in providing me with opportunities in diverse settings. By playing sports in a diverse neighboring city, I was on-track to gain exposure to different races, cultures, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, and backgrounds. Through a mixture of implicit and explicit learning experiences, I have come a long way in decreasing my preconceived notions and misunderstandings of other groups that

formed when in an all-White educational setting. I had to recognize my biases that were an inherent part of growing up in my small, White town in Western MA. I now have an ever-growing ambition to constantly search for the unfamiliar.

As I grew personally and professionally, my instruction as a fifth-grade teacher reflected my well-rounded understandings as well. This growth has benefited my students who were growing up in an environment similar my own. My eyes were opened to diversity, provoking my ambition to help my students have their eyes opened as well.

As a White teacher at a predominantly White school, I could have followed in the footsteps of my schooling experience. If I did that, then race would not be a vital topic in my classroom, which is necessary if these students ever leave the racially homogenous community. It is also a vital part of engaged citizenship and integral to deeply understanding US history. In contrast, I chose to make diversity education and exposure a main tenet in my instruction to improve students' globalized understanding. For example, having students reading the newspaper daily and hosting Socratic seminars on topics that the principal considered "touchy," like the 2016 election, immigration reform, and gun control. When asking to talk with the school's principal about teaching such topics, I was often met with responses of doubt and discouragement, rather than with the supportive tools to aid me in executing those lessons appropriately.

More than ever, fifth and sixth graders at Mill River Elementary School were asking questions about what they saw on the news and mimicking racist things they heard outside of school in the predominantly White community, purely out of unconscious racism. Hearing students say racial slurs on the playground during my first year of teaching was when I realized that, as a school, we needed to make multicultural understandings a priority with urgency.

When trying to bring topics of multiculturalism to the forefront for the entire school, I was never taken seriously. The administration was focused on keeping traditions alive, and not on prioritizing the expansion of multicultural understandings in our predominantly White, rural school. For example, I recall a staff meeting when I wanted to have a school-wide Indigenous People's Day celebration, alongside the traditional scarecrow-making competition, since they fell at the same time. Without a chance to offer more ideas to highlight the holiday, I was turned down by the leadership team. At another staff meeting, I asked if we could tailor the holiday craft night in December to a multifaith celebration with different stations for each of the holidays in December. I picked out a craft for Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Three-Kings Day and more, only to be turned down by the principal because parent-volunteers who help every year like to do the same craft and would not want to change. Tradition, at this point, became one of the greatest hurdles for me. I knew that if I wanted to prioritize the multicultural understandings of my students, I would need to do it on my own, within my classroom. Trying to branch out further than my own domain was going to need too many approvals by the school's principal who did not foster the same motivation for this mission. Even within my classroom, I faced challenges. On one occasion, I was refused funding to attend professional development on multicultural education by the administration and told to buy resources on my own to bring multiculturalism to my classroom. On another, I was told that an article that mentioned the KKK was "too vulgar" for my students to read, even if it was placed in a historical context. I became frustrated with the lack of support for not being able to help my students understand racial injustices at an age when they were asking more and more about it.

Having experienced both apathy and outright rejection by the administration when teaching multicultural understandings in a middle grade has made leadership support for teachers

a personally important mission. As a result of my professional setbacks with regard to leadership support, I have decided to explore this area further. In the Introduction that follows, I have developed a rationale and plan to examine leadership support for expanding multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle schools. The Introduction entails (1) a statement of the problem, (2) the purpose of the study, (3) definition of terms, (4) description of the potential significance of the study, (6) identification of the delimitations, (7) a review of the literature, (8) explanation of the method, (9) and a chapter outline for the dissertation in its entirety.

Statement of the Problem

The problem I wished to better understand is that principals of rural, predominantly White schools with middle grades typically do not consider expanding multicultural understandings a priority (Hines 2016; McCann, 2012; Singleton & Linton, 2006). I experienced this problem first-hand as a teacher in a rural elementary school when faced with a lack of principal support in expanding students' multicultural understandings. As a doctoral student of educational leadership, I was interested to see what principals could do to help other teachers in similar environments. When looking for literature on the topic, I was disappointed to find a dearth of material that reflected this specific scenario. I was successful, however, in finding information that was related to this topic, but did not meet the specificity I desired.

I began my journey in expanding multicultural understandings in my classroom by being inspired by research that justified bringing these ideas into a general education setting (Gay, 1994; Nieto, 1996). Research has asserted that regardless of the age or racial dynamic, multicultural education has an important place in schools (Gay, 1994; Jones, 2015; Nieto, 1996).

As I became increasingly convinced that multicultural understandings needed to be part of my classroom, I struggled to find research that reflected my specific scenario.

What I did find, however, was that regardless of the racial dynamic, when teachers try to improve their school's multicultural understandings, the principal is at the forefront of the initiative before the classroom teacher can be impactful (Hines 2016; McCann, 2012; Singleton & Linton, 2006). Research consistently led me to the school leader's role in expanding multicultural understandings. The school's leadership is the main force responsible for diminishing or eliminating teachers' unfamiliarity and discomfort with expanding their students' multicultural understandings (Hines 2016; McCann, 2012; Singleton & Linton, 2006). Teachers need leadership support in order to bring multiculturalism to their classrooms (Hines, 2016). It was not surprising to me that I felt incapable to fully integrating multicultural understandings without leadership support.

Principals have shown to be important in bringing multiculturalism to schools (Hines 2016; McCann, 2012; Singleton & Linton, 2006). What the research has not shown, however, is how these leaders can bring multiculturalism to predominantly White, rural, middle grades. Although this problem has not been addressed in research, previous leadership research on effectively evoking change can provide guidance to explore to see how it can help. Research about leading school improvement work is discussed below.

Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) outlined twenty-one responsibilities for school leaders in an attempt to provide consistency in what is expected of school leaders, especially principals in particular. Marzano et al. (2005) addressed the central question, "To what extent does leadership play a role in whether a school is effective or ineffective? That is, How much of a school's impact on student achievement is due to the leadership displayed in the school?" (p.

4). They acknowledged that it is a daunting task to meet all of those responsibilities, making school leadership a very difficult position. When achieved, however, Marzano et al. (2005) asserted that each responsibility can be directly tied to student academic achievement. Marzano et al. (2005) ranked each of the responsibilities in order of their impact on student academic achievement. Situational awareness and flexibility were the highest-ranking (Marzano et al., 2005). While the focus of this analysis was on student academic achievement, it inspired the question: If principals at predominantly White, rural schools foster these twenty-one responsibilities with emphasis on expanding multicultural understandings in the middle grades, would it improve their results? The work of Hitt and Tucker's (2016) also gave more clarity on effective school leadership, but it did not indicate direct implications for expanding multicultural understandings.

Hitt and Tucker (2016) wrote about five essential areas, or domains, of effective leadership practices. These included, "(a) establishing and conveying the vision, (b) facilitating a high-quality learning experience for students, (c) building professional capacity, (d) creating a supportive organization for learning, and (e) connecting with external partners" (p. 452).

These five areas applied to the principals' role in expanding a school's multicultural understandings were not addressed, but Hitt and Tucker (2016) provided contextual examples where these areas could evoke effective change. For example, the essential practices could be used toward improving student literacy performance on assessments.

The caveat of Hitt and Tucker's (2016) work, similar to Marzano et al.'s (2005) work, was that academics were emphasized, rather than an idea like multicultural understandings. Hitt and Tucker (2016) and Marzano et al. (2005) simplified educational leadership into numeric

categories. A 2010 Wallace Foundation Study narrowed effective educational leadership even more by looking at the role principals have within schools, but within three concise components.

In the 2010 Wallace Foundation Study, Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood, and Anderson (2010) identified three categories principals need to address to evoke change: (1) expectation and accountability, (2) efficacy and support, and (3) engagement and stakeholder influence (pp. 30-31). The first category of expectations and accountability looked at how important and urgent the leader considered the initiative, which also included how often he/she assessed the initiative's progress. The second category of efficacy and support investigated the leaders' active support of the initiative, frequency of involvement, and his or her overall impact. This category also explored how leaders and other members of the organization are held accountable for their contributions. The third category of engagement and stakeholder influence looked at how involved the different organizational parties feel toward the initiative, and what factors and conditions aid and hinder the initiative's progress. Outside stakeholder funding could influence this category's effectiveness (Wahlstom et al., 2010).

Wahlstrom et al. (2010) asserted that regardless of the principal's initiative, if these three categories are thoroughly addressed, there should be a higher success rate for the initiative. They addressed the variable nature of school leadership by writing that, "Contextual variables matter greatly, we know, as do worthwhile academic programs and instructional practices….In these efforts, another factor comes into play—leadership" (p. 5). The authors added that effective leadership is the constant factor that determines the extent of student learning that occurs. And effective leadership means that all three concepts must be in place.

The interplay of Wahlstrom et al.'s (2010) three guiding categories of effective leadership is paramount in order to influence student learning. The researchers contended that all

three areas must be addressed for maximum student learning within the initiative the school leader is enacting. They illuminated this idea further by representing the argument with a triangular model. In this model, each side of the triangle represents one of the three categories of effective leadership. All three sides must be in place for the triangle to form and the whole triangle constitutes the outcome, which is student learning. They concluded their summary in this way: "Effective leadership depends, we have found, on expectations, efficacy, and engagement. The three concepts do not denote isolated dimensions of leadership. Rather, they imply complementary relationships that sustain effective leadership at all levels" (p. 30). They argued that isolation of any of the three concepts diminishes, or even eliminates, the effectiveness of the school leader's initiative; and that all three categories must be addressed concurrently for full effectiveness.

In response to this research, I ask: Is it possible that if principals address these three categories in rural, predominantly White schools -- with a focus on expanding multicultural understandings in the middle grades – are their efforts more likely to succeed? Based on my own experience, the issue is that principals at these schools are not considering supporting teachers in expanding multicultural understandings as a priority. If they did, it would appear in their expectations and accountability, their efficacy and support, and their engagement and stakeholder influence consistently, as Wahlstrom et al. (2010) asserted.

Educational leadership research has delineated several approaches to effective school leadership when evoking change (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Marzano et al., 2005; Wahlstrom et al., 2010). None of this research, however, has been applied to the same area of need: the principals expanding multicultural understandings in middle grades of predominantly White, rural schools. What follows is the articulation of a study that sought to understand how Massachusetts

principals in rural, predominantly White schools expand multicultural understandings in the middle grades.

Purpose of the Study

This study explored the principal's role in expanding multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades. First, it investigated the urgency and prioritization that principals bring to their role in expanding multicultural understandings. This gave clarity as to whether principals see multiculturalism as important within their school. Then, principals were asked to report what they are currently doing to address multicultural understandings. Information about what is occurring also gave insight into what is not occurring, which was just as valuable. Finally, the study investigated what supports and/or hinders the principal in expanding multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades. The study illuminated the support that principals give and receive and also inquired as to what is missing that limits the potential of the expansion of the multiculturalism.

Guiding Research Questions

The three guiding research questions that follow were intended to address the study purposes:

1. To what degree do principals consider it a priority to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades?
2. What do principals report they are doing to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades?
3. What do principals report are factors and conditions that inhibit and support their efforts to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades?

Definition of the Terms

Due to the scope of topics that multicultural and antibias education covers, it is necessary to define the following relevant terms that apply to this research:

Antibias: The act of not favoring one idea, perspective or characteristic over others.

Antiracism: The act of not treating other races as if they are of lesser value than one's own race. The Oxford Dictionary (2017) defines the term "antiracism" as, "The policy or practice of opposing racism and promoting racial tolerance."

Middle Grades: These include grades 5-8.

Multiculturalism: Relating to a myriad of different cultures. The Oxford Dictionary (2017) defines the term "multiculturalism" as, "The presence of, or support for the presence of, several distinct cultural or ethnic groups within a society."

Multicultural Understanding: Involving a greater understanding, sensitivity, and appreciation of the history, values, experiences, and lifestyles of groups that include, but, are not limited to, other races and ethnicities.

Rural: A region with less than 500 people per square mile (Rural Commonwealth, 2018).

White: Self-described as Caucasian.

Significance of the Study

This study has the potential to benefit seven groups. They include (a) predominantly White, rural schools with middle grades, (b) school leaders, (c) other school stakeholders, (d) middle grade teachers at predominantly rural, White schools, (e) Middle grade students at predominantly rural, White schools, (f) preparation programs for administrators, and (g) preparation programs for teachers.

The predominantly White, rural schools with middle grades, especially those in Massachusetts could learn about what is working well and lacking so they may improve their own approaches. The leadership and instructional approaches within the school could then improve and change.

Both superintendents and principals could gain deeper understandings about what supports they could be supplying teachers that they are not supplying. This study would also help them reflect on what they are providing and consider if it aligns with how other principals are supporting their teachers. To see what other principals view as effective teaching practices of multiculturalism would help them enhance what they are expecting to occur in the classrooms at their schools that they may not have considered previously. This study may inspire other principals in similar settings to complete a similar self-reflection process that the survey instrument enacted. This entails thinking first about what they are doing, then to reflect on what they wish they were doing and then ending with what is preventing the latter from occurring.

School stakeholders, including local government, school committee/board, local businesses, and parents could obtain new information that influences their roles, based on this study. If there is common support that principals see as necessary for teachers, but they are not able to provide, then other stakeholders may want to help fill this void. For example, if a lack of funding prevents a principal from sending a teacher for professional development on fostering multicultural understandings, then maybe the school community would do a fundraiser to support the cause. The stakeholders would benefit knowing that they played a part in improving the school.

White middle grade teachers at predominantly White School schools would learn what principals see as effective teaching practices. As a result, they can reflect on their own practice to

evaluate if it matches these expectations. They can also reflect on what supports they receive from their principals and ask themselves if there are additional supports they see worth requesting that other principals value. It may also inspire these teachers to think about supports that teachers at other schools are getting that they are not getting. It could inspire them to make requests or at least highlight these disparities to administrators.

Middle grade students at predominantly rural, White schools could improve their overall multicultural understandings if principals and teachers adjust their approaches to enhance their multicultural and antibias education. As a result, this would improve their multiculturalism for years to come. The students would subsequently feel better prepared to be culturally competent entering high school.

This study could help preparation programs for administrators to take these findings and consider what supports they could emphasize to prospective administrators. This study could inform future administrators where the gaps are in multicultural understanding in these schools and inspire future administrators to enter their coursework with motivation to help fill these gaps. Coursework in these programs could focus on the struggles that prevent administers from providing support that they see lacking.

The final group who could apply understandings from this study is preparation programs for teachers. These programs could see what supports principals are giving teachers and what supports principals are struggling to give White teachers. The new teachers may be able to enter the field thinking critically about how to use effective teaching strategies if missing some administrative support. These seven groups have the potential to benefit based on the increased understanding that this study could provide. In the next section, I discuss the delimitations of the study.

Delimitations

This study was delimited in several ways. Delimitations are categorized according to the participants, the setting, and myself as the researcher.

The participants in this study were first respondents to my initial survey, that was sent to 167 principals in the state of Massachusetts from schools that are rural, predominantly White with middle grades. I then conducted ten in-depth interviews with the ten individuals who agreed to answer questions. When considering the participants, the schools also were required to contain at least one of the middle grades (5-8) to serve as a frame of reference for the questions they are asked. For example, a school may include grades 1-6, but the principal was being asked specifically about the supports he or she provides to the teachers of grades 5 and 6 at that school, since those are the middle grades within the school. Middle grades were the focus in this study due to the lack of research for this specific age group in multicultural understandings. While the topic of this research study was directly associated with the teachers and students, the participants were only principals. This allowed the results to illuminate the perceptions of these figures in the phenomenon. The teacher and student perspectives may be the focus in a subsequent study.

Special considerations were given for the setting. Separate middle schools are not as common in the geographic region of the study, which was the state of MA. To allow for a larger sample pool, this study did not look solely at stand-alone middle schools that do not have other grades within the building. Rather, this study included any schools with any of the grades in the range of fifth grade through eighth grade. The geographic region of the study was the state of Massachusetts. This particular state was selected because of the high number of schools that have a predominantly White faculty and student body. In the state of Massachusetts, 167 schools

are deemed rural and predominantly White in terms of student population and faculty population. The survey asked the principals if they would be willing to be interviewed for more insight into this topic.

Personal researcher biases needed to be delimited as a crucial step in making the study authentic (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This entailed making personal considerations. As the researcher, I am a former middle grade White teacher of White students and the study was conducted in the state where I was previously educated at multiple schools. Those schools were part of the survey pool for inviting principals to participate in the study. These connections increased the meaningfulness of the study to myself, as the researcher. The principals may recognize my name and felt more inclined to participate based on previous work relationships. The next section provides a review of the literature, which frames the theoretical underpinning for this study.

Review of the Literature Summary

The review of the literature is organized according to three main sections. These include (a) benefits of multicultural and antibias education, (b) implementing multicultural education, and (c) the role of educational leadership in promoting multicultural understandings.

The first section described the importance of multicultural education and defines it. To conceptualize multicultural understandings, a person must understand racism, antiracism, bias, antibias and multiculturalism (Derman-Sparks, 2008; Neito, 1996). Understanding the foundational definition and background for each of these terms contributed to a broader understanding of how they influenced to the wider definition of multicultural understandings (Alismail, 2016; Derman-Sparks, 2008; Derman-Spark & Ramsey, 2011). Multicultural

understandings is more than a concept, it encompasses curriculum, activities, programs, assignments, and an overall culture within itself (Gay, 1994; Jones, 2015; Nieto, 1996).

This second section addressed the implementation of multicultural understandings. Research illuminates approaches to implicit and explicit multicultural education. Various racial combinations between students and teachers were discussed. Research provided insights into seven factors and conditions that promote and inhibit multicultural education, from which school leaders can learn and grow (Bradshaw, 2017; Lachuk & Mosley, 2011; McCann, 2012; Milligan & Howley, 2015; Tatum & Brown, 1998; Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2016).

The third section discussed the of role school leaders, with an emphasis on principals, in expanding the multicultural understandings of schools. An understanding of change theory led to an exploration of the unique and important role of principals in developing multicultural education within schools as divided into three phases (Singleton & Linton, 2006). This subsection culminated by examining the principal's role in the context of three seminal works in educational leadership (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Marzano, Waters, and McNulty, 2005; Wahlstrom et al., 2010).

The literature was intended to provide insight as to why multicultural understandings are important, how multicultural education can be effectively implemented, and why school leader support is important in successful multicultural education implementation. The review of the literature, however, lacked insight into how principals can support White teachers expanding multicultural understandings in White middle grade students at rural schools. The next section outlines the study's method, which delineates a plan to address this void in the literature.

Method

The following section articulates the different aspects of the study's methodology: the design approach employed and its rationale selection of participants and setting, development of instruments, and processes for data collection and analysis. It also includes a description how confidentiality and anonymity are prioritized for the participants.

Type of Design and Rationale

This study was an explanatory sequential mixed methods study. Creswell and Creswell (2018) wrote that this type of study "is one which the researcher first conducts quantitative research, analyzes the results, and then builds on the results to explain them in more detail with qualitative research" (p. 15). By first exploring how principals would rate their experiences and insights, it then allowed for further exploration to occur through in-depth interviews. Creswell and Creswell (2018) also said that this type of study usually begins with a larger pool of participants and then is narrower in the qualitative half.

Participants and Site

Due to the specificity of the topic, the participants had to fit specific criteria, which included being a principal of a school that houses middle grades that are predominantly White, in a rural setting. These schools were also required to have a predominantly White faculty. According to the US census data, the country is designated as "predominantly White" with 77% of the population reported as White and the state of Massachusetts as 81% White. For the purpose of this study, 80% quantified predominance in race. In order to fit the qualification of "rural" for this study, I used the US census data for rural cities and towns in Massachusetts (US Census Bureau, 2017; Rural Commonwealth, 2018). By narrowing down the schools based on if they are in a rural community, have middle grades (5-8) and if both the student population and

the faculty population were both 80% White, this left 167 principals to ask to answer the closed-response survey (US census, 2017; MA DESE, 2018). The next subsection explains the instrumentation used on the study.

Development of Instruments

Following Creswell and Creswell's (2018) guidelines for an explanatory sequential mixed methods study, there were two instruments used in this study: a closed-response survey and in-depth interviews. The study began with the closed-response survey, a quantitative instrument with a larger participant pool that led to a narrower participant pool for the second half of the study—the interview—the qualitative element. Both instruments were developed using the seven areas that, when present, promote multicultural understandings and when lacking, inhibit multicultural understandings.

Closed-response survey. The first instrument was a closed-response survey that was sent to participants via email on the invitation to participate (see Appendix A) with a link to the survey. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), this served as the quantitative instrumentation in the first part of an explanatory sequential mixed method study.

The content of the closed-response survey was created with the three guiding research questions in mind. The questions were general at first, and then made more specific by asking about specific parties. This included direct self-reflection for the principals and then reflective questions on their view of the teachers and students. The questions were put on a Likert scale for ideas like frequency of an action and how important they considered an idea.

The survey was developed using the Qualtrics website. The survey was used for quantitative information and to select the participants for the in-depth interviews that served as

the qualitative half of the study. The survey ended with asking the participants if they would be willing to participate in an interview and to provide their preferred format for doing so.

In-depth interviews. The second instrument used in this study was in-depth interviews. Participants were first given a letter of informed consent to participate in the interview. As Creswell and Poth (2018) explained collecting "data from individuals who have experienced a phenomenon by using in-depth interviews" with open-ended questions allows the researcher to use textual and structural descriptions (p. 79). Having in-depth interviews was essential for effective data analysis of a phenomenology, which was the qualitative half of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study.

The in-depth interview questions were based on questions in the closed-response survey. The survey was to gauge principals' overall thoughts, reflections, and opinions, but the in-depth interviews were meant to inspire the principals to provide more background and reasons why they gave the responses they did on the closed-response survey. For example, the principals were asked in the closed-response survey to rate how frequently they work on expanding their own multicultural understandings. In the interview, they were reminded of their answer to that survey question and then asked to describe what that looks like. The two instruments played a major role in the data collection, which is described next.

Data Collection

This subsection delineates the data collection processes. This includes, addressing researcher biases, bracketing procedures, software for data collection, and format options for the interviews.

Data collection began with first recognizing my own biases to help diminish them (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Having been a White teacher of White students of a middle

grade, I had to be aware of my own biases as part of a personally important study. As Creswell and Poth (2018) explained, bracketing is typically necessary in a phenomenology. Even though this study had a quantitative piece that made it technically an explanatory sequential mixed methods study, procedural considerations for phenomenology applied to this study. In bracketing, the researcher has to view the phenomenon with a fresh perspective and not let previous experiences affect the data collection or analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). From there, it is the researcher's responsibility not to influence the participants' responses in any way. This study used bracketing to diminish researcher bias.

The survey data was collected using the Qualtrics website. The participants were first sent an email requesting their participation with a letter that explains that there is zero risk and how their participation would provide further insight into the field of Education (see Appendix A). After one week, the pool of participants received a reminder email about the survey. I then closed the survey after two weeks to begin the statistical analysis of the survey responses. Ten of the survey respondents expressed interest in being interviewed and I interviewed them in-person or over the phone.

The interview, based on availability, occurred over the phone or in-person. The survey asked respondents' preferences. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed and entered into NVIVO coding software for data analysis. This led to the analysis process as described in the next section.

Data Analysis

This subsection describes the data analysis procedure, which considered the quantitative data to look for deeper meaning in the qualitative data. This subsection then looks at how responses are to be analyzed according to quantitative and qualitative lenses. The deepest,

richest, analysis is to take place in the qualitative half in which I follow Creswell and Poth's (2018) spiraling method of phenomenological analysis.

Since this study was an explanatory sequential mixed methods study, the first portion was quantitative. The data analysis started with looking at the survey averages for each of the seven action areas that categorized the questions. This information gave an overview of trends for the larger participant pool. Creswell and Creswell (2018) wrote that conducting a survey first allows for meaningful participant selection for the qualitative half of the study. Commonalities in principal perspectives was to be included in data analysis. The quantitative information helped prioritize the emerging themes in the quantitative data analysis. The interview protocol was closely related to the survey so that the same topics were covered to probe deeper.

The next stage of analysis was for the interviews, which was the qualitative element of the study. The qualitative piece phenomenological in nature. Creswell and Poth (2018) wrote that data analysis for a phenomenology consists of a spiral that begins with data collection. In order to reach the final phase of taking account of findings, I had to manage and organize the data, read and memo emerging ideas, describe and classify codes into themes, develop and assess interpretations, and represent and visualize the data.

Within the context of a phenomenology, this process occurred in nine steps, that I followed. Creswell and Poth (2018) added that first, I had to create and organize data files. I then read through the text, making margin notes and form initial codes. The third step was that I had to describe personal experiences of the participants through an epoche. From this, I described the essence of the phenomenon, from which I formed exemplifying statements that were grouped into meaning units. In the final phase, I developed textual descriptions that culminated into the

essence. Creswell and Poth (2018) also emphasized that the goal here was to provide an exhaustive description of the phenomenon.

The data analysis followed Creswell and Poth's (2018) recommendations for phenomenological interview analysis procedures. The analysis, in short, had quantitative analysis to extract initial trends. The qualitative analysis found exemplifying statements to represent highly prevalent themes. The third and final step was tying the two together to formulate findings. Since Marzano et al. (2005), Hitt and Tucker (2016) and Wahlstrom et al. (2010) all shared important contributions to effective educational leadership practices, their guidelines provided helpful organizational lenses when synthesizing the results and findings. The final subsection of method briefly describes confidentiality with regard to the study.

Confidentiality

All participants were provided with a letter of informed consent when asked to participate in the study (see Appendix A). The letter of informed consent communicated the purpose of the research, procedures, the benefits, and how their answers and identity are kept confidential. This letter, inviting participants to be a part of this study, assured the principals that their identities would not be revealed in the study. Also, the letter clearly stated that the participant can withdraw at any time. My contact information, along with the contact information of my senior advisor and the IRB representatives at Lesley were available on the letter. All information was securely saved on a password-protected computer. The next section briefly describes each of the chapters of the dissertation.

Chapter Outline

Chapter One serves as the introduction section to provide the reader with background of the problem, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, and the definitions of terms. The

first chapter also includes the definition of key terms, significance of the study, a brief description of the method, the delimitations, and a chapter outline.

Chapter Two is the review of literature section, which entails a thorough exploration divided into three major sections. These sections include the benefits of expanding students' multicultural understandings, research about the process of implementing multicultural understandings in various learning scenarios, and the principal's role in leading change.

Chapter Three discusses the study's method. This chapter provides an overview of the research design, describes the participants and setting, and explains the instrumentation used. It also includes the data collection and analysis procedures, as well as the issues of trustworthiness, delimitations, and limitations.

Chapter Four summarizes and analyzes the results, leading to findings. These are organized by research questions. Common themes and understandings are presented and findings are extrapolated.

Chapter Five begins with a summary of the study, which then leads to the discussion subsection to interpret the findings and conclusions. This section also includes future research implications and the final research reflections.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

How to expand students' multicultural understandings has been a growing area of interest in the field of education, politics, and life in general. The amount of resources for school leaders and teachers, however, is still limited. There is a growing amount of research on teaching strategies for educators of early childhood, high school and college students. When it comes to middle school (grades 5-8), the information becomes extremely limited. Resources are even more slim when not just discussing how to expand students' multicultural understandings, but also when looking into how to teach multicultural understandings as a White teacher of White students. The lack of understanding is concerning because it is a pertinent issue in the United States. While the United States is a melting pot of cultures and races, there are still single-race communities and learning environments nationwide. Trainor (2008) stated that "most White students in the United States attend all White schools; most live in highly racially segregated neighborhoods and have little regular, substantial contact with people of other races" (p. 130). Single-race learning environments affect youths' development because these particular settings shape who they are in early elementary grades and continue to do so throughout their years of schooling. Winans' (2010) findings stated that students who grow up and go to school in racially segregated places have an increased likelihood to develop racial illiteracy. Diangelo (2018) developed the idea that segregation in our nation is alive and well and schools are a place where this is most evident. White neighborhoods have White schools and Diangelo (2018) added that more often than not, White students are not taught by a non-White teacher until they teacher higher education.

The purpose of this literature review is to illuminate what is known about teaching and supporting multicultural understandings. As a result of sharing existing literature, this review identifies a major disparity in understanding. This chapter is broken into three main sections. The first section gives the background of terminology and ideologies, which defines racism, antiracism and multicultural education and the benefits of multicultural understandings. This is necessary for exploring the principal's responses in the study. The second section shares what works when teaching multicultural understandings and considering the Whiteness of the teacher and the students. The second section also highlights the factors and conditions that promote and inhibit multicultural understandings in schools. The final section of the literature review investigates what has been written about the role of the school leader in promoting multicultural understandings. This section provides information that comes closest to the central topic of the study. These three sections argue that the problem is that there are insufficient understandings with regard to how principals support White teachers expanding to White students' multicultural understandings in the middle school grades (Gay, 1994; Tatum, 2017; Winans, 2010).

Benefits of Expanding Multicultural Understandings

Multicultural understandings, for the usage of this literature review and the study conducted in this dissertation, describes wide, strongly established, conceptualizations of others' differences. Lachuk and Mosley (2011) explained that this type of education is grounded in perspective-taking. While curriculums can play a role in how multicultural understandings are fostered, it is the participants' internalization that defines the learning that takes place (Lachuk & Mosley, 2011). Multicultural understandings have numerous benefits for students' educational experiences (Alismail, 2016). If schools are going to combat racism and racial bias, then it is necessary for everyone in the school community to discover their own racial identities (Alismail,

2016). This self-discovery process is useful for both the teacher and the student in improving both of their performances (Derman-Sparks, 2008). When a person discovers facets of personal identity, this can include the person's antibias roots (Derman-Sparks, 2008). For a person to learn of personal racism or bias, the individual needs to understand the meaning of these terms.

Defining Racism

To be antibias means to be antiracist. To best understand antiracism, a clear definition of racism is necessary. Aveling (2007) described racism as the result of people's personal attitudes, values and practices interacting with those of society and larger organizations. While history outlines progress in the United States, with the end of racial segregation by legislation, this country is by no means untouched by contemporary racism. Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2011) contended that examples of modern-day racism in the U.S., are due to economic disparities between People of Color and Whites.

Diangelo (2018) articulated that dismantling modern racism requires constructive, critical feedback from others. She wrote strictly from the White perspective and recommended White people receive feedback on problematic patters of racism. Diangelo (2018) added that, "one of the greatest social fears for a white person is being told that something that we have done is racially problematic" (p. 4). She continued that rather than receiving that feedback with appreciation, White people often receive it with insult or denial. These types of interactions can and should be helpful, Diangelo (2018) wrote, but only after the individual accepts and owns his or her mistake. Only that internalization will effectively dismantle a person's racism.

As Poteat and Spanierman (2012) asserted, modern racism has numerous branches, including three main perspectives. The first is social dominance orientation, which is the idea that there are hierarchies among groups in society that place certain groups higher up than others

(Poteat & Spanierman, 2012). They contended that in social dominance orientation, dehumanization and competition are the central causes of prejudice, which are driven by discrimination based on feeling threatened by the societal status quo. The second perspective that Poteat and Spanierman (2012) described as characterizing modern racism is right-wing authoritarianism. They wrote that right-wing authoritarianism predicts racial prejudice, like social dominance orientation, but differs in that it has the three qualities of authoritarian submission, conventionalism, and authoritarian aggression. The third perspective that predicts modern racism is color-blind racial ideology in which participants ignore their prejudice. Color-blind racial ideology risks further perpetuation of racist ideas in modern society. People who follow color-blind racial ideology desire to function regardless of race. Poteat and Spanierman (2012) explained that individuals may develop color-blind racial ideology prior to either social dominance orientation or right-wing authoritarianism and feel justified in their prejudice. They feel convinced that by not acknowledging racial differences means that they do not perpetuate the disparities between groups. The opposite is true, however. Poteat and Spanierman (2012) continued that those who function under color-blind racial ideology maintain the societal status quo and long-established prejudice will only remain and not diminish. Color-blind racial ideology typically involves subtle instances of racism that may manifest subconsciously.

One of the more modern, seminal books to come out is *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria: And Other Conversations About Race* by Beverly Tatum (2017). In the newly revised and updated version, she emphasized the fact that the population of Americans of Color is on the rise, making it even more pressing for White students to have multicultural viewpoints. Tatum (2017) added that with the proportional shift on non-White Americans on the rise, segregation is still strong. In the Northeast, 50% of Black students attend

schools that are 90-100% non-White. Tatum (2017) asserted, “Students are, once again, predominantly assigned to schools based on where they live, and to the extent that neighborhoods are segregated, the schools remain so” (p. 4). In such segregated scenarios, the predominantly White settings are marked by the color-blind perspective. Tatum (2017) furthered this idea by writing that in the current student population, there is a color-blind millennium that she argues should be re-labeled, “color-silent” (p. 24). She emphasized the widespread mindset that it is better to not mention or address racial differences that is carried into our schools and society as a whole. With a sense of what modern racism is in the U.S., it is possible to imagine how it can be disassembled through antiracism education and action.

Defining Antiracism

The Oxford Dictionary (2017) defined the term “antiracism” as, “The policy or practice of opposing racism and promoting racial tolerance.” In general, antiracism refers to the process of working toward a racist-free society and is often used interchangeably with the terms nonracist and nonracial (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011). Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2011) described an antiracist as a person who is on a life-long journey of four developmental phases. The first is exploring racism, which involves self-reflection on personal biases and the biases of organizational affiliations in the person’s life. The second phase is experiencing a sense of remorse, anxiety and/or guilt due to the prevalence of racism in modern society. This happens as the person learns more of the realities of society. Sometimes the process is stifling and prevents individuals from moving further in the process of becoming an antiracist. For those who do not feel overcome by modern racism, they move onto the third phase, which is reaching out to others who are equally trying to disassemble their own racism and rewrite what it means to be White. This contrasts the history of Whiteness in association with superiority. The final phase is actively

participating in antibias and multicultural work through social justice movements and every day choices and continual self-reflection. To be antiracist means to be antibiased and embody multiculturalism. A person must have a sound understanding of what these ideas are and how these ideas contribute to the process of being an antiracist. At this point, the person is fully immersed in the fourth and final phase (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011).

Defining Multicultural Understandings

The Oxford Dictionary (2017) defines the term "multiculturalism" as, "The presence of, or support for the presence of, several distinct cultural or ethnic groups within a society." To teach multiculturalism is to have students embody social capital. This means that students' relationships encourage trust among their peers, as well as a group mentality of equality, where everyone interacts horizontally, rather than in a hierarchically (Putnam, 1995). All students can see each other as equals in terms of their rights, but embrace their unique qualities. These unique qualities do not make any one person higher in rank than another. If they can embrace this understanding, then they will achieve communicative equality (Szretzer, 2000). Multiculturalism exists when there is diversity in the population and it is acknowledged. This definition also recognizes that even if the population is not diverse, there must be "support for the presence…" of diversity in the greater population (Oxford Dictionary, 2017). Alismail (2016) described multicultural understandings as a response to the diversity in the American population due to immigration over time. A caveat in his analysis is that he wrote that fostering multicultural understanding in school is solely the practice of teaching a diverse group of students with the purpose of achieving equal opportunity in school. He added that this version of multicultural understandings provides equal opportunities and income later in life. While this is an important aspect of multicultural understandings in schools, it is not the only role that it plays in

educational settings. Alismail (2016) also did not acknowledge the numerous learning institutions in the United States that are not diverse in student race and culture. It does not mean that multicultural education does not exist there, but rather, it manifests in an alternative form.

Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2011) wrote that some teachers take a more surface-level approach to integrating multiculturalism into their classrooms. For example, they described educators who use award-winning books that critics acclaim as the best representations of multiculturalism. These pieces of literature have a contrary effect. Books are an integral part of children's developing understanding of the world and its people. Any misappropriation or misrepresentation in those works can falsely lead students' developing perspectives on race and ethnicity. This occurs because many publishers choose to work with the most well-known authors, even if they contain superficial ideas about minority groups (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011). A multiplicity of sources is key when teaching multiculturalism because multiculturalism means that there is not one correct view of a group of people. A teacher cannot use one book to teach about a single race. An effective practice is to incorporate as many resources as possible, so that students see different perspectives on the same concepts. A well-rounded viewpoint requires a great deal of reflection on the part of the educator. For example, three different books may all portray Black people celebrating Kwanzaa and a White class may then think that all Blacks celebrate Kwanzaa. Teachers need to put themselves in the learners' shoes and think about how it feels to know little to nothing about another group/culture/race/ethnicity. A teacher must also model a reflective approach to the material so that students will learn to ask critical questions about the content and how it is being presented. Of course, the level and types of questioning depend on the age of the students and the grade. It is important for the teacher to think about the generalizations that students will formulate. The specific strategies to foster

multicultural understandings vary by locality, student body and the teacher. What is inconsistent is that teachers are often unsure about how to teach in a multicultural, responsive way. Alismail (2016) concluded that teachers "seem to be uncertain about the specific values of multicultural education and are not sure how to implement the principles of multicultural education effectively" (p. 144). He asserted teacher preparation programs must embrace an antibias approach to better prepare prospective teachers in effective practices of multicultural education.

Antiracists who embrace multiculturalism are able to broaden their perspectives by learning about a wide array of cultures and races. Antibias is a part of being an antiracist. Bias refers to prejudices and perceptions that people hold that affect their later experiences (Alismail, 2016). Teachers must develop cultural sensitivity to teach without bias. Consistent self-reflections on students' work prevents bias. Practitioners' self-reflection is key in this process. Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2011) contended, to carry out any type of multicultural or antibias work, educators must have a deep understanding of their biases. This means that educators must understand what they know and explain what areas of knowledge need strengthening. Since teaching multiculturalism requires educators to teach about identities outside of their own, this means teachers need to learn as they teach. Teachers of multiculturalism must learn alongside the students. Teachers reflect on what they think they know and what they think is true. They then fill in the gaps. This process brings them clarity on misconceptions or gaps in knowledge. That misinformed perspective can taint the information the teacher passes along to students. This perpetuates a cycle of maintaining stereotypes. Is it a concern if stereotypes are perpetuated? Why does it matter if a student can describe the difference between African-Americans and Haitian-Americans if the student can score high on the required standardized tests? The answer may not be obvious, but is important. Before exploring how multicultural understandings benefit

learning in different scenarios, it is helpful to better conceptualize the general benefits of multicultural understandings.

Benefits of Multicultural Understandings in Learning and Education in General

Expanding multicultural understandings goes beyond a more well-rounded perspective. Gay (1994) outlined the foundational principals of general education and found clear connections tied to multicultural education. Many of these are in alignment with democratic values. Furthermore, Gay (1994) argued that multicultural education is a necessary component of general education. He wrote that a teacher must foster multicultural ideals to perform effective teaching practices. Additionally, Gay (1994) identified four reasons as to why multiculturalism is necessary in general education. The first was that cultural background and ethnic identity guide students' attitudes, values, and actions in a variety of situations. The guiding process makes them better prepared to respond in diverse situations. A second reason was that multicultural education can diminish student and faculty biases. This decreases stereotypes in the larger society. A third reason was that learning is possible if all students feel welcome and experience equity. This needs to extend to both social and academic domains of school. The fourth reason was highly connected to the third. Gay (1994) asserted, students must learn about what qualities the community values for the students to develop socially. Students understand that there is more to others than what appears on the outside. Multicultural understandings give students tools to learn more about races, cultures, religions and ethnicities.

All teachers must understand how to expand students' multicultural understandings to make it an integral part of general education. Jones (2015) built upon the definition of multicultural understandings as curriculum, activities, programs and assignments that focus on respecting all cultures. Nieto (1996) wrote, that expanding a student's multicultural

understandings "challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic and gender among others) that students, their communities and teachers represent" (p. 208). This definition of a diverse community showed that even if the student body is completely White, there is still diversity present. The definition also stated that respecting differences is a necessary skill for all students to learn. Reis and Mendez (2009) wrote about the trend of increasing diversity in schools in the United States and how American culture needs to focus on redefining diversity to mean more than just race. The National Association of Multicultural Education provided a definition that goes beyond race by writing, "multicultural education includes…the ways societies set up boundaries between the cultural, social, political, and ideological lines the interrelated matrix of class and classism, race and racism, gender and sexism, disability and ableism, etc." (National Association of Multicultural Education, 2019). This perspective is broader than most. The caveat with being so broad, as Kohli, Pizarro, and Nevarez (2017) warned, is that have too wide of a scope can cause a group of people to ignore branches of diversity that are not present and then there is an increased likelihood for microaggressions. For example, if a predominantly White school does not routinely make racial diversity a topic to better understand, those White students are more likely to exhibit microaggressions toward non-White students, whether they be conscious or unconscious (Kohli et al., 2017). The culmination of these definitions of multicultural understandings, have specific implications when applied at the middle school level, which is discussed next.

Benefits of Multicultural Understandings, Specifically at the Middle School Level

For this study, I refer to middle school grades as 5-8 in alignment with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Depending on the location, these grades

could be housed in an elementary school, high school, a mixture, or have their own building. If multicultural understandings benefit general education, regardless of student age, then are there specific benefits for different grade levels? Many authors and researchers have affirmed this idea. Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2011) contended that early childhood is an important developmental period to start the process of expanding students' multicultural understandings. It shapes students' learning for the rest of their educational careers. Poteat and Spanierman (2012) studied 342 White college students to investigate the prevalence of the three modern racist perspectives. These include right-winged authority, social dominance orientation and color-blind racial ideology. They found that color-blind racial ideology was the most popular and supplied evidence of specific cases where blatant racism appeared. Poteat and Spanierman (2012) remarked that these college students entered school without these ideas about race. Their time at the college did not shape their perspectives because they were not there long enough. This means that students' racial perspectives are shaped before entering college. This further emphasizes the importance of primary and secondary education in students' identity development. Middle school is a time and place where students begin questioning themselves more than ever. This is to the credit of the high media influence that is constantly around them mixed with hormonal changes (Ward, 2013). Tatum and Brown (1998) conducted a study with middle school students. These students were either just beginning or fully immersed in adolescence. The researchers connected adolescence with these students' racial identity formation and found that students land on a continuum of how they view themselves. Where they landed on the continuum was contingent upon where they were in their growth and development in adolescence. With a better conceptualization of multicultural understandings and its associated terminology, this paper explores what research has been done when expanding multicultural understandings.

Research Implementing Multicultural Understandings

Middle school is evidently a vulnerable time for adolescents because they are expediting in their identity development, especially in their racial-identity development. Racial identity is "the belief systems that evolve in response to the racial group categorizations given meaning by the larger society (Lawrence & Tatum, 2008, p. 49). There have been studies and literature written about how White teachers can expand multicultural understandings in students younger and older than middle schoolers. There has also been research and literature about how any racially-affiliated teacher can effectively expand multicultural understandings in an all-White class at levels other than middle school. What is lacking most is concrete work on how a White teacher can teach a group of White middle school students about multicultural understandings. There are first findings about multicultural understandings that are general and not specific to White teachers or White students. This paper investigates research about White teachers specifically and research about their role in expanding students' multicultural understandings. This leads to what the field of Education has deemed as effective practices. The section also describes work that shares the effective instructional practices for teaching multicultural understandings to White students as a White educator. I conclude the section with research on the factors and conditions that promote and inhibit multicultural education.

General Multicultural Teaching Practices

Regardless of the race of the students and the race of the teacher, research has found certain teaching strategies as most effective when fostering multicultural understandings at all grades. However, there are teaching strategies for multicultural understandings that are consistent, regardless of the students' racial make-up. Bradshaw's (2012) work in early childhood emphasized the importance of teacher self-questioning when reflecting. Whether the

lesson is explicitly about race or not, there is a series of questions that the teacher should ask him or herself. These questions are a cultural self-examination. These questions improve the learning environment by offering more diverse representations of other races and cultures. Bradshaw (2012) found the more often that teachers ask themselves these questions, the more likely they are to foster a multicultural learning environment. Bradshaw's (2012) questions included, "How do I communicate respect to others? What type of verbal cues do I use?" (Bradshaw, 2012, p. 9). As Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2011) explained, early childhood educators' word choice establishes the vocabulary and verbal norms for everyone present. The second question that Bradshaw (2012) wrote is vital for cultural self-reflection. He asked, "How much choice do I believe young children should have in making decisions?" (p. 9). This could apply to older grades, like middle school, since the amount of choice that students make varies based on their age. Middle school students can make more decisions every day, both large and small. For students to expand their multicultural understandings, choice is essential because it gives them the chance to show their understandings of equality when exhibiting independence. Self-reflection is important because if all students do not have the same choices, then students sense inequality (Tatum & Brown, 1998). Tatum and Brown (1998) shared that adolescents are more observant and susceptible to their surroundings. This affects their personal racial identity. A third question that Bradshaw (2012) found as important for early childhood educators to consider is, "What do I consider developmental milestones for adaptive and self-help behaviors?" (p. 9). At first glance, this looks like a question that does not pertain to the middle school level, but it does. The main reason why a teacher should ask him or herself this question is because each culture and race has unique qualities that inform students' behaviors. For example, if a student is Chinese and does not make eye contact when speaking to the teacher, it is not out of disrespect,

but rather, it is the student's way of following a cultural norm. A teacher must understand the Chinese culture to respond appropriately. The third question of self-reflection, applies especially at the middle school level. It asked, "How much do I know about the various races and cultures represented in my classroom?" (Bradshaw, 2012, p. 9). This question could include things other than behavioral norms. The more the teacher knows about students' backgrounds, the more the teacher can create bonds with the students. These bonds are grounded in understanding and interest. The fourth question that Bradshaw (2012) outlined is, "What are the typical family roles and interactions in my culture?" (p. 9). This question could be grouped with the third question when thinking about the role of family in different cultures. When teachers are reflecting upon their family norms based on their cultures, it requires an introspective look on personal racial identity. The fourth question was then broken into two separate questions. The first was, "What role does family play in my students' cultures and how does this affect their learning?" (Bradshaw, 2012, p. 9). The second question was, "How does my own personal racial identity influence my perspective of others' cultures and my actions." This question provides deeper self-reflection to identify personal biases and privileges. In the next section, I discuss how these ideas apply to White teachers specifically. The last question that Bradshaw (2012) shared is, "How much information about my personal life is appropriate/acceptable to share with others?" (Bradshaw, 2012, p. 9). This is another question that applies to both the teacher and the students. The teacher must reflect on the appropriate amount to share and still be appropriate and not over-share. This is based on the students' culture. The teacher must also consider how much to expect from the student when sharing. The teacher must ensure that the students understand the learning norms of the learning environment. Some cultures are more private than others and it is the

responsibility of educators to respect students wishes to remain private. Encouragement to share is often a welcomed strategy across the literature.

Teachers who self-reflect on their own races, their understandings of others' races, and their own teaching practices should also focus on exposing students to different cultures in new ways. Tichnor-Wagner, Parkhouse, Glazier, and Cain (2016) found that there are three main effective instructional practices for globally responsive education. The first are, "intentional integration of global topics and multiple perspectives into and across the standard curriculum" (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2016, p. 12). The second is, "ongoing authentic engagement with global issues" and "connecting teachers' global experiences, students' global experiences, and the curriculum" (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2016, p. 12). As a variety of pedagogical theorists have explained most teacher education program teaches prospective educators, explicit and implicit instruction are both necessary. A common theme is also that learning occurs at fluctuating levels, based on the content, experience, learners' mindsets and other variables that affect the experience. How the teacher tailors instruction determines the effectiveness of multicultural understandings.

Tailoring Pedagogy and Educator Qualities to Maximize Multicultural Understandings

Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2016) used middle school as a setting for exploring multicultural understandings at the three levels of implicit, surface and deep. Regardless of the pedagogy, the teacher implements the implicit structure in the same way. Implicit structure refers to promoting layered identities, empathy, global interconnectedness, and an emphasis on responsibility. When looking at the second level, surface learning, there is more variety in how the teacher incorporates three pedagogies. The surface level of the first pedagogy (intentional integration) involves global examples and the second pedagogy (engagement with global issues) is grounded

in the standard curriculum. The third pedagogy (connecting experiences) appears as surface learning. Students share their experiences through their coursework, but the process is informal and authentic in nature. When implementing the three pedagogies at the deep structure level, the first pedagogy has three approaches. Intentional integration includes giving students a variety of examples and viewpoints. Ideas are consistently carried throughout the curriculum. This allows the main ideas to be multidisciplinary because of their consistent integration. The deep level of the second pedagogy occurs throughout the duration of the school year. The continuous implementation makes consistency a very important part of the deep structure of integrating globalized education. When it comes to implementing the third pedagogy at a deep level, there needs to be flexibility. Students collaborate to learn from one another and the teacher must be self-reflective on how global experiences are part of the learning environment.

In addition to implementing these three main pedagogies, globally competent educators have another objective. Their identities and professionalism must represent global competence (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2016). Personal qualities that a globally competent teacher have include the ability to communicate in multiple languages. This allows teachers to show their students that they value other languages. This also provides an improved stream of communication if any student or students' families speak another language. The second quality for globally competent teachers is that they must create a classroom environment that promotes diversity and global participation. This environment must value differences. It is essential to have ongoing discussions of current events in the news and a safe place to delve into uncomfortable topics. This environment requires students to be able to share, question and investigate their own identities and each other's identities. This process connects greatly to a third characteristic of these teachers. Globally competent educators take the curriculum and standardized skill-sets that

they are mandated to teach and apply them to real-world issues. As a result, the real-world applications promote students to think deeply about the reasoning behind inequality, injustice, and other world problems. The main objective of bringing in global ideas is to inspire students to be the cause of grass-roots change.

The fourth quality that makes a teacher globally competent is increasing student participation in their learning (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2016). Tichnor-Wager et al. (2016) recognized that reflecting and taking the time to analyze as a class is highly valuable. They emphasized that if students are feeling inspired to make a change, the next phase is to interact directly with those who live in different places. With technologies like video conferencing, email, and other social media outlets, it is easier than ever for classrooms across the world to communicate and collaborate. Ideas that once seemed distant and to which students could not relate suddenly enter these students' worlds. The fifth teacher initiative is to take these relationships with people outside of school to the next level. This means establishing a partnership with a goal or initiative in mind. By building a sense of empathy in this partnership, students' personal investments in the initiative are heightened. This increases their participation. The final quality that a globally responsive teacher must implement is to assess students' academic proficiencies alongside formative assessments of their multicultural understandings. These assessments must be self-reflective for students and the teacher. The teacher reflects on how to improve instruction to enhance students' perspectives and worldliness. The students reflect on what knowledge they have and what knowledge they lack. The objective of this is not to make students feel as though they have done well or not. The goal is to provide the students with information about themselves. The teachers and students can then work together to plan their journey of lifelong globalized learning.

This section explored research-supported methods for teaching multicultural understandings in general. This paper now explores how to teach multicultural understandings in specific conditions. These conditions include different mixtures of race between the teachers and the students.

Expanding Multicultural Understandings with a White Teacher and Racially Diverse Class

Just as Black and White students differ in many ways, so do teachers of varying races. The strategies that I have brought together in this section could apply to non-White teachers as well, but have been found to benefit White teachers specifically. These strategies for teaching multicultural understandings are not mutually exclusive based on the race of the participants. However, the level of their effectiveness may vary based on the color of the teachers' and students' skin. White teachers who teach multicultural understandings are responsible for following certain effective teaching practices. The first is self-reflection. Self-reflective questioning is useful for all educators expanding students' multicultural understandings. Tatum and Brown (1998) discovered that White teachers' self-reflection is not nearly as insightful and practical when conducted in solitude. They had White teachers routinely collaborate with other educators to discuss their own biases, understandings of other races and cultures and experiences in the classroom. Tatum and Brown (1998) found that these White teachers felt better prepared to foster multicultural understandings in their teaching afterward. Their analysis also contends that students need confidence in who they are when forming their racial identities. Tatum and Brown (1998) warned that a students' positive view of their own racial identity is a lifelong objective, not a semester-long goal. For teachers, this means that their work toward improving how students see themselves and others is ongoing and never ends. The never-ending process of developing a positive perspective of racial identities is continuous for teachers as well. Tatum

and Brown (1998) wrote that people who have a deeper understanding of their own racial-affiliations are more apt to accept others.

Self-reflection plays a major role in expanding multicultural understandings, including teacher self-awareness of biases. These biases can stem from personal, racial and cultural biases. For a White teacher, there are inherent biases that are common. White teachers have their own personal history and racial identity that can influence their bias, but there are commonalities in the biases. Many of these shared biases are subconscious. One bias that many White teachers have is favoritism of Whites over Blacks (Downey & Pribesh, 2004). Downey and Pribesh (2004) found that the strained relationship between Black students and White teachers begins before Kindergarten and carries through adolescence. They have cited evidence that when Black students are matched with Black teachers and when White students are matched with White teachers, there are higher rates of academic success on standardized tests. The results were significantly higher than when there was a racial mismatch between the teacher and the students. In addition, Downey and Pribesh (2004) found that adolescents were overall more frustrated with their White teachers than with their Black teachers.

Downey and Pribesh (2004) investigated why these inherent biases form in White teachers. Lachuk and Mosley (2011) described White teachers as holding onto unearned privileges that they have because of their Whiteness. This involves holding onto a positive self-image in regard to their racial identity. They said this self-image ties White educators together. Lachuk and Mosley (2011) connected privilege with a sense of entitlement for White teachers. White teachers must be taught, at least during their pre-service time, how to reverse any racism and pre-conceived misconceptions about race. An educator preparation program typically can provide a guided reflection process to facilitate this. These concerns are increasing in popularity

today, but there are many teachers who have not been given the opportunity to look at themselves as privileged Whites. Without opportunities to go through racial self-reflective training, these White teachers may still be carrying their residual, unconscious racism. As a result, it may be influencing their instruction. Lachuk and Mosley (2011) found that having open dialog and storytelling helps teachers address their racial entitlements and privileges. The result is that they are able to decrease their unconscious racism. The key to this process is to teach to transform. This involves replacing their perspectives, which is major step is identifying teachers' histories and personal narratives that shaped their viewpoints. The next phase is to analyze their perspective to find the constraints on their view of society and race. Lachuk and Mosley (2011) emphasized that this takes time and requires dedication through sharing and implementing feedback.

Lachuk and Mosely (2011) described teachers taking reflection time away from students by emphasizing how detrimental that can be. Schulz and Fane (2015) argue that the best time for teachers to address their biases is in front of their students to serve as self-reflection models. This is particularly important when the teacher and the students are White because of the numerous privileges and entitlements they carry, mostly subconsciously. Schulz and Fane's (2015) study concluded that if teachers are going to ask their students to discuss and analyze race directly, then teachers need better preparation. Schulz and Fare (2015) asserted that current teacher-preparation programs consider Whiteness a topic that brings silence, rather than discourse. Their findings were based off a qualitative study incorporating interviews with three Australian educators of Health Education. They concluded that students and teachers both can acknowledge their blind spots and biases to better understand them. A better understanding of personal blind spots allows the individual to target areas of their perspective. The role of the White teacher of

White students is to serve as an ally and role-model for speaking up. The teacher acknowledges being in the position of the students and shares the process of diminishing racial bias. This is self-reflection that leads to action and it benefits both the teacher and the students.

Segall and Garrett (2013) found that there is a trend for White teachers to be more reluctant when exploring race because they feel more comfortable with actively ignoring race through a colorblind perspective. They discuss that most White teachers do not have the required knowledge-base about race and racial issues to feel prepared to teach these concepts to students. Lee-Nichols (2012) reported similar findings where White teachers were timid to discuss race with students due to their own lack of knowledge. The White teachers' inexperience with races outside of their own, mixed with influences from their upbringing, were the common reasons as to why they felt uncomfortable with discussing race. Segall and Garrett (2013) agreed that in suburban and rural schools, most teachers are White, middle-class Americans who have lived substantially segregated lives. They found that White teachers could benefit by broadening their knowledge-base about race. The area that needed the most attention was teacher self-reflection on what they do know. Segall and Garrett (2013) argued that living in the United States means that every person has at least a small amount of racial awareness based on experiences they have had. The problem is that White teachers are not comfortable talking about race and then use a lack of knowledge as an excuse to avoid it entirely. One way that White teachers can avoid their own racial bias is to first acknowledge the lens with which they see race (Segall & Garrett, 2013). The White teachers must then remove that lens. These teachers are aware that they try to avoid talking of race and they can then apply this understanding to their students. White students may develop an avoidance of speaking about race. After that, teachers need to acknowledge, with their students, the presence of race inside and outside of their classrooms. Segall and Garrett

(2013) further emphasized that even if the entire class is White, race is still there; it's just racial diversity that is missing. It is important for teachers to acknowledge the lack of racial diversity and how it does not represent the greater society. Self-reflective questioning on the part of the teacher is not the only effective practice when fostering multicultural understandings for White teachers. Another effective practice is parent involvement.

Tatum and Brown (1998) recommended having educators share resources and strategies with parents to aid the process of adolescents formulating their racial identity. A commonly known fact is that the perspectives of parents often influence those of their children. This means that if a parent is racist, then those ideas will seem to be the norm to the child. As evident in Tatum and Brown's (1998) research, a person's past is what dictates personal racial identity. A parent who has lived, or still lives, in an area with little diversity may not have been encouraged to learn in a multicultural environment. This instills racism that could be subconscious and unintentional. This racism could overtake their daily actions. As a result, the child grows up around this racist parent and fosters an understanding that racist actions are acceptable. This happens even if the parent's actions are subconscious. Dermin-Sparks (2008) found that encouraging parents to actively expand their multicultural understandings with their children helps both parties foster antibiased perspectives, be more aware of their own White privilege and support developing empathy for other races. A simple strategy is to release a class newsletter that has community events. If it is a multicultural event that takes place in the school, just by having the parent attend means that multicultural ideas matter to him or her. The child sees this and it influences him or her to share the same values. This strategy could also apply specifically to when the teacher and the students are both White. There are strategies for teaching multicultural understandings specifically when the teacher is not White, but the students are White.

Expanding Multicultural Understandings with a Non-White Teacher and a White Class

Winans' (2010) research provided ways that teachers of any race can promote White students to critically review how race influences the way people speak, culture, organizations, beliefs and everyday life. She wrote that White students in an all-White classroom lack knowledge about and experience with other races. This setting hinders their ability to develop a racial identity that considers races other than their own. Racial identity includes how personal race influences thoughts, beliefs and actions. A second part of racial identity is the person's understanding about others' races and how to accept, empower and celebrate them.

Cherng and Halpin (2016) investigated the importance of minority teachers and the influence that their race has on their students. Cherng and Halpin (2016) found that students have a more positive perception of their teacher when they are of the same race due to their ability to relate to one another. Since the minority population in the United States is growing rapidly and substantially, this is why Black students with Black teachers received higher test scores than when there was a racial mismatch between the teacher and students. White students with White teachers received higher scores than where there was a racial mismatch between students and teachers as well. If there is a mismatch between the race of the teacher and the students, then it is the duty of the teacher to work on providing information and opportunities to their students of races outside of their own. Cherng and Halpin (2016) furthered Winans' (2010) notion that when the teacher relates to students based on sharing the same race, they must also take that bond and use it to widen students' perspectives. The teacher must push students outside of their comfort zones and expose them to roles that are less familiar. If the entire class is White, no matter the race of the teacher, the key for student academic success and globalized learning lies in the students' ability to have a positive relationship and bond with their teacher.

Having a relatable teacher is essential when students are attempting to identify their own White privilege and diminish it as much as possible. Denevi and Pastan (2006) described teaching this concept of Whiteness to students. They contended that White students are overwhelmed by a sense of shame in their racial identity. This contrasts the group solidarity that other racial groups experience. White students also feel that they are not justified in doing diversity work because they are convinced that diversity work is the work of people from other races. Denevi and Pastan (2006) introduced several vignettes in which students were convinced that if they performed the required hours of community service in a diverse high school, then they would be able to declare they do not have privilege. They were convinced that by serving the hours, they erased any racism that they may have had due to their upbringing. This was not the case since people cannot dismantle deep-rooted racism so quickly and easily. Denevi and Pastian (2006) asserted that White students who are involved in community service in diverse settings see their time as "work for *other* people and only want to be involved in the work as long as they can see that *other* people are benefitting from their efforts" (p. 72). The problem here lies with the White volunteers in diverse settings who have the objective of destroying the social construct of privilege. These individuals unknowingly cause the privilege to continue. They still cast themselves as separate from those they are helping. If the greater society is to achieve equality, then people must dismantle the concept of the "other." The Whites in this scenario consistently viewed themselves as separate from people of different races, meaning that they are continuing to hold onto their Whiteness. By viewing themselves as separated these people to held onto White privilege. Denevi and Pastian (2006) added that it is difficult for individuals to dismantle their own, personal White privilege. To expect these students to be able to apply it to the entire Western society is very unrealistic. Denevi and Pastian (2006) described

using all-White classes as a starting place to dismantle barriers between races. These classes could work with Black adults with the explicit intention of decreasing racism and advancing shared understandings. While other combinations of races among students and teachers have been well-researched, there is less known about teaching multicultural understandings when the teacher and students are both White.

Expanding Multicultural Understandings with a White Teacher and White Students

When teaching multicultural understandings, it is necessary to consider the audience to a certain extent. White students and students of other racial groups fall in different places on the continuum of racial identity development (Tatum & Brown, 1998). White students tend to be more advanced in their racial identity development by the middle grades than their peers who are not White (Tatum & Brown, 1998). Teaching specifically to an all-White or predominantly White class has differences when compared to teaching in a more racially diverse setting. Crowley-Long (1995) contended that racially homogeneous educational settings make "it difficult to provide students with opportunities to learn about issues of race, class, and ethnicity" (p. 1). She conducted research as to what strategies make this process practical. Her research was set at the college-level, but aligns with research on younger students.

Crowley-Long (1995) provided evidence that if students do not develop a solid understanding of racial issues, they may maintain incorrect or biased views of other people. If these students cannot understand differences in race, they are less likely to understand people of other cultures, religions and genders (Crowley-Long, 1995). When teaching race to White students, a White teacher needs to first establish credibility. At first, most people would not think of a White teacher as the most valid and reliable source to teach about race. However, it is possible. Educators lack knowledge in certain areas and they are responsible for filling those

gaps. This honesty encourages the class to work collaboratively with the teacher to learn about race together. Students then have a deepened understanding because they feel more comfortable. This is because the students can have a teaching role and the teachers can have a learning role. Crowley-Long (1995) wrote about teaching students about race in general terms, but has found it more beneficial to provide students with first-hand accounts from people of different races. To increase effectiveness, Crowley-Long (1995) stated that this instruction should tell about the causes and consequences of prejudice. “In-Class Discussions of Affirmative Action” is a teaching strategy that blends these ideas together (Crowley-Long 1995, p. 1).

This approach starts with either a spontaneous or teacher-moderated discussion that uncovers students’ subconscious racism (Crowley-Long, 1995). These discussions often begin with a student giving a general statement about another race, typically based on stereotypes. In Crowley-Long’s (1995) research, she provided an example of a student describing African Americans as people who receive special privileges just because they are Black. When the teacher asked the student what evidence he had to support his claim, he was only able to provide third-hand anecdotes. The teacher then provided statistical evidence to the student to prove that there are no quota laws for hiring based on race, yet minorities are still underrepresented in high-ranking positions. This discovery of missing knowledge is not intended to make students feel like they were wrong or unintelligent. It is meant to show them that there is much that they do not understand and there is a lot of knowledge they lack because of their privileged, racially homogenous upbringing. Acknowledging the lack of knowledge leads to filling in the gaps. Then it is the time for affirmative action. This involves asking students what could be done to provide equality in opportunities. Thinking about the options for equality gives the students the ability to apply their new understanding.

As previously outlined, teacher self-reflection is important when identifying and addressing personal biases. This applies to direct work with students as well. Crowley-Long (1995) stated that routine use of media outlets, like newspapers, newscasts/websites, and online networking exposes students to people who represent different races. This exposure helps students see that there can be misrepresentations as well as true, positive representations of people of all races. Discussions can deepen about how a single person cannot solely represent an entire race. An individual can influence others' understandings and perspectives of that race when in the right spotlight. Crowley-Long (1995) asserted that it is important to never put the sole non-White student in the position as feeling like the representative for that race. She mentioned that guest speakers can provide great first-hand accounts from people of different races. Like non-White students in the predominantly White classroom, the all-White community should not treat non-White guests as representatives of that race. She explained, "The ultimate goals should be to help students discover their own biases, explore alternative frames of reference, and improve their ability to accept and empathize with diverse populations and orientations" (Crowley-Long, 1995, p. 4). A wide perspective is essential.

The content of lessons is one area in which other cultures can enter the classroom. When teaching Social Studies and American History, there are many instances where the textbooks have struggled to show that White Americans were not and are not perfect. In recent years, books like *Lies Across America* and *Lies My Teacher Told Me* by James Loewen have pointed out the numerous caveats in mass-produced textbooks. His work involved exploring content that textbooks should really be teaching students. He also investigated the rates at which certain ideas are present or lacking in the United States history textbooks in schools today. Noticing these flaws has a downside. As a result of learning that textbooks have struggled to show all of the

truths or even agree on the real history, many school districts are not prioritizing social studies and history. The lack of appropriate materials is due to insufficient funding dedicated to studying the country's past. Inaccurate or biased textbooks remain in classrooms across the nation because they are too expensive to replace. Loewen (2008) found that textbooks would need to discuss the interconnected nature of slavery as a socioeconomic exchange and racism as a way of thinking, rather than a belief system. He also shared that a majority of United States textbooks do not place blame on the United States for things that clearly were ethically wrong. Some textbooks only give credit to the United States for positive accomplishments. He affirmed that seven out of twelve textbooks speak of John Brown, an abolitionist who created the plan to free slaves by capturing the arsenal at Harper's Ferry during the Civil War, even mention him. None of them paint him as a positive figure and three of them call him insane. This leads to the question, if students were taught the often-untold racist history of the United States from the beginning, would White students who grew up isolated from racial diversity, develop enhanced antibias and multicultural awareness and understanding? Having a strong sense of the history of their nation could provide students more depth in their understanding of their personal identities.

There are six identity statuses for Whites of all ages (Lawrence & Tatum, 2008). The first is contact, which is when White people see being White as the norm. This status of contact involves little to no reflection, causing these individuals to ignore their privileges. The second status, disintegration, involves an increase in awareness. These people still hold limited perceptions of other races, racial privileges and racial disadvantages. The most dangerous aspect is that these people attempt to convert others to their perspectives. They do this to try and maintain the status quo and color-blind mentality. The third status is called reintegration, which is when individuals develop a sense of fear and anger toward people of color and blame them for

larger problems. They do this to avoid deeper racism and bias issues. The fourth status is called pseudoindependence, which is when a White person wants to distance him or herself from other Whites. The White person does this hoping to strengthen a bond with people of color. This bond brings them increased awareness about the meaning of race and how it influences a person's identity. The fifth status is a step even father toward embracing racial diversity. This is called immersion/emersion. In this state, the White individual commits to self-reflection and asks questions about the meaning of a person's race in relation to the greater society. The final status is autonomy, which essentially is the highest, most understanding status a person can hold. This is when a White person can find a balance between embracing their Whiteness while actively displaying a commitment to antiracist activity and self-reflection. A person can hold one or more of these statuses at a time and the one that is most overbearing can vary based on the given situation.

Regardless of where a student or a teacher falls on the continuum of racial identity (i.e. what status they hold) everyone is capable of transitioning toward antibias and multicultural embodiment (Lawrence and Tatum, 2008). Once an individual can recognize personal White privilege, usually the person feels guilty or ashamed. These individuals may even want to avoid the topic entirely. That prevents the individual from participating in antibias movements and preventative actions. Lawrence and Tatum (2008) described the importance of action-plans to encourage people to identify the most racist parts of their lives and write what exactly they plan to do to prevent such behaviors. They promoted teacher education as a great starting place for this process. These programs help educators structure their learning environments and curriculum to align with these values and ideas, especially if the class is all or predominantly White. While research has found specific strategies that work well with different racial

combinations, there are commonalities in instructional approaches to expand students' multicultural understandings, regardless of participants' race.

Commonalities for Expanding Students' Multicultural Understandings

Ideas from early childhood education and postsecondary education both give insight as to what works well before students enter middle school and after middle school. Once again, there is a lack of research sharing how White teachers foster multicultural understandings in middle school. By analyzing what has worked in early childhood and postsecondary education with various racial combinations, it is possible to see a set of teaching practices that are consistently useful when there is a White teacher expanding students' multicultural understandings to White students. I ascertain that from a first grader, to a high school senior, these practices have been consistently effective. The first is student self-reflection on personal racial identity (addressing biases and privileges) and others' racial identities. The second is teacher self-reflection on personal racial identity and others' racial identities. This also includes teachers' instructional approaches to expanding students' multicultural understandings, which involves bringing ideas about other cultures into the classroom for explicit instruction, sharing and exploration. Another effective teaching practice is to incorporate multicultural understandings into the already established curriculum. Fostering a safe learning environment where students feel open to share about their racial understandings and misunderstandings. A final, commonly cited, effective teaching practice is keeping parents connected with multicultural understandings values and the role these values can play. The above-stated teaching strategies for incorporating multicultural understandings are not just for the teacher, but also for other school leaders. Administrators and principals play an integral role in bringing the resources, motivation, and reasoning to the

forefront at their schools. What follows is an examination of the factors and conditions that promote and inhibit multicultural understandings in schools.

Promoting and Inhibiting Multicultural Education

When exploring practices for supporting multicultural understandings, a combination of multicultural research and educational leadership research meld together into a succinct list of seven action areas. They include (a) school-wide culture, (b) principal self-improvement, (c) assessment and data collection, (d) teacher feedback, (e) stakeholder support and resources, (f) teacher professional development and accountability, and (g) curricular focus.

When these seven areas are successfully and thoroughly addressed, they each promote multicultural understandings. Each of the action areas has the potential to promote multicultural understandings or inhibit multicultural understands.

School-wide culture. A school's culture is not limited to the classroom setting, but extends into the hallways, athletic fields, and greater community. Scribner, Cockrell, Cockrell, and Valentine (1999) emphasized the importance of a school-wide approach to embracing a multicultural goal. They shared the importance of a collaborative approach and when a goal becomes part of the culture, self-reflection becomes a cultural norm. Within this area, contributing factors include fostering a sense of urgency and expressing a prioritization of multicultural understanding in the school mission. Both Hines (2016) and McCann (2012) noted that if principal preparation programs addressed the importance of school-wide culture focusing on multicultural understandings, then principals were more likely to follow-through on bringing this to their future schools with success.

Biases can easily dismantle a school's culture as a whole. Gay (1994) wrote that just as a school's culture can cultivate multicultural understandings, it can just as easily prohibit their

growth. A school-wide culture where students do not feel welcome and experience equity hinders academic learning (Gay, 1994). Scribner et al. (1999) asserted that a large inhibiting factor against a school-wide culture that fosters multicultural understandings is a lack of collaboration amongst faculty in addressing biases. Diangelo (2018) added that if people cannot collaborate in addressing their biases and racist perspectives, multicultural growth is halted. School-wide culture could also prioritize other aspects of student development more than their multicultural understandings (Scribner et al., 1999).

Principal self-improvement. Similar to how principals are tasked with helping teachers improve their practice, principals are also tasked with improving themselves. As addressed in the later section dedicated to the school leader's role, when principals take the time to reflect on their strengths and areas that require improvement specific to multicultural understandings, they are more likely to have ongoing self-improvement (Bradshaw, 2012). This then leads principals to foster personal motivation for their school to incorporate multicultural understandings (Tatum & Brown, 1998). McCann (2012) also stated that principals who value self-reflective work are more likely to encourage faculty and students to do the same, thus spreading self-reflection further. The area of principal self-improvement can be addressed through goal-setting, designating specific self-reflection time, actively learning about other cultures, and staying up-to-date on multicultural education practices (McCann, 2012; Tatum& Brown, 1998).

Principal self-improvement can serve as an inhibiting factor against a school expanding multicultural understandings if not properly directed. If principals' self-reflection time is dedicated solely to how to better address standardized test scores and not how to dismantle personal, racial biases, they are limiting their ability to address multicultural understandings at their schools (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). Segall and Garrett (2013) contended that a color-blind

perspective may prevent self-reflection of biases, thus limiting their self-improvement specific to expanding their multicultural understandings. If principal self-improvement lacks the proper structure and urgency, it has the potential to be an inhibiting factor.

Assessment and data collection. While the term "assessment" is often met with criticism, the literature has advocated that it can aid in successfully implementing an initiative. Wahlstrom et al. (2010) wrote that school leaders must assess any initiative's progress on an ongoing basis to make necessary adjustments. Such assessments provide critical insight into how time and resources are being utilized to best address the imitative. In the context of promoting multicultural understandings, this may be in the form of taking inventory of how well the seven areas in this section are being addressed. Winans (2010) shared how documenting and assessing students' multicultural understandings leads to effective, school-wide multicultural growth. It is beneficial when teachers communicate with students' previous teachers to facilitate this.

Assessment and data collection is an incredibly important aspect of being a globally competent teacher, according to Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2016). Just as progress-monitoring is helpful in advancing students' multicultural understandings, it can be detrimental and inhibit their progress. If teachers are not properly trained in how to reliably assess students' progress in expanding their multicultural understandings, they may not understand subsequent steps to enhance their understandings further (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2016). Since student self-reflection is an important step to utilizing the assessment data, teachers need to know how to specifically teach their students self-reflection to address biases.

Teacher feedback. In order to promote multicultural understandings in schools, it is important that principals receive feedback from teachers on what they need to better address this initiative. Teachers, rather than administrators, typically have the most direct relationships with

students (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2016). If teachers feel they are lacking the resources, training, or time to address multicultural understandings in their classrooms and act as globally competent educators, they need to feel comfortable to share this feedback with their administrator (Milligan & Howley, 2015). They are the most knowledgeable in the specific needs of their students, since they spend the most time with them in the academic setting. Teachers who are not comfortable expressing what they need to properly integrate multicultural understandings into their instruction are inhibited in addressing this necessity.

Segall and Garrett (2013) and Diangelo (2018) both associated comfort with ignoring race. Diangelo (2018) wrote that there is necessary discomfort White people need to endure to fully self-reflect on their biases and to spark motivation for self-improvement. With a process that is already uncomfortable on a personal level, teachers require a comfortable professional atmosphere to support the dismantling of their biases. Singleton and Linton (2006) added principals need to value all teachers' voices in this process. If the faculty culture does not foster an openness with honesty, then the principal could lack an authentic view of what teachers truly need. Improvements toward increasing the expansion of multicultural understandings is then inhibited. Cheema and Fuller Hamilton (2017) shared that when teachers did not have input on what professional development they wanted, the turnover rate was higher. Teacher feedback can be an inhibiting factor when teachers do not want to focus on multicultural understandings and argue that their efforts should be spent elsewhere. Teachers must see the value.

Stakeholder support and resources. Stakeholders could be local businesses, parents and families, local government, or school committees, but all share an equally important role. Wahlstrom et al. (2010) explained that one of the most effective qualities of a school initiative's success is whether or not it is backed with stakeholder support. Stakeholders tend to have strong

local influence and supply necessary funding (Wahlstrom et al., 2010). Without their support, it is increasingly challenging to update necessary supplies, like outdated textbooks (Loewen, 2008). As a result, a lack of stakeholder support and resources could be an inhibiting factor against a school expanding multicultural understandings.

Stakeholder support and resources have the power to limit the expansion of multicultural understandings at a school as well. Stakeholder support is a supporter of an initiative's success (Wahlstrom et al., 2010). However, if stakeholders are focused on supporting a limited number of initiatives and expanding multicultural understandings does not make the list, then the school's multicultural growth would likely be inhibited. For example, school stakeholders may be more focused on improving student test scores than students' global citizenship. Stakeholder support and resources may also be targeted toward multiculturalism, but not in an effective way. For instance, if the school committee supplies funding for a guest speaker during Black history month and the individual is being utilized as a representative for an entire race, that could further students' unconscious biases and stereotypes. While the stakeholder's intentions may be positive, they need a sense of the resources that are most effective and needed.

Teacher professional development and accountability. Through workshops and trainings, professional development is integrated into teachers' work. In Massachusetts, the fairly new teacher evaluation system is how administrators hold teachers accountable in meeting teaching standards and progress toward goals. Diangelo (2018) wrote of the importance of critical feedback in addressing biases and improving multicultural perspectives to hold people accountable. In addition, Lachuk and Mosely (2011) asserted that taking the time to give detailed feedback on how teachers can improve their multicultural practices in the classroom pays dividends later. Without giving such feedback, teachers would not know if their approaches are

effective and lack direction on how to improve. This opens up opportunities to explore what types of specific professional development would best address the areas in which teachers need the most support (Cheema and Fuller Hamilton, 2017). If teachers are missing the necessary constructive feedback, then the spread of multicultural understandings may be inhibited.

Teacher professional development can inhibit a school's expansion of multicultural understandings if faculty are only offered professional development that ignores multiculturalism (Cheema & Fuller Hamilton, 2017). For example, a workshop about helping struggling learners in math, may not address the need to incorporate multicultural aspects to the subject-areas to encourage implicit multicultural instruction. Teacher accountability, when not utilized with a focus on multicultural understandings, can also inhibit their expansion. The teacher evaluation system in Massachusetts has a strand that is titled, "Meeting the needs of all learners" but does not make any multicultural references in the specific expectations. The lack of specificity has the potential to hinder the effectiveness of the accountability to which principals hold teachers. Also, home-life plays a large role in students' multicultural understandings (Tatum & Brown, 1998). Teachers may feel demoralized if they are held accountable for their students' multicultural understandings when they are not the only factors shaping their students' perspectives.

Curricular focus. As previously discussed, schools that offer curricula that explicitly and implicitly teaches multiculturalism has the power to expand students' multicultural understandings (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2016). When incorporated in already-existing curricula, it is important that there is flexibility in the content and that the curricula is skill-based. It poses more challenges when teachers are tied to certain books and on strict timelines. Opportunities for guest speakers and field trips increase students' exposure to other cultures as well (Crowley-Long, 1995).

A curriculum that focuses on multiculturalism has the potential to inhibit students in expanding their multicultural understandings. Lee, Menkart, Okazawa-Rey (2008) wrote about the pitfalls of integrating multiculturalism into curricula and how the best of intentions may not manifest properly. The name of their book, *Beyond Heroes and Holidays*, summarizes their main argument. A curriculum that has a surface-level, minimalist approach to multiculturalism lacks the time for self-reflection so that students can delve deeper into their biases. Such an approach may actually perpetuate biases that they already hold, thus inhibiting their ability to expand their multicultural understandings.

Seven main areas work together to foster multicultural understandings within schools. When principals are able to consistently address these seven areas effectively, they are more likely to promote multicultural understandings not just with students, but with the school as a whole. Each of these seven action areas, however, have the power to serve as inhibiting factors and conditions for students multicultural understandings. While certain approaches to these seven action areas can serve as inhibitors, an absence of the seven areas can also prevent students' expansion of their multicultural understandings. To better understand how principals can promote multicultural understandings, and avoid the pitfalls of inhibiting them, a closer look at educational leadership literature is necessary. What follows is a discussion on educational leadership research and literature that could guide the implementation of multicultural teaching by a school's principal.

The Role of Educational Leadership in Promoting Multicultural Understandings

To better understand how principals can promote multicultural understandings, and avoid pitfalls of inhibiting them, a closer look at educational leadership research and literature is necessary. The succeeding section is divided into six subsections, which include (a) diverse

settings lend ideas to expanding multicultural understandings, (b) White majority versus White minority, (c) the importance of self-reflection when expanding multicultural understandings, (d) the role of highly effective learning communities on expanding multicultural understandings, (e) middle school applications of expanding multicultural understandings, and (f) three leadership views of expanding multicultural understandings. For the purpose of this paper, school leadership focuses on the school's principal.

Hitt and Tucker (2015) defined leaders as, "Those who influence and mobilize others in the pursuit of a goal" (p. 533). Hitt and Tucker (2015) elaborated that leadership is the leader's actions toward guiding the organization and stakeholders. The leader prompts these groups to take actions that drive the members toward a common goal and vision. In this scenario, of a White principal of a student body of mainly White students, it is the principal who is responsible for guiding the teachers. The guidance ideally teaches teachers how to instruct and integrate multicultural understandings and make multicultural understandings a school cultural norm. This can only happen if the principal can unite the faculty and staff to share this vision and goal.

Singleton and Linton (2006) wrote that the principal is the main force responsible for bringing multicultural understandings into a school. In racially diverse settings, the principal delegates teams of teachers who are focused on equality. These teams focus of closing the achievement gap between White students and minority students. In an all-White (or mostly White) setting, some qualities still hold true. For example, whenever having an initiative that relates to understanding racial differences, the literature has shown that collaboration is essential. This is evident in Singleton and Linton's (2006) description. They wrote that the staff needs to be a part of a team effort and that "Teaching adults differs from teaching students, and thus, it is

the principal's responsibility to develop the skills set necessary to effectively facilitate adult learning" (Singleton & Linton, 2006, p. 235). Working alone would only slow down the process.

While leaders need to value collaboration, a sense of control is an important facet of school leadership (Western, 2008). In order to have a strong vision of change for a school, principals must have a strong, personal understanding of their values toward the institution. This introverted lens is essential when considering possible changes and shifts in the established routines. Western (2008) credits a leader's sense of control as the asset that enables the leader to be able to direct the organization the way they envision. When considering what approached to expanding multicultural understandings principals value most, control may play a major role.

Principals, for the most part, have control over what teachers will implement on a daily basis. Singleton and Linton (2006) gave an example of how principals can begin teaching their staff about racial equality and how these teachers can do the same for their students. An implementation routine can start with sharing a quote from Gerald Pine and Asa Hillard that reads, "Solving the problem of racism is America's unfinished agenda, and it must be regarded by educators as a moral imperative" (Singleton & Linton, 2006, p. 236). The principal is then supposed to ask, "To what degree are the equity efforts under way in this school system a demonstration of our 'moral imperative'?" which then leads to prompting questions to develop a "vision of equity for the school" (Singleton & Linton, 2006, p. 236). They explore three interlocked domains that include community, learning and teaching, and leadership. In each of these categories, they make an equity goal. Small groups then share with the large group and they find commonalities. Participants then formulate a school-wide goal for each domain. The principal writes the goals as a hard-copy for each participant to keep as future reference. Under the domain of leadership, there needs to be acknowledgement that every teacher, regardless of

race, has the same amount to offer to the conversation on race when expanding students' multicultural understandings (Singleton and Linton, 2006). This is one way that a collaborative approach can start the process of drafting a school-wide multicultural goal. Scribner, Cockrell, K., Cockrell D., and Valentine (1999) wrote that the most effective, highly ranking schools are those who have a collaborative team that manage to incorporate the school and district improvement plans into their everyday work. There has been little research-supported information available on how school leaders can support White teachers teaching multicultural understandings to White students as part of larger school-wide goals. The literature has stated, however, that the school leader's role requires self-reflection to build a highly effective learning community as a starting place of collaborative efforts (Scribner et al., 1999). Middle schools benefit from many strategies that work at other levels, but some strategies are specific for middle school students.

Diverse Settings Lend Ideas to Expanding Multicultural Understandings

Information on White principals who teach multicultural understandings in racially and culturally diverse settings gives insight to teaching these values in general that can be applied to various student racial make-ups. As with the teaching strategies described previously in this paper, the race of the student population is worth considering since research on the White administration working with White faculty and White student expanding their multicultural understandings is limited. The purpose of this section is to synthesize the tactics that have worked in other racial mixtures. Even Genao (2016) states that there needs to be more investigations on the impact of student learning of race and bias when the teacher matches the students in race. He adds that this especially applies to when the administration's race is matching the faculty and students' races as well. Theoharis and Haddix (2011) found that White

principals are fully able to take responsible leadership around race and fulfill meaningful intellectual and emotional work. By looking at White leaders in diverse, urban settings, they were able to acquire insight as to what works effectively when creating an inclusive culture. Granted, in these settings, the culture was diverse, making multicultural understandings part of the student body depiction. They found White leaders consistently foster a school climate of acceptance and equality. Having a classroom climate of these qualities are ideas that Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2016) and Crowley-Long (1995) shared as essential in a multicultural classroom. Theoharis and Haddix (2011) wrote that the principals who they studied shared a similar approach. These principals reflected on their consciousness, knowledge and skills around race through hosting professional development on expanding multicultural understandings and designing district-wide curriculum to match these ideas.

Theoharis and Haddix (2011) wrote of more tactics for school cultures to further expand students' multicultural understandings. The six principals in their study brought ideas about race into their data meetings with other administrators. They all had ongoing personal reflection about race and privilege. This brought insight into connections between the demographics of the students and their achievement and behavior. At an all-White setting, data could also play an important role because the school leader could gain a sense of where students are living. They could learn whether or not students' neighborhoods have more diversity. This would allow school leaders to gain insight as to what knowledge they have and if any prejudices could be inherent in their homes. Theoharis and Haddix (2011) argued that treating race as a separate issue from linguistic differences or learning needs like special education, makes it seem as though race does not belong with other equality issues. They argue that educators should teach all equality together. For race to be treated separately would defeat the purpose. The researchers

found that too often, school districts rely on bringing in leaders of color when there are not any. They then give them the duty of facilitating racial equality conversations. This is not feasible in a district without leaders of color.

The reality of there being a majority White or minority White student population in schools is a growing trend in the United States since the height of desegregation in the 1960s (Milligan & Howley, 2015). Regardless of the student body, in the United States the teacher and administrator population is mostly White, even in White minority schools. Education, as a profession, is vastly more White than any other race in the United States. Teaching multicultural understandings works well when there are members of different racial and cultural groups present as a frame of reference and exposure of diversity for all. Lareau and Weininger (2003) found that according to their cultural capital theory, the mismatch between the race of the adults and the race of the students can sacrifice student learning. If learning is better when the races match, then it is possible to say that when the administration and teachers are White and the students are White, the students will learn more. The students' ability to learn academic content is enhanced, but the exception may be students expanding multicultural understandings. Millgan and Howley (2015) added that when they studied White principals in urban, diverse schools, they all remarked that their principal-preparation programs did not teach them how to use their leadership role to dismantle the stenotype-ridden perspectives of their White faculties. They summarized this by writing, "Leaders should know how to sponsor the relevant conversations and actions that confront, disable, and replace common unfair practices" (Milligan & Howley, 2015). This idea makes the principal a mediator and guide with helpful directives for others. This also serves well when the student body is mostly White or when Whites are the minority.

White Majority Versus White Minority

Student body characteristics can have correlations to factors like schoolwide academic success and teacher shortages. Cheema and Fuller Hamilton (2017) conducted a study in which they looked closely at schools with a majority of White students and a minority of White students. In schools where the student body was mostly White, the principals perceived higher teacher participation. When the student performance suffered, that is when the teacher morale was highest. As the number of students at the White majority schools grew, so did the number of teachers. This prevented teacher shortages. In the White minority schools, the principals perceived that when the student performance was highest, that was the only time their morale surpassed that of teachers at the White majority schools. Teacher shortages at White minority schools remained a constant issue regardless of the size of the student body. Overall, the White majority schools were better at avoiding teacher shortages, having high morale during tough academic dips in performance and having teachers who are eager to participate in more school activities. Cheema and Fuller Hamilton (2017) looked more deeply at what the principals were doing at these schools. They discovered that at the schools where teachers were staying, the teachers had input on the professional development and there was a strong focus on relational trust. The researchers summarize that an effective school principal must possess a high level of skill and ability to monitor and address teacher shortage, participation and morale. These three factors have a high likelihood to influence student academic performance. If the focus of the professional development and relational trust is on multicultural understandings, then students at White majority schools will have enhanced respect and acceptance of others when they leave. Other research that I describe next relates to the importance of professional development and

relational trust when principals support teachers in expanding multicultural understandings. It could be true that White majority schools have the foundation in place, but just need to use those structures with the right focus. Critical Race theory may provide that needed focus.

Regardless of the race of the administration, faculty and students, Critical Race Theory (CRT) is something that every administrator needs to bring to the forefront of any school community, according to Stovall (2008). Solorzano and Villalapando (1997) also shared that within CRT there are five tenets that make it an integral part of expanding multicultural understandings and the school leader's focus. According to them, the school leader needs to focus on the basic ideas about race. This leads to the school looking at how ideas about race intersect. It also leads to looking at how race impacts every academic and social discipline. The second tenet is that the school leader considers the status quo and recognizes that it will likely have to challenge and with that, comes resistance. This status quo could be the presence of racism, a lack of diversity, or anything in-between. The third tenet is that the school leader needs to bring a multicultural focus to schools in order to bring also bring social justice. The school leader also needs to emphasize using experiential knowledge for everyone at the school to learn new ideas. The fifth tenet is that the school leader uses an interdisciplinary perspective and knows that race is everywhere in education. This is regardless of the content, level, age-range, or group of students. All of these factors are not something that can be plainly taught to an administrator via a preparation program. With a baseline of proper skills and experiences for reference, administrators will be able to self-reflect to take appropriate subsequent actions based on the setting and scenario at-hand. A preparation program should supply administration tools to keep learning and improving.

The Importance of Self-Reflection When Expanding Multicultural Understandings

Singleton and Linton (2006) shared the thoughts of a district equality coach from a school district in Chapel Hill, South Carolina named Graig Meyer. He described his personal insights as a White school leader who was trying to teach others about White supremacy. He focused on the need for White people to acknowledge personal White privilege if they are to overcome it. He said that the more he looked into himself, the more he felt a need to share the reflections and reflection techniques with his colleagues. Recognizing his own personal biases allowed him to then develop a motivation to be an agent of change by serving as a role-model for the teachers. Aveling (2007) asked 35 White Australian principals, at predominantly White primary and secondary schools, to reflect on whether or not racism was present in their schools. The findings showed that most principals denied there being any racism and if there was, then it was handled using all-encompassing student behavioral policies, typically centered on bullying. A follow-up study, conducted by Charles, Mahoney, Fox, and Halse (2016), looked closely as to whether or not Aveling's (2007) findings could represent principals as a whole or at least principals in Australia. They found that contextual factors like religion and class become intertwined with a series of behavioral patterns that students share and that it becomes more of an issue about entire school equality that does not center around purely race. This connected back to Theoharis and Haddix's (2011) point that all issues of equity and equality need to be grouped together.

Deep personal reflection time is essential for principals also, because it can unearth some truths. McCann (2012) asked principals to complete an inventory on their racial perspectives. She found that most principals, who initially claimed that they were not racist, discovered racist ideas within themselves as they completed the inventory. She explained how principals can

understand what it means to be White and the privileges this entails. They may not be fully conscious of these privileges for themselves, however. She said that self-reflection is the most important step. Helping the principal understand self-reflection work leads eventually to culturally proficient schools.

Being reflective on decisions is also very important for the administrator. For example, McCann (2012) wrote that during the hiring process, White principals need to screen out any candidates who are culturally ignorant. They need faculty who do not avoid speaking about or racial topics. She described the next step for the principal is to train all other administrators and all teachers. This leads to day-to-day work integrating multicultural understandings into curriculum and instruction. A mentoring program or support group makes this possible because the training and continued work requires collaboration. The essential intent of multicultural understandings is to have people value one another more, so working alone will not provide authentic progress (McCann, 2012). As McCann (2012) stated, self-reflection is essential and must include a dialog to interpret it. Just having the title of principal does not ensure that the individual knows how to bring multicultural understandings to a school.

McCann (2012) contended that leadership preparation programs need to make multicultural understandings and tactics a large part of the demonstration requirements to pass. She found in her research that elements of social justice may need to play a larger role in these programs. These programs also need to give prospective principals more insight as to what to do in different scenarios. For example, if there is only White faculty, with each opening, there could be more motivation to attract candidates of various races and cloture backgrounds.

Both Hines (2016) and McCann (2012) made connections to the importance of administrator preparation programs as part of a school-wide multicultural program. As Hines

(2016) described, that for multicultural understandings to be in administrator preparation programs, the approach consists of four parts. The first is racial competence in which the principals must recognize the role that race places in their school community within the school and in the region. This is while acknowledging the unpleasant revelations, like White privilege. In addition, Hines (2016) said that racial reflections, like the previously described personal reflection time, is essential. Hines (2016) added that racial reflections should entail thinking about what it means to be a member of their racial group. They should think about how their race affects the larger learning space. The third essential component of administrator preparation is to have these leaders ready to bring racial assertiveness to the school norms. Racial assertiveness refers to the ability to honestly share feelings about race and racial topics. The community needs to have a routine of handling the stress in this process. The routine also includes the process of all school community members sharing their perspectives and roles in White privilege. The fourth and last necessity of what principals need to learn in their preparation programs is how to foster racial responsiveness. Principals need to give the learning community, including faculty, parents and students, a safe place where race is considered a topic worth exploration and investigation. Free expression about racial issues is encouraged. This type of environment does not shy away from approaching uncomfortable issues and acknowledges that the unavoidable presence of White privilege is what will pose obstacles for this to happen smoothly. The principal needs to make multicultural understandings an essential initiative within the school, and concurrently bring the faculty and staff together. A sense of community can help foster this collaborative initiative.

The Role of Highly Effective Learning Communities on Expanding Multicultural Understandings

One of the strongest ways that a school leader, like a principal, can have a widespread, positive impact on a school, is through fostering a highly effective learning community. Wagner and Kegan (2006) outlined 9 different skills that students need in our modern era by the end of their compulsory education. These are the skills they need when entering the work force or higher education. Wagner and Kegan (2006) contended that no one is to blame for failing schools. There may also be no one to blame for a White student body having unconscious bias against other races or cultures. What matters is that school leaders recognize that it is a blameless issue and searching for a culprit is a waste of time. Blame inhibits collaboration. Many of these essential skills successes are dependent upon students' ability to work well with others. Working well with others is a skill that requires being able to get to know someone else and respect those people. For example, one of the skills is adaptability, which Wagner and Kegan (2006) described as creative thinking and problem-solving. While this is a form of adapting, so is being able to work with a variety of people in a mixture of settings. If students are not experienced with working with people from other racial or cultural backgrounds, they may do or say things that are unconsciously bias. This hinders the productivity and dismantles their potential success. Wagner and Kegan (2006) also listed attitude as an essential skill, but describe it mostly in terms of positive cognitive style. This promotes a positive attitude toward learning about differences and fosters acceptance of all. Lunenburg (2011) also agreed that principals and other school leaders need to incorporate systems thinking where the participants see all parts of a school as interrelated and affecting one another. He also says that there are five disciplines that shift schools to being designated as learning organizations. These include creating continuous learning

opportunities, promoting inquiry and dialogue, encouraging collaboration and team learning, creating systems to capture and share learning, empowering people toward a collective vision, connecting the organization to its environment, and providing strategic leadership for learning. All of these five disciplines are key traits that Singleton and Linton (2006) described as necessary for both staff and students to foster an accepting community of diversity. Middle school is a unique time for students and has its own set of recommended strategies.

Middle School Applications of Expanding Multicultural Understandings

While these effective practices, recommendations and strategies are worth considering, it is also important to think about what makes middle school unique. This especially applies to the leadership within a middle school. If school leaders are going to execute these six effective practices for bringing multicultural understandings to their schools, vast changes are necessary. Since many schools that include the middle school grades follow the team model, collaboration is already present (Grenada & Hackmann, 2014). Grenada and Hackmann (2014) studied a group of teachers. They named these teachers organizational leaders and they compared these specific teachers to their peers without the leadership role. The teachers who were organizational leaders reported higher professionalism and engagement. These teachers also felt increasingly committed to the goal of teaching and learning. This study furthered the idea that the team model allows for more time for the grade-level teams to work on cross-disciplinary initiatives, which could lend themselves well to a myriad of topics and initiatives (Grenada & Hackmann, 2014). The collaboration was most effective when it also was two-way. This means that the teacher team had input in the decisions that the administration was making. Grenada and Hackmann (2014) credited distributed leadership for the success, but said that the qualities of it are essentially those that make good leadership. Distributed leadership, according to Watson and

Scribner (2007), is sharing responsibility without authority. This means that the principal still holds the title, but also is allowed to share the final decision. When there are positive relationships, there is a developing atmosphere of trust. Members of the community share a vision and long-term goal. One implication that Watson and Scribner (2007) cited is that principals hired to cover the middle school grades need to harness a commitment to sharing leadership with others in the school and empower the teachers. Having a shared goal based on ideas of inclusion could be an encompassing way to achieve enhanced equality in diverse schools (Lindsey, 2009). This idea also extends to schools with students of mostly a single race because having inclusion based on languages and special needs also helps give students a frame of reference when thinking about differences. The interrelated recommendations and findings throughout the literature show that middle school is an opportune time to teach multicultural understandings, but requires administrative support.

Three Leadership Views of Expanding Multicultural Understandings

By viewing effective practices for school leaders implementing changes, there are three sources that have given their own clear outlines on how to lead the changes. These three sources have provided the seminal research for educational leadership's role in expanding multicultural understandings. Marzano, Waters and McNulty's (2005) study illuminated twenty-one responsibilities for school leaders that range from highly effective to highly ineffective. Marzano et al. (2005) detailed how each of these leadership responsibilities can impact student academic achievement. The authors stated that it is a daunting task to meet all of those responsibilities, making school leadership a very difficult position. Marzano et al. (2005) showed how each responsibility can be tied to student academic achievement. Marzano et al. (2005) ranked each of the responsibilities in order of their impact on student academic achievement. Situational

awareness and flexibility were the highest-ranking (Marzano et al., 2005). While the focus of their this analysis was on student academic achievement, it inspires the question: If principals at predominantly White, rural schools foster these 21 responsibilities with emphasis on expanding multicultural understandings in the middle grades, would it improve their results? Hitt and Tucker's (2015) work also gave more clarity on effective school leadership, but lacked direct implications for expanding multicultural understandings.

Hitt and Tucker (2015) wrote, "Five essential broad areas, or domains, of effective leader practices emerge as…(a) establishing and conveying the vision, (b) facilitating a high-quality learning experience for students, (c) building professional capacity, (d) creating a supportive organization for learning, and (e) connecting with external partners" (p. 452). How these five broad areas apply to the principals' role in expanding a school's multicultural understandings are not addressed, but they do provide contextual examples where these areas could evoke effective change. For example, the essential practices can be used toward improving student literacy performance on assessments. The caveat of Hitt and Tucker's (2015) work, similar to Marzano et al.'s (2005) work, is that academics were emphasized, rather than an idea like multicultural understandings. Hitt and Tucker (2015) and Marzano et al. (2005) all simplify educational leadership into numeric categories. Another report narrows effective educational leadership even more by looking at the role principals have within schools, but with a concise three components.

Wahlstrom et al. (2010) identified three categories that principals need to address take to evoke change: (1) expectation and accountability, (2) efficacy and support, and (3) engagement and stakeholder influence. The first category of expectations and accountability looked at how important and urgent the leader considers the initiative, which also included how often assess the initiative's progress. The second category of efficacy and support looked at the leaders' active

support of the initiative, frequency of involvement and their overall impact. This category also explored how the leader and other members of the organization are held accountable for their contributions. The third category of engagement and stakeholder influence explored how involved the different organizational parties feel toward the initiative, and what factors and conditions aid and hinder the initiatives' progress. Outside stakeholder funding could influence this category's effectiveness (Wahlstom et al., 2010). In their executive summary, Wahlstrom et al. (2010) asserted that regardless of the principal's initiative, if these three categories are thoroughly addressed, there should be a higher success rate for the initiative.

Wahlstrom et al. (2010) addressed the variable nature of school leadership by writing that, "Contextual variables matter greatly, we know, as do worthwhile academic programs and instructional practices….In these efforts, another factor comes into play—leadership" (p. 5). Effective leadership, according to Wahlstrom et al. (2010), is the constant factor that determines the extent of student learning that occurs. Effective leadership requires all three concepts.

The interplay of Wahlstrom et al.'s (2010) three guiding categories of effective leadership is paramount for them to influence student learning. Wahlstrom et al. (2010) contended that all three areas must be addressed for maximum student learning for the initiative the school leader is enacting. Wahlstrom et al. (2010) illuminated this idea further by representing this argument with a triangular model. In this model, each side of the triangle represents one of the three categories of effective leadership. All three sides must be in place for the triangle to form and the whole triangle makes the outcome, which is student learning. They concluded their summary by writing, "Effective leadership depends, we have found, on expectations, efficacy, and engagement. The three concepts do not denote isolated dimensions of leadership. Rather, they imply complementary relationships that sustain effective leadership at

all levels" (Wahlstrom et al., 2010, p. 30). Isolation of any of the three concepts diminishes, or even eliminates, the effectiveness of the school leader's initiative. All three categories must all be addressed concurrently for full effectiveness (Wahlstrom et al., 2010). These three guiding leadership views supply ideas on how school leaders can address the expansion on multicultural understandings in their schools.

Chapter Summary

In an increasingly globalized world, it is extremely prevalent for all students to expand their multicultural understandings no matter the race of the students or the teachers. Whether one race or a multitude of races are represented within a school, diversity in the learning environment is possible. This literature review found three major ideas consistently in the work of others. The first, that taking a step toward embracing the expansion of multicultural understandings requires a clear conceptualization of this specific type of learning and its general benefits to teachers, students, and the learning community. This notion is consistent across racial demographics and age-levels. The second section found that self-reflection, careful planning and thoughtfulness in relationship-building all play a major role in educators embracing multicultural understandings in their practice. The third and final section shared the important role that school leaders hold in supporting teachers when expanding students' multicultural understandings. These three sections led to a conclusion that there is a lack of understandings about how principals can support White teachers of White students when expanding middle school students' multicultural understandings. This is study hopes to help fill that void in the literature.

Chapter Three presents the Method, which includes an overview of the research design and the data collection and analysis procedures.

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

Introduction

As previously identified in the statement of the problem, this study focuses on the idea that research has not illuminated the principal's role in expanding multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades. This was inspired by my own experiences as a fifth grade teacher trying to promote multicultural understandings, but lacking administrative support. My review of the literature explored research that has been previously conducted in the domains of multicultural understandings and educational leadership. While there is a wealth of literature on multicultural understandings in various, specific scenarios and settings, there is a dearth of information in regard to the principal's role in expanding multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades. The lack of research on this specific issue inspired the subsequent study, which was an explanatory sequential mixed methods study that began with a survey and led to a series of interviews with Massachusetts principals.

Following the Introduction, Chapter Three is organized according to the following sections: (a) philosophical worldview and influence of social and cultural perspective, (b) overview of the design, (c) participants and setting, (d) development of instruments, (e) data collection procedures, (f) data analysis procedures, (g) delimitations and limitations, (h) issues of trustworthiness, and (i) chapter summary.

Philosophical Worldview and Influence of Social Cultural Perspective

Growing up and attending school in a predominantly White, rural town in Massachusetts, multicultural understandings were never a focus in my education or personal life. It was not until I was old enough to have a developed sense of agency that I began to purposefully dismantle unconscious racism that my hometown produced in me. As a I grew to learn more about other

races and cultures, I was inspired to carry that work into my teaching, but was disheartened by the challenges I faced. My work as a fifth grade teacher for three years at a rural, predominantly White elementary school has influenced my view of how principals can support teachers expanding multicultural perspectives of middle grade students in this type of setting. When investigating how I could improve my practice as a White teacher of White students in expanding students' multicultural understandings, I was discouraged by the lack of materials and resources to support me in my endeavors. What was even more discouraging was that I struggled to receive support from the school's principal in improving my approach to expanding these multicultural understandings in students. I wondered if the lack of support I was feeling from the administration was something that was state-wide in the numerous rural, predominantly White schools in MA. To investigate this feeling more fully, I knew I had to investigate the principal's point-of-view in prioritizing multicultural understandings.

This reflective process allowed me to address my biases to ensure that I detached my biases from the lens through which I viewed this study. I was cognizant that my professional and personal experiences were not necessarily the same as other educators. These personal acknowledgements were the first steps taken in the bracketing process to ensure I diminished personal biases as much as possible for this study. This self-reflective process also allowed me to think about my worldview to guide my research. Understanding that my own experiences were not necessarily representative of how all principals approach fostering multicultural understandings was an important revelation.

Subedi (2016) has written that researchers can be divided into three categories, which include qualitative orientated methodologists, quantitative oriented methodologists and mixed methodologists. Based on these three groups' perspectives, they were labeled constructivists,

positivists and pragmatists, respectively (Subedi, 2016). Further, Suebi (2016) elucidated this theoretical idea by writing, “Pragmatism rejects either-or views on constructivism and positivism, rather embraces both points of view. It believes that researchers may be both objective and subjective in epistemological orientation” (p. 571). The framework of this study supported the researcher in acting objectively and subjectively concurrently, also as a part of the bracketing process. And the framework supported the idea that a combination method, was better than a single approach. The next section outlines this study’s research design.

Overview of the Research Design

This study used both quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate three guiding research questions. This section describes and provides rationale for the (a) guiding research questions and (b) explanatory sequential mixed methods study.

Guiding Research Questions

This explanatory sequential mixed methods study has addressed the following three guiding research questions:

1. To what degree do principals consider it a priority to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades?
2. What do principals report they are doing to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades?
3. What do principals report are factors and conditions that inhibit and support their efforts to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades?

Each of these three were first addressed in the closed-response survey that was sent out to the participant pool. The interviewees were asked questions that were directly correlated to the

questions on the closed-response survey with the intention to gain further explanation and deeper perspective on their initial responses. Ultimately, the survey gave overarching, general, quantitative data, while the interviews supplied in-depth, personalized responses with reasoning.

Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Study

This study is an explanatory sequential mixed methods study. Creswell and Creswell (2018) wrote that this type of study, "is one which the researcher first conducts quantitative research, analyzes the results, and then builds on the results to explain them in more detail with qualitative research" (p. 15). By first exploring how principals would rate their experiences and insights, it then allowed for further exploration through in-depth interviews. Creswell and Creswell (2018) also said that this type of study usually begins with a larger pool of participants and then is narrower in the qualitative portion. This was the case because 17 principals completed the survey and ten principals were interviewed.

Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) explained that the greatest benefit of mixed method approaches is that they prevent the research from falling into unimethod bias to gain a variety of divergent viewpoints. A fear that marks some researchers, as Subedi (2016) asserted, is the possibility of the quantitative and qualitative findings yielding opposite findings. This does not make either null and void, but rather, means that the conceptual framework needs to be reexamined, which is a major finding within itself (Subedi, 2016). After characterizing the explanatory sequential mixed methods study, it is possible to better understand the qualitative portion of the study.

The qualitative portion of the study was categorized as a phenomenology. Creswell and Poth (2018) wrote, "a phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (p. 75). In short, this type

of study looked closely at participants' perceptions, but these participants all share something. In this case, all of the participants shared that they are principals in rural Massachusetts, they have one or more middle grades at their schools, and they work in predominantly White learning communities with White teachers teaching mostly White students. These parameters were used for contacting participants. Creswell and Poth's (2018) definition of phenomenology was a broad categorization for the qualitative portion of the study. Transcendental Phenomenology may be an even more accurate description of what this study entailed.

Moustakas (1994) described a transcendental phenomenology as a study that first identifies a phenomenon. The next step Moustakas (2994) outlines was bracketing out one's own experiences and then collecting data from several people who all have experience with the phenomenon. This study fit the criteria to be considered a transcendental phenomenology. The greatest benefit of this specific type of phenomenology is that it used bracketing to increase the transcendental nature of the study. By this, Moustakas (1994) meant that it allows for the researcher to view everything "freshly, as if for the first time" (p. 34). In other words, it is a precautionary approach to avoid bias or personal perception from making its way into the study. Bracketing made this empirical research more natural in the sense that it allowed for the lived experiences to be pure when analyzed. What made this study a qualitative phenomenology, specifically, was that a group of people who share a common experience answered the same questions to address the three guiding research questions in connection to the phenomenon. The next section further explains the participants and setting of the study.

Participants and Setting

Being a life-long resident of MA, this state seemed like a practical and applicable setting for this study. My experience in feeling a lack of administrative support when spreading

multicultural understandings to my students also was a convincing factor for using the state of Massachusetts since this is where I taught. After deciding to use Massachusetts, I pursued choosing my participant pool, which included principals at rural, predominantly White schools with middle grades.

To gain the email addresses of Massachusetts principals of rural schools that house middle school grades, I had to first define "rural" as having less than 500 people per square mile, as the United States census (2010) states. From there, I looked at the information collected by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2018) to see what schools had both predominantly White student populations and predominantly White faculty. For this study, predominantly White meant 80% or more of a given population was reported as White on the racial demographic reports (MA DESE, 2018). The last qualifying characteristic was that the school needed to have at least one middle grade. Any rural school that had at least one of the middle grades, 5-8, with both student and faculty populations reported as 80% or higher being White, was contacted. For the purpose of this study, 80% quantifies predominance in race. In order to fit the qualification of "rural" for this study, I used the United States census data for rural cities and towns in Massachusetts (US Census Bureau, 2017; Rural Commonwealth, 2018). With prospective participants selected, the next step was to contact them.

The MA DESE website posts the email addresses of each school's principal. Immediately after receiving IRB approval, the letter of informed consent (Appendix A) was emailed to 167 qualifying principals. Twelve email addresses were unable to be delivered, so I had to go to district websites and submit on their online "inquiry" pages that delivered my request to participate. The email was sent on February 6th, 2019 and one reminder email was sent after one week, on February 13th, 2019. The survey was closed after two weeks. I successfully received 17 survey responses

with ten respondents noting that they were interested in being interviewed. Of the 17 survey responses, it should be noted that not all 17 participants responded to every single question. Respondents accessed the survey via a link on the letter of informed consent. The survey was created on the Qualtrics website. Two of the principals who were interested in participating needed written permission from their superintendents before proceeding with the study. I was able to acquire written permission and proceed with those principals as participants in the study.

After reviewing the 17 responses, I contacted the principals who expressed an interest in being interviewed. I originally thought that I would be able to select ten principals based on the responses to have a variety of perspectives, but with only ten principals willing to be interviewed, I did not have a large enough participant pool to narrow down interviewees. The respondents were asked to share their preferred format for the interview (in-person, phone-call, or video-conference). Nine requested a phone interview and one requested an in-person interview. I then contacted each of the ten principals by using the email address that they supplied to set up a time to conduct the interview. Upon beginning the interview, they were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix C). If the interview was done over the phone, then the interviewee was asked to sign the form, scan it, and email it back for my records.

The interviews lasted approximately 20-30 minutes and I recorded each using my phone's voice recording feature to create an mp3 file to save. I then transcribed them myself into a Microsoft Word document to enable coding using NVIVO software. The instrumentation details follow.

Development of Instruments

The purpose of the study was to investigate principals' perspectives for the three guiding research questions. The development of both instruments was grounded in the literature. The

factors and conditions that promote and inhibit multicultural understandings were used to divide each instrument into seven areas. To do effectively address the three guiding research questions, I chose to begin this process with a closed-response survey, which supplied general, numeric ratings for quantitative data. I subsequently contacted the respondents who stated that they were interested in being interviewed. The creation of the instruments occurred concurrently because the interview protocol was based on the survey. Each of the questions on both instruments were created by considering information from the review of the literature. The section describes the process to develop each of these instruments, starting with the closed-response survey.

Closed-Response Survey

As previously mentioned, an explanatory sequential mixed methods study begins with a quantitative instrument, which typically is a survey (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The principals that met the qualifications for participation as previously outlined, were sent an email with a letter of informed consent (Appendix A). The letter included a link to a Qualtrics survey online (Appendix B). The questions were divided into seven main sections. These included (a) school-wide culture, (b) principal self-improvement, (c) assessment and data collection, (d) teacher feedback, (e) stakeholder support and resources, (f) teacher professional development and accountability, and (g) curricular focus.

I chose to use a Likert scale survey that enables respondents to rate their responses on a four-point scale, (1=None; 2=Little; 3=Some; 4=Most). I chose to make it an even number so that no respondent could give a middle rating each time. Indecisive responses would not yield informative insights for later interpretation. Each section presented actions that the principal may take. For example, under the category of school-wide culture, the first action presented was "Including multicultural understandings in the school mission." Under that action, the areas to

rate on the four-point scale included (a) importance of experience, (b) frequency of participation, (c) efficacy of completion, and (d) impact of experience. In total, the closed-response survey asked the participant to give rankings for 27 different actions. The 27 different actions were divided into seven categories, as inspired by the literature. Each category had between three and five actions listed.

The closed-response survey ended with optional open-response questions if the respondent was interested in participating in an in-depth interview. If the respondent was interested in being interviewed, then they were asked to give their name, contact information and preferred interview format (in-person, telephone, or video-conference). Regardless of whether or not the respondent was interested in being interviewed, they were asked to provide an email address if interested in receiving a summary of findings.

In-Depth Interviews

The in-depth interview began with providing a letter of informed consent to the participant for them to sign. They had the option to provide verbal consent if not done in-person. The interviews were recorded using my phone's recording feature and later transcribed into a Microsoft Word document myself. The same seven sections that were used in the closed-response survey were used in the in-depth interview protocol. The difference in this instrument, however, is that it went deeper into why the participant responded the way he or she did. For example, under the category of teacher professional development and accountability, the respondent rated the action of, "Encouraging teachers to make expanding middle grade students' multicultural understandings a professional practice goal for the year." During the interview, I first supplied the interviewee with a summary of how he or she responded to the actions within this category and then asked, "How do you encourage your middle grade teachers to incorporate

multicultural understandings into their professional practice goals?" In the event that the participant's ratings showed that this action did not take place, there was consistently an option which reflects that. In this case, I asked, "If not, why do you not have one?" This way, depending on how the interviewee answered the closed-response survey, they were required to provide rationale for their responses.

Another way in which the interview protocol differed from the closed-response survey is that it ends with inquiring about next steps to see if the participant has plans to improve their practice with expanding multicultural understandings at their school. The next section describes the procedures used to collect data.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection for the closed-response survey employed the Qualtrics online site through Lesley University. The link to this site private, secure site was included in the letter of informed consent (Appendix A), which was sent to the 167 qualifying principals. A reminder email was sent to the principals after one week and the survey was available for a total of two weeks. The Qualtrics website securely stored their responses to the questions that aligned to the three guiding research questions. The closed-response survey ended with asking if the participants were interested in being interviewed as a follow-up to the survey questions. If yes, they were asked to supply contact information and their preference in interview format.

Upon responding that they were interested in being interviewed, all ten of these principals were emailed to set up a date, time, and format for their interviews. Before beginning the interviews, they were each asked to sign a letter of informed consent (Appendix C). The in-depth interviews were recorded using my phone's recording feature. The transcribed interviews were on Microsoft Word documents, thus making them compatible for being entered into NVIVO

software for coding. The data collection was organized into seven main sections to allow for clear, coherent analysis, to align with the categorization of the survey and interview protocol.

Ten interviewees was an acceptable number of participants, based on Creswell and Creswell's (2018) and Creswell and Poth's (2018) guidelines for phenomenological research. As previously outlined, the qualitative portion of the study was phenomenological, making these guidelines appropriate. Creswell and Poth (2018) stated that 5-25 participants are appropriate for a phenomenology. Creswell and Creswell (2018) similarly wrote, "Phenomenology ranges from 3-10" (p. 186). This makes ten interviewees appropriate for both of the ranges that the literature provided. There was a total of 17 survey responses. Since the survey was the quantitative portion of the explanatory sequential mixed methods study, Creswell and Creswell (2019) did not specify exact numbers. They argued that there has been a lack of specificity when outlining this type of study, mainly because it is so new. They stated, however, that the quantitative portion is typically a survey that has more participants than the qualitative portion of the study. By having 17 survey responses and ten interviews, this study met their expectations for a proper imbalance in participant numbers.

Data Analysis Procedures

The closed-response survey and the interview protocol were each organized into the same seven sections to make it easier to see, at least initially, major categories and connections between the quantitative data and the qualitative data. This mixed methods study began with quantitative data that came from the closed-response survey, which is what was first analyzed. This section describes (a) quantitative data analysis and (b) qualitative data analysis, (c) coding the data, and (d) interpreting major categories from the data.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The closed-response survey supplied quantitative data. Of the 167 principals emailed to participate, I received 17 responses. For each of the questions, Qualtrics supplied me with the mean for each of the four response categories of (a) importance of experience, (b) frequency of participation, (c) efficacy of experience, and (d) impact of experience. I calculated the average response for each of the four response categories for each of the action categories. For example, I calculated the mean for the response category of importance of experience for the action category stakeholder support and resources. This involved looking at the responses given for the four questions that fall under the action category of stakeholder support and resources.

After calculating these averages, I compared them to see what action categories ranked highest and lowest in terms of the four response categories. For example, which action category was rated the highest for importance of experiences? Overall, the process of calculating such averages and comparing them, allowed for looking closely at the interview data to search for exemplifying statements to go with the quantitative data.

Research question one. The first research question states: To what degree do principals consider it a priority to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades? With regard to this question, the scale for "importance of experience" gives insight as to whether or not the principals deem expanding multicultural understandings a priority. The greater percentage of respondents rating a four on "importance of experience," then the more that specific category is prioritized. To also address the first research question, the respondents were asked specifically about prioritizing multicultural understandings over other mandatory focuses, like standardized testing.

Research question two. The second research question states: What do principals report they are doing to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades? The closed-response survey addressed this by presenting actions that the literature review identified as the most effective in expanding multiculturalism within schools. The principals then ranked the four categories on a four-point scale. More specifically, how principals ranked actions in terms of "frequency of participation" and "efficacy of completion" shows what they are, in reality, doing.

Research question three. The closed-response survey investigated the third guiding research question: What do principals report are factors and conditions that inhibit and support their efforts to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades? The survey investigated this by revealing what actions principals find important, but are not frequently participating in that action. A high ranking for "importance of experience," but a low ranking of frequency of participation" and "efficacy of completion" could mean that there is a factor missing that supports the principal from participating in the action that promotes expanding multicultural understandings. The survey then asked, why this is occurring and what factors inhibit their participation. Once again, only numerical representations for response rates were given for statements, but gave insight into what actions principals find important, but are not implementing. The qualitative portion of the study investigated why this is occurring, thus better investigated the third guiding research question.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The closed-response survey, which served as the quantitative portion of the study, gave numerical insight and preliminary findings that were used as the basis for choosing participants to be interviewed. The survey response also played a role in tailoring questions for the interview

to remind interviewees how they responded to the survey. They were then asked for justification, explanation and further insight as to why they answered the way that they did.

Simply put, the qualitative, in-depth interviews intended to provide more background on what is happening, not happening and reasons for each of those areas. The qualitative portion of the study was deemed phenomenological in nature and follows Creswell and Poth's (2018) recommendations on how to analyze qualitative data through the coding process.

Of the 17 survey participants, I interviewed ten. While I originally intended to specifically choose individuals that supplied varied responses from one another, I only had ten principals agree to be interviewed, but was fortunate to have a mixture of principals who gave overall viewpoints of highly valuing multicultural education and those who did not, based on their survey results. I had some who were proactive in expanding multicultural understanding and some who were not. By having a variety of perspectives, I learned more about why principals have the perspectives they have. The investigation of each of the three guiding research questions took place in the interviews, but the third guiding research question was the focus. This was because the third guiding research question focused on the reasoning behind the principals' responses to the first two guiding research questions.

The survey gave percentages for the responses for the different actions in the four categories that are on a four-point-scale. The in-depth interviews addressed the guiding research questions by asking some questions that specifically target this. For example, the interview protocol (Appendix D) included the question, "How would you describe the prioritization of multicultural understandings as part of your middle grades' curriculum?" and, "If not deemed a priority, what overshadows it?" to address the first guiding research question of, "To what degree do principals consider it a priority to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly

White, rural, middle school grades?" Interview responses to the questions that directly related to the guiding research questions gave preliminary major categories to help categorize participants' perspectives (Saldaña, 2016). The coding process was where the deepest level of qualitative analysis took place.

While direct questioning was mainly a means for further addressing the first two guiding research questions, the third guiding research question was best addressed because of its focus on explaining why principals do what they do and why they do not do certain actions.

Coding the Data

The most prominent method for answering the guiding research questions through this instrument was by taking the responses and extrapolating major categories through coding. According to Creswell (2018) and Moustakas (1994), the process of analyzing the data in a phenomenological study follows the procedures of horizontalization. This type of analysis was part of this study's analysis. It began with going through the survey responses with the intention of highlighting exemplifying statements that focus on capturing the lived experiences of the participants, thus providing insight into the phenomenon (Creswell, 2006). The exemplifying statements and major categories contributed to the clusters of meaning (Creswell, 2006). The clusters of meaning were synthesized into textual descriptions that describe what influenced the participants' experiences. The final phase of the analysis was extracting the essence of the phenomenon, which was also called the essential, invariant structure.

In a more specific description of the data analysis in this study, it entailed six main steps:

1. I organized and prepared the data for analysis by transcribing the audio from Google Voice into a Microsoft Word document. I loaded the Microsoft Word documents with interview transcriptions into NVivo coding software.

2. I read all data and formulated initial, general thoughts and interpretations into memos.
3. I started coding all collected data by using codes that the reader would expect (seven categories of support) and then formulated codes that may be surprising that arise from participant responses. I also conducted a second cycle of coding to see if there is any data that applies to multiple codes (i.e. simultaneous coding). These accumulate into the codebook for the study.
4. I used the codes to develop major categories that were to be used as the headings of the findings section (Chapter Four).
5. I represented the major categories in the form of a narrative, which entails a detailed discussion of the major categories.
6. I made an interpretation in qualitative research of the findings. This essentially captured the lessons learned, thus capturing the essence. This allowed me to craft few questions to inspire further research.

In order to code the data, I used NVIVO software. By using this software, I still had to go through the text line-by-line, but it made it easier to pull up codes grouped together at a time when analyzing. This made it possible to color-code nodes and organize the different major categories that arose.

The coding procedures, which followed Saldaña's (2016) recommendations, were first to get an exemplifying statement for each of the research questions from each of the participants. I did this by first coding each of the principal's responses in accordance to each of the seven categories of support. For each of the seven nodes, I looked for commonalities that appeared through word frequency queries. I then looked more closely at the coded data as to where the frequently used terms appeared to extrapolate the context of its usage. Once I read what

surrounded the term, I decided if each of the interviewees were supplying, overall, similar perspectives and ideas. The commonalities were used to create exemplifying statements that related to the seven categories. They were divided into answering the three guiding research questions.

While this was the most straight-forward method of coding, as outlined by Saldaña (2016), he also encouraged researchers to use "simultaneous coding" (p. 94). This meant that the researcher uses two or more codes for the same datum. For example, if a principal gave a response that focused on teacher professional development, it would be coded for that node. However, if when talking about professional development the principal mentioned that the professional development was made possible from an outside donor, this same passage would be coded for the nodes associated with stakeholder support. This allows the researcher to account for the overlap that is inevitable because of how interconnected the seven categories are with one another. This second coding cycle made the exemplifying statements increasingly accurate.

Interpreting Major Categories from the Data

With exemplifying statements formed for each of the seven categories of support, I looked closely at how this information connected back to the three guiding research questions. The exemplifying statements from the coding process, in conjunction with the numerical trends from the quantitative data, yielded findings for each of the three guiding research questions. The survey data quantified the exemplifying statements that came from the interview data, which further supported their validity. After categorizing nodes for each of the seven areas of support, the exemplifying statements were matched to the quantitative data. For example, since school-wide culture ranked highest quantitatively for importance of experience, a statement would be extracted to explain why. Major categories that came out of the coding process did not have a

minimum percentage agreement due to the small sample size, as Saldaña (2016) also validated. The mixed methods analysis then reached back to the literature.

More specifically, the coding was used to draw connections to Wahlstrom et al. (2010), Hitt and Tucker (2015) and, Marzano (2005). As interesting and thought-provoking as the analysis process was, there were other factors that warranted consideration. This included addressing the limitations and delimitations that made analysis possible and feasible. The next section describes how this was conducted.

Delimitations and Limitations

This section describes the steps taken to delimit the scope of the study. It also provides insight into potential weaknesses of the study.

Delimitations

This section describes the steps taken to delimit the study, which can be categorized into the participants, the setting, and myself as the researcher.

The study was delimited in terms of participants. The participants in this study were 17 principals who responded to the survey that was emailed to a total of 167 principals. These were all principals in the state of Massachusetts from schools that are rural, predominantly White, with middle grades. I then interviewed ten principals from the pool of respondents for in-depth interviews. When considering the participants, the schools had to have a minimum of one middle grade (5-8) to serve as the focus for the questions the principals were asked. For example, a school may include grades 1-6, but the principal was asked specifically about the supports he or she provides to the teachers of grades 5 and 6 at that school, since those are the middle grades within the school. Due to the dearth of research for this specific age group in multicultural understandings, middle grades were the focus in this study. The participants were strictly

principals, even though the topic of this research study was directly associated with the teachers and students. This allowed the results to illuminate the perceptions of these figures in the phenomenon. The teacher and student perspectives may be the focus in a follow-up study.

This study was also delimited in terms of the setting. Separate middle schools are not as common in the geographic region of the study. To allow for a larger sample pool, this study did not look solely at stand-alone middle schools that do not have other grades within the building. Rather, this study included any schools with any of the grades in the range of fifth grade through eighth grade. The geographic region of the study was the state of MA. The high number of schools that have a predominantly White faculty and student body made this state a proper fit for the study. In the state of MA, 167 schools are deemed rural and predominantly White in terms of student population and faculty population. The survey asked the principals if they could be willing to be interviewed for more insight into this topic.

Personal researcher biases needed to be delimited as a crucial step in making the study authentic (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As the researcher, I am a former middle grade White teacher of White students and the study is conducted in the state where I was previously educated at multiple schools. Those schools were in the pool to which the survey was sent. Due to the anonymity that I promised in my consent letters (Appendix A and C) respondents were not required to provide their names or any of their contact information. The only way I knew the identity of the principals was if they wanted to receive a summary of findings after the study or if they wanted to be interviewed. The connections that I made using these familiar schools increased the meaningfulness of the study to myself, as the researcher. As an additional consideration, the principals may have recognized my name and felt more inclined to participate

based on previous work relationships. The next subsection looks specifically at the limitations of the study.

Limitations

For this study, there were three main limitations, one of which was that the sample locations were not all identified. Since the survey respondents were not asked to provide information about their school or district, unless they wanted to be interviewed or sent a summary report, I was not able to identify the location of the participants who answered the survey. This was to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. That information could have potentially provided a clear connection between location and responses. Also, it is possible that more than one respondent was from the same school district since I sent the survey to principals of schools that were from the same school district.

A second limitation to this study was that I had a response rate of 10%. Principals have many responsibilities and in the state of MA, late winter and early Spring is statewide, mandatory standardized testing called MCAS. With principals focused on preparing their schools for testing, their time was limited. This made it more challenging for principals to agree to be interviewed. A principal's job, arguably, is always quite busy and regardless of the time of year, there would be a reason why there was not a high response rate. The second week of the survey period was February vacation, which may have benefited the study in that ten principals were willing to be interviewed. There may have been fewer principals willing to be interviewed had it not been a vacation week and students and teachers were not around.

The format and schedules of schools with middle grades greatly vary throughout the state. Some schools consider middle grades to be a part of their elementary schools, whereas other districts consider them a part of stand-alone middle schools. When asked about middle

grade teachers, the principals who work at middle schools where students have a different teacher for every subject-area had more individuals to consider than principals who worked at elementary schools. At elementary schools, the students have a single academic teacher, thus allowing the principals to focus on fewer teachers when responding to survey and interview questions. While there were a few limitations within the scope of this study, precautions were taken to ensure trustworthiness, which are explained next.

Issues of Trustworthiness

As clearly articulated earlier, this topic is very personal because of my experiences as a middle grade teacher and not having felt supported by administration when trying to expand my students' multicultural understandings. While these personal connections have inspired a motivation and drive to make this study the best it can be, it also highlighted the need to be wary of my biases. This section provides insights into (a) bracketing, (b) reliability, and (c) validity.

Bracketing

As Creswell and Poth (2018) outlined, the bracketing process allows for the researcher to be self-reflective as part of the process as a means for diminishing bias. I recognized that my experience as a fifth grade teacher who felt unsupported by administration is not necessarily the way that ever middle grade teacher feels in the state of MA. This recognition also enabled me to see past the emotions that I felt when thinking back to my own struggles to spread multiculturalism. I recognized that leaders learn, adapt and change, allowing them to improve their practice. Even though I personally worked for some of the participants in the past, I did not use my experiences as a lens for viewing the data. I had to take their perspectives at face-value because even if I did not see certain participants as advocates for multicultural understandings in the past, they certainly may be advocates now. The next section summarizes this chapter.

Reliability

As the researcher, I took steps to ensure this study was as reliable as possible, meaning that if another researcher were to conduct the same study, it would yield similar results. Since I was the only researcher on the study, I did not have to coordinate and compare another person's perspective on the coding process. I chose to transcribe myself, rather than use an outside agency or software to increase the accuracy. My memos from the coding process that defined the codes on my code-book made certain that all text I added to the associated nodes carried consistent meaning.

Validity

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the bracketing process was one means of making the study more valid because I was able to set my own thoughts and feelings aside. In addition, I made sure to not mention my own experiences in lacking principal support when trying to expand the multicultural understandings of my middle grade students in a rural, predominantly White school. Creswell (2018) advocated for peer debriefing as a means of getting others' perspectives on the process and findings. I sought feedback from my colleagues who hold doctorates and work in higher education along with a fellow Ph.D. candidate in my cohort. Their familiarity with conducting quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods studies and factors that increase validity made them helpful resources for input and constructive criticism. This process also allowed me to become concise in my writing to ensure the findings were expressed clearly.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Three delineated the method used in this study. It first supplied the philosophical worldview influence of social and cultural perspective. That self-reflective insight was useful in the bracketing process to further diminish researcher bias.

This chapter then provided an overview of the research design and rationale to explain how the study can best be categorized. This included elaboration on what it means for a study to be an explanatory sequential mixed methods study and for the qualitative portion to be a phenomenology.

The next section was the participants and setting, where the intentions of the study were described and followed by a description of what happened when the study was conducted. The process of selecting participants and choosing the setting were also described.

The third subsection was the instrumentation. This was divided into the quantitative portion and the qualitative portion. How each of the instruments were used to address the three guiding research questions were also included.

The fourth subsection was the data collection procedures, which included the steps taken to disseminate the survey and to conduct the interviews. Software used in the study was also discussed.

The fifth subsection was the data analysis procedures, which outlined information for making meaning from both quantitative and qualitative data. Each of the processes required reflecting back on the three guiding research questions to better categorize the meanings.

Delimitations and limitations were further shared in the subsequent two subsections to explore how this study was made manageable, yet meaningful. These considerations were made especially in terms of participants, setting and personal experiences and reflections.

The final subsection of Chapter Three was focused on issues of trustworthiness, that centered on bracketing and diminishing personal biases that come from prior experiences and connections with principals in Massachusetts. It also explained the validity and reliability of the study. Chapter Four, which follows, focuses on analyzing the collected data.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

This explanatory sequential mixed methods study explored the principal's role in expanding multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades. The lack of literature providing insight into this issue was motivation to conduct this study. The following three guiding research questions provided the framework for organizing quantitative and qualitative data:

1. To what degree do principals consider it a priority to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades?
2. What do principals report they are doing to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades?
3. What do principals report are factors and conditions that inhibit and support their efforts to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades?

Chapter Three explained how the guiding research questions were addressed in detail. Overall, by first exploring the urgency and prioritization that principals bring to their role in expanding multicultural understandings, the first guiding research question gave clarity as to whether principals see multiculturalism as important within their schools. To address the second guiding research question, principals were asked to report what they are currently doing to address multicultural understandings that provided insight into what is not occurring. The third guiding research question investigated what supports and/or hinders principals in expanding multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades.

Chapter Three described the data collection and analysis procedures that led to the contents of Chapter Four. Data collection began with creating a list of email addresses of principals in rural, predominantly White schools that have middle grades across MA. These 167 principals were emailed a letter of informed consent (Appendix A) with a link to a Qualtrics survey (Appendix B). A total of 17 principals answered the survey, but not every principal answered all parts, so some sections have fewer responses.

After two weeks, ten principals expressed interest in being interviewed over the phone, or in-person. The principals' signed letter of informed consent (Appendix C). Each principals' interview was customized to best gather insight into their survey responses. The questions were divided into the same seven action areas as the survey to ensure consistency (Appendix D). All ten interviews were transcribed for coding during the analysis portion.

Data analysis began with the quantitative data, which involved looking at averages for each of the response categories and focusing on the action areas that were presented. Numeric trends then led to preliminary findings that were used as a lens for coding when beginning the qualitative analysis. While average numerical data was used the most, it was essential to look closely at every question for further contextualization when crafting findings.

For the qualitative data analysis, NVIVO software was used for coding and extracting major categories (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldaña, 2016). The major categories were then correlated with the quantitative data. Interview responses to the questions that directly related to the guiding research questions produced preliminary major categories to help categorize participants' perspectives (Saldaña, 2016). The coding process was where the deepest level of qualitative analysis took place. The qualitative analysis was closely linked to the quantitative

analysis when exploring why principals supplied the responses they did for the closed-response survey. This order made it an explanatory sequential mixed methods study.

Chapter Four is organized according to three main sections. These sections include (a) introduction, (b) presentation and analysis of data, with resulting findings, for each guiding research question, and (c) chapter summary. Within the presentation and analysis of data for each guiding research questions there are three subsections. These three subsections include (a) data collected to address the three guiding research questions, (b) summary of data analysis for each guiding research question, and (c) delineation of findings for each guiding research question.

Guiding Research Question One: To what degree do principals consider it a priority to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades?

The first guiding research question was mostly addressed through the closed-response survey. And yet, in-depth interviews provided further explanation as to how principals prioritized expanding multicultural understandings. This section is divided into three subsections: (a) data collected to address Guiding Research Question One, (b) analysis of data for Guiding Research Question One, and (c) findings for Guiding Research Question One.

Data Collected to Address Guiding Research Question One

This first subsection describes the data collected from each instrument and specifies how each instrument addressed the first guiding research question. Within the description of the closed-response survey, the data are culminated into tables. Within the description of the in-depth interviews, the qualitative data are presented in a table. The section then leads to a summative analysis of the collected data and concludes by presenting findings related.

Closed-response survey. The closed-response survey presented literature-based actions that principals can take to support multiculturalism in their schools. The survey asked principals to respond to four categories for each of the presented actions. The four response categories were, (a) importance of experience, (b) frequency of participation, (c) efficacy of completion, and (d) impact of experience. A total of 17 principals responded, but not all principals responded to each question, thus some of the totals for question responses fall below 17. Response averages for each of questions for each of the questions illuminated trends for matching preliminary findings to major categories after qualitative analysis of the in-depth interview data. For each response category, principals rated their answers on a four-point Likert scale, ranging from none (one) to most (four).

The response categories connected most to the first guiding research question were importance of experience and impact of experience, as they were a means of engaging prioritization. The response categories of frequency of participation and efficacy of support, however, also provided deeper insight during analysis. This is further explained in the second subsection.

Table 1 displays the data for the action area of school-wide culture. Within that single action area, there are four exemplifying statements. Table 1 shows the number and the corresponding percentage of principals for each of the four response categories.

Table 1

Closed-Response Survey Questions for School-Wide Culture

Action Area	Exemplifying Statement	Response Category	1 (None)	2 (Little)	3 (Some)	4 (Most)
School-Wide Culture	Including multicultural	Importance of Experience	0 0%	3 17.65%	8 47.06%	6 35.29%

	understandings in the school mission. Adjusting school-wide/community events to be increasingly multicultural.	Frequency of Participation	0 0%	10 58.82%	5 29.41%	2 11.76%
		Efficacy of Completion	0 0%	9 52.94%	5 29.41%	3 17.65%
		Impact of Experience	0 0%	10 58.82%	3 17.65%	4 23.53%
	Expressing a sense of urgency to faculty for expanding middle grade students' multicultural understandings.	Importance of Experience	0 0%	1 5.88%	10 58.82%	6 35.29%
		Frequency of Participation	0 0%	7 41.18%	6 35.29%	4 23.53%
		Efficacy of Completion	0 0%	7 41.18%	4 23.53%	6 35.29%
		Impact of Experience	1 6.25%	6 37.50%	5 31.25%	4 25.00%
	Adjusting school-wide/community events to be increasingly multicultural.	Importance of Experience	0 0%	3 17.65%	8 47.06%	6 35.29%
		Frequency of Participation	0 0%	11 64.71%	4 23.41%	2 17.65%
		Efficacy of Completion	0 0%	9 52.94%	5 29.41%	3 17.65%
		Impact of Experience	1 5.88%	10 58.82%	2 11.76%	4 23.53%
	Inviting in guest speakers to share about other cultures.	Importance of Experience	1 5.88%	5 29.41%	3 17.65%	8 47.06%
		Frequency of Participation	3 17.65%	7 41.18%	3 17.65%	4 23.53%
		Efficacy of Completion	5 29.41%	4 23.53%	2 11.76%	6 35.29%
		Impact of Experience	4 23.53%	5 29.41%	2 11.76%	6 35.29%

Table 1 provides a comprehensive view of the data collected for the action area of school-wide culture. It allows for more fluid way to see which exemplifying statements rated highest and lowest for each of the four response categories. The data analysis section for guiding

research question one refers to Table 1, due to the high average rating for importance of experience.

Table 2 displays the data for the action area of principal self-improvement. Within that single action area, there are four exemplifying statements. Table 2 shows the number and the corresponding percentage of principals for each of the four response categories.

Table 2

Closed-Response Survey Question for Principal Self-Improvement

Action Area	Exemplifying Statement	Response Category	1 (None)	2 (Little)	3 (Some)	4 (Most)
Principal Self-Improvement	Including multicultural understandings in your professional practice goals for the year.	Importance of Experience	2 11.76	3 17.65%	5 29.41%	7 41.18%
		Frequency of Participation	5 29.41%	4 23.52%	4 23.53%	4 23.53%
		Efficacy of Completion	6 35.29%	2 11.76%	3 17.65%	6 35.29%
		Impact of Experience	6 35.29%	2 11.76%	3 17.65%	6 35.29%
	Self-reflecting on your own multicultural understandings.	Importance of Experience	1 5.88%	1 5.88%	6 35.29%	9 52.29%
		Frequency of Participation	3 17.65%	3 17.65%	5 29.41%	6 35.29%
		Efficacy of Completion	4 23.53%	1 5.88%	5 29.41%	7 41.18%
		Impact of Experience	3 17.65%	2 11.76%	5 29.41%	7 41.18%
	Actively expanding your own multicultural understandings.	Importance of Experience	1 5.88%	3 17.65%	5 29.41%	8 47.06%
		Frequency of Participation	3 17.65%	4 23.53%	5 29.41%	5 29.41%
		Efficacy of Completion	3 17.65%	3 17.65%	5 29.41%	6 35.29%
		Impact of Experience	3 17.65%	3 17.65%	4 23.53%	7 41.18%

	Staying up-to-date by reading research on multicultural education.	Importance of Experience	1 6.25%	3 17.65%	6 35.29%	6 35.29%
		Frequency of Participation	2 11.76%	7 41.18%	4 23.53%	4 23.53%
		Efficacy of Completion	2 11.76%	6 35.29%	6 35.29%	3 17.65%
		Impact of Experience	2 11.76%	4 23.53%	6 35.29%	5 29.41%

Table 2 provides a visual for the data collected via the closed-response survey, specifically for the action area of principal self-improvement. It supplies a helpful way to see which exemplifying statements rated highest and lowest for each of the four response categories. Later analysis discusses how this actin area has the highest average for the response category of importance of experience.

Table 3 exhibits the data for the action area of assessment and data collection. Within that single action area, there are four exemplifying statements. Table 3 shows the number and the corresponding percentage of principals for each of the four response categories.

Table 3

Closed-Response Survey Questions for Assessment and Data Collection

Action Area	Exemplifying Statement	Response Category	1 (None)	2 (Little)	3 (Some)	4 (Most)
Assessment and Data Collection	Evaluating multicultural understandings in primary grades to see if students are developing foundational multicultural understandings.	Importance of Experience	1 5.88%	3 17.65%	6 35.29%	7 41.18%
		Frequency of Participation	4 25.00%	4 25.00%	4 25.00%	4 25.00%
		Efficacy of Completion	4 25.00%	6 37.50%	2 23.50%	4 25.00%
		Impact of Experience	3 17.65%	6 35.29%	3 17.65%	6 35.29%

	Evaluating middle grade students' multicultural understandings.	Importance of Experience	1 5.88%	1 5.88%	9 52.94%	6 35.29%
		Frequency of Participation	3 18.75%	6 37.50%	3 18.75%	4 25.00%
		Efficacy of Completion	3 18.75%	6 37.50%	3 18.75%	4 25.00%
		Impact of Experience	2 11.76%	8 47.06%	2 11.76%	5 29.41%
	Communicating with or going to observe at other rural, predominantly White schools to see how they are expanding multicultural understandings in their middle grades.	Importance of Experience	3 17.65%	5 29.41%	2 11.76%	7 41.18%
		Frequency of Participation	7 43.75%	8 50.00%	0 0%	1 6.25%
		Efficacy of Completion	7 43.75%	7 43.75%	1 6.25%	1 6.25%
		Impact of Experience	7 41.18%	6 35.29%	1 5.88%	3 17.65%
	Asking the districts' high school teachers what multicultural understandings gaps students have when entering.	Importance of Experience	2 12.50%	3 18.75%	5 31.25%	6 37.50%
		Frequency of Participation	8 40.00%	4 26.67%	2 13.33%	3 20.00%
		Efficacy of Completion	6 40.00%	4 26.67%	2 13.33%	3 20.00%
		Impact of Experience	6 37.50%	4 25.00%	2 12.50%	4 25.00%

Table 3 provides a comprehensive view of the data collected to address the action area of assessment and data collection. It effectively displays which exemplifying statements rated highest and lowest for each of the four response categories.

Table 4 displays the data for the action area of teacher feedback. Within this action area, there are three exemplifying statements. Table 4 shows the number and the corresponding percentage of principals for each of the four response categories.

Table 4

Closed-Response Survey Questions for Teacher Feedback

Action Area	Exemplifying Statement	Response Category	1 (None)	2 (Little)	3 (Some)	4 (Most)
Teacher Feedback	Asking middling grade teachers about how they bring multicultural understandings to their teaching.	Importance of Experience	0 0%	2 11.76%	9 52.94%	6 35.29%
		Frequency of Participation	2 12.50%	9 56.25%	2 12.50%	3 18.75%
		Efficacy of Completion	2 12.50%	7 43.75%	4 25.00%	3 18.75%
		Impact of Experience	3 17.65%	5 29.41%	4 23.53%	5 29.41%
	Asking middle grade teachers what they need in order to expand their students' multicultural understandings.	Importance of Experience	0 0%	3 17.65%	7 41.18%	7 41.18%
		Frequency of Participation	2 12.50%	6 37.50%	3 18.75%	5 31.25%
		Efficacy of Completion	3 18.75%	5 31.25%	4 25.00%	4 25.00%
		Impact of Experience	3 17.65%	5 29.41%	3 17.65%	6 35.29%
	Asking middle grade teachers what their greatest challenges are with teaching their middle grade students about race and other cultures.	Importance of Experience	1 5.88%	1 5.88%	6 35.29%	9 52.94%
		Frequency of Participation	3 18.75%	6 37.50%	3 18.75%	4 25.00%
		Efficacy of Completion	3 18.75%	4 25.00%	4 25.00%	5 31.25%
		Impact of Experience	3 18.75%	3 18.75%	3 18.75%	7 43.75%

Table 4 presents data collected via the closed-response survey for the action area of teacher feedback. It shows which exemplifying statements rated highest and lowest for each of the four response categories. In later analysis, it is noted that this action area has the lowest average for the response category of importance of experience.

Table 5 displays the data for the action area of stakeholder support and resources. Within this action area, there are five exemplifying statements. Table 5 shows the number and the corresponding percentage of principals for each of the four response categories.

Table 5

Closed-Response Survey Questions for Stakeholder Support and Resources

Action Area	Exemplifying Statement	Response Category	1 (None)	2 (Little)	3 (Some)	4 (Most)
Stakeholder Support and Resources	Applying for outside funding dedicated to expanding multicultural understandings for middle grade students.	Importance of Experience	0 0%	5 29.41%	6 35.29%	6 35.29%
		Frequency of Participation	5 31.25%	8 50.00%	1 6.25%	2 12.50%
		Efficacy of Completion	6 37.50%	5 31.25%	1 6.25%	4 25.00%
		Impact of Experience	5 29.41%	6 35.29%	1 5.88%	5 29.41%
	Supplying school-based funding to middle grade teachers specifically for multicultural materials (books, activities, etc.).	Importance of Experience	0 0%	3 17.65%	6 35.29%	8 47.06%
		Frequency of Participation	2 12.50%	7 43.75%	2 12.50%	5 31.25%
		Efficacy of Completion	3 18.75%	4 25.00%	6 37.50%	3 18.75%
		Impact of Experience	3 17.65%	6 35.29%	2 11.76%	6 35.29%
	Discussing expanding multicultural understandings in your school with your superintendent.	Importance of Experience	1 5.88%	3 17.65%	7 41.18%	6 35.29%
		Frequency of Participation	6 37.50%	3 18.75%	4 25.00%	3 18.75%
		Efficacy of Completion	6 37.50%	2 12.50%	5 31.25%	3 18.75%
		Impact of Experience	6 35.29%	3 17.65%	4 23.53%	4 23.53%
	Asking parents for insight on their satisfaction of their	Importance of Experience	3 17.65%	2 11.76%	8 31.25%	4 23.53%

	middle grade student's multicultural understandings.	Frequency of Participation	8 50.00%	4 25.00%	3 18.75%	1 6.25%
		Efficacy of Completion	9 56.25%	2 12.50%	4 25.00%	1 6.25%
		Impact of Experience	9 52.94%	3 17.65%	3 17.65%	2 11.76%
	Asking the school committee for ideas/resources for expanding middle grade students' multicultural understandings.	Importance of Experience	6 35.29%	4 23.53%	6 35.29%	1 5.88%
		Frequency of Participation	12 75.00%	2 12.50%	2 12.50%	0 0%
		Efficacy of Completion	10 71.43%	2 14.29%	2 14.29%	0 0%
		Impact of Experience	12 70.59%	2 11.76%	2 11.76%	1 5.88%

Table 5 provides a visual for the data collected via the closed-response survey. It shows which exemplifying statements rated highest and lowest for each of the four response categories. According to the data presented here, this action area ranked as lowest average efficacy of completion when compared to the other seven action areas. This is discussed in later analysis.

Table 6 displays the data for the action area of teacher professional development and accountability. Within that single action area, there are three exemplifying statements. Table 6 shows the number and the corresponding percentage of principals for each of the four response categories.

Table 6

Closed-Response Survey Questions for Teacher Professional Development and Accountability

Action Area	Exemplifying Statement	Response Category	1 (None)	2 (Little)	3 (Some)	4 (Most)
Teacher Professional Development	Encouraging teachers to make expanding middle grade	Importance of Experience	1 5.88%	4 25.53%	9 52.94%	3 17.65%

and Accountability	students' multicultural understandings a professional practice goal for the year.	Frequency of Participation	7 43.75%	4 25.00%	3 18.75%	2 12.50%
		Efficacy of Completion	7 43.75%	5 31.25%	3 18.75%	1 6.25%
		Impact of Experience	7 41.18%	5 29.41%	3 17.65%	2 11.76%
	Offering teachers professional development time/opportunities with a multicultural focus.	Importance of Experience	2 11.76%	5 29.41%	6 35.29%	4 23.53%
		Frequency of Participation	5 33.33%	7 46.67%	2 12.33%	1 6.67%
		Efficacy of Completion	7 43.75%	5 31.25%	3 18.75%	1 6.25%
		Impact of Experience	7 41.18%	5 29.41%	3 17.65%	2 11.76%
	Focusing on how middle grade teachers bring multicultural understandings to their classrooms in their evaluations.	Importance of Experience	2 11.76%	5 29.41%	6 35.29%	4 23.53%
		Frequency of Participation	5 33.33%	7 46.67%	2 12.33%	1 6.67%
		Efficacy of Completion	7 43.75%	5 31.25%	3 18.75%	1 6.25%
		Impact of Experience	7 41.18%	5 29.41%	3 17.65%	2 11.76%

Table 6 shows data collected via the closed-response survey for the action area of teacher professional development and accountability. It allows for analysis by displaying which exemplifying statements rated highest and lowest for each of the four response categories. Later analysis uses this data to discuss how this action area ranked lowest for average impact of experience.

Table 7 conveys the data for the action area of curricular focus. Within that single action area, there are four exemplifying statements. Table 2 shows the number and the corresponding percentage of principals for each of the four response categories.

Table 7

Closed-Response Survey Questions for Curricular Focus

Action Area	Exemplifying Statement	Response Category	1 (None)	2 (Little)	3 (Some)	4 (Most)
Curricular Focus	Supporting middle grade teachers in bringing students on fieldtrips with a focus on multiculturalism (i.e. plays, museums, multi-school events).	Importance of Experience	1 5.88%	2 11.76%	7 41.18%	7 41.18%
		Frequency of Participation	3 18.75%	7 43.75%	4 25.00%	2 12.50%
		Efficacy of Completion	4 25.00%	4 25.00%	7 43.75%	1 6.25%
		Impact of Experience	3 17.65%	5 29.41%	5 29.41%	4 23.53%
	Prioritizing multicultural understandings over standardized test preparation.	Importance of Experience	4 23.53%	4 23.53%	3 17.65%	6 35.29%
		Frequency of Participation	5 31.25%	6 37.50%	3 18.75%	2 12.50%
		Efficacy of Completion	5 31.25%	5 31.25%	4 25.00%	2 12.50%
		Impact of Experience	5 29.41%	6 35.29%	3 17.65%	3 17.65%
	Encouraging teachers to use technology to use technology to meet students/guest speakers who are from other cultures.	Importance of Experience	2 13.33%	1 6.67%	4 26.67%	8 53.33%
		Frequency of Participation	4 28.57%	7 50.00%	0 0%	3 21.43%
		Efficacy of Completion	4 28.57%	5 35.71%	1 7.14%	4 28.57%
		Impact of Experience	4 26.67%	5 33.33%	1 6.67%	5 33.33%
	Offering middle grade teachers curriculum with multicultural emphasis.	Importance of Experience	3 17.65%	1 5.88%	6 35.29%	7 41.18%
		Frequency of Participation	5 31.35%	3 18.75%	5 31.25%	3 18.75%
		Efficacy of Completion	6 37.50%	4 25.00%	4 25.00%	2 12.50%
		Impact of Experience	6 35.29%	4 23.53%	4 25.00%	3 17.65%

Table 7 displays the data for the action area of curricular focus. Within that single action area, there are four exemplifying statements. Table 7 shows the number and the corresponding percentage of principals for each of the four response categories.

The preceding seven tables display the data that were used to calculate averages for the response categories for each of the action areas. The data in Tables 1-7 were used in conjunction with the qualitative data discussed next.

In-depth interview. The interviews started with a review of the interviewees' survey results with him or her. Their survey responses then dictated the questions for each of the seven areas of action. As shown in Appendix D, the interview protocol included options based on the interviewee's survey results. The actions on the survey that received high ratings in importance of experience and impact of experience were used as a starting-point to learn more about how this looks in his or her school. The priorities that I gathered in the quantitative data were preliminary findings that were confirmed in the interviews. The averages calculated in the survey also informed the coding process to allow for searching for exemplifying statements that matched, challenged, or gave further insight into the numerical correlations for principals' priorities for multicultural understandings.

The coding process supplied eleven major categories. Each of the eleven major categories were tied to quantitative data, as the rest of the chapter explains. The eleven major categories were then matched to exemplifying statements to best describe the sentiments within the major category. For example, the major category of supporting all learners in the school mission has the exemplifying statement, "Our school mission talks about supporting all learners, regardless of background, so all feel welcome and comfortable." All principals expressed ideas that fell into

this major category, making it a prevalence of 100%. Each of major categories has a prevalence between 70-100%.

Table 8 provides a list of four major categories, each matched with a corresponding exemplifying statement, a percentage of prevalence (response rate), and the associated guiding research question and finding. This table only presents qualitative data for Guiding Research Question One. Information used within Table 8 was used to provide further insight into the preliminary, quantitative.

Table 8

Qualitative Data: Major Categories and Exemplifying Statements for Guiding Research Question One

Major Category	Exemplifying Statement	Prevalence	Associated Guiding Research Question and Finding
Supporting all learners mission.	"Our school's mission talks about supporting all learners, regardless of background, so all feel welcome and comfortable."	100%	GRQ #1 Finding#1
Focus on existing diversity within the school.	"We are mostly White, so we have to look at what we do have, which is a variety of learning styles and the LGBTQ community, to focus on diversity."	100%	GRQ #1 Finding #1
School mission limits.	"A welcome school culture is important, but it doesn't stop prejudice from arising always."	80%	GRQ #1 Finding #1
Control over personal growth.	"As principals, we have the most control over ourselves, so the more we can do to grow and improve, the better off our school will be."	90%	GRQ #1 Finding #2

Table 8 displays a culmination of the qualitative data extracted from the in-depth interviews with ten principals. Eleven major categories were distilled with matching exemplifying statements. Table 8 specifically highlights the preliminary findings based on

qualitative data that was linked to quantitative data during analysis. Quantitative data analysis is discussed in the next subsection.

The qualitative data in Table 8 was a part of coding using NVIVO software. Each major category was part of the code-book and used to extract meaning to match to preliminary findings in the quantitative data. The data analysis for each guiding research question used the above-mentioned major categories and exemplifying statements as a means to extract findings. This is further explained in the next subsection.

Summary of Data Analysis for Guiding Research Question One: To what degree to principals consider it a priority to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural middle school grades?

The first guiding research question, "To what degree do principals consider it a priority to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades?" was addressed in both the quantitative portion and the qualitative portion of the study. After extrapolating numerical values from the closed-response survey, I extracted major categories and exemplifying statements from the interview transcriptions through coding procedures. The data analysis for the response rating categories of importance of experience and impact of experience will now be discussed.

Closed-response survey. The closed-response survey allowed for an overview to gauge how principals feel about multicultural understandings in their rural, predominantly White middle grades. Each of the four response categories is discussed next, but with greatest emphasis on importance of experience and impact of experience as the most directly related to the first guiding research question.

Tables 1-7 depict the responses for each of the exemplifying statements' response categories. Upon further analysis of this data, the average response rating for importance of experience for each of the seven action areas. Importance of experience is directly connected to the first guiding research question because a high rating within this response category is associated with principals valuing the exemplifying statements. Data presented in Tables 1-7 were compared and warranted closer examination. Within Table 1 the action area with the highest average rating for importance of experience was school-wide culture, with an average rating of 3.18. Within this action area, frequency of participation and efficacy of completion were lower, suggesting that even though principals highly value the action area and see it as impactful, they lack frequent participation and follow-through. Using the data presented in Table 4, the action area with the lowest average for importance of experience was teacher feedback, with an average rating of 2.49.

Since school-wide culture had the highest average rating of importance of experience, questions that fell within the action area of school-wide culture required further review. Table 1 shows that while principals reported that it was important to have a school-wide culture that emphasized expanding middle grade students' multicultural understandings, they rated their frequency of participation, efficacy of completion, and impact of experience as lower on average. As seen in Tables 1-7, action areas of principal self-improvement, assessment and data collection, stakeholder support and resources, teacher professional development, and curricular focus all showed higher average ratings in importance of experience than their average rating in impact of experience.

Looking even more closely at specific exemplifying statements, according to Table 1, *"*Including multicultural understandings in the school mission" and "Adjusting school-

wide/community events to be increasingly multicultural" had the highest averages for importance of experience within the action area of school-wide support. Data analysis for guiding research question one also showed a noticeable trend within the action area of impact of experience.

Impact of experience is closely linked to the first guiding research question because if principals think of exemplifying statements as impactful, then it is likely they see it as effective. When looking at importance of experience and comparing it to impact of experience, six of the seven action areas had higher average ratings for importance of experience than they did for impact of experience. Frequency of participation and efficacy of completion did not follow this trend. This showed that principals highly valued the different action areas, but have not seen great impact as a result of those actions. Tables 1-7 were used as a comparison tool to depict the disparities between the two response categories.

The average response rating for impact of experience for each of the seven action areas. The action areas with the highest average rating for impact of experience was principal self-improvement, with an average response rating of 2.79. As seen in Table 2 the exemplifying statement, "Self-reflecting on your own multicultural understandings" had the highest impact of experience rating within principal self-improvement.

The action area with the lowest average for impact of experience was teacher professional development and accountability, with an average response rating of 2. This is a range of .79 between averages for principal self-improvement and teacher professional development. This suggested that principals see their own self-improvement as the most impactful and see teacher professional development and accountability as the least impactful. This was further emphasized because within the action area of teacher professional development

and accountability, all of the exemplifying statements had the same results for impact of experience.

In-depth interview. The topic that inspired the most verbose responses from the principals fell under the action area of school-wide culture. This matched the quantitative data as the action area with the highest average response rating for importance of experience. The exemplifying statement that fit 100% of interviewees was, “Our school mission is to support all learners, regardless of background so all feel welcome and comfortable.” Many of the principals quoted their school mission statements and handbooks when addressing school-wide culture.

All of the interviewed principals shared that their school-wide cultures focused on welcoming all learners and focused on the diversity present at the school. The exemplifying statement that matched this idea was, “We are mostly White, so we have to look at what we do have, which is a variety of learning styles and the LGBTQ community, to focus on diversity.” The principals shared that their schools focused on inclusion toward differences in sexual-orientation and learning, intellectual and physical disabilities, rather than multiculturalism in terms of race. Since racial diversity is not a part of these predominantly White schools, it has not been a cultural norm to talk about different races there.

In relation to the numeric trend of the importance of experience being higher than the impact of experience for school-wide culture, an exemplifying statement arose from the interview data. 80% of principals shared the sentiment that, “A welcome school culture is important, but it doesn’t stop prejudice from arising always.” The principals who shared this also explained that there was language in their school’s mission statement that reflected their welcoming and non-discriminatory nature, but not specific to race. Five of the ten principals supplied specific examples of how prejudices still exist in their schools. Two of the ten principals

cited incidences with students making racial slurs just in the past week and three principals spoke of times when they had racial slurs spray-painted or etched on school property within the past year. According to these principals, the students who committed these acts rationalized their acts as, “not being a big deal because it’s not like it would offend anyone there.” Principals agreed that the students did not see the harm and severity in their actions until afterward. This led to three principals describing their approach to multicultural understandings as purely “reactionary.” They elaborated that multiculturalism has not been a focus until something goes awry, then the faculty and staff have had to address it, typically in the form of punishment. Prevention has not been a focus in those three principals’ schools. While school-wide culture had the highest average rating for importance of experience, the school-wide cultures that the principals described were lacking multicultural impact. The data analysis next looks at the highest average for impact of experience.

The category that had the highest average rating for impact of experience was principal self-improvement. The exemplifying statement that supported this quantitative data was, “As principals, we have the most control over ourselves, so the more we can do to grow and improve, the better off our school will be.” 90% of the principals interviewed shared anecdotes of how they have strived to expand their own multicultural understandings through staying up-to-date on current events, taking graduate courses, attending workshops and professional learning communities, traveling, and reflecting on their families integration with other cultures through marriage. Those same principals also shared that having control over their own professional development was easier than steering teachers’ professional development. Only one of the ten interviewed principals expressed zero interest in purposefully trying to expand his multicultural

understandings. That one principal was about to retire, so that may have played a role in his response.

When discussing their own multicultural understandings, four of the principals used their elaboration as a segue to talking about their family ties to other cultures. They shared that they married someone of another race or have children who have married someone of another race. Those four principals cited this personal life experience as a reason why they value having a multicultural lens personally and professionally. The trends and preliminary findings presented above were used to create the findings presented next.

Delineation of Findings for Guiding Research Question One: To what degree to principals consider it a priority to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural middle school grades?

Both the quantitative data and the qualitative data provided insightful information to better understand the phenomenon of being a principal of a rural, predominantly White school with middle grades. The first guiding research question led to two findings. Their explanations and related synthesis follow.

Finding #1: A school-wide theme of "acceptance for all" may not be effective. The first finding is that principals at predominantly White, rural schools prioritize providing a school-wide culture that fosters acceptance for all with a focus on the nonracial diversity that is present, but the results lack anticipated impact. Exploring implications of school-wide culture began with quantitative data that made it possible to seek elaboration and rationale in the in-depth interviews. The quantitative feedback that the survey supplied showed that the school-wide culture is the action category that principals report as having the highest level of importance on average, as seen in Table 1. In contrast, the survey results for the action category of school-wide

culture was below the average for the importance of experience. The qualitative correlation that school-wide culture could be deemed more important than it is impactful matched the qualitative findings in that they value it, but do not see the anticipated results. As Table 8 displays, interviews provided the opportunity to explore what principals specifically see as the important aspects of their school-wide culture when expanding multicultural understandings.

All interviewed principals elaborated on their school-wide culture by expressing sentiments that aligned with the exemplifying statement, “Our school’s mission talks about supporting all learners, regardless of background, so all feel welcome and comfortable.” Their commentary also matched the quantitative data that although they see it as important, its impact is not as high as they would like. 80% of principals interviewed expressed notions of prejudice that exist in their schools. An exemplifying statement that represented this idea was, “A welcome school culture is important, but it doesn’t stop prejudice from arising always.” These principals also spoke of how their school missions were meant to cover more than other cultures, like the LGBTQ community and intellectual, learning and physical disabilities. Evidently, embracing the diversity that is already within the school is important to these principals, but they are not seeing the multicultural understandings that they strive to have the students foster. Although the interviewed principals were able to express their high value for a school-wide culture that embraces diversity, they do not see it as a barrier for prejudice.

The qualitative data reflected that all of the principals interviewed relied on the diversity that is present within their schools as a means to contextualize what it means to have a strong sense of acceptance. Since the interviewed principals all shared that they prioritize embracing what is already present at their school, this carried the notion that principals are most invested in

what they have the most control over. This idea continues in the second finding for the first guiding research question.

The underlying message of Finding #1 is that the best intentions do not always lead to the anticipated results. Principals have strived to promote a school-wide culture that fosters acceptance for all, but they have not observed the results that they would like. Their school-wide focus has been on the diversity present within the school and since the schools in this study were predominantly White and rural, they lack racial diversity. Without a school-wide culture that routinely emphasizes multicultural understandings, students have not received reminders of how to be accepting of other races and cultures.

In any school, principals prioritize improving how the school population treats one another with an emphasis of kindness and respect. The principals in this study, in contrast, have not taken this a step further by including multicultural understandings. As a result, the language they have used in their formal handbooks and mission statements, along with day-to-day dialogues, has reflected how to behave in general. The caveat was that these principals have been ignoring the diversity that has not been present in the school. The result was a mentality of "out-of-sight-out-of-mind." If racial diversity is not present in the school, the principals have concluded that is no frame-of-reference from which to draw upon to foster a sense of racial acceptance and wide-spread multicultural understandings. The principals, as a result, have focused on what has been present. The outcome, unfortunately, was that the students have not been hearing consistently about racial acceptance and since that has not been a focus, they have resorted to racist acts. The students who committed such acts did not feel their choices deserved consequences since they did not think anyone at that school would be offended. The principals did not provide any instances where students were committing acts that would directly offend

someone at the school based on differences. Even though the schools has diversity in ability and sexual orientation, for example, the principals were not able to provide examples of any discriminatory acts directed toward any individuals in those groups. This made sense if the students' rationale was that they would never do anything that would insult or offend someone within the school.

Principals at these predominantly White, rural schools were hoping that their middle schools would transfer the message of acceptance for all to multicultural understandings, but explained that this approach was not working as well as they had hoped.

Finding #2: It is effective for principals to have direct control over their personal multicultural understandings. To elaborate, principals at predominantly White, rural schools prioritize expanding their personal multicultural understandings because they see it as being most impactful on the entire school's multiculturalism and an area that they have the most direct control. The quantitative data first supplied Finding #2 preliminarily, but the qualitative data cemented this idea. The quantitative data first supported the idea that the area of greatest impact was principal self-improvement, as displayed in Table 2. This provoked further questioning during the in-depth interviews. When asking the principals what they prioritize in their multicultural efforts for their school, Table 8 shows exemplifying statement, "As principals, we have the most control over ourselves, so the more we can do to grow and improve, the better off our school will be" summarized the sentiment felt by nine of the ten principals.

The connection that a majority of the principals made between control and impact was shared in the interviews. Principals who ranked principal self-improvement as the action area with the greatest impact out of the seven action areas on the survey, also gave explanations related to their own multiculturalism being the area over which they have the greatest control.

Bringing together the quantitative and qualitative data allowed for a more general perspective of this finding. Thinking about other areas of life, help contextualize Finding #2.

Think about the areas of life people have the most control over tend to be where they have the highest impact, in general. For example, generally, people have control over when they leave for work. As soon as they have children with unpredictable needs and schedules, parents' control is compromised and they are not as likely to get to work on time. The execution of the action is sacrificed. In this scenario, the same rationale applies. If principals felt like there were few obstacles inhibiting their ability to expand their multicultural understandings, their success rate of completing activities for self-improvement would increase. The key in both these instances is control. Once control is compromised, then so is the impact of the experience and completion rate.

The idea that principal self-improvement is the most impactful is not surprising when considering the role of the principal. As the head of the school, the principal has many responsibilities. Overall, the principal is responsible for cultivating the school-wide culture, implementing change, focusing areas of improvement, and serving as a school representative. With those influential roles in mind, it is possible to see how the school principal's self-improvement was deemed the most impactful. The influence the principal has on the rest of the school is substantial. With a sense of what principals have prioritized in this initiative, it was possible to explore what the principals have been implementing in order to support the expansion of multicultural understandings.

Guiding Research Question Two: What do principals report they are doing to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades?

This guiding research question was intended to reveal what principals are actively doing and are not actively doing to expand multicultural understandings at their schools. Similar to the first guiding research question, the second guiding research question was addressed through data collection in the closed-response survey and the in-depth interviews. This section is broken into three subsections: (a) data collected for Guiding Research Question Two, (b) analysis of data for Guiding Research Question Two, and (c) findings for Guiding Research Question Two.

Data Collected to Address Guiding Research Question Two

The closed-response survey was used to gauge what principals were actively doing to expand their students' multicultural understandings and formulate preliminary findings. That data was used to ask questions to learn more about those findings and confirm or challenge them in the in-depth interviews. An explanation of data collected to address the second guiding research question for each of the instruments follows.

Closed-response survey. Seven action areas were explored to see what principals were actively doing to expand multicultural understandings. More specifically, within each of the action areas, the response categories of frequency of participation and efficacy of completion were used to learn about principal involvement, or lack of involvement. It was important to compare those two response categories with importance of experience and impact of experience for meaningful data analysis This is explained in the subsequent subsection.

The response rating for frequency of participation correlated to principals' level of participation in expanding multicultural understandings in the middle grades. Table 9 compares the seven action area's averages for frequency of participation and efficacy of completion.

Table 9

Average Response Ratings for Frequency of Participation and Efficacy of Completion

Action Area	Average Response Rating	
	Frequency of Participation	Efficacy of Completion
School-Wide Culture	2.57	2.69
Principal Self-Improvement	2.63	2.71
Assessment and Data Collection	2.20	2.19
Teacher Feedback	2.53	2.58
Stakeholder Support and Resources	2.01	2.06
Teacher Professional Development and Accountability	1.97	3.76
Curricular Focus	2.24	2.25

Table 9 provides a way to compare the frequency of participation and efficacy of support of all seven action areas, on average. If principals partook in the action frequently, then it occurred regularly. Low ratings in this category were associated with lack of consistent involvement. Participation in the action areas was a measure to rank what actions principals were implementing most. Participation is not synonymous with follow-through, but data for efficacy of completion provides that insight.

The response category of efficacy of completion collected data associated with follow-through. This response category means that principals have begun and successfully completed an action that contributed to multicultural understandings. Similar to the data collected for frequency of participation, efficacy of completion rates did not necessarily correlate to high importance of experience or impact of experience ratings. A high response rating for efficacy of

completion correlated to increased follow-through on the action areas. Table 9 was used to compare efficacy of completion. If principals had low ratings for follow-through on the presented actions, then it showed that the action was not something they started and completed in its entirety. By comparing both response categories, it was possible to see what action area was associated with the least principal involvement. Further investigation into the closed-response survey's preliminary findings were explored in the in-depth interviews.

In-depth interview. The frequency of participation and efficacy of completion results gave insight to what principals were participating in most when working toward expanding their school's multiculturalism. Those results were used on an individual basis as inspiration for specific questions in the in-depth interview phase of the study. The interview protocol (Appendix D) showed the different options for each action area so that questioning was tailored for each principal's survey data. For example, when a principal reported that they were frequently participating in one of the actions presented on the survey and reported high efficacy of completion, this prompted deeper questioning into what this has looked like for that principal and the rationale behind it. Low ratings of participation and efficacy of completion were also inspiration for further questioning to learn what factors inhibit principals, as discussed in the data analysis for the third guiding research question.

Table 10 provides the qualitative data that relate to the second guiding research question and findings, presented later in this section. This data represents the deeper insights tied to the quantitative preliminary findings presented earlier in this section.

Table 10

Qualitative Data: Major Categories and Exemplifying Statements for Guiding Research Question Two

Major Category	Exemplifying Statement	Prevalence	Associated Guiding Research Question and Finding
Professional practice goals reflecting district and school plans.	"Since our professional practice goals as administrators should reflect the school improvement plan, and the school improvement plans need to reflect the district's strategic goals, multiculturalism can have a trickle-down effect."	80%	GRQ #2 Finding #3
Lack of funding for teacher professional development.	"Since outside agencies provide the professional development, and teachers want to go to multicultural ones, then we by all means, support them. We don't have the funds to send them too much, however."	70%	GRQ #2 Finding #4
Limited teacher evaluation of multiculturalism.	"One of our standards for evaluation is 'Meeting the needs of all learners,' but that's typically the only time we hold teachers accountable for focusing on student differences, unless a lesson I observe is about multiculturalism."	70%	GRQ #2 Finding #4

Table 10 provides the major categories and related significant statements that were used in the data analysis, in conjunction with the quantitative data. The next subsection explores the quantitative results and qualitative results that connected to the second guiding research question.

Summary of Data Analysis for Guiding Research Question Two: What do principals report they are doing to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades?

This subsection summarizes both the closed-response survey and in-depth interviews and the results that connected to the second guiding research question.

Closed-response survey. The closed-response survey asked principals to rate actions that were divided into seven areas of action. There were between three and five exemplifying statements per area. On a Likert scale of one-four (none-most), principals rated the frequency of participation and efficacy of completion for the presented action.

Table 9 allowed for comparison of the frequency of participation ratings for each of the seven action areas for frequency of participation. The action area with the highest average rating in this response category was principal self-improvement (2.63) and the action area with the lowest average rating in this response category was teacher professional development and accountability (1.97) with a range of 0.66. This suggested that principals were more routinely involved in principal self-improvement than they were with providing teacher professional development and holding teachers accountable for expanding their students' multicultural understandings.

Data from the first guiding research question helped the data analysis of the second guiding research question. When exploring the quantitative and qualitative results for Guiding Research Question One, the second preliminary finding was that principals found their self-improvement to be the most impactful and prioritized expanding their own understandings. Looking closely at more specific questions within the action area of principal self-improvement, the exemplifying statement that received the highest rating was, "Self-reflecting on your own multicultural understandings." The data showed principal self-improvement was the action area in which they were most frequently involved. That made sense because it received the highest impact rating.

Data presented in Table 9 showed the averages for each of the seven action areas for efficacy of completion. The action area with the highest average rating in this response category

was teacher professional development and accountability (3.76) and the action area with the lowest average rating in this response category was stakeholder support and resources (2.06) with a range of 1.7. Teacher professional development and accountability was the lowest average action area for frequency of participation, yet this was the highest area for efficacy of completion. This preliminary finding suggested that principals have not facilitated teacher professional development and accountability focused on expanding multicultural understandings often, but when they have, they followed through on it. The responses for each of the exemplifying statements within the action area of teacher professional development and accountability for efficacy of completion were consistently the same, which furthers the idea that the averages are a good indicator of specific exemplifying statements. The in-depth interviews, explained next, confirmed and furthered these preliminary quantitative findings.

In-depth interviews. The in-depth interview process was an opportunity to learn more about the noticeable quantitative trends. When asking principals specifically about the trend of low frequency of participation and high efficacy of completion for teacher professional development and accountability, a major category and related exemplifying statement evolved. As seen in Table 10, the exemplifying statement to answer this was, “Since outside agencies provide the professional development, and teachers want to go to multicultural ones, then we by all means, support them. We don’t have the funds to send them too much, however.” This exemplifying statement represents responses from 70% of the principals interviewed. They also shared that their in-house professional development has been always academic-based. If a teacher wanted multicultural professional development, the offering would need to be supplied by another source.

The other portion of this action area was focused on accountability, as seen in Table 10. A major category that arose for accountability was that principals always focus on "meeting the needs of all learners" when it comes to teachers' formal observation feedback and yearly summative evaluations. That strand of the Massachusetts evaluation form does not specifically identify multiculturalism as a part of that strand. Principals expressed that there has been a lack of multiculturalism in teacher evaluation standards. An exemplifying statement in Table 10 that reflected this idea extracted through the coding process was, "One of our standards for evaluation is 'Meeting the needs of all learners,' but that's typically the only time we hold teachers accountable for focusing on student differences, unless a lesson I observe is about multiculturalism." This statement reflected the views of the same 70% of interviewed principals who expressed lack of funding for teacher professional development on multiculturalism. Of the seven principals who responded with that idea, six of them expressed that if they had more time and if standardized test preparation was not a focus, they would have evaluated it more often.

The in-depth interviews were an opportunity to inquire more into what principals have been specifically doing to expand their personal multicultural understandings, since they reported that they have been participating in it so much in the survey data. When principals were asked to share about their own multicultural understandings and if they were active in expanding them, 100% of interviewed principals were able to provide examples of how they do so. Examples they supplied were traveling, taking courses, attending workshops and staying up-to-date on multicultural teaching strategies. As previously explained when discussing data in relation to the first guiding research question, their reasoning for having been most frequently active in expanding their own multiculturalism was because it was something over which they have direct control.

According to Table 10, 80% of interviewed principals shared that expanding multiculturalism in their district was in their newest district-wide strategic plan and school improvement plan. The exemplifying statement that elaborated this was, “Since our professional practice goals as administrators should reflect the school improvement plan, and the school improvement plans need to reflect the district’s strategic goals, multiculturalism can have a trickle-down effect.” Having individual professional practice goals that align with school or district improvement/strategic goals has allowed for principals to meet multiple standards at once. The findings now delve deeper into the synthesis related to these findings.

Delineation of Findings for Guiding Research Question Two: What do principals report they are doing to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades?

As previously outlined, the action areas of frequency of participation and efficacy of completion were the most predominant in the closed-response survey for formulating preliminary findings, with the other action areas supporting the conjectures. Those preliminary findings were further investigated when collecting qualitative data in the in-depth interviews. Both sets of data were used to formulate two findings for the second guiding research question.

Finding #3: Principal goals that match school goals promote multiculturalism. Principals are more inclined to focus on expanding their multicultural understandings if their professional practice goals are to match the multicultural focus of district strategic plans and school improvement plans that emphasize multicultural growth. The ties between the qualitative and quantitative data inspired Finding #3. The quantitative data that showed high frequency of participation in principal self-improvement, as seen in Table 9, was later explained in the in-depth interviews, as seen in Table 10. The interview data gave the rationale behind their high

participation rate, which was because these principals were trying to meet district strategic plan and school improvement plan's objectives. Exploring this finding within the context of MA, this finding makes sense.

In the new evaluation system for both teachers and administrators in Massachusetts, the more overlap a professional can have in meeting the requirements, the more manageable the tasks. For example, it has been common for teachers to have very interrelated professional practice and student learning goals, so that the evidence could fit both goals. The state of Massachusetts has expected principals to address the district strategic plans and school improvement plans, as well as meet the objectives of their professional practice goals. As a result, having professional practice goals that are related to the larger school and district plans has been common practice.

When creating professional practice goals, the principals have put thought into how the goals could be measured for their effectiveness. They also have considered how to document growth toward meeting those goals. There has been a high level of accountability with the professional practice goals and that pressure has meant that the principals must be proactive in meeting the goals. In turn, if expanding multicultural understandings has been a focus for the district and the school, then the principals' professional goals likely reflect that idea. The success rate in meeting the goal is then much higher. Finding #4 goes beyond principals' professional development and looks at their impact on teachers' development.

Finding #4: Principals expressed a desire to more effectively help guide and support teachers in expanding multicultural understandings. Principals have greatest efficacy of completion in supplying teachers with multicultural professional development and evaluating teachers on multiculturalism, but not as frequently as they wish they could. The quantitative data

in Table 9 supplied the notion that professional development has been occurring, but the qualitative interview data in Table 10 provided valuable insight on the reasoning behind this. Survey data that gave high efficacy of completion to teacher professional development and accountability also gave this action area a low rating of frequency of participation. Qualitative interview data provided insight that while they always provide professional development in multiculturalism and address it in yearly evaluations, it is an action area that is typically addressed once and no more. Principals were successful in providing teachers with professional development and evaluating them on their implementation of multicultural ideas, but they regretted not having enough time dedicated to that specific topic.

Online research into the professional development workshops that have been offered at the private workshop centers within the state showed that most locations offered 2-4 multicultural workshops per year. Most were in the eastern part of the state. Three western Massachusetts principals commented on the lack of multicultural trainings within an hour of their schools. Such limited offerings have led to school districts being mostly responsible for offering such training if they wanted to train teachers. This has not been an easy task since most school's professional development days have had strictly academic focuses. The same academic prioritization also has affected teacher evaluations. Principals felt like it would help to have more one-on-one conversations about how teachers can improve their multicultural practice, but academics were the focus. When principals observed lessons, they evaluated the overarching accessibility of the lesson, but fostering multicultural understandings was not part of the evaluation. The subsequent section begins with the data collected for the third guiding research question.

Guiding Research Question Three: What do principals report are factors and conditions that inhibit and support their efforts to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades?

The main purpose of guiding research question three was to learn more about what is helping and hindering the process of rural, predominantly White schools expanding multicultural understandings. The third and final guiding research question, similar to the preceding two guiding research questions, relied upon a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. This section is divided into three subsections: (a) data collected for Guiding Research Question Three, (b) analysis of data for Guiding Research Question Three, and (c) findings for Guiding Research Question Three.

Data Collected to Address Guiding Research Question Three

The creation of the instruments was greatly dependent upon the seven areas that the literature identified as the most influential in promoting and inhibiting multicultural understandings in schools. The final research question, required a much-higher level of description, making it more applicable for the in-depth interviews, but the closed-response survey was used for data pertaining to direct the questioning in the interviews. The closed-response survey action areas of school-wide culture, stakeholder support and resources, and curricular focus gave insight into what promotes and inhibits these principals in spreading multicultural understandings. These three specific action areas warranted closer inspection because of the trends they presented. This section leads to the chapter summary to end the chapter.

Closed-response survey. When comparing the seven action areas, an interesting trend surfaced in three action areas. Stakeholder support and resources had a higher ranking for

importance of experience, but the other three response categories were almost an entire point lower. Principals, on the survey, recognized the importance of stakeholder support and resources, but gave lower values for the other three response categories. This suggested low rates of stakeholder support and resources, even if deemed important. The numerical trend inspired interview question as to why principals valued stakeholder support and resources but did not rate them highly in any other categories. This preliminary finding connected to Guiding Research Question Three because it suggested a factor that was inhibiting principals.

Table 11 presents the average response ratings for the four response categories for stakeholder support and resources.

Table 11

Stakeholder Support and Resources Averages for Response Categories

Response Category	Average Rating
Importance of Experience	2.86
Frequency of Participation	2.01
Efficacy of Completion	2.06
Impact of Experience	2.15

Table 11 allowed for further analysis of trends within the action area of stakeholder support and resources. The in-depth interview provided insight into inhibiting factors, as explained later.

Since the literature explained that school-wide culture can influence the other six action areas that have the power to promote of inhibit multicultural understandings at a school, the survey averages for school-wide culture required deeper examination. Table 12 displays the average rating for each of the response categories within school-wide culture.

Table 12

School-Wide Culture Averages for Response Categories

Response Category	Average Rating
Importance of Experience	3.06
Frequency of Participation	2.57
Efficacy of Completion	2.69
Impact of Experience	2.63

Table 12 displays that, on average, principals see school-wide culture as important, but their participation, follow-through, and the resulting impact fall short in comparison to how important they see it. A school culture that lacks emphasis on multicultural understandings may contribute a lack of stakeholder support and resources. This furthers the idea that a school culture is the cause of other inhibiting factors. The in-depth interviews provided more insight on the preliminary finding.

Aside from inhibiting factors and conditions, promoting factors were the other focus of the data analysis to address Guiding Research Question Three. Another numerical trend to surface was in curricular focus. In contrast to response ratings suggesting that principals value an action area but are not implementing it, the action area of curricular focus showed consistent responses across the four response categories. Table 13 shows the average rating for each of the response categories within curricular focus. This was an important preliminary finding because it had potential to provide a finding as to what supports principals in expanding students' multicultural understandings.

Table 13

Curricular Focus Averages for Response Categories

Response Category	Average Rating
Importance of Experience	3.01
Frequency of Participation	2.24

Efficacy of Completion	2.25
Impact of Experience	2.39

Table 13 provided information to look at a trend that seemed to support multicultural understandings. Those data show that principals value curricular incorporations of multicultural understandings, but struggle with follow-through. This quantitative data matched the qualitative data that elaborates on principals' perspectives on curricular focus.

In-depth interview. The interview process provided a deeper understanding of what principals were doing and what factors were allowing them to complete those actions. The interviews also gave insight into what factors posed the greatest obstacles for principals when focusing on expanding their middle grades' multicultural understandings.

Table 14 displays the qualitative data related to Guiding Research Question Three. The major categories were linked to the preliminary quantitative findings presented in Tables 11-13.

Table 14

Qualitative Data: Major Categories and Exemplifying Statements for Guiding Research Question Three

Major Category	Exemplifying Statement	Prevalence	Associated Guiding Research Question and Finding
Lack of designated funding.	"We have to allocate school budget toward anything multiculturalism. We don't have outside resources."	90%	GRQ #3 Finding #5
State testing focus.	"When teachers come and see me, it's about the new standards and how to address those because that's what's on their minds right now. They know MCAS is on the line."	80%	GRQ #3 Finding #5
Lack of prioritization in school culture.	"As a whole, multiculturalism is not something that we are all thinking about routinely. It's not	70%	GRQ#3 Finding #5

	part of the school's identity, so it's not where money goes."		
Social-emotional curriculums.	"We don't have time or money for a multicultural curriculum, but our social-emotional curriculum provides the social skillsets that are necessary for valuing all people, regardless of their backgrounds."	80%	GRQ #3 Finding #6
Teachers' choice to integrate multiculturalism into English and social studies.	"Since there is some flexibility in how we address English and social studies standards, these are two areas where we can bring literature in to open kids' eyes to other cultures and figures of other races, but it's up to teachers to take that initiative."	100%	GRQ #3 Finding #6

Table 14 provides a succinct view of the qualitative data cumulated, relating to Guiding Research Question Three. The major categories, exemplifying statements are used in the data analysis. Summary of the data analysis from both instruments follows.

Summary of Data Analysis for Guiding Research Question Three: What do principals report are factors and conditions that inhibit and support their efforts to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades?

The closed-response survey and the in-depth interviews were able to provide insight into what supports and inhibits principals in expanding multicultural understandings at their predominantly White middle grades.

Closed-response survey. The closed response survey provided information for the action area of stakeholder support and resources. Table 11 shows that out of the four response rating categories, importance of experience was rated highest on average with a value of 2.86. Frequency of participation, efficacy of experience, and impact of experience were all around an average of 2. Table 11 shows that while principals saw stakeholder support and resources as

important, the support has not been frequent, has been less dependable, and has lacked substantial impact. Stakeholder support and resources was the action area that ranked lowest, on average, in efficacy of completion (2.06) when compared to the other six action areas. This suggested that stakeholder support and resources had the lowest completion rate for supporting the expansion of multicultural understandings. To find out more behind these quantitative findings, interview coding unveiled major categories pertaining to what principals saw as the strongest supports and greatest inhibitors in their attempts at spreading multicultural understandings.

When looking at the response category averages for curricular focus in Table 13, it was clear that respondents saw incorporating multicultural understandings into the curriculum as important, with a response average of 3.01. In the other three response categories, the average response ratings were lower than experience (2.24-2.39). This suggested that the curricular incorporations do not happen as often as principals would have liked. The interviews provided the opportunity to inquire if this was the case and if so, why? The survey results showed the curricular incorporations of multicultural understandings was occurring in the middle grades to an extent, but did not give examples as to how this has occurred. That was where the in-depth interview filled the void in understanding, as presented next.

Table 12 confirmed that principals think multicultural understandings are important, but they are not implementing multicultural understandings effectively. The importance of experience response category received an average of 3.06, but the other three categories that reflect involvement, efficacy, and impact were all less. Frequency of participation averaged 2.57, efficacy of completion averaged 2.69, and impact of experience averaged 2.63. This is convincing evidence that principals lack follow-through on these strategies to enhance their

school culture's role in fostering multicultural understandings. According to the survey questions and response data, principals, on average, are struggling to include multicultural understandings in their school mission, adjust school and community events to be increasingly multicultural, express a sense of urgency to the school of community, and invite guest speakers to address multicultural ideas. It is possible that the lack of multicultural prioritization in the school-wide culture may be leading to a lack of stakeholder support and resources.

In-depth interviews. Interview questioning enabled further investigation into the numerical finding that principals have seen stakeholder support as important, but that support has not happened often. Table 14 displays the major categories and related information. Principals were prompted to share for further explanation by answering the question, "What outside supports and resources do you have dedicated to expanding multicultural understandings in your middle grades?" As seen in Table 14, one major category that came from interview data was related to lack of resources. The exemplifying statement that matched 90% of interviewed principals was, "We have to allocate school budget toward anything multicultural. We don't have outside resources pinpointed for this specifically." The two principals, who confirmed they had outside funding support, claimed that it was because they had a partnership with a local college. Outside of that partnership, principals stated that they were restricted to their school's budget. Those two principals also shared that without the partnerships, they did not know of another way they could provide similar experiences of multiculturalism.

Interview data also yielded a major category of another inhibiting factor, which was prioritization of addressing state academic standards. As Table 14 displayed, eight of the principals mentioned the new social studies and science standards for the state of Massachusetts and how their focus on teacher development was surrounding how to address those new

standards. The exemplifying statement that encapsulated this sentiment was, “When teachers come and see me, it’s about the new standards and how to address those because that’s what’s on their minds right now. They know MCAS is on the line.” These teachers emphasized that standardized test preparation has been a leading focus for them. That prioritization of testing has detracted from their ability to focus on expanding students’ multicultural understandings. Three principals stated the fifth and eighth grade is the hardest one to find time dedicated to multicultural understandings because they have to take the science MCAS in addition to the ELA and math MCAS tests. Questions related to the standardized testing focus led to then exploring the implications of curricular focus, in which two supports arose in their explanations.

The exemplifying statement that described the idea that multicultural understandings are not a part of the school culture was, “As a whole, multiculturalism is not something that we are all thinking about routinely. It’s not part of the school’s identity, so it’s not where the money goes.” This connects to the survey data that shared that principals value school cultures that prioritize multicultural understandings, but lack effective and consistent participation. An organization that does not make an initiative a part of the culture, is inhibiting its progress (Wahlstrom et al., 2010).

Social-emotional curriculums were mentioned in 80% of interviewed principals, as shown in Table 14. Those principals spoke about how social-emotional lessons were about acceptance, tolerance, understanding differences and expressing ideas to others. The exemplifying statement addressing the major category that social-emotional curriculums broaden multicultural understandings in middle grade students was, “We don’t have time or money for a multicultural curriculum, but our social-emotional curriculum provides the social skillsets that are necessary for valuing all people, regardless of their backgrounds.” This statement

summarized the sentiment expressed in the quantitative data for not having enough resources or time for directly addressing multicultural understandings. This exemplifying statement included the shared idea that schools' social-emotional curriculums have provided multicultural understandings implicitly through behavioral and relational lessons. The principals did make clear that their social-emotional curriculums have lacked explicit multiculturalism. Most of the principals used their social-emotional curriculum responses as a natural transition to address multiculturalism in their English and social studies curriculums.

Principals also supplied insight into academic areas that provided the most flexibility in addressing multicultural understandings. All principals mentioned English and social studies as the two subject-areas that have leveraged the most opportunity to tie in multicultural understandings. The exemplifying statement that matched this idea in Table 14 was, "Since there is some flexibility in how we address English and social studies standards, these are two areas where we can bring literature in to open kids' eyes to other cultures and figures of other races, but it's up to teachers to take that initiative." Three of these principals provided even more insight in explaining this idea. They shared that since English frameworks in Massachusetts were skill-based, the literature used was not specifically outlined by the state, thus the state enabled teachers to incorporate literature by authors from other cultures and races and about characters from other cultures and of other races. Such curricular flexibility addresses the promoting factor of curricular focus (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2016). The social studies frameworks that have guided curriculum in the middle grades in Massachusetts also have provided standards that were meant to designate certain figures and events, but have left substantial room for further exploration and self-reflection. As previously mentioned, the focus for most teachers in these schools has been to address the newly shifting standards, and that there has been opportunity to

tie in multicultural understandings if teachers take the effort. The principals made clear that multicultural understandings in the classroom have been dependent on the teacher's motivation to foster and build upon those ideas. This following subsection explains two findings for the third guiding research question.

Delineation of Findings for Guiding Research Question Three: What do principals report are factors and conditions that inhibit and support their efforts to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades?

Guiding Research Question Three investigated what factors support and inhibit principals. One finding addresses the supporting factors and the other finding addresses the inhibiting factors.

Finding #5: Specific aspects of school culture influence the expansion of multicultural understandings. The two largest factors that inhibit principals' ability to expand students' multicultural understandings in the middle grades are (a) lack of stakeholder support specific for multiculturalism and (b) lack of time dedicated to a multicultural focus. The quantitative data collected in the closed-response survey showed that there were two inhibiting factors that inhibit principals' ability to expand students' multicultural understandings in the middle grades. These two factors also confirmed in the qualitative interview data.

Further investigation into the data showed that principals did not see their school culture embracing the expansion of multicultural understandings as a priority. The quantitative data in Table 12 showed that principals think it is important to include multicultural understandings in school-wide culture, but they lacked participation, efficacy of completion and impact of experience. In the in-depth interviews, seven of the ten principals shared that their school culture did not adequately prioritize multicultural understandings, as displayed in Table 14.

Principals saw stakeholder support and resources as important, but the support was not happening as much as principals would have liked. They saw this as an inhibiting factor in fostering multicultural understandings at their schools, which Wahlstrom et al. (2010) described as necessary for an initiative's success. When stakeholder support and resources are sufficient, they are a promoting factor. When lacking, as this data show, then it is an inhibiting factor. As seen in data presented in Table 11 and Table 14, stakeholder support would have been a welcomed help, but since it was not common, principals have had to allocate school budget if they wanted to incorporate multicultural understandings. Since school budgets were limited, this diminished the amount of multicultural materials and experiences the principals were able to provide.

Due to a reprioritization of time toward academic standards and standardized test preparation instructional time, multicultural efforts have been limited. In Massachusetts, teachers have needed to focus on the MCAS testing that takes place annually. Test preparation and the actual testing has forced teachers to spend weeks every spring on this work. Two of the middle grades, fifth and eighth, take the most MCAS exams because these students need to take the science MCAS in addition to the ELA and math MCAS. In no way have these tests assessed multicultural understandings, thus the class time preceding testing has lacked a multicultural focus. Finding #5 addressed the inhibiting factors, while Finding #6 describes the top supporting factors.

While lack of time and inadequate stakeholder support were cited as the inhibiting factors, this finding may be representative of a larger issue in school culture. A school culture that prioritizes an initiative dedicates the necessary time and stakeholder support to see the initiative come into fruition (Wahlstrom et al., 2010). If the principals in this study had a school

culture that prioritized multicultural understandings, then time and stakeholder support would not be obstacles to overcome. As Finding #1 explained, these principals shared that their school-wide theme of "acceptance for all" may not be sufficient. Data in Table 12 also showed the insufficient multicultural prioritization in the school-wide culture. Maybe the only way to fix these two inhibiting factors is to address the school culture as a whole.

Finding #6: Flexible subject-areas support principals fostering multicultural work. The greatest factor that supports principals' ability to expand students' multicultural understandings in the middle grades is flexibility in social-emotional, social studies and English curriculums, but is dependent on teacher initiative. Flexible curricula was noted as a promoting factor for multicultural understandings, according to Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2016). Similar to how Finding #5 came into fruition, the numerical finding that principals see the most flexible academic disciplines supply leverage toward multicultural understandings evoked investigation in the qualitative data. Data in Table 13 for curricular focus led to meaningful qualitative data, as presented in Table 14. The coding process confirmed this idea though exemplifying statements, but also gave more specificity, by naming three areas of study.

Principals thought that incorporating multicultural understandings in the curriculum was important, but was not occurring as much as they would have liked. Similar to how in Finding #1 the principals were trying to make school mission statements about acceptance of all apply to multicultural understandings, principals were also trying to say that their social emotional, social studies and English curriculums have fostered the multiculturalist skills needed. As shown in Table 14, these principals were able to explain the areas in the already-established curriculum that were flexible and open for multicultural understandings to be a part of the lessons. These same principals also emphasized, however, that in order for the multiculturalism to be a part of

the already-established curriculums, it was the teachers' initiative that played the largest role in ensuring that it occurred. It is possible that if multicultural understandings had a stronger presence in the school's culture, then teachers may feel more motivated to incorporate such ideas in their instruction more. While curricular flexibility is a promoting factor, how multicultural understandings are integrated may be dependent upon the school culture's sense of urgency toward the initiative. Teacher initiative made it possible and without it, multiculturalism was not incorporated. This was also connected to Finding #4 in that teacher evaluations have focused on meeting the needs of all learners, but have not specified a multicultural focus. The result is that the evaluation system has lacked a way to hold these teachers accountable in taking the initiative to incorporate multicultural understandings. Chapter 5 delves more into the idea that these predominantly White, rural schools with middle grades have room for multiculturalism, but lack execution. A chapter summary follows.

Chapter Summary

This serves as the last section of Chapter Four, which summarizes the main ideas from the chapter. This section also provides insight into how the information provided in this chapter is used in Chapter Five.

This study was designed to explore the principal's role in expanding multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades. Data collected via an online, closed-response survey and in-depth interviews provided a mixed methods approach. The data analysis began with the quantitative data and that led to extracting major categories from the qualitative data by forming exemplifying statements to match major categories.

Chapter Four was divided into three main sections, which included (a) introduction, (b) presentation and analysis of data, with resulting findings, for each guiding research question; and

(c) chapter summary. Within the presentation and analysis of data for each guiding research questions there were three subsections. These three subsections included (a) data collected to address the three guiding research questions, (b) summary of data analysis for each guiding research question, and (c) delineation of findings for each guiding research question.

For each of these guiding research questions, a synopsis of the findings was presented. In total, there were six findings from this study. Guiding Research Question One provided two findings, which included (a) a school-wide theme of "acceptance for all" may not be effective and (b) it is effective for principals to have direct control over their personal multicultural understandings. Guiding Research Question Two delineated two findings as well. These included, (a) principal goals that match school goals promote multiculturalism and (b) principals expressed a desire to more effectively help guide and support teachers in expanding multicultural understandings. Finally, the third guiding research question described two finding, which were (a)funding and lack of time inhibit principals from fostering multicultural efforts and (b) flexible subject-areas support principals fostering multicultural work. These six findings have the potential to impact seven groups, which is investigated in Chapter Five.

The Chapter Five provides five section, including (a) introduction, (b) study summary, (c) discussion, (d) future research, and (e) final reflections. The discussion describes deeper insight into the six findings in terms of theoretical implications, practical implications, and recommendations. Chapter Five also describes future areas of study, as inspired by the limitations and delimitations.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH, FINAL REFLECTIONS

Introduction

This chapter is divided into five sections, (a) introduction, (b) study summary, (c) discussion, (d) future research, and (e) final reflections. The summary reviews the different aspects presented in the first four chapters. This review then leads to the discussion, of the six findings. Each finding includes three subsections: theoretical implications, practical implications, and recommendations. While considering the delimitations and limitations of this study, the future research section identifies possible studies to provide deeper insight into multicultural education in predominantly White, rural settings. The last section, final reflections, includes a summary of thoughts from the experience of conducting this study and personal ideas about the findings.

Study Summary

Being a fifth grade teacher was one of the most powerful, rewarding, and challenging roles I have ever had. In that position, the most difficult scenarios I encountered was trying to discuss ideas about race and other cultures with my predominantly White classes. To begin, I felt I lacked knowledge in how to approach multicultural understandings properly and effectively. When seeking help on how to expand my students' multicultural understandings, I needed administrative support. The administration, however, denied my pleas for multicultural professional development opportunities, classroom materials, and programming. Further, they did not justify to me their decision to not supply me with what I requested. As these middle grade students were at the height of their racial identity formation, I asked myself, how would

they be culturally competent, global citizens growing up with limited multicultural understandings?

This study had personal importance to me because it investigated a scenario that I experienced and through which I struggled. I grew up in a rural, predominantly White town with schools that were mostly White. Unfortunately, my teachers were not proactive in expanding students' multicultural understandings, which led to an out-of-school endeavor for me. My personal goal, by completing this study, was to help bring attention to a prevalent scenario in Massachusetts, and more broadly the entire United States. Principal support of White teachers in expanding the multicultural understandings of their predominantly White, rural, middle grades has lacked empirical evidence. The purpose of this study was to help fill that void.

An extensive review of the literature did not directly address principal support of White teachers in expanding the multicultural understandings of their predominantly White, rural, middle grades. Yet it did supply information in three main areas: (a) benefits of multicultural and anitbias education, (b) implementation of multicultural education, and (c) the role of educational leadership in promoting multicultural understandings. Research asserted that regardless of the age or racial dynamic, multicultural education has an important place in schools (Gay, 1994; Jones, 2015; Nieto, 1996). This study aimed to address a population that has lacked emphasis in the literature by investigating three guiding research questions:

1. To what degree do principals consider it a priority to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades?
2. What do principals report they are doing to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades?

3. What do principals report are factors and conditions that inhibit and support their efforts to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades?

This explanatory sequential mixed methods study began with a closed-response survey that was sent out to 167 qualifying principals. After receiving 17 survey responses, ten agreed to be interviewed. These in-depth interviews garnered deeper insight into seven categories that the survey addressed. By organizing the survey data in accordance to the guiding research questions, the preliminary data guided the coding of the interview transcripts. Ultimately, the numeric trends and qualitative coding yielded six findings, two for each of the three guiding research questions. These six findings are explained in detail in the subsequent discussion.

Discussion

This section contains six subsections to address each of the six findings. For each of the findings, critical considerations are divided into theoretical implications, practical implications, and recommendations.

Finding #1: A school-wide theme of "acceptance for all" may not be effective

Finding #1 was linked to Guiding Research Question One: To what degree do principals consider it a priority to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades? Literary connections substantiate this finding next.

Theoretical implications. Reis and Mendez (2009) have noted the trend of increasing diversity in schools in the U.S. and advised American culture to focus on redefining diversity to mean more than just race. "Diversity" brings skin color to most people's minds, but that is not the sole quality that diversifies a population (Reis & Mendez, 2009). Reis and Mendez (2009) have emphasized that schools must focus on the diversity that is present within the schools, even

if racial diversity is not present. This leaves these schools with the opportunity to highlight minority groups like parental sexual-orientation and multi-linguistic abilities.

Depending on the source, multiculturalism has varying definitions. The principals in this study redefined multicultural understandings in a way that better fit their predominantly White setting. A more inclusive definition was, "multicultural education includes…the ways societies set up boundaries between the cultural, social, political, and ideological lines the interrelated matrix of class and classism, race and racism, gender and sexism, disability and ableism, etc." (National Association of Multicultural Education, 2019). In sum, multiculturalism goes beyond race.

When thinking about how to implement this broader definition of multiculturalism, it is important to embrace all types of differences in the student population. According to Reis and Mendez (2009) and the National Association for Multicultural Education (abbreviated as NAME) (2019), those students increase understanding and empathy toward non-racial diversity as a result. This approach, however, does not impact their understandings of other races and cultures (NAME, 2019). NAME did not advise schools ignore or not purposefully attempt to incorporate understandings of minority groups not present in their schools (NAME, 2019). Ignoring under-represented differences has been shown to lead to prejudice problems in the school community (Kohli, Pizarro, & Nevarez, 2017). As a result, in predominantly White schools, the few non-White students are more likely to face microaggressions (Kohli et al., 2017).

NAME (2019) added, "a significant role for multicultural education in White schools is to help White students recognize how racism works… and how White people can learn to become allies working to challenge and dismantle racism." NAME (2019) emphasized that

fostering multicultural understandings early in school leads to them becoming global citizens in the future. If racial diversity is missing, then it is up to the school to do whatever it can to fill students' void in understandings as a means to properly prepare their students to be global citizens. The principals in this study, as reflected in Finding #1, agreed that their school-wide acceptance of all learners has been ineffective. Marzano et al. (2005), Hitt and Tucker (2016), and Wahlstrom et al. (2010) all contributed connected ideas of broadening an organization's view in an attempt to meet learners' needs.

When considering Marzano et al. (2005), the principal's focus on nonracial diversity was not addressed directly. Rather, Marzano et al. (2005) highlighted the importance of focus in general. Within this responsibility, correlating to academic achievement, Marzano et al. (2005) explained that having too many focuses is overwhelming for the school as a whole. They wrote that the eighth most important responsibility is the principal's focus, which is the extent to which the principal, "establishes clear goals and keeps those goals in the forefront of the school's attention" (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 42). Finding #1 concluded that the principals at these rural, predominantly White schools need to broaden their school-wide cultural focus to encapsulate branches of diversity that are not as common or even present at all in the school. Marzano et al. (2005) suggested that the school-wide culture at these schools should be more inclusive and explicitly target the area of ineffectiveness. If racial acceptance and understanding is lacking in the student body, then that needs to be a clear objective. This theoretical implication connects to Hitt and Tucker (2016) as well.

Hitt and Tucker (2016) wrote, "Five essential broad areas, or domains, of effective leader practices emerge as…(a) establishing and conveying the vision, (b) facilitating a high-quality learning experience for students, (c) building professional capacity, (d) creating a supportive

organization for learning, and (e) connecting with external partners" (p. 452). In consideration of Finding #1, the principals at rural, predominantly White schools were "establishing and conveying a vision," with a scope that was having limited results (Hitt & Tucker, 2016, p. 452). Their scope for acceptance in their school-wide culture and mission did not include other races, thus not preventing students' racial acts. As a result, the remaining four essential domains for effective leader practices suffered. Students were not able to have high-quality learning about the minority groups that are not largely part of the school population. In the future, this could prevent them from adopting professional capacity in multicultural understandings. The principals who supported that idea in the interviews describing their approach as "reactionary," rather than "preventative." Teachers lacked the ability to address the topic in a way to prevent such racial acts. The lack of focus on racial diversity has hurt the school climate. Hitt and Tucker (2016) elaborated that a suffering school climate results in students not equipped as globalized, culturally competent citizens. Finally, in regard to connecting to external partners, the schools that focused on multicultural understandings the most had partnerships with local colleges, but still did not include racial diversity in their school-wide culture focus. While Hitt and Tucker (2016) advocated for such outside support, if any of the other essential supports suffered, like previously discussed, then the entire school suffers. The Wallace Foundation's study by Wahlstrom et al. (2010) presented further insight as well.

Wahlstrom et al. (2010) wrote of three categories of effective leadership, in which the first category connected most to Finding #1. The first, expectation and accountability, applies most to Finding #1. The school-wide culture sets the expectations for student behavior and competence. Since racial-diversity lacked as a focus at these rural, predominantly White schools, the students have not been holding themselves accountable because the expectation has not been

made clear to them. The students have not fostered an understanding that acceptance for all applies to groups not represented in the school population. The extension of the skill-set has been ineffective. These theoretical implications lead to practical implications.

Practical implications. The principals in this study accepted that their focus on nonracial diversity was a means of incorporating multiculturalism, but they were still seeing instances of prejudice. This is a sign that their approach has not been developing the sense of empathy and acceptance for groups that are not necessarily present at their school. The problems that principals were citing in their interviews revolved around an "out-of-sight-out-of-mind" mentality. This resulted in students committing prejudicial acts at school, toward groups that do not attend or work at their school. The principals' hope for skill-transference was not effectively preventing this. The repercussions that ensued furthered the idea that principals were approaching multicultural understandings on a reactionary basis.

Recommendations. The first finding has led to recommendations for three parties, starting with principals**.** This first finding has the potential to improve principals' practices in fostering multicultural understandings at their rural, predominantly White schools with middle grades. The need for explicit instruction regarding racial diversity is needed to foster more well-rounded multicultural understandings. Simply because a branch of diversity is not present at a school does not mean that it should not be part of the school-wide culture and academics. This finding also has the potential to affect school stakeholders. They could do more to support this shift by helping fund necessary professional development, pay for training, and donate class materials that could support this.

The second group to benefit from this finding would be administrator preparation programs, since they could provide training for future administrators with a focus on

intentionality around multiculturalism. This could lead to reduced students' prejudice. These programs can discourage the assumption that acceptance for all can fill the void of multicultural understandings. Administration preparation programs who offer license renewal workshops could also influence principals to be more explicit with their school's multicultural goals.

The third recommendation is aimed at parents. This finding could have implications for parents of students at predominantly White, rural schools because if learning about different races and cultures is not explicitly taught in school, then the parents may need to fill the gap. Otherwise, those students are at a higher risk of developing unconscious biases and racism.

Finding #2: It is effective for principals to have direct control over their personal multicultural understandings

Similar to Finding #1, Finding #2 was also used to address Guiding Research Question One: To what degree do principals consider it a priority to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades? The theoretical implications, presented next, connect literature to this finding.

Theoretical implications. The literature on leadership supplied countless definitions of what it means to be a leader, yet a common quality amongst all descriptions was the sense of control (Western, 2008). Whether that control is personal, organizational, or reaching outside of the organization, control is present. The control, however, varies in form and appears at different levels. Personal improvement is the most within leaders' reach, making personal improvements the starting place in organizational change (Western, 2008). Western (2008) emphasized multicultural understandings are emphasized as requiring an even deeper level of personal exploration and development prior to impacting the organization as a whole.

Western (2008) emphasized the importance of every leader consistently participating in deep, introspective work to develop a cultural sense-of-self. This entails looking deeply at the institution and context, the embodied and cultural self, personality, expertise, and role power (Western, 2008). The result of this work is increased personal cultural competence, but also for the organization as a whole.

The process of principals first focusing on their self-improvement prior to organizational improvement comes with one caveat. There needs to be a transference of the initiative to others. This prevents the principal's multicultural improvements and strategies from being kept in isolation. As Wagner and Kegan (2006) contributed, the isolation of adults in the education system discourages their learning and ability to improve their practice. They continued that collaboration is the most important quality for organizational improvement (Wagner & Kegan, 2006). Providing opportunities for collaboration as a school-wide community promotes discussion and brain-storming for highly effective strategies at the organizational-level (Wagner & Kegan, 2006). The result is momentum for systemic change (Wagner & Kegan, 2006). In connection to Finding #2, personal growth is important, but only serves its purpose if eventually spread (Wagner & Kegan, 2006). The three seminal educational leadership pieces provided deeper insight into the theoretical implications.

Marzano et al. (2005) delineated twenty-one responsibilities of school leaders correlated to student academic achievement. Those twenty-one responsibilities predominantly focused on how principals interact and support teachers and students. In contrast, Finding #2 is personal for the leader and focuses on his or her own professional development. The principals in this study saw this as being the most impactful on the school's overall multicultural understandings and cited control as the rationale. "Control" was not a term that Marzano et al. (2005) used for school

leaders, except for when describing arrogance as being “out-of-control egos” (p. 52). Having increased control over an action area has not been linked to greater student success, according to Marzano et al. (2005). This may be because Marzano et al.’s (2005) focus was on student academic achievement. Where Marzano et al. (2005) did not connect principal control of personal growth to student success, Hitt and Tucker (2016) helped to fill the void.

Hitt and Tucker (2016) greatly credited school leader personal growth and achievement as the predecessor of larger organizational growth. Hitt and Tucker (2016) added that the foundation of building professional capacity in the faculty, as a whole, needs to begin with a strong leader vision. They added, “Once leaders embrace and demonstrate what they personally can do to promote the vision, and consider how to engage teachers, their attention turns to developing others, and themselves” (Hitt & Tucker, 2016, p. 548). This, theoretically, means that the principals in this study have been taking the first steps necessary to provide a school-wide culture that expands multicultural understandings. Wahlstrom et al. (2010) added similar ideas that follow.

Wahlstrom et al. (2010) wrote that a combination of principal professional development, efficacy, and ability to integrate data were the three leading attributes of collective principal efficacy to lead to student achievement. Similarly, Finding #2 argued that principal professional growth was important and impactful. The principals reported they felt it was important and impactful because they had a sense of control. Wahlstrom et al. (2010) asserted that efficacy of personal growth is often due to the amount of control leaders have over their own improvements. The insights that these three leadership pieces supplied for Finding #2 have provided a framework for practical implications, presented next.

Practical implications. Principals shared that they see their work on personal multicultural understandings as being the most impactful. This is appropriate because a leader's self-improvement in multicultural understandings has been linked to organizational improvement in multicultural understandings (Western, 2008). Principals, as the most direct organizational leaders of the schools, serve as the role-models for the faculty and student body. By exemplifying self-reflective work in dismantling unconscious racism and bias, and to better understand other cultures, principals' self-improvement is the first step toward the school as a whole embracing this work. Transference of the strategies that principals see as effective for the larger school community is paramount. These strategies support the school in developing multicultural understandings.

Recommendations. This finding has illuminated recommendations for three groups. For principals, this finding lends the recommendation that they see their position as one of influence over the faculty and students. Their own multicultural understandings and work toward bettering their viewpoints has the potential to improve the multicultural understandings of the entire school. Principals, once they find ways to improve their multicultural understandings, must not keep those strategies in isolation. Rather, they need to encourage teachers to do the same with the intention that those strategies then make their way to the students.

This finding could benefit administrator preparation programs. If principals have an understanding how their modeling of multicultural understanding can benefit the entire school, then the principals may be more inclined to do so. Preparation programs need to teach prospective principals how to model their expanding multicultural understandings in a way that teachers can implement in their practice. The emphasis, however, is that role-modeling cannot be the extent of the principals' deep self-reflection and multicultural exploration. Principals must

foster a collaborative effort to pass along to the faculty, students, and parents. Preparation programs could provide guidance and strategies of how to bridge the modeling phase to a collaboration phase.

This finding leads to a recommendation for teachers as well. If teachers are aware that principal modeling of expanding multicultural understandings is the first step toward inspiring their own multicultural growth, then they may be more observant of their principals. As a result, those teachers may be more apt to open the conversation about how to improve the multiculturalism for the school as a whole and in their classrooms. Finding #3, which is discussed next, has some overlapping implications and recommendations.

Finding #3: Principal goals that match school goals promote multiculturalism

Finding #3 is in response to Guiding Research Question Two: What do principals report they are doing to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades? Literature supported the theoretical implications, presented next.

Theoretical implications

Principals need to be skilled at multi-tasking in order to meet the expectations of the position. That is why overlap between district and school improvement plans with principals' professional practice goals is not uncommon. On a simplistic level, district and school improvement plans and professional practice goals are quite similar. Both require specificity in how to reach measurable, time-sensitive objectives. Scribner et al. (1999) wrote that the most effective, highly ranking schools are those who have a collaborative team that manage to incorporate the school and district improvement plans into their everyday work.

The three seminal pieces of educational leadership by Marzano et al. (2005), Hitt and Tucker (2016), and Wahlstrom et al. (2010) share connections to Finding #3. Starting with

Marzano et al.'s (2005) responsibility of focus, principals tie together personal and school or district initiatives to meet the required criteria. Finding #3 also matches the fifteenth responsibility that Marzano et al. (2005) called, "optimizer" (p. 53). Marzano et al. (2005) defined this as, "Inspires and leads new and challenging initiatives" (p. 53). This seemed fitting since principals combine their goals with the larger school and district goals as a means of integrating the new. The focus can be enhanced without the leader spreading him or herself too thin.

Hitt and Tucker (2016) added, "Leaders are those who influence and mobilize others in the pursuit of a goal" (p. 533). This applied to Finding #3 because in order to effectively mobilize members of an organization, the leader cannot have too many goals. To avoid this, they write that having a collective goal so that maximum effort is directed toward that goal, rather than trying to balance too many different goals at one time. The increased focus and enhanced collaboration promotes group motivation and increases effectiveness.

Wahlstrom et al. (2010) wrote of a helpful perspective that connected to Finding #3. They wrote that principal's goals are much more challenging to achieve when not backed with district support (Wahlstrom et al., 2010). Since Finding #3 stated that principals are making their professional practice goals match the school and district plans, it makes sense that the principals are considering the likelihood of receiving higher administrative and financial support in achieving those goals. The practical applications now integrate these theoretical implications into helpful insights.

Practical implications. This finding means that if schools want to expand their students' multicultural understandings, then it could be a part of the district or school improvement plan. This connects to Finding #2 since principals have the most control over their own self-

improvement. This is linked to the highest impact. Integrating multicultural understandings into larger goals will promote the principal's improvement even more. Principals connecting their goals to the school or district plans, increases the likelihood that the district plans will be met.

Recommendations. Finding #3 inspired recommendations for principals and for districts and schools as a whole. To start, a recommendation for principals in which they could continue to tie their professional practice goals to the district or school improvement plans when the focus is on expanding multicultural understandings. This promotes a sense of consistency in initiatives and limits their focus from stretching too thin. The result is increased effectiveness for the goals.

A second recommendation is at a larger administrative level. Districts and schools may emphasize multicultural understandings as part of their improvement plans as a means to encourage principals to make it their professional practice goals. As discussed earlier, this would benefit the teachers and the students through the "trickle-down effect" via principal modeling.

Finding #4: Principals expressed a desire to more effectively help guide and support teachers in expanding multicultural understandings

Finding #4 also addressed Guiding Research Question Two: What do principals report they are doing to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades? More insight into principal support, as provided by literature, is presented next.

Theoretical implications. This finding shared that principals see the value in high quality professional development with a focus on expanding teachers' multicultural understandings. Research has also supported the role of professional development. Cheema and Fuller-Hamilton (2017) specifically credited the power of professional development in teachers greatly improving their multicultural understandings. The issue, however, is that schools do not offer enough of it, due to lack of funding and time.

The Massachusetts teacher evaluation guidelines include Meeting the Needs of All Learners as a major category, but the evaluation has lacked wording to cover specific multicultural understandings. Principals are left to address the topic at their own discretion. If principals do not make multicultural understandings expectations clear to teachers, then teachers may not be motivated to incorporate multicultural understandings in their instruction at all.

Diangelo (2018) argued that feedback is one of the most powerful tools for dismantling unconscious bias and racism in order to enhance multicultural understandings. The main problem with this notion is that the deep and personal feedback that she referred to does not have a place in the current teacher evaluation system that is strictly outlined. Principals are not in a position to give the type of feedback for which Diangelo (2018) advocated because the evaluation system lacks the focus. Principals mostly focus on the multicultural understandings with students and faculty on a reactionary basis when something goes awry. The system is not satisfactory in being preventative.

Applying Finding #4 to the three seminal pieces of educational leadership literature provided deeper insights into theoretical implications. Marzano et al. (2005) credited "affirmation" as the "extent to which the principal recognizes and celebrates accomplishments and acknowledges failures" and was the highest ranking responsibility being linked to student academic achievement (p. 42). In other words, Marzano et al. (2005) advocated for feedback, both positive and constructive. Further down the list, the 19th responsibility was "resources," which was the "extent to which the principal provides teachers with materials and professional development necessary for the successful execution of their jobs" (p. 43). The connection between Marzano et al.'s (2005) writing and this study was the value principals put on teacher professional development and evaluating teachers to provide necessary feedback. While

Marzano et al.'s (2005) writing pertained mostly to students' academic achievements, it could be extended to also include the expansion of students' multicultural understandings. If one of the seminal pieces of literature does not include multiculturalism as a tenant of students' success and focusses on academics, then that could possibly be a contributing factor as to why principals have not been implementing actions they highly value. The books that principals are using do not focus on multicultural understandings enough.

Hitt and Tucker (2016) wrote that one of their five essential domains of effective leader practices was building professional capacity. This involves teacher feedback and supplying appropriate professional development for teachers, which connects to Finding #4 since those are two actions that principals valued. Since this study found that principals have not been effectively implementing these actions as frequently as they would like, Hitt and Tucker's (2016) work suggested that the principals in this study have been sacrificing their effectiveness in expanding students' multicultural understandings. This is because principals have not consistently supported teachers in expanding their students' multicultural understandings.

Wahlstrom et al. (2010) emphasized expectations and accountability as a tenant of principals evoking change. Finding #4 addressed principals holding teachers accountable, but not to Wahlstrom et al.'s (2010) standards. Wahlstrom et al. (2010) found that when not enough time is spent on crafting and planning meaningful, purposeful, customized professional development for teachers, it does more harm than good. Teachers then feel like their time is wasted because the workshops do not apply to their scenarios and needs (Wahlstrom et al., 2010). Since Finding #4 stated that principals wish they had more time for professional development, that suggested that not enough thought is going into how to make effective offerings possible. Together, the three central pieces of educational leadership literature argued that providing feedback to

teachers and supports for improvement through professional development make them more effective, in general. This connects to Finding #4 in that teachers at predominantly White, rural schools are getting the supports that the literature described, but not to the extent that the authors deemed effective. Practical implications are discussed next.

Practical implications. Principals recognized that professional development for teachers with a multicultural focus is important, so they do ensure that it is offered. The issue, however, is due to limited time and resources, they have not been able to provide the professional development that they wish they could. Every school has money allocated for professional development, but in MA, some schools are greatly limited in how much is available to each teacher. Limited time is another struggle that these principals face. Sending teachers to professional development during the school year is highly inconvenient and hiring substitute teachers costs the school money.

Another practical implication is in regard to evaluations. The evaluation system for teachers is not designed to address teachers' multicultural understandings or how they incorporate them into their instruction.

Recommendations. Finding #4 led to recommendations for three groups. The first recommendation is that principals provide more multicultural professional development opportunities to teachers. The self-reflective processes, cross-disciplinary curricular approaches, and more that professional development can cultivate in these teachers is money well-spent.

The second recommendation is that school stakeholders, like local businesses and donors, provide funding that is specifically for multicultural professional development usage .Interviewed principals expressed that if they wanted to foster multicultural understandings in their schools, they would need to allocate a portion of their school's budget to such an endeavor,

which has already been spread incredibly thin. Stakeholders have the opportunity to lessen the financial burden that this worthwhile focus has on supporting cultural competence in this nation's future.

The third and final recommendation is for principals to address multicultural understandings explicitly as part of the evaluation process. Even though one of the major Massachusetts evaluation strands is Meeting the Needs of All Learners, they are encouraged to see this as an opportunity to discuss ways educators can improve their multicultural practices. While the feedback may not be at the personal level Diangelo (2018) desired, it would look at instructional incorporations of multicultural understandings and awareness. The next two findings address the third guiding research question.

Finding #5: Specific aspects of school culture influence the expansion of multicultural understandings

Finding #5 addresses Guiding Research Question Three: What do principals report are factors and conditions that inhibit and support their efforts to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades?

Theoretical implications. School-wide culture is one of the seven action areas that literature identified as having the ability to either promote or inhibit the expansion of multicultural understandings. The quantitative and qualitative data, when analyzed together, suggested that school-wide culture, when not prioritizing multicultural understandings, inhibits other action areas. Specifically, the school culture caused the school to allocate inadequate time and insufficient resources toward expanding multicultural understandings.

The school-wide cultures that principals in this study described were missing prioritization of multicultural understandings, leading to a lack of stakeholder support and

resources. Stakeholder support and resources are often responsible for the materials in classrooms. Loewen (2008) argued that most historical texts found in modern-day American classrooms do little to highlight the true, racial history of the US and shy away from topics that focus on race and prejudice. Loewen (2008) stated that this is because it costs too much for schools to replace textbooks and they have to use what stakeholders supply. Principals in this study argued, similarly, that lack of resources prohibits them from focusing on multiculturalism enough in their middle grades.

Time was the other inhibiting factor. McCann (2012) pointed out that developing multicultural understandings takes a substantial amount of time and dedication for both the teacher and the student. With increasing pressures on academics, this is becoming harder for teachers to accomplish with their classes. Time is an inhibiting factor that was tied throughout the literature as necessary for each of the areas that promote multicultural understandings. Time is necessary for each of the seven areas to be implemented successfully. Time itself, however, was not treated as a stand-alone factor, but rather an integrated necessity. Arguably, time could be deemed a "resource" and as Wahlstrom et al. (2010) wrote, lacking resources is an inhibiting factor against an initiative's success.

Setting aside time dedicated toward an initiative means that it is prioritized (Wahlstrom et al., 2010). If other demands, like test preparation, detract from time for multicultural understandings, then the school culture is reflecting a prioritization of testing over multicultural understandings. While principals claimed time was an inhibiting factor in expanding multicultural understandings, this may result from a larger, cultural issue at these schools. While principals report stakeholder support and lack of time as the inhibiting factors, they are not be

stepping backward to see that the school-culture is causing the resources and time to be spent on other initiatives.

Segall and Garrett (2013) found that there is a trend for White teachers to be more reluctant when exploring race because they feel more comfortable with actively ignoring race through a colorblind perspective. They argued that teachers who have a lack of training and personal reflection time on their own racial perspectives are not equipped to teach multicultural understandings. While principals cited stakeholder support and time as the greatest inhibitors in expansion of students' multicultural understandings, the lack of teacher professional development to personally address prejudices could also plays a role. Principals in this study, however, did not acknowledge the lack of teacher self-reflection and lack of professional develop as an inhibiting factor. The lack of professional development, however, is caused by a lack of time and resources. The three seminal pieces of educational leadership literature further the theoretical implications of Finding #5.

Under the responsibility of "order," Marzano et al. (2005) wrote that when providing order in an organization, groups require structures that give leadership, time, resources, and incentives to promote instructional work. Marzano et al. (2005) elaborated that this goes beyond finding time and stakeholder support. It requires re-designing policies and practices that the standards-based education has established. While Finding #5 claimed that stakeholder support and time have been the largest inhibiting factors for principals in supporting the expansion of multicultural understandings, Marzano et al. (2005) argued that it is really the set-up of the system that forces schools' decisions to be based on limited time and finances. Marzano et al. (2005) contended that if money and time are what leaders are claiming as the largest obstacles,

then the true issue is much deeper in the organizational constructs. Other work in educational leadership digs deeper into this idea.

Hitt and Tucker (2016) emphasized the importance of the principal bringing the faculty and staff together to share a vision and goal tied to school culture. Without the sense of unity, they added, the principal is not able to provide consistent guidance to help the organization meet that vision or goal (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). This understanding from Hitt and Tucker (2016) connected to Finding #5; because, while principals in this study cited lack of stakeholder support and time as the largest inhibitors toward expanding multicultural understandings, they may not have recognized that school culture was a significant inhibiting factor. Similar to Marzano et al. (2005), Hitt and Tucker (2016) saw the problem as being structural to the organization. Hitt and Tucker (2016) claimed that collaboration is the key toward solving an inhibiting factor when focused on an initiative. If combining the similar viewpoints of Marzano et al. (2005) and Hitt and Tucker (2016) then the school needs to begin at a much larger scale with all members involved. The issue may be rooted in the state's values, because the state is the overseeing power that regulates limitations on time and funding. If Massachusetts were to put more emphasis on expanding students' multicultural understandings and if those skills were part of the school's evaluations, then the principals would have added pressure to focus on that initiative. More on this is in the recommendations section later.

In Wahlstrom et al.'s (2010) piece, they wrote that their third category to evoke change was engagement and stakeholder support. Within this category, they explored the importance of stakeholder influence over an organization and how their funding can be the deciding factor on an initiative's success. Similar to Marzano et al. (2005) and Hitt and Tucker (2016), Wahlstrom et al. (2010) added that the organization needs to be foundationally structured to have the

relationships and contacts to foster such stakeholder supports. Without them, the resources are not supplied. The foundational structure is directly related to the organization's culture. If the culture emphasizes multicultural understandings, then the foundational structure will be set up to promote that initiative. This means that stakeholder support could increase if prioritized in the school culture and foundational structure. Similarly, when addressing the inhibiting factor of time, Wahlstrom et al. (2010) denoted that this is also an organizational change that would need to occur. This involves the second category of effectiveness that included efficacy of support. As a result, frequency of involvement and overall impact see the greatest improvement.

Practical implications. While the focus on Finding #4 was lack of time and funding for professional development with a focus on multicultural understandings, Finding #5 focuses on the actual instructional time that teachers spend focusing on multicultural understandings with their students. The literature argued that no academic skill or understanding could ever surpass multicultural understandings and racial identity formation in terms of importance (Segall & Garrett, 2012). That idea led to the connection that it is not recommended to rationalize inhibiting a multicultural focus in the classroom.

Time was one of the two inhibiting factors principals cited as preventing them from fully incorporating multicultural understandings in the middle grades. Lachuk and Mosely (2011) reported that taking away students' reflection time in racial identity formation is incredibly detrimental to their development. Stakeholder support was the other inhibiting factor. While many of the principals gave literary avenues to aid in incorporating multiculturalism into English Language Arts, social studies, and social-emotional curriculums, to revamp classroom libraries with multicultural texts is an expensive endeavor. This idea then leads to the question, does time and stakeholder support have to inhibit multicultural understandings from expanding? The

recommendations, in the next subsection, address some of the ways that principals can support the expansion of multicultural understandings at their school that would not cost them money or require additional time.

Aside from considering expanding students' multicultural understandings within the already-established educational constructs, the literature presented from education leadership suggested larger change (Marzano et al., 2005; Hitt & Ticker, 2016; Wahlstrom et al., 2010). If explicit instruction is an expectation, the strategies to incorporate multicultural understandings across the curriculum would not suffice. That approach is too subtle. If a cross-disciplinary approach were the only option, then all academic content would need to be recreated to have sufficient amounts of multiculturalism. From a wider viewpoint, a more direct approach is warranted to shift the entire school culture, thus affecting the entire school dynamic. The most over-arching way to make time and stakeholder support promoting factors, instead of inhibiting factors, is to more highly prioritize multicultural understandings in the school culture.

Recommendations. There are four recommendations connected to Finding #5. Similar to the recommendations for Finding #4, teachers will not know how to model multicultural understandings if they do not have the skillsets themselves. This furthers the motion that professional development is the first essential step. Principals need to find the resources and time necessary to provide such training for their middle grade teachers. They also need to dedicate part of teacher observation write-ups on multicultural incorporations to hold teachers accountable.

Classroom incorporations of multicultural understandings can be done without extra time or resources. Teachers can use the materials that are already in classrooms as multicultural discussion and writing prompts can be used when focusing on Massachusetts frameworks or

Common Core State Standards. Teachers need to be more intentional in how they address multicultural understandings if using pre-made curriculums that lack these ideas initially. However, with supplementary lesson planning, it can be done. Yet again, teachers would likely require professional development on how to do this effectively. As a preventative measure, teachers preparation programs could also have more of an intentionality in how to bring multicultural understandings into already-establish curricula.

If a school is able to commit to a deeper curricular restructuring, materials that are more explicit with multicultural messages would be helpful. Stakeholders could allocate funds for updating history texts and increasing the variety of literature in the classrooms. Parents could help by donating books to classrooms and increasing the multiculturalism in their home book collections.

Finally, the school culture may be the most powerful tool, as it could influence time allocation and stakeholder support and resources. The school culture would need to consistently reflect on how well it fosters multicultural understandings and how to improve. Then time and stakeholder support will also be allocated with that mission in mind. These recommendations reflect some of the findings as presented in Finding #6.

Finding #6: Flexible subject-areas support principals fostering multicultural work

Finding #6 also addresses Guiding Research Question Three: What do principals report are factors and conditions that inhibit and support their efforts to expand multicultural understandings in predominantly White, rural, middle school grades?

Theoretical implications. The instruments in this study were each divided into seven sections, each one dedicated to an action area that has the power to promote or inhibit multicultural understandings. The area of curricular focus included emphasis on curricular flexibility to allow

for explicit and implicit multicultural teaching (Tichnor-Wagner, 2016). Finding #6 confirmed that principals had flexible curricula that enable multicultural instruction, which promoted expanding students' multicultural understandings.

Loewen (2008) discussed the importance of incorporating the cultural influences within American history as essential for any citizen's education at every level. He wrote of how well history is reflected in the American canon of literature and thus, issues of race make their way into ELA curriculums. For example, the history behind Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is commonly read in many American middle grade English classrooms, but racial issues are a major focus in the character development and scope of the plot. The ELA and social studies incorporations are not as challenging as it would be in math.

Previous literature has provided background on the practicality of incorporating multicultural understandings in social-emotional curriculums, but the focus has greatly been on the primary grades, not the middle grades. Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2016) wrote about implicit instruction when integrating multicultural understandings into what occurs in schools, with an emphasis on major categories of empathy, global interconnectedness, layered identities and responsibility. Dermin-Sparks (2008) linked empathetic capacity-building to home-school communication to promote consistency in students' days. Crowley-Long (1995) added that the more time students spend during their school day dedicated to crafting their own identity, the stronger learners and community members they become.

The three seminal pieces of literature in educational leadership provided insights into the curricular supports for expanding students' multicultural understandings. Starting with Marzano et al. (2005), "input" is the tenth responsibility that they described as, "The extent to which the principal involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies"

(p. 41). This idea is connected to Finding #6 because it bridges that idea that teachers are professionals who are trusted to use their own perspectives and strengths to make meaningful lessons for their students. Teacher input allows for multicultural understandings in the classroom to fit into what the class is already doing. It takes great familiarity with the academic curriculum, that only the classroom teacher has, to be fully capable to adding in multicultural aspects. If a principal fully cultivates and values teacher input, then teachers would have a strong sense of control.

The thirteenth responsibility of "knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment" focused on "a hands-on approach to classroom practices" where the leader "is aware of best practices in these domains" (Marzano et al., p. 54). This reflected ideas of Finding #6 because principals cannot support teachers with how to incorporate multicultural understandings if they are not well-versed in how to do it effectively. Hitt and Tucker (2016) share this idea by writing that shared instructional leadership allows for teachers and principals to work together to learn about best practices. The result is a community of professional learners. Hitt and Tucker's (2016) notion that collective goal-making as a means of transformational leadership has been used to improve teaching practice.

Finding #6 promotes teacher-driven choices in curricular incorporations of multicultural understandings. Wahlstrom et al. (2010) cautioned that teacher leadership within most schools is limited to grade-levels and disciplines. As a result, they found that the teacher collaboration is less likely (Wahlstrom et al., 2010). They wrote that when teachers are able to control what they are teaching, they are less likely to seek help or lend advice toward colleagues. The principals at schools with strong teacher leadership in curricular decisions have principals who provide oversight, but are more directive than collaborative (Wahlstrom et al., 2010). Wahlstrom et al.

(2010) elaborated, “Principals in these schools… make little effort to influence their implementation (p. 9). Wahlstrom et al.’s (2010) perspective provided insight that even though principals in this study claimed that curricular flexibilities have supported teachers’ ability to incorporate multicultural understandings in their middle grades, the teacher’s initiative is a reflection of what the principal values. As such, what the principal deems as most important is a reflection of the school’s priorities and culture. These ideas, reflected from the literature, have illuminated practical implications and recommendations, presented next.

Practical implications. The practical implications for this final finding is that cross-disciplinary instruction is a way to cover standards and objectives over the course of the school year. No matter the age of the students, their grade level will have what seems to be too much to fit into a single academic year. Fortunately, the format of the education system in Massachusetts does not require a particular curriculum. Rather, teachers largely have a sense of freedom with how they address the skill-based standards. Granted, the rigidity in how teachers address the frameworks varies by district based on the administration. How the districts approach the frameworks can vary based on the population and the district’s preferences. With emphasis put on cross-disciplinary instruction within the frameworks, the same mentality can be used for incorporating multicultural understandings.

Recommendations. Finding #6 has inspired three main recommendations. The first is for teachers to utilize the freedom and flexibility to the skill-based standards to address multiculturalism whenever possible. For example, whenever there is an opportunity to turn the classroom conversation toward understanding other races and cultures, they could take advantage of the chance.

The second recommendation goes to principals, in which they may brainstorm and support teachers in thinking about how to make the integration of multiculturalism possible. It is recommended that they provide professional development and training on how to do this effectively.

The third recommendation is geared toward teacher preparation programs, in which they could consider providing more explicit instruction in how to tie multicultural understandings into a skill-based curriculum. The theoretical and practical implications and recommendations for each of the six research findings have led to future research suggests that are based on the limitations and delimitations of the study.

Future Research

By the end of the review of the literature, it was clear that there was a dearth of information on principal support of White teachers in expanding the multicultural understandings of their predominantly White, rural, middle grades. In addition, the delimitations and limitations inspired several areas for future research. A delineation of five areas for future study follows.

1. Collect more information about the locations where the principals work

A delimitation for this study was that the participants were all within the state of Massachusetts. Massachusetts has a high prevalence of rural, predominantly White schools. A limitation, however, was that the locations were not identified in the survey. Had the locations been known, then more connections could have been made by learning more about the status and public information about that specific city/town and school district. For example, if there has been any prejudice or racial issues in the news for that specific district. More background information could have provided a larger picture to contextualize the data better.

2. Use a larger sample size

Since this study was looking specifically at rural Massachusetts with a very specific, racial demographic, this limited the sample size. A future study could use all of New England, a different state, or the entire nation. A larger sample could create more convincing results, but a different population could also show different results. Different state regulations that the principals are facing could lend state-specific recommendations. Another time of year could have yielded a larger sample size. For example, summertime, when principals do not have students and teachers in the building, could have been a better time when principals had more of a chance to participate. Even in summer, principals are more apt to use personal vacation days, so it is unknown what time would yield the largest results since principals have highly busy schedules year-round. Had the survey gone out at a less busy time of year, that could have increased participant responsiveness.

3. Use only stand-alone middle schools

The same study could be conducted using principals who work specifically at stand-alone middle schools, rather than a mixture of elementary schools with middle grades, high schools with middle grades, and stand-alone middle schools. The difference in how the school day functions and the number of academic teachers that students have could affect how multicultural understandings are addressed.

4. Include teacher and/or student perspectives

Future studies could include the voices of students and/or teachers. More perspectives could help either confirm or challenge the ideas collected in this study. For example, what principals reported they have been doing may not be what teachers and students report they have been experiencing in support of expanding multicultural understandings at their school.

Contradictions of perspectives could be valuable findings and give insight into each school's trustworthiness. Teacher and student perspectives may provide insight on factors and conditions that promote and inhibit multicultural understandings that were not included in this study.

5. Investigate other racial combinations

This study looked at predominantly White settings, but future study could focus on the role of the principal in expanding multicultural understandings at schools of varying demographics. It would be interesting to learn if the results are consistent in predominantly Black schools or mixed-race schools.

6. Explore other research methods

While the explanatory sequential mixed methods design was an insightful approach to this study, it is not to say that another design approach would not yield informative, helpful results. For example, a case study could go much deeper into a rural, predominantly White school and involve observational data, along with interviews from students, teachers and parents. As Creswell and Poth (2018) emphasized, there is never just one approach to a research problem, but rather many. They explained that it is a matter of researcher-preference as to what he or she qualifies as the most suitable and practical for the investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Other research methods also open up possibilities to answer other research questions, like how are principals addressing White fragility, as described by Diangelo (2018)? The next section describes final reflections of this study.

Final Reflections

As a former fifth grade teacher, I can recall the lack of support I felt when trying to foster multicultural understandings among my predominately White classes. As a White woman, I had to purposefully dismantle the inherent, unconscious racism that comes with growing up in rural,

White Massachusetts. Personally, it pained me to think that if my school had made multicultural understandings a priority at my school, I would not have had to diminish such prominent, unconscious biases in my personal ideology. This study has inspired a call to action for several main groups, all of whom I anticipated could benefit from this study.

Predominantly White, rural schools with middle grades, especially those in Massachusetts, can gain important insights from this study. Since this study identified what has been working well and what has been lacking, educators working in similar schools may reflect on what is and is not working in their schools. Leadership and instructional approaches within the school have the power and influence to evoke the greatest change.

School leaders, including both superintendents and principals could gain deeper understandings about what supports they could be providing teachers that they are not doing. The personal reflections that this study can inspire in their daily routines may evoke changes to align with how other principals reported they have been supporting teachers. School leaders are encouraged to use the instruments in this study as a way to self-reflect and question if each of the seven actions areas are serving as promoters or inhibitors in expanding their schools' multicultural education. They are also encouraged to think about whether or not their school's culture is causing any of the other six inhibiting factors.

This study confirms that school stakeholders have a strong influence over principals' choices and priorities. School stakeholders, like local governments, school committees/boards, local businesses, and parents could note that principals display a common theme of lacking funding toward enhancing multicultural understandings for their middle grade students. It costs a sizeable amount of money to send a single teacher to multicultural professional development, and yet, the benefits can reach dozens, if not hundreds, of students, due to the amount of contact

teachers have with students over time. School-stakeholders may use this study as motivation to self-reflect if they are serving as a promoting or inhibiting factor in expanding multicultural understandings at a given school.

Middle grade teachers at predominantly White, rural schools could also benefit from the findings. This study used an extensive review of the literature to generate a list of the actions most-cited as effective practices for expanding multicultural understandings. According to principals, the findings delineated the practices that were deemed most popular and effective. These findings can benefit teacher instruction as rural, predominantly White schools with middle grades because teachers can base their teaching on the effective practices.

Arguably, the most important group to benefit from this study are middle grade students who attend predominantly White, rural schools. They are the ones who interact with the teachers and administrators and model their perspectives. These are our future leaders, workforce, and citizens. In all, they are our country's future.

Both teacher and administrator preparation programs are urged to take note of these results, too. What is going well and what is lacking is valuable information that new and prospective teachers and administrators are advised to address in their respective roles.

In sum, rural, predominantly White, middle grades across Massachusetts are proactive in expanding students' multicultural understandings, but still have room for improvement. The scenario of White teachers educating predominantly White classes happens quite often. Middle school, a time when students are at the pinnacle of racial identity formation, is when understanding differences is vital. If students do not have these skills to be culturally competent, then their lack of multicultural understandings can lead to unconscious biases and racism. Teachers at these predominantly White, rural schools have the opportunity to expand students'

multicultural understandings. In a world becoming increasingly interconnected globally, multicultural understandings are necessary for students, especially if they ever leave their predominantly White, rural hometowns. Principal support has been linked to teacher effectiveness, thus student achievement. Findings presented in this study have illuminated recommendations and contributed ideas for future study. The most important recommendations from this study, directed at principals, are as follows:

- Include multiculturalism directly in the school mission.
- Share personal multicultural understandings to benefit teachers and students.
- Tie professional practice goals to the district or school improvement plans when the focus is on expanding multicultural understandings.
- Provide more multicultural professional development opportunities to teachers.
- Provide teachers with resources and time to practice modeling multicultural understandings for their students.
- Take time to look at the school culture as a whole and consider how the culture embodies multiculturalism.
- Help teachers plan how to use the required standards to leverage multicultural understandings in their curricula.

Since the review of the literature showed that there is a dearth of information on the specific scenario of principals supporting predominantly White, rural schools expanding middle grade students' multicultural understandings, this study is a first step toward filling that void and calls principals to action.

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Appendix A

Letter of Informed Consent for Survey Participation

Dear Colleague,

I am an Instructor of Elementary Education and the Education Preparation Liaison at Springfield College. I am currently a graduate student at Lesley University and am working on earning my Ph.D. in Educational Leadership. I am writing to ask for your involvement that could have a great impact in the field of Education.

You are receiving this email because you are a school that has any or all of the middle grades (5-8) and are in a rural community in MA. Your school also has at least 80% of your student and faculty populations designated as White.

As you may already be aware, there is a lack of information made available to principals on how they can expand the multicultural understandings at their schools. This study aims to help provide information to share to the larger field of education about the important work principals at these specific schools are doing.

Would you be willing to take a survey on the link below? The choice is your decision and you may stop participating in this study at any time and can choose not to answer any question that you are not comfortable answering. By clicking the link below, you are giving consent to participate in the study. It should take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete.

Confidentiality is a priority to me, and I will make every effort to keep your participation anonymous. If you would like a summary of the study findings when completed, please include your email address at the end of the survey. All information will be kept securely and your responses will not be linked to your email address. At the end of the survey, you will be asked if you would be willing to participate in an in-depth interview with me to hear more about your role in expanding your school's multicultural understanding. You are given options in terms of format.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions via phone at 413-588-7164 or via email at jchase9@lesley.edu. In addition, you may contact my faculty advisor, John Ciesluk at jciesluk@lesley.edu. There is a Standing Committee for Human Subjects in Research at Lesley University to which complaints or problems concerning any research project may, and should, be reported if they arise. Contact the Committee Chairperson at irb@lesley.edu

Survey link: https://lesley.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1FvfZTCGOlHvfRr

Thank you for your support,

Jacquelynne Chase
Ph.D. Candidate, Lesley University

Appendix B

Participant Closed-Response Survey

Dear Colleague,

Your participation is important in understanding the role that principals play in expanding multicultural understandings in rural, predominantly White schools that have middle grades. This survey will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. Please take your time in answering your questions. If you want/need to leave the survey and come back later, your responses will save for one week. You can withdraw at any point. By continuing on, you are giving your informed consent to participate. Your identity will only be matched to your responses if you state they you would like to be interviewed, but it will be kept confidential and not included in the written study. Please note that "middle grades" refer to any grade between 5-8. "Multicultural understandings is defined, for this study, as relating to a myriad of different cultures and as the Oxford Dictionary (2017) defines the term "multiculturalism" as, "The presence of, or support for the presence of, several distinct cultural or ethnic groups within a society."

Thank you for your time!

Jacquelynne Chase
Ph.D. Candidate, Lesley University

On a scale of 1-4 (1=None; 2=Little; 3=Some; 4=Most), please rate the following:

1. School-Wide Culture

a. Including multicultural understandings in the school mission.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

b. Adjusting school-wide/community events to be increasingly multicultural.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

c. Expressing a sense of urgency to faculty for expanding middle grade students' multicultural understandings.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

d. Inviting in guest speakers to share about other cultures.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4

Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

2. Principal Self-Improvement

a. Including multicultural understandings in your professional practice goals for the year.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

b. Self-reflecting on your own multicultural understandings.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

c. Actively expanding your own multicultural understandings.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

d. Staying up-to-date by reading research on multicultural education.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

3. Assessment and Data Collection

a. Evaluating multicultural understandings in primary grades to see if students are developing foundational multicultural understandings.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

b. Evaluating middle grade students' multicultural understandings.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

c. Communicating with or going to observe at other rural, predominantly White schools to see how they are expanding multicultural understandings in their middle grades.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

d. Asking the districts' high school teachers what multicultural understandings gaps students have when entering.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4

Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

4. Teacher Feedback

a. Asking middling grade teachers about how they bring multicultural understandings to their teaching.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

b. Asking middle grade teachers what they need in order to expand their students' multicultural understandings.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

c. Asking middle grade teachers what their greatest challenges are with teaching their middle grade students about race and other cultures.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

5. Stakeholder Support and Resources

a. Applying for outside funding dedicated to expanding multicultural understandings for middle grade students.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

b. Supplying school-based funding to middle grade teachers specifically for multicultural materials (books, activities, etc.).

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

c. Discussing expanding multicultural understandings in your school with your superintendent.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

d. Asking parents for insight on their satisfaction of their middle grade student's multicultural understandings.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4

Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

e. Asking the school committee for ideas/resources for expanding middle grade students' multicultural understandings.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

6. Teacher Professional Development and Accountability

a. Encouraging teachers to make expanding middle grade students' multicultural understandings a professional practice goal for the year.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

b. Focusing on how middle grade teachers bring multicultural understandings to their classrooms in their evaluations.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

c. Offering teachers professional development time/opportunities with a multicultural focus.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

7. Curricular Focus

a. Supporting middle grade teachers in bringing students on fieldtrips with a focus on multiculturalism (i.e. plays, museums, multi-school events).

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

b. Prioritizing multicultural understandings over standardized test preparation.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

c. Encouraging teachers to use technology to use technology to meet students/guest speakers who are from other cultures.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4

Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

d. Offering middle grade teachers curriculum with multicultural emphasis.

Importance of experience	1	2	3	4
Frequency of participation	1	2	3	4
Efficacy in completion	1	2	3	4
Impact of experience	1	2	3	4

8. Would you be willing to participate in an in-depth interview to last approximately 30 minutes?

9. If so, what is your preferred format (in-person, video-conference, or phone)?

10. If interested in being interviewed, what is your name, email address and phone number?

11. If you would like a summary of the study's findings, please provide your email address. This will, in no way, be tied to the responses you provided.

Appendix C

Letter of Informed Consent for Interview Participation

Dear Colleague,

You are about to participate in an interview that is based off of the questions you answered previously in a closed-response survey online. On the survey, you stated that you would be willing to participate in an interview, and communicated your preference in interview format (video-conferencing, in-person or phone).

The choice is your decision and you may stop participating in this study at any time and can choose not to answer any question that you are not comfortable answering. Your answers will be recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Confidentiality is a priority to me, and I will make every effort to keep your participation anonymous. Your identity will be given a random participant identification number, so no reader could identity you. All information will be kept securely. After data has been collected and analyzed, if you would like, findings will be communicated with you.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions via phone at 413-588-7164 or via email at jchase9@lesley.edu. In addition, you may contact my faculty advisor, John Ciesluk at jciesluk@lesley.edu. There is a Standing Committee for Human Subjects in Research at Lesley University to which complaints or problems concerning any research project may, and should, be reported if they arise. Contact the Committee Chairperson at irb@lesley.edu

I hereby agree to participate in an interview and choose to stop and/or not respond to any question at any time.

_____ _____

Signature Date

Thank you for your support,

Jacquelynne Chase
Ph.D. Candidate, Lesley University

Appendix D

Participant Interview Protocol

Interviewer begins giving the letter of informed consent (Appendix C) to the interviewee and shares the measures taken to reduce bias and ensure confidentiality. Verbally reminds participants that he/she can choose to not respond to any question or stop participating in the interview at any time and that their responses are recorded for analysis purposes.

Interviewer beings: Thank you for taking the time to share more about your role in bringing multicultural understandings to your middle grade students. I have divided your questions into seven categories, based on what the literature describes as effective practices for multicultural education and leadership. I will summarize your responses for the corresponding survey questions for each section before asking you questions to elaborate on your experiences and perspective.

1. School-Wide Culture

We will first talk about your school's overall culture before. You supplied the following information about how you have/have not been able to bring multicultural understandings to your entire school (researcher summarizes survey responses supplied).

a. How is multiculturalism expressed in your school mission?
    a. If it is not, why not?
b. Can you give some examples of how your school-wide culture fosters multiculturalism?
    a. If not, then what has inhibited your school from being multicultural?
    b. What would you like to see be different for your school's culture?
    c. Do you have ideas of next steps?
c. What did you do to make this possible?
d. Who or what supported these actions?
e. Explain how you are able to incorporate a sense of urgency to this topic for middle grades.
    a. If you do not provide a sense of urgency, what inhibits you from doing so?

2. Principal Self-Improvement

Now, we will discuss your expansion of your own multicultural understandings. On the survey, you gave the following responses to the following factors of self-improvement (researchers summarize survey responses supplied).

a. Can describe your professional practice goal(s) that you have had that focused on multiculturalism?
    a. If not, why have you not had that as part of your goals?
b. Describe what you do to self-reflect on your role in bringing multicultural understandings to your school.
    a. If not, why do you not self-reflect?
c. How often do you take the time to do this?
d. How do you actively expand your own multicultural understandings?
    a. If not, please explain why.
e. What role does new, scholarly research on multicultural understandings in education play in your practice?

a. If you do not use research, why not?

3. Assessment and Data Collection

I will now ask you to share more information on the role of assessment and data collection in expanding your middle grade students' multicultural understandings. On the survey, you provided the following responses in regard to the role of assessment and data collection (researcher summarizes survey responses to the interviewee).

a. How do you gauge the multicultural understandings of your primary grades?
    a. If you do not assess this, why not?
b. Do you deem your primary grades as fostering multicultural understandings?
c. How do you assess the multicultural understandings of your middle grade students?
    a. If you do not assess this, why not?
d. How do you obtain feedback from your middle grade students' future high school teachers to assess their multicultural understandings?
    a. If you do not try to obtain that feedback, why not?
e. Can you explain an instance of when you communicated or observed at another rural, predominantly White school with the intention of learning how they expand multicultural understandings?
    a. If you have never tried reaching out to another school that is similar to your school, why not?

4. Teacher Feedback

Let's talk about the role of teacher feedback. On the survey, you gave the following responses to how you use teacher feedback (researcher summarizes survey responses the interviewee supplied).

a. How do you ensure you hear what teachers want and do not want in terms of support in teaching multicultural understandings?
b. What supports do teachers report to you that they like or want more of?
    a. If they do not report anything, why not? Is it not a focus for them?
c. What do your middle grade teachers tell you they are missing when trying to bring in multicultural understandings to their classrooms?
    a. If teachers are not reporting they are missing anything, do they feel open to tell you if they are missing support?

5. Stakeholder Support and Resources

Now we will discuss the role of others' supports. On the survey, you gave the following responses to questions about stakeholder support and utilizing resources toward expanding your middle grade students' multicultural understandings (researcher summarizes survey responses that the interviewee supplied).

a. How do you secure outside funding with the purpose of expanding students' multicultural understandings?
    a. If you do not, why do you not?
b. How do you make it possible to dedicate some of your school budget specifically toward multicultural understandings?
c. Describe how you address your middle grade students' multicultural understandings with your superintendent.

d. How often do you have these conversations and do you feel your needs are met?
    a. If you do not address this with him/her, why not?
e. Describe the role the school committee has in the expansion of your middle grade students' multicultural understandings.
f. Describe how you secure parent-support and assistance in expanding middle grade students' multicultural understandings.
    a. If you do not obtain their support, why not?

6. Teacher Professional Development and Accountability

We can now look at the professional development and accountability of your middle grade teachers. On the survey, you gave the following responses to questions about this area (researcher summarizes survey responses that the interviewee supplied).

a. How do you encourage your middle grade teachers to incorporate multicultural understandings into their professional practice goals?
    a. If you do not encourage this, why not?
b. Do you include multicultural understandings on your middle grade teachers' evaluations?
    a. If not, why?
c. Do you supply district/school professional development or outside professional development centered on multicultural understandings?
    a. If not, why not?

7. Curricular Focus

Our final area to discuss is about the curriculum your middle grades implement. On the survey, you gave the following responses to questions about this area (researcher summarizes survey responses that the interviewee supplied).

a. Do you offer a curriculum that emphasizes multicultural understandings for the middle grades? Can you describe it?
    a. If not, why do you not have one?
b. How would you describe the prioritization of multicultural understandings as part of your middle grades' curriculum?
    a. If not deemed a priority, what overshadows it?
c. What role does technology play in bringing in multicultural understandings to your middle grade classes?
    a. If it does not play a role, why not?
d. What role do field trips and guest speakers play in bringing in multicultural understandings to your middle grade classes?
    a. If it does not play a role, why not?
e. How would you describe your next steps in supporting the expansion of your middle grade students' multicultural understandings?