Strengthening a Principal Preparation Internship by Focusing on Diversity Issues

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Regina Figueiredo-Brown

Marjorie Campo Ringler

Mandi James

East Carolina Universiy

This study discusses East Carolina University's (ECU) preparation program and its emphasis on the study and application of diversity throughout the internship. ECU's comprehensive internship provided candidates time to apply theory and knowledge about school leadership and diversity topics addressed on a monthly basis at internship seminars. A qualitative analysis of interns' reflections about their learning and experiences suggested that the focus on diversity was beneficial. Findings indicated learning about diversity throughout the internship opened opportunities for interns to work with students, parents and staff with a new found knowledge of diversity learned by attending lectures by scholars in various diversity topics and engaging in dialogue with principals about diversity topics. Principal preparation faculty realized the importance of selecting engaging presenters to encourage interns to embrace learning about a topic and the need for continual learning about diversity issues that affect the university's service region.

Introduction

The job of today's school principal is increasingly challenging. School leaders are tasked with improving student achievement for *all* students, rethinking how their schools are organized to promote teaching and learning, expanding the expectations held by all those within the building, and ensuring that policies and practices support student progress for all students (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). Research suggests that principals' beliefs form the basis for their perceptions, judgments, expectations and their practice (Brown, 2004). In order for them to serve increasingly diverse students, staff and communities, principals need to be culturally aware and responsive; they need to develop the beliefs and capabilities to lead all stakeholders effectively and positively (Gao & Mager, 2011).

Principals generally obtain a master of school administration degree to develop their leadership skills increasingly in programs with a commitment to diversity (Howard, 2006; Howard, 2010). It is becoming imperative that universities establish exemplary preparation programs that cultivate principals who feel prepared and who demonstrate competency in those practices associated with strong leadership that can create schools where all students, including the economically, racially and ethnically diverse ones, can be successful (Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, LaPointe, & Orr, 2010; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). The purpose of this paper is to examine how one principal preparation program was modified to better prepare candidates to communicate, interact, and work positively with individuals from diverse cultural groups.

Literature Review

Preparing Principals: Cultural Competence

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandated that schools be responsible for meeting learning standards for *all* students; disaggregated data is used to prove this point. As increasingly diverse students populate classrooms, the pressure to increase the achievement of all of these students' demands principals use effective methods, including supporting and developing effective teachers and implementing valuable organizational processes (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005). Schools must educate students who vary in race and ethnicity, language, cultural background, religion, socio-economic status, sexual orientation and abilities. Schools must create environments that welcome and support *all* students irrespective of their differences (Heraldo, Brown, & Forde, 2007). At the same time, while student populations are increasingly diverse, teacher populations are increasingly homogeneous – white, middle class and cloistered away from the communities in which they teach (Feistritzer, 2011; Howard, 2006). Teachers often must meet the challenge to educate students whose community members they may never have met; that they may know little about; and whose race and ethnicity, culture and social backgrounds are significant contributors to the kinds of students they are and the ways in which they learn. In order for principals to support teachers they may need to help develop teachers' understanding, positive beliefs and expectations about their students, communities and school families.

Principals are also a key to the required restructuring and rethinking that schools must undergo (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). In order for principals to lead this effort they must be made aware of diversity (Howard, 2006), must come to understand the urgency of becoming culturally competent (Samuels, 2014), and must be critically reflective in how they will do this

(Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Wisniewski, 2015). McKenzie's and Scheurich's (2004) research focuses on barriers principals face in developing schools that ensure quality learning for all students, including patterns in their own thinking and behavior that act as traps for creating equitable schools for diverse students. In their research they find that the onus of developing school leaders who can be reflective and capable of leading school reform towards equity, is on universities that prepare future principals. Universities are tasked with helping future principals understand and recognize equity traps and the kinds of deficit thinking that can be incessant in the lives of the most vulnerable children. Principals must then learn to recognize these traps in themselves before they can be effective in their schools. University preparation programs can advance this process and provide workable and proven ways to reshape deficit thinking thereby removing equity traps so that schools can be fair for all children (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004).

Preparing Principals: An Internship Model

One of the ways that has been researched and proven effective for university principal preparation programs is a well-designed and supervised internship (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010). Internships have the potential to link theoretical understanding of diversity with practical school experiences (Wilmore & Bratlien, 2005). When principal interns are reflective about the way that their classroom learning informs their leadership skills, they can work through equity traps that they encounter. Even when principal interns are unable to make the changes they understand are necessary, the process helps them to consider ways in which they will address these traps once they are working principals.

Cross disciplinary studies on experiential learning show that exposure to concrete elements of real-world practice can increase a leader's ability to contemplate, analyze, and systematically plan strategies for action (Butler, 2008). Internships provide authentic experiences to bridge the gap between theory and practice when students work in schools addressing daily school issues with the support of a school based supervisor (Cunningham, 2007). This is especially true for principal interns who may not have had experience with diversity.

In this era of accountability for all students, principal interns need to learn to not only manage a school but also to transform it. To be agents of change, principal preparation programs need to provide interns with an internship experience that is broad, varied and authentic in the areas of instructional leadership, school improvement and student achievement (Anast-May, Buckner, & Greer, 2011; Cunningham & Sherman, 2008). These experiences must include professional mentor principals who can help transition the intern from classroom teacher to school leader. Good mentors provide feedback on a day-to-day basis, structure opportunities for interns to problem solve important school issues and help interns develop personal beliefs that will drive their leadership (Gray & SREB Team, 2007).

A robust internship that spans an academic school year experience is essential to principal preparation because students get to learn extensive cultural aspects of school leadership. In addition to experiencing varied situations, the students have the opportunity to build relationships over time, which is helpful in implementing change. Gray (2001) a principal intern wrote about her robust internship experiences and strongly suggested that integrating the intern into the school is an essential component when preparing schools for the intern. The mentoring principal and the intern should develop a relationship and in turn build relationships with other members in the building. It is important that interns meet the other team members and

get to know them on a professional and personal level. As a result of building these relationships the staff is more likely to view the intern as a leader in the building.

In many principal preparation programs interns are provided a mentor to serve as a guide in the process of becoming an effective administrator (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Gray & SREB Team, 2007). Well-designed programs include extensive mentored internships that integrate theory and practice and progressively develop administrative competencies through a range of practical experiences (Ringler, Rouse, & St. Clair, 2012; Risen & Tripses, 2008). The internship phase of educational leadership preparation programs should provide the core of the experience for graduate students, providing students with opportunities to serve as apprentice administrators and solve real school problems (Pounder, Reitzug, & Young, 2002).

Preparing Principals: A Professional Development Model

Effective professional development should be ongoing so that the learning may be transferred into practice (Joyce & Showers, 2002; Zepeda, Parylo, & Bengtson, 2014). Through professional development, teachers and principals continue improving their knowledge and skills and keep abreast of the research and best practices in education. The Learning Forward Association, formerly known as The National Staff Development Council, developed standards to identify effective professional development (Learning Forward Association, 2014). These professional development standards are based on research that provides a framework that focuses on engaging educators in their own learning. These standards outline the importance of engaging in ongoing meaningful learning intertwined with specific contexts. More detailed information on the Standards for Professional Learning can be accessed at the Professional Learning website (Learning Forward Association, 2014) http://www.learningforward.org/standards/standards.cfm.

Standards for professional development apply to principals as well. Principal preparation programs should incorporate research-based professional development processes to impact interns' leadership skills. Joyce's and Showers' (2002) seminal research indicates that follow up processes such as coaching, study groups, or peer observations enable adults to acquire new knowledge and skills and to transfer that knowledge and those skills to active practice. A principal preparation program accomplishes the follow up processes by incorporating coaching, study groups, and observation in the entire program's coursework, but especially in the internships and field experiences (Orr & Barber, 2005). To implement this principle, principal preparation programs should facilitate learning situations that integrate new ideas into existing knowledge. Secondly, it is important that principal preparation programs assess specific needs of individuals and groups and address the needs of the learners (Joyce & Showers, 2002). To do so, principal preparation programs should facilitate activities that build success incrementally and helped learners become more effective and competent over time. Finally, principal preparation programs must involve learners in situations that are practical and relevant. To achieve this, research suggests that applying the new learning to the context in which the adult works is beneficial (Tennant & Pogson, 1995).

According to Learning Forward Association (2014) there are three essential prongs to professional development: content, context, and process. Together these help ensure meaningful learning of concepts and skills for educators. The content of any professional development should be research-based and appropriate to promote educators' learning. Delivering content alone, devoid of understanding the context, undermines the relevancy to the audience. The context refers to creating a learning environment that is relevant and more likely to be conducive

to learning. In addition, context addresses the audience's learning needs by incorporating examples and strategies that are germane to a specific site. Finally, the process of a professional development from introduction to follow up should focus on learning outcomes, including an evaluation of its effectiveness.

Preparing Principals: Framework for Evaluating Professional Development

Before any professional development is initiated, it is essential to plan for the intended outcomes and the evaluation of the effectiveness of these outcomes. Thomas Guskey (2000) proposes a framework for evaluating professional development for K-12 educators that assesses and evaluates five different levels; initial training; participant learning; organizational support; implementation of new learning; and finally impact on K-12 student learning outcomes. He further recommends that the levels be used for planning professional development and thus consider which assessment data will be collected for evaluation at each of the five critical levels.

Guskey's (2000) framework for evaluating professional development presents five levels that build on each other; consequently success at level one is requisite for success at higher levels. The first level of assessment looks at the participants' reactions to the professional development experience. This level determines participants' initial satisfaction with their professional development and provides data to determine not only how to improve this professional development but also indicates participants' willingness to continue on this learning path. The second level of assessment determines what participants learned from professional development. The second level focuses on measuring the knowledge and skills participants gained. Data obtained to evaluate this level may be used to improve the content, format, and organization of a professional development.

This third level of evaluation focuses on the organization and its support of the professional development opportunity. At this level, the assessment determines if the professional development promoted changes compatible with the mission of the school or district. The data gathered at this level is used to document and improve organizational support and to inform future change efforts. The fourth level of assessment determines both degree and quality of implementation of the new knowledge and skills. Sufficient time must pass to allow participants to adapt the new ideas and practices to their own setting. The fifth level of assessment measures the effect of a professional development on student learning (Guskey, 2000). This final level of assessment is complex because there are many external factors that affect student learning in addition to teacher instruction. Researchers are not able to determine a direct link between teacher professional development and their students' learning outcomes. Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, and Shapley (2007) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis analysis of 1,343 studies focused on kindergarten through high school between 1986 and 2003 and only nine studies met the criteria for credible evidence set by the *What Works Clearinghouse*, a U.S. Department of Education (2013) resource that provides educators with scientific evidence about professional development programs that affect student learning.

The Context of This Study: Focusing on Diversity during the Internship

The principal preparation program at East Carolina University (ECU) is structured to provide students with key features of exemplary programs. Programs differ in emphasis, however, important features are replicated in myriad programs: recruitment and selection of teacher-

leaders; focus on instructional leadership and school improvement; integration of coursework and fieldwork; cohort models; and robust internships (Anast-May et al., 2011; Cunningham, 2007; Davis et al., 2005). ECU is developing an MSA program that comprises many of these features including a robust internship that requires candidates to complete one thousand hours of field experiences working with licensed and practicing school principals. Due to the intensity of the internship requirement, school district leaders and ECU faculty communicate continually about regional needs and interns' learning experiences. Through this ongoing dialogue it became clear to school leaders and university faculty that changing demographics are reshaping many schools in North Carolina and it is requisite that school leadership be prepared to work with increased diversity in staff and students. As a result, ECU enhanced the internship by adding a focus on diversity to help interns understand how the changes in race, ethnicity, religion and language in eastern North Carolina affects the way school leaders must work. This study explores ECU's emphasis on cultural diversity through the use of a monthly diversity seminar conducted during the internship year and its effect on principal candidates' learning and skills.

Methodology

Design of Study

In this study, professional development about diversity topics was included on a monthly basis at internship seminars, after which interns focused on each month's topic while completing their internship experiences at their various schools. At the end of each month, interns critically reflected (Wisniewski, 2015) on their learning about the diversity topic of the month. This process was designed for interns to have the opportunity to learn one diversity topic at a time and to be critically observant of how this newfound knowledge of diversity manifested itself at their internship site. For this reason, it was important to evaluate principal interns' learning about each diversity topic.

The overall research question that guided this study was: Did the addition of diversity topics to the internship have an influence on students' leadership skills? This research question was studied by using the first two levels of Guskey's (2000) framework for evaluating professional development: assessing the principal interns' satisfaction with the monthly professional development activities and principal interns' perceptions of how prepared they were to communicate, interact, and work positively with individuals from diverse cultural groups.

Analysis of participants' reactions to the monthly lecture on diversity and its lecturer were defined by Guskey's (2000) in the first level in his framework for evaluating professional development. Data were gathered through questionnaires given at the end of each month's training session (see Appendix A). These critical reflections were analyzed to determine initial satisfaction with the professional development experience. The information gathered was used to improve program design and delivery of professional development (Guskey, 2000).

Analysis of participants' perceived learning outcomes on diversity were defined by Guskey's (2000) in the second level in his framework for evaluating professional development. Data were gathered from a written reflection document (see Appendix B) that elicited participants' perceived learning about diversity. The final reflection asked students to rate presenters, presentations, and reflect on the impact of the topics on their learning and leadership skills. Data that were gathered were used to demonstrate the overall impact of the monthly diversity seminars.

For this study, the sample included all principal candidates (n=62) completing their 2012-2013 internship; 58 students completed the final reflection by the required due date for a response rate of 82%. The remaining 4 students' reflections were submitted past the due date for various reasons and therefore were not included in this study.

Data Analysis

A qualitative analysis was conducted on written monthly reflections and a final overall reflection using a grounded theory approach to determine patterns of responses (Glasser & Strauss, 1967). When reviewing responses the researchers read all the documents first to determine general themes that emerged by diversity topic. Researchers then read the written responses for a second time and coded the broader feedback into several themes within diversity topics. Additional readings focused coding on developing themes by candidates' reactions to the presenter of each diversity topic.

Limits of the Study

This study is delimited by several factors. First, the data only represents intern perceptions of the first year of implementation of this program. The findings of the program were used for program improvements and since we continue to collect data it will eventually allow for longitudinal analysis of impact. Second, the results are limited to the context of predominately rural eastern North Carolina and therefore the findings cannot be generalized, but must be contextualized to other locations. Finally, there is a need to gather additional quantitative data that informs of interns' initial and final self-assessments to determine changes in their sense of efficacy and beliefs about cultural competency.

Findings

All interns commented on the overall value of the seminars and all recommended continuation of the program based on four themes. Sixty percent (n=35) of interns stated that the seminars helped them be more open minded and accepting of diversity. Seventy percent (n=40) also became aware of the dimensions of diversity found in their school community. Sixty-two percent (n=36) learned strategies for helping K-12 students embrace their own diversity. Finally, although there were only 14 comments (24%), the topic of poverty was considered the most immediately applicable seminar among respondents because interns recognized the relevance of this topic to their own school community and learning how to address the needs of children in poverty would significantly impact their school culture and student learning.

Initial Satisfaction with Seminar

Candidates ranked seminar diversity topics and reflected on their satisfaction with each (see Table 1 for rankings). Candidates' satisfaction often reflected their opinion of the presentation or their own position on the content presented. Principal candidates were explicitly asked which topic challenged their prevailing beliefs the most. In addition, implicit in their ranking of topics from most to least useful is that those topics that they considered least useful were the ones that they considered to be the most controversial. The most common response was that the seminar

Table 1
Ranking

Diversity Topics	Avg. Topic Rank Score 5 - Most beneficial to 1 - least beneficial	Presenter	Avg. Presenter Rating 3 - "excellent presenter"-to 1 - "not so great presenter"
Teaching Children of Poverty	4.2	Francis Marion University Professor and Director of the Center for Children of Poverty. Center provides professional development for teachers. Presenter utilized visuals and videos, facilitated group discussions, and varied presentations to include lecture and discussions.	2.9
Dialects & Linguistic Diversity	3.2	ECU Linguistics Instructor. Professional developer of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Model (SIOP). Presenter utilized visuals and videos, facilitated group discussions, and varied presentations to include lecture and discussions.	2.9
Cultural Diversity	2.7	ECU professor of Sociology. Professor identified with Native American heritage. Presenter lectured and shared personal stories.	2.4
Gender and Sexual Orientation	2.6	ECU Directors of LGBT Resource office. Presenter lectured about LGBT topics relative to undergraduates at the university who are graduates of local public schools. She also explained resources available at the university.	2.4 (presenter1) 2.3(presenter2)
Religious Diversity	2.5	ECU professor of religious study. Lectured about the various religious groups in eastern North Carolina. Presented lecture and shared research study and results.	1.9

on gender and sexual orientation was the most exacting because it disrupted candidates' long-standing religious traditions and beliefs. One student who lives in a small, rural and conservative town struggled with the concepts presented in the sexual orientation seminar. "The topic of gender and sexual orientation was the most challenging for me because I was raised to believe that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) are not the norm and people in my community tend to frown upon people living with gender and sexual orientation that is

different." While students may have respected the presenter of this topic they were uncomfortable with the content. One intern affirmed, "This is a topic that is scary to a lot of educational professionals. I feel this is a very important topic." Another student mentioned his conflicting personal and professional views, "I would have to say the LGBT were the most challenging. I have mixed feelings when dealing with this group of people. I personally think it's wrong for this type of behavior to be allowed on school property. I feel at times that I am forcing my beliefs on those who think differently. But at the same time, I correct heterosexual conduct also." Another student expressed the very personal and deep-rooted nature of the topic:

> "I will have to admit that the one that challenged me the most was the Gender and Sexual Orientation. I think the root of this is due to my own background of being raised in a Southern Baptist home. I was always taught that this was an abomination to God and against the bible. However, I also always thought of it as an "adult" choice. I never imagined how many young students are struggling with their identity on a daily basis and how that affects their self-esteem. I was saddened to hear of the cases of bullying and eventual suicide. As irony would have it, I just found out today that one of my Navy buddies committed suicide last night. There was a group of us that were very close when we were activated as a result of 9/11. He had just found out that he was HIV positive on Friday and killed himself on Sunday. I am saddened that he did not feel like he could have confided in me. I truly think it was because he knew my religious beliefs and did not think I would accept him the way he was. That doesn't say a lot for me as a friend and I definitely have regrets. However, as an administrator, I know I must put my own personal beliefs aside. I will make sure I treat those students NO differently, and provide the same support, protection, and compassion to them that I would any other student."

North Carolina is conservative when it comes to LGBT issues and principal candidates rated this seminar comparatively poorly; some students suggested limiting or reducing the seminar. However, LGBT prominence and issues are increasingly visible, relevant and important for school leadership. As one intern stated,

> "I think the one-diversity topic that challenged me the most was the discussions from the ladies on LGBT in schools. As an elementary teacher, and even as an eastern North Carolinian, my exposure to these groups is limited. As an administrator I'm going to have to make sure to pay attention to these issues in my school and have good research based solution when the problems arise. Usually, these students are more subjected to bullying and I have to be prepared to handle these incidences…"

The seminar on religious diversity taxed students hand in glove with the LGBT presentation. A 2012 Gallup poll revealed that nearly 70% of Americans are very or moderately religious (Newport, 2012). In North Carolina that number is closer to 80% (Pew Research Center, 2015). At the same time, interns realized that their religious understanding was limited to a narrow definition of Christianity and this caused them some tension and opened up areas for potential misconceptions in schools where students are likely from varied religious and non-religious backgrounds. One intern aptly expressed this tension:

> "The most challenging topic for me was the LGBT topic. This topic goes against all of my religious values and beliefs. My religion does not accept LGBT values

and beliefs and it is difficult to treat everyone the same. But, regardless of my personal beliefs, I must recognize all people as the same and all religions and beliefs as the same."

Interns' Perception of the Impact of Topics on Their Learning and Leadership

Interns indicated that they learned strategies to help students embrace their diversity and be successful in schools and to help staff expand their awareness. Candidates went beyond analyzing their school community through the lens of diversity and actually implemented change strategies. They implemented these in different ways depending on their building needs and instructional contexts and hoped that by trying new things they could make an impact on their school community. One intern indicated that he sought to share his new understanding with educators at his school in order that pedagogy could be influenced

> "With each topic, I was searching for ways to share with staff members at my school. This helped me to apply what was learned in the workshop and pass the teachings from the presentation with others. Hopefully, this will cause a chain reaction of developing more "teacher thinkers" in the school."

Another candidate described how he looks at instructional strategies differently as a result of the seminars and what he has done in an effort to elicit instructional change at his school.

> "The poverty lecture influenced my leadership skills the most because I now focus on looking for those 20 strategies in classrooms. I sent them to all the teachers and explained that they were things I should always see because they are best practices. My thinking on what is "good instruction" has been influenced by those strategies."

One candidate, who works in a small rural elementary school, shared that when she spoke with parents of children who struggled in reading, she was disappointed because parents often were silent and accepting of her comments, yet she did not see changes in their student's reading habits. She explained specific changes she has made to her communication style in order to increase understanding among her varied audiences.

> "The diversity topic that influenced my leadership skills the most was the dialect and linguistics topic. I realize that you have to talk with your audience and speak in a manner in which they can understand. For example, when talking with some parents, I don't use acronyms or educational jargon without explaining what it means and breaking it down to them so they can understand. This is very important in administration because you have to be able to get your point across without being patronizing or condescending."

This citation captures the intended effect of this diversity focus for the final year of the principal internship.

> 'Prior to the presentation of these topics, I would have said that I was not a prejudice person and did not reinforce common stereotypes; unfortunately I discovered that this was not true. Through these discussions and the research that I conducted, I was forced to confront many of the stereotypes that I had. Although this was difficult, I feel that recognizing these issues will make me a better administrator because I will be more informed and more accepting of individual differences (of students, parents and staff). I will also be less likely to

        inadvertently say something related to one of the diversity topics that others may
        find offensive because I have had to look at issues from all sides."

Diversity topics either simmered with interns for a time or were immediately applied in their schools. Depending on their students', staff and communities' needs, interns reconsidered their beliefs and expectations and applied new strategies.

Conclusion

Principal's self-efficacy beliefs determine to a large extent whether they will implement the diversity concepts they are learning (Siwatu, 2009). ECU's diversity seminars require candidates to: be keenly aware of each diversity theme manifest in their schools; deliberate; implement strategies, or determine how they might implement them if they were in charge, pinpoint key principles in their schools; and purposefully and critically reflect on their experience. Students practice and they appraise their understanding and application of each month's topic thereby allowing them to build their sense of efficacy, while they have the opportunity to garner support from university supervisors and classmates.

      The seminar lasts a school year and therefore allows diversity topics to be iterative; students continue to reflect on themes as they transpire in schools and university supervisors can continue to support and instruct candidates in their self-development process. Providing time for students to reflect and look for specific instances of each topic in their schools, and then providing time during the seminar for students to discuss these instances in smaller groups, enables future leaders to envision ways to make changes now or when they have their own schools. Diversity awareness progresses through stages (Cruz, Ellerbrock, Vasquez, & Howes, 2014; Samuels, 2014) and students vary in the ways and rates at which they progress in their understanding. Structuring a program with sufficient time to permit development is fundamental if change in behavior is a goal.

      Principal interns are required to conduct various needs assessments at their field placements. Collecting and examining data is a critical step as candidates learn to recognize inequities and develop approaches for serving in their communities. Seminars are most relevant to students when they can directly observe diversity topics and implement strategies for improvement.

      Furthermore, seminar presenters matter a great deal and may determine how well candidates will internalize topics. While university financial resources are at a premium and often constrain options for selecting presenters, there are many local professionals who are willing, passionate and able to address issues of diversity. It is critical to find ones who can engage and connect their topic to the interns. Obtaining student feedback is an important way to continuously improve seminar presentations. At the same time, university supervisors play a vital role in the diversity development of their students as they guide discussions and respond to reflections. It is critical that these supervisors have expertise, competence and see the urgency in developing culturally responsiveness interns.

      Finally, as we mentioned, American teachers consist primarily of White middle class females and while ECU's principal preparation program includes people of color, many of the educators have had few interactions or little experience with people who are not of their ethnic and racial or cultural background. Principal interns often live in isolation from their students, which means that preparation programs must recognize this disconnect and consider how it

affects student achievement (Wood, 2009). The diversity seminar is one way that ECU attempts to redress this issue.

Recommendations and Implications

In an effort to introduce future leaders to relevant and critical diversity themes East Carolina University implemented a seminar that currently serves as an introduction and awareness of the issues germane to each theme. While this is a sound beginning, more is needed. Principal candidates are sometimes unaware of their own or others' biases. Once they become more aware, they need assistance in developing their self-awareness as they seek for meaningful ways to apply culturally relevant practices in their leadership. The seminar, and the presenters must advocate for this kind of change.

Candidates must also be provided examples of culturally responsive mentor principals and university supervisors who successfully work with diverse populations. Students need to engage with leaders who are committed to culturally responsive education and addressing inequities in schools because they are often influenced by them (Wood, 2009). "Professors with relevant experiences with diversity have a wealth of knowledge, examples and anecdotes" (Siwatu, 2009, p. 127). When they share these, it helps future principals understand cultural responsiveness better and informs candidates how to handle the complexities of leading in diverse learning communities. Program coordinators must be able to use reliable instruments to accurately assess mentors' and supervisors' commitment to diversity and inequity (Samuels, 2014).

At the same time, it may be necessary for universities to provide professional development to mentors and/or supervisors. Researchers affirm that it is difficult to make substantive changes to a principal preparation program if faculty and mentors do not prescribe to and endorse these changes (Wood, 2009). Part of these changes would require leaders to examine their own beliefs about diversity -- their own values, assumptions, stereotypes, bias and experiences (Samuels, 2014). Professional development can facilitate this process thus enabling principal candidates to have cultural knowledge be an integral part of their internship experience (Lindsey, Martinez, & Lindsey, 2007).

Furthermore, cultural competency requires that curriculum throughout the MSA be infused with diversity themes so that candidates understand their ubiquitous nature and the need for competent and committed leadership to advocate for them. When diversity topics are separated out of the coursework, it can lead students to view difference as disconnected from leaders' other work.

Finally, the context of this study is an important factor in the potential development of other principal programs. This study took place primarily in rural Eastern North Carolina. Consequently the recommendations and intern responses is particular to this area. At the same time, diversity is not a regional phenomenon; it is transforming cities and towns throughout the United States. And equally important, conversations about equity and diversity need to take place even in homogenous communities. Context is one of the 3 prongs in meaningful professional development and we recommend that university programs carefully examine their contexts as they design principal preparation programs with diversity in mind.

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APPENDIX A: MONTHLY DIVERSITY REFLECTION

Diversity topic of the month: _____ Month: _____
School:_____District: _____
MSA student's name:_____ Principal's name: _____
University Professor/ Supervisor: _____

1. Briefly summarize the diversity topic for the month and tell what you personally learned about the topic (1-2 paragraphs)**:**

 2. Briefly describe your interactions with various cultural groups related to the topic of the month by describing what you saw, what you heard, and what you learned this month at your school site about this topic (1-2 paragraphs): Include how it relates to one or more of the following:

- Organization of the school—This includes the administrative structure and the way it relates to diversity, and the use of physical space in planning schools and arranging classrooms.
- School policies and procedures—This refers to those policies and practices that impact on the delivery of services to students from diverse backgrounds.
- Community involvement—This is concerned with the institutional approach to community involvement in which families and communities are expected to find ways to become involved in the school, rather than the school seeking connections with families and communities.

3. Briefly describe how, if you were the principal, you would address the issue to encourage cultural diversity in your school. (1-2 paragraphs). Explain in some detail strategies you would use. Elaborate on one or more of the strategies below:

- Examine how stereotypes are developed, barriers created, and misunderstandings magnified.
- Allow staff and students to examine their own bias and focus on how they perceive differences.
- Build awareness of how cultural differences can profoundly impact others.
- Motivate staff and students to change their behavior and attitude toward others.

APPENDIX B: FINAL DIVERSITY REFLECTION

Name: _____ Date: _____

After the seminar presentations, you were asked to be keenly aware of each diversity topic and write in depth reflections on the implications of the diversity topic on educational leadership. Now it is time to look back and do a final reflection on the impact of diversity on your practice.

Please respond to the following questions:
1. Reflect on the Diversity topics presented at the MSA internship seminars. Rank the topics from most beneficial to least beneficial. Rank the most beneficial=5 to least beneficial=1:
   ____ Teaching Children of Poverty
   ____ Dialects & Linguistic Diversity
   ____ Gender and Sexual Orientation
   ____ Religious Diversity
   ____ Cultural Diversity
   Comments: list pluses and deltas.
2. Reflect on the presenters of the diversity topics. Indicate for each presenter whether
   3 – Excellent presenter! Bring back for next year interns
   2- Great presenter but no need to bring back for next year interns
   1- Not so great presenter
   ____ Dr. AAA, Teaching Children of Poverty
   ____ Ms. BBB, Dialects & Linguistic Diversity
   ____ Dr. CCC, LGBT Diversity
   ____ Ms. DDD, LGBT Diversity
   ____ Dr. EEE, Religious Diversity
   ____ Dr. FFF, Cultural Diversity
   Comments: List pluses and deltas.
3. From all of the diversity topics discussed what did you learn?
4. What influenced your leadership skills the most? How did it influence your leadership skills?
5. Which of your diversity values or beliefs were the most challenged by any of the diversity topics? Why?