

**“THERE’S SOME GOOD KARMA UP IN HERE”:  
A CASE STUDY OF WHITE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN AN URBAN CONTEXT**

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As educators work to improve achievement within the current policy environment of accountability and "subgroups," their attention has been drawn to considerations of race, culture, and learning in schools. Yet few school leaders have the preparation or knowledge to assist teacher learning about these issues.

Theories of culturally relevant pedagogy focus on how teachers can teach subject matter in a culturally appropriate manner, and previous scholarship has considered culturally relevant pedagogy in relation to teaching and learning. This inquiry examines it in relation to leadership content knowledge. Critical race theory offers a lens through which to examine the relationship of beliefs and knowledge when considering race and racism in the American educational system and for further situating an examination of school leadership and cultural competency.

The research questions I address are:

1. What kind of perspective toward students is held by educators in the school? How do these perspectives connect with teaching, learning, and leadership?
2. How is culturally relevant pedagogy represented in the schools? How do school leaders foster or hinder CRP in their schools?

3. In which contexts and events in the practice of school leadership do issues of race, culture, and learning surface? How are the issues mediated by the principal and other school leaders?

This case study of three White principals reveals that they faced many issues of race, culture, and learning, yet tended to be colorblind and colormute. Even when they identified issues, they were reluctant to address them or without resources, thus ignoring situations that could have served as sites of teacher learning. Several White teachers held dynamic and nuanced asset perspectives toward children of color. New teachers in particular learn a “repertoire of racialized and ‘cultural’ comparisons” (Pollock, 2001) as a key component of belonging to their community, a repertoire that knowledgeable school leaders could begin to disrupt through efforts to assist teacher learning and development toward an asset perspective.

In addition, several teachers were trying to implement features of culturally relevant pedagogy, and one or two were seeking knowledge about issues of race and racism. An assistant principal who was African American assisted teacher learning about students’ funds of knowledge. Nevertheless, these efforts were not supported by the broader professional community or White school leadership.

This study may be useful to policy makers and professors of education in encouraging a reexamination of requirements for leadership preparation which currently lack an emphasis on culturally relevant leadership content knowledge or social justice. Leadership content knowledge that includes knowledge of culturally relevant pedagogy, particularly critical consciousness that problematized colorblind ideologies, could play a significant role in deepening teacher understanding of the relationship of race and culture to teaching and learning, and thus, in instructional improvement.

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### **The Education of a Poet**

Her pencil poised, she's ready to create,  
Then listens to her mind's perverse debate  
On whether what she does serves any use;  
And that is all she needs for an excuse  
To spend all afternoon and half the night  
Enjoying poems other people write.

Leslie Monsour (2000)

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## **1.0 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

Over one hundred years ago, W.E.B. DuBois (1903) predicted that issues of race and racism would be the dominant problem of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the US. After two and a half centuries of enslavement of African Americans, accepted systems of discrimination had become entrenched. Following much struggle, these visible systems were finally declared illegal in the courts. New legislation including the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the development of affirmative action policies promoted integration and the promise of equality.

At the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, however, there has been a reversal of many anti-discrimination policies. Racism, while deeply ingrained in the US, has become nearly invisible to policymakers and educators (Lopez, 2003; Moses, 2002). No Child Left Behind (2001) has focused the attention of policymakers and educators on reducing the so-called “achievement gap,” requiring districts to disaggregate standardized test data by “sub-groups.” The data clearly reveal that there continues to be a wide gap in academic performance between African American and Latino/a students on one hand, and Asian American and White students on the other. The former generally score at “basic” and “below basic” levels, the lowest categories on mandated state tests in reading and mathematics, whereas the majority of White and Asian American students is achieving at “proficient” or “advanced” levels (National Center for Education

Statistics, 2008). High school graduation rates and rates of college attendance of African American and Latino/a students remain disproportionately low, and school drop out rates remain disproportionately high (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008).

At the same time, the current and predicted demographics of teachers and school leaders contrast urban student demographics (US Census Bureau, 2001). Due to this demographic disparity, many students of color in urban districts are taught by teachers who do not look like them, in schools led by principals who do not look like them. In fact, there are only two large urban districts where the majority of teachers are African American (Hoffman, Llagas, & Snyder, 2003). If the majority of teachers and school leaders are White and the majority of students are black and Latino, there is the potential for cultural incongruence between educators and the students they teach. Cultural incongruence occurs when home cultures of students are ignored or devalued in schools. Most teachers admit that they do not feel prepared to teach students of color (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Clearly, policy makers, educators, and researchers must examine their practice and identify new and better ways of educating children of color. School leadership is being asked to play a pivotal role in this process. The purpose of this study is to raise the visibility of race and culture among educational leaders as they are being called upon to improve teacher practice.

In this study, I draw upon three literatures as the basis for the conceptual framework: culturally relevant pedagogy, instructional leadership, and critical race theory. This chapter serves as a brief introduction to the goals of my study of school leadership and selected concepts from these central discourses. As a theory of instruction that ties the home culture of students to learning in schools, culturally relevant pedagogy provides a critical perspective on the role of race and racism in schools (Ladson-Billings, 1995). My review of the leadership literature



emphasizes both the role of the school principal in fostering teacher learning in a sustained and meaningful way and also the knowledge a principal needs for this to happen (Nelson, 1998; Smylie & Hart, 1999; Stein & Nelson, 2003). Because my study may be seen as closely related to the theoretical literature on leadership for social justice, I include a brief examination of this concept. Lastly, I present critical race theory, or CRT (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lopez, 2003), as a lens through which to examine the relationship of beliefs and knowledge when considering race and racism in the American educational system and for further situating an examination of school leadership and cultural competency.

After briefly presenting the key concepts from the literature that will be developed in Chapter II, I define the problem that emerges. I then situate myself, briefly describing the evolution of my personal interest in the problem. Finally, I present the context and focus of the study and elaborate the possible ways in which this study will contribute to knowledge of culturally relevant school leadership.

## **1.2 MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY**

School children arrive at kindergarten not as “vessels to be filled” but rather as sentient beings who have been deeply immersed in a home culture for about five years. Culture refers to a “dynamic system of social values, cognitive codes, behavioral standards, worldviews, and beliefs used to give order and meaning to our own lives as well as the lives of others” (Gay, 2000, p.8). Different groups of people have differing cultural beliefs (Sunstein & Chiseri-Strater, 2002). If teachers are from a culture other than that of the child, there may be a disarticulation between the

education a child has received at home through cultural transmission, and the formal education that begins at school (Heath, 1978; McCarty, 2002; Spindler, 1997). As Spindler (1997) noted, “Conflicts ensue when the school and teachers are charged with responsibility for assimilating or acculturating their pupils to a set of norms for behavior and thought that are different from those learned at home and in the community” ( p. 101).

The multicultural education movement attempted to address these potential conflicts, placing home cultures and languages represented by students at the center of teaching and learning (Banks, 2002; Gay, 2000; McCarty, 2002). In spite of the prevalence of multicultural education as a part of teacher training and professional development (Sleeter, 1993), many educators maintain a cultural deficit perspective towards children in urban schools, blaming the child’s economic circumstances, or what they imagine to be uninterested parents, or other external causes for academic failure (Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Scheurich & Skrla, 2003).

While the substantial impact of such external circumstances cannot be dismissed in any consideration of academic success or failure, it diverts attention from a focus on instructional problems within school and demands a more nuanced analysis. I examine how a cultural deficit perspective runs counter to, and possibly undermines, efforts to identify new and better ways to educate children of color, and how such a perspective impairs instructional leadership.

Built upon educational anthropology, and in partial response to the widely held deficit perspective, a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy has emerged over the last decade. Culturally relevant pedagogy focuses on how teachers can teach subject matter in a culturally appropriate manner, and how their understanding of the historical legacy of racism is essential to this task. This approach to teaching and learning goes beyond multicultural education by simultaneously addressing student achievement and cultural identity while “developing critical

perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate” (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Referred to elsewhere in the literature as “culturally responsive,” “culturally competent,” or “culturally attuned” teaching (Gay, 2000; Hoskins, 1999; Nieto, 1996; Osborne, 1996), this theory considers the complexities of race and racism essential to any examination of teaching and learning, and, as this study contends, instructional leadership as well. While it would seem to hold enormous potential as a framework for instructional change, culturally relevant pedagogy has yet to receive widespread attention in schools of education. In the following section, I introduce some ways in which issues of race and racism are factors in schools, followed by a brief introduction to critical race theory.

### **1.3 COLORBLIND IDEOLOGY AND CRITICAL RACE THEORY**

Throughout this inquiry, I refer to beliefs based in racial differences that are largely unexamined in our public schools as “colorblind ideologies” (Lewis, 2001; Schofield, 1982). These beliefs may be expressed through a deficit perspective towards children or through an insistence that “I don’t see color/race.” Educators who claim they are colorblind deny that they consider race in their day-to-day work, claiming that all children are the same to them (Pollock, 2001). While White teachers and school leaders may feel that this stance expresses a lack of bias or racism, it implies a naturalization of the status quo. It may actually hinder learning about the salience of race and culture in schooling (Schofield, 1989) and serve as a barrier to the development of critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lewis, 2004). When White educators declare they are colorblind, they are in essence denying responsibility for examining their own whiteness and

privilege (Lewis, 2004), and the relationship of whiteness to the disproportionate failure of African American students.

Increasingly, scholars have begun applying critical race theory (CRT) (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) in the analysis of the American educational system (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lopez, 2003; Tate, 1997). CRT counters a tendency to ignore race as an issue in society, or to see racism as enacted uniquely through individual, overt acts of discrimination or violence (Delgado & Stefancic 2001; Lopez, 2003). I draw upon critical race theory in this study to consider the positionality of the participants as White leaders in urban settings and how their whiteness plays a role in their understanding of the relationship of race and culture to learning. The literature from critical whiteness studies offers additional perspectives for the examination of whiteness in our society and the privilege that accompanies it (Frankenberg, 2004). This study draws from this literature to explore instructional leadership in terms of the normalization of whiteness (McCarthy & Crichlow, 1993; Omi & Winant, 1993).

#### **1.4 TEACHER KNOWLEDGE**

In parallel to the multicultural education literature, a robust literature on the importance of teacher knowledge of subject matter has developed over the past twenty years (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Shulman, 1986; Shulman, 1987; Spillane, Diamond, Walker, Halverson, & Jita, 2001; Stein & D'Amico, 1999; Stodolsky, 1988). After being labeled the “missing paradigm” of research on teaching (Shulman, 1986), teachers’ knowledge of the subjects they teach has been shown to influence both what and how well they teach (Burch & Spillane, 2003) and also how they respond to attempts at school reform (Stodolsky & Grossman, 2000).

Recently, scholars in educational administration have extended research on subject matter knowledge, suggesting that subject matter knowledge has a role to play if school principals and other leaders are expected to exercise instructional leadership (Nelson, 1998; Spillane, 2005; Stein & Nelson, 2003).

While much of the work on teacher knowledge of subject matter has emerged from the field of mathematics education, this field has also been in the forefront of research relating subject matter to culture, providing some guidance to educators (Gutstein, 2005; Gutstein, Lipman, Hernandez, & de los Reyes, 1997; Sleeter, 1997; Tate, 1994). Scholars in literacy education have also begun to connect subject matter to culturally specific ways of knowing (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Godley, Carpenter, & Werner, 2007; Greene & Abt-Perkins, 2003; Lee, 2001; Stodolsky & Grossman, 2000). This emergent body of work in both math and literacy education juxtaposes subject matter and culturally relevant pedagogy as vital areas of focus in teacher education and professional development.

Teacher knowledge of race and racism is another important factor for school leaders to consider. Many educators may not interrogate their heritage, and they may lack an understanding of institutional racism, how it is reproduced within US schools, and their role in the process (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lopez, 2003). “Whiteness” and the privilege that accompanies it are taken for granted. In fact, “The White, male, heterosexual societal norm is privileged in such a way that its privilege is rendered invisible” (Grillo & Wildman, 2000, p. 650). In light of the demographic disparity between children and educators seen in most urban schools, scholars in teacher education have begun to address this “normalization” of whiteness within the teaching profession and the role it plays in teaching and learning (Cochran-Smith, 1995; Cochran-Smith, 2000; Delpit, 1988; Scheurich, 1993; Sleeter, 1993). My review of the literature summarizes

what is known about teachers' and leaders' understandings of racism and privilege, the processes of reproduction in schools, and the connection to learning and leadership.

Cultural competency is “knowledge of the cultural characteristics of different ethnic groups and of how culture affects teaching and learning, as well as pedagogical skills for translating this knowledge into new teaching-learning opportunities and experiences” (Gay, 2000, p. 29). This inquiry extends this definition to school leadership by examining the degree to which White principals emphasize cultural competency in their work with teachers.

## **1.5 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP**

The emergence of standards-based reforms in public education over the past fifteen years has a “simple logic: schools and school systems should be held accountable for their contributions to student learning” (Elmore, 2000, p. 4). Within this environment, conceptions of school leadership are being reconsidered and reframed (Elmore, 2000; Heck & Hallinger, 1999). As the role of school leaders is expanded to helping both students and teachers to learn, the problem of the achievement gap falls increasingly on the shoulders of the principal.

Current research in educational leadership emphasizes the improvement of instruction, acknowledging that such improvement is possible only “with dramatic changes in the way public schools define and practice leadership” (Elmore, 2000, p.4). Principals ideally fulfill the role of instructional leader with broad knowledge of different content areas and pedagogy as well as knowledge of school reform, to improve teaching and learning (Burch & Spillane, 2003; Fullan, 2001; Murphy & Datnow, 2003; Stein & Nelson, 2003). Within the current policy discourse, however, little attention has been given to what school leaders understand about the relationship

of race and culture to teaching and learning. The idea of culturally competent or culturally relevant leadership remains under-examined and under-theorized.

## **1.6 THE PROBLEM**

The importance of teacher beliefs and knowledge and what it means for a teacher to use culturally relevant pedagogy have been studied at the level of the classroom (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lee, 2003; Nieto, 1999), but thus far, there has been a paucity of literature connecting school leadership to cultural competency or attunement (Fullan, 1999; Lopez, 2003; Page, 2003; Scheurich & Skrla, 2003). Some attention has been given to moving beyond supervision and management toward instructional improvement as the focus of school leadership, and to leadership for social justice. Little emphasis has been placed on what school administrators know about race and culture, and their relationship to subject matter, teaching, and learning, and how, if at all, principals use such knowledge as they work with teachers toward school improvement.

As leaders of urban schools work to improve achievement in the current policy environment of accountability and “subgroups,” their attention is being drawn to racial disparity in achievement as never before. Yet little is known about how school leaders respond to these considerations in their day-to-day practice, or what resources, if any, they may draw upon to assist them. This study is designed to explore the relationship between educational leadership and cultural competency or attunement. It is an in-depth case study of three White principals of schools that serve African American children in two urban districts, and their understandings and constructions of race, and culture, and learning within their communities of professional practice.

The study also considers other formal and informal school leaders whose roles became apparent during field work. Finally, the study explores the role that school leadership plays in shaping teacher learning of culturally relevant pedagogy.

## **1.7 SITUATING MYSELF**

To situate myself and my interest in this subject, I include some autobiographical information here (Richardson, 1990; Sunstein & Chiseri-Strater, 2002). As a Peace Corps volunteer, I was sent as a teacher of English to Côte d'Ivoire in West Africa where I lived for 12 years. I became bilingual and bicultural, and soon, a mother of two sons who were also bilingual and bicultural. I returned permanently to the US in 1988 with my sons, aged 11 and 4, and settled in Ithaca, New York to teach ESOL in the public schools. I expected that a university town in the Northeast would be an accepting, bias-free home for my African American sons and me.

Within the first month of my older son starting 6<sup>th</sup> grade, I received a phone call at home on a Sunday night from his guidance counselor. Mr. Williams tried to convince me that my son should be moved from enriched math to average math. The math teacher had not complained, and my son was doing well in class. So, I objected. I thought it was curious but never looked at it through another perspective until six months later when the same guidance counselor told me that my son was a “borderline behavior problem.” This was a label that I took seriously, so I asked for dates and data, which I later found did not exist. Mr. Williams said, “Well, on our overnight field trip to the Catskills, your son was frustrated when he could not build a log bridge.” I asked if this was not a rather normal adolescent reaction, and I received a positive response. But then the guidance counselor said that he noticed that my son liked being in a



leadership role This is when alarms went off in my head. This White male was expressing discomfort with the idea that an African American male could aspire to leadership, and equating “borderline behavioral problems” with qualities of leadership in a child of color.

Thanks to African American colleagues/mentors/sisters of mine who told me to “show your face at that school,” I began to advocate for my sons and their right to an education built upon high expectations. I took a course called “Racism in American Society” at the Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell University. I became active in a community group, Parents of African and Latino Students at Ithaca High School, and served on the school district’s Multicultural Education Committee, the Affirmative Action Committee, and the Superintendent’s Advisory Committee on Academic Achievement. Until my younger son graduated from Ithaca High School in June 2002, challenging institutional racism in the public schools was a constant in my life. I saw the demotivation that resulted from low expectations and began to form an understanding of the ways in which racism manifests itself in the public schools.

As a White woman, I could address the lack of culturally responsive pedagogy that I witnessed in many White colleagues to a degree that my Black friends often could not. Discussions of race, culture, and learning, if they occur at all, are difficult and participants can become defensive. These colleagues seemed less guarded in asking me questions, or in exposing deficit perspectives they held since they may have assumed that I shared their questions and perspectives. White principals who have an understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy and have begun to interrogate their own privilege would be better positioned to engage teacher learning in the areas of race, culture, and learning than those who do not have such an understanding.

I continue to consider the relationship of institutional racism to educational reform efforts. When I first moved to a mid-Atlantic urban center in 2000, I spent four months substitute teaching in the city schools where I witnessed several startling racially charged incidents. I completed my principal certification courses without any focus on multicultural education, let alone culturally relevant pedagogy. For meaningful and sustainable reform to occur, with the elimination of overwhelming academic failure of Black and Latina/o children as its goal, teachers, educational leaders, professors, and policy makers cannot continue to be “colorblind” with the salience of race all around them.

## **1.8 CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATIONAL THEORY AND PRACTICE**

This study contributes to educational theory and practice in several ways. First, it contributes to multicultural education in general, and also to the body of knowledge in the field of educational leadership. There has been little investigation into the ways in which educational leaders perceive and understand the relationship of race and culture to learning in urban schools. Such research could lead to improved understanding among policy makers and practitioners as our student population becomes increasingly more diverse. This study broadens the understanding of what school leaders need to know in order to provide and sustain a successful learning environment for all children. In short, a focus on cultural competency of school principals would contribute to a reconceptualization of the work of educational leaders.

In the field of educational leadership, this study expands ideas of what principals need to know to be successful by connecting cultural competence and culturally responsive pedagogy with knowledge necessary for instructional leadership and its use in practice. As the role of

principal is being redefined to be that of instructional leader, the scope of what it means to know teaching and learning will be broadened. When we look at “how educational leaders can help both students and teachers to learn” (Stein & Spillane, 2005), the role of both students’ and teachers’ culture has to be considered. This study examines the role that whiteness and racial positionality may play in the day-to-day practice of three White principals.

Finally, I hope to contribute to the development of a theory of culturally responsive leadership. As such a theory develops, there are implications for educational leadership preparation as well. This study could serve to encourage policy makers and professors of educational leadership to reexamine requirements and the content of certification programs for prospective leaders, and ongoing professional development of practicing leaders.

## 2.0 CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is designed to explore the relationship of educational leadership and cultural competency within the current policy environment of the revised federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 2001, widely known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001). Through the NCLB requirement that schools, districts, and states disaggregate standardized test data by what the law refers to as “sub-groups” consisting of African American students, Latino students, and English language learners, among others, the policy has underscored what has been named as the “racial achievement gap.” Whether this new focus motivates new instructional responses to issues of race, culture, and learning, or encourages an entrenchment in the deficit perspective toward children, school leaders play a significant role. In schools where the majority of students are black and Latino, and the majority of teachers and school leaders are White, there is the potential for cultural incongruence between educators and the students they teach unless the educators understand culturally relevant instructional practice. Thus, I seek to understand ways in which White school principals and other school leaders encounter issues of race and culture as related to teaching and learning in their day-to-day practice. In this chapter, I draw upon three literatures to situate my proposed study within the broader scholarly discourse: culturally relevant pedagogy, instructional leadership, and teacher knowledge.

Throughout this review of the literature, and indeed this inquiry, I assume that school leadership is influential in contesting or maintaining beliefs that may prove detrimental to school reform. District and school leaders are key agents of change within a conceptualization of schools as places where everyone is reflective about teaching and learning, reflective about the relationship of race and culture to teaching and learning, and actively engaged in the construction of knowledge (Giles & Hargreaves, 2006). Knowledgeable and skilled school leadership is vital to reform efforts that position teaching and learning at the center. To assist teachers in developing new knowledge of subject matter and pedagogy, or culturally relevant pedagogy that is subject specific, school leaders develop their own expertise in these areas, and work to create a culture that supports teacher learning (Stein & Nelson, 2003). In fact, successful reforms reflect learning “up and down the line,” from students to teachers to school leaders to area superintendents and district leaders (Elmore & Burney, 1997; Hubbard, Mehan, & Stein, 2006; Stein, Hubbard, & Mehan, 2004).

The second major assumption that underlies this study, situated within the critical race paradigm, is that racism is an intractable part of American life and institutions (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Omi & Winant, 2001). This includes public schools where the achievement gap is seen as “a normal outcome of the racial structure of society” (Bonilla-Silva, 1997, p. 475).

My review of the literature begins with the history of multicultural education, an area of scholarship that precedes scholarship on culturally relevant pedagogy, and its strengths and limitations. In Section 2.1.2, I examine colorblind ideology in schools to highlight the importance of teacher beliefs about race and learning and to outline what the field knows about the relationship of such beliefs to teaching, learning, and leadership. Next, I review literature

that develops dimensions of culturally relevant pedagogy that are most directly linked to classroom teaching and learning of subject matter. After a review of scholarship on instructional leadership, and a brief discussion of the literature on leadership for social justice, I review what the field knows about leadership knowledge of subject matter, culture, and race and racism, and knowledge of connections to teacher and student learning. My review continues with a brief examination of what is known about professional development to consider contexts in which leadership may promote teacher learning. I conclude with a conceptual model that identifies the key constructs that guide my study and shows how these constructs relate to each other.

## **2.1 CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY: ANTECEDENTS AND DEVELOPMENT**

This review opens with an examination of the history of multicultural education and its limitations in Section 2.1.1. Next, in Section 2.1.2, I present literature on colorblind ideologies in schools, ideologies that are often expressed through deficit perspectives toward children of color and ignore children's *funds of knowledge* (Moll, Tapia, & Whitmore, 1993). In Section 2.1.3, I review literature that contributes to an understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy.

### **2.1.1 The History of Multicultural Education**

Evolving from the early ethnic studies movement at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the intergroup education movement, and the ethnic studies movement of the 1960s and 1970s,

multicultural education developed when educators who were interested in the history and culture of ethnic minority groups began to include “concepts, information, and theories from ethnic studies into the school and teacher-education curricula” (Banks, 2002). Multicultural education has been defined as

an idea, an educational reform movement, and a process whose major goal has been to change the structure of educational institutions so that male and female students, exceptional students, and students who are members of diverse racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups will have an equal chance to achieve academically in school. (Banks & Banks, 2001, p.1).

One of the early goals of multicultural education was to integrate curriculum with ethnic content, an area that produced rich scholarship in the latter part of the 20th century (Banks, 2004; Bernal, 1987; Takaki, 1987). In its early implementation in schools, the focus of multicultural education was not subject matter specific. Looking broadly at curriculum, Banks and Banks (2001) identified four approaches to reform: the contributions approach, the additive approach, the transformation approach, and the social action approach. In the contributions approach, teachers focus on hero, heroines, and holidays, while in the additive approach, some ethnic content or themes are added to the existing curriculum. Within the transformation approach, teachers begin to modify the structure of the curriculum to “enable students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspective of various ethnic and cultural groups” (Banks, 2004, p. 15). Finally, as the latter approach extends into the social action approach, students are encouraged to “make decisions on important social issues and take actions to help solve them” (Banks, 2004, p. 15).

Most attempts at reforming curriculum to become multicultural were concentrated at the more superficial levels that is, the contributions approach or the additive approach (Sleeter, 1993). Moreover, the curriculum goals of multicultural education were not explicitly related to subject matter. They remained general except in social studies which could easily open up to content integration by including historical accounts of people of color and women, or the study of various religions, for example. Indeed, even a cursory review of the literature on multicultural education reveals that many of the most prolific writers are former educators in social studies, a subject matter that is receptive to this primary goal (Banks & Banks, 2001).

There are other limitations of multicultural education as well. Even with social studies open to change, multicultural education failed to contextualize schools and “classrooms within an analysis of racism” (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004), thus neglecting issues of power and social reproduction in schools.

Another limitation of multicultural education is that it has been perceived by educators in diffuse ways, with little association to school improvement efforts in the minds of teachers, and even less association with culturally relevant teaching and learning of subject matter. Teachers have not seen multicultural education as directed at their instructional practice. In a study of teachers who had participated in professional development in multicultural education, Sleeter (1992) found that the majority of teachers viewed it to be either irrelevant to their work or directed more at helping students get along with each other than toward the improvement of instruction. Other teachers saw it as beneficial to students’ self-esteem. Only a few held more complex views, and just one teacher in the study connected multicultural education to social activism (Sleeter, 1992). Multicultural education took on different meanings to different people.



“Colorblind” ideologies persisted among educators in the public schools, and are discussed in the following section.

### **2.1.2 Colorblind Ideologies in Schools**

Just as children bring their cultural and racial heritage into school, so too do teachers and principals. But many White educators do not interrogate their heritage, and may lack an understanding of institutional racism, how it is reproduced within US schools, and what their role is in the process (Pollock, 2001; Sleeter, 1993). I have chosen to focus on White educators in my inquiry because they are the most numerous, even in urban settings, and most likely to declare themselves “colorblind” while viewing race as a taboo subject (Cochran-Smith, 1995; Pollock, 2001). Teacher and administrator beliefs based in racial differences may be expressed through a deficit perspective towards children, through an insistence on colorblindness, or simply through silence, and are largely unexamined in public schools (Delpit, 1995). In this section, I review literature on the deficit and asset perspectives and the impact of colorblind ideologies on teaching and learning in schools.

#### **2.1.2.1 Deficit and Asset Perspectives**

While multicultural education has attempted to place home cultures and languages of students at the center of teaching (Banks, 2004; Cummins, 1996; McCarty, 2002), many educators continue to maintain a deficit perspective towards children in urban districts (Banks, 2004; Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Scheurich & Skrla, 2003). In education, it was first referred to as the “cultural deprivation” paradigm, and more recently, the “at risk” paradigm, promoting the belief that schools must help low-income or African American children “overcome the deficits that result

from their early family and community experience” (Banks, 2004, p. 18). Banks links this engrained paradigm to social science research in the 1960s that attempted to explain the behavior and values of low-income populations, or what was called the *culture of poverty* (p. 18), while others trace its roots further back in history to the period of enslavement (Ringer, 1983).

When teachers and school leaders believe that students come to them with deficits rather than assets from their home culture, there are implications for teaching and learning. Teachers who subscribe to a deficit perspective do not recognize knowledge that children possess before they even set foot in school (Heath, 1997; Moll et al., 1993). Moll et al. (1993) use the term *funds of knowledge* to describe “historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge or skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being” (p. 133). Households possess many resources, both cultural and cognitive, that offer the potential to be useful in teaching and learning in schools (p. 134). Without understanding children’s funds of knowledge, teachers may hold low expectations for the students they teach, and be less motivated to explore instructional innovations with them (Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2003; Stodolsky & Grossman, 2000).

Heath’s (1997) research on narrative skills at home and school stands in contrast to a deficit notion toward “others,” and shifts from deficit rhetoric toward an understanding of *ways of taking meaning* from the environment observed in children of different racial and cultural backgrounds. Families use language with children in different ways, including ways of labeling objects, and respond to children’s utterances in different ways. These differences have implications for the transition to school and children’s participation in classroom discourse. Classroom discourse, with its emphasis in early literacy development on *what-explanations*, tends to favor children of the White, middle-class community Heath refers to as *Maintown*.

Children are accustomed to adults asking them questions to which the adults already know the answer. In response to children's answers to "What is X?" during a bedtime story, Maintown parents socialize children into the "initiate-reply-evaluate" pattern that has long dominated classroom discourse (Mehan, 1979).

Yet, as Heath points out, "mainstream children can benefit from early exposure to Trackton's creative, highly analogical styles of telling stories and giving explanation" (p. 186) and a wider perspective of narrative forms. Children respond to many analogical questions about their environment, such as "What's that like?" with non-specific comparisons of objects or people (p. 182). They learn to tell stories as a kind of monologue, with or without an audience.

The importance of Heath's (1997) work is in the attention it draws to predominant discourse patterns within classrooms, and the problematic inaccessibility to these patterns for African American children, particularly in relation to instruction in literacy. Children bring to school an orientation to narrative which can be built upon in early literacy instruction, if teachers know how to do so. Heath (1997) argues that cultural congruency between home and school can be strengthened if teachers and school leaders view the assets inherent in each narrative style and draw from them to scaffold learning for African American children with limited or no previous exposure to predominant discourse patterns.

In a study of school reform in a large urban district, Diamond, Randolph, and Spillane (2004) interviewed teachers in several different schools to determine whether they held an asset perspective or deficit perspective toward students, and what the relationship of these beliefs might be to classroom instruction. They found that in schools which were more integrated racially and economically, teachers made efforts "to address perceived deficits directly and to reassure students that they are capable of doing the work" (p. 20). For example, one teacher

considered the use of “literature circles” as a means of helping students with reading difficulties. Within this integrated context, teachers displayed a sense of responsibility toward students, changing their instructional practices to enhance student learning. Despite the fact that subject matter was not the authors’ focal point, a close reading of the examples given to support their claims suggests that teachers with deep knowledge of literacy and an asset perspective were able to use their knowledge in innovative ways that helped students learn. However, in schools that were largely African American, with high rates of free and reduced lunch eligibility, teachers appeared to resist instructional innovations, articulating a belief that perceived student deficits served as a barrier to learning. Teachers in these schools situated responsibility for learning and academic success within children and their families rather than within their own instructional practices (Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004).

In an ethnographic study of five teachers in a school change project in an urban, Mexican American community, Gutstein and colleagues (1997) focus on a subject matter that while not traditionally seen as open to multicultural approaches has provided fertile ground for research on teachers’ perspectives toward students: mathematics. Gutstein et al. (1997) observed two opposing orientations to student culture and experience in teachers, a deficit orientation and an empowerment orientation. They also noted that “one can be familiar with student culture and experience yet still hold a deficit orientation” (p. 727). The researchers observed professional development that countered the deficit perspective by teaching teachers to use student culture to improve student learning of math.

When it comes to teaching diverse students, teachers’ “beliefs, attitude, and dispositions may matter as much as knowledge” (Stodolsky & Grossman, 2000, p. 126). The literature provides examples of professional development that address the deficit perspective which has

proven to be very persistent among teachers. The deficit perspective contributes to low teacher expectations for children, and low academic achievement. Holding a deeper understanding of students' home culture impacts teacher practice in two ways. First, it creates a potential tool for the scaffolding of subject matter, and second, it encourages an asset perspective toward children. When teachers have an asset perspective toward children, they are more likely to innovate instructionally (Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004). School leaders with an understanding of how a deficit perspective affects teacher expectations and sabotages teaching and learning could in turn influence teachers under their supervision to begin to change the way they view children, and therefore, the way they teach (Shields, 2004).

#### **2.1.2.2 The Impact of Colorblind Ideologies on Teaching and Learning**

Omi and Winant's (1993) theoretical work defines race as socially constructed yet persistent in its salience in our society. They argue for a definition of "race, in which the concept operates neither as a signifier of comprehensive identity, nor of fundamental difference...but rather as a marker of the infinity of variations we humans hold as a common heritage" (p. 9). At the same time, they argue "against the widely reported death of the concept of race" (p. 3).

In a study of a desegregated middle school in the late 70s, Schofield observed that educators viewed race as "irrelevant to one's needs...Even taking note of race is seen as an indication of possible prejudice" (Schofield, 1982, p. 50). Discussions of race in schools have become taboo, and remain so, even in this policy environment of data disaggregated by race (Freeman, 2005; Pollock, 2004).

Color blindness implies not only being blind toward the existence of racism, but also toward the existence of privilege. "Whiteness" and the privilege that accompanies it are often taken for granted, and "The White, male, heterosexual societal norm is privileged in such a way

that its privilege is rendered invisible” (Grillo & Wildman, 2000, p. 650). Critical whiteness studies examines privilege that is accorded people simply because they are White, and allows researchers to examine the core of institutionalized power. In light of the demographic disparity between children and educators seen in most urban schools, scholars in teacher education have begun to address this “normalization” of whiteness within the teaching profession (Delpit, 1988; Cochran-Smith, 1995; Cochran-Smith, 2000; Scheurich, 1993; Sleeter, 1993).

In spite of studies in educational anthropology that have connected home cultures to school (Lipka, 1998; McCarty, 2002), Eurocentric cultural assumptions about teaching and learning continue to be dominant and most valued by majority White educators in urban schools (McDermott, 1997). In schools that serve African American children, teachers who hold a deficit perspective toward students have been found to resist efforts to improve instruction, whereas those who held an asset perspective were more innovative in both literacy and math instruction (Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004; Gutstein et al., 1997). The connection between the deficit perspective among teachers and motivation to change one’s teaching practice is an important one to recognize for instructional leaders whose goal is school reform. They can attend to the deficit perspective if they know to search for it, and thus begin to reduce barriers to instructional innovation and improved learning for teachers and students. I examine research on school leadership and the deficit perspective in Section 2.2.4, Instructional Leadership: Knowledge of Colorblind Ideologies and Connections to Teaching and Learning. This review now turns to literature on culturally relevant pedagogy.

### **2.1.3 Culturally Relevant Pedagogy**

In the previous sections, I examined the contributions and challenges of multicultural education along with colorblind ideology that is deeply embedded within schools. As academic achievement of African American and Latino/a students in American schools languished throughout the 1990s, some of the shortcomings of multicultural education came into relief, including its lack of clear connections to subject matter, pedagogy, and cultural ways of knowing, and the lack of focus on institutional racism in schools. In addition, the lack of “codification” or specification of what it is that teachers and school leaders need to know about all of the above may have played a role in limiting the potential of multicultural education in improving instruction for children of color.

To address these limitations of multicultural education, scholars developed a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). CRP examines teaching and learning within a more critical paradigm and through more explicit connections between the home culture of students and the subject matter (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2000). It builds upon research in educational anthropology that examines cultural congruence between home and school. Culturally relevant pedagogy focuses on the need for teachers to not only value the home cultures of the students they teach but explicitly address the home culture and students’ understanding of it in the classroom, to teach subject matter in a culturally appropriate manner situated within children’s funds of knowledge that they bring to school, and to be educated with an understanding of the historical legacy of racism in our society and its current impact on education (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

In this section, I review literature related to culturally relevant teaching to highlight how it has expanded notions of what teachers need to know in order to be successful teaching a diverse population of students in urban settings. Toward the end of the section, I discuss the aspects of CRP that can be most closely linked to teaching and learning of subject matter, and also to instructional leadership which focuses on teacher learning and student learning.

Building upon work by educational anthropologists who explicated the relationship between culture and learning, Ladson-Billings (1995) conducted a qualitative study of eight exemplary teachers of African American students, interviewing the teachers and observing their practice over a period of two years. Their practices provided examples of teaching that allowed Ladson-Billings to develop the following three criteria that undergird culturally relevant pedagogy:

1. an ability to develop students academically;
2. a willingness to nurture and support cultural competence of students; and
3. the development of a sociopolitical or critical consciousness (p. 483).

The author presents several broad characteristics as theoretical foundations of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 478), cautioning that they represent a spectrum of teaching behaviors rather than prescribed behaviors. For example, the teachers observed in this study held certain beliefs about themselves and others, i.e., demonstrating the beliefs that all students are capable of academic success, that pedagogy is an art that the teachers were still learning, and that they were members of the community in which they taught and teaching was a way to give back to that community. The teachers studied by Ladson-Billings also believed “in a Freirean notion of ‘teaching as mining’” (p. 479), or pulling knowledge out. This latter belief



aligns with research on students' "funds of knowledge" which has shown that children bring knowledge rooted in their home cultures to school (Moll et al., 1993), and stands in opposition to the deficit perspective that many teachers hold toward students of color. In order for this concept of "teaching as mining" to serve teaching and learning in the classroom, however, teachers must learn to recognize the knowledge children bring and use it to scaffold subject matter learning, thus strengthening their own teaching.

In an examination of ethnographies of classroom practice in cross-cultural and multiethnic settings, Osborne (1996) identifies common assertions that he categorizes as either "fundamental understandings" that culturally responsive teachers hold, or "classroom processes" they establish to improve teaching and learning (Osborne, 1996). I have included the assertions identified by Osborne that are most germane to teaching and learning, and leadership (see Table 1). These understandings and processes develop greater specificity in exactly what knowledge is needed in order for school principals to provide culturally relevant leadership, and thus assist in framing my inquiry.

**Table 1: Common Assertions in Culturally Relevant Pedagogy  
(adapted from Osborne, 1996)**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>Fundamental understandings held by culturally responsive teachers</p>  | <p>Classroom processes established by culturally relevant teachers</p>   |
| <p>Not necessarily from same ethnic group as students they teach (Osborne, 1996, p. 289)</p>  | <p>Warm, respectful, and academically demanding of all students (p. 296)</p>   |
| <p>Socio-historical and political realities beyond school impact what happens in classrooms and must be understood well by the culturally relevant teacher; i.e., “the supposedly neutral and objective preparation that we received while becoming teachers ignored the social forces in society at large, and so inequality and racism (to name just two central issues) were never critically examined...” (Osborne, 1996, p. 292)</p> | <p>Spell out cultural assumptions on which the classroom (and schooling) operate (p. 298).</p>   |
| <p>Desirable to teach content that is culturally relevant to students’ previous experiences, that fosters their natal cultural identity, and that empowers them with knowledge and practices to operate successfully in mainstream society (Osborne, 1996, p 292)</p>   | <p>Elements of culturally relevant classroom management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. using group work,</li> <li>b. controlling indirectly rather than confrontationally,</li> <li>c. avoiding “spotlighting,”</li> <li>d. using an unhurried pace,</li> <li>e. using the home participation structures of the children (Osborne, 1996, p. 299).</li> </ul> |
| <p>It is desirable to include students’ first languages in the school program and in classroom interactions (Osborne, 1996, p. 295).</p>  |  |

The understandings and processes of culturally relevant pedagogy underscore students' connections to their home culture, and provide ways for educators to support cultural connections in school and use them to scaffold learning . These features of CRP develop greater specificity in the knowledge needed for school leaders to provide culturally relevant leadership. However, they do not provide insights into teaching and learning that is specifically rooted in subject matter.

Scholarship that ties CRP to specific subject matters contributes to the knowledge base for teachers, and is knowledge that school leaders can draw upon in their work with teachers to strengthen teaching and learning in urban settings. For example, Heath's (1997) work, discussed earlier, points out variations in narrative style that children from different racial and cultural backgrounds take to school. Knowledge of different narrative styles among children in any given classroom, and how to build upon children's styles is invaluable to teachers and school leaders in the teaching of early literacy. In the following paragraphs, I review research that links culture to the teaching of subject matter. I am limiting this examination to literacy and math because in the current policy environment, these are the disciplines that are receiving the most attention and resources in teaching and leadership (Spillane, 2005).

Similar to Heath's research on diverse narrative styles of expression that children acquire in their home culture, a body of scholarly work connects cultural funds of knowledge to the learning of subject matter in school. In analyzing ways to build upon African American vernacular for scaffolding student learning in a secondary English literature class, Lee (2001) attempted to align the students' cultural funds of knowledge with "cultural practices of the subject matter" (p.97). African American students live within a community which has a rich tradition of language play and "verbal artistry," including "signifying" (Gates, 1989; Morgan,

2002; Rickford & Rickford, 2003). Signifying requires tacit use of strategies such as double entendre, metaphor, satire, and irony, all of which can serve in negotiating, understanding, and analyzing literary text (Gates, 1989; Lee, 2001; Morgan, 2002).

In working with a high school English class in a school that served African American students, Lee taught literary analysis by asking the students to first consider signifying dialogues to determine inferred meaning. Through this process of cultural modeling, “the students make public and explicit knowledge of strategies that they routinely use that have been intuitive and implicit” (Lee, 2001, p. 101). Teachers gradually transition students to analyzing literary texts that reflect the African American experience, and then texts that may be more culturally distant and unfamiliar, such as texts by Shakespeare. Teachers who experimented with cultural modeling activities in their English classes developed a perspective that their students could meet the intellectual demands of the curriculum (Lee, 2001).

The Algebra Project was developed to improve teaching and learning of middle school mathematics, particularly among students who have been underrepresented in algebra and college preparatory mathematics classes (Silva & Moses, 1990). The Project supports the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Standards (NCTM, 1989, 2000) which are grounded in a constructivist approach to learning, and “seeks to change the way mathematics teachers construct their learning environments by producing teachers who are able to facilitate a mathematics learning environment grounded in real life experiences and to support students in the social construction of mathematics” (p. 379).

Moses observed that students had difficulty in the transition to algebraic thinking and might benefit from explicit attention to this transition. In learning concepts of number, young children “are exposed to many, many different physical events in which the questions, ‘How

many' and/or 'How much?' are asked" (Silva & Moses, 1990, p.380), but in the transition to algebra, a second question comes into play: "'Which way?' (i.e., Which one of two opposite directions is involved in this context?)" (p.380). To assist students in associating this question with numbers, Moses developed a "Transition Curriculum" within which students construct "mathematical symbols and objects using familiar experiences as their foundation" (p.380). Students are led through several steps in which they engage in a physical event, represent it through pictures, represent it through their home language, represent it through mathematical language, and finally, through symbols. In the latter stage, students first develop their own symbolic representation before being introduced to standard notations and symbols.

The Transition Curriculum provides complex scaffolding for students beginning with experiences rooted in their day-to-day lives and utilizing their own language. It draws from physical events occurring within city public transportation systems, and thus familiar to urban students. Through the concepts of trips, equivalent trips, and displacements, students are assisted in joining the two questions about number, and ready to transition to algebra (Silva & Moses, 1990).

Lee's (2001) cultural modeling system and Moses' (1990) Transition Curriculum tie CRP to specific subject matters, English language arts and mathematics, respectively. They both contribute to a body of knowledge, grounded in subject matter, for culturally relevant teachers, and consequently, to knowledge that school leaders can draw upon in their work to strengthen teaching and learning in urban settings.

## 2.2 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Just as effective teachers know how to establish a community of learners among children in their classroom, effective principals know how to establish a community of learners among teachers in schools. School leaders with knowledge of teaching and learning, subject matter, culturally relevant pedagogy, and the role of race and racism in education could provide the kind of leadership that encourages teacher learning in those areas in order to improve student learning. I open this section by presenting conceptions of leadership from current literature on school administration, highlighting the intersecting concepts of *distributed leadership* and *instructional leadership*, and then presenting Stein and Nelson's (2003) concept of *leadership content knowledge* which will serve as an integral part of the conceptual framework of this study. The review of the literature continues with separate sections focusing on strands of knowledge that contribute to a conceptualization of culturally relevant instructional leadership, beginning with the existing discourses on principal and teacher knowledge of subject matter. Other strands include principal and teacher knowledge of culture and its connection to learning, colorblind ideology and principal and teacher knowledge of race and racism in American society and connections to teaching and learning, and principal knowledge of teacher learning. Each literature is reviewed in terms of its connection to teacher and student learning. I end with a brief discussion of the literature on leadership for social justice which provides some background for my inquiry.

The term *instructional leadership* has appeared in the literature since the early 1990s, yet a clear conception of it that links district and school leadership to teacher learning and student learning has only recently begun to emerge. *Instructional leadership* implies that school leaders possess a deep knowledge of teaching and learning and the processes that can establish

professional learning communities within schools and districts. Within this vision of leadership, school leaders play an important role in creating powerful learning opportunities for students, teachers, and the educational system as a whole (Coburn, 2005; Elmore, 2000; Hightower, 2001; Stein & Nelson, 2003).

According to Spillane (2005), *leadership* “refers to activities tied to the core work of the organization that are designed by organizational members to influence the motivation, knowledge, affect, and practices of other organizational members or that are understood by organizational members as intended to influence their motivation, knowledge, affect, and practices” (p. 384). This definition is useful given that it places knowledge at the center of leadership practice in much the same way that leadership content knowledge does. In addition, it does not restrict leadership uniquely to situations where the outcomes are beneficial.

Recently, conceptions of administration that position school leadership uniquely within the principalship have been expanded to shared or “distributed” leadership that resides within the principal and other leaders, such as subject matter coaches and teacher leaders (Elmore, 2000; Murphy, 1990; Smylie & Hart, 1999; Spillane, 2005; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001). In this view, leadership practice is seen as the product of interactions among leaders and followers with multiple individuals performing leadership routines, from full time administrators to full time teachers. This conception of leadership is particularly salient if school leaders are expected to possess deep knowledge of subject matter, teacher learning, *and* culturally relevant pedagogy. It is unlikely that an individual leader would possess such knowledge in multiple subjects (Stein & Nelson, 2003; Spillane, 2005).

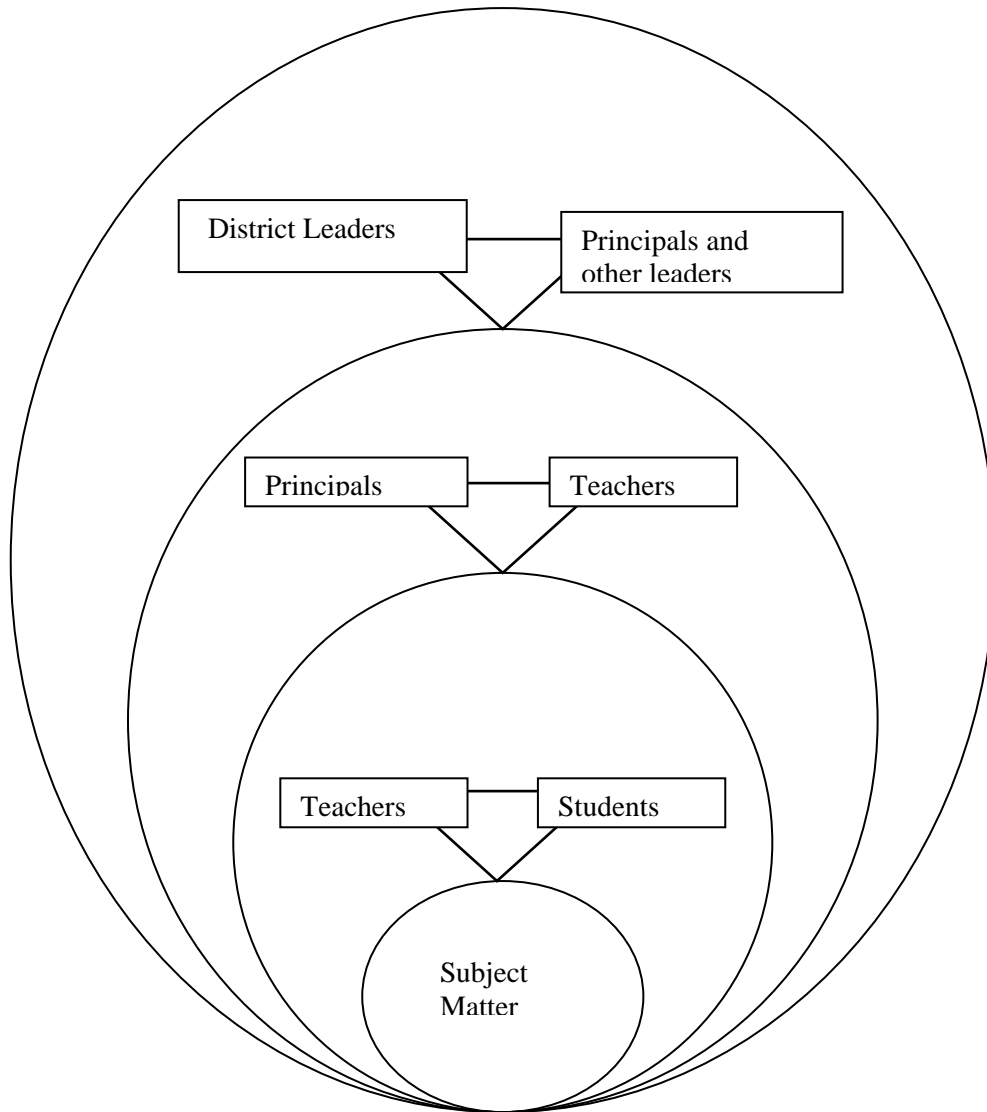
Although the present study begins with a focus on the formal leadership of three principals in the context of their practice, it was designed to include others in formal leadership

roles such as subject matter coaches and in informal leadership roles within the schools as their roles were revealed through observations in the field. In the next section, I review work that further refines instructional leadership in terms of knowledge of subject matter and knowledge of how to lead for instructional improvement.

### **2.2.1 Leadership Content Knowledge**

Through their construct of “leadership content knowledge,” Stein and Nelson (2003) envisage the kinds of knowledge necessary for the practice of instructional leadership that effectively links district and school leadership to teacher learning and student learning with subject matter at the core (Stein & Nelson, 2003). They draw parallels between the role of pedagogical content knowledge in teaching, and leadership content knowledge in instructional leadership. They contend that “knowledge about subject matter content is related in complex ways to knowledge about how to lead,” and illustrate leadership content knowledge (LCK) through three cases. In some contexts, subject matter knowledge is mediated for the purposes of leadership, while in others, knowledge of leadership is impacted by new learning of content, and in others still, the two are “so tightly fused that they need to be disentangled” (p. 424). LCK is always rooted in “knowledge of the subject, how it is learned (by adults as well as children), and how it is taught” (p. 424). The strength of their analysis is in their portrayal of school leaders as both teachers and learners, and in their emphasis on the content at the core of leadership within a nested learning community.





**Figure 1: Nested Learning Communities**

(Used with permission from Stein & Nelson, 2003; adapted from Brown, Greeno, Lampert, Mehan, & Resnick, 1999)

In addition, Stein and Nelson (2003) distinguish the kinds of knowledge that contribute to LCK and the pedagogical relationships among educators in which it is central (see Table 2). In the relationship column, the arrows point away from the “teacher” and toward the “learner” in each relationship; the knowledge column identifies the knowledge that is needed by the “teacher” to carry out his or her role. Each successive row in the table below expresses a new kind of knowledge needed while encompassing the knowledge specified in the row above it. School leaders, just as teachers, have a need for knowledge of subject matter and how children learn.

**Table 2: Components of leadership content knowledge**

| <b>Relationship</b> | <b>Knowledge</b>                                       |
|---------------------|--|
| Teacher→Student     | subject matter   |
| Teacher→Student     | how children learn subject matter                      |
| Teacher→Student     | how to assist children’s learning of subject matter    |
| Principal→Teachers  | how teachers assist student learning of subject matter |
| Principal→Teacher   | how teachers learn to teach subject matter             |
| Principal→Teachers  | how to assist teacher learning                         |

Although I draw upon this conceptualization to examine how school leaders engage in promoting teacher learning, and the knowledge they draw upon, I examine leadership content knowledge beyond the principal-teacher dyad, with more of a distributed perspective. Within such a perspective, school leaders include subject matter coaches and informal teacher-leaders with deep knowledge of subject matter, teacher and student learning, and culturally relevant pedagogy. Requisite knowledge is viewed as shared among the principal and others.

### **2.2.2 The Role of Subject Matter**

Developing at the same time but in relative isolation from multicultural education, a focus on subject matter, or what Shulman called the “core of teaching and learning,” was emerging in research on teacher education (Shulman, 1986). Shulman identified different domains of teacher knowledge that were necessary for high-quality classroom instruction including: subject matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and curricular knowledge (Shulman, 1986). Pedagogical content knowledge is subject-specific, and thus varies from mathematics to literacy to social studies. To improve instruction requires both subject matter knowledge and the knowledge of how to teach it. Teaching also requires representation of subject matter knowledge, use of subject matter knowledge in interpreting student work, and use of it in analyzing student mistakes (Hill, Schilling, & Ball, 2004).

Although Shulman and most researchers who followed in his footsteps identified knowledge of learners and learning as an important feature of teachers’ professional knowledge, they did not focus on diversity of learners and funds of knowledge that learners bring to learning, nor did they focus on diversity of teaching contexts and the implications that such diversity may have for teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987). Other researchers point out the utility of broadening notions of the knowledge needed in teaching (Hill, Schilling, & Ball, 2004). In the following paragraphs, I review work by two researchers with extensive backgrounds in the study of teaching subject matter who attempt to do just that.

In a study of the teaching of subject matter in diverse settings, Stodolsky and Grossman (2000) explored differences among high school teachers in their responses to an increasingly diverse student population. They wanted to learn why some teachers adapted their instructional practice while others did not. In case studies of two teachers who did modify their practice and

two who did not, the authors (2000) describe a continuum of adaptations, ranging from the most commonly observed change, content integration, to a deeper reconceptualization of teaching.

Stodolsky and Grossman (2000) found that the differences in teachers' ideas about the subjects they teach "may have consequences for their willingness and ability to adapt to diverse learners" (p. 130). Math teachers tend to view mathematics as sequential in how it must be taught. They see the body of knowledge of mathematics as static, and they tend to experience limited autonomy in making curricular choices. These views and experiences may constrain math teachers' attempts at adaptation. In contrast, English teachers tend to view their subject matter as less static and less sequential, and value their independence in making curricular choices and are thus more inclined to make adaptations in teaching a more diverse group of students (Stodolsky & Grossman, 2000).

Although teachers' perceptions of general features of the two subject matters may make teaching English more conducive to adaptation for diverse learners, individual beliefs held by teachers about the subject matter are enormously relevant. For example, one of the English teachers held strong beliefs about the "established literary canon" in English, and these beliefs allowed him less negotiability in adapting his practice to meet the needs of changing students (Stodolsky & Grossman, 2000).

Stodolsky and Grossman (2000) highlight knowledge that is important for school leaders in diverse contexts. As teachers deepen their subject matter knowledge and begin to experiment with new practices, they need access to new knowledge, and support from knowledgeable colleagues, including principals. School leaders who understand teachers' perceptions of subject-specific nuances are better positioned to work with them towards improving student learning. I now turn to the literature on leadership knowledge and practice in subject matter

teaching and learning. Even at the elementary level, the subject matters for school leaders (Spillane, 2005).

In a longitudinal study of school leadership, Spillane found that leadership practice at the elementary level varies based on the subject matter (Spillane, 2005). In general, elementary school leaders talked in subject-neutral terms about leadership for instruction. However, their participation in literacy-related leadership routines was much greater than in mathematics- or science-related routines (p. 388). Elementary schools in the study were more likely to have multiple formal and informal leaders in language arts than in mathematics. The formally designated subject-matter leaders were central in providing advice to teachers. Not surprisingly, school principals viewed language arts expertise as residing within their own school while viewing mathematics expertise as external. Elementary school leadership is thus structured differently depending upon subject matter (p. 395).

In two of the three cases of leadership that Stein and Nelson (2003) analyzed, the focal subject matter is mathematics, and in the third, it is literacy and mathematics. Mathematics has a more delineated knowledge base in contrast to literacy with its broader disciplinary base, including reading, writing, and literature, and consisting of a broader and more diffuse knowledge base (Stein & Nelson, 2003; Stodolsky & Grossman, 1995). Two of the leaders in their cases, Mrs. West, a principal, and Dr. Garfield, an associate superintendent, thought that teachers needed to experience the first-hand learning of specific subject matter in order to understand instruction that supported students' thinking in that subject matter (Stein & Nelson, p. 434). This may be an accessible experience in a bounded subject matter such as mathematics that is conducive to teachers or school leaders working together in professional development sessions with authentic problems, co-constructing solutions. However, constructing teacher

knowledge of culturally relevant pedagogy which cuts across all subject matters requires different professional development strategies on the part of school leadership.

### **2.2.3 The Role of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy**

In the earlier section on CRP, I highlighted its components, along with research that has connected CRP to specific subject matter. Many theorists in multicultural education argue that teachers need to know about their own culture and think of themselves as cultural beings at the same time they learn positive attitudes toward students with different cultural backgrounds (Cochran-Smith, 2003). However, there is very little study of sustained, reform-based professional development on culturally relevant pedagogy, and how school leaders assist such teacher learning. Most of the research on learning of CRP provides accounts of college courses for pre-service teachers (Cochran-Smith, 1995, 2000, 2004).

We know that what school leaders know matters for teachers (Burch & Spillane, 2003; Coburn, 2005; Murphy & Datnow, 2002), but little attention has been given to what school leaders understand about cultural contexts of schools, and the relationship of cultural funds of knowledge that children carry to school to teaching and learning. Given the influential role of school leaders in assisting teacher learning within the framework of leadership content knowledge, it is important to study what they know about culturally relevant pedagogy and teachers' knowledge of it, and how leaders assist teacher learning of CRP.

#### **2.2.4 Knowledge of Colorblind Ideologies and Connections to Teaching and Learning**

In this section, I review literature on professional development that attempts to deconstruct colorblind ideology as well as literature that examines what the field knows about the role of school leadership in this process. As discussed earlier, the connection between the deficit perspective among teachers and motivation to change one's teaching practice is an important one to recognize for instructional leaders whose goal is school reform; they can attend to it if they know to search for it, and thus begin to reduce barriers to instructional innovation and improved learning for teachers and students. But this is largely uncertain: White educators, including school leaders, tend to be colorblind to the manifestation of issues of race and racism in school contexts (Pollock, 2001; Lewis, 2003; Schofield, 1982).

In a study of professional development created to improve "teacher effectiveness in working with black students," Lawrence and Tatum (1997) examined the impact of a program that targeted teachers who were predominantly White and working in suburban Boston schools that had accepted black students from Boston as part of the voluntary METCO desegregation plan (Lawrence & Tatum, 1997, p. 165). The authors wanted to know if teachers would alter their daily teaching practice to reflect changed attitudes as a result of the professional development they were attending. Participants were presented with the concepts of racism, White privilege, and theories of racial identity development, and wrote reflective essays on the class readings, discussions, and activities throughout the semester. Lawrence and Tatum analyzed the teachers' essays and found that 57% of the participants reported "specific antiracist actions they had taken during the course" (p. 167), including improving relations among teachers, students, and parents, transforming curriculum, and changes at the institutional level in support services for students of color.

Lawrence and Tatum (1997) also described changes in leadership practice reported by principals who attended the professional development. In addition to establishing “cultural identity groups” in their schools and becoming advocates for children of color, the principals began “to challenge racist attitudes and behaviors displayed by school employees” (p. 174). There was also evidence of administrators questioning school-wide and district-wide policies, such as tracking, that were detrimental to African American children. However, this study of short-term professional development was based upon self-report and did not include any observations of leadership in context.

In fact, there is little empirical study of the day-to-day responses of school leadership to race or racism, but the work that exists points to the fact that “school leaders tend not to notice or attend to racism or issues of race” (Henze, Katz, & Norte, 2000; Lipman, 1998; Ryan, 2003). This literature usually does not strongly associate knowledge of race and racism with instructional leadership, but rather focuses on the role of school leaders in inter-group conflict resolution (Henze et al., 2000; Lawrence & Tatum, 1997).

In studying the role of leadership in addressing racial or ethnic conflict among students, Henze et al. (2000) developed a continuum of ways in which school leaders view conflict. They placed root causes of conflict such as racism, segregation, and socialization at one end of their continuum, underlying or subtle conflicts such as avoiding or excluding certain groups in the center, and overt conflicts, such as physical fights at the other end (p. 197). The authors observed that ways in which school leaders addressed racial conflict depended upon their ways of defining the problem, and when overt conflict was “recognized as a symptom rather than the illness, effective school leaders can direct their attention to trying to address the more subtle or underlying tensions that may be related to race or ethnicity, or going further to address the root



causes of conflicts” (p.198). However, only one principal planned professional development with the largely White staff to focus on these issues with the goal of examining and decentering racism, but no description of these efforts were provided. Another important finding of this study was that underlying racial tensions were present in all 21 schools that were studied, thus underscoring the need for principals and other school leaders to be knowledgeable about the manifestation of colorblind ideologies and racism in educational contexts.

Thus, the literature shows that professional development that addresses race and racism is extremely rare, and when it does occur, it is rarely sustained. Principals were not found to play a prominent role in addressing issues of race and racism in schools, let alone assist teacher learning in this area.

### **2.2.5 Knowledge of Teacher Learning**

Studies of changing practice show that teacher beliefs can shift over time when their own capacity to learn is nurtured in well-constructed professional development situated in classroom practice, a process which a strong instructional leader influences (Nelson, 1998). As illustrated by the concept of leadership content knowledge, instructional leaders, in order to have such impact, must know how teachers learn and how to assist them in their learning ((Nelson & Sassi, 2000; Stein & Nelson, 2003). In this section, I review literature on the knowledge school leaders need to construct a professional community built upon learning, beginning with changing notions of what constitutes successful professional development.

Traditional forms of professional development for teachers include the use of isolated workshops that take place off-site, and are usually unconnected to the teachers’ day-to-day practice (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). While traditional forms of

professional development persist in school districts and in state-sponsored training, they typically do not provide teachers with sufficient time, opportunities to learn, and content that would increase their knowledge and lead to deep and sustained change in classroom practice (Loucks-Horsley, et al., 1998 as cited in Garet et al., 2001).

Reform-based professional development for teachers is closely connected to the day-to-day practice of teaching with access to new knowledge and support on-site (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Garet et al., 2001). Teachers are likely to need sustained support as they begin to experiment with new practices, including culturally relevant pedagogy. School leaders play an important role in providing such support and in crafting a context within which professional learning of subject matter and practice can take place (Elmore, 2001). Learning occurs within the school itself, rooted in a strong focus on classroom instruction (Spillane, 2000; Stein & Nelson, 2003). For example, a teacher working on establishing a cultural modeling activity for the first time in her class could be released from her teaching duties for a morning to observe a more experienced and knowledgeable colleague in her building. Her observation could be followed up with a discussion with her colleague, and the school's literacy coach or principal, and they could also share professional reading about cultural modeling in their school-based study group (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Instructional leaders at the school would be able to assess the intellectual and practical needs of the faculty and make such arrangements to assist teacher learning of new subject matter-specific, culturally relevant pedagogy.

Studies of leadership in District 2 in New York City and school reform in San Diego, show that effective instructional leaders create norms at the building level that position professional development as a part of principals' and teachers' daily practice (Hubbard, Mehan, & Stein, 2006; Stein, Hubbard, & Mehan, 2004). In San Diego, principals were expected to be

instructional leaders who embedded professional development within classroom practice for teachers, conducted walkthroughs, analyzed practice, and recommended changes to improve practice. It was incumbent upon them, along with literacy and math coaches, to improve instruction, but many were unprepared for the job because of their own training and opportunities to learn as teachers, and because of limitations of their later training as principals (Hubbard, Mehan, & Stein, 2006).

If one of the goals of school leadership is to create a culture of learning within schools that adapts what the field knows about professional development and teacher community, leaders need to know about teachers as learners. I now turn to the literature on the role of school leadership in teacher learning.

There are certain dimensions of leadership practice which allow principals to play a pivotal role in teacher learning such as conducting teacher observation and evaluation, professional development, and leading faculty meetings in which certain policy messages pertaining to instruction are privileged (Coburn, 2005; Spillane, 2005). However, the conception of leadership as distributed recognizes that leadership work is shared across many individuals “who don’t necessarily always pull in the same directions” (Spillane, 2005).

Among a principal’s traditional day-to-day responsibilities, supervision of teachers may be the trickiest to navigate while moving toward the establishment of a school culture that values an overall emphasis on teaching and learning at all levels, and the deprivatization of practice. In considering the role of school leaders in instructional improvement, Spillane (2000) describes the tension inherent in the relationship between school leaders as teachers and classroom teachers as learners. Traditionally, principals have evaluated teachers and played a key role in decisions about tenure, decisions that seriously impact individuals’ lives, and this role of authority does not

always contribute to the establishment of trust between principals and teachers. While instructional leadership may be distributed in a school, this authority rests squarely within the principalship, and it may serve to hinder or motivate teacher learning. Stein and Nelson (2003) speculate that this authority can motivate teacher learning, but trust between school leaders and teachers is necessary for the risk-taking required in changing one's practice, and especially for confronting colorblind ideologies that exist in schools.

### **2.2.6 Leadership for Social Justice**

The study I completed may fit within the purview of leadership for social justice, yet I am reluctant to categorize it as such. While there are a growing number of theoretical articles that attend to leadership for social justice (Shields, 2004), and several empirical studies that consider it (Marshall & Ward, 2004), it remains a rather vague construct. Moreover, the concept of leadership for social justice has not been meaningfully connected to the specifics of how subject matter is taught and learned, and thus provides limited guidance for how teachers can improve their instructional practice and in turn, how school leaders can assist them in doing so. For example, in a theoretical article that proposes changes in school leadership preparation, Cambron-McCabe and McCarthy (2005) define leadership for social justice as leadership that “emphasizes moral values, justice, respect, care, and equity; always in the forefront is a consciousness about the impact of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and disability on schools and students’ learning” (p. 201). They connect social justice in schools to student learning and to the role of school leaders to engage directly in the improvement of teaching and learning without tying social justice specifically to subject matter, culturally relevant pedagogy,

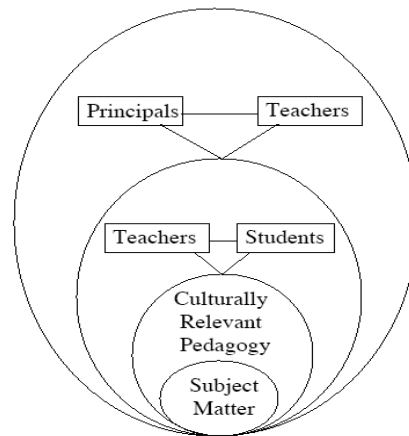
or colorblind ideologies in schools, or to the related knowledge that school leaders may need to promote social justice.

### 2.3 IMPLICATIONS

The idea of culturally competent or culturally relevant leadership remains under-theorized. As the literature reveals, subject matter is central to teaching, learning, and leadership. The knowledge that school leaders bring to the practice of leadership influences which subject matter, if any, is privileged, how it is privileged, and whether profound instructional improvement is undertaken (Coburn, 2005; Spillane, 2005; Stodolsky & Grossman, 2000). However, the teaching and learning of subject matter cannot be isolated from “the meaning of culture, the impact of culture on learning and schooling, the ways in which schools and classrooms function as cultures, the nature of ethnic, racial, and urban cultures..., and the role of culture in socialization, interaction, and communication” (Cochran-Smith, 2003, p. 6). Culturally relevant pedagogy and a critical understanding of colorblind ideologies are also central to successful teaching, learning, and leadership. In this section, I pull from the literature I have reviewed to develop a framework for studying leadership in a cross-cultural setting.

In Figure 2, adapted with permission from Stein & Nelson (2003), the triad of student, teacher, and subject matter is positioned at the center of teaching and learning, just as it is in Figure 1. However, this framework embeds the inner core of subject matter within a pedagogy that is culturally relevant, or attuned. It emphasizes teaching children with an understanding of their assets or funds of knowledge that may initially be invisible to teachers and school leaders. Within this framework, teachers and school leaders learn to recognize this, and to draw from

culturally relevant pedagogy in order to incorporate and scaffold from students' funds of knowledge to teach subject matter and improve instruction.



**Figure 2: Nested learning communities that are culturally relevant**

(Adapted with permission from Stein & Nelson, 2003.)

Drawing from various fields of inquiry including culturally relevant pedagogy and instructional leadership, Table 3 represents a conceptual framework for understanding culturally responsive leadership content knowledge. This framework is drawn from leadership content knowledge as illustrated earlier in Table 2, expanding it to include knowledge of culturally relevant pedagogy. Within this framework, accomplished teachers know subject matter and how to assist student learning of subject matter concurrently with knowing how children of diverse racial and cultural backgrounds learn subject matter; i.e., culturally relevant pedagogy. School leaders share this knowledge and assists teachers in developing it. They assess what teachers know, and they know how teachers learn culturally relevant pedagogy, and how to assist teachers in learning culturally relevant ways of teaching subject matter.

**Table 3: Culturally relevant leadership content knowledge**

|  |
|--|
| Subject matter   |
| How children of diverse racial and cultural backgrounds learn subject matter; i.e., culturally relevant pedagogy |
| How teachers assist students of diverse racial and cultural backgrounds in learning of subject matter            |
| How teachers learn culturally relevant pedagogy  |
| How to assist teachers learning to teach subject matter in a culturally relevant manner                          |
| How to assist teacher learning about race, culture, and racism in schools  |

Culturally attuned school leadership, as shown in Table 3, maintains subject matter at the core of teaching and learning (top row, right column), but highlights leader knowledge of ways in which culturally diverse children learn subject matter (second row), and ways in which teachers assist students in learning subject matter (third row), for example, through scaffolding in culturally appropriate ways in the classroom (Lee, 2001; Silva & Moses, 1990). Culturally attuned school leaders also understand how teachers learn culturally relevant pedagogy (fourth row), and how to construct professional development settings in which teachers learn culturally relevant pedagogy (fifth row), including a focus on the salience of race and racism in American society (sixth row).

This important dimension of culturally responsive or attuned leadership content knowledge involves understanding the trajectory that is required for teachers who are learning about race and culturally relevant pedagogy, and how to assist teachers learning to question

colorblind ideologies. It focuses on teacher attitudes and beliefs about race and whether teachers see children from an asset or deficit perspective. Teacher resistance to change may emerge, resistance which may be countered through leadership content knowledge, expanded to include knowledge of colorblind ideologies.

As the literature shows, colorblind ideologies impact efforts to improve instruction, learning, and leadership. The degree to which White school leaders in particular learn to engage issues of race, whiteness, and privilege themselves may determine the degree to which they engage teacher learning in these areas. If school leaders are “colorblind,” they will be blind to the need to address racialized ideology in schools, and blind to the need for culturally relevant pedagogy. On the other hand, understanding how colorblind ideologies surface in schools, in relation to subject matter and culturally relevant pedagogy, coupled with knowledge of how teachers learn about each, and how to assist teacher learning of each, could contribute to the development of culturally attuned leadership.



### **3.0 CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

This inquiry explores the relationship between school leadership and culturally relevant pedagogy through an in-depth case study of White school leadership in schools that predominately serve African American children in two separate urban districts. It considers the understanding and construction of race, culture, and learning within the practice of school leadership and examines the role that school leadership may play in shaping teacher learning and the processes through which this happens.

A qualitative case study is well-suited for observing and understanding school leadership practice in a cross-cultural context. The school leader-participants in this study are White and came of age in middle to high income suburban communities in contrast to the majority of the students in their schools who are growing up in African American urban communities of mixed to low income; these different communities reflect different cultures (Spindler, 1997). Although anthropologists argue against a notion of “racial determination of culture” (Morgan, 2002), many also suggest that there are “continuities in African American language and cultural values” that connect to African language and culture (p. 15). This moves beyond an historic, general view that African Americans had “no distinctive culture” (Kochman, 1981) in contrast to broad acceptance of a culture linked to European heritage for many White Americans. The context of this case study of school leadership is thus cross-cultural.

As a research strategy, case study “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (Yin, 2003, p. 13). A case study is appropriate to an inquiry into issues of race, culture, and learning because it allows the researcher access to ways in which people experience the world and ascribe meaning to their experience (Merriam, 1998). Other methods have been found to be more problematic in revealing information about race and racism. For example, when people have participated in survey research on race, there is often an element of social desirability to their responses which they themselves contradict in follow-up interviews (Feagin, 2001). Social desirability presents challenges to uncovering nuances in people’s experiences and beliefs pertaining to race, nuances that a case study design, along with extended time in the field, allows to be revealed.

As an *instrumental case study*, this inquiry differs from an *intrinsic case study* in which “the case itself is of primary interest” (Stake, 1995). By examining the practice of three White female principals of schools that predominately serve African American students and how issues of race and culture surface in their leadership practice, this case study is instrumental to developing an understanding of White school leadership in an urban context (Stake, 1995).

In the following sections, I present the methodology that guides this case study, including the research questions at the center of it, the context for the study, the process of data collection, and analysis. At the end of the chapter in Section 3.6, I review some of the study’s limitations.

### **3.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The research questions I address are:

1. What kind of perspective toward students (deficit or asset, or somewhere in between) is held by educators in the school?
  - How, if at all, do these perspectives connect with teaching, learning, and leadership?
2. How, if at all, is culturally relevant pedagogy represented in the schools?
  - How do school leaders foster or hinder CRP in their schools?
3. In which contexts and events in the day-to-day practice of school leadership do issues of race, culture, and learning surface?
  - To what extent are the issues mediated by the principal and other school leaders?
  - What resources do school leaders draw upon in understanding issues of race, culture, and learning?

### **3.2 INTRODUCTION TO THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

This case study of school leadership took place in three elementary schools located in two different urban districts in southwestern Pennsylvania. I originally selected a small, middle class and working class urban district near Pittsburgh as the site of this case study based upon its

demographics. Almost all of the 1500 K-12 students who attend the public schools are African American, and 75% of the teachers are White, thus offering a multicultural context with potentially rich data on leadership. The district has three elementary schools from kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and a middle school and high school that share a building.

I sought two principals in this district with strategic contrasts and similarities in mind (Yin, 1994). A professor from my university with connections to the district as a consultant in curriculum and instruction acted as “gatekeeper” to the research site (Fetterman, 1998), and suggested Debra Russo<sup>1</sup> and Laney Thomas as knowledgeable elementary school leaders for this study.

After beginning her administrative career in a rural district and gaining several years of experience, Ms. Russo accepted a position as principal of Central School in this urban district. Three years later, she was viewed as so successful in promoting instructional change by central office administrators and outside consultants that she was asked to move to another school in need of improvement in the district while maintaining the principalship at Central School. In 2005-06, the experienced principal was in her first year at Rosa Parks School, a school that had had seven principals in six years. In my initial May 2006 interview with Ms. Russo, I learned that she was the acting principal of two K-6 schools and that the second participant in my study, Ms. Thomas, was not a principal but rather an assistant principal.

Although Ms. Russo was nominally the principal of both Central and Rosa Parks School, she spent most of her time at the latter. Thus, the assistant principal at Central School, Ms. Thomas, played an essential leadership role in Ms. Russo’s absence. Ms. Thomas had been a teacher at the same school for four years before being appointed as assistant principal, and was

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<sup>1</sup> Debra Russo is a pseudonym. Pseudonyms are used throughout this dissertation for people and places to ensure confidentiality.

therefore very familiar with not only the teachers and children at the school, but also the routines and curriculum.

The initial phase of this study continued from May through early June 2006. The first week in June, a newspaper article announced that Ms. Russo had accepted a position as assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction in a small district located in the county seat of a rural area to the east of Pittsburgh. She had to quickly arrange meetings with teachers at both schools to personally inform them of her decision to leave. Her departure left a void in the leadership of Rosa Parks School and Central School. The two assistant principals were left in limbo until the end of August 2006 when they were both named principals of their respective buildings. I interviewed Ms. Thomas soon thereafter, and began to observe her in faculty and professional development meetings. What I did not know at the time was that she, too, would shortly be leaving the district. Because she had felt disrespected when the district did not appoint her as principal of Central early in the summer, she had begun to search elsewhere for administrative positions. On the last day of September, she revealed to me that she had accepted a position as principal of an elementary school in a district fifteen miles outside of Pittsburgh, in the affluent suburbs to the north. When we met that day, she was on her way to inform the superintendent and negotiate her exit from Central.

While I continued to observe Ms. Thomas throughout the month of October, I immediately began a search for a new research site where I would have prolonged access to a school leader, and more open access to classrooms. I decided to purposively target a larger, more integrated urban school system in which issues of race, culture, and learning could be better brought into relief. In the first phase of data collection in a setting where the student population was almost 100% African American, this was somewhat challenging. For example, while I

could easily elicit responses to questions about characteristics that African American children may bring to the classroom, a question about what kinds of things the faculty had done to facilitate the academic success of African American children was usually answered by the participant saying “everything we do here is for our kids’ academic success.” It was possible that more contrasting or richer data might come to the surface in a more integrated context. I soon had a list of five principals from a mid-sized urban district of about 32,000 students in southwestern Pennsylvania, and they were all willing to participate in this study.

Table 4 presents school and district demographic information and illustrates several contrasting features of the schools that were ultimately chosen for my study: size, racial demographics of students and teachers, and socioeconomic status of the students.

**Table 4: School and district demographic information**

| Schools   | Number of students | Grade levels | Racial demographics: Students                          | Racial demographics: Teachers | % Students qualifying for FRL |
|---|--------------------|--------------|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Riverton: Small urban district of approximately 1500 students   |                    |              |  |                               |                               |
| Rosa Parks  | 269                | K-6          | 98% AfAm;<br>2% White                                  | 10% AfAm;<br>90% White        | 81%                           |
| Central   | 330                | K-6          | 97% AfAm;<br>3% White                                  | 15% AfAm;<br>85% White        | 85%                           |
| Weston: Midsize urban district of approximately 32,000 students |                    |              |  |                               |                               |
| Lenox   | 478                | K-8          | 53% AfAm;<br>39% White;<br>7% multiracial;<br>1% Asian | 10% AfAm;<br>90% White        | 88%                           |

Sources: District 1, District 2, and Pennsylvania Department of Education

The larger district was in the second year of reform efforts undertaken by a superintendent in the second year of his tenure. As part of the reform, almost two dozen schools were closed in the summer of 2006. Teachers and school leaders moved to new assignments in other buildings, some due to choice and some due to “displacement” by colleagues with more seniority as determined by the strong teachers’ union.

With the support of my advisor, I chose a principal of a school that had been newly reconstituted by the district in 2006-07 as part of the ongoing reform efforts. The principal and teachers were all newly reassigned to this building, and would be engaged in the implementation of America’s Choice reforms which is described in more detail in Chapter 4. The principal, whom I call Karen Schneider, received her doctorate in educational leadership from a local university and was sympathetic to my needs as a researcher. I felt that all of these factors guaranteed a potentially rich context within which to continue the study.

A contrasting feature of this case study of leadership is the depth and variety of experience among the principals (See Table 5). Ms. Russo, of Rosa Parks School, had the most years of teaching experience before becoming a principal, and also had the most administrative experience. Dr. Schneider, of Lenox School, had taught for five years before becoming a mathematics coach in her district for seven years, and had been a principal for seven years at the time of this study. Ms. Thomas, the assistant principal of Central School who then became principal, was in her first two years as a school leader. The principals provided access to others at the site, introducing me to assistant principals, subject matter coaches, and consultants, and recommending teachers for me to observe.

**Table 5: Principals' experience**

| Principals:  | Debra Russo<br>Rosa Parks School | Laney Thomas<br>Central School | Karen Schneider<br>Lenox School |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Total years as teacher                               | 19                               | 7                              | 5                               |
| Other experience                                     |                                  |                                | 5 years as<br>mathematics coach |
| Years experience as<br>principal at time of<br>study | 9                                | 1.5                            | 6                               |
| Total years at current<br>school                     | 1                                | 4                              | 1                               |
| Years as principal at<br>current school              | 1                                | .5                             | 1                               |
| Total years in district                              | 4                                | 4                              | 12                              |

While one of the principals had particular strengths in the teaching of literacy, and another in mathematics, observations were not limited to one subject matter over another in terms of their leadership practice. In shadowing principals, I observed their practice across many settings: leading faculty meetings, presenting professional development, interacting with students and families, and collaborating with subject matter coaches. At Lenox School, I also had access to Leadership Team meetings, and observed many of them over the course of four months. All members of the Leadership Team were interviewed, and all of the teacher-members were observed. Subject matter coaches in both districts were interviewed and informally observed.

In addition, teachers from different grade levels at each site were asked for multiple classroom observations and interviews about their practice after being recommended or



volunteering (Table 6). Two teachers at Central School and four teachers at Lenox School welcomed me into their classrooms. After recruiting a first grade teacher and a fifth grade teacher at Central School, I sought two focal teachers at the same grade levels at Lenox School; in addition, an eighth grade teacher volunteered to participate in the study. Four of the teachers self-identify as White and one self-identifies as African American. The amount of experience among the focal teachers ranged from 4 to 9 years. All of the teachers at Lenox School were in their first year there due to the fact that it was newly reconstituted by the district, and had just opened its doors in the fall of 2006. Teachers in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and above at Lenox were “departmentalized,” teaching the same subject to several classes at their grade level.

**Table 6: Focal teachers' demographics and experience**

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|                               | Self-identified racial heritage | Years teaching experience | Years at present school | Selected this school assignment? | Number of students   |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| <hr/>                         |                                 |                           |                         |                                  |  |
| Central School                |                                 |                           |                         |                                  |  |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> grade teacher | White                           | 4                         | 3                       | Yes                              | 22   |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> grade teacher | White                           | 5                         | 5                       | Yes                              | 18   |
| <hr/>                         |                                 |                           |                         |                                  |  |
| Lenox School                  |                                 |                           |                         |                                  |  |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> grade teacher | White                           | 4                         | 1                       | No, displaced                    | 20   |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> grade teacher | White                           | 5                         | 1                       | Yes                              | About 15 in each of 3 classes that meet for double periods |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> grade teacher | African-American                | 9                         | 1                       | Yes                              | About 15 in each of 3 classes that meet for double periods |

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Classroom observations of and interviews with these focal teachers offered insights into ways in which school leadership shapes classroom instruction and an opportunity for triangulation of data in order to validate and confirm or disconfirm what I learned about the practice of school leadership (Fine, Weis, Weseen, & Wong, 2003; Sunstein & Chiseri-Strater, 2002). In addition, I was able to see the degree to which culturally relevant pedagogy was woven into teaching practice.

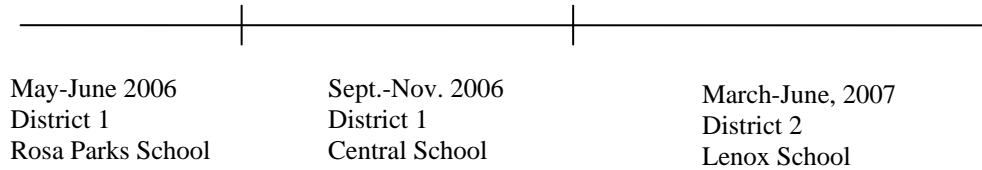
No teachers at Rosa Parks School were asked to volunteer for observation or interviews; the principal characterized the teachers as wary of her from the beginning of the school year, and

generally suspicious of any “outsiders.” She preferred not to request volunteers for me to observe because she felt they were resistant to changes she suggested, and did not want to further antagonize them by promoting my presence in their classrooms. In retrospect, I realized that Ms. Russo was already planning her upcoming departure and probably did not want to take on the struggle of convincing teachers to open their doors for my study that close to leaving the school.

Through gradual cultural immersion as a participant-observer (Fetterman, 1998, p. 35), I sought to identify what school leaders understand about the relationship of race and culture to learning and how, if at all, their understandings influence their work with teachers. This case study of school leadership was designed to generate a portrayal of the relationships among race and culture, teaching, learning, and leadership.

### **3.3 DATA COLLECTION**

This study had three distinct phases of data collection (Figure 3). The first phase began in May 2006, and went through June 2006 when Ms. Russo announced that she had accepted a position as director of curriculum and professional development in a rural county in western Pennsylvania. The second phase of data collection, focused largely on Central School, took place from September 2006 through early November 2006 when the second principal left her position for another principalship of an elementary school in a suburban district. The third phase of data collection spanned the period of March through June 2007 at Lenox School.



**Figure 3: Timeline of data**

I conducted semi-structured interviews of each principal to surface her beliefs about race, her knowledge of culture and learning, and perceptions of the cultural and subject matter competency of the teachers in the school, and her understanding of the principal’s role in developing teacher knowledge, particularly in regard to culturally responsive pedagogy (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). In depth, initial interviews lasting from one hour to an hour and a half (resulting in an average transcript of 15-20 pages), provided information about ways in which the principal interacts with teachers and others in her day-to-day practice, both formally and informally. These initial interviews gave me a sense of the range of activities to sample and allowed me to plan targeted observations. In addition, they revealed others who play a role in instructional leadership in the school, such as subject matter coaches and teacher leaders who were subsequently interviewed and in many cases, observed. All interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis (Merriam, 1998).

Because leadership is a “product of the interactions of school leaders, followers and their situation” (Spillane, 2005), studying interactions among leaders and followers is central to this study. Observational data was collected by “shadowing” each principal on a regular basis over the course of field work. Shadowing the principal for several consecutive hours at a time provided a window into the day-to-day, naturalistic practice of leadership as it unfolds in its

situated context. In addition, I purposively selected events that allowed me to observe the principals and other leaders in various capacities, many of which were identified in the initial interviews, such as conducting walkthroughs, leading faculty meetings, and providing professional development. These events were scheduled in advance and more targeted than the observations acquired through shadowing (see Table 7).

**Table 7: Scope of qualitative data collection**

| Participants  | Interviews   | Observations   |
|---|--|--|
| Principals, assistant principals, and other school leaders such as subject matter coaches | Entry/ exit and several interim interviews of @ 1.5 hours with principals<br><br>Central and Rosa Parks: 5<br>Lenox: 4                         | Multiple observations of practice through “shadowing” of principals during school day for 2-7 hours.<br><br>Central and Rosa Parks: 5<br>Lenox: 5  |
|   | Interviews with assistant principals and additional leaders such as content coaches of 1-1.5 hrs.<br><br>Central and Rosa Parks: 4<br>Lenox: 9 | Observations of targeted events: on-site faculty meetings (2 hrs. each), leadership team meetings (1.5 hrs. each), professional development (1-6 hrs.), etc.<br>Central and Rosa Parks: 8<br>Lenox: 16 |
| Teachers  | Interviews with 2-3 focal teachers in both sites whose teaching is also observed; duration of 1-1.5 hrs.<br><br>Central: 4<br>Lenox: 8         | Classroom observations of literacy and math classes taught by focal teachers for 1.5-3 hours each<br>Central: 5<br>Lenox: 10   |
|   | Interviews with teacher leaders of 1-1.5 hrs.<br><br>Central and Rosa Parks: n/a<br>District 2: 3  | Observations of grade level meetings as well as informal interactions among teachers and teacher-leaders<br>Central: 8<br>District 2: 14   |

While acknowledging that it was not possible to always neatly bound classroom observations, I targeted classes in literacy and mathematics because of the body of research on culturally relevant teaching for both subjects. I included both of these subject matters because instructional leaders lead across multiple subjects. In fact, in order to observe classroom processes as described by Osborne (1996), it was important to be in the classroom at other times as well. Other classes were observed during field work as part of the principals' role of instructional leader. I also observed informal conversations and interactions among other teachers, through participant-observation, and between school leaders and teachers, and kept field notes on them which I later wrote up along with reflections on what I had seen.

Relevant school and district documents were collected as well. Artifacts from classroom teachers and principals that provide information on instruction, or professional development, and what messages are privileged or muted by the principal, were also sought. I was given many documents on reform efforts in the larger district. I also saved newspaper articles about the reform efforts and about school leadership, and imported them into NUD\*IST for coding.

### **3.4 INTERVIEW AND OBSERVATION PROTOCOLS**

Initial interview protocols were designed to surface leaders' knowledge of teaching, learning, and leadership, their knowledge of subject matter, their perspectives, whether asset or deficit, toward students in their schools, their knowledge of the role race plays in education and in their day-to-day practice, and their efforts in improving student and teacher learning (see Appendix A). I adapted several questions from Ladson-Billings (1994) in order to explore school leaders' and teachers' familiarity with culturally relevant pedagogy. Subsequent interview questions

were designed based upon what I learned in initial interviews and observations (Patton, 1990; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Over the course of my fieldwork, interview questions also explored participants' knowledge of instructional leadership, their views of their role in improving teaching and learning, and their beliefs about race, culture, and learning.

Protocols for coach and teacher interviews paralleled those of the principal to a certain degree, with a focus on teacher knowledge of the relationship of race and culture to teaching and learning. The initial teacher protocol also focused on instructional practices and beliefs as observed in the teachers' classroom practice (see Appendix B). In addition, teachers were asked about leadership practices and teacher learning in their schools. Subsequent interview questions were designed based upon what was learned in initial interviews and observations and to follow-up on insights from the participants (see Appendix C).

In attempting to gain an understanding of colorblind ideologies in teaching and learning, I found that a constructionist approach to interviewing facilitated the synthesis of understandings of different events or issues offered by different participants (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). *Responsive interviewing*, "shaped by the practical needs of doing interviews," (p. 30) is a humanistic approach to in-depth interviewing that acknowledges that human beings develop a relationship in the course of an interview, and with these relationships comes ethical responsibilities for the researcher. In conducting interviews, I tried first and foremost to listen carefully to the insights that participants shared about their work and the context of their work as educators, and the meanings they gave to it. Their responses often dictated where to go next in the interview, and whether to pursue certain questions or to drop them.

In my observations of principal practice, I generally took field notes describing as much about the setting, conversations, and actions before me as I could write in my notebook. After

leaving the setting, I would fill in any gaps as soon as possible while details were fresh (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). I developed protocols to guide my school based observations, one for principal shadowing and another for classroom observations (see Appendices D and E, respectively). In my initial classroom observations, I wrote in my notebook but for subsequent observations, I often requested permission to use my laptop if I felt it would not distract the children. In these ways, I tried to capture the complex social world of the schools in which I observed.

Approval to conduct this research was received in February 2006 from the University of Pittsburgh Institutional Review Board (see Appendix F).

### **3.5 DATA ANALYSIS**

I developed extensive logs, one for each district, to track the data I was amassing. Each interview transcription and each set of observational field notes became documents that were imported into NUD\*IST (N6), qualitative data analysis software. I recorded each document's name, the date of the event it represented, participants in each event, and the status of the document's formatting, base coding, and analytic coding.

Analysis was ongoing and began during my field work in the first phase of data collection. I took advantage of summer vacation after the first round of data collection to step back and consider the data I had gathered at that point. This permitted further refinement of my protocols and drafting of my early categorical coding scheme.



I kept an analysis log where I wrote notes on interviews after conducting them, and then again later, as I read through transcripts (Merriam, 1998). I wrote summaries of each interview and observation, noting the points that would contribute to understanding my research questions (Emerson et al., 1995; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). In the back of the analysis log, I recorded themes and ideas that related to my research questions.

I used N6 for my data analysis, entering all field notes of observations and transcripts of interviews conducted at the schools into N6 for management and coding. N6 is a tool for “transforming qualitative data,” and presents the possibility of making “sense of what goes on” (Wolcott, 1994, p. 10). It encourages dynamic and systematic analysis through stages that have been identified as “familiarization, identifying a thematic framework, indexing, charting, mapping and interpretation” (Ritchie & Spencer, 2002).

I developed a coding scheme that was both *a priori* and emergent (Merriam, 1999), beginning with a set of base codes to identify demographics and the roles of participants and contexts in which observations or interviews took place. Table 8 shows both base codes (in the first column) and some of the early analytical categories derived from my conceptual framework (leadership content knowledge, subject matter, how children learn subject matter, how to assist student learning of subject matter, how teachers learn to teach subject matter, and how to assist teacher learning of subject matter; culturally relevant pedagogy; perspectives toward students, etc.) as well as categories that emerged as themes from the data (leadership turnover, “I don’t see color,” “it’s a socioeconomic or class issue,” etc.).

**Table 8: Coding scheme**

| Participants (base coding)   | Leadership  | Culturally relevant pedagogy  | Colorblind ideologies  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <u>School leaders</u><br>○ principal<br>○ assistant principal<br>○ coaches<br><br><u>Teachers</u><br><br><u>Consultants</u><br><br><u>District leaders</u> | <u>Leadership content</u><br><u>knowledge</u><br>○ subject matter literacy mathematics<br>○ how children learn SM<br>○ how to assist Ss learning of SM<br>○ how teachers learn to teach SM<br>○ how to assist T learning of SM<br><br><u>Distributed leadership</u><br><br><u>Conceptions of leadership</u> | <u>Fundamental understandings</u><br>○ CR Ts do not have to come from same racial or ethnic group<br>○ sociopolitical or critical consciousness<br>○ acknowledgement of racism<br>○ teach SM that is CR<br>○ support cultural competence of learners<br><br><u>Learning processes</u><br>○ academically demanding of learners<br>○ warm and respectful<br>○ explicit about cultural assumptions in classroom<br><br><u>Rooted in SM</u><br><br><u>How Ss of diverse racial &amp; cultural heritage learn SM</u> | <u>Perspectives toward Ss</u><br><br>Asset<br>○ parents are concerned about children<br>○ kids want to learn<br><br>Deficit<br>○ parents don't care or aren't involved<br>○ parents don't know how to help<br>○ 'kids don't bring any background knowledge'<br>○ "I don't see color"<br>○ overidentification of Ss into Special Education<br>○ "It's a socioeconomic or class issue" |

I systematically coded the data, for example, to identify occurrences of the principals' involvement in professional development or work with teachers, coding to specify the content, such as subject matter, culturally relevant pedagogy, issues of race, or NCLB policy. I coded documents through an iterative process, continuing to develop specificity in my categories and sub-categories based upon what I was seeing in the data. My coding scheme included 70 base codes and 250 analytic codes (See Appendix G for code book of analytic codes; Base codes have been omitted to protect confidentiality). Each rereading of documents and coded data allowed further immersion and thus, further familiarization with the data (Stake, 1995).

During the analysis, I also developed a descriptive narrative of each school, creating reports that focused on issues of leadership, culture, race, and teaching and learning at each school. I also created matrices of data that allowed me to compare and contrast the school principals and other leaders based on common themes, and I did the same for focal teachers.

The extensive coding allowed me to access the data at any given category. I used open coding in the early phases of analysis, followed by axial coding which allowed for the examination of relationships among the various categories (Merriam, 1998). After coding the data for deficit and asset perspectives, for example, and realizing that many educators sometimes expressed both within the same text unit, I searched for overlaps of the two categories, and this search resulted in a new category that I could examine holistically. The new category of overlaps allowed me to access all of the data, look across it, and analyze it, thus further refining my understanding of educators' perspectives and ways in which they are demonstrative of racialized ideologies. These iterative steps allowed for a systematic analysis that assisted the interpretive process.

### **3.6 LIMITATIONS**

Several substantive limitations have come to light over the course of this study. Designed as a case study that aims to build a deep portrayal of school leadership, this inquiry is necessarily limited in sample size. With a principal and one of her assistants as initial participants, I hoped to be able to observe their practice over several months. But leadership turnover at the building and district level and the strength of privacy norms that may still be inherent in the principalship proved to be challenges in conducting this research.

Leadership changes at the district and building level proved to be somewhat disruptive to a study on leadership. Dynamics shifted from leadership practice that had been open and collaborative to practice that was more closed and guarded. When word inadvertently got out that the first principal, Ms. Russo, had resigned, she held an impromptu meeting with teachers to confirm the facts of her departure, and then became less visible as she used vacation days in the final weeks of the school year. She had completed staff evaluations months before and conducted end of the year grade level meetings with teachers. Therefore there was less “real” leadership happening. When people know they are leaving, they tend not to be as involved or invested in core leadership activities; they may already be thinking about their future position and the possibilities it offers.

The turnover in leadership limited what I was able to observe, not only in late May into June 2006, but also in the fall of 2006. In May, I was not invited into classrooms at Rosa Parks where Ms. Russo qualified her relationship with reticent teachers as “still developing”. She did not want to push for permission from teachers for me to observe classrooms, and this reluctance may have solidified when she knew she was leaving. Luckily, I had two focal teachers at Central School, the school where Ms. Russo had been principal for three years, who continued to participate in the study through the fall. However, when school was back in session in September with Ms. Thomas as the new principal, she had already interviewed for a similar position in a suburban district and left Central School in November 2006.

Privacy norms came into play several times over the course of data collection. School leaders are very possessive of their time, and juggle many demands. Of the three principals studied, none of them really encouraged unscheduled observations or shadowing, even though they initially agreed to such an arrangement. As with teaching, formal leadership practice, while

perhaps more public in many ways, remains somewhat inscrutable. In addition, some of the events that I was invited to observe seemed rather staged. Unless I could triangulate the regularity of such an event, I assumed it to be a rare occurrence (Stake, 1995).

## 4.0 CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

In presenting the findings of a case study of White school leadership in an urban setting, this chapter begins with “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of the three schools that were the sites of the research, along with portrayals of the three school principals and their practice. Such description helps “to convey a holistic understanding of the case” (Merriam, 1998, p. 194) and situates the analysis that follows. In an attempt to provide a balance between description and interpretation, the portrayals provide general description of the context, particular description through quotes from interviews and field notes, and are followed by “interpretive commentary” (Emerson et al., 1995; Erickson, 1986, as cited in Merriam, 1998; Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

The results of the data analysis are reported in four sections. In Section 4.1, I describe the context of the study through portrayals of the three principals, two from Riverton City Schools, the small urban district, and one from Weston City Schools, the mid-size urban district. In addition, I present a brief analysis of their practice through the lens of leadership content knowledge (Stein & Nelson, 2003). In Sections 4.2-4.4, I present findings for each of the research questions and sub-questions. In Section 4.2, I discuss the perspectives of school leaders and teachers toward students of color, and analyze ways in which these perspectives connect to teaching, learning, and leadership. Section 4.3 examines the presence of culturally relevant pedagogy in the schools and classrooms through portrayals of teacher practice. I consider the role of school leadership in developing or hindering culturally relevant pedagogy. In Section

4.4, I focus on the contexts and events in the day to day practice of school leadership in which issues of race, culture, and learning surface. I analyze the extent to which leaders mediate such issues and the resources available to them to do so, and finish with a discussion of school leaders' understandings of the relationship of race and culture to learning.

## 4.1 THE CONTEXT

### 4.1.1 Riverton City Schools: Rosa Parks School and Central School

*The Leadership Practice of Ms. Russo, Principal of Rosa Parks and Central Schools*

To get to Rosa Parks School in southwestern Pennsylvania, I drive through the forlorn downtown of a small city, about ten blocks long. Many of the storefronts are boarded up but others are already open, including one with a sign advertising "Payday Loans." There are other stores offering "cash advances," several beauty salons, and a cleaning company.

The traffic lights are out of sync, causing traffic to stop just about every block and making it quite convenient for pedestrians to walk across the street wherever they please. It is rush hour, and opposing traffic is backed up as far as the eye can see. The road that goes through downtown is a busy thoroughfare and alternative route to the main east-west highway that carries morning commuters into a nearby, large urban center.

Rosa Parks School is an old brick building located just off of this street, about a mile past the downtown area. Just before 8:00 on a sunny May morning in 2006, there is a lot of activity in front of the school. Children of all sizes are heading into the building, while many others stay out on the side lot which is paved and fenced in. There is a dilapidated basketball hoop without a

net at one end of the lot, and the older kids are playing a pick-up game before classes start. The building has seen better days. Two older White women are standing on the sidewalk in front of the steps that lead up to the front door of the school, and they are greeting everyone who passes by on their way up the stairs. One of the women is wearing a tee-shirt that has a stylized drawing of three African women, with the phrase “African Women’s Legacy” written under the image.

Just past the front door, I come upon a large open atrium. Walls rise a few stories on three sides of it, and there are no windows anywhere. There are several classrooms off of the atrium and hallways that disappear off either side of it. To my left is a door marked “Office.” In the back corner of the open space, lots of primary age children with their backpacks strapped to them sit in front of a large TV watching cartoons. They are waiting to be told to go to class. I see the principal talking to a woman by the office door, and decide to wait on a folding chair by the door. Ms. Russo soon comes over and welcomes me. She tells me that we’ll be observing a kindergarten mathematics demonstration lesson upstairs at 8:15, taught by the district mathematics coach.

Ms. Russo heads in through the office door, and I follow. She is in her early fifties but looks younger, with shoulder-length light brown hair and a slight frame. She seems business-like, quiet but friendly, as she introduces me to Ms. Bekka and Ms. Sherman, the two African American office assistants who sit behind a long desk across from the entrance to this public part of the office. I notice a black and white video monitor hanging from the ceiling in one corner of the office; it scans the entry and allows the assistants to determine which visitors to buzz in. The assistants both greet me warmly, and Ms. Russo and I continue into her office to the right. Her door, which has a narrow rectangular window in it, has lots of “thank you” notes from students



taped to it, thanking Ms. Russo for having read to their class. There is a white board on the door, and also a poster entitled “What a balanced literacy program looks like.” The components listed on the poster include phonics, decoding, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, and each has an explanation under it.

It is 8:05 as we go into Ms. Russo’s office. The office is rectangular with two desks at opposite ends, and a round conference table in the middle. The second desk belongs to Ms. Miller, the assistant principal of Rosa Parks School. The outside wall is lined with windows that let in bright light. The principal opens a red folder that is in the middle of a round conference table, and suggests that I take a seat. She tells me that there are five disciplinary referrals in the folder from the previous day. She says again that she and I will observe a kindergarten mathematics class that is co-taught by the building and district level mathematics coaches, but first she needs to take care of these discipline issues. Ms. Russo walks over behind her desk and calls someone about the referrals, maybe one of her assistants, and asks her to get two students from their classes.

A short, thin African American boy, probably about third grade age, walks into the principal’s office, and stands by her desk. A minute later, another little boy appears and stands next to him. Ms. Russo tells them to have a seat for a minute. With great gravitas, the children sit down quietly at the table with me, being very respectful of Ms. Russo. Ms. Russo makes another phone call and says, “Michael is having a hard time at Central today. [Central is the other school where she is principal. She spent 3 years there and is now leading both schools.] His class has a sub and it’s hard. Someone needs to come and take him home.”

One of the children sitting with me at the table asks quietly, “She works at Central, too?” I nod. Just then, a third child comes into the office, and one of the other children tells him to sit

down. He walks around behind me, and I say “Excuse me.” He says, “That’s alright.” At 8:12, a fourth, older child enters the office and he stands by the table, soon kneeling on one knee as if he needs to rest. He still has his backpack on. Meanwhile, Ms. Russo is still on the phone with the grandmother of the child from Central, asking, “He still needs his medicine? Where is that? Riverton East? I’ll call over there to see if we can help you. He’s going to come home. He needs his medicine.” She says goodbye and hangs up, but immediately makes another phone call. She repeats almost verbatim what she had already said to the first family member: “He needs to go home today since there is a sub. He can walk home.” She walks over and sits at the table and talks to the children gathered around it. She calmly asks them about the referrals, and continues with a few follow-up questions about their rough housing at lunch time the day before. The children listen respectfully and apologize for their behavior, and are soon sent back to their classes amidst promises that it won’t happen again. By 8:15, Ms. Russo and I are heading upstairs to observe the demonstration lesson in mathematics.

The events this morning are representative of Ms. Russo’s efforts to address challenges she encountered in a school where most teachers are tenured with many years of experience, and have not had a strong principal for many years. While she works toward establishing positive discipline at Rosa Parks, she also attempts to improve instruction with a teaching staff that has had seven principals in seven years. As Ms. Russo said:

I think that this building has really...it has a history here that...it’s hard to isolate the variables...exactly which things affect the way the teaching goes in this building. But they have had a different principal in this building every year for the last seven years. So that’s one thing that impacts this situation here. The people here have done a lot of things without accountability or a real leader in

the building for many years. It was very difficult at the beginning of this year, and they're still not easy. They're still a work in progress in this building... It was not a positive learning environment, was not positive behaviorally, everything was about consequences and excluding children. Kids were in school, out of school, long term suspensions, moved to approved private schools. The teachers rebelled against my positive system of dealing with children at the beginning of the year...it still is my biggest challenge 'cause they still want them gone and out of sight, out of mind. And they had a history of being able to do that. They were empowered to do that.

[D.RS.DR.IV.060502]

Ms. Russo's leadership represented a new regime for teachers who were used to little, if any, questioning of their instructional or disciplinary decisions. In the first year of her leadership at Rosa Parks School, Ms. Russo worked with teachers to establish a program of positive discipline that kept children in classrooms and in school. This represented a major shift from a highly punitive approach to the discipline of children. Students were now rewarded for attendance, for good behavior, and for good grades with a special field trip every nine weeks; in the spring of 2006, most students and teachers went to a professional baseball game. She said:

Most people become teachers because they like children, and they feel a connection with children, and they want to make a difference in a child's life. But for some reason, the system gets in the way, and they lose contact with that. But when they actually get to go back to that again, and they get positive experiences with children...if they're sitting in a movie with them or going bowling with them or roller skating with them and they're interacting that

way...then that brings back how they felt and it ends up being contagious.

[D.RS.DR.IV.060502]

The principal viewed these trips not only as a source of motivation for children, but also as an important venue for building positive relationships between teachers and their students. She feels that such relationships lead to higher teacher expectations for children, and improved instruction and learning.

Ms. Russo has tried to transfer some of the leadership routines and norms that have been part of her practice over the past three years at Central School to Rosa Parks School [D.RS.DR.OB.060505; D.RS.DR.IV.060502; D.CS.KK.IV.060608]. These routines, reflective of Ms. Russo's leadership content knowledge, focus on school improvement through the use of learning walks and school-embedded professional development, including deeper involvement of subject matter coaches in classrooms, and were supported by collaboration with university-based consultants. They stand in contrast to the long-standing system of classroom autonomy and low administrative involvement at Rosa Parks School that Ms. Russo has encountered.

On this May morning, Ms. Russo takes me upstairs to observe a demonstration lesson in mathematics. The principal is not sure what the focus of the lesson will be but she tells me that it will be presented to a kindergarten class [D.RS.DR.OB.060505]. It is going to be taught by the consultant who serves as the district mathematics coordinator; he is assisted by the school's coach.

The lesson provides an opportunity for learning for both the building coach and the kindergarten teacher and may be of slightly greater consequence because the principal and an outside observer will be present. It takes place in the coach's office in a former classroom, where half of the room is set up as a classroom and half of it as an office. A group of eleven

kindergarten children, 10 of whom are African American, and one of whom is White, quietly sits in a semi-circle on the floor near the blackboard. Their teacher, an older African American woman, sits on a chair behind them. There is a screen pulled down in front of the blackboard on which a slide is projected. The slide shows colorful shapes in each corner, surrounding a smiley face in the middle, with the caption, "Can you guess my shape?" A young White woman, the building mathematics coach, sits next to a desk with a computer and projector on it. The older White man standing in front of the children is Mr. Campbell, a consultant in mathematics who works with the district mathematics coaches. Ms. Russo and I sit on two little chairs behind the computer and overhead set up, not far from the building coach. I take notes while the principal sits and watches.

Mr. Campbell tells the children that they are going to play a game about shapes. The slide changes to one that has a poem on it that he reads:

I see a shape coming into view, is it red or is it blue?

Just what shape are the sides making and just how many sides is it taking?

Count the corners nice and quick, Wow, you were really slick.

Count the sides before we stop, 1,2,3 they all go pop.

A short vertical line appears on the screen. Although it is impossible to make any reasonable guess about the shape at this point, Mr. Campbell asks the kids, "Can anyone guess what shape this is?" A student says, "Square," and Mr. Campbell requests that the child "come up and draw where you think the next line will be." As the child approaches and is obviously way too small to reach the on-screen image, the coach pulls a chair over and lifts him onto it. The child makes an invisible line with his finger, and Mr. Campbell says, "OK, good!" Other children sit in their places looking up at the screen but some begin to squirm. The child climbs

down, and goes back to his place as a second line appears on the screen. This is repeated with two other children until a square has indeed been constructed line by line on the overhead screen.

Mr. Campbell then says: “Can we make a rule about squares?”

A child answers: “It’s purple.”

Mr. Campbell prompts: “What about my sides?”

Another child says: “They’re the same.”

Mr. Campbell nods, and says: “Are they all the same? Let’s count them.” He points and counts along with the class: “1, 2, 3, 4.” How many sides are there?”

The children respond, “Four.”

Then, Mr. Campbell asks, “What else do you notice?”

A child says, “Those points.”

Mr. Campbell continues: “What about those points? How many are there?”

Another child answers, “Four.”

Mr. Campbell: “Let’s count.” He touches each point as students count chorally. Then, a sentence is added to the screen: “I’m a square.” [D.RS.DR.OB.060505]

After continuing this slow-paced activity in similar fashion with three other shapes, Mr. Campbell announces that it is now time for the class to go to reading, and dismisses the children to line up. As the children line up, the kindergarten teacher says to them, “Let’s hear ‘thank you’ for Dr. Campbell.” The children all say “Thank you” in unison. The class exits, and Ms. Russo and I stand up. The principal thanks Dr. Campbell and the school’s mathematics coach, saying, “Good job.”

This lesson, set up as an example of model practice in mathematics for a classroom teacher, the principal, and a guest to observe, was bogged down by an overindulgent use of technology and a lack of conceptual rigor that might have been expected in a 40 minute period. A whole-group, teacher-centered lesson, it kindled little student engagement. The kindergartners patiently sat on the floor looking up at the screen while every few minutes, one of them was

called up to point to the screen. Although the district coach presented the lesson as a model, the task placed low cognitive demands on the children (Stein, Smith, Henningsen, & Silver, 2000).

Afterwards, the principal did not comment on the content of the lesson nor did she ask any questions about it, or set a time to do so with the subject matter coaches or the teacher [D.RS.DR.OB.060505]. While she acknowledged beforehand that she did not know what the coaches would be presenting, she may have trusted them to plan a rigorous mathematics lesson. Instead, we saw a demonstration lesson with low cognitive demands, without any follow-up discussion among the principal, the kindergarten teacher, the district mathematics coach, and the building mathematics coach. But the class could have been the topic of discussion with the teacher who observed to ensure that she not view it as a model to emulate. This episode contradicted teacher accounts of Ms. Russo's strong leadership content knowledge.

But it may be that Ms. Russo's thoughts are elsewhere. Unbeknownst to the school community and this researcher, Ms. Russo had already made plans to move to a central office position in a suburban district, and the search for the 8<sup>th</sup> principal in eight years at Rosa Parks School would begin the following month. She would be leaving Rosa Parks and Central School where she mentored Laney Thomas, a woman who served as intern and assistant principal with her before succeeding her as principal in late August 2006. Ms. Thomas is presented in the following section.

*The Leadership Practice of Ms. Thomas: From Assistant Principal to Principal at Central School*

While Ms. Russo was principal of both Central and Rosa Parks Schools in spring 2006, Ms. Thomas was the assistant principal across town at Central. To get there, I turn off the main

road before driving through the downtown section of Riverton and drive several blocks through a residential area. The houses seem slightly run down and close together. Kitty-cornered from the third stop sign, there is a large green lawn with a sprawling school building set back from the road. It looks like a one story building, but there is a sloping hill on one side, leading down to a parking lot for teachers and staff. There is a lower level to the school, with the kitchen and cafeteria in the basement, along with kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades.

I park and walk around to the front door and press a buzzer. I hear a click, and pull on the door handle to enter the school lobby. The hallway is carpeted with an indoor/outdoor blue floor covering. I walk down the hall to the office which has an inviting feel with the walls on the hallway side all made of glass. The secretary sitting behind a desk greets me, and asks me to sign in. There are two parents with young children sitting in the reception area and soon, a teacher comes in and escorts them to their kindergarten screening. The secretary tells me that Ms. Thomas is on the phone but will be with me shortly [D.CS.OB.060510].

After a few minutes, Ms. Thomas walks out and welcomes me into her office. In her early thirties, Ms. Thomas was a teacher for seven years before becoming an assistant principal intern, sponsored by a university program in urban school leadership the year before, and an assistant principal in the current year (2006-07). Because she had taught at Central School for three years beforehand, she knew the teachers and had developed a strong working relationship with Ms. Russo who had been principal at Central for two of those years, as well as her internship year.

There is only one desk in this shared office, but it has two name plates on it, one for “Laney Thomas, Assistant Principal” and the other, “Debra Russo, Principal.” Ms. Thomas sits behind the desk and begins to tell me about her role at the school. With Ms. Russo spending



more than half of her time at Rosa Parks School, Ms. Thomas describes her own role as “unique in the fact that the principal isn’t here on a daily basis, so I am involved in the daily management of the building.” In explaining what that entails, she said:

That would consist of parent meetings, if there’s some parent concerns, meeting with teachers, and having grade level meetings, faculty meetings, meeting with students on an individual basis if they have a need or there’s a conflict between them and their peers, classroom observations, informal and formal, and just the daily operations of overseeing the school building and the needs of the staff, the teachers, the students, the parents.

[D.CS.LT.IV.060510]

She added that Ms. Russo was still in charge of formal teacher evaluations although they completed many of the evaluations together, and debriefed with teachers together.

After Ms. Russo’s resignation became public in early June and both schools lost their principal, it seemed logical that the assistant principals would be named as principal of their schools and have the entire summer to transition into their new role. As of late August, however, no appointments had been made. One week before the school year was to begin, the new superintendent finally made the official announcement that Ms. Thomas would be the principal of Central School, and Ms. Miller, principal of Rosa Parks. Ms. Thomas experienced an easy move into the role of principal despite the late notification, saying:

I think once the school year started, it was a fairly smooth transition and I think most of all that relates to the unique role that I served in last year. As of this past June 9th, I actually was given and assumed responsibilities of the principal even though I wasn’t technically appointed into that position. So as far as closing out the

building, doing the paperwork, taking inventory, doing ordering, doing your daily routines over the summer, participating in the instructional decisions that would be made for this year, staff decisions that would be made, dealing with parents, the organization of the building, any kind of grounds or maintenances [was] under my responsibility. Even though, technically, I was still the Assistant Principal. So starting off this school year being notified late August that I received the position, it was a smooth transition for those reasons.

[D.CS.LT.IV.061011]

Although most of what Ms. Thomas describes fits within administrative or management routines of school leadership rather than instructional or learning routines, completing these tasks coupled with the strong mentoring relationship she had with Ms. Russo enabled a “smooth transition” into the principalship. Ms. Green, one of the focal teachers at Central whose practice is described later in this chapter, mentioned that as of August 2006, the school no longer had an assistant principal, thus adding stress to Ms. Thomas’ role:

She has so many jobs. I think she’s spread way too thin. She doesn’t have an assistant. So she has probably three hundred and fifty some students with a lot of needs and a lot of behavior issues. So her biggest role is just to maintain safety in the building and to handle the parents and students. Where other places, they don’t have that role. They have other people. They have more help: Assistant Principals and things. And here she’s pretty ...spread pretty thin.

[D.CS.CG.IV.061101]

This teacher sees the principal’s most important responsibility in terms of preserving a safe environment and “handling” the parents and students. But Ms. Thomas also attends to

teacher learning. Although “spread way too thin,” she nevertheless established routines described by Ms. Green:

She does learning walks where she invites you to go into another grade to watch other teachers teach where you get wonderful ideas. She has an open-door policy. You’re able to go into her office at any time, for any reason. You’re not intimidated. She now has in-services in the morning at 7:30. From 7:30 to 8:00 she has really stepped up and has a lot of in-services for the teachers.

[D.CS.CG.IV.061101]

While the learning walks and classroom visits may represent a continuation of leadership routines developed during Ms. Russo’s tenure, Ms. Thomas had also committed to a new series of workshops for teachers on examining student data from the first *4Sight Benchmark Assessment* of the school year (Success for All Foundation, 2008). This was a district priority that she reflected at the building level. One of these workshops is examined in the following paragraphs.

I observed Ms. Thomas at two early morning “in-services” that focused on *4Sight Benchmark Assessments* in late September and mid-October 2006 (two others were cancelled at the last minute because a consultant could not present). Some of the summertime “instructional decisions” that Ms. Thomas described earlier (see quote on p. 12) related to her role in the planning of professional development for teachers on the use of *4Sight* assessment data after the district piloted it in the previous school year. Aligned with the Pennsylvania Standards, the *4Sight Benchmark Assessment* is “a benchmark assessment tool that enables you to predict your students’ reading – and in some states, math – achievement multiple times throughout the year” (Success for All Foundation web site, 2008). Its use is widespread throughout the state of

Pennsylvania, with 340 of 501 districts using it in 2006-07 (<http://www.pattan.k12.pa.us/files/Handouts07/4Sight032707.pdf>). Riverton District was using it in grades 3-6.

The first in-service begins at 7:30 a.m. and includes the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers with the goal of discussing the *4Sight* data from their classes; as the first administration of the assessment this year, it provides “baseline” data. The three teachers at each level are present, along with the building mathematics coach and the literacy coach. The teachers had pushed two rows of six desks up against each other so everyone could sit together.

Ms. Thomas and the coaches hand out scored assessments to the teachers, and they begin to leaf through them. The principal stands at one end of the cluster as she addresses the teachers, telling them:

This time is for you to review your baseline data and look at the open-ended questions. Tomorrow, we’ll go over *4Sight* data with the other elementary schools. But we’d like you to look at the actual questions and the rubric, and look at your class. Look at the scoring for the open-ended questions; it’s beneficial to see how they’re doing in math and also reading.

[D.CS.OB.060928]

The math coach says that most students are finished concentrating by the time they get to the open-ended questions, and wonders why the kids can’t start with those. One of the focal teachers, Ms. Kowalski, responds that teachers were told that everybody had to follow the given order. The principal tells them that the administration wanted to have teachers score the open-ended questions because they would see patterns, but there is no money for substitute teachers to cover the classes. The subject matter coaches and the administrators did the scoring [D.CS.OB.060928]. It gets quiet as the teachers look at their students’ tests.

One teacher announces that she is missing all of her reading tests. The mathematics coach suggests that her colleagues look through their piles to make sure they don't have the missing tests. There is occasional discussion of individual students. One teacher complains that a student didn't know what "scientist" was, having never seen the word in print before. No one responds to her comment. Ms. Kowalski, sitting next to the principal, has a side conversation with her about a 5<sup>th</sup> grade child who had stolen items from another child. She tells Ms. Thomas that the student admitted it to her mother.

The teachers continue shuffling through their papers until 8:00 am when they begin to put the papers back into manila envelopes. Ms. Thomas tells the teachers to "hold onto them today, and we'll look at them tomorrow." The desks are rearranged, and the teachers head out the door to their classes [D.CS.OB.060928].

The following day, there would be a district-wide session for teachers conducted by a university-based consultant about connecting assessment data to instruction [D.CS.OB.060929]. But this in-service with the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers at Central School did little to encourage thought in that direction, or to assess how the teachers thought about the relationship between the *4Sight Benchmark Assessments* and their classroom instruction. The principal and coaches did not provide the teachers with any organizing tasks that could have served as scaffolding for the district-wide PD the next day, with teacher learning in mind. In addition, the discussion was largely subject matter neutral. For example, Ms. Thomas did not ask the teachers to closely examine the mathematics or literacy questions that were most challenging to the students. When a teacher made a comment about the word "scientist," there was no follow up from either the literacy coach or the principal to encourage discussion about connections between the data and classroom literacy instruction. The principal was present to answer questions about the

assessment and assessment data, and as she said in her introduction to the agenda for the session, to allow time for the teachers to review the results. However, it is not clear how, if at all, this professional development strategy facilitates teacher learning, a goal of instructional leadership (Spillane, 2005; Stein & Nelson, 2003).

The second school-based in-service that I observed in mid-October was led by the district administrator in charge of data and assessment and took place in the school's cramped computer lab so that teachers could learn how to access the 4Sight online tool for examination of their classroom data. Although Ms. Thomas was present, her role was limited to introducing the central office administrator.

Right around the time of these observations in late September 2006, Ms. Thomas presented her resignation to the superintendent, and they negotiated her departure date for early November. She was moving to a principalship of a large suburban elementary school, a big change from Central School in this small urban district. She identified several factors in her decision to leave, including the delay in her appointment as principal of Central School, the fact that her colleague and mentor, Ms. Russo had left, and the recent departure of the university consultants from the district. For her brief tenure as principal of Central, Ms. Thomas maintained the status quo at a time of leadership turnover at the district level with a new superintendent, and turnover at the building level in two out of three elementary schools in the district. In her work with teachers, she focused on leadership routines and procedural knowledge rather than teachers' subject matter knowledge, or how to improve the teaching of subject matter. Her school leadership experience in an urban context was at best tentative.

Thus, Riverton was faced with the task of replacing a principal in November, an unusual time to successfully undertake such a search. Within weeks, Ms. Miller, who was intern

assistant principal when Debra Russo was principal, was moved from Rosa Parks School to Central School to become principal of the school where she had once taught 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. An interim principal was hired for Rosa Parks, thereby becoming the ninth principal in eight years at the school.

#### **4.1.2 Westwood Public Schools: Lenox School**

The last school principal to be introduced, Dr. Schneider, works in a midsize urban district called Weston with approximately 32,000 students at the time of the study. The school where she was reassigned for 2006-07 is several miles away from Rosa Parks and Central Schools in the Riverton School District.

The area of the city where Lenox School is located, also called “Lenox,” is high on a ridge with distant views across a river that is still used for industrial transportation. I drive through several distinct neighborhoods, all somewhat bleak and forgotten by newer development that is taking place in other parts of the city. Wood frame houses line the street, very close to one another. The community of Lenox is predominantly White, and is situated between two neighborhoods that are predominantly African American. In recent years, gangs from the two surrounding communities have engaged in several shootings, mostly targeting each other (*City News*, May 2007).

After rounding a corner where there is a Korean grocery store, I drive past a church, and arrive at the school. I park along the street amidst several other cars, half in the street and half on the sidewalk. Lenox School is housed in two geographically separate buildings, and this one houses kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade; the more modern building that houses 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades is located four blocks down a steep a hill, and a few blocks over. Lenox School is a

newly reconstituted school created by a policy decision of the Board of Education. The mid-size urban district was facing a budgetary crisis which the Board felt could be partially alleviated by closing many neighborhood schools.

The district administration chose the America's Choice reform model for implementation in several of the reconstituted K-8 schools, including Lenox. The America's Choice web site explains that its "School Design helps districts and schools focus on five critical elements of school improvement:

1. Creating a standards-based system with assessments that monitor progress and inform instruction;
2. Aligning instruction to standards and focusing teaching on moving students from where they are to where they need to be;
3. Strengthening instructional leadership;
4. Building professional learning communities;
5. Engaging parents and the community." (America's Choice, 2008)

Each school is expected to have a Leadership Team, consisting of assistant principals, subject matter coaches, several teacher-leaders, and the family liaison, that works closely with the principal to monitor implementation of the reforms. At Lenox, this team met on a weekly basis over the course of this study (March through June 2007). There were two America's Choice (AC) consultants assigned to the district to collaborate with school leaders in providing professional development to teachers, visiting classrooms, modeling instruction, and offering overall assistance in multiple schools.

"Focus walks" take place on a regular basis to evaluate implementation of the reform, occurring when the principal, assistant principals, and coaches, with or without the AC consultants, walk through the school as a team to observe classroom instruction and follow-up



with some informal feedback to teachers. The more formal version of the focus walk is called a “Quality Review” with an expanded team of observers including district administrators and a representative from AC in New York City, and it takes place twice a year. The Leadership Team meets with the observers before a Quality Review to present initial “evidence” of the school’s progress in each of the five critical elements for school improvement, and after it to assess progress together. Except for the teachers, members of the Leadership Team also participate in the Quality Review itself.

When the first AC Quality Review was conducted at Lenox in December 2006, it showed that implementation was *not* on schedule, and that little progress had been made in meeting program goals. Consequently, Dr. Schneider decided to spend most of her time in the K-2 building, focusing on instructional improvement. The two assistant principals were assigned to focus on the 3-8 building, with one of them on the first floor in charge of grades 3 through 5, and the other upstairs, responsible for grades 6 through 8.

The physical distance between the two buildings that make up this school is far enough to be problematic. The teachers and school leaders rarely meet as one professional K-8 community, the coaches run between the two buildings, and older and younger children rarely have the opportunity to interact in contrast to one of the hallmarks of the AC reform model. The principal addressed the impact on school leadership and community in one of the first leadership team meetings after receiving results of the December Quality Review, saying:

Everyone knows what a struggle it’s been to run two buildings, and I’ve started complaining publicly. I believe [the district director of facilities] is coming tomorrow to do a walk-through. I sent a memo and wrote a list of non-educational issues, and educational issues. I wrote about the parking issue, traveling back and forth, and how steep the roads are. We cannot be together as a school.

There is no auditorium. We cannot meet as a staff all together. In the America's Choice K-8 model, the whole point is cross-age tutoring and to have kids interact. I requested consideration of a new building.

[D.LS.OB2.070321]

Later, she again spoke of the physical distance in terms of AC implementation, saying, "The design doesn't work in two buildings" [D.LS.OB.070328]. Although the subject matter coaches work in 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades, their offices are both located in the 3-8 building, while the Reading First coach is centered in the K-2 building. Being housed in two separate buildings presents challenges in providing learning opportunities for children and developing a strong professional learning community for teachers and school leaders.

These challenges are especially salient because Lenox is a new school, with a new population of students who have never before gone to school together, and a new professional community of teachers and school leaders. In the following paragraphs, I present the history of the two neighborhood communities that form Lenox because it is central to understanding the larger context.

Lenox had previously existed as a neighborhood school in a community that was predominantly White. In the fall of 2006, it was reconstituted (*City News*, Aug. 2006) by combining it with Lincoln School, a closed school with a student population that was predominantly African American. The latter had been housed in a newer building with a swimming pool and other "amenities," including a kitchen for the preparation of hot school lunches, unavailable in the reconstituted school. The district-wide closings and reopenings created many new schools made up of new communities of school leaders, teachers, students, and parents. With the addition of Lincoln students, Lenox School's demographics shifted from

70% White and 30% African American to 60% African American and 40% White (district documents). As the principal stated:

It was a huge shift. Lenox proper is a very...am I allowed to say this? A very racist community and they did not like those kids coming into their school. So we had to deal with a lot of racial stuff and the irony of it is it really wasn't kid motivated. It was adult motivated.

[D.LS.KS.IV.070316]

Several months after the school's opening, the principal described the surrounding neighborhood as "racist," an opinion that had not changed since the beginning of the year. Although the school district envisioned the arrival of the new students from Lincoln well in advance of the first day of school, its policy of reconstitution did not include any plans for efforts in community-building among families and their children.

The district wide plan was to reopen numerous "new" schools with extended hours and an extended school year, implementing reform efforts based upon America's Choice as previously described. The district anticipated the need for professional development related to AC but did not anticipate the need for community-building. District documents reveal that teachers from the AC schools received eight days of professional development on the reform model in the summer of 2006 while principals and coaches were offered a few additional days. However, the school's professional community was together for only a week before classes began, thus allowing little time to address the blending of two racially disparate communities of students and families at Lenox.

When asked about the "heads up" that she received from the district central office, or outreach that the district extended beforehand to the communities, the principal said:

No heads up. And I've not worked in multicultural schools. I've really...my experience is predominately with African American schools and so it was shocking to get here and pinch myself, remind myself that it's 2006 back in August. So it was shocking and it was shocking for a lot of the staff. It was certainly shocking for my two assistant principals and we've slowly stopped dealing with those issues. Did the district do anything? No. Did I share that knowledge with them? Yes.

[D.LS.KS.IV.070316]

Dr. Schneider found it “shocking” to encounter the racism that existed. In fact, little attention, if any, had been accorded to the “reconstitution” of a new community of learners at Lenox before the opening of school. According to Sarah, one of the focal teachers of this study:

I always heard a lot of bad things about Lincoln. And even just in the teachers' room and the way we talked between each other. It was, “Oh, Lincoln. It's a rough school.” So we knew that those kids that were in Lincoln were going to be fed into Lenox. And I never really heard...Lenox always seemed like it was neutral territory, so to speak. But at the very beginning of the year, we got kind of a warning letter from our [guidance counselor] that there were some problems with the kids saying that there were people from Lincoln that came here to their school and they hated them, or the families hated them. But I really didn't experience that too much at the primary level. I think that was more at the intermediate building. And I haven't heard much about it lately, so I think everyone just kind of accepted it.

[D.LS.KQ.IV.070516]

Even before school began, the teachers had preconceived notions about the children from Lincoln, predominantly African American, who would be attending Lenox. Lincoln is described as “rough” while the former Lenox population is described as “neutral.” In referring to a school-

wide letter from the school guidance counselor to advise teachers to be aware of tensions, this 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher matter-of-factly described children talking about “hating” the Lincoln children coming to Lenox. She located most of the problems within the 3-8 building and not within the K-2 building where she teaches.

The outside lower level of the three story structure used for K-2 consists of brick walls with no windows, giving the impression of a fortress. I walk to the door and ring the buzzer, and someone lets me in remotely. I walk into a small, dark foyer; to the right is a brightly lit coke machine and a stairwell, and to the left, the school cafeteria. I head upstairs. There is an artistic, three-dimensional display of a tropical tree on the wall at the first landing, with student writing about the “Kapok Tree” posted around it. At the top of the stairs is a bulletin board that features Anansi stories with a picture of the trickster spider and more student writing. The open office door is just past the bulletin board, and I enter.

The school secretary, an older White woman, is standing in a cramped area behind a chest-high counter to the right. She is dressed head to toe in several shades of green in honor of St. Patrick’s Day. After I introduce myself, she tells me that the principal is expecting me.

I knock on Dr. Schneider’s door and she welcomes me into her roomy office. To the right is a small seating area, with two chairs on each side of a coffee table. Just past the seating area is the principal’s desk with a large chair behind it. Perpendicular to the desk, there is an extension of it that holds a computer and printer. To the other side is a two level rotating book shelf, packed with binders. Windows line the opposite wall. The wide window sill is full of coffee cups, a coffee machine, and a small refrigerator. The principal walks toward me, vigorously shakes my hand, and joins me in the seating area. She begins to tell me about her background, the move to Lenox, and her leadership of the AC reforms.

After Dr. Schneider completed her doctorate in school administration, along with her certification in administration and supervision, she took a position in a rural district for two years. She returned to Weston City Schools in 2002 and “took the worst school in the state of Pennsylvania” [D.LS.KS.IV.070316]. The school, considered to be in crisis, had low teacher morale, some of the worst test scores in the state, and an 83% free or reduced lunch rate (*City News*, June 2005). Children were moving on to 6<sup>th</sup> grade without being proficient in reading, writing, and mathematics. According to the newspaper, Dr. Schneider brought

...a dream that [the school’s] students could become exceptional scholars and a plan she hopes will boost achievement for years to come. The result, teachers say, is a school that has been ‘100 percent transformed.’ Nearly all the kindergarten and first-grade students can read and do math proficiently, their teachers say, and the older children’s test scores have leaped since 2002. Math scores rose from 5.9 percent of students being considered proficient in 2002 to 34.1 percent the following year to 35.3 percent last year. Reading scores rose from 7.9 percent of students being considered proficient in 2002 to 22.7 percent the following year to 29.4 percent last year. In all but last year’s math score, which met state standards, the results fell short of state thresholds but still were considered passing because they improved so dramatically. (*City News*, June 2005)

Dr. Schneider built a learning community in which teachers analyzed classroom assessments and other student work on a monthly basis to develop an "action plan" for each pupil. Teachers wrote "reflections" about the data on student learning, and Dr. Schneider provided feedback to them. The school’s agenda for professional development was informed by these exchanges (*City News*, June 2005).

But in spite of the ongoing gains in student achievement, the school was on the list of those schools that would be closed at the end of 2005-06. The principal explained how this decision was made by an outside evaluator:

Unfortunately [the evaluator] had come in and did that study and rated schools and a lot of the data that they chose at that time was older data because our kids hadn't taken the PSSA at 3<sup>rd</sup> grade yet. So they looked at...they just go back the previous four or five years and of course that data didn't look good and we were rated a "one" and essentially the school closed. And I fought it and I showed new data and told them that things were coming, but it was almost one year too late, you know? Had they done the study last year, I think the outcome may have been different.

[D.LS.KS.IV.070316]

Dr. Schneider was appointed as principal of Lenox, a new school that would be implementing America's Choice (AC) as its means of reform. She began in her new role in late spring of 2007, interviewing teachers for Lenox:

We had the opportunity to interview and hire our own staff, but that didn't transpire really the way that it was supposed to transpire because with all of the closings, there were a lot of displaced teachers. So after interviewing in March, April, May until eleven o'clock every night, hiring the best of the best, a lot of those teachers were younger teachers with say, three years of seniority. So what kicked in in August was displaced teachers had to be placed and I lost eleven of the teachers that I had hired. This building [K-2] has one teacher that I hired and everybody else was a displaced teacher. So that has presented itself.

[D.LS.KS.IV.070316]

As she explains, the majority of the teachers in the K-2 building had been assigned by the district (i.e., “displaced”), rather than chosen by the school’s administrative team, and these teachers did not wholeheartedly opt into the reform at the beginning of the school year. In addition, Dr. Schneider herself was traversing a period of adjustment inherent in changing one’s professional context: “Oh, the school closing was an incredible experience in that it carried into this year. I didn’t realize for a while how I was mourning the loss of my school” [D.LS.KS.IV.070316]. Nevertheless, in the aftermath of the first “Quality Review” in December<sup>2</sup>, the principal was faced with strengthening the reform efforts at her new school, and consequently decided to spend the bulk of her time focusing on literacy instruction in the K-2 building.

The renewed focus on implementation of the AC reforms coincided with this study. I observed Dr. Schneider in five Leadership Team meetings, several meetings with the literacy coaches and assistant principals, and in seven K-2 faculty meetings. In the following pages, I discuss a Leadership Team meeting, a principal visit to a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom where the AC consultant was working with the teacher and the faculty meeting that followed it later that day, and the Final Quality Review debrief session which occurred in late May. These observations provide evidence of the leadership content knowledge that Dr. Schneider brought to bear on her leadership practice through a deepening attention to reform and teacher learning at Lenox.

#### *March Leadership Team meeting*

On the last Wednesday in March 2007, a Leadership Team meeting takes place at the 3-8 building at 2:00 p.m. The Leadership Team at the school is charged with assessing evidence of progress in meeting the expectations for implementation, discuss strengths and weaknesses,

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<sup>2</sup> Although the first Quality Review took place in December 2006, the Leadership Team did not receive feedback about it until late February 2007.



troubleshoot, and plan ahead. Those present are the principal, the two assistant principals, the Reading First coach, the literacy coach, the mathematics coach, the parent liaison, the guidance counselor, Sarah who is the teacher representative from the K-2 building and also a focal teacher in this study, and two teacher representatives from the 3-8 building, including Mayra Jackson, 8<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher and also a focal teacher.

The meeting begins with a discussion of the challenges in implementing America's Choice in two separate buildings, with Dr. Schneider evaluating her own performance while describing the outcome of the Quality Review:

I have been extremely ineffective this year. I haven't known how to do this, be principal of two buildings. [The assistant principals] and I talked, and now we're meeting every Monday. We're going to help each other and support each other. We have the results from the America's Choice review, and we didn't do very well.

[D.LS.OB2.070328]

Internal and external evaluators rated the schools' implementation based upon the focus areas of AC (rigorous standards and assessments, aligned instructional systems, instructional leadership, professional learning communities, and parent/guardian and community engagement). The principal calls herself "ineffective" and explains that the AC rating system is based on numbers from 0-3 with three as a strong rating, but most of this first evaluation consisted of zero or one as the score. The people involved in the Quality Review were Leadership Team members, the assistant superintendent in charge of America's Choice Implementation, one of the AC consultants, and a representative from AC in New York. Amy, one of the assistant principals, complains that she was not clear on the expectations because the AC rubrics were not helpful. Dr. Schneider says, "Principals in the program are supposed to meet as a group every month, but we haven't. But lots of the feedback has been right on target.

It's like the PSSA; our kids are being judged by one moment in time. Now, so are we." One of the teachers says, "I didn't think of this as an adversarial thing. Maybe we shouldn't think of it like that." The principal says, "You're right. I take the blame, I need to do better" [D.LS.OB2.070328].

At the end of the scheduled Leadership Team meeting, the teacher representatives leave the office to return to class but the coaches, the principal, and Dave, one of the assistant principals stay. Dr. Schneider asks him how the 3-8 staff meeting went the day before, and he replies, "Good. It was a good opportunity to converse and find out where we are from a management perspective. We talked about where we're going." She tells him that she met with both of the AC consultants the day before, and they do not believe that Lenox has the "right accountability" in the implementation of AC [D.LS.OB3.070328]. She explains what this means:

If the coaches ask the teachers to do something, it's up to the administration to follow up. So for example, with leveling books, the teachers were supposed to do it with their libraries and they didn't. We'd tell teachers we want to see evidence of standards in classrooms, and then we'd go around and check. So the coaches ask teachers for something, or we ask, and then we are supposed to check. [D.LS.OB3.070328]

She adds that the AC consultants have seen little evidence of consistent follow up, and very uneven implementation from classroom to classroom. Dave says, "I need to be in those staff development sessions to see what they're doing. I know math but for me to grow, I need to know literacy. I don't know leveling." The Reading First coach recalls a "to do" list of the things that "need to be in place" that the literacy coach developed for teachers, adding that the coaches did not provide a timeline. She continues: "It's been confusing because in the

beginning, America's Choice, it sounded like a choice, it would be nice to do. Now, we have to do these things. It was unclear" [D.LS.OB3.070328].

At this point, the other assistant principal, Amy, returns. Dave remarks, "I'm just cross because the consultants were not clear with us." Amy adds, "We should've been at the meeting with them yesterday. As it is, it's second hand information. We're at the end of the year and I'm not going to jump through hoops" [D.LS.OB3.070328]. Dr. Schneider says that other schools that are implementing AC also feel they need more help after the initial Quality Review. Dave says, "I felt like a piece of crap with that report, and the teachers thought that it didn't validate their work. It didn't encourage us at all." Karen tells him that he was not supposed to give that out, adding, "The problem is not the teachers, it's our leadership. If we tell teachers to post standards, a week later, we go back and make sure the standards are posted." Amy says, "It's like the Gestapo, or maybe accountability for your job description." Dr. Schneider tells them that she showed slides of AC classrooms in New York City to the K-2 teachers at their meeting the day before, and "we can oomph it up now!"

As the preceding excerpt from late March shows, the assistant principals seem somewhat discouraged by the feedback from the first Quality Review. The principal nevertheless underscores the need for accountability on the part of leadership, herself included. In her view, shaped by conversations with the AC consultants and the subject matter coaches themselves, when the coaches request that teachers comply with specific AC goals, the administrators must provide the authority for successful implementation. But this could be challenging if administrators do not have the leadership content knowledge necessary for implementation, a problem that Dave underscores in admitting that he does not have the expertise in literacy to be a strong leader in this subject matter. He has not attended the Saturday professional development

sessions. He and his colleague in the 3-8 building rely heavily on the subject matter coaches to work directly with teachers, both at the classroom level and in holding weekly faculty meetings organized by subject matter.

Dr. Schneider attempted to address the issue of limited leadership content knowledge in the 3-8 building by convening occasional early morning meetings for the assistant principals and the subject matter coaches in which the AC reforms were discussed in depth. Between the Leadership Team meeting of March 21 and the Final Quality Review ten weeks later on May 31, Dr. Schneider also held six K-2 faculty meetings that focused on implementation of AC with attention to rituals and routines, rubrics, stages of writing workshop, the use of sourcebooks, the importance of children being able to articulate what they were learning about, etc., and three more Leadership Team meetings. In the K-2 meetings where literacy was usually the focus, the principal was often assisted by the Reading First coach, and twice by the AC consultants whose time was shared with seven other schools in the district. The subject matter coaches also met several times with teachers in grades 3-8 who were organized into departments. Dr. Schneider focused on strengthening instruction in the K-2 building as she concurrently focused on strengthening leadership content knowledge and instruction in the 3-8 building.

In the next few pages, I describe both a visit the principal made to a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom where one of the AC consultants was assisting early in May 2007, and the K-2 faculty meeting that took place later that afternoon during which the consultant and the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher discussed the assistance the teacher had received. Following these events, I describe the final Quality Review that the school underwent for Year 1 implementation of AC reforms.

*Principal visit to Second Grade followed by a Faculty Meeting*

Dr. Schneider and I enter the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom at 1:30 pm. There are six rectangular tables in this classroom with 19 students present: 6 African-American females, 4 White females, 7 African-American males and 2 White males. There is a longer rectangular table, parallel to the classroom wall, and the White female teacher, Ms. D., is standing behind it, in between the blackboard and the children's seats. Windows line the wall opposite the teacher. A poster on an otherwise empty side wall says "Reader Response Wall." In the back corner of the classroom, there is a little chair that is labeled "author's chair." On the wall nearby, there is a poster entitled "class carpet routines." Number one says, "Sit like a pretzel." Number two is, "The person in the author's chair is the only one talking."

It is very warm upstairs and the teacher says to the children, "I don't want you to be wilting; I want you to be blooming!" Many of the students sit up straighter and smile, but one African American girl has her head down on her table. The class is working on a lesson in literacy, reviewing vocabulary before the students begin to read a new story.

Jim, the AC consultant, seems to be working on something near that back corner, and we walk over there. He and Karen have targeted this 2<sup>nd</sup> grade as a prospective model classroom. Jim tells us that he has been working with the teacher to develop the notion of co-constructing "artifacts" with children. Karen tells me that they do not want store-bought posters, but rather posters made by the teacher and children.

We hear the teacher asking what "vast" means. A child answers, "Huge," and the teacher asks for a sentence. The student says, "Ms. D., listen: Colonel took a voyage across a vast ocean." The teacher smiles and says, very enthusiastically, "That's what the kids are doing, using three words at once right there!"

Then Jim quietly asks Karen, “Do you know what the difference is between a principal and an instructional leader?”

Karen replies, “An instructional leader asks the kids what they are doing.”

Jim responds, “That’s the difference between a principal and an instructional leader. A principal only spends 30% of the time in classrooms, or just walking around classrooms. An instructional leader sits down and asks the kids what they are doing. I don’t want to see a teacher’s performance, hamming it up. I and you want to see kids learning.” Karen nods to this.

Jim adds that he has helped this teacher organize her sourcebooks which are used in writing workshop. Students keep a writer's “sourcebook” in which they record their responses to shared readings and other classroom events, and other students' stories, as well as their own ideas for future writing. He said that Ms. D. needed help with some sourcebook ideas, vocabulary and spelling ideas, and organization in general. He points to a wire chart holder on the floor labeled “sourcebook ideas;” many chart papers that the children have constructed with the teacher are hanging from it. The papers include lists of possible topics and related vocabulary that the children have brainstormed with the teacher’s guidance. Jim tells us that he and Ms. D. have archived these artifacts for the children to refer to when they have writing workshop. Karen tells him that she hopes he will talk to the K-2 teachers about writing workshop at the meeting later this afternoon, adding that the Reading First coach will lead most of the discussion.

Our visit is interrupted when the school secretary comes to tell the principal that someone from the district’s facilities office would like to meet with her. Karen thanks Jim and leaves the classroom to return to her office [D.LS.OB.070501]. Although the visit is cut short, the excerpt illustrates the principal’s renewed focus on instructional improvement at the K-2 level and the

quality of support provided by the AC consultant for teacher learning at the level of the classroom, as well as Karen Schneider's learning at the level of school leadership.

Two hours later at 4:00 pm, the K-2 faculty meeting begins in the school library with 14 teachers, the Reading First coach, the principal, and the AC consultant present. Karen introduces Ann, the Reading First coach, to "show the model" to the teachers. Ann stands up and points to several 8"x11" cardboard posters which she refers to as the "stages of writing." The cards are strung together by yarn, and each one is labeled with the name of a stage (prewriting, drafting, conferencing, revising) from the process approach to writing that is put forth by America's Choice, called *Writers' Advantage*. Ann says, "Here it is, Karen typed it up, and we printed it out. You're all getting one. I asked [a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher] if I could try it in her classroom. It went pretty well." She goes on to relate her experience with the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class, saying that "the system [for children to show in which stage they are currently working] seems like it is working." The principal adds, "The kids keep track of where they are by moving a clothespin with their names on it from stage to stage, and you should keep track of the kids you haven't conferenced with in a long time."

At this point, the AC consultant, Jim, suggests one way of providing feedback. Pointing to the "stages of writing" charts, he says, "This is very nice, but how am I sure that kids know how to revise? I would use sticky notes to give to kids with ideas based on their conferences. I don't write on their paper. We want to see how you're letting your kids know how to improve their work" [D.LS.OB2.070501]. Ann continues, telling teachers that she and the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher she was working with decided "we could keep the kids' folders in a milk crate so they could find them, clearly labeled, accessible to them."

Karen, the principal, nods and says:

Yes, accessible, not in a pile somewhere. We've got 30 days of school left and no one has gone through with one piece. Certain things need to be attended to and we need to keep the momentum going. Last week, I'm taking a focus walk and I'm checking for standards. I'm looking for all of these points that we discussed in January, things that should be in place. Anyway, I've dropped the ball, but in late April, I shouldn't be walking around checking on standards." [D.LS.OB2.070501]

While admitting that she has "dropped the ball" regarding implementation of America's Choice, the principal also admonishes the teachers for not following through on the reforms they were requested to implement in January and earlier. She then distributes copies of the numerical feedback from the December Quality Review, telling them, "You can see where we stood in somebody's eyes, and next steps and suggestions for what we still needed to do. If there are things you have in place, you can rest on those, but the ones you don't have, you have to work toward. It's the direction you need to be going" [D.LS.OB2.070501].

Jim asks the teachers if anyone has anything to celebrate, adding "I'm impressed with what I'm seeing; it has changed." Several hands go up, and a teacher says, "One of my moms said it looks like an elementary school now." Another teacher describes a successful new routine that a colleague developed with her students. Then Ms. D., the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher, begins describing Jim's efforts in her classroom earlier that day:

I celebrate that Jim was in my room in my room all day. If we all had that opportunity, I felt much more secure. I was validated in some of the things I'm doing. All I needed was motivation. He taught my writing lesson today. I took lots of notes. He showed me lots of things like look what's hanging up in the room. We're always making lists of words, sports, feelings, as references. So



we put them all together as a reference for the kids, and he modeled how to use it for the kids.

The enthusiasm of Ms. D's description of her work with the AC consultant, along with the extemporaneous quality of it, engaged her colleagues who seemed to closely follow her account. Jim tells the teachers that the goal is to build a community within the school so they can all go to each other. Karen adds, "My best time in teaching was when a guy from Bank Street came into my room every week; I wouldn't be sitting here today if I hadn't had that experience." Ms. D. continues, "Jim asked me why, why, what, what? He made me think about what I was doing." Jim says, "I'm not here to judge. I'm here to help. If you want me to come into your class, talk to Karen" [D.LS.OB2.070501].

There are several important aspects of this excerpt. Dr. Schneider has placed the AC reforms at the center of her leadership practice, and was assisting K-2 teacher learning in the area of writing workshop. Although she was comfortable with the district literacy curriculum and the new emphasis on writing workshop through AC, she worked with the school's literacy coaches and the AC consultants to strengthen her knowledge of literacy and how children learn to read and write. Dr. Schneider encouraged teachers to work with the coaches and the AC consultants to improve their literacy instruction, showing an understanding of classroom-based teacher learning. Teachers were given tools to help children monitor their own stage of writing, and the AC consultant recommended methods for providing feedback to children, and offered to spend time in joint classroom-embedded work with any teacher who requested his assistance.

The work the principal was doing with the AC consultants, the Leadership Team, the coaches, and teachers would be spotlighted in the Quality Review in late May 2007. The coaches in particular had spent many extra hours with the principal organizing binders full of "evidence" of the school's progress in meeting AC goals in each focus area and were fully engaged in the

process of instructional improvement. This event, described in the next section, qualified as the final appraisal of the school's efforts in implementing Year 1 of AC, and all of the Leadership Team members except the teachers were involved in it. This included the principal, the assistant principals, the family/community liaison, the guidance counselor, and all three coaches.

*The Quality Review, late May 2007*

On the day of the Quality Review, the principal's office has never looked cleaner and more organized. There are 20 binders of assessment data, including student work, arranged on a circular shelf next to Karen's desk. The desk itself has been cleared off. The literacy coach sits on a chair in front of the desk. Ann, the Reading First coach, and the mathematics coach cannot sit still even though the principal does. They wander from the main office into the adjacent conference room and back again. The conference room, also very neat, is stiflingly warm. There are thirteen chairs around the long table in the room, and an extra chair against the door which someone tells me is my spot for the pre-Review meeting. The math coach goes off to find a thermometer and places it on the window sill in the conference room; it reads 96 degrees. Before the external team arrives at Lenox, rumors begin to circulate that the district administrator in charge of AC schools is being harsh in her judgement. The math coach checks the thermometer which has risen to 102 degrees.

Anxiety is also rising as the coaches and Dr. Schneider await the arrival of the Quality Review team. The team consists of the district administrator, the AC consultants, and a representative from AC's central office in New York. The Quality Review is similar to a walk-through, in that educators visit multiple classrooms with a clear focus in mind. The focus of today's Quality Review as indicated on a handout given to everyone before the Review begins includes "Stage One Implementation Elements" and "Student Responses." Under "Evidence

expected to see,” it says “Components of AC Design model.” Specific questions listed for students are:

- “What are you working on? or Can you show me your work?”
- What standard are you working on?
- Why is it important to learn this?
- How do you know if your work is quality work?
- Do you know how to improve your work next time?” [D.LS.DO.070531]

Everyone in the pre-Review meeting takes a clipboard and one of these papers, and exits the conference room. The Review begins at about 1:15 p.m., and continues until almost 2:45 p.m. The team that I shadow consists of the principal, the district administrator, the AC representative from New York, and one of the AC consultants who has on occasion worked in the building with teachers and members of the Leadership Team. We begin by visiting classes in the K-2 building, and after an hour, drive down the hill to the 3-8 building.

Tensions emerge between the Dr. Schneider and the district administrator over what children understand about the quality of their work based upon teacher feedback, and how to improve it, and the principal becomes so upset that she is in tears. She disappears into a restroom to pull herself together while the district administrator takes a phone call for several minutes. The AC representative from New York tells the on-site consultant that a Quality Review is not meant to be an uncomfortable evaluation of a school principal or Leadership Team, but rather “a tool for learning.” She adds that she cannot say this to the district administrator because “we have to respect the district’s wishes, and the ways in which the district wants to interpret AC.” The consultant adds that there are some really good things happening at Lenox.

The meeting of the Leadership team members and the external Quality Review team gets underway shortly after 3:00 pm, and everyone agrees to end at 4:30 because the district

administrator has somewhere to be shortly thereafter. One of the AC consultants begins reading, “Leadership team identifies any gaps between student performance in reading and math, and AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) targets, and develops strategies.” Karen addresses this goal, saying, “Teachers are writing reflections monthly, and we go through it all, all the data. I want to know so I can apply some kind of triage to get that kid what he or she needs.” The district administrator asks, “How do you monitor?” Karen replies,

Now that I have coaches and assistant principals, I have a lot of help. ‘Hey, I see that student, she’s flat- lining, and we need to get her to the instructional support team.’ If you remember the last AC meeting we had, I spoke about this data monitoring. These teachers need to know why we ask them to do certain things. The transformation has had to be at that deeper level, not just ‘hang up the stages of writing.’ This is long-term, enduring, making strong teachers stronger. Transformation like that will not happen in 10 months. [D.LS.OB3.070531]

The district administrator asks Karen to rate this goal, and she answers, “2.” [The rating system involves assigning a score of 1-3, with 3 meaning that the goal has been attained.] The administrator agrees, saying, “OK, because some of it is not in place yet, but your beliefs are there” [D.LS.OB3.070531].

Throughout the entire debriefing session, the principal and subject matter coaches try to negotiate higher scores on the implementation rubric with the district administrator, who has the last word and often insists on a lower rating. At 5:10, the meeting breaks up and most people exit, including the district administrator. She thanks everyone as she leaves. The principal and subject matter coaches stay after and talk, all very relieved that the Quality Review is over and the school has made so much progress between February and May. There is a palpable sense of

achievement among these three leaders who worked so hard to have all the classrooms and the binders of evidence ready for this day.

The following week, the principal sends a memo to all faculty members about the Quality Review in which she stated:

For year 1, stage one, our scores are very good. We have far more areas of strength than we do growth areas. For those that went on the focus walk, we were extremely proud of our school. The buildings looked great, with many components in place. The student work displays were wonderful and in some cases, just so powerful. Anne, from AC New York, just couldn't stop complimenting us on how beautiful the rooms and hallways looked and how great the student work pieces were. We were so very proud as we showcased our school for others and could talk about the hard work you have done this year.

On behalf of this year's Leadership Team, we would like to thank everyone for the many things you have accomplished this year. You have done amazing things under some difficult circumstances. We all would like to thank you for hanging in there with us and for growing with us this year.

[D.LS.DO.070604]

Dr. Schneider finished by telling them that the following year, they will begin “with all of the components in place from this year, right from the start so that we can focus in on new areas and our growth areas” [D.LS.DO.070604].

The excerpts from Karen Schneider's practice show that, as the principal of a newly reconstituted school targeted for AC reform efforts, she had her work cut out for her. “Mourning” her former school and professional learning community at the beginning of the school year, and facing racism among some parents and students, she was nonetheless

responsible for implementing America's Choice, the district's choice for reform, in a school split between two physically separated buildings. This meant establishing a new learning community focused on instructional improvement, even if it took the entire school year to do so.

In March as Karen Schneider began to take full responsibility for the reforms, she chose to attend to teacher learning in the K-2 building, spending most of her time there. She assumed responsibility for the learning needs of the K-2 teachers, arranging weekly faculty meetings, occasional classroom visits, and in-class time with AC consultants and subject matter coaches to assist teacher learning. She described the importance of professional development:

I believe that the way we strengthen teaching and learning is to strengthen our teaching force. So they all had to commit to staying for staff development. Every teacher in both buildings stays every Tuesday, voluntarily, for staff development. So that and we do a lot of our own in-house staff development which is going to change cause I'm going to get the AC consultants to come and have them help me move some things and just do them. But the staff development piece has been critical...looking at data, meeting with teachers, talking with them about kids, talking to them about their data, talking about next steps, where are we going, differentiation, and being in classrooms...critical.

[D.LS.DS.IV.070316]

She understood the importance of teacher ownership of the reforms, as well as the role of accountability, successfully balancing the tensions inherent in her role in both the evaluation of teachers and the provision of opportunities for their learning, largely through the three subject matter coaches at Lenox and the AC consultants, and would often push back when met with teacher or administrator resistance.

Thus, several dimensions of leadership content knowledge are visible in Karen Schneider's work as principal, especially in her emphasis on learning at all levels of the nested learning community. With a focus on subject matter (mainly literacy) and student learning at the core, her conceptions of teacher learning and how to assist it revolved around the AC reforms. She also focused, notably, on her own learning which was sustained in large part through her close relationships with knowledgeable and experienced subject matter coaches and Jim, one of the AC consultants. She also worked to assist the learning of the assistant principals who were based in the 3-8 building, organizing occasional early morning meetings with them and the coaches to discuss the reforms and plans to assist teacher learning.

#### *Shared and contrasting concerns among the three school leaders*

These three urban school leaders face many of the same issues in an era of reform and high-stakes accountability: challenges in student achievement, in teacher learning, and in the development of professional community. The principals who have been introduced work toward school improvement by emphasizing similar leadership practices such as providing professional development for teachers, evaluating instruction, and monitoring student assessment, albeit with varying degrees of success. Two of them are working with teachers to use student outcome data and student work to inform instruction and planning or facilitating professional development that focuses on teacher learning in the use of data to inform instruction. In all three schools, the teacher demographics do not match student demographics, with a teaching force that is predominantly White.

Yet there are differences among the schools as well. In terms of student population, Rosa Parks and Central are nearly 100% African American, while Lenox presents a more integrated

context. Lenox School's student body was about 53% African American, 39% White, and 7% Multiracial at the time of this study. While all three school contexts included a predominantly White teaching staff, differences in the degree of integration of the student population may imply differences in the presence of colorblind ideologies and events that appear in the daily practice of school leadership. This will be further developed in addressing the research questions.

The formerly transient teaching staff at Rosa Parks and Central in Riverton had stabilized over the past two years under the leadership of Debra Russo, and student achievement at Central was showing steady progress [D.CS.DO.060929]. In contrast, all of the staff at Lenox in Weston were newly assigned to the school, reconstituted in the past year, thus creating a new professional community with new leadership. The principal and assistant principals, coaches, teachers, and teacher assistants, were all getting to know one another in a high-stakes first year together.

Although all three schools are struggling to coalesce as professional learning communities, the difference is what lay at the heart of their struggles. Rosa Parks was plagued by a lack of sustained attention to instructional improvement due to leadership turnover for eight consecutive years. At Central, the momentum was shifting away from the preceding three years of sustained reform efforts and progress in student achievement lead by Ms. Russo. The interim principal, Ms. Thomas, served as a place holder, trying to hold onto the gains of the past and attending to district priorities. Her tentativeness as a new principal was apparent in the "in-services" she organized for teachers that did not offer deep or sustained learning opportunities. At Lenox, although Dr. Schneider spent the first half of the school year mourning the loss of the strong professional learning community she had developed at her former school, she was gearing up in Year 1 implementation of comprehensive reform centered in the America's Choice model.



Moreover, there were differences in the degree of leadership content knowledge displayed by the three principals. Ms. Russo and Dr. Schneider, both of whom possessed over 15 years of experience in education, used subject matter knowledge of literacy in their work to assist teacher learning. Dr. Schneider, a former district-wide mathematics coach, demonstrated knowledge of teacher learning in literacy and how others could assist teacher learning, encouraging coaches and consultants to work with teachers within their classrooms. She provided time for teachers to work together and reflect on their work to build their understanding of AC reforms in professional development settings. Teachers at Central School reported similar efforts in promoting balanced literacy by Ms. Russo, but by the time of this study, she was transitioning out of the district. As for Ms. Thomas who was also leaving the Riverton School District, she was a novice principal who said she was comfortable in literacy as a subject matter, but there was not enough data to confirm or dispute the degree of her knowledge or how she transformed it in her work with teachers.

These characteristics, including the degree of racial diversity of the student population, the demographic disparity between the teaching staff and the student population, the history of leadership turnover at Central and Rosa Parks Schools, and the newness of the teacher and greater community at Lenox, establish contrasts in context which are relevant in addressing the research questions in the following sections.

## 4.2 EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVES TOWARD CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

The findings presented in this section pertain to Research Question #1:

What kind of perspective toward students (deficit or asset, or somewhere in between) is held by educators in the school?

- How, if at all, do these perspectives connect with teaching, learning, and leadership?

Educators' perspectives toward the children they teach play an important role in the daily practice of teaching and leadership (Diamond, 2007). As noted in the literature where these perspectives have been described as "asset" or "deficit" (Diamond, 2007; Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004; Garcia & Guerra, 2004), educators who demonstrate a strong deficit perspective toward learners may also possess low expectations for their academic success. They may also be more reluctant to engage in innovative instructional practice or reform efforts (Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004; Stodolsky & Grossman, 2000). Educators with a strong asset perspective value children's "funds of knowledge" and demonstrate high expectations for their students (see Table 9). Moreover, leaders with knowledge of teachers' perspectives are better positioned to work with them to improve instruction; such knowledge is a dimension of culturally relevant leadership content knowledge.

Although one of the school leaders and one of the focal teachers in this study held "consistent" deficit perspectives toward children of color (see Table 9), and one of the school leaders and one of the focal teachers held "consistent" asset perspectives, most of the participants fell between these opposing perspectives. Five participants (a principal, two mathematics coaches, a literacy coach, and a 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher) in the study showed evidence of a deficit

perspective when discussing children of color, with three of them (the principal, one of the mathematics coaches, and the literacy coach) occasionally showing a perspective that fit more with an asset perspective. Accordingly, they were considered to hold an “inconsistent” deficit perspective. In contrast, there were nine participants who held an asset perspective toward children. Yet seven of them occasionally voiced deficit beliefs and are therefore described as “inconsistent” in terms of an asset perspective.

**Table 9: Educator Perspectives toward Children of Color**

| Consistent deficit perspective   | Inconsistent deficit perspective   | Inconsistent asset perspective   | Consistent asset perspective  |
|--|--|--|---|
| Educator does not recognize “funds of knowledge” that children possess and bring to school. Holds and demonstrates low expectations for student learning and behavior. Responsibility for learning and academic success is situated within children and their families rather than within classroom instruction. Educators display diminished sense of responsibility toward students.<br>(Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004; Garcia & Guerra, 2004) | Educator views children primarily from a deficit perspective, but may acknowledge some positive attributes and assumes some responsibility for their learning. | Educator views children primarily from an asset perspective, capable of learning, but occasionally displays views rooted in deficit perspective. | Educator recognizes children’s funds of knowledge and builds upon them to encourage learning. Views children as highly capable of learning challenging material with high quality instruction. Feels and shows sense of responsibility for student learning and academic success.<br><br>(Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004; Garcia & Guerra, 2004) |
| 1 school leader (mathematics coach),<br>1 teacher  | 3 school leaders (principal, mathematics coach, and literacy coach)  | 4 school leaders (2 principals, literacy coach, and mathematics coach),<br>3 teachers  | 1 school leader (assistant principal),<br>1 teacher   |

Section 4.2.1 begins with a discussion of the school leaders including the principals, an assistant principal, and several subject matter coaches, and their perspectives. I present examples of school leaders who hold deficit and asset perspectives based upon interviews and observations, starting with a mathematics coach who consistently viewed children at his school through a deficit perspective. In Section 4.2.2, I present findings that pertain to the focal teachers through examples from the three categories that are represented. Section 4.2.3 discusses how these perspectives connect to teaching, learning, and leadership.

#### **4.2.1 The perspectives of school leaders toward children of color**

Perspectives of school leaders toward students of color connect in important ways with their leadership. Table 10 displays perspectives of participants in this study. While there were leaders across the continuum, the only school leader whose perspective was strongly positioned within a deficit perspective was a mathematics coach in an elementary school that was 99% African American.

**Table 10: Perspectives of school leaders towards children of color**

|  | Deficit perspective | Asset perspective |
|--|---------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Rosa Parks School</i>                   |                     |                   |
| Ms. Russo, principal                       |                     | I                 |
| <b>Ms. Miller,<br/>assistant principal</b> |                     | C                 |
| Mathematics coach                          | I                   |                   |
| <i>Central School</i>                      |                     |                   |
| <b>Ms. Thomas, principal</b>               | I                   |                   |
| <b>Mathematics coach</b>                   | C                   |                   |
| <i>Lenox School</i>                        |                     |                   |
| <b>Dr. Schneider, principal</b>            |                     | I                 |
| Reading First coach                        | I                   |                   |
| Literacy coach                             |                     | I                 |
| Mathematics coach                          |                     | I                 |

Leaders who are discussed in this section are shown in bold.  
 C= consistent                      I= inconsistent

The mathematics coach at Central School, who identified himself as White, had been a 4th grade teacher for three years and a 5th grade teacher for three years at another building in the Riverton School District, and was in his second year as a coach when I interviewed him:

Well, we have basically a high poverty level in this area. We have free breakfast, free lunch, and now free dinner through the Century 21 Program. So we're basically...I mean parent involvement is not

there. We feed them to get them to come out basically. We have to have a picnic in order to get them to come out and they have to go to the classroom first in order to get their ticket to show that they went to the classroom. Otherwise they would have just come and got the food and left. So we need to increase parental involvement in this district. I don't know how we can do it. Parents need to be held more accountable. The children are not coming with the background, the mathematics background.

[D.CS.BK.IV.061013]

This quote reveals the coach's low opinion of parent motivation at Central School as he describes Open House when parents can meet with teachers and learn about the curriculum. The school provides a picnic dinner in order to encourage attendance, and in the coach's view, the parents are more interested in the food than in the curriculum. He seems to blame parents for not providing a "mathematics background" for their children. The mathematics coach at Central School does not recognize children's funds of knowledge, and situates responsibility for learning outside of the school and within families, saying, "Parents need to be held more accountable." Thus, he views children through a deficit perspective.

The mathematics coach explains that teachers do a lot for the children of Riverton, citing the efforts of his wife who teaches in another elementary school:

Most of our teachers here are very nurturing, very caring and actually go above and beyond what it is because they know what these children come with baggage and what they have. The teachers basically, they give up for these children and I know because my wife teaches 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade in the district, so I know what she deals with on a daily basis...

[D.CS.BK.IV.061013]

The coach sees children as possessing “baggage,” and teachers as people who sacrifice and “give up for these children” in order to teach them against all odds.

At the opposite end of the continuum from the coach is Ms. Miller, the assistant principal of another building (Rosa Parks School) in the same district. A middle-aged woman who identified herself as African American, she displays a consistent asset perspective toward children and families. When asked what role parents play in their children’s academic success, she responds:

We don’t have as much parent involvement and I don’t think it’s because the parents don’t want to be involved. I think many do not know how to help their children. Sometimes they’re...they haven’t finished school themselves or the math is different even though it may just be division. They see a paper come home and it’s being taught a different way, so they say I don’t know what you’re doing. I know as a classroom teacher, I would get notes from parents in second grade: “I don’t know how to do this, Ms. Miller. What should I do?”

[D.RS.MM.IV.060512]

She concedes that parental involvement may not be as developed as she wishes, but unlike the math coach, she does not find fault with parents. Instead, she shows an understanding of some of the barriers that may keep them from helping their children, adding:

That’s not always easy because you have that parent that has two or three kids. That parent has a job that barely makes enough money to clothe their kids, to feed their kids, to pay the rent or they have to work two jobs to try to do all those things. So when is there time to go over homework, when is there time to do all those things that that parent that lives in the suburb has time to do? So

it's frustrating. It's frustrating for the parents. I believe they want their kids to do well, but where do they get the time or how do they do it?

[D.RS.MM.IV.060512]

She repeats her belief that parents want their children to do well. She offers that she has thought about seeking grant funding in order to offer a stipend to parents to compensate for their time to come into school to learn how to help with homework, "just some kind of way to get the parents into the building, re-educate them on how to help their kids, and then maybe those parents would then teach the next group or so on and so forth" [D.RS.MM.IV.060512].

Importantly, Ms. Miller communicates this asset perspective to teachers in her school.

Here, she discusses her response to a 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher who was shouting at a student:

I think you need to speak to older children in a different tone. I think you need to be mindful that they're sixth graders and if you're up in their face screaming and hollering, then that's what you're going to get back. But when they're screaming, and that's what I see with some of these younger teachers. That's what they...that's how they think they're going to get them to do whatever it is they need them to do. They're screaming. They're raising their voice, and what you have is...it's flipped because now you have two kids yelling at each other because now that the kid isn't responding...'cause you're doing the same thing they're doing. So I kind of said something, and she just said, "You know, I never thought about it that way." And she says, "I'll try to make sure that I remember that." He's twelve. In his head, he's a young man. In his head, maybe he's taking care of the household at home. So you can't come at him like he's a seven-year-old 'cause it's not going to work. It's not going to work. Not to say that a child shouldn't listen regardless of who it is. I'm not saying that, but you



don't know what's going on in that household. I think it's kind of respect. I don't know. I'm not a screamer or a yeller, so I've usually never had a problem with respect with kids. I respect them. So they in turn respect me and it might be because I'm not screaming and yelling. And I talk to them, and I want to hear what they have to say.

[D.RS.MM.IV.060512]

The preceding quote illustrates how Ms. Miller worked with a White teacher to help her learn how to interact with the young people of color she teaches. A twelve year old boy at Rosa Parks School may be taking care of his household and is therefore “a young man.” The knowledge and skills he has gained through his role at home contribute to his “funds of knowledge,” to be valued and built upon at school. Ms. Miller alludes to these funds of knowledge that exist within children and emphasizes the importance of respect in reaching older children in the interaction with a 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher that she describes.

As shown in Table 11, two of the principals in this study hold an inconsistent asset perspective while the third principal, Ms. Thomas, holds an inconsistent deficit perspective. I first present data on her perspective before presenting data on one of the principals with an inconsistent asset perspective.

Early in this study in the spring of 2006, Ms. Thomas, self-identified as White, was assistant principal at Central School, but was promoted to principal in August of that year. She expressed a belief that children in urban districts such as Riverton may arrive at school not as prepared as their suburban counterparts, saying:

In an urban setting, a lot of our students haven't had the background knowledge or experiences that I think a suburban area child would have growing up. Whether it's experiences to trips to the zoo or a museum. The vocabulary enrichment of what they are

told, how they are explained things and how they process things. They haven't had that. They may not have been exposed to literature books [sic]. I mean a lot of our students come to us at three or four and they don't know the front and the back of a book. So we have to take the extra steps, go the extra mile to provide the enrichment, provide the outside activities, and kind of provide building up their vocabulary and their prior knowledge so they can make the connections.

[D.CS.LT.IV.060510]

In her view, many children at Central are lacking in vocabulary and experiences, do not have general "background knowledge," and may not have book handling skills when they get to pre-school. Ms. Thomas credits the school for going "the extra mile" in efforts to build "vocabulary and their prior knowledge." With no acknowledgement of children's funds of knowledge from home, Ms. Thomas shows beliefs similar to those of the mathematics coach that are rooted in a deficit perspective; however, unlike the mathematics coach, she counters this by placing responsibility for student learning with the school. In speaking about the importance of Head Start and Pre-K, she says:

So we do a lot of that catch up and that's why I think it's important to have that early childhood component which we're trying to build in with bringing our Head Start into the buildings [from the classrooms located in detached trailers] and having our Pre-K. So that the earlier we get them and if they stay with us, then I think we can have a bigger outcome with moving them instructionally.

[D.CS.LT.IV.060510]

Ms. Thomas speaks of the school's early childhood programs in terms of instructional outcomes, expressing confidence that in spite of having to "do a lot of catch up" with children,

the children will learn. In her view, the longer the children are at Central, the stronger their learning will be.

Another way in which Ms. Thomas shows an inconsistent deficit perspective in contrast to a strong deficit perspective is in how she discusses her role as a school leader in working with students and staff:

I think the main thing that sticks out in my mind, I think number one is you need a positive school culture because it's a challenging job. And we have a lot on our plates to deal with. I think as a leader when you model that you're not afraid to roll up your sleeves and get in there and work and do what you need to do, whether it is that you spend lunch with that student or you sit down to debrief for an hour and a half and process why they are upset. It kind of encourages the other staff members that have the kids all day long, to realize, "Well okay. It took a little bit of time, but it's building relationships with the students."

[D.CS.LT.IV.060510]

In a context where "we have a lot on our plates," she recognizes the need for a "positive school culture" and finds value in spending time with upset students as necessary at lunch time or other times to help them process their feelings. At the same time, she is modeling the importance of building relationships with students for the teachers in her school.

Dr. Schneider, the principal of Lenox School who also identified herself as White, held an asset perspective toward students and their families that showed some inconsistency. While she views children as very capable of achieving at high levels with high quality instruction, she has had a mixed response from families in terms of their involvement in schools throughout her career. In explaining this, she says, "...we worked in environments where we called home and there's really no response or we sent things home and there's really no response either from a

lack of care or perhaps disconnected phones or all kinds of things.” She shows a deficit view toward families who do not respond to notes or messages from school, yet she realizes that there may be other reasons besides “lack of care” that they are unresponsive. In describing the community of Lenox, Dr. Schneider says:

We have more parents that do care than some of us have ever experienced in our careers. What that’s meant for classroom teaching and learning is that sometimes you are going to get some support at home with homework, or kids have some kind of weekend enrichment. Sometimes kids are bright and articulate and have a sense of the world versus kids that come to us with nothing and I think we go back to....if you’re not learning the way I’m teaching, then I need to teach the way you’re learning and make a shift in a lot of the classroom practices that we do because of the environments which our kids are coming from.

[D.LS.KS.IV.060316]

In contrasting “bright and articulate” children with children who “come to us with nothing,” she fails to recognize the funds of knowledge that children carry into school which shows a deficit perspective. Whether children bring an enriched background or “nothing” to school, however, Dr. Schneider feels that teachers need to engage in classroom instruction that reaches every child, shifting their practice in order to do so. Thus, she places responsibility for children’s learning with teachers which is more in line with an asset perspective. Overall, this principal possesses an inconsistent asset perspective.

In summary, most of the school leaders represented in Table 11 demonstrated beliefs that were not consistently illustrative of either a strong deficit or a strong asset perspective, but rather more nuanced perspectives. In the case of Ms. Miller, the assistant principal at Rosa Parks School, there was an example of a school leader sharing her asset perspective with a teacher,

encouraging her to recognize students’ funds of knowledge. These perspectives will be further discussed in relationship to leadership content knowledge in Section 4.2.3. First, I present findings pertaining to the perspectives of teachers.

#### 4.2.2 Perspectives of teachers

Table 11 displays perspectives of focal teachers in this study. I discuss three of them, one from each of the perspectives, or degree of perspectives, represented.

**Table 11: Perspectives of Focal Teachers toward Children of Color**

|                       | Deficit perspective | Asset perspective |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Central School</i> |                     |                   |
| <b>Cynthia Green</b>  | C                   |                   |
| <b>Katie Kowalski</b> |                     | I                 |
| <i>Lenox School</i>   |                     |                   |
| Sarah Tomasch         |                     | I                 |
| Emily Benko           |                     | I                 |
| <b>Mayra Jackson</b>  |                     | C                 |

Teachers who are discussed in this section are shown in bold.  
 C= consistent                      I= inconsistent

While there were teachers across the continuum, the only teacher whose perspective was strongly positioned within a deficit perspective was a first grade teacher in a school that was 99% African American, Central School. In fact, she taught in the same school as the mathematics coach with a consistent deficit perspective, and identified herself as White.

Ms. Green describes the neighborhood in which her students live as one with “A lot of disadvantaged families living in the homes. Some houses have boarded up windows where they should be condemned and I can only imagine what the children are living in” [D.CS.CG.IV.061101]. She views the neighborhood surrounding the school with trepidation although it is a mixed income area, and the families in the neighborhood as “disadvantaged.” When asked about the role the family plays in the academic success of children, Ms. Green says:

I think some students who are being successful have the family background whoever it might be, their parents or their guardian because a lot of my students don't even live with their parents. They live with guardians and if they're doing their homework and bringing their homework back and they have some type of adult figure at home to have that family support, they're at grade level or above grade level. Unfortunately, the majority of my students don't go home where the parent is able to help them. Whether they're working or they don't have the interest or the knowledge, you know, to help them complete the homework. I have more compassion toward them and I let them...I'm a little easier on them when they bring it back all wrong just because they're trying to do it themselves. So I have a lot of students who don't...I don't have the family support coming in and bringing, returning, their homework. If I make phone calls, they don't bring it...return the phone calls.

[D.CS.CG.IV.061101]

In this first grade teacher's view, the most successful children in school are those whose parents carefully monitor their homework. But most of her students have parents who are working, or lack “the interest or knowledge” to help with homework. If children are not successful with homework, Ms. Green positions the blame within home life rather than classroom instruction. She shows little appreciation for students' fund of knowledge. Moreover,

Ms. Green demonstrates low expectations for her students and does not assume full responsibility for their learning. These beliefs contribute to a consistent deficit perspective that is evident in her instruction as well. A discussion of Ms. Green’s teaching practice is presented in Section 4.3.1.

Like two other focal teachers in this study, Katie Kowalski, a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher in the same K-5 school as Ms. Green who also self-identified as White, holds a view of her students that is rooted mostly within an asset perspective, but not consistently. She acknowledges that when she first started teaching at Central School:

I heard a lot of negativity [from colleagues] about that no parents are involved and it was kind of a shock coming from, you know, a suburban school where I student taught.

[D.CS.KK.IV.060608]

She initially found a big contrast in the level of parental involvement between her student-teaching site in the suburbs and her urban school, noting that “parents feel guarded at first” at Central. She found that they “weren’t very warm and didn’t really want to have any conversation, didn’t really want to come up into the classroom.” Ms. Kowalski sought to understand these feelings and with administrative support, developed seasonal activities such as a Harvest Festival to begin to develop positive relations with families:

You could bring your families and your siblings and there’s pumpkins and donuts and cider and activities for the kids. When we started to do that and they felt comfortable and you were opening your door to them. And you weren’t calling always about negativity, then that’s when you saw the support because I have a lot of support in this classroom, but it’s taken a while.

[D.CS.KK.IV.060608]

She made a conscious effort to build relationships, making the school “a positive place for families and kids.” For her, a nurturing, caring, environment was as important as high expectations, progress monitoring, and “making kids own what they’re learning. When they know where they are, what their goals are, where they should go, and what expectations you have for them, I think the students can reach success” [D.CS.KK.060608].

To improve teaching and learning in her classroom and develop student “ownership” of their learning, Ms. Kowalski began to use a more student-centered approach, with less lecturing. In describing this effort, she says,

I think I’ve pulled back a little bit and I’ve let my kids take a little more ownership and I’ve kind of set them up, or posed a problem or a challenge and I let them work together...especially in math I’ve done that. In Math, they can be a little more explorative, but I think I’ve taken a role as more the facilitator and the guide and I can see where my kids’ strengths and weaknesses are when I’ve done that. Setting up my room with groups and having mixed ability levels within groups also helps.

[D.CS.KK.IV.060608]

She has been able to make pedagogical changes that reflect an asset perspective toward students.

Nevertheless, Ms. Kowalski still displays some beliefs that are rooted in a deficit perspective when asked about the school’s status in regard to No Child Left Behind (2001). Although in opposition to her earlier stated attitudes, she wonders “how can our school with where our children are coming from have the same expectations without...we don’t have all the resources, and we don’t have all the family support.” She adds:

At the same time when I see my students in action I say, “Well, absolutely they should be doing the same because they can do it.” So I’m kind of like two sided on that because I see...I get



frustrated that they have the same expectations, but at the same time I want my kids to have the same expectations because I know they can do it if they are pushed. And you never want to lower the bar because of where a student comes from.

[D.CS.KK.IV.060608]

Thus, Ms. Kowalski expresses a conflict between her response to NCLB accountability policies and her own individual expectations for her kids whom she knows “can do it.”

Ms. Kowalski’s perspective toward children of color evolved over her four years at Central School after she developed positive relationships with students and their families that did not support what she had heard from colleagues with a strong deficit perspective within her professional community. Vestiges of this perspective occasionally surface as she reconciles the conflicting views and perspectives of some of her colleagues with her own views and experiences:

If someone wasn’t doing their homework... you know other teachers used to always say, “Well, they don’t care anyways. They’re not going to do it.” But then I would see the parent get on that child and reinforce the importance of homework. So I don’t know why...if it’s just an unfamiliarity or if it’s that the parents have removed themselves from some of the education, but I think that once they know that they’re just as important as the teacher in their life and they feel important, then maybe that’s when the wall is broken down. You just have to...it’s a little work, but you have to do it.

[D.CS.KK.IV.060608]

This teacher has grappled with deficit-based messages within her professional community about children and their families and is developing an understanding that is grounded in an asset perspective and based upon her own experiences. She acknowledges the “work” involved but

shows a level of commitment to it, a commitment, she says, that developed in part through support from Ms. Russo when she was principal at Central School:

Our first year, Ms. Russo tried to start a Parent Teacher Association and we didn't have a big turnout and she kept reminding us that, you know, we can say they aren't going to be involved and close the door on them and always think negatively or we can find things that are going to bring them in.

[D.CS.KK.IV.060608]

The principal persevered in her outreach toward families, directly contradicting beliefs rooted in a deficit perspective that existed among many teachers in the school when she got there. Although the mathematics coach and Ms. Green, the 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher, may have persisted in a deficit perspective, Katie Kowalski was developing more of an asset perspective toward children of color and their families.

The only focal teacher who displayed a consistent asset perspective, Mayra Jackson, taught 8<sup>th</sup> grade English language arts, and like the only school leader with a consistent asset perspective, identified herself as African American. In taking full responsibility for learning in her classroom, Ms. Jackson does not call parents in order to improve student behavior, saying, "One of the things I try to do is deal with the student as best as I can. I don't actually need the parent to intervene with anything" [D.LS.MJ.IV.070523]. She acknowledged that interested and involved parents "make my job a lot easier and make it easier for the kids to move forward, too," but added:

When I say I don't call parents, it's not because I don't believe in them participating. But I just think also as a teacher, my responsibility is to be able to manage my classroom and also to teach my students. And I always tell my kids, "This is my house.

That's your mom's home or your dad's home or both, but this is my house." So I try to deal with whatever I can in the classroom.

[D.LS.MJ.IV.070523]

This quote shows Ms. Jackson's strong sense of duty in assuring that children learn in her classes. She displays confidence in her ability to "manage my classroom and also to teach my students," and consistently views her students as highly capable of learning challenging material.

Ms. Jackson participates in the Pennsylvania Writing Project as a "Fellow," having gone through the Summer Institute several years before. When I observed her class, writing workshop was taking place, and students were conferring about their work with the teacher and among themselves. The students were taking turns using the six computers in the back of her classroom for writing. Ms. Jackson provided positive and supportive messages to the class about the research projects they were completing, telling them, "Everyone is at different stages, but we need to make sure that you all have the opportunity to make the deadline." She explicitly conveyed a belief in the students' ability to complete their projects on time with her support. There were displays of student writing on the walls, including poetry [D.LS.MJ.OB.070529].

When asked how her African American heritage influences her work as a teacher, Ms. Jackson replied:

I have a responsibility to give back, which is one of the reasons why I teach, and even especially in this particular district because it has a large number of African-Americans. I want to say our district is more than 60% African-American, and so I feel like I have a responsibility to give back. Some of the things that I was able to get was because of teachers, because of counselors. And because I didn't have access to that information at home, I feel that I have a responsibility now that I am knowledgeable and now that I

have the access, that I should give the same things back to students who aren't as fortunate, just like I wasn't.

[D.LS.MJ.IV.070523]

Unlike Ms. Green and Ms. Kowalski, Ms. Jackson's perspective is rooted in her own past experiences as she sought to succeed in high school and continue to college. She voices a strong sense of responsibility for not only teaching her students but also guiding them towards long-term academic success.

Although analysis across the schools in this case study implies that developing an asset perspective toward children of color may be more supported by an integrated context, it also shows that perspectives held by teachers are dynamic rather than static, and thus open to change in a positive direction. As Ms. Kowalski shows, the dynamic quality of teacher perspectives illustrates that it is possible to change one's perspective toward a more consistent asset perspective. It suggests that a knowledgeable school leader may be able to assist teacher learning in this area of culturally relevant pedagogy. In addition, as seen with both Ms. Miller and Ms. Jackson, African American educators possess both cultural knowledge and insights from their own experience that are not often recognized or valued within the broader professional community. As a school leader, Ms. Miller transformed this knowledge in assisting the learning of one individual teacher. Next, I consider ways in which these perspectives relate to teaching, learning, and leadership.

#### **4.2.3 How deficit and asset perspectives connect to teaching, learning, and leadership**

Because perspectives of teachers toward students of color have been shown to impact expectations for children, opportunities for learning, and teachers' willingness to innovate

(Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004), it is important to examine such perspectives and consider how they relate to leadership. The mathematics coach and the only teacher with a strong deficit perspective both work at Central School, a predominantly African American school. Although many of the White educators held an inconsistent asset perspective that could strengthen into a more consistent asset perspective with assistance from knowledgeable school leaders, these perspectives were largely ignored by the school leaders, and received no attention in professional development.

For the mathematics coach rooted in a deficit perspective and Ms. Thomas, the principal who held an inconsistent deficit perspective, the teachers and school leaders at Central School were making commendable efforts to teach children who often came to school hungry and sleep-deprived. As Ms. Thomas said:

When you think about their background and you look at the low socio-economic [status] and their diversity and their culture and everything else that they're dealing with...if you're not looking at the individual, you don't know where you're going to take them instructionally. If they're hungry or if they haven't slept or something's going on at home, you need to begin to meet those needs first before I think instructionally you can say you're going to keep pushing forward for them.

[D.CS.LT.IV.060519]

From Ms. Thomas' perspective, it is understandable to put off instruction until children's physical needs are met. Children's "diversity and their cultures" are seen as burdens rather than positive attributes that strengthen their potential for academic success. She believes "the urban setting is a challenging place," and "teachers have a stressful job." She saw teachers as "going that extra mile" just as the mathematics coach did. With such a heroic view of teachers, these

school leaders may be satisfied with the status quo, and not feel a sense of urgency for change or instructional innovation. Moreover, when school leaders themselves are rooted within a deficit perspective, as Ms. Thomas and the math coach are, it may be that little change is sought. They may maintain the status quo in a culture of low expectations and instruction that is cognitively undemanding and unimaginative.

Even the school leaders with a more consistent asset perspective did little to assist teacher learning in this area. Ms. Russo's assistant principal and office mate at Rosa Parks School, Ms. Miller, demonstrated a strong and consistent asset perspective toward children of color. Ms. Miller's work with a 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher to develop the latter's understanding of children's funds of knowledge remained private. Although she showed expertise in this dimension of culturally relevant leadership content knowledge, and expertise in how to assist teaching learning of this content, Ms. Miller's expertise was not recognized or used to promote broader teacher learning. As the lone African American woman working with two White women (Ms. Russo and Ms. Thomas), she may have been marginalized from decision making about teacher learning and not empowered to share her experience in assisting teacher learning.

No focal educators from Lenox, the more integrated context, were found to have a consistent deficit perspective toward children of color, perhaps because they had occasion to see Black and White children learning with equal success and challenges in their classrooms. Ms. Jackson, an African American teacher who displayed a strong asset perspective similar to Ms. Miller at Rosa Parks School, was also not sought as a source of cultural knowledge.

The perspectives of educators described as "inconsistent" fall between "deficit" and "asset," and may be more dynamic than static. Thus, there is the possibility for learning and developing a more consistent asset perspective toward children, and knowledgeable school

leaders could be central in promoting such change. Developing teacher knowledge that would strengthen growth toward an asset perspective is an important component of culturally relevant leadership content knowledge.

In the following section, the representation of culturally relevant pedagogy in the schools in this study is discussed.

### **4.3 REPRESENTATION OF CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY IN SCHOOLS**

The findings presented in this section pertain to Research Question #2:

How, if at all, is culturally relevant pedagogy represented in the schools?

In Section 4.3.1, I provide accounts of the practice of four focal teachers in this study, two from Riverton City Schools, and two from Weston City Schools, and analyze the representation of culturally relevant pedagogy within their instruction. In Section 4.3.2, I discuss findings in relation to the presence of culturally relevant pedagogy in different subject matters, and in Section 4.3.3, the role that school leaders played in fostering CRP.

#### **4.3.1 Culturally relevant pedagogy in the practice of four focal teachers**

I begin this section with a discussion of instructional practice of the two focal teachers at Central School followed by a discussion of instructional practice at Lenox School.

### *Two focal teachers and their practice at Central School*

In this section, I introduce the instructional practice of a 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher and a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher from Central School. I observed the 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher, Cynthia Green, several times in the fall of 2006 and the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Katie Kowalski, several times in the spring and fall of 2006, and present excerpts from field notes of the observations. Both teachers were observed teaching literacy and mathematics, and interviewed several times about their teaching practice, leadership practice in the school, and about culturally relevant pedagogy.

#### *Cynthia Green, 1<sup>st</sup> grade*

Ms. Green warmly greets me as I arrive to observe her 1<sup>st</sup> grade class. The children are lining up against a tiled wall outside the bathroom as they return from a special class when I come across them in the lower level of the building. Many of the children smile at me without speaking, respecting their teacher's rule of silence in the halls. It seems rather gloomy in the basement hallway due to the lack of windows and the cloudy, late fall weather.

The teacher suggests that I go ahead to her classroom and settle in. With a couple of windows along the back wall, it is slightly brighter than the hallway. The desks are spread out in four long rows, all facing the blackboard. The seating arrangements have changed from earlier in the year when the desks were clustered in small groups of 4 or 5 desks.

At 10:25, Ms. Green and children usher into the class. There are 10 boys and 9 girls present today, and all of the children are African American. The teacher tells them to take their chairs and go over to the "reading center" which consists of a small whiteboard easel next to a horseshoe shaped reading table for small group work in the back of the room. The children carry their wooden chairs to the back, but some of them make a mad dash, carrying their chairs in an



unwieldy manner, and bumping into each other as they jockey for a position near the teacher's seat. In a loud voice, the teacher tells them to walk. She says, sternly, "We do not come into the reading circle like this. Lanae, if you choose not to join us, go up to the office and I'll send a referral immediately." This little girl pulls up closer to the cluster of chairs, but cannot get too close because the chairs take up so much room. The children sit quietly. Ms. Green, now sitting on a chair next to the whiteboard, gestures to a spot in front of her and says, "Keith, you come back and sit here. Boys and girls, you need to come in and sit down quietly so we can get started. I still have children who want to be furthest away. You need to be close. Your card is turned and you need to get back to green. Your card is turned to yellow." The teacher is alluding to the system of progressive sanctions she has established to control behavior.

The teacher tells the children, "Now, we're going to do some word blending. We have so many today, that we're going to do it here. You all look like Central stars. Let's go back and sound this out."

She writes "quip" on whiteboard easel, and says, "Sound it out" as she points to it. Many, but not all, of the children say, "/kw/." Ms. Green tells them, "This is on the DIBELS test that those teachers are going to give you after Christmas so you really need to listen." She says, "Quip," and tells the children to say it as she points to it, and they do so. She says, "What if I take away the /p/ and put /k/?" Most of the children say, "Quick." She then writes "whim" on the whiteboard, and asks, "What if I take away the /i/ and put /æ/?" Again, most of the children say, "Wham," but a few students are either silent or say something else.

Ms. Green asks the children, "How many people have been studying our spelling words?" Most hands go up. She continues, "If we have time at the end of the day, we'll play Spelling Basketball. You must know your spelling words to be successful. Quietly, let's review

our spelling words. Quiz.” The children chant “q-u-i-z” two times, and then, “The word is quiz.” They clap hands as they chant. They seem to know this spelling routine very well, and enjoy it as they proceed through the words “whiz” and “quit.” Most of the children are actively engaged in this activity.

The teacher suddenly stops the routine to write “No Recess” on the whiteboard, and these three names under it: Lanae, James, Delmar. As she writes, some children are sounding out the initial letters to figure out whose names have been put up. Ms. Green says, “You need to pay attention and participate.” She then returns to reciting spelling words. She says: “when” and the children spell it two times, repeating the routine. The teacher stops the routine to say, “James, you did the work, so I’m erasing your name already.” James sits up straight and smiles. He is now chanting and clapping his hands with his classmates. The teacher continues with the spelling words, saying “Who.” Many children say “H” as the first letter as they chorally spell the word, and Ms. Green stops them, saying, “Just a minute. Take a picture of the word ‘who.’ You all want to start it with h, but it’s a “w” word.” The class proceeds through the following spelling words: card, which, quick, there, arm.

Ms. Green says to the children: “Let’s go back to learning, and review the words of the week.” She points to a place on the wall with words written on manila card stock taped to it. This is the Word Wall, and the children chant together in monotone, word by word as their teacher points to each word, “about, books, by, family, grew, read, work, writing, sometimes, because.” The children move back to their desks shortly after this exercise, and the teacher leads them in round-robin reading in which each student reads aloud from a common text [D.CS.CG.OB.061213].

The district just introduced a new basal published by Harcourt in reading in the past year, but the tasks witnessed in the beginning of this 1<sup>st</sup> grade class were based on the phonics supplement that the school uses in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade, *Saxon Phonics and Spelling*. Although the group phonics work on the combinations of qu and wh was connected to most of the spelling words, there were few connections among the phonics work, the spelling words, and the basal used in reading. There was no child discourse around the spelling words. The children chanted the words, one after the other. There was very little meaning attached to any of the exercises that took place by the easel. Ms. Green told the children that they have to know all the “letters” but did not mention “sounds.” She was not scaffolding to strengthen their understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds. She even mentioned the DIBELS test that these first graders will face after winter break, but there was little if any checking or assessment of individual student learning. In a one hour literacy block, only 10 minutes at the very end were devoted to comprehension of text. Most of the time was spent on rote phonics instruction and round-robin reading.

I asked Ms. Green what characteristics she felt that African American children brought to the classroom, and she responded:

They’re a lot louder. In their free play, their free play is a lot of touching, a lot of loudness that someone that did not teach in this urban setting they would think that there was roughhousing or what have you, but here, that’s how they play. That’s how they talk. They talk loud. They play loud, but they’re not being disrespectful. They’re not hurting each other. That’s their culture.

[D.CS.CG.IV.061101]

She expresses a monolithic or essentialist view of “their culture” that does not allow for diversity among her African American students. I asked her how such characteristics influenced her teaching, and she told me that she does “more hands on” instruction. She continued:

The majority of my students learn better hands-on. I have some auditory learners, but they’re more hands-on, get into the action, use the manipulatives, act it out, break it down to real life situations. If I have a number model and I want to try to get it to them if I talk about Burger King and Happy Meals, they relate and they understand and they do better. But if I just talk about seven plus three, I would get more students if I said, “Seven “Hamburger Happy Meals” plus three “Hamburger Happy Meals.” How many “Hamburger Happy Meals’ is your grandma going to buy today?” They would be able to respond better like that. So if I talk about items... talk about common interests around the school and manipulatives, that’s how they learn the best.

[D.CS.CG.IV.06110]

Nevertheless, across six different observations in this teacher’s classroom, the instruction always took place in a whole group setting in both literacy and mathematics. Ms. Green tended to be teacher-centered, implementing tasks that presented low cognitive demands for her students. There was no use of manipulatives or evidence of other “hands-on” instruction in spite of her belief that her students learn best “hands on.”

In addition, there were several opportunities for culturally relevant pedagogy that fell by the wayside. For example, the story that the class was reading from their basal, “Tomás Rivera,” was based on the life of a twentieth century Chicano writer, educator, and university administrator who grew up in a family of Mexican-American migrant farmers in Texas, yet no mention was made of the contributions of migrant workers to the US economy or society,

Mexican culture, or Tomás Rivera himself. A cultural assumption that everyone celebrates Christmas allowed the teacher to mention Santa several times in the December observation. No signs of other holiday celebrations or “festivals of light” were present nor mentioned. This assumption also appeared to exist school-wide in that there was a “Santa’s Workshop” where toys or inexpensive gifts were being sold, and children were encouraged to bring in money for purchases at lunch time.

*Katie Kowalski, 5<sup>th</sup> grade*

Over the course of this study, Katie Kowalski was in her fourth and fifth years of teaching elementary school, four of which had been spent at Central School teaching 5<sup>th</sup> grade. She was a young White woman, not yet 30 years old, with blond hair and blue eyes. She did her student teaching in a wealthy suburban district, similar to where she grew up. Beginning her teaching career in an urban school was, as she says,

...an eye-opening experience to me because I grew up in an area where I didn’t have any African American students in my graduating class or in my neighborhood. And it was a new world for me and then when I came here, this is like home for me.

[D.CS.KK.IV.060608]

Katie speaks of her “new world” in positive terms, saying it is “like home.” She is considered by the principal and others to be a teacher-leader in the building and district, and is an active member of the district professional development committee.

My first observation of Ms. Kowalski’s 5<sup>th</sup> grade takes place on a spring day. In the class of 18, all the students are African American except for one White student, a girl. I learn later that seven of the children have special needs and spend part of their day outside of this classroom in special education.

The room, an octagonal shape, is arranged with five clusters of desks. There is a bin on each cluster which holds chips that the children or the cluster earn for positive behavior. Across from the door on the other side of the desks is the screen that the teacher uses for her overheads. One wall is lined with windows, making the room bright. There is a reading area with a horseshoe shaped table on the right side of the room. Each desk has a worksheet on it, seat work that the kids do upon arrival.

The teacher stands at the door to the classroom, greeting each of the children with a friendly “good morning.” As they come into class, they go to the coat rack area to hang up their jackets and backpacks, and then sit down to begin their work. At 8:02, Ms. Kowalski enters and says to the class, “I like how you’re all getting busy.” She stops behind one student and says to him softly, “OK, what does that equal?  $\frac{1}{4}$ ?” The child says yes in a soft voice. The teacher then asks the entire class, “In order to put fractions in order from least to greatest, what do we convert them to?” The students answer, “Decimals.” The teacher tells the kids, “You can ask your neighbors for help.”

Another student speaks softly to the teacher. The teacher says to everyone in a loud voice, “Gloria made a good point. She keeps dividing, so for the fraction  $\frac{1}{16}$ , she divided 1 by 16. Is .0625 large or small?” The students respond, “Small.” The teacher says “Yes” as she continues circulating around the room, looking over their shoulders, and checking on their work. At 8:06, she walks over near the overhead projector and starts going through the attendance list and announces that there are two students absent. She asks the kids, “Dawn’s not coming?” but gets no clear response.

A child asks, “What’s a quart?” and Ms. Kowalski says in a quiet, calm voice, “You know when you buy milk? It’s the smallest container.” Then loudly, to all, she suggests, “You

may want to take out your *EveryDay Math Reference*.” Ms. Kowalski says, “Everybody, write down in the margins ‘page 179.’ That’s where you can check US equivalent measures. You have about four more minutes.” At 8:14, she says, “Put the sheet in your green folder. If you are finished, help pass your journals out. They have been passed out by cluster. You should have sharpened pencils and binders on your desks. Thank you to those that helped pass out the journals. Group 3 looks good [She places a chip in the bin on their desks]. OK, group 4 too.” Moving quickly to the other cluster, she places a chip in that group’s bin.

The teacher says, “OK, thanks for coming in and finishing your work so well. Because of testing, we didn’t do a math task, and we only have 25 minutes until reading. Then we’ll count our chips to see which team wins.” She then does a general review of upcoming dates and schedule changes, reminding kids that next Monday, there is no school, and that the teachers are having meetings on Tuesday and Wednesday. [D.CS.KK.OB.060526]

This short excerpt from the beginning of the day in 5<sup>th</sup> grade provides a glimpse into Ms. Kowalski’s attention to subject matter. As soon as the children enter the classroom, they work on a review of fractions and their relative value. The actual mathematics may represent lower level procedures without connections, rooted in algorithms, possibly because it is review of prior instruction (Stein, Smith, Henningsen, & Silver, 2000). This teacher has been working with the district mathematics coordinator and a researcher at a nearby university to develop more cognitively demanding “math tasks” to complement *Everyday Mathematics*, the curriculum used in the district [D.CS.KK.OB.060526]. She plays a leadership role on the district-wide professional development committee in planning mathematics workshops for teachers.

This attention to subject matter is coupled with clear expectations for the children. The teacher’s warm relationship with the children is apparent as she circulates. She checks over

their shoulders and talks quietly to them. She informally assesses how the students are doing, offering support and recommending references for them. She stops to take care of morning routines such as attendance. Ms. Kowalski uses a reward system to encourage positive behavior.

The following fall, I visited Katie's classroom on the afternoon of Open House scheduled from 2:30 until 4:00 pm at the end of the school day. Most of her students are from single parent families, or live with their grandparents, and all of them receive free or reduced lunch. When she first started as a teacher at Central School, Katie noted that parents and grandparents seemed to be guarded in their interactions with her, saying:

Initially I just found that they weren't very warm and didn't really want to have any conversation, didn't really want to come up to the classroom and meet the teachers and really weren't interested. I can't speak for everybody. It was just that's the feeling that I got.

[D.CS.KK.IV.060608]

But her relationships with parents developed over time. At the Open House, lots of student work is displayed around the classroom, including math quizzes with percentages written in red on each one clipped to clothespins which hang from long strings attached to the ceiling. The first progress reports of the school year have gone home earlier in the week. There were about 12 people (all African American except for the teacher), a mix of adults and children, in the room when I arrive. Parents and other family members get a ticket from teachers for a picnic dinner that begins at 4:00 once they have visited their children's classrooms to see the teachers.

Katie talks to each parent individually in a relaxed and friendly tone. She holds her grade book and refers to it as she discusses each child's academic progress. All the dialogues take place in the center of class, amidst the clusters of desks. Other parents or family groups stand or sit around the room, keeping mainly to their own family while they wait to talk to the teacher. Some of the families consist of mother and a child, others are larger extended families, and there



is one father/son pair. Many of the children mingle with each other and explore their classroom, showing off their displayed work to each other or family members. More families enter the classroom while I am there. In the following paragraphs, I describe separate interactions that I observed with three different sets of parents and their children.

The first part of a conversation that I overhear is a parent asking the teacher what she should do at home about the 4Sight assessment results which just went home to families. The mother is concerned that her daughter scored at basic and below basic. Katie says, “Don’t worry too much. Lots of kids got 60% to 70% and that’s OK for the first assessment. It’s early in the school year still, and your daughter will do much better on the next one. OK, I’m gonna’ go talk to Nia’s mom now unless you have any other questions.” The parent thanks her, and the teacher excuses herself to go talk to another mother.

Katie greets this new mom, and tells her to come over by the door to see the attendance chart and the homework completion chart that are both posted on the door. “Here’s our attendance. Nia is late almost every day as you can see. She’s missed a lot of homework. She can still get it in for this term; I accept them late. Every day I check off who turns their homework in.”

The girl sighs and says, “I do them every day but forget them.” Her mother tells her that she needs to remember to hand them in and she will help her. They thank Katie as she hands them the tickets for dinner, and they leave the room.

A young African American father, maybe in his early 30s, approaches Katie with his son at his side. Katie asks the father if he got the progress report, and he answers, “Yeah.”

Katie says, “He’s doing real well. Math is phenomenal. We spend a lot of time on factors and multiplication facts. He got 85% on the third test but that was the most difficult.”

The father says a low-keyed, “OK,” showing approval of his son’s efforts.

The teacher continues, “He’s doing really well. He is a good participator and gets along with everyone. He forgot one assignment but usually does all of his homework.”

The dad again says, “OK,” but his pride in his son is palpable.

Katie adds, “He goes to Ms. Desarro for speech but he’s doing so well that she’s reducing his time to a half hour. I don’t want my kids missing math or reading so he goes at spelling time. He’s a good all-round kid. I can always count on him. We have more kids this year, so we work in groups a lot, and he helps motivate others. He’s a real trooper. Do you have any questions for me?”

The parent says: “No, I just wanted to check in.”

Katie tells the dad, “Next week we’ll be doing some writing, some narrative. We’re writing a scary story since Halloween is coming. Did I give you your tickets?” She hands dinner tickets to the parent.

The young father says: “There’s some good karma up in here. Thanks, Sis.” They shake hands and he heads out the classroom door with his son, smiling. [D.CS.KK.OB.061004]

As seen from this excerpt of an observation of Open House, Ms. Kowalski is highly respectful of her students’ families. Her tendency toward an asset perspective, discussed in Section 4.2.2, is on display as she interacts with families and conveys high expectations for their children. She tells parents and grandparents how their children are doing academically, providing details and suggestions for improvement. For those who may need extra encouragement and support, such as the girl who was missing lots of homework, Katie offers it. She tells her that she will accept late assignments. Almost 75% of her students attended Open House with family members, above the average of 50% that the principal reported [D.CS.LT.IV.061011].

Aspects of culturally relevant pedagogy are visible in Katie's interactions with family members and in her teaching [D.CS.KK.OB.060526; D.CS.KK.OB.061004]. She is highly explicit in giving assignments to her students and providing clear expectations, and tells the children what to expect in terms of upcoming schedule changes. She radiates a sense of caring toward the children and their learning. Katie displays a constructive approach to discipline with a calm demeanor, reinforcing participation and positive behavior by quietly handing out chips to clusters of children who make a smooth transition from their morning work to the next activity. It is a peaceful setting in which teaching and learning are valued.

*Two focal teachers and their practice at Lenox School*

*Sarah Tomasch, 1<sup>st</sup> grade*

Sarah's classroom is set up with short tables in a U-shape, two on each of the three sides. There are little chairs on both sides of the tables, and I count a total of 25 chairs. It looks as if several are not "inhabited" because they do not have the blue seat covers that the others do. The seat covers have large pockets facing outward, and the pockets have workbooks in them. Under each occupied chair is a light blue bin in which supplies and more books and notebooks are kept. There are little plastic bins with lids that latch to house the math toolkit. *Everyday Math*, the district mathematics curriculum, has a "toolkit" for children consisting of shape templates, rulers, and little clocks. The classroom has lots of kid-friendly posters up on the walls and blackboards. There are several teacher-made posters taped to the front chalkboard (one titled "Powerful Language", one called Vocabulary of Feelings - a black and white commercial poster that is essentially a list of words, and one called "Great Beginnings" for stories, and another named "counting routines" on the bulletin board above those posters). On the file cabinet near the door,

there is a sign “Writers Wall of Fame”, and below it are hung 16 stories with crayon illustrations, work by the children in this 1<sup>st</sup> grade class.

At 12:20, the kids enter very quietly and head to the rug area in front of the room, and sit down. There are five African American girls, three White girls, one White boy, and seven African American boys, or sixteen children altogether. Ms. Tomasch follows them, and sits in the rocking chair on the rug. Ms. Tomasch tells the class, “We have a visitor today,” and introduces me as “Ms. Judith.” She tells the children that as they discussed the day before, I am working on my doctorate to become a doctor like Dr. Schneider, and that to do that, I am going to college longer than many people do. She tells them that I am here to watch their writing this afternoon.

Ms. Tomasch continues addressing the children, focusing on the writing task of the day, “You are working on a narrative procedure that explains how to do something. You provide a guide. Everyone made a list yesterday, and now what are we working on today?” The teacher stands up and points to a chart hanging from the blackboard tray, and the children read its title, “Directions.” Ms. Tomasch calls on Kwasi to begin reading from the chart, and he reads, “Sequence information that you need.” The teacher asks, “What does ‘sequence’ mean?” Another child says, “Put in order,” and the teacher nods, adding, “So that’s what you’re going to do today. If you’re writing about making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, do you include *everything*? [Most of the children shake their heads, and she continues.] You include what we need to know. So if I say, yesterday we went to the grocery store, should I include that?” The children answer loudly, “No!” Referring to Pennsylvania state standards for the teaching of writing, she asks, “What’s our standard?” The children say, “Types of writing.” Ms. Tomasch

replies, “Yes, and what kind?” The students respond, chorally, “Informational.” The teacher says, “Yes, so it’s giving information.”

“Kwasi, Ebony, Jermaine, Aisha, Elijah, Ella.” The children leave the rug as their names are called, and go to their seats to begin writing. One little girl comes over to check the word wall and tells me that she is looking for the word *together*. She finds it, and returns to her seat and copies the word from the word wall.

Ms. Tomasch starts discussing sequencing again, saying to the entire class, “Notice how they are in order. You wouldn’t mix it first, then add the milk. Make sure you write the directions in order, and leave out any unnecessary information.” The teacher goes from student to student to check on their work and answer questions as they continue writing and revising. She asks them to read their directions to her, and occasionally makes a suggestion about sequencing or something that was left out.

Ms. Tomasch sits down next to Elijah to confer with him, and he reads his writing to her. She tells the class, “Elijah has done a very good job of explaining how to make oatmeal. I’m going to ask him to read it to you.” Elijah reads, “Dump the oatmeal in the bowl. Add some water. Put it in the microwave. Put it in for 1 minute. It is done. Take it out of the microwave. Put some sugar and milk on it. Stir it and eat.” Smiling, the teacher asks the class, “Do you think you could make oatmeal from his instructions? Did he meet our objective?” The other children respond, “Yes!” The teacher looks at Elijah and says, “Very good, Elijah! Elijah is going to work on his ending by going up there and looking at our model. Good work!” The child gets up and walks to the front of the room to read the model poster on making pudding that is hanging from the chalk tray. The final two sentences on the chart paper are: “Now you know how to make a simple snack. Delicious!”

Ms. Tomasch moves to Jermaine and sits next to him as she simultaneously notices a little girl at the next table looking upset and languishing over her work. The teacher asks another girl to go help her with her list of supplies. She finishes with Jermaine, and tells Elijah, still in front of the room, that they can work together. Although Jermaine's face is expressionless, he walks jauntily toward Elijah to join him on the rug, clearly proud of his writing and happy to sit down to work with his friend. Ms. Tomasch moves over to work with Aisha. Three children at another table are standing as they look at a child's illustration, and talking a bit loudly about it. Almost immediately, the teacher asks them, "Are you talking about writing?" They sit down so fast that they look guilty of not discussing writing, and they get back to work. The teacher, after working some more with Aisha, excitedly says, "We are looking good!" She begins working one-on-one with another child.

At 12:50, the same little girl that used the word wall earlier comes back over by me. She is holding a yardstick as she scans the wall. I ask if I can point to something for her and she says, "Around." I look at the wall, but only see "round." As she hands me the yardstick, she says, "That's good because my friend can just add 'a.'" I point to the word and hold the yardstick there for a while so the other child has time to copy it from across the classroom. The teacher is still working with the same little boy, and says to him, "OK, you're ready to work on your ending. Good work, much better." He smiles broadly and gets up to go to the front of the room with the other children who are working quietly [D.LS.ST.OB.070607].

This 30 minute excerpt from Ms. Tomasch's classroom instruction highlights several features from culturally relevant pedagogy. This teacher discusses college and graduate school with her first graders, indirectly showing high academic expectations for them. She is warm, encouraging, and positive in her relationships with the children, focusing all the while on the

subject matter of literacy through writing workshop. The students are familiar with relevant academic standards and go about their work independently, showing an understanding of Ms. Tomasch's expectations. They have opportunities to work with her and each other, sharing their work and learning to evaluate it.

Ms. Tomasch is learning to incorporate writing workshop into her literacy practice, and has been supported in her efforts through her work with the Reading First coach and professional development in line with AC reforms. However, although some essential features of CRP are present, she was not observed teaching subject matter that was reflective of cultural diversity, and did not show evidence of a critical consciousness or developing such thinking in her students.

*Emily Benko: 5<sup>th</sup> grade*

The 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms are located at the end of the long hall in the 3-8 building of Lenox, past the office and the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade rooms. There are four computers in the back of the room, and a class meeting place in one corner where there is a rug and a stool. There is a kitchen sink on the side of the room where the door is, surrounded by cupboards that have been painted purple. Windows line the opposite wall. The room has five clusters of four desks each. Today, nine students are present: four White boys, one African American boy, and four White girls. It is a very small group of children that does not seem demographically similar to other classes at Lenox School. The room is darkened in attempt to keep the temperature down on a very warm late spring afternoon.

Ms. Benko teaches literacy to three different classes of fifth graders. After doing an introduction to the week's spelling words during which the children take notes of the definitions, she asks them to meet her in the back of the room on the rug. Ms. Benko says, "OK, materials

managers, if you would please get your sourcebooks and your writing folders, and then sit on the red rug.” The literacy coach walks into the class, and joins the children as they sit down.

Michael, the lone African American child, hesitates, and the teacher calmly but firmly invites him to join his classmates. After stalling for a minute, he gets up and moves to the rug.

Ms. Benko sits on the stool and asks the children, “So what did we use in your reports? The students answer, “Photographs.” The teacher continues, “There’s another way we talked about to gather information. What is it?” The students respond, “Interviewing someone.” The teacher nods and says, “Today we’re going to look at your areas of expertise and using interviews to get more information about them. Let’s go around the room and hear what you are an expert in. Michael? It doesn’t have to be up here.” She is referring to a list on chart paper on the wall. Students offer various activities in which they have expertise, including baseball, dancing, softball, gymnastics, technology, babysitting, videogames and shopping for them. One girl is silent and does not respond, and the teacher says, “I know there’s something; I’ll come back to you.” Ms. Benko adds to the chart paper as children respond. A boy says, “Acting,” and she says, “Yeah, you’re awesome at acting.” The girl who had no response earlier raises her hand, and says, “Babysitting.”

Ms. Benko smiles and says, “Look at these experts in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade! So if you wanted to do a report on something, you could find an expert on it and interview him or her. Who in here knows someone who lives on farm?” Many kids raise their hands. The teacher continues, “Great, because we’re going to talk about corn! Here are some interviewing tips. I’m going to look at my notes. Going back to the time of Christopher Columbus, they had to learn about corn. Here are some questions. How does it grow? How can you cook it? I want to use my sourcebook to write questions to ask the expert about corn. When I pair you up to interview, it’ll



be on something you're not really an expert on. So Michael, what kinds of things do you eat with corn in them?" Michael answers, "Waffles." She asks, "Do you grind it up or toss in whole kernels? Now, you see how I'm asking him questions and I'm clarifying with him. What do you think I do at the end of the interview?" The students answer, "Say thank you!" Ms. Benko tells them, "Now you're going to go back to your seats and write in your sourcebooks. You're going to create five questions about your topic. But am I writing about Michael or something else?" A couple of children say, "Not Michael, your own topic." The teacher continues, "So during your work period, I want you to come up with five questions about the topic that you chose. OK, go back to your seats."

The children return to their desks and begin writing in their sourcebooks, one of the components of AC's approach to writing workshop. The literacy coach stays on the red rug during the beginning of writing workshop, but soon, she is walking around and looking at the classroom walls and posters. She then goes and sits with one of the students and enters into discussion with him. Ms. Benko is circulating and answering questions children have, or spurring them on in other ways. She asks one child, "What are questions you could ask about video games? What games require math?" The coach comes over and sits with Michael, and soon asks him, "You're doing baseball, right? What could you ask?" Michael responds, "I was thinking, what does a shortstop do?" She smiles and tells him, "OK, write that down."

At that moment, Ms. Benko comes over and says to the coach, "It's a bit tricky since it's not their real topic that they'll interview about." She looks at Michael's work and says a few quiet words to him. He is busy writing. She tells him he has a good question, and reminds him to put a question mark at the end [D.LS.EB.IV.070514].

After the class has worked on this assignment for about twelve minutes, the teacher calls them back to the red rug and asks a few of them, including the formerly reluctant Michael, to read their questions. She has to remind them not to answer the questions. She tells Michael, “I like how you were sticking to questions that pertained to the game. That’s good. Anyone else have questions or comments? Did you hear how detailed they are?” She tells the children to return the lists of questions to their folders because she has to “get you to your lockers.” After only five minutes of sharing their work, the class ends at 3:25 with the children going out to the hall to get ready to go home.

As seen in this excerpt from her instructional practice, Ms. Benko, while warm and respectful of all students, is still learning to implement rigorous, meaningful tasks in writing workshop as part of the AC reforms. As she circulated and spoke one-on-one to students, the teacher seemed to realize that the task she had assigned (writing interview questions about their own area of expertise) was inauthentic and not very useful for the interviews they would really conduct in later classes. She shared this insight with the literacy coach who was observing the lesson. According to the coach:

That was the report writing; she was at the beginning and wasn’t sure how to do the lessons. So I came in, saw how she was doing, and saw how the kids responded and then afterwards we talked about some of the things that went well, and what she probably could have done to change the lesson so that it came off better, so that when the kids went to work time they knew exactly what she was looking for. They were writing questions but were a little confused about who their audience was...She had tried to change

the lesson to fit the time frame they had and after it was very easy to see, oh you could have done it this way and it would have worked better. She's still very hesitant with the writing.

[D.LS.LC.IV.070618]

The literacy coach offered feedback to Ms. Benko the following day, continuing to work with her to improve in the teaching of writing.

Although Ms. Benko, a teacher with a nuanced asset perspective, shows strengths in management-related CRP, she does not appear to emphasize cultural diversity in the teaching of subject matter, nor does she show a critical consciousness or develop one in her students through her teaching (see Table 13). She is, however, aware of the importance of positive relationships with and among her students. In Section 4.4.1.2, Ms. Benko's efforts to counter racism that emerged in the newly reconstituted school are described, and provide some evidence of an emergent critical consciousness not yet reflected in her pedagogy.

#### *Comparison of the practice of culturally relevant pedagogy among the focal teachers*

As shown through the descriptions of practice in this section, three of the four focal teachers incorporated features of culturally relevant pedagogy into their instruction, and the fourth, Cynthia Green, did not. Table 12 displays features of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Osborne, 1996) as presented in Chapter 2 and indicates in which of the focal teachers' classrooms the features were observed. Although Ms. Kowalski, Ms. Tomasch, and Ms. Benko drew from many of them, none of the focal teachers consistently incorporated all of these features of CRP into their instructional practice. In fact, none of the teachers showed aspects of a critical consciousness or efforts in developing it in their students.

There is a strong contrast between the two first grade teachers and their management structures and approaches to teaching literacy within a meaningful context. In Sarah Tomasch's learner-centered class, the students were observed working independently as well as with each other in writing workshop. The children were applying decoding skills through inventive spelling as they wrote instructions about something of their choice; the task was cognitively demanding and motivating for the first graders. If a child was off-task, Ms. Tomasch indirectly refocused him. Ms. Green, on the other hand, was very teacher-centered, rarely encouraging independent or small-group work in her classroom. She practiced "spotlighting" of children she judged to be misbehaving, embarrassing them in front of peers.

Like Ms. Tomasch, the two 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers generally showed warmth and respect toward their students and their families. Although Ms. Benko was perhaps at an earlier stage of learning to implement writing workshop than her colleague in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade, she too was working closely with the literacy coach to improve her instruction and incorporate more cognitively demanding tasks into her teaching.

**Table 12: Culturally pedagogy observed in classrooms of focal teacher**

| Understandings and classroom processes<br>(Adson-Billings, 1994; Osborne, 1996)             | Central School teachers                 |  | Lenox School teachers:                           |                                       |
|---|---|--|--|---------------------------------------|
|   | Cynthia Green,<br>1 <sup>st</sup> grade | Katie Kowalski,<br>5 <sup>th</sup> grade | Sarah Tomasch,<br>1 <sup>st</sup> grade          | Emily Benko,<br>5 <sup>th</sup> grade |
| Teacher is personally warm toward and respectful of all students.                           | No                                      | Yes                                      | Yes  | Yes                                   |
| Teacher conveys high academic expectations for all students.                                | No                                      | Yes                                      | Yes  | Yes                                   |
| The teaching of subject matter is often reflective of cultural and/or linguistic diversity. | No                                      | No                                       | Not observed                                     | Not observed                          |
| Teacher spells out the cultural assumptions on which the classroom operates.                | Not observed                            | Yes                                      | Yes  | Not observed                          |
| Teacher shows critical consciousness and develops it in her students.                       | No                                      | No                                       | No   | No                                    |
| Teacher uses group work.  | Not observed                            | Yes                                      | Yes  | Yes                                   |
| Teacher controls behavior indirectly, avoiding “spotlighting.”                              | No; heavy use of spotlighting.          | Yes                                      | Both directly and indirectly; some spotlighting. | Yes                                   |
| Teacher uses an unhurried pace.   | No                                      | No                                       | Yes  | Yes                                   |
| Teacher draws upon the home participation structures of the children.                       | No                                      | Efforts in that direction                | Not observed                                     | Yes                                   |

As seen in Section 4.2.2, Ms. Green was also the only teacher who was found to hold a consistent deficit perspective towards children of color, a perspective manifested in a highly punitive approach to classroom management and a persistent reliance on learning tasks that presented low cognitive demands for children, thus limiting their opportunities to learn. Ms. Kowalski, Ms. Tomasch, and Ms. Benko all held an inconsistent asset perspective, taking more responsibility for student learning than Ms. Green, and showing more positive approaches to classroom management and their relationships with children. None of the teachers were found to make direct or strong connections between subject matter and CRP, a point that will be further addressed in Section 4.3.2.

#### **4.3.2 The presence of culturally relevant pedagogy in different subject matters**

Both Central and Lenox Schools had subject matter coaches in mathematics and literacy who worked to develop teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and to varying degrees, principals' and assistant principals' leadership content knowledge. When asked how the school built upon African American culture, one of the literacy coaches at Lenox said:

Well, other than a little bit like through the principal's book of the month trying to pick multicultural kinds of books, I can't say that we really...I don't think that we've really done anything particularly cultural.

[D.LS.RF.IV.070327]

Culturally relevant pedagogy did not receive much, if any, attention from the subject matter coaches in their work with teachers, nor was it addressed in other professional development contexts which were predominated by the use of data to inform instruction or

America's Choice implementation. Nevertheless, several participants discussed CRP in their practice.

Although the coaches' work did not directly link subject matter to culturally relevant pedagogy, the literacy curriculum used at Central included texts that reflected diverse cultures, as in the story of Tomas Rivera described earlier in the excerpt from Ms. Green's classroom. Here, I discuss two contrasting attempts by the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Central School and the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Lenox School to teach content that was culturally relevant through lessons based upon the district literacy curriculum.

I observed Ms. Kowalski teaching reading based on a passage from *Yang the Third and Her Impossible Family*, a children's book about a young Chinese girl who is a recent immigrant to the US (Namioka, 1995). Yang traverses many awkward moments as she adjusts to the culture of her new school and neighborhood. To introduce the text in their literature-based basal, the teacher asked the students what culture the story was from, and one of them answered, "Chinese?" The teacher then said, "So what country or culture is it?" Another student replied, "China." Ms. Kowalski asked another child to read the "Question of the Day" projected onto a screen: "How is the Yang family like a typical American family and how is it different?" She then said, "For example, a typical family action is that at 5:00 pm, you sit down for dinner." The teacher then solicited additional "typical" actions of American families. One child said "We have birthday parties." Another said, "We go to amusement parks." Still another added, "A typical family is that your dad is at work and your mom's always talking on the phone." The teacher laughed at this, and then asked, "How do you think it could be different?" One student said, "Language," and another said, "Different rituals." Ms. Kowalski responded to this comment by

saying, “Yes, their religion might be different. And did you ever notice that they take off their shoes sometimes?” [D.CS.KK.OB.061004]

Through her questions and comments, the teacher is reinforcing stereotypes about Chinese American people and gender roles while conveying idealized notions of American families, whose fathers work while the mothers stay home, all having dinner together at 5:00 pm. Her failure to deconstruct these notions imparts a superficial understanding of cultural diversity, and shows an absence of critical consciousness. When asked about the multicultural focus of this story, Ms Kowalski said:

This one theme is kind of on different cultures...We read the story about Yang that moved from China. We read the story “Elena,” that they’re from Mexico. We read about Rosa Parks. So it’s kind of a multicultural theme, which is really good, and the kids like to learn about kids their ages from different cultures. So that was just the actual story that we were reading that particular week, and I think the moral of that was they just wanted you to learn that that girl was pretty embarrassed about her family’s differences, but in the end everybody’s unique and you don’t have to be like the cookie-cutter type and her mom had good qualities and she wasn’t giving herself enough credit. Kind of about fitting in, but at the same time valuing your family and your culture. So hopefully that can strike them.

[D.CS.KK.IV.061011]

Although Ms. Kowalski describes cross-cultural tensions that the story about Yang explores, she did little to explore their rich potential in classroom discussions with her students, instead emphasizing the main character’s embarrassment about her family’s differences.

Emily Benko, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Lenox School, did not explicitly identify elements of her practice as culturally relevant, nor did I observe CRP rooted in subject matter teaching



when in her classroom. However, when explaining what she had done to “make students like reading more,” she said:

I did away with workbook pages. And it’s just...you do fun things. And I think, too, you have to adapt it to their culture. If you want to make a little rap out of a fluency passage, okay, that’s fine because you’re reading. You know what I mean? You don’t realize you’re doing it, but you’re doing it.

[D.LS.EB.IV.070525]

She identifies the adaptation of rap to build fluency in reading as a way of adapting reading “to their culture.” She added that with the America’s Choice reforms, she faced some time constraints in scheduling such adaptations, but “luckily, our administrators here realized it because I cried enough about it” and she would have a third period for literacy the following year.

Another non-focal teacher at Lenox complained that the little time she used to have for multicultural projects had evaporated in the era of high-stakes testing:

What I used to do that I can no longer do...I used to take like the week of Martin Luther King’s birthday and do something. I used to take Black History month and I used to do a program, but because...and this is very sad, but because of the testing in March and the implications, until after March I don’t have any fat to fry, so to speak. No time. No extra time.

[D.LS.EB.IV.070321]

These projects were associated with social studies but were not described in any further depth.

Thus, the interest and motivation to adapt pedagogy was present in several classrooms. As seen in the excerpts from classroom practice and interviews, a few teachers attempted to

connect subject matter to culturally relevant pedagogy, ranging from content integration based in curriculum to building upon children's funds of knowledge. Their unrefined attempts, while showing potential for effective pedagogy, also showed a clear need for assistance from knowledgeable school leadership. In the following section, I examine ways in which school leaders fostered or hindered CRP.

### **4.3.3 How school leaders practice and foster or hinder culturally relevant pedagogy**

For the school leaders in this study, culturally relevant pedagogy was not a conscious part of their practice, let alone a topic they fostered in their work with teachers. The two experienced principals engaged to a limited extent with certain elements of CRP in the realm of classroom management, but Ms. Thomas, the novice principal, did not. Although Dr. Schneider and Ms. Russo insisted that teachers convey high expectations for all students, they failed to make connections between CRP and the teaching and learning of subject matter.

Furthermore, there was little evidence of critical consciousness among the school leaders in this study. Critical consciousness, a fundamental understanding held by culturally responsive educators, refers to knowledge of social, political, and historical realities that impact schooling. Leaders occasionally voiced some awareness of racism without connecting it to leadership or instructional practice or to broader social and historical realities, while at other times, they avoided any acknowledgement of it.

In this section, I begin with an examination of the colorblind stance of Ms. Thomas, the least experienced of the three principals. I then explore Ms. Russo's efforts to establish positive teacher-student relationships at Rosa Parks School. I end the section with a discussion of the lack of critical consciousness present in leadership practice.

The short term, novice principal at Central School, Ms. Thomas, often used the term *whole child* in referring to children's needs:

Really, when you think of the Central School student, I think of the whole child. I think that when I reflect on them, that's what I think about them. I mean that they have so many different aspects and sides to them, but when I think of their needs and how to address them, I look at them as a whole.

[D.CS.LT.IV.060510]

Ms. Thomas maintained a firm colorblind stance that did not acknowledge the relationship of children's funds of knowledge or their home culture to teaching and learning. In fact, her efforts to be colorblind may mask a dysconscious racism that hesitates to question the status quo of underachievement of students of color. For the two and a half months that she was principal at Central, professional development efforts mandated by the central district office focused on student outcome data, the use of the 4Sight assessments, and the relationship of data to instruction. Culturally relevant pedagogy was not part of her leadership practice.

Ms. Russo and Dr. Schneider, who each had more than 20 years experience in public education, attended to classroom management by stressing positive approaches to student discipline with teachers. They believed in controlling behavior indirectly rather than confrontationally or through "spotlighting," while showing deep respect for children. Before Ms. Russo's arrival at Rosa Parks School, teachers often threw children out of class for misbehavior. As principal, she worked with teachers to develop alternatives to the exclusion of children from classes, and suspension from school. Ms. Russo developed a program called "Rosa Parks Stars" in which classes were rewarded for attendance and positive behavior, earning field trips with their teachers. She discussed importing the program to Rosa Parks School when she was principal at both schools:

I instituted the Positive Behavioral Support that I had at Central over here. I have something called Central Stars and Rosa Parks Stars. And if the children come to school on time, if they follow classroom rules, those types of things. Every nine weeks the children get to go on a reward trip and the teachers get to go too. And it kind of happens naturally. When teachers go and share in positive experiences with the kids, I think I noticed this at Central and I started to notice it here at Rosa Parks, I think that most people become teachers because they like children, and they feel a connection with children, and they want to make a difference in a child's life. But for some reason, the system gets in the way, and they lose contact with that. But when they actually get to go back to that again, and they get positive experiences with children, they remember.

[D.RS.DR.IV.060502]

This quote reveals Ms. Russo's belief in the importance of teacher relationships with children. She resisted efforts by teachers to exclude children from the reward trips, and gradually, more discipline problems were settled inside the classroom than the school office. The Rosa Parks and Central Stars' programs served to strengthen student-teacher relations which led to fewer disciplinary confrontations and suspensions.

In a school-wide faculty meeting at Lenox at the end of the school year devoted to positive discipline as part of a district-wide initiative, Dr. Schneider lectured the teachers about the achievement gap:

Throughout my career, there's this talk of the achievement gap between Black and White students, and it should be a no brainer. We shouldn't have it. It has to do with poverty. When you live in poverty, it has an impact. You know, India is a Third World country, yet India and China are outsourcing us in every area. In

India, there's a big disparity between rich and poor, and they are not having these problems. They live under blankets hung out between ropes, and they send their kids to school and they excel. No discipline problems. So I start to think to myself that a lot of people in America say Black/White, others say poverty. But now I'm saying it's not poverty because there are a lot of people in India who are going out and getting an education.

[D.LS.DS.OB.070615]

Dr. Schneider seemed to be thinking aloud as she considered whether the achievement gap in the US is due to students' race or income level, presenting simplified notions about life in the "Third World." It was an uncomfortable moment that ended with the principal thanking her captive audience, followed by their polite applause and an awkward silence. The teachers who were there were not sure what to make of it. Although Dr. Schneider may have intended to illuminate barriers to academic achievement, she fell short. The rest of the day, teachers at Lenox worked in small groups to develop an explicit system of discipline, classifying specific behaviors as belonging to one of four different levels of seriousness, and then linking them to agreed-upon sanctions.

Although the efforts of Ms. Russo and Dr. Schneider to showcase and systematize discipline in their schools may have led to improved teacher - student relationships, they avoided some of the most consequential topics. These topics included, for example, which students were disciplined the most, why students were disciplined, how students who were suspended were performing academically, the degree to which disciplinary sanctions were racially equitable, and who were the teachers involved. Such questions would have required critical consciousness on the part of school leadership and a systemic examination of discipline practices and consequences of those practices for teaching and learning.

In the following section, I discuss events in the practice of school leadership that foreground issues of race, culture, and learning.

#### **4.4 EVENTS IN LEADERSHIP PRACTICE IN WHICH ISSUES OF RACE, CULTURE, AND LEARNING SURFACE**

The findings presented in this section pertain to Research Question #3:

In which contexts and events in the day-to-day practice of school leadership do issues of race, culture, and learning surface?

- To what extent are the issues mediated by the principal and other school leaders?
- What resources, if any, do school leaders draw upon in understanding issues of race, culture, and learning?

In Section 4.4.1, I begin with an in-depth examination of several events that highlight how issues of race, culture, and learning are present in the day-to-day practice of urban school leadership, and illustrate the need for culturally relevant leadership content knowledge. They occurred at Lenox School, the newly reconstituted school that opened in August 2006 by combining two elementary schools, one that was predominantly African American and one that was predominantly White, into the buildings that had previously housed the predominantly White school. Section 4.4.2 presents findings on the resources that school leaders draw upon in understanding issues of race, culture, and learning. Later in Section 4.4.3, through a discussion of colorblind ideologies that surfaced at all three schools, I examine the leaders' understandings of the relationship of race and culture to learning and leading.

#### **4.4.1 Events in which issues of race, culture, and learning surfaced, and their mediation**

There were several distinct times when issues of race, culture, and learning surfaced in the day to day practice of school leaders at Lenox School. As a reconstituted school that combined two demographically different neighborhoods, Lenox School opened to tensions that played out in classrooms and to a lesser extent, professional development sessions. Table 13 displays the events that are examined, and the actors involved, and provides a capsule summary of the extent to which school leaders mediated the issues of race, culture, and learning. These events are presented and analyzed in this section.

**Table 13: Events in which issues of race, culture, and learning surface in leadership practice**

| Context/event   | Participants   | Mediation by leaders  |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Placement issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Shifting class lists in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade early in school year</li> <li>○ K parent’s request to transfer child mid-year in spring</li> </ul> | <p>Teachers, parents, principal, and assistant principals</p> <p>Principal, parent, teacher, central office</p>                    | <p>Some changes to class lists were made by school leaders to satisfy parent requests, and some were refused. No other follow-up occurred.</p> <p>After transfer request was denied by district leaders, parent contacts principal who supports district decision. Principal follows up with teacher.</p> |
| <p>White 5<sup>th</sup> grade child’s panicked response when assigned to sit next to African American child first week of school</p>  | <p>Teacher, student, and principal</p>   | <p>Principal immediately addressed individual student’s fears, instilled by parents. With administrative support, 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers engaged in weekly community-building activities with their classes. Other teachers were warned of “problems.” There was no mediation with parents.</p>    |
| <p>Teacher opposition to student access to curriculum materials (slate boards and manipulatives) as suggested by EveryDay Mathematics<sup>3</sup> consultant in PD session</p>  | <p>Three 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers, district EM consultant, district mathematics coordinator, and school mathematics coach</p> | <p>District leader and consultant listened and insisted that school math coach would assist teacher in use of slates and manipulatives.</p>   |

*Placement issues*

<sup>3</sup> University of Chicago School Mathematics Project curriculum



The principal discussed problems with the adults in the White community of Lenox, problems that initially focused on placement of their children:

And what we found was 99.9% of any of those problems that we had early on, as I said earlier, weren't motivated by kids. It was adults. And there are numerous examples. I mean, just a lot of parent complaints that were all rooted in a lot of racial stuff.

[D.LS.KS.IV.070316]

As an example of such a parent complaint, Dr. Schneider recounted the story of a father who had requested a transfer for his kindergarten child to attend another public school in the weeks before this study began [D.LS.KS.IV.070316]. When the father's request was denied by the district, he became furious and called the principal to ask her about it. He told her that he and his wife felt there was too much homework in kindergarten at Lenox and had therefore requested the transfer.

But the teacher, in discussing the situation with the principal, related that all the feedback she had heard from the mother of the child was positive and supportive. Dr. Schneider contacted the father to follow-up, and recounts her conversation with him:

Your wife keeps saying she's really pleased with the things that are coming home. He's going on and on and on and everything that he's saying I'm coming back with something and finally he says, "Lady, I don't want my kid going to school with those kids." I said, "Excuse me?" He said, "I'm at work and I can't talk anymore." Click.

[D.LS.KS.IV.070316]

This father finally admitted the motivation for his request to transfer his kindergartener, and it was as the principal had said, most likely "rooted in a lot of racial stuff." For the school leader, it was troubling that this incident had happened six months into the school year.

But back at the beginning of the year in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and other grades, some White parents had requested changes in class placement changes that school leaders agreed to.

According to Ms. Benko, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher:

... the parents would come in and say “my child can’t be in that classroom. There’s too many Lincoln kids”, or there’s too many...and that was just like....but someday you may live in the same neighborhood. My neighborhood’s mixed. You gotta...and I’m from [a rural community], all White. I’m thinking you’ve got to get over that. You can’t instill that in your children.

[D.LS.EB.IV.070516]

After noting that no school-wide efforts in community building were undertaken at the beginning of the school year, a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher referred to parental requests for changes in seating rather than placement:

Nothing was taken into consideration about the students and what it was going to be like when they got together and I have to say that in Third Grade it’s not that bad. I mean they’re little still and they’re much more open, but I hear things like, “Don’t sit my kid next to that kid.” Things like that and I try to honor what the parents ask for, but I try never to make it an obvious thing in the classroom and my class tables are very diverse and if a parent...now this has not happened, but if a parent came to me and said, “I do not want my student sitting at a table with kids from Lincoln.” Or whatever. That would not happen.

[D.LS.KF.IV.032007]

While she experienced some inappropriate requests from parents, this teacher locates the complaints and problems as residing elsewhere in the school and not in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade where the kids are “little still and they’re much more open” [D.LS.KF.IV.032007].

But the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher also comments that she tries “to honor what the parents ask for.” Ms. Benko appears much stronger in believing that requests grounded in fear and racism should be ignored. When asked how the school administration responded to placement changes, she said,

Ah, a lot of the parents were at some point given in to. “Okay, we’ll pull your child from that classroom,” in some instances. I immediately was against it, because I thought no, no. It’s my job to work them through this. I mean, if the parents have issues, that’s... I can’t change the world. But I can control it in my classroom, you know. But you do what you’re told.

[D.LS.EB.IV.070516]

Ms. Benko opposed changes in placement at the opening of school. She takes responsibility as a teacher to “work them through this,” describing this as part of her job. The next section examines an event from Table 13, centered in Ms. Benko’s classroom, that highlights such efforts.

#### *“Irrational anxiety” in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade*

Given the strong boundaries that delineate neighborhoods in the city (*City News*, 2007), it was no surprise that the school closings generated strong feelings among parents and educators alike, and even children. According to Dr. Schneider, she and the teachers had to focus on building relationships among students and families:

We’ve just been trying to develop relationships, let people know who we were and what we were going to be about here, what we were going to tolerate, what we weren’t going to tolerate and as we’ve bumped up against those specific circumstances of what I

would call blatant racism, we've handled the problems as they've come up and they have.

[D.LS.KS.IV.070316]

One such “problem” in which issues of race, culture, and learning surface takes place against this backdrop. Soon after the new Lenox School opened in late August, the principal was summoned to a fifth grade classroom where a child had inexplicably exited the room. The teacher, one of three focal teachers from Lenox described earlier in this chapter, is a White woman with five years of teaching experience in the city. The student was so upset by something that he was experiencing a strong, visceral response. Dr. Schneider describes her concern:

The first week of school, a fifth grader who had walked out of the classroom, he is visibly shaking, he's visibly shaking. So I go over and I pull him out in the hall and I said, “What is wrong?” He said “Nothing.” I said, “You are shaking. Are you cold? Are you sick?” He said, “No.” He said, “My teacher put me next to this Black boy and my parents told me that all the kids from Lincoln are bad.” That's what he said. And meanwhile the kid that he was sitting next to from Lincoln was in the gifted program and like this really nice guy, but he was visibly shaken because the teacher sat him at a table next to a Black kid and the parents told him the kids from Lincoln were bad.

[D.LS.KS.IV.070316]

Dr. Schneider considered this to be one of several “specific circumstances of what I would call blatant racism” at Lenox School in its inaugural year. Dr. Schneider advised the 5<sup>th</sup> grade child to make his own decisions about new classmates:

We were in school, he's going to be around new people, and he needed to make decisions about people not based on what other people said, whether they were parents or students or...he needed to have experiences with people on his own and make choices about who was bad, who was good, who was whatever.

[D.LS.KS.IV.070316]

The child returned to class, much calmer. His teacher, Emily Benko, had previously taught at another urban elementary school that was almost 100% African American, and was surprised to encounter such strong racial tensions at the reconstituted Lenox School, tensions that served as an impediment to teaching and learning:

Black, White, they just didn't get along. They hated each other, they couldn't work together...it was very segregated. And from my understanding, it's like a lot of Lincoln kids came over. Lenox people felt like they were coming into "our neighborhood." And I'm not real sure, but it seems like Lenox might be mostly White. But it just seems like that's always been a problem in Lenox, that the racial issues are there... and I never realized it. But at the beginning of the year, I remember going into the principal's office going, "I don't know what to do. I don't know how to help them." Because like in [my old school], it was basically territorial issues with the children. It was never race. And I just didn't know how to approach that here.

[D.LS.EB.IV.070525]

In her efforts to understand and focus on the currents of racism that were impacting her work with children, Ms. Benko directly sought assistance from the principal. The principal called upon an African American guidance counselor at Lenox to work closely with the 5<sup>th</sup> grade

teachers to plan experiences that would contribute to developing a sense of community among students at their grade level. In turn, the counselor invited a colleague from a social service agency in the city to present one session to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. In describing these combined efforts, she said:

The teachers did some things in their classroom. Once we had our [local] Partnership come in...now let me see. She worked with the 7th and 8th grade on building relationships, communicating effectively, anti-bullying. Then she worked with the 5th grade on the same type of topics just really because we knew there was a need to address this irrational anxiety in the community. So there was a lot of emphasis put on team building.

[D.LS.KU.IV.070618]

The 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers continued to organize community-building activities for all three of the fifth grade classes. For Ms. Benko, positive relationships among children were important in creating a successful classroom in which learning takes place:

My 5<sup>th</sup> grade team, we worked very hard on just bringing kids together. We did a lot of team-building activities. I mean, we had social gatherings like every week. People made fun of us for it. It was, “oh c’mon, why are you doing this?” But it is important, because when you want to do that flexible grouping in your classroom, they’ve got to work together.

[D.LS.EB.IV.070525]

Colleagues from other grade levels questioned the 5<sup>th</sup> grade focus on “team-building activities.” In the intensive first year of a push for implementation of school reform, there were competing interests for the use of instructional time. For Ms. Benko, however, the rationale for taking time away from instruction was based in a strong belief that such activities would eventually benefit instruction, and that racism should be countered:

You've got to get past it...and you know, it was amazing. A lot of it was from the parents, because the parents would come in and "My child can't be in that classroom. There's too many Lincoln kids," or there's too many...but someday you may live in the same neighborhood. I'm thinking you've got to get over that. You can't instill that in your children

[D.LS.EB.IV.070525]

Although she does not name racism, Ms. Benko thought that the school should address it.

The school leaders and teachers at Lenox were very concerned about calming the White child's fears about sitting next to an African American child who by all accounts was an honor student. Their response was immediate and genuine, aimed at returning the focus in the classroom to teaching and learning. However, there is no evidence regarding their response to the child whose mere presence had set off this "irrational anxiety," as the guidance counselor referred to it. Thus, it is not clear how his learning was interrupted or otherwise impacted.

Most teachers and leaders at the school felt that such incidents and complaints were no longer surfacing as of late winter. The guidance counselor observed:

I don't think it was maybe until February that I noticed that things were kind of stabilizing, really. The staff was saying, "What school are you from?" in September, October. It was like where are you coming from? And that was a natural divide right there. We're all supposed to be here as one and by February that was no longer an issue.

[D.LS.GC.IV.070618]

She acknowledges the role of the staff in perpetuating the divisions in the school community based upon neighborhood of origin. Without fully recognizing their own contributions to this racial divide, the teachers, the principal, and the guidance counselor

mobilized resources when racism became an issue in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. But fear and racism were treated as isolated incidents by the school leaders, just as other events involving race were treated in isolation. Mediation by leaders addressed specific incidents rather than underlying issues affecting teaching and learning. Indeed, there was no mention of anyone attending to the African American child whose mere presence had been the impetus for such a visceral response, followed by a series of workshops and efforts aimed at “building community.”

I now turn to another event from Table 13 that uncovers teacher attitudes toward students that are very much entwined with teaching and learning, and ways that leaders try to circumvent such attitudes.

#### *Refusal to use curriculum materials in the teaching of mathematics*

As part of professional development efforts at the school, a consultant from *Everyday Mathematics* was scheduled to present a demonstration lesson for three 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers on a May morning. In addition to the consultant, the district mathematics coordinator was also visiting. There was some tension in the room due to scheduling snafus: the teachers were originally told that the lesson would take place 2<sup>nd</sup> period. But on the morning of the visit, they were informed that the demonstration would begin immediately during 1<sup>st</sup> period, and two of them had to quickly prepare plans for the substitute teachers who were covering their classes. After objecting to the building mathematics coach about the last minute notification, the teachers settled into the first demonstration lesson which lasted for one period.

Soon after the lesson ended, the children left for art class. The consultant began to debrief with the teachers, telling them that “the idea is to flesh out more student engagement and involvement” [D.LS.OB.070422]. She commented that these children were used to a lot of



teacher direction so trying to get them to be more independent was new for them. The consultant suggested that “the slate boards should be used more routinely.” One of the teachers, a fifty year old White woman named Mary, responded dismissively, saying, “I can tell you that I don’t use slate boards because my kids use them as weapons.” The consultant persisted in her advice by saying, “But one thing I can tell you is that the more the kids use slate boards, the more accustomed they become to it.” In fact, slate boards are recommended for use in teaching *Everyday Mathematics* as a tool for efficiently assessing student learning.

But Mary would not acquiesce to the idea of having her students access slate boards, saying, “But they will truly hurt each other.” The consultant, the district mathematics coordinator, and the coach seemed surprised and taken aback at this condemnation of 1<sup>st</sup> grade children. The consultant agreed, adding that there might be:

some disruption if this was new to the kids. I haven’t seen slate boards in the routine. They would allow for more student engagement in the routines, and different ways to engage them. Change up some routines. Use base ten blocks, use straws, but vary it so students become thinkers of the routine, not parrots. And try to stay within a more 15-20 minute routine. The research base says less amount, but more frequently. Kids need smaller time blocks.

[D.LS.OB.070422]

Mary and one of the other first grade teachers, Lynn, are veteran teachers who are somewhat set in their ways and resistant to change. The other 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher, Sarah (also a focal teacher), runs the model mathematics classroom in this building, and is known for establishing and managing independent student groups in her instruction. When the *Everyday Mathematics* consultant clearly states in the debrief session that here in Lynn’s classroom, “it’s a

lot of teacher direction,” nobody objects to this assessment. The message that children must be allowed time to work on their own and that morning routines should be kept to short periods of time is clear. Later, the discussion centers on formative assessment, and ways to do alternative assessments, including work with slates. In supportive and reassuring tones, the consultant promises to show the teachers how to do small group assessments with slate boards, and still, Mary insists, “I don’t do slates” [D.LS.OB.070422].

As seen in this excerpt from leadership practice, this teacher refuses to fully implement the mathematics curriculum due to her strong deficit perspective toward the children of color and the economically poor children in her classroom. For her, their behavior is borderline dangerous in that they would “truly hurt each other.” She may be resistant to instructional change because she believes that the behavior of the children cannot change; after all, this observation takes place near the end of the school year and Mary is still complaining about her class. While the subject matter coach, the consultant, and district mathematics coordinator in the room object to the teacher’s reluctance to incorporate slate boards into her teaching and offer to assist her in doing so, they do not object to her view of the children in her classroom. These school leaders show persistence in telling her that she will be using slate boards in teaching mathematics, yet remain silent about her strong deficit perspective and its possible negative impact on children’s opportunities to learn mathematics.

Across these events, school leadership failed to address racism and racialized ideologies as expressed by White parents and teachers. There was a normalization of whiteness and privilege with at least three different educators talked about “honoring” parents’ placement or seating requests that were racially motivated rather than questioning them. In ceding to these requests or to the teacher who refused to fully implement a curriculum due to her deficit

perspectives toward children, school leaders send messages to the broader community that such privilege is part of the fabric of the school.

In the next section, I discuss resources available to school leaders in mediating events that surface relationships among race, culture, and learning.

#### **4.4.2 Resources that school leaders draw upon in mediating issues of race, culture, and learning**

In the case of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade where the effects of racism interrupted instruction, the classroom teacher viewed Dr. Schneider as a potential resource, and immediately sought assistance from her. The principal, in turn, called upon the guidance counselor, a highly experienced African American educator with many contacts in the local social service community. The counselor invited a colleague into the school to present workshops to several different grade levels of students with attention to “building relationships, communicating effectively, anti-bullying.” Although there was no direct attention to anti-racism education, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers recognized the need to provide continuing opportunities to build relationships among the students, drawing from their own resources to plan these opportunities with support from the administration. When they organized a “make your own sundae” party for all 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes, the principal covered their expenses [D.LS.EB.IV.070525]. The 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher, while saying that she had received no support herself, suggested that there were commercial programs to aid schools in community building:

But there’s really been nothing at all, no help whatsoever from anybody... We need a program like “Different and the Same” or once a month or once every two weeks where we sit down and we

talk about how we're different and how we're the same and how we celebrate that.

[D.LS.KF.IV.070320]

When asked whom they went to when they had any questions about African American culture, the White school leaders in this study generally named African American educators in their buildings, including classroom teachers and support staff such as social workers or guidance counselors. One of the principals named the school secretary as a resource when questions about African American culture arose. Several teachers said that they were friendly with a custodian or a cafeteria worker whom they could question. And finally, a subject matter coach told me that she has never had any questions about African American culture.

There was no mention of books, curriculum, or other tools that school leaders turned to for assistance or guidance in mediating issues of race, culture, and learning. A teacher showed me a stack of books that she planned on reading on her own, including *Learning While Black* (Hale, 2001). Educators with questions about race and culture often relied on relationships that were unequal in status and therefore problematic due to issues of authority and an inherent power imbalance which may tend to inhibit honest exchanges. In part because the events described in this section were seen as isolated incidents rather than as symptomatic of a deeper, systemic problem, resources were limited to those found in existing social networks. Without deeper understanding, school leadership was unable to assist teacher learning about the relationship of race and culture to instruction.

#### **4.4.3 School leaders' understandings of the relationship of race and culture to learning and leadership**

At Lenox School, in the midst of reform efforts, Dr. Schneider was working toward the improvement of student learning through school reform efforts while issues of race, culture, and learning abounded. Even when events required a response, the principal showed a reluctance to publicly discuss or address racism. There was no public acknowledgement that the problems were rooted in racism although the principal said exactly that in private. At Lenox, educators used the names of the neighborhoods represented at the school as a kind of code to allude to issues of race. Several teachers had heard stories about “the kids from Lincoln” and White parents often complained about them, particularly at the beginning of the school year, but these notions remained publicly unchallenged by the school leaders.

The teachers, the principal, and the guidance counselor mobilized resources when racism emerged in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. But it was treated as an isolated event at the school, just as other incidents were treated in isolation. Although a letter was sent to all teachers in the building encouraging them to be aware of tensions between families from Lenox and Lincoln, the two communities that formed the new school, several teachers dismissed racism as existing elsewhere in the school. Racism was considered distant and unobtrusive. There was no systemic response to the racism that was acknowledged by school leaders; it was sporadic and piecemeal as problems arose. Indeed, there was no mention of anyone attending to the African American child whose presence had been the impetus for such a visceral response, as well as a series of workshops and efforts at community building. Instead, the focus was on anti-bullying and community building, and it was limited to 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades.

Racialized ideologies in the day-to-day practice of school leadership, just as in society as a whole, are not always manifested only through conflict among individuals, but are not often recognized when not. They are also displayed through deficit perspectives that teachers and school leaders hold. When the 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher refused to fully implement the Everyday Mathematics curriculum because she believed that her children “will truly hurt each other,” she was limiting her instructional repertoire and opportunities to learn for the children in her class. Although the mathematics coach, the consultant, and district mathematics coordinator in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade classroom objected to the teacher’s reluctance to incorporate slate boards into her teaching and indeed offered to assist her in doing so, they did not object to her view of the children in her classroom. The teacher brazenly shared her strong deficit perspective not only in front of her grade level colleagues but also three school and district leaders, implying that she was very comfortable in doing so. Perhaps she knew that her views were shared within her professional community, or that no one would question her. Nevertheless, the response of the school and district leaders was silence.

In Riverton where the student population was almost 100% African American, racialized ideologies were often expressed through beliefs that positioned teachers as heroes who sacrificed for the children they taught, and leadership as maternalistic and altruistic, poised to pay for Ritalin prescriptions if families could not afford them.

The normalization of whiteness and privilege was left unexamined and unexplored as schools engaged in broader instructional improvement efforts. In the next chapter, I discuss conclusions and implications from this case study of White school leadership.

## **5.0 CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

This case study explored cross-cultural school leadership through an in depth case study of three White principals of schools that serve African American children in two urban districts. It considered what leaders and teachers know about race, culture, and learning, and how principals incorporate this knowledge into their leadership practice, particularly their work with teachers.

In Section 5.1, I discuss the conclusions that can be drawn from this study. In Section 5.2, I present contributions of this investigation. Next, in Section 5.3, I discuss the implications of this inquiry for education policy, including district policies of reconstitution, the use of disaggregated data in instructional decision-making, and lastly, implications for leadership preparation programs. The chapter closes with Section 5.4 which presents suggestions for future research.

### **5.1 CONCLUSIONS**

In spite of “a developing consensus that leaders should take as their primary responsibility the improvement of student learning” (Stein & Spillane, 2003), they have not been expected to know much about race and culture (Lopez, 2003; Page, 2003), let alone how to address and relate them to the improvement of teaching and learning. This case study of White school leadership in

contexts that are predominantly African American supported previous research findings on the strength of colorblind norms and the absence of public race talk in schools (Lewis, 2003; Pollock, 2001; Schofield, 1982). Yet the case also uncovered pockets of knowledge about culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) and teacher learning about CRP within schools, knowledge that remained private and invisible, and thus removed from traditional venues of teacher learning. As seen across the three research questions, there were educators who wanted to learn about race, culture, and learning, and improve instruction for students of color, and there were others whose knowledge remained hidden. These findings extend previous research, challenge long held assumptions, and contribute to an emerging theory of culturally relevant leadership content knowledge. In Sections 5.1.1-5.1.3, I highlight conclusions that emerge from the three research questions explored in the case and connect the conclusions to the existing literature.

### **5.1.1 Deficit perspectives and asset perspectives at Central, Rosa Parks, and Lenox**

#### **Schools**

Though instructional rigor in both literacy and mathematics was a theme in many professional development settings, school leaders, including coaches and district PD providers, never explicitly addressed the pervasive deficit perspective teachers held toward children of color as part of their focus on teacher learning and instructional improvement. Teachers with a stronger deficit perspective were not as willing to take responsibility for their students' learning, and as a result, may not have felt an urgency to improve their practice. Those teachers who held more nuanced deficit and asset perspectives engaged in school and district reform efforts more enthusiastically than their colleagues with a deficit perspective, and tended to view school leadership as a valuable resource for teacher learning. These findings support previous research



that found that teachers who displayed an asset perspective were more motivated to change their instructional practice (Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004; Gutstein, Lipman, Hernandez, & de los Reyes, 1997).

The perspectives of educators found to be “inconsistent” were situated in between “deficit” and “asset,” and dynamic rather than static. Thus, there is the possibility for learning and developing a more consistent asset perspective, and a role for school leadership in promoting such change and developing teacher knowledge toward an asset perspective, therefore strengthening teaching and learning at the classroom level.

Another finding highlights the influence of teachers’ professional communities on the development of their perspectives toward students of color. One novice teacher in the study struggled to form her own cross-cultural understandings, rooted in an evolving perspective that contrasted with messages from her colleagues that were rooted in a strong deficit perspective. This study contributes to previous work that explores the influence of professional community in mediating teacher understandings toward their work in general (Coburn, 2001), and specifically toward children of color (Castagno, 2008; Pollock, 2001). New teachers in particular learn a “repertoire of racialized and ‘cultural’ comparisons” (Pollock, 2001) as a key component of belonging to their community at a new school, a repertoire that knowledgeable school leaders could begin to disrupt through efforts to assist teacher learning and development toward an asset perspective.

### **5.1.2 The presence of culturally relevant pedagogy**

None of the focal teachers were found to incorporate all features of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Osborne, 1996). The aspects of CRP that were most common, such as

showing warmth and respect toward students, or incorporating group work, were those that fit in easily with previous practices or reform messages in the environment (Spillane, 1996), or had to do with classroom management routines. Those features that represented shifting instructional practice to connect subject matter to CRP, or to show a critical consciousness in the work of teaching, were starkly absent. Although this may not be surprising in schools where CRP was not a focus of recent reform efforts, it was somewhat surprising that there was so little evidence of multicultural education in urban schools with diverse student populations.

The features of CRP that were most unique and thus challenging for White school leaders were: 1) teaching subject matter that is reflective of cultural and/or linguistic diversity; and 2) showing and assisting the development of critical consciousness. In their work with teachers, Ms. Russo and Dr. Schneider established positive approaches to discipline in their schools, emphasized the importance of warm relationships with students, and conveyed the importance of high academic expectations. The experienced principals focused mainly on general features of CRP such as classroom management and positive discipline that may be common goals in comprehensive school reform efforts that purport to “leave no child behind.” Although there were focal teachers who attempted to integrate CRP into subject matter instruction, albeit superficially, leadership did not have the capacity to assist teacher learning of CRP.

Absent from reform efforts in the schools in this study was knowledge that connects subject matter learning to both culture and cultural ways of knowing (Moll et al., 1993). Although there is a growing body of literature in both literacy and mathematics education that has forged these connections (Godley, Carpenter, & Werner, 2007; Green & Abt-Perkins, 2003; Gutstein, 2005; Lee, 2001; Lewis, 2003; Wheeler, 2008), they were also absent from leadership practice in assisting teacher learning. This study also uncovers gaps in teacher and leader

knowledge about race and racism, and shows the need for a deeper understanding among school leaders of the legacy of racism in the United States and its relationship to education, an understanding that is the basis of critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Osborne, 1996). This knowledge includes the capacity of White educators to discuss and examine whiteness, privilege, race, and racism and their presence in the classroom and school office (Hyttén & Warren, 2003; Lewis, 2003).

School leadership has a clear role to play in developing CRP in teacher practice and emphasizing connections between home culture and subject matter. This study shows, however, that principals also tend to focus on general features of CRP that easily fit into their leadership practice and are common goals of comprehensive school reform efforts. Without a strong knowledge base in the culturally relevant teaching of subject matter or critical consciousness, school leaders cannot assist teacher learning of CRP, or promote changes in instructional practice (Henze et al., 2000; Ryan, 2003).

### **5.1.3 Issues of race, culture, and learning that surface in leadership practice**

In the three predominantly African American schools that were sites for this study, the White principals and other school leaders faced issues of race, culture, and learning, yet tended to be colorblind and colormute (Pollock, 2001; Schofield, 1982). Even when they were confronted with issues, they were often reluctant to address them and unable to identify appropriate resources, thus ignoring situations that could have served as sources of teacher learning.

Although most White teachers and leaders were uncomfortable in confronting or discussing racism in the school and community, Ms. Benko, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade focal teacher at Lenox, had a sense that it needed to be addressed, and sought help from the principal regarding how best

to respond to an upset child whose fears were rooted in racism. She used the incident as a catalyst to build community in her classroom, and across the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Dr. Schneider's response, however, centered around a construction of racism as bullying, and did not reach beyond the incident and other related incidents to address racism as a systemic issue. In deracializing the school response (Lewis, 2003), Dr. Schneider missed an opportunity for teacher learning. In fact, when she spoke to the entire staff of Lenox at the end of the school year about race and poverty as possible causes of the achievement gap, she offered assurance that racism was not an issue at Lenox.

Through her uneven and sometimes awkward efforts to address racism at Lenox, Dr. Schneider showed an awareness that it should be addressed in schools. However, she was hampered by the limits of her own knowledge in questioning racist parental beliefs or strongly addressing placement problems in a public forum, or in assisting teacher learning. When the district and building leaders in mathematics education insisted that the 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher fully implement the curriculum by incorporating slate boards into her instruction, they lost additional leverage for teacher learning and full implementation of reforms by ignoring her strong deficit perspective toward economically poor children of color.

Several teachers described their reluctance to contradict parental belief systems which endorsed racism, a reluctance that may be ascribed to limited knowledge about the legacy of racism in the US or fear of offending White parents by questioning their privilege. Indeed, the case reveals a widespread construction of racism as a temporary ill manifested through others' acts of hatred and malice; in this view, educators hold little responsibility for examining their own privilege and role in maintaining systemic racism and disproportionate educational failure of students of color (Castagno, 2004; Lopez, 2003; Pollock, 2001). This study illustrates that

such colorblind and colormute ideologies held by school leaders also limit learning opportunities for teachers and students.

White school leaders did not know how to address racism and deficit perspectives, and rarely turned to more capable others in the school environment as resources. In fact, they often turned to people in the environment with lower professional status who may have been less inclined to contradict or challenge the leaders' responses. Previous scholarship has shown that preservice students of color contribute "a richer multicultural knowledge base to teacher education than do White students" (Sleeter, 2001) and are often dedicated to multicultural teaching, social justice, and providing an academically challenging curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 1994). This study extends the literature by uncovering knowledge held by African American educators that remained invisible and devalued within the school context. Not only did Ms. Miller, the assistant principal at Rosa Parks School, hold knowledge of students' home cultures and funds of knowledge, she transformed this knowledge for the purpose of assisting teacher learning in her work with a 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher (Stein & Nelson, 2003). Nevertheless, White leaders did not turn to their colleagues of color for insights into issues of race and racism, how teachers learn about these issues, or how to assist teacher learning about these issues.

With no systemic response to widely acknowledged racism, teachers dismissed racism as individual acts of malice that were removed from their own practice rather than structural and embedded within their own practice (Lopez, 2003); they deracialized educational practice. The widespread denial of racism in the practice of White school leadership allows it to persist, unacknowledged and unchallenged. The hard, sustained work of examining and deconstructing whiteness, privilege, and racism, and relating them to teaching and learning in the school as a whole was not undertaken.

## 5.2 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS INVESTIGATION

In this section, I present contributions of this study to the understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy and colorblind ideologies in schools before turning to contributions in the study of school leadership. I then discuss contributions from this inquiry to an emergent theory of culturally relevant leadership content knowledge.

### 5.2.1 Extending understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy

This case study extends our understanding of and highlights challenges in the enactment of culturally relevant pedagogy. It shows that the most observed features of CRP were the warm and positive relationships focal teachers maintained with children (Shields, 2004), and the practice of non-confrontational discipline (Osborne, 1996), even though such features were in evidence in colorblind or race-neutral contexts (Greene & Abt-Perkins, 2003). In previous work, teachers who drew productively from children's *funds of knowledge* often engaged students in cognitively demanding teaching and learning (Greene & Abt-Perkins, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Lee, 2001). But most of this previous work on CRP pays little attention to teacher learning and the role of school leadership in promoting it. This study attempts to bridge these areas.

Studying colorblind ideologies expressed through deficit perspectives toward children, low academic expectations for children, and cognitively undemanding approaches to instruction can reveal explicit and implicit assumptions about race and learning that teachers hold and offer a starting point for their own learning; this case adds to the literature that confirms the persistence of these ideologies (Gordon, Piana, & Keleher, 2000; Lewis, 2003; Shields, 2004). It confirms that White teachers and leaders are often colorblind and deny the existence of racism in

education. This study underscores the need for White educators to understand the normalization of whiteness and their own privileged position in a racist society. In addition, it illustrates how unexamined privilege can undermine even the most persistent reform efforts, and contributes to critical whiteness studies in education (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997).

The more experienced school leaders in this study expected teachers to show high expectations for students in their schools yet showed a lack of critical consciousness in their efforts in school reform and teacher learning. This study contributes to the literature by further defining critical consciousness as a feature of CRP (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Osborne, 1996) and connecting it to the practice of school leadership.

### **5.2.2 Extending understanding of school leadership**

In this section, I discuss ways in which this case study contributes to the literature on instructional leadership. In broadening conceptions of instructional leadership to include conceptions of culturally relevant pedagogy, including the development of critical consciousness, this study highlights the potential role for school leaders in assisting teacher learning of CRP and disrupting racialized ideologies. I also discuss the lack of opportunities for principal learning and challenges that arise with leadership turnover.

This study suggests that teacher learning of racialized ideologies (including the norms of colorblindness and colormuteness, and perspectives toward children) can occur within their professional community. This learning remains unscrutinized, and develops in parallel with reform efforts in ways that may undermine reform. Assisting teacher learning presents opportunities and challenges for instructional leaders, not the least of which is having the knowledge themselves.

This study highlights the lack of knowledge of CRP among school leaders, and also the limited opportunities for leadership development. In finding that White school leaders have varying degrees of knowledge and tend to address racism through a colorblind lens if at all, it extends literature on school leadership that found that principals ignore racism or issues of race (Gooden, 2002; Grillo & Wildman, 2003; Henze et al., 2000; Ryan, 2003). It supports previous research that has demonstrated the lack of high quality professional development for practicing school leaders (Bichsel, 2008). While charged with facilitating teacher learning, principals have few learning opportunities of their own, and often these opportunities are provided by universities or professional organizations such as the American Association of School Administrators and are disconnected from practice (Peterson, 2002). In this case study, leadership routines in which the school leaders participated such as focus walks, faculty meetings, and leadership team meetings provided opportunities for learning through interaction with teachers, coaches, and assistant principals within the nested learning community (Spillane, Diamond, & Jita, 2003). In Riverton, Ms. Russo served as a mentor to Ms. Thomas, and their relationship served as a site for learning. In Weston, Dr. Schneider participated in district-wide America's Choice PD and learned along with her coaches about the reforms. In a larger district such as Weston, principals may have more of an opportunity to participate in a professional community with other principals which could serve as a site for learning. The assistant principals at Lenox were not as engaged until faced with the end of the year Quality Review and teachers who were asking many questions about the AC reforms. None of the principals had had professional development in CRP.

Within a month of this study being undertaken, the initial principal-participant announced her departure for a position in curriculum supervision in a district in a rural county to the east of



Riverton. Although she had spent four years as principal of Central School, she had only been at Rosa Parks School for that school year, and had told me that she was making inroads with the teachers in opening up their doors and their practice. She left reluctantly, and for a variety of reasons, including impending churn in the central district office due to turnover in the superintendent's position. She took knowledge of the children and families of Riverton, and knowledge of how to maintain and honor such relationships with her, as well as knowledge of the teachers she had coached into developing more positive relationships with students. In both Riverton and Weston, where leadership had been disrupted due to school closings and reconstitution of schools, this case further illustrates the negative impact of leadership turnover on reform efforts (Elmore, 2000) and on the development of culturally relevant leadership.

### **5.2.3 Culturally relevant leadership content knowledge**

This study suggests that leadership content knowledge that includes knowledge of culturally relevant pedagogy, particularly critical consciousness that problematized colorblind ideologies, could play a significant role in deepening teacher understanding of the relationship of race and culture to teaching and learning, and thus, in instructional improvement. In this section, I revisit the framework first presented at the end of Chapter 2 to consider an emergent theory of culturally relevant leadership content knowledge, thus extending the work of Stein and Nelson (2003) on leadership content knowledge.

At Lenox School, in the midst of reform efforts, Dr. Schneider was working toward the improvement of student learning amidst issues of race, culture, and learning. Even when events required a response such as in the case of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade class disrupted by racism, the principal showed a reluctance to publicly discuss or address racism. Instead, the focus was on anti-

bullying and community-building among older students, with no attention to teacher learning about racism. Teachers in the primary grades, located four blocks away from grades 3-8 and thus physically separated from them, acknowledged that there were tensions in the school but saw racism as distant and removed from their classrooms. They were blind to their responsibility for the normalization of whiteness and privilege at Lenox, and school leaders were reluctant to push back, even when they realized how privilege limited curricular repertoire.

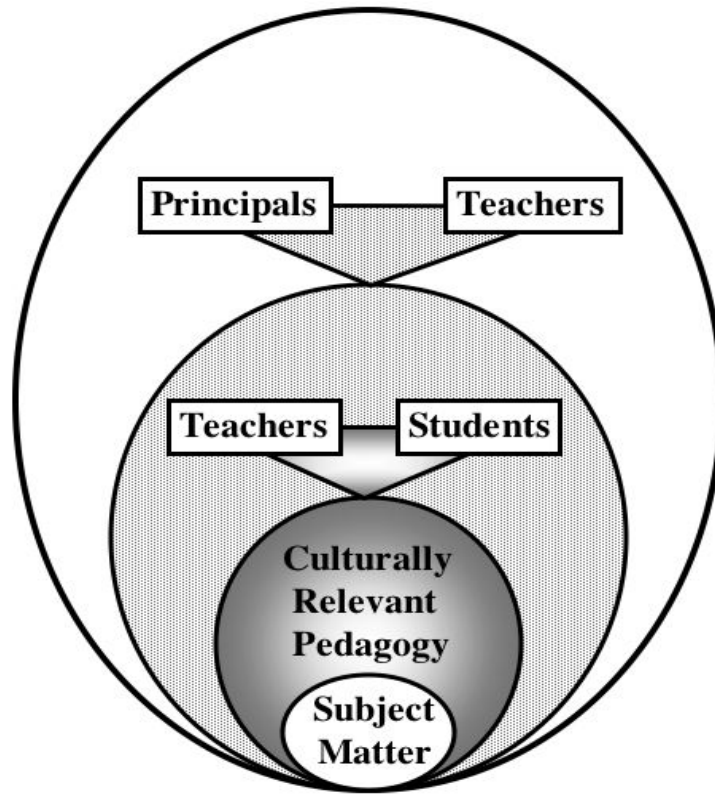
Teachers' perspectives toward students of color are dynamic, but without knowledge and assistance of more capable others (Stein & D'Amico, 2002), shift slowly if at all. One of the participants in this study was found to be developing more of a nuanced asset perspective toward her students and their families in spite of messages in the environment that supported a strong deficit perspective. This teacher's learning was rooted in her own practice and reflection and would have benefited from assistance from knowledgeable school leaders.

A theory of culturally relevant leadership content knowledge may include concepts that have not traditionally been included as part of teacher or leader preparation or professional development. These include:

1. Culturally relevant school leaders understand and value students' home cultures and language and how students of various cultures learn subject matter.
2. Culturally relevant school leaders in schools that are predominantly African American or Latino read widely and participate in study groups to learn about their students' cultures. They facilitate classroom-embedded teacher learning with the goal of teachers "importing the culture and everyday experiences of the students" into learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

3. Culturally relevant school leaders incorporate critical consciousness into leadership practice. They understand colorblind ideologies, including the importance of an asset perspective toward students, and they connect perspectives of teachers to instructional improvement. In addition, they are conscious of the role of whiteness and privilege in inhibiting change in instructional practice.
4. Culturally relevant leadership content knowledge involves understanding the trajectory required for teachers who are learning about race and culturally relevant pedagogy, and how to assist teachers learning to question colorblind ideologies and in developing a critical consciousness.

Each of these represents an element of culturally relevant leadership content knowledge which is depicted in Figure 4. Culturally relevant pedagogy encircles subject matter with which it is closely linked in teaching and learning, but it is also present in the interactions between teachers and students, represented by the lower triangle in Figure 4. Culturally relevant leadership content knowledge encompasses the teacher-student relationship and the core of that relationship (teaching of subject matter in culturally relevant ways), but it also resides in the relationship between principal and teacher. A culturally attuned school leader knows how teachers learn CRP, and understands how to facilitate teaching learning of CRP.



**Figure 4: Culturally relevant leadership content knowledge**

### **5.3 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This study illuminates several consequences of policies related to high stakes testing mandated through No Child Left Behind (2002) as they pertain to culturally relevant leadership. For example, the new focus in NCLB on data disaggregated by race has not motivated new instructional responses to issues of race, culture, and learning. As this case shows, silence around racialized patterns of achievement continues. School leaders would benefit from preparation and professional development that provides them with knowledge and opportunities

to practice leading such discussions; this would counter tendencies by some leaders to reify stereotypes in which deficit perspectives are rooted.

Under NCLB when schools do not maintain Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) on state assessments for several consecutive years, they are subject to sanctions, including the loss of students to other schools. Reduced student populations lead to closings or reconstitution. One of the districts in which I conducted this study found itself with too many buildings and too few students and moved to shut down many of its schools, reopening some that combined diverse communities for the first time in schools. This bought the district more time for the newly reconstituted schools, such as Lenox, to do well on the high-stakes tests, thus avoiding sanctions.

When school closings are encouraged, however, districts face other problems, including some that were seen in this case study that impact the entire community. For example, issues of racism surfaced when two racially disparate communities came together to form Lenox at the same site that had previously been a predominantly White school. The opening of the new school would possibly have been smoother if the district and building leaders had anticipated potential problems and focused some attention on community building beforehand.

In addition, with widespread school closings, the district failed to anticipate the disruption to educators' professional learning communities which have long been recognized in the literature as important sites of teacher development (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). It takes time to reestablish professional learning communities which were decimated through school closings. As seen in this case, school leaders are also susceptible to this loss. Dr. Schneider recounted her own sense of disorientation after her former school was closed, and dramatically compared it to being in mourning. Her period of mourning lasted well into the following school year and was a barrier to full implementation of reforms. As this study shows, districts that

engage in multiple school closings may maintain some momentum in educational improvement by doing more to support teachers and school leaders before, during, and after the process.

Multicultural education that encouraged the expansion of curriculum beyond a heavily Eurocentric focus in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was absent from classroom observations in this case study (Banks, 2002). It was not a focus of any leadership routines, either. Several teachers recounted that they no longer had time to engage students in thematic, multicultural units in social studies or literature because, as one put it, “there was no fat to fry” due to testing policies.

This study may be useful to policy makers and professors of education in encouraging a reexamination of requirements for leadership preparation which currently lack an emphasis on culturally relevant leadership content knowledge or issues of social justice (Dantley, 2002; Pena, 1997; Rusch, 2004; Theoharis, 2007). White principals who will lead in diverse settings within a context of increasing attention to teacher development would benefit from preparation that provides in depth knowledge of culturally relevant pedagogy. This knowledge would include a broader, more critical understanding of the history of race and racism in American education and how it intersects with education. Cross-cultural field experiences with opportunities to make sense of cultures other than one’s home culture would enrich leadership preparation. It would require knowledgeable principal educators with deep understanding of cross-cultural leadership.

Future leaders who engage in sustained examination of their own racial and cultural heritage would better understand those of their students and teachers, and be better situated to develop teacher capacity (Pena, 1997). For White prospective principals, developing a critical understanding of whiteness and privilege could pave the way toward greater understanding of the legacy of race and racism in our educational system. These understandings could strengthen

leaders' critical consciousness which would allow them to facilitate teacher learning in this area as well.

#### **5.4 DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study connects culturally relevant pedagogy to school leadership and thus begins to develop a theory of culturally relevant leadership content knowledge. The findings and conclusions of this inquiry suggest directions for further investigation into leadership and knowledge of culturally relevant pedagogy, including critical consciousness, and ways in which school leaders facilitate teacher learning of CRP, including deconstructing racialized ideologies. With one of the schools engaged in comprehensive school reform with the America's Choice model, it suggests further study of reform and elements of CRP. Finally, this study calls for sustained efforts to theorize culturally relevant leadership content knowledge.

Multicultural education that expanded notions of heavily Eurocentric subject matter curriculum in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was absent from classroom observations in this case study. It was not a focus of any leadership routines, either. This suggests a need for inquiry into barriers to culturally relevant subject matter. The reform efforts in both districts in which this study took place did not explicitly address students' fund of knowledge or cultural ways of knowing as part of the reforms. A future line of inquiry could explore the genesis of such reforms to see if this is a conscious decision of the developers, what is the record of such reforms, and how they are sustained in diverse contexts. As schools become more and more diverse, it may be that comprehensive school reform models will recognize and reflect the

diversity and the growing knowledge base in culturally relevant pedagogy (Godley et al., 2007; Gutstein, 2006; Jimenez & Gersten, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lee, 2001; Wheeler, 2008).

The study of school leaders who have successfully focused on teacher learning of CRP, or who are interesting in learning, would contribute to a theory of culturally relevant leadership content knowledge. Greeno, Collins, and Resnick (1996) discuss *design experiments* in which researchers and practitioners collaborate in designing, implementing, and analyzing changes in practice within a school or classroom setting (p. 15). Such iterative design research developed in concert with a school principal and other school leaders could offer insights into the development of culturally relevant leadership content knowledge.

Continued research into the knowledge that White school leaders bring to bear on their practice in schools that are predominantly African American or Latino is also warranted. One line of inquiry which may be productive would draw from institutional theory and literature on sensemaking (Weick, 1995) to further explore how school leaders frame and interpret race within a cross-cultural leadership context (Evans, 2007).



## EPILOGUE

This case study reveals that several White teachers held dynamic and nuanced asset perspectives toward children of color. In addition, it found that several teachers were trying, perhaps clumsily, to implement features of culturally relevant pedagogy, and one or two were seeking knowledge about issues of race and racism. An assistant principal who was African American assisted teacher learning about her students' funds of knowledge. Nevertheless, these efforts were not supported by the broader professional community or White school leadership. In fact, leaders seemed to shy away from mentions of race, culture, and learning, limited by their own lack of knowledge but also limited by their own racialized ideologies.

But the young African American father who discerned that, "There's some good karma up in here" as he left Open House in Ms. Kowalski's class, was voicing hope and possibility not only for the academic future of his 5<sup>th</sup> grade son but also for the young White teacher who was so caring toward her students, and was learning to value African American culture in her short four year career, on her own. Culturally relevant leadership content knowledge would systemically engage teacher learning with a sustained focus on these topics, encouraging a predominantly White teaching force to grapple with the complexities of race, racism, and culture in education.

**APPENDIX A**

**INITIAL PRINCIPAL PROTOCOL**

## Principal Protocol

### Initial Interview

INTRODUCTION: Information about the Principal and school

1. Please tell me a little bit about your background.
  - How long have you been a principal?
  - How long have you been at this school?
2. How long were you a teacher prior to becoming an administrator?
  - What grade level/positions? Where?
3. Tell me about the children at this school
  - Probe→ race? any English language learners? students with special needs? socioeconomic backgrounds represented?
  - What does that mean for instruction?
  - What does that mean for your work as principal?
4. How would you describe the neighborhood in which this school resides?
  - Probe on given characteristics: Can you give me an example?
  - What does that mean for teachers' approach to instruction?
  - What does that mean for your work as a principal?
5. What kinds of things have you done at \_\_\_\_\_ School to facilitate the academic success of African American children?
6. What kind of role do you believe parents play in the academic success of children?
7. How would you describe the relationships you have had with parents of students?
  - Probe→ Please describe a recent interaction with a parent.
8. Could you talk about the school's status in regard to NCLB?
  - Probe→ How has it been going?
9. Could you please tell me about the teachers you work with?
  - Probe→ racial demographics
  - Probe→ years of experience, educational background, community involvement
10. How, if at all, does this contrast in demographics between students and teachers affect teaching and learning at \_\_\_\_\_ School?

- Your leadership?

11. How would you describe your own racial and cultural heritage?

- How, if at all, does it influence your work as principal

## ROLE AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER: SUBJECT MATTER

12. I'm wondering if you could please tell me about your school and what your focus has been this year.

- Probe→ How has it been going?

13. How do you see your role in improving instruction at \_\_\_\_\_ School?

- Probe→ What do you find most challenging?
- Most rewarding?

14. What kinds of things have you done in the school to improve learning?

- Probe→ professional development
- Examination of data/relating data to instruction
- Observations/evaluations/walkthroughs

15. Can you identify teachers in the school that you consider to have a particular strength in teaching mathematics? In teaching literacy?

- What makes them strong teachers in this subject?

16. What are some ways that you support teachers in improving teaching and learning?

- Probe:
  - Observing in classrooms/walkthroughs or learning walks
  - Providing formal/informal feedback
  - Providing professional development (contexts?)
  - Providing materials and other support
  - Assistance on testing and assessment issues
  - Providing broader instructional leadership

17. In which subject matter do you feel that you are most knowledgeable? Why?

- Probe→ How does this impact your work?
- Could you give an example of your work in this subject area?
- What professional development have you had in this subject matter?

Probe→PD since you have been a school leader?

- How has your leadership practice in this subject matter changed if at all since you became a principal?
- Who do you turn to if you have questions in this area?

18. Which subject do you find most challenging? Why?

- Probe→ How does this impact your work?
- Could you please give an example of your work in this subject area?
- What professional development have you had in this subject matter?
- How has your leadership practice in this subject matter changed if at all since you became a principal?
- Who do you turn to if you have questions in this area?

19. Could you describe recent interactions you have had with teachers in the other content areas?

#### ROLE AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER: CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY

Introductory script: I am interested in your understandings of the relationship of race and culture and learning, and how these understandings affect your leadership if at all.

[Some questions adapted from Ladson-Billings, G. (1994)]

20. How have your experiences at this school been different from your experiences at your previous school(s)?
21. In your experience, what characteristics do African American children as a group bring to the classroom?
22. How does the school incorporate these characteristics into teaching and learning?
23. How do you think the schooling experience of your students differs from that of White students?
24. How, if at all, does the school build upon African American culture in teaching and learning?
25. If you could revamp teacher education so that teachers would be more effective with African American students, what changes would you make?
26. If you could revamp leadership education so that district and school leaders would be more effective with African American students, what changes would you make?
27. I am interested in understanding if any components of what Gloria Ladson Billings calls “culturally relevant pedagogy” are being adapted in schools. What do you think of when you consider culturally relevant pedagogy?

#### CLOSING

28. I would like to observe three classrooms over the next month, and again in the fall, (knowing that assignments may change) preferably one at each level (early, 2/3, and intermediate), and interview teachers about their instruction. You have mentioned a

few teachers who have strengths in different areas; how would they feel about opening their classroom to me?

29. What plans does your school have for any additional professional development this year? Could you describe the nature of the session?

30. What are your professional development plans for summer?

- How are plans and priorities for next year shaping up?
- How were they determined?

31. I am interested in observing faculty meetings over the next month if that's OK. Could you please provide me with a schedule of upcoming faculty meetings?

- Grade level meetings?
- Other?

32. Is there anything else that you want to tell me that I may not have asked you about?

**APPENDIX B**

**INITIAL TEACHER PROTOCOL**

## Teacher Protocol

### Initial Interview

#### INTRODUCTION: Information about the Teacher and Classroom

1. Please tell me a little bit about your background.
  - How long have you been a teacher?
  - How long have you been at this school?
2. What grade level/positions?
3. Tell me about the children at this school
  - Probe→ race? any English language learners? students with special needs? socioeconomic backgrounds represented?
  - What does that mean for your approach to instruction?
  - What does that mean for your work as a \_\_\_grade teacher?
4. How would you describe the neighborhood in which this school resides?
  - Probe on given characteristics: Can you give me an example?
  - What does that mean for your approach to instruction?
  - What does that mean for your work as a teacher?
5. What kind of role do you believe parents play in the academic success of children?
6. How would you describe the relationships you have had with parents of students?
7. Could you talk about the school's status in regard to NCLB?
8. Could you please tell me a little about the teachers you work with?
  - Probe→ racial demographics
  - Probe→ years of experience, educational background, community involvement
9. How, if at all, do you think this contrast in demographics between students and teachers affects teaching and learning at \_\_\_\_\_ School?
10. How would you describe your own racial and cultural heritage? How, if at all, does it influence your work as a teacher?



I wanted to ask you a few questions about the reform efforts.

11. Could you please tell me about the focus walk on Monday?

Probe→ Who was involved?

What feedback did the team provide to teachers?

12. How would you characterize changes that have taken place in the past couple of months?  
What kind of teacher learning has been involved?

13. I understand that a practice focus walk took place here on Tuesday at the staff meeting.  
Could you please tell me about it?

14. When the quality review takes place next week, what will the team be looking for? Do  
you know who will make up the evaluative team?

### **Conceptions of School Leadership**

15. How would you describe the role of your school's principal?

16. What are some ways that the principal of your building supports teachers in improving  
teaching and learning?

- Probe:
  - Observing in classrooms/walkthroughs or focus walks
  - Providing formal/informal feedback
  - Providing professional development (contexts?)
  - Providing materials and other support
  - Assistance on testing and assessment issues
  - Providing broader instructional leadership

17. Could you please describe a recent interaction you had with the principal about teaching and learning?
18. What particular strengths does the principal offer in knowledge of literacy instruction? Math instruction?
19. If you could revamp education for administrators so that district and school leaders could provide strong instructional leadership in the teaching of reading or math, what changes would you make?
20. What particular strengths does the principal have in teaching African American children?
  - Could you provide an example?
21. If you could revamp education for administrators so that district and school leaders could provide strong instructional leadership in the teaching of African American children, what changes would you make?

### **Teaching and Culturally relevant pedagogy**

Questions about teaching African American children, adapted from Ladson-Billings (1994).

22. If teacher has experience in another school or district, ask: How have your experiences at this school been different from or similar to your experiences at your previous school(s)?
23. In your experience, what characteristics do African American children as a group bring to the classroom?
24. How, if at all, does the school build upon African American culture in teaching and learning?
25. How do you as a teacher incorporate these characteristics into your classroom instruction, if at all?
26. What kinds of things has the faculty done at \_\_\_\_\_ School to facilitate the academic success of African American children?
27. If you could revamp teacher education so that teachers would be more effective with African American students, what changes would you make?

28. Could you please describe any professional development that has addressed multicultural education?
29. Who do you go to if you have any questions about African American culture?
30. Who do you go to if you have any questions about multicultural teaching?
31. What kind of professional development, if any, have you had in this area?

### **Teaching and Subject matter**

32. I'm wondering if you could please tell me about your school and what your focus has been this year.
- i. Probe→ How has it been going?
33. What do you see as the top priority in improving achievement at \_\_\_\_\_ School?
34. What kinds of things have you done over the past year to improve teaching and learning in your classroom?
- i. Probe→ professional development
  - ii. Examination of data/relating data to instruction
  - iii. Observations/evaluations/walkthroughs
35. Can you identify colleagues in the school that you consider to have a particular strength in teaching mathematics? In teaching literacy?
- What makes them strong?
36. In which subject matter do you feel that you are most knowledgeable? Why?
- i. Probe→ How does this impact your work?
  - ii. Could you give an example of your work in this subject area?
  - iii. How would you say your instruction in this subject matter has changed, if at all, over the past 3-5 years? If relevant, ask→ 5-10 years?
  - iv. What professional development have you had in this subject matter?
  - v. Who do you turn to if you have questions in this area?
37. Which subject do you find most challenging? Why?
- i. Probe→ How does this impact your work?

- ii. Could you please give an example of your work in this subject area?
- iii. How would you say your instruction in this subject matter has changed, if at all, over the past 3-5 years? If relevant, ask → 5-10 years?
- iv. What professional development have you had in this subject matter?
- v. Who do you turn to if you have questions in this area?

38. How often do you get together with colleagues to discuss teaching of reading? Math?

39. Could you describe recent interactions you have had with other teachers about instruction?

40. Is there anything else that you want to tell me that I may not have asked you about?

**APPENDIX C**

**SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

Teacher Protocol: Follow-up

October 2006

INTRODUCTION: Information about the new school year and class.

41. Could you please tell me how it's going this year?
42. Tell me about the children in your class this year
  - Probe→ race? any English language learners? students with special needs?
  - What does that mean for your approach to instruction?
  - What does that mean for your work as a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher?
  - How did they do on the PSSA?

TEACHING AND SUBJECT MATTER

43. I'm wondering if you could please tell me about your school and what your focus has been this year.
  - i. Probe→ How has it been going?
44. I observed you teach a multicultural story about Yang and her family. Could you tell me a little about that?
45. How often do you teach/does the book offer such stories? What do you think it represents for your kids?
46. Could you tell me a little about what, if anything, you learned from the professional development that I observed 2 weeks ago it?
  - i. Could you talk about your involvement in the planning? In examination of data and relating data to instruction?
  - ii. How did you and your colleagues work together to develop the presentation?
47. Could you tell me about the school's status in regard to the PSSA?
48. From the presentation you made with your 5<sup>th</sup> grade colleagues, it seems that your group works closely together in general.

Probe→ looking at student data.

How do you relate it to instruction?  
In math? In reading?

How often do you get together with your grade level to discuss teaching of reading? Math?

How often do you get together with other colleagues?

How often do you discuss teaching of reading or math with the principal?

## CONCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

49. You have a new principal this year. How has that been going?
50. How would you describe the role of your school's principal?
51. What are some ways that the principal of your building supports teacher learning?
52. Could you please describe a recent interaction you had with the principal about teaching and learning?

## TRANSITIONS IN LEADERSHIP

53. There have been major changes in school leadership at this school and in the district. How has that affected teachers?
54. Could you tell me about your colleague's decision to leave the district?
55. Could you tell me about the new principal's decision to leave the district?

## WORK WITH FAMILIES

56. I observed you during open house last week. How would you qualify your relationship with the families of children in your class?
57. How have you developed the warmth and respect that I observed?
58. Has your one student's attendance improved this week?
59. What have the parents or students asked you about the leadership changes?
60. How do you respond to their questions?

## CLOSING

61. Is there anything else that you want to tell me that I may not have asked you about?
  62. I would like to observe you teaching reading and teaching math over the next month, and interview you afterwards about your instruction (and continue in the fall). Could you please recommend a time in the next couple of weeks that would be convenient for you?
  63. Do you and your colleagues have grade level meetings? If so, would it be possible for me to observe your next one?
35. Could you please provide me with a class schedule?

**APPENDIX D**

**PRINCIPAL OBSERVATION PROTOCOL**



## PROTOCOL FOR SHADOWING PRINCIPAL

Principal:

Date of observation:

School:

Time shadowing began: \_\_\_\_\_ Ended: \_\_\_\_\_

Total length of time: \_\_\_\_\_

Identify context(s): office, hallway, faculty lounge, meeting, classroom, etc.

-----

### DESCRIPTION OF SHADOWING

Write an account of the observation that describes the chronological unfolding of events, including a description of the principal's talk and actions, what she did and talked about. Also, include any unusual aspects of the setting (ie, was this the day before a vacation, or after a snow day, etc.) as well as the learning context (is this the day after a PTO meeting, or a PD session?).

1. Describe the main leadership routines that were observed.
  - Describe the focus of the principal's activities. Use her language.
  - From principal's perspective, what appeared to be the goal of the activity?
2. Describe the interactions the principal had. With whom? About what? Duration?
3. Describe any issues of race or culture that surface.
4. Describe any focus on student learning that surfaces.
5. Describe any focus on teacher learning that surfaces.
6. Other?

**APPENDIX E**

**CLASSROOM OBSERVATION PROTOCOL**

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Date of observation:

Site:

Grade:

Teacher's name (pseudonym):

Other adults in room and their role (as it becomes apparent):

Subject matter focus of instruction:

Number of students in class:

Student gender: \_\_\_F \_\_\_M

Racial demographics: \_\_\_African American \_\_\_White \_\_\_Latino \_\_\_Asian  
\_\_\_ Native American

Scheduled time for observation:

Time instruction began:

Ended:

Total length of instructional time:

(Time markers will be noted in field notes.)

\*\*\*\*\*

Identify all print resources used:

Curricular materials:

Teacher-made materials:

Other (children's literature, newspaper article, etc.):

Briefly describe the classroom (table and chair arrangements, bulletin boards, work displays, etc.):

## Description of Instruction

Write an account of the lesson that describes the unfolding of instructional events, including a description of the content, teacher talk and actions, what students did and talked about. Include any unusual aspects of setting (i.e., was this the day after a snow day, etc.), as well as the learning context (i.e., where today's lesson is situated with respect to lessons coming before and after it).

1. Identify and describe classroom activities in which the teacher engaged the students. List them in order and include a descriptive header to be used in NUD\*IST formatting.
2. Select task that occupied the most amount of time and answer the following questions:
  - Describe task as presented by teacher, using teacher's language.
  - From the teacher's perspective, what appeared to be the goal of the task?
  - What expectations for students did she convey? How?
  - How did the teacher interact with children?
3. Describe elements of culturally relevant pedagogy in evidence during the lesson.
4. Describe classroom management style of teacher (small group, large group, any discipline issues that were observed and teacher response to them).

**APPENDIX F**

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL**



**University of Pittsburgh**  
***Institutional Review Board***

3500 Fifth Ave., Suite 100  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213  
Phone: 412.383.1480  
Fax: 412.383.1508

**Exempt and Expedited Reviews**

University of Pittsburgh FWA: 00006790

University of Pittsburgh Medical Center: FWA 00006735

Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh: FWA 00000600

**TO:** Judith Touré  
**FROM:** Sue R. Beers, Ph.D., Vice Chair  
**DATE:** 2/15/06  
**PROTOCOL:** From Envisioning to Enacting: Culturally Responsive Instructional Leadership

IRB Number: 0601136

The above-referenced protocol has been reviewed by the University of Pittsburgh Institutional Review Board. Based on the information provided in the IRB protocol, this project meets all the necessary criteria for an exemption, and is hereby designated as "exempt" under section 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2).

The regulations of the University of Pittsburgh IRB require that exempt protocols be re-reviewed every three years. If you wish to continue the research after that time, a new application must be submitted.

- If any modifications are made to this project, please submit an 'exempt modification' form to the IRB.
- Please advise the IRB when your project has been completed so that it may be officially terminated in the IRB database.
- This research study may be audited by the University of Pittsburgh Research Conduct and Compliance Office.

**Approval Date:** 2/15/06

**Expiration Date:** 2/15/09

SRB:tmr

**APPENDIX G**

**ANALYTIC CODEBOOK**

DISSERTATION CODEBOOK

Licensee: Judith Touré  
PROJECT: LCKCRP project

\*\*\*\*\*  
(3 1) /Analytic codes/Leadership  
\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 1) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Leadership content knowledge  
\*\*\* Description:  
knowledge for the practice of instructional leadership that links district and school leadership to T learning and S learning with subject matter at the core (Stein & Nelson, 2003)  
\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 1 1) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Leadership content knowledge/subject matter knowledge  
\*\*\* Description:  
use when this is discussed by a leader or observed in PD, faculty meetings, grade level meetings, etc.  
\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 1 1 1) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Leadership content knowledge/subject matter knowledge/literacy  
\*\*\* No Description  
\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 1 1 2) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Leadership content knowledge/subject matter knowledge/mathematics  
\*\*\* No Description  
\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 1 2) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Leadership content knowledge/how children learn SM  
\*\*\* Description:  
use when this is discussed by a leader in an int. or in PD, faculty meetings, grade level meetings, etc.  
\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 1 3) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Leadership content knowledge/how to assist S learning of SM  
\*\*\* Description:  
use when this is discussed by a leader in an int. or in PD, faculty meetings, grade level meetings, etc.  
\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 1 4) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Leadership content knowledge/how Ts assist S learning of SM  
\*\*\* Description:  
use when this is discussed in an int. or in PD, faculty meetings, grade level meetings,  
\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 1 5) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Leadership content knowledge/how Ts learn to teach SM  
\*\*\* Description:  
use when this is discussed by a leader in an int. or in PD, faculty meetings, grade level meetings, etc.  
\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 1 6) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Leadership content knowledge/how to assist T learning  
Description:  
use when this is discussed by a leader in an int. or in PD, faculty meetings, grade level meetings, etc.  
\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 1 6 1) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Leadership content knowledge/how to assist T learning/through feedback  
\*\*\* No Description  
\*\*\*\*\*



(3 1 1 6 2) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Leadership content knowledge/how to assist T learning/use of Learning Walks/Focus Walks

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 1 6 3) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Leadership content knowledge/how to assist T learning/see each other teach

\*\*\* Description:

11/27/07

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 1 6 4) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Leadership content knowledge/how to assist T learning/modeling lessons for teachers

\*\*\* Description:

this includes debriefing with teachers afterwards

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 1 6 5) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Leadership content knowledge/how to assist T learning/develop a comfort zone/respect

\*\*\* Description:

use this when participant is discussing importance of a "comfort zone" or the role of mutual respect and other affective qualities in teacher learning

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 1 6 6) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Leadership content knowledge/how to assist T learning/provide time for co-planning

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 1 6 7) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Leadership content knowledge/how to assist T learning/be there to help

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 1 6 8) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Leadership content knowledge/how to assist T learning/look at student work with them

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 1 6 9) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Leadership content knowledge/how to assist T learning/through bi-weekly meetings on Fostering Geometric Thinking

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 2) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Distributed leadership

\*\*\* Description:

use to code examples of distributed leadership by formal and informal leaders

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 2 1) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Distributed leadership/excluded from process to hire new principal

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 2 2) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Distributed leadership/working together with APs or coaches

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 3) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Leadership blunders/meltdowns

\*\*\* Description:

use this code when public behavior of leaders seems not to be thought out or appropriate

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 4) /Analytic codes/Leadership/As transformational

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 5) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Turnover

\*\*\* use this code when participant discusses changes in leadership

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 5 1) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Turnover/building level

\*\*\* code for changes in leadership at the school level

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 5 1 1) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Turnover/building level/teachers or other adults upset over changes

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 5 2) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Turnover/district level

\*\*\* Description:

when participant is discussing leadership changes at district level, ie, superintendent or assistant supe

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 6) /Analytic codes/Leadership/General conceptions of leadership or l-ship role

\*\*\* Description:

code when people discuss their ideas of what leadership is. Also use for observations of general leadership in action in meetings, etc.

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 6 1) /Analytic codes/Leadership/General conceptions of leadership or l-ship role/management role

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 6 2) /Analytic codes/Leadership/General conceptions of leadership or l-ship role/as ethical

\*\*\* Description:

use when any incident of ethical or unethical leadership is addressed

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 6 3) /Analytic codes/Leadership/General conceptions of leadership or l-ship role/can't get too close to followers

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 6 4) /Analytic codes/Leadership/General conceptions of leadership or l-ship role/presence

Description:

use this code when someone is discussing physical presence of school leader(s), or when observation entails physical presence of leader at an event or in a classroom; this is useful when there is no obvious leadership or learning role evident in the situation

\*\*\*\*\* (3 1 6

5) /Analytic codes/Leadership/General conceptions of leadership or l-ship role/teachers need more of it

Description:

use this code when someone (either a leader or a follower) states that someone needs more guidance or leadership about something

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 6 6) /Analytic codes/Leadership/General conceptions of leadership or l-ship role/I put pressure on teachers

use when leader is discussing this as part of her role

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 6 7) /Analytic codes/Leadership/General conceptions of leadership or l-ship role/we have to build trust/support each other

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 6 8) /Analytic codes/Leadership/General conceptions of leadership or l-ship role/getting teachers to be instructionally strong

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 6 9) /Analytic codes/Leadership/General conceptions of leadership or l-ship role/spending time in classroom

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 6 10) /Analytic codes/Leadership/General conceptions of leadership or l-ship role/principals should be in classrooms every day

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 6 11) /Analytic codes/Leadership/General conceptions of leadership or l-ship role/as transformational

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 6 12) /Analytic codes/Leadership/General conceptions of leadership or l-ship role/it's all about caring for kids

\*\*\* Description:

He philosophically really, I think, liked...because he shared that with me many times, liked what I was about with the children and I liked what he was about with the children and even though other decisions along the way we disagreed with we both really cared about the kids.

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 6 13) /Analytic codes/Leadership/General conceptions of leadership or l-ship role/it's about power and being in charge

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 6 14) /Analytic codes/Leadership/General conceptions of leadership or l-ship role/as hierarchical

Description: from data 11/30/07

It consists about reviewing the goals that were set with the board with the district which are the six goals, as you see they are posted up there with the And they are posted around the building. There's one on the board. I have one on my door. That was established when he came together with the board as his goals for the district, which were brought down. He established them with the board. He told us what the goals would be. Those were the goals for the teachers.

from D.ES.LT.IV.061011

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 6 15) /Analytic codes/Leadership/General conceptions of leadership or l-ship role/leaders should share a vision

Description:

from data 12/9/07

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 6 16) /Analytic codes/Leadership/General conceptions of leadership or l-ship role/everyone is a leader

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 6 17) /Analytic codes/Leadership/General conceptions of leadership or l-ship role/she is a teacher-leader

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 6 18) /Analytic codes/Leadership/General conceptions of leadership or l-ship role/leader is stretched too thin

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 7) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Perspectives toward followers

Description:

use this code when leaders are discussing how they view their followers and/or the role or behavior of their followers; use this code when they convey their expectations to their followers

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 7 1) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Perspectives toward followers/ they have autonomy

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 7 2) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Perspectives toward followers/"they don't take us seriously"

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 7 3) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Perspectives toward followers/"You're all great teachers"

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 7 4) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Perspectives toward followers/"it's how I know teachers are learning"

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 7 5) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Perspectives toward followers/teachers take pride in their work when performance is recognized

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 7 6) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Perspectives toward followers/they're like students

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 7 7) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Perspectives toward followers/how to tell when a teacher is struggling

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 7 8) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Perspectives toward followers/tenured v. non-tenured teachers

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 7 9) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Perspectives toward followers/resistant to change

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 7 10) /Analytic codes/Leadership/Perspectives toward followers/teaching is stressful

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 1 8) /Analytic codes/Leadership/issues of race, culture, and learning in leader's practice

Description:

use this code when such issues surface, or when person is discussing them

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy  
No Description  
\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 1) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/fundamental understandings  
Description:  
these emerge from Osborne's review (1996) of ethnographies of cross-cultural classroom practice, and also from Ladson-Billings (1995); use when observed or discussed  
\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 1 1) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/fundamental understandings/Cr Ts do not have to come from same ethnic group  
No Description  
\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 1 2) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/fundamental understandings/sociopolitical or critical consciousness  
\*\*\* Description:  
use when leader or teacher discusses social or political forces beyond the classroom, ie, inequality and racism, or when such issues are being addressed or taught in interviews or observations  
\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 1 2 1) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/fundamental understandings/sociopolitical or critical consciousness/maybe it's a race thing  
No Description  
\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 1 2 2) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/fundamental understandings/sociopolitical or critical consciousness/acknowledgement of racism  
Description:  
use this code when participant discusses existence of racism  
\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 1 3) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/fundamental understandings/teach content that is CR  
Description:  
use this code when interviewees discuss teaching in CR manner, or when CRT is observed  
\*\*\*\*\* (3 2 1

4) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/fundamental understandings/support cultural competence of learners  
\*\*\* Description:  
Use this code when teachers or leaders discuss seeking to develop cc in learners  
\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 2) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/learning processes established by CR Ts and Ls  
\*\*\* Description:  
these emerge from Osborne's review (1996) of ethnographies of cross-cultural classroom practice; established in classrooms to improve teaching and learning; code when observed or discussed  
\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 2 1) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/learning processes established by CR Ts and Ls/academically demanding of learners  
\*\*\* No Description  
\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 2 2) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/learning processes established by CR Ts and Ls/warm and respectful of learners and/or their families  
\*\*\* No Description  
\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 2 3) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/learning processes established by CR Ts and Ls/explicit about cultural assumptions

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 2 4) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/learning processes established by CR Ts and Ls/use of CR management

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 2 5) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/learning processes established by CR Ts and Ls/teach anti-racism

\*\*\* Description:

use this code when participant deiscusses anti-racism work

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 2 6) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/learning processes established by CR Ts and Ls/"teach the way children are learning"

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 3) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/leadership processes

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 3 1) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/leadership processes/moral leadership

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 3 2) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/leadership processes/handling the problems of blatant racism

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 4) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/rooted in subject matter

\*\*\* Description:

use when someone discusses CRP that is rooted in literacy or math instruction, or in observation of linkages between CRP and subject matter

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 5) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/how children of diverse racial and cultural heritage learn (subject matter)

\*\*\* Description:

use when this is discussed by a participant in an int. or in PD, faculty meetings, grade level meetings, etc.

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 6) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/how Ts assist children of diverse racial & cultural heritage in learning SM

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 7) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/how Ts learn CRP

\*\*\* Description:

use when this is discussed in an int. or in PD, faculty meetings, grade level meetings, etc., or when it is observed

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 8) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/How to assist T learning of CRP

\*\*\* Description:

use when this is discussed n an int. or in PD, faculty meetings, grade level meetings, etc., or observed

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 9) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/How to assist T learning to teach SM in CR manner

\*\*\* Description:

use when this is discussed in an int. or in PD, faculty meetings, grade level meetings, etc.

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 2 10) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/How to assist T learning about race, culture, racism in schools

\*\*\* Description:

use when this is discussed in an int. or in PD, faculty meetings, grade level meetings, etc.

\*\*\*\*\*

3 2 11) /Analytic codes/Culturally relevant pedagogy/general conceptions of CRP

\*\*\* Description:

use when general notions of CRP are discussed in an int. or in PD, faculty meetings, grade level meetings, etc.

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 3) /Analytic codes/Colorblind ideology

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 3 1) /Analytic codes/Colorblind ideology/racism as mental health issue

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 3 2) /Analytic codes/Colorblind ideology/tolerance of racism

\*\*\* Description:

use this code when participant is "respecting" a student's family's (or someone else's) racist belief system

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 3 3) /Analytic codes/Colorblind ideology/Whiteness

\*\*\* Description:

use when participants discuss being White, or privilege

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 3 4) /Analytic codes/Colorblind ideology/it's a socioeconomic/class issue

\*\*\* Description:

when participant(s) mentions high level of poverty among students and families or neighborhood as reason for academic challenges

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 3 5) /Analytic codes/Colorblind ideology/overidentification of kids into SpEd

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 3 6) /Analytic codes/Colorblind ideology/"I don't see color"

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 3 7) /Analytic codes/Colorblind ideology/a good teacher is a good teacher is a good teacher

\*\*\* Description:

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 3 8) /Analytic codes/Colorblind ideology/we don't make excuses

\*\*\* Description:

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 3 9) /Analytic codes/Colorblind ideology/we have African American celebrations

\*\*\* Description:

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 3 10) /Analytic codes/Colorblind ideology/I learn about culture or race from subordinate people of color

\*\*\* Description:  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 (3 3 11) /Analytic codes/Colorblind ideology/maternalism or paternalism  
 \*\*\* Description: use this code when participant is expressing paternalistic attitude toward child or family  
 ie, I help these poor children/families, I give them food, I buy them medicine  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 (3 3 12) /Analytic codes/Colorblind ideology/meritocracy  
 \*\*\* Description:  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 (3 3 13) /Analytic codes/Colorblind ideology/we go the extra mile with these kids  
 \*\*\* Description:  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 (3 3 14) /Analytic codes/Colorblind ideology/"the whole child"  
 \*\*\* Description:  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 (3 4) /Analytic codes/professional experience/background  
 \*\*\* Description:  
 Use this code when participant is discussing her/his prof. experience or background  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 (3 5) /Analytic codes/General conceptions of instruction  
 \*\*\* No Description  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 (3 5 1) /Analytic codes/General conceptions of instruction/time spent on lesson planning  
 \*\*\* No Description  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 (3 5 2) /Analytic codes/General conceptions of instruction/high expectations for kids  
 \*\*\* No Description  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 (3 5 3) /Analytic codes/General conceptions of instruction/differentiated instruction  
 \*\*\* No Description  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 (3 5 4) /Analytic codes/General conceptions of instruction/modeling for kids  
 \*\*\* No Description  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 (3 5 5) /Analytic codes/General conceptions of instruction/encourages independent learning  
 \*\*\* Description:  
 use this code when teacher is observed fostering independent work among children, or discussing its  
 merits  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 (3 5 6) /Analytic codes/General conceptions of instruction/cooperative grouping  
 \*\*\* No Description  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 (3 5 7) /Analytic codes/General conceptions of instruction/accountable talk  
 \*\*\* No Description  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 3 5 8) /Analytic codes/General conceptions of instruction/learning/student-centered instruction  
 \*\*\* No Description  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 (3 5 9) /Analytic codes/General conceptions of instruction/learning/fidelity to a curriculum  
 \*\*\* No Description  
 \*\*\*\*\*



(3 5 10) /Analytic codes/General conceptions of instruction/learning/referral process

\*\*\* Description:

use this to code any discussion of IEP process, or presence of emotional support classrooms

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 5 11) /Analytic codes/General conceptions of instruction/learning/have clear expectations for learners

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 5 12) /Analytic codes/General conceptions of instruction/learning/I use food as much as possible

\*\*\* Description:

use when teachers or others describe their use of food in instruction, as manipulatives or as a bribe or for motivation

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 5 13) /Analytic codes/General conceptions of instruction/learning/conceptual understanding is or should be developed

\*\*\* Description:

use this when participant discusses importance of building conetual understanding as the goal of instruction, whether it be in classroom teaching or in PD

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 5 14) /Analytic codes/General conceptions of instruction/learning/use of authentic tasks

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 6) /Analytic codes/Conceptions of literacy instruction

\*\*\* Description:

Here, code statements about what reading instruction entails

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 6 1) /Analytic codes/Conceptions of literacy instruction/use of word wall

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 6 2) /Analytic codes/Conceptions of literacy instruction/T confers with children about their writing

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 6 3) /Analytic codes/Conceptions of literacy instruction/balanced literacy

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 6 4) /Analytic codes/Conceptions of literacy instruction/Success for All

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 6 5) /Analytic codes/Conceptions of literacy instruction/flex grouping

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 7) /Analytic codes/Conceptions of math instruction

\*\*\* Description:

use to code statements about what math instruction entails; also code observations of mathematics instruction

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 7 1) /Analytic codes/Conceptions of math instruction/EveryDay Math

\*\*\* Description:

use to code statements about the curriculum, Everyday Math

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 7 2) /Analytic codes/Conceptions of math instruction/use of manipulatives

\*\*\* Description:

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 7 3) /Analytic codes/Conceptions of math instruction/basic facts can be practiced through games

\*\*\* Description:

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 7 4) /Analytic codes/Conceptions of math instruction/problem solving or use of math tasks

\*\*\* Description:

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 8) /Analytic codes/Conceptions of NCLB

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 8 1) /Analytic codes/Conceptions of NCLB/school improvement plan

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\* (3 9)

/Analytic codes/Teacher learning

\*\*\* Description:

use this code when teachers talk about learning something through PD or through their own practice, or elsewhere; or when leaders talk about their ideas on general teacher learning.

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 10) /Analytic codes/Privatization

\*\*\* Description:

Use when someone is referring to the move to privatize Turner School in W-burg in the 90s; usually cited in reference to why the IFL is kept at arm's length in the district

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 11) /Analytic codes/mental health issues

\*\*\* Description:

the principal often mentions the high frequency of mental health problems in this school among students, teachers, and parents. we use this code when such references turn up in interviews or field notes

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 12) /Analytic codes/Conceptions of PD

\*\*\* Description:

Use when participant is discussing her/his conception of what "good" professional development is; this gives insight into what priorities are for that person, and how they think of learning

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 13) /Analytic codes/Student demographics

\*\*\* Description:

use this code when participants discuss characteristics of student population

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 14) /Analytic codes/Teacher demographics

\*\*\* Description:

use this code when participants discuss characteristics of teacher population of the school or district

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 14 1) /Analytic codes/Teacher demographics/heritage

\*\*\* Description:

use this code when participant is describing own ethnic/racial heritage

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 15) /Analytic codes/Perspective toward learners

\*\*\* Description:

these are the codes we use for asset or deficit perspectives that educators or others display toward students and/or their families

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 15 1) /Analytic codes/Perspective toward learners/alarming literacy rates among students

Description:

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 15 2) /Analytic codes/Perspective toward learners/ “they’re street”

Description:

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 15 3) /Analytic codes/Perspective toward learners/ “their families are not mathematical people”

Description:

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 15 4) /Analytic codes/Perspective toward learners/ “they’re persistent and do not quit”

Description:

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 15 10) /Analytic codes/Perspective toward learners/Asset perspective

\*\*\* Description:

Use this code when participants talk about children/families as capable learners with potential for academic success, or demonstrate this perspective in observations. Cut from node (3 10). Cut from node (3 3 1).

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 15 10 1) /Analytic codes/Perspective toward learners/Asset perspective/parents are concerned about their kids

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 15 11) /Analytic codes/Perspective toward learners/Deficit perspective

\*\*\* Description:

Use this code when participants talk about or demonstrate belief that children bring negative attributes to school, thus making them difficult if not impossible to teach. Poverty or ignorance is blamed for poor academic achievement. Cut from node (3 11). Cut from node (3 3 2).

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 15 11 1) /Analytic codes/Perspective toward learners/Deficit perspective/parents don't know how to help children

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 15 11 2) /Analytic codes/Perspective toward learners/Deficit perspective/kids go home where nobody reads to them to studies with them

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 15 11 3) /Analytic codes/Perspective toward learners/Deficit perspective/kids don't have the prior knowledge or don't bring the background

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 15 11 4) /Analytic codes/Perspective toward learners/Deficit perspective/kids can't be trusted with manipulatives

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 16) /Analytic codes/Discipline issues/discipline of children

Description:

Use this code when participants discuss issues of discipline in interviews or observations, or are observed disciplining children

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 16 1) /Analytic codes/Discipline issues/discipline of children/I'm tough toward kids

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 16 11) /Analytic codes/Discipline issues/discipline of children/Student behavior

Description:

Cut from node (3 11).

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 16 11 1) /Analytic codes/Discipline issues/discipline of children/Student behavior/Positive

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 16 11 2) /Analytic codes/Discipline issues/discipline of children/Student behavior/Negative

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 17) /Analytic codes/parental involvement

\*\*\* Description:

conceptions of parental involvement in schools or out of schools

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 18) /Analytic codes/Conception of neighborhood(s) of school

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 19) /Analytic codes/America's Choice

\*\*\* Description:

use this code when AC reforms are being discussed

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 19 1) /Analytic codes/America's Choice/rituals and routines

\*\*\* Description:

use this code whenever rituals and routines are discussed

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 19 2) /Analytic codes/America's Choice/teaching children about standards

\*\*\* Description:

use this code in observations or interviews when teacher is discussing subject matter standards

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 19 2 1) /Analytic codes/America's Choice/teaching children about standards/with connections

\*\*\* Description:

use this code when teacher is relating standard to actual classroom work

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 20) /Analytic codes/Professional learning community

\*\*\* Description:

use when teachers or leaders are working together and showing collegiality, or discussing PLCs

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 21) /Analytic codes/organizational factors

\*\*\* No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(3 21 1) /Analytic codes/organizational factors/reconstituted school

\*\*\* Description:  
use this code when participant is discussing school as "new" school  
\*\*\*\*\*  
(3 21 1 1) /Analytic codes/organizational factors/reconstituted school/chosen v. placed teachers  
\*\*\* Description:  
when someone is discussing how teachers ended up at Lenox  
\*\*\*\*\*  
(3 21 1 2) /Analytic codes/organizational factors/reconstituted school/we're all new here  
\*\*\* No Description  
\*\*\*\*\*  
(3 21 2) /Analytic codes/organizational factors/we have 2 buildings  
\*\*\* No Description  
\*\*\*\*\*  
(3 22) /Analytic codes/Conceptions of "best practices"  
\*\*\* Description:  
Use this when someone mentions something as "best practice" in teaching  
\*\*\*\*\*  
(3 23) /Analytic codes/Conceptions of data use  
\*\*\* Description:  
use this code when anyone is talking about the use of data  
\*\*\*\*\*  
(3 23 1) /Analytic codes/Conceptions of data use/use of student work  
\*\*\* No Description  
\*\*\*\*\*  
(3 24) /Analytic codes/Conceptions of "achievement gap"  
\*\*\* No Description  
\*\*\*\*\*  
(3 25) /Analytic codes/Conceptions of coaching  
\*\*\* Description:  
Code text that mentions people's notions of coaching in schools  
\*\*\*\*\*  
(4) /Contexts/events numbered  
\*\*\* Description:  
these are contexts or events in daily leadership practice in which issues of race, culture, and learning  
surface; added on 12/17/07  
\*\*\*\*\*  
(4 1) /Contexts/events numbered/day to day practice  
No Description  
\*\*\*\*\*  
(4 1 1) /Contexts/events numbered/day to day practice/story of White 5th grade boy afraid of  
African American 5th grade boy  
\*\*\* No Description  
\*\*\*\*\*  
(4 2) /Contexts/events numbered/PD sessions  
\*\*\* No Description  
\*\*\*\*\*  
(4 2 1) /Contexts/events numbered/PD sessions/1st grade mathematics demonstration and  
debrief  
Description:

this was a PD session of all 3 mathematics teachers observing a demo lesson presented by the district  
Everyday Math consultant; the district K5 math coordinator was there along with the building  
mathematics coach

\*\*\*\*\*

(4 3) /Contexts/events numbered/Faculty meetings

No Description

\*\*\*\*\*

(4 3 1) /Contexts/events numbered/Faculty meetings/last faculty meeting of year: attention to  
race

No Description

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