

School Leadership Review

Volume 16
Issue 2 *Spring/Summer 2022: Equitable
Leadership*

Article 5

May 2022

Cultivating CRSL Capacity for Marginalized Students and Student Groups

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Recommended Citation

Palmer, Dusty L.; Almager, Irma L.; and Valle, Fernando (2022) "Cultivating CRSL Capacity for Marginalized Students and Student Groups," *School Leadership Review*. Vol. 16: Iss. 2, Article 5.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/slr/vol16/iss2/5>

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Introduction

The population of English language learner students increased approximately 5% from 2017 to 2018 in Texas schools, totaling 19.7% of the entire student population that were enrolled in that state (Texas Education Agency, 2018). Additionally, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) reported that special education students comprised of 9.6% of the 5.4 million students in Texas, while economically disadvantaged students comprised 3.2 million students or 60.6% of the entire PreK–12 grade student population in Texas. To better serve the increasing population of marginalized students and student groups, teachers and principals need improvement in the high-quality pre-service training they receive. Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) argued teachers are the cornerstones for student achievement, but principals are the cornerstones for teacher improvement. Childress (2014) further stated that principals are the key to improving teacher practices and suggested they provide the instructional coaching necessary for teacher growth.

The aim of our research was to assess the pre-service training that aspiring principals (i.e., principal interns) received during a 15-month job-embedded principal residency program. We wanted to examine the impact principal interns had on student achievement and teacher practices. With the increase in marginalized students enrolling in Texas public schools, we wanted to examine how principal interns increased their cultural awareness and provided leadership through a culturally responsive leadership framework. In this qualitative content analysis, we examined the perceptions of 39 principal interns who were part of three job-embedded principal residency cohorts. The responses to their self-reflection questions were designed to measure the principal interns' experiences at the halfway point in the residency program and again toward the end of their residency program. Through the inductive and deductive analysis, there were three common themes: self-reflection of the equity audit, disparities with marginalized student groups, and use of data to drive decisions.

Literature Review

Principal preparation programs are refining the roles of principals such that instructional coaching is a key. This literature review focusing on the refining roles of principals in relationship to how principal preparation program have refined over the past ten years. Young and Eddy-Spicer (2019) reviewed the exemplary principal preparation programs that received awards through the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) and provided insight into principal preparation programs to redesign the theory-to-practice model. There were five leadership programs that were awarded the Exemplary Educational Leadership Preparation (EELP) Award and serve as aspiring models for other leadership preparation programs. The universities that received the award were the University of Illinois–Chicago (UIC), University of Texas–San Antonio, University of Denver Ritchie Program for School Leaders and Executive Leadership for Successful Schools, North Carolina State University Northeast Leadership Academy, and the University of Washington (UW) Leadership for Learning (L4L) Program. Three of the five programs listed above were highlighted in a special edition of the *Journal of Research in Education* (JRLE). Young and Eddy-Spicer (2019) stated, “Educational leadership is affected by rapid and evolving knowledge on learning, teaching, and leading; the demands of society; the persistent demographic changes of schools; and the increasing complexity of the job of school leader. The three programs profiled in this issue reflect excellence in educational leadership preparation, though they do so in different and

contextually appropriate ways” (p. 8). Korach and colleagues (2019) provided a blueprint for a university-to-school principal preparation model known as the Denver Ritchie Program, where the purpose was to prepare aspiring leaders ready to lead and challenge the status quo. The Denver Ritchie Program was the result of a partnership between the University of Denver’s (DU) Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (ELPS) and Denver Public Schools (DPS). The one-year principal preparation program was rooted in a shared theory of transformative and courageous leadership. Not only has the program received national recognition from the Wallace Foundation and UCEA, the ELPS department has reciprocated the vision and values to strengthen the department as a whole. Korach et al. (2019) reiterated, the “developmental practices as partners with students, schools, and districts is powerful and invigorating” (p. 46). Cited preparation programs had similar designs to also create a pipeline of leaders, but in their own context.

Cosner et al. (2015) led the charge to develop the UIC coaching model where professors served as faculty coaches. The goal of UIC was to consistently prepare a cohort of aspiring school principals by continuing their education beyond the master’s degree. The UIC program believed that this extended program would prepare principals to transform challenging urban schools. Having the extended program allowed for the faculty coaches to continue to work with their students while they were serving in the field as principals. Similar to the Denver Ritchie Program, the UIC program partnered with Chicago Public Schools (CPS). Cosner et al. (2019) conducted individual and focus group interviews with CPS principals whose schools had far exceeded student learning outcomes. This provided UIC with key actions in designing their exemplary leadership preparation program. A few of the key actions included: a partnership with CPS that funded the principal residents, a highly selective admission process, cohort-based admissions, support from a mentor principal, and coaching from a UIC faculty member. The effectiveness of the UIC principal preparation model was measured by the eligibility and placement of their students into a principalship position. They found that 70% of their students were placed in a principalship position within five years of completing the program and claimed that the majority of the other 30% were in administrative roles such as the assistant principal position.

The third program highlighted was the UW L4L Program. This educational doctoral program’s central focus was helping candidates to address educational equity. By doing so, the program analyzed data over a 20-year term to evaluate and improve their L4L program design. Ultimately the aim was to prepare leaders to “help candidates realize ambitious equity-focused leadership standards such as the demonstrated ability to marshal the collective engagement of others to disrupt and decrease race, class, language, ability, and other group-based disparities in service of true educational equity” (Honig & Walsh, 2019, p. 52). The UW program also was cohort based, and each cohort developed an equity standard that would support participants’ on-the-job learning opportunities while they served as doctoral candidates. For example, cohort 7 created their equity standard to be the following: “Foster collective action to disrupt and decrease race, class, language, culture, ability, gender, sexuality, citizenship, and other group-based disparities and to ensure that the needs, interest, and assets of nondominant students are central in change efforts” (p. 63). Honing and Walsh (2019) suggested to intensively study data and research to improve their leadership programs, as they described in their own study that research and data has improved their own efforts in their L4L program.

The RAND research corporation has also taken a stance on principal preparation programs, publishing a book titled *Launching a Redesign of University Principal Preparation*

Programs. Within the book, the authors described the Wallace Foundation’s efforts in launching the University Principal Preparation Initiative (UPPI). The UPPI focused on seven universities that included: Albany State University, Florida Atlantic University, North Carolina State University, San Diego State University, University of Connecticut, Virginia State University, and Western Kentucky University. RAND highlighted evidence-based features and the context of successful university principal preparation programs that included: a coherent curriculum, supervised clinical experiences, active recruiting, cohort structure, effective program leadership, university-district partnerships, financial support, and state context. As cited by RAND, the program features listed above were compiled by Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) and noted that there was another program feature that was not listed. This program feature was “continuous engagement with program participants, wherein the program offers induction coaching and support to graduates after they have been placed as principals” (p. x).

The literature review outlines principal preparation programs that have been recognized and used as effective principal preparation models at the national level. Enormous funds, such as \$48.5 million dollars from the Wallace Foundation UPPI, supported efforts “toward redesigning universities [*sic*] educator preparation programs with the support of high-need districts and according to the features and contexts” listed above (Wang et al., 2018, p. x). The literature provides a foundational framework for this study on researching and redesigning our own effective principal preparation program using the features and contexts the universities mentioned above exhibited.

Context of Study

Over the past five years, our program has taken necessary steps to refine our principal preparation program. The Denver Ritchie Program was pivotal in the redesign of our job-embedded principal preparation program and building leader capacity through a principal grow-your-own model. Similar to the UIC coaching model and their cycle of inquiry introduced by Cosner et al. (2015), we established our own model known as the Principal Fellow (PF) Program to continue the efforts of providing meaningful learning opportunities that include supporting and advocating for underserved students.

The context of the PF program includes an 80% focus on instructional leadership and most specifically on instructional coaching. At the beginning of the 15-month job-embedded principal preparation residency program, the interns attended a weeklong summer institute on campus. Some information that was introduced was (1) linkage to the state and national principal standards; (2) theory-to-practice literature; (3) overviews of law and policy including special education, 504, and deaf education; (4) instructional coaching; (5) leading PLCs; and (6) advocacy and support for vulnerable populations. A foundational piece of the learning experience is for each principal intern to conduct an equity audit of the campus on which they will be serving. The equity audit peels back the curtain for the PF to identify and create action steps to address the areas of need and any inequities that are revealed (Skrla et al., 2004; Furman, 2012). Once the equity audit is conducted and presented to their mentor principal and possibly other school leaders, the principal intern develops an action plan.

The action plan endorsed by the TEA used in the PF program was purposefully selected with the original intent of the instrument that is used on “improvement required” campuses in Texas. The PF program creatively used this instrument to focus on six areas of instructional leadership: two teachers identified through the equity audit, a content area of need other than the content certification of the principal intern identified through the equity audit, and three other areas that include learning law and policy through supporting a

special education student, an English language learner, and a deaf education student. Through these six areas, the principal intern conducted a root cause analysis with the appropriate stakeholders to identify any problems. Once the root cause analysis was conducted and the problem was identified, the principal in collaboration with the stakeholders, created a specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and time-bound (SMART) annual goal along with four SMART quarterly goals. Each quarterly goal includes four interventions to be implemented, and progress is monitored throughout the quarter by the intern. Also, during the residency program, the principal intern conducts four pre-conference, observation, and post-conference (POP) cycles for the two teachers as identified and described above. This is where instructional coaching is foundational for teachers to improve instructionally so that student outcomes can improve. However, often we know that developing teacher practices and working with adults can be challenging.

The method used to address the challenges that the PF may encounter through conducting the POP cycles is similar to the UIC model. University faculty members serve as the instructors for the classes as well as the faculty coaches. Over the past three years of this refined PF residency model, there has been an average of 14 principal interns where the faculty-to-principal intern coaching ratio is usually 3:1. This structure provides that authentic, personalized coaching experience for the principal intern during the entire 15-month job-embedded residency program. Similar to the triad model (Cosner et al., 2015) where reoccurring meetings with the intern, their mentor principal, and faculty coach occur, the PF program conducts these meetings during onsite visits, where the faculty coach meets one-on-one with the principal intern. Creating a one-on-one space for the principal intern and the faculty coach is intentional since sometimes there needs to be an opportunity for the intern to reflect on their experiences in a confidential manner with their faculty coach. During the residency program, each faculty coach and mentor talk on a weekly basis, and there is a minimum of two times a semester that the faculty coach is on their campus.

The purpose of this qualitative content analysis was to examine the perceptions of principal interns in a job-embedded principal preparation residency program. The second purpose was to examine the principal interns' experiences and critically reflect on how the experiences are linked to Khalifa and colleagues' (2016) Culturally Responsive School Leadership (CRSL) framework. Khalifa et al. (2016) pointed out three premises schools need to follow to be culturally responsive: (1) CRSL is necessary for effective leadership to occur in schools, (2) CRSL needs to be present and continuous throughout the school year for sustainability to occur, and (3) CRSL has unique characteristics, including critical self-reflection. The following research questions guided this study:

- (1) What was the principal interns' perception of their experiences throughout the job-embedded principal residency program?
- (2) In what ways did the principal interns' residency experience associate with the four emerging themes developed by Khalifa et al. (2016) that include critical self-reflection, teacher development with emphasis on cultural responsiveness, being culturally responsive to inclusive learning environments, and engaging with students and parents in a contextual community?

Methodology

The methodology of this study was through the lens of comprehensive qualitative content analysis research design, which examined the experiences through the perceptions of 39 principal interns (i.e., PFs) over a three-year period. The PFs were highly vetted through a joint

district and university partnership. Therefore, the participants in this study were purposively selected due to their involvement in the job-embedded principal preparation residency program, also known as the Principal Fellows Program. The participants all served in PreK–12 public schools in Texas.

In this study, the researchers wanted to examine student artifacts in the form of self-reflection questions about the work conducted by the principal interns over the past three years to examine if there were any associations linked to the culture responsive leadership framework of Khalifa et al. (2016). Therefore, a qualitative content analysis examining the responses to open-ended, self-reflection questions was conducted. The data source consisted of four self-reflection questions regarding principal interns' experience in a job-embedded principal preparation residency program. The principal interns completed several self-reflection questions at the midway point and toward the end of their job-embedded residency program, but only four of the questions were specifically used for this study. In total there were four questions, 39 responses per question, and a combined total of 156 responses that were analyzed.

Historically, content analysis was first introduced in a quantitative research approach that objectively examined quantifiable descriptions of the manifest content of communication of written or oral materials (Berelson, 1952). Due to criticism of the quantitative research approach, Kracauer (1952) argued for content analysis research to be conducted in a qualitative way where the texts from the oral or written communication would be analyzed more holistically. In essence, a qualitative content analysis is considered a research approach to subjectively interpret data (Schreier, 2012; Krippendorff, 2018).

Cho and Lee (2014) provided a study comparing the similarities and differences between a grounded theory and a qualitative content analysis, and listed unique characteristics for each. The unique characteristics of a qualitative content analysis “is the flexibility of using inductive or deductive approaches or a combination of both approaches in data analysis and the ability to extract manifest and latent content meaning” (Cho & Lee, 2014, p. 4). In this study, an inductive and a deductive approach were used to examine any associations that exist with the CRSL framework.

Diagram 1 displays a conceptual framework of the qualitative content analysis that was conducted. The diagram shows the process of the inductive and deductive data collection and analysis.

Diagram 1. Qualitative content analysis.

department, and *supported teacher* were revised into the code of *building teacher capacity*. As revising occurred and the codes were reduced to a smaller set of codes, then themes started to emerge for each question. This process of analyzing the responses occurred for each of the four questions, where each question produced its own set of codes and emerging themes.

Deductive Data Collection and Analysis

Similar procedures as used in the inductive analysis were used in the deductive analysis. Cho and Lee (2014) suggested the use of the same steps as described above but replacing step 2 and step 3. Mayring provided that step 2, referring to “the determination of category and levels of abstraction,” needed to be replaced by “theoretical-based definitions of categories,” and step 3, referring to “the development of inductive categories from material,” be replaced with “theoretical-based formulation of coding rules” (as cited by Cho & Lee, 2014, p. 10). The other steps listed in the inductive process were the same for the deductive process. Also, the same four self-reflection questions were used. The second research question guided the deductive analysis. In what ways did the principal interns’ residency experience associate with the four emerging themes developed by Khalifa et al. (2016) that include critical self-reflection, teacher development with emphasis on cultural responsiveness, being culturally responsive to inclusive learning environments, and engaging with students and parents in a contextual community?

The four themes highlighted in this research question became the codes. From Khalifa and colleagues’ (2016) article, “Culturally responsive school leadership: A synthesis of the literature,” certain words and phrases were provided in each of the emerging themes that were used for codes. Table 1 provides the coding structure aligning with the codes, definition of the themes, the self-reflection questions, and the preliminary codes.

Table 1. Coding structure

Codes and Definitions*	Self-Reflection Questions	Preliminary Codes
<p>Critical Self-Awareness</p> <p><i>An awareness of self and his/her values, beliefs, and/or dispositions when it comes to serving poor children of color</i></p>	<p>In what ways did the equity audit impact your perception of schools?</p> <p>How did you specifically address instructional areas you currently find inequitable on your campus?</p>	<p>Self-reflection, Equity audits, Social justice, Leading with courage</p>
<p>Culturally Responsive Curricula and Teacher Preparation</p> <p><i>Ensuring that teachers are and remain culturally responsive</i></p>	<p>In what ways has instructional coaching influenced your thinking about growing teachers?</p>	<p>Developing teachers, Collaborative walk-throughs, PD opportunities, Data</p>
<p>Culturally Responsive and Inclusive School Environments</p> <p><i>Identifying and fostering a culturally responsive school environment for marginalized students</i></p>	<p>In what ways did the equity audit impact your perception of schools?</p> <p>How did you specifically address instructional areas you currently find inequitable on your campus?</p>	<p>Building relationships, Modeling, Promoting a vision, Challenging policies, Teachers, Behaviors, Student voice, Disparities in</p>

		achievement, Disparities in discipline
Engaging Students and Parents in Community Contexts	In what ways have you worked with parents to support student achievement?	Parents, School, Community, Families, Nurturing for others, Caring for others
<i>The ability for school leaders to accommodate the lives of parents and promote overlapping school-community contexts</i>		

*Khalfia et al. (2016)

Inductive Analysis Outcomes

Culturally Responsive Curricula and Teacher Preparation

There were four primary codes related to the culturally responsive curricula and teacher preparation (CRCTP) theme that was generated through the inductive analysis. The self-reflection question that aligned with CRCTP was: In what ways has instructional coaching influenced your thinking about growing teachers?

Self-Reflection. The PF provided responses referring to their own self-reflection from their previous experience serving as a teacher, self-reflection while serving as an instructional coach during their internship experience, and the prompting of teachers to use their own self-reflection to improve their own instructional practices. For example, one PF stated, “After being a member of the campus leadership team and now being a member of the front office leadership team, I am seeing the behind-closed-doors activities and perceptions that are a part of a school and understanding that everyone does not teach every child through the lens of equity instead of equality.”

Role as Instructional Coach. The second code described the roles of serving as the instructional coach. The PFs used data to drive their decisions. They used data to set goals, clear guidelines, and provide next steps for teachers to improve their instructional practices to therefore improve student achievement. The PFs were intentional in creating goals for teachers to specifically target the teachers’ weaknesses.

Data. As mentioned above, the PFs used data to drive their decision-making. They used data when communicating with teachers. Often, teachers were resistant to receiving feedback and the PFs used data to objectively state to the teacher what areas of refinement they needed to improve on.

Building Teacher Capacity. The PF purpose of instructional coaching was to build teacher capacity. There were several preliminary codes that generated the code *building teacher capacity*. Some of the preliminary codes consisted of the following phrases: developing teachers, growing teachers, building relationships, and working together. One of the driving factors in building teacher capacity was using the teacher as a resource. This required active listening to teachers’ concerns or needs.

Critical Self-Awareness and Culturally Responsive and Inclusive School Environments

Since the self-reflection questions regarding equity audits was in two parts, the primary codes were combined and described in this section. The two self-reflection questions were: (1) In what ways did the equity audit impact your perception of schools and your new school? (2) How

did you specifically address instructional areas you currently find inequitable on your campus. The inductive analysis yielded four codes: purpose of the equity audit, creating action steps, surprises, and disparities.

Purpose of the Equity Audit. The PFs provided their own self-reflection of the importance of conducting equity audits. A few statements include: “I have come to realize that equity audits are important and that well-defined procedures will help in maintaining an equitable campus,” and, “By spending time analyzing different aspects of the equity audit, I was able to adjust my lenses in order to better serve the school as a whole. I was able to forecast specific struggles based on data and begin looking for ways to help close the gap and create opportunities for teachers and students to be successful.”

Creating Actions Steps. The PFs were intentional in creating action steps for teachers to improve their instructional practices. After conducting the equity audit and collaborating with other campus leaders, one PF stated, “We, as instructional leaders, looked at the data. We had restructured the planning guides to meet the needs of the students currently being taught. The changes are all supported by the data and will target areas that [are] consistently low or have not been taught at all. We will create the unit assessments as well, and they will be based on that unit with some spiral concepts included. We know our time is short, but we intend to be intentional and focused on getting the kids where they need to be.”

Surprises. One of the codes that was revealed seemed to shock the PFs when conducting the equity audit. The PFs were surprised by findings through conducting the equity audit. Some of the findings included teachers having really good teaching strategies, yet their students continued to underperform on the state’s accountability test (i.e., STAAR tests, EOC tests). Another shocking finding PFs came across was how the principal on the campus hid data (specifically discipline data) and would not release it to the teachers. One PF stated, “I also saw that most of the faculty had no idea about what data their school had to offer. In the audit, it showed that most of the teachers had been in the school, so I thought they would know their data, but that was not the case.” A crucial surprise was discovery that special education students were not being served.

Disparities. The disparities, also referred to as inequities, were revealed through the second part of the equity audit self-reflection question. The findings included disparities in teacher-to-student demographics, special education, English language learners, gifted and talented, Hispanic academic performance and discipline referrals, and African American academic performance and discipline. Table 2 breaks down the amount of times the PF referred to a disparity. One PF states, “By doing the equity audit for my new campus, I was able to see that even though the majority of the campus was made up of minority students, those students were overrepresented in discipline referrals and underrepresented in GT, SPED, and 504.” The most frequent finding was African American disparities. There were 20 findings that were identified that were associated to African Americans students. Another PF response was:

An area that stood out was the ratio of African American males with disciplinary consequences compared to the other subpopulations. Of the six individuals who received office referrals during the first six-week grading period, half of those were African American males. This means that a subgroup that consists of 6% of the total population is responsible for 50% of all disciplinary referrals. These reports consistently note the individual being “disrespectful, noncompliant, or aggressive.” Through this identification of potential inequality, the school has taken actions to implement professional development to provide teachers with the tools necessary to manage student behaviors in

a manner that promotes a better overall relationship between the teacher and the students. All six students who were referred for disciplinary action have been provided a mentor in which [*sic*] to conduct the check-in/check-out intervention process and allow for positive relationship building.

Engaging Students and Parents in Community Contexts

The finding of this theme was common among all the PFs and their experiences. The PFs communicated with parents in both positive and negative conversations. Often, the PFs contacted the parents in regard to a discipline referral or a behavioral concern. However, they also provided positive reinforcement after communicating the initial concern to the parent. Most importantly, PFs provided support for student groups such as special education students. One PF stated,

There are also several direct ways that I have worked with parents to support student achievement. I make positive calls to parents when their child is making gains in class. I have also been able to invite parents to attend awards ceremonies for academic awards as well as for the Spelling Bee. Parents are always so pleased to attend a ceremony or event to celebrate their child. Another way I have directly worked with parents for the success of their child is during Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) meetings, 504 meetings, and Response to Intervention (RTI) meetings. These are meetings where we can discuss the accommodations and supports necessary to ensure every child has access to the curriculum.

Deductive Analysis Outcomes

The findings in the deductive analysis yielded similar findings, therefore only the major findings will be discussed in this section. The deductive analysis consisted of predetermined preliminary codes to see if there was a connection to CRSL themes. All the preliminary codes can be found in Table 1. The preliminary codes that were consistently referenced were: self-reflection on the equity audit, developing teachers, walk-throughs/observations, PD opportunities, data, building relationships, disparities in academic and discipline, and parents. The self-reflection on the equity audit was most common; however, the self-reflection question itself explains why there were so many findings. The self-reflection question was: In what ways did the equity audit impact your perception of schools and your new school? One principal responded,

I have learned the importance of performing equity audits on schools and its programs. It is important to have teacher demographics match student and community demographics. This is important to prevent possible discrimination and possible favoritism among teachers and students. It is important to look at equity of disciplinary procedures to ensure all students are being treated fairly and equitably. It is important to look at special programs to insure we are meeting the needs of all students, despite ethnicity and socioeconomics. Looking at equity in attendance helps with problem-solving to improve attendance percentages. It also gives you a good view if discrimination is happening in the classroom. These audits should be performed each year to ensure proper procedures are in place and that all needs are being met.

The other major finding through the deductive analysis was disparities in academic performance and discipline. Again, Table 2 breaks down the frequency of identified disparities. To reiterate, African Americans experienced the most disparities. There were six reports that African Americans were academically underperforming, four reports on underrepresentation in the gifted and talented program, and five reports on overrepresentation in special education. In relationship to this finding, several PFs reported the unequal representation of teacher

demographics to student demographics. It was often reported that African Americans reported as the lowest performing on their campus and were most frequently referred to the office for disciplinary reasons. On the same note, teachers' demographics consisted of African American teachers being the lowest performing on the campus.

Table 2*Breakdown of identified disparities*

African American Disparities	20	Hispanic Disparities	4
Academically Underperforming	6	Overrepresented in Discipline	1
Overrepresented in SPED	5	Overrepresented in Discipline with Males	1
Underrepresented in SPED	1	Underrepresented in GT	1
Overrepresented in Discipline	3		
Underrepresented in GT	4		
General Disparity	1		
Special Education	18	English Language Learners	6
Academically underperforming	10	Inequity in Bilingual Area	2
Overrepresented	1	Achievement Gap Inequity	2
Overrepresented with Males	1	Academically Underperforming	2
Overrepresented with African Americans	2		
Overrepresented in Discipline	2		
Overall Underrepresented	2		
Underrepresented in GT	1		
Discipline	10	Gifted and Talented	9
Overrepresented with Males	10	Underrepresented with African American	4
Overrepresented with African American	2	Underrepresented with SPED	1
Overrepresented with White Males	1	Overrepresentation with White	1
		Underrepresented with Hispanic	1
		Academically Underperforming	1
		Minority Student Underrepresented	1

Common Themes

There were common themes that were revealed after comparing the inductive findings with the deductive findings. The top three common findings were the three major findings discussed under the deductive findings section. The three themes include: self-reflection of the equity audit, disparities with marginalized student groups, and use of data to drive decisions. Both analyses provided preliminary codes that were continually revised until primary codes were developed, and then eventually the top three common themes were revealed.

Strengths and Weakness of Conducting the Content Analysis

There were strengths and weaknesses in conducting an inductive and deductive analysis. The inductive analysis was conducted before the deductive analysis and was the most time-consuming. The line-by-line coding procedure presented a copious amount of preliminary codes, and often it was sometimes difficult to interpret the context of the word or phrase. For example, one line that was analyzed was “finding the right words when providing feedback to make an impact on student achievement.” This line is unclear about who is providing the feedback. Is the faculty coach providing feedback to the principal intern? Or, is the principal intern providing feedback to the teacher? Or, is the teacher providing feedback to the students in the classroom? After discovering this issue in context, the researchers went back and conducted a more holistic analysis looking at coding individual sentences or groups of sentences. This coding approach provided clarification on the context of the words or phrases.

A strength of conducting an inductive analysis provided frequency of responses that came to light after revising preliminary codes into final codes. Ironically, the most surprising code to us was the frequent responses on the code *surprises*. Without conducting an inductive analysis, this code would not have been found.

Implications

Equity audits are important and necessary to identify current and relevant problems that are occurring in schools. Conducting equity audits provides rich data that instructional leaders can use in an objective manner to set goals, initiate actions steps, and communicate effectively with teachers. By doing an equity analysis, inequities are revealed. Equity audits peel back the curtain and can reveal “ah ha” revelations. Instead of pointing fingers at the problem though, the instructional leaders such as the PFs in this study not only identified the problems but also provided and implemented action steps to address them.

The equity audit provides insight to detailed information on student groups. The perspective of the PFs on conducting their equity audits provided us data that did reveal that marginalized students and student groups continue to not be provided an equitable learning opportunity. The findings in this study imply that a deeper look into the reasons inequitable learning opportunities exist is needed. Self-reflection questions that prompt discussion are: Is the teacher demographics in comparison to the student demographics a probable cause for marginalized student groups to have low attendance rates, high discipline referrals, low academic performance, underrepresented/overrepresentation in special education, or an underrepresentation in the gifted and talented program? A second question for discussion would be: How are teachers being developed to respond to culturally inclusive environments?

Further studies would include a critical analysis to be conducted on the principal interns’ documents and tasks while serving in the job-embedded principal preparation program. Analyzing the equity audits would be beneficial to continuing to identify any disparities that exist and add the perspectives of the PFs in this study. We recommend that equity audits be a high priority for instructional leaders to conduct prior to every school year. It is important that blind spots and biases of instructional leaders do not hinder in building teacher capacity and improving student achievement. We also recommend that instructional leaders use data from the equity audit to communicate with teachers in an objective manner. To summarize the importance of equity audits, one PF stated it best, “Equity audits revealed to me the disproportionate decisions made on a day-to-day basis, that as an administrator, you may not even know are occurring on your campus. Equity audits help correct these issues before they become problems.”

Conclusion

This study examined the perspectives of 39 principal interns during a 15-month job-embedded internship. This study reiterates that principals who use instructional coaching are key to developing teachers (Childress, 2014). The study also reiterates that marginalized student groups are not being served equitably with the afforded learning opportunities provided to other students. Skrla and colleagues' (2004) equity audit framework allowed the PFs to dive deep into their campus data to identify inequities. Furthermore, the PFs implemented actions steps to develop teacher capacity to be culturally responsive for all students.

The inductive and deductive analysis was important in the discovery of themes in this study. Without the inductive analysis, certain themes or codes would not have been revealed. The three main themes that are common in both analyses were self-reflection on equity audits, disparities with marginalized student groups, and use of data to drive decisions. The findings were evident in that the principals serving in the job-embedded principal preparation program were able to critically self-reflect on their experiences and provide responses that did connect to the Khalifa et al. (2016) CRSL framework. Therefore, principal preparation programs must continue to improve on their pedagogy and curriculum to instill culturally responsive leadership in aspiring principals. Most importantly, principals and assistant principals must serve as effective instructional coaches to produce a culturally responsive school environment.

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