

PERCEPTIONS OF CURRENT PRINCIPALS AND SUPERINTENDENTS
REGARDING MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCIES
NEEDED IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Perceptions of Current Principals & Superintendents

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Abstract

Educational leaders in the 21st century are facing many demographic changes. During the past 30 years, multicultural education has become more important as schools accommodate the needs of an ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse population. Administrators need multicultural skills to lead in a time of global change. Achievement gaps among culturally diverse populations make it imperative for educators to meet the challenge of learning new skills in the 21st century. As the student population changes, leaders will need the knowledge, skills and ability to work collaboratively with community members (Sue, Arredondo, McDavis, & Roderick, 1992).

This descriptive study explored the perceptions of superintendents and principals regarding multicultural competencies as measured by the *Multicultural Counseling Inventory (MCI)*. Forty-three superintendents and principals from upstate New York participated in a web-based survey that measured their multicultural competencies including the categories of knowledge, skills, awareness and relationship. Findings suggest that there is no difference between principals' and superintendents' perceptions regarding multicultural competencies in this study. The differences in urban/suburban principals and rural principals scores were statistically significant for the MCI Subscale, Multicultural Relationship.

Key words: MCI, Multicultural Competency, principals, superintendents, 21st Century skills

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

As the United States becomes more ethnically and racially diverse in the 21st century, schools are also becoming more multicultural (Fry, 2007; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2006; The Education Trust, 2006; Duke & Ming, 2007; Ovando & Troxell, 1997; Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr & Cohen, 2007). Recently, research involving counselors' multicultural competence has extended to the field of education. Superintendents and principals need to possess multicultural competencies that will prepare them to work with a more diverse population. However, more research is needed to consider the multicultural competence of school leaders including superintendents and principals. What perception do superintendents and principals have regarding their multicultural competence and do they possess the knowledge and awareness to lead their districts? The changing demographics create a new challenge for school leaders in addition to the increasing pressures of assessment and accountability, and the demands of *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* mandates and the reauthorization of the *Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)*.

Purpose Statement

Despite numerous research studies that explore multicultural competencies among counselors, very few researchers have investigated the multicultural competencies of superintendents and principals (Boske, 2007; Ovando, 2002; Ovando & Troxell, 1997). The purpose of this quantitative single-stage descriptive study was to explore the multicultural competencies needed for superintendents and principals to effectively lead in the 21st century. One hundred and twelve superintendents and principals from upstate New York were invited to take an electronic version of the *Multicultural Counseling*

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Inventory, MCI (Sodowsky, Taffe, Gutkin, & Wise, 1994). The predictor variables investigated were demographic variables and experience of superintendents and principals; the criterion variable was multicultural competence as measured by the MCI.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study included the following:

Guiding Questions

1. Do principals and superintendents differ in their perceptions regarding multicultural competencies needed in the 21st century?
2. Do rural and urban/suburban principals and superintendents differ in perceptions of multicultural competencies needed in the 21st century?
3. What level of awareness do principals and superintendents possess regarding their multicultural competencies?
4. Is there a relationship between multicultural competencies and effective communication as perceived by principals and superintendents?

Definitions

For the purposes of this study, diversity or multicultural education was defined in broad terms to include ethnicity, students with special needs, gender, poverty level, and English language learners (ELL). The term multicultural competency was used based on the following understanding:

Cultural competence is a developmental process occurring at individual and system levels that evolves and is sustained over time. It requires that individuals and organizations: Have a defined set of values and principles, demonstrated behaviors, attitudes, policies and structures that enable them to work effectively in a cross-cultural manner (Mowry, 2005, p. 1).

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The study relied on the following definitions:

Term	Definition	Source
<i>Multicultural Counseling Inventory (MCI)</i>	The Multicultural Counseling Inventory measure Multicultural Competency. The original instrument (Sodowsky et al., 1994) included 3 subscale domains including awareness, skills, knowledge. An additional subscale was added to the instrument, relationship. The four subscales include: “Skills: 11 items measuring general counseling and specific multicultural counseling techniques and methods of assessment, Awareness: 10 items measuring multicultural sensitivity, interactions and advocacy in general life experiences in professional activities, Relationship: 8 items measuring the counselor’s perceived interactions with minority clients including comfort level and stereotypes, Knowledge: 11 items measuring treatment planning, case conceptualization, and multicultural counseling research”	Granello & Wheaton, 1998, p. 6
<i>Ethnic Minority</i>	“Denotes a numerically smaller or politically powerless group in relation to a larger, controlling, and dominating majority and was used during the civil rights struggle for political, economic, legal, and social opportunities for African American, Latino, and Asian Americans and First Nations Peoples”	Lum, 2007, p. 117
<i>Multicultural Counseling</i>	”As the field of counseling moves into the 21 st century, cultural differences in addition to ethnicity have increasingly gained recognition as important considerations in the counseling process: gender roles, sexual orientation, aging, and physical disability”	Lee, Blando, Mizelle, & Orozco, 2007, p. 1
<i>Multiculturalism</i>	“Recognizes the pluralistic nature of cultures and societies and has been associated with academic and political movements”	Lum, 2007, p. 117

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<i>Multicultural Training</i>	“Training objectives should not be mastery of all of the skills, but to equip leaders with the insight that shows that awareness is important, the knowledge to recognize cues, and the skill to act on it”	Connerley & Pedersen, 2005, p. 112
White	“A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. It includes people who indicate their race as "White" or report entries such as Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Near Easterner, Arab, or Polish.”	U.S. Census Bureau, 2006a
Black or African American	“A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa. It includes people who indicate their race as "Black, African American," or provide written entries such as African American, Afro American, Kenyan, Nigerian, or Haitian.”	U.S. Census Bureau, 2006a
American Indian and Alaska Native	“A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment”	U.S. Census Bureau, 2006a
Asian	“A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.”	U.S. Census Bureau, 2006a
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	“A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.”	U.S. Census Bureau, 2006a
Some other race	“Includes all other responses not included in the "White", "Black or African American", "American Indian and Alaska Native", "Asian" and "Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander" race categories.”	U.S. Census Bureau, 2006a

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Culturally diverse factors impacting schools include, but are not limited to, the number of English language learners, students with special needs, students from ethnically diverse backgrounds, and students from low-income backgrounds. The knowledge, skills and abilities that students need in the 21st century include mastery of core subjects, including reading, math, and science, as well as problem solving and collaborative skills (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2006).

Significance of Study

It is predicted that by the year 2020, more than half of the student population will consist of African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Native Americans (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). According to the U.S. Census (2001), the current population of historically underrepresented people is 31% and is expected to reach 50% by 2050 (Lee et al., 2007). Additionally, the United States Census Bureau reported that public school enrollment had reached record numbers at 50 million students in October 2005. As a response to increased enrollment, many districts have built new schools. The number of schools increased during the 20th century from 13,000 to 94,000 (Fry, 2007).

In these public schools, the Hispanic population has increased by more than 55%, 19.8% in 2005-06 compared to 12.7% in 1993-94. In contrast, the number of all-white schools has decreased by 35% from 25,603 in 1993-1994 to 16,769 in 2005-2006 (Fry, 2007). It has also been noted that 40% more (8.4 million) undocumented immigrants have moved to the United States in the last ten years (Passel & Cohen, 2008). Educators are and will continue to be challenged to meet the needs of these increasingly diverse populations (Fry, 2007). Many states including Georgia, North Carolina and other southeastern states that did not have an immigrant presence have experienced the biggest growth (Passel & Cohen, 2008).

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U.S. Census Bureau (2008) predicts that the population in the U.S. will be more culturally diverse and older by 2050. Ethnic minorities will become the majority by 2042. It is also projected that 62% of children will be ethnic minorities by 2050, an increase from 44 % currently. This rapid acceleration will create a challenge for educators who are trying to improve student performance and close achievement gaps (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).

Superintendents and principals are influential; they lead their districts and schools in considering new ways to educate students in the 21st century (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000). Educators need multicultural competency skills to assist them in communicating, respecting, educating, and working with families of students from diverse backgrounds (Ovando & Troxell, 1997). Educators will need to diversify their skills to include knowledge of various religions and spiritualities, socioeconomic issues, biracial and multiracial student concerns, global migration, and mental health issues (Arredondo, Zoila, Tovar-Blank & Parham, 2008). According to Ovando and Troxell (2000),

Superintendents need to develop the multicultural competencies (knowledge, attitudes, and skills) that will enable them to better respond to the expectations and needs of diverse communities. By being knowledgeable about the community's wants and desires, by demonstrating a positive attitude toward the multicultural values and traditions of diverse groups, and by applying multicultural interpersonal and organizational skills, the superintendent will be in a better position to lead the stakeholders in the development of a vision (Owen & Ovando, 2000, p. 138).

Demographic trends were explored further in the *Closing Expectations*

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Study (Achieve, 2008), which investigated the preparation of high school graduates for the 21st century workforce. *Achieve* was created in 1996, as an independent, bipartisan, non-profit organization in Washington, DC, that assists schools in improving academic standards, assessments, and graduation requirements. Governors, educational leaders (K-12 and higher education), and CEO's attended an annual summit where they were surveyed regarding their high schools' standards and graduation requirements with regard to the demands of the workforce in the 21st century. According to Achieve (2008),

In 2004, Achieve, The Education Trust, the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and the National Alliance of Business released the ADP benchmarks. Based on extensive research with employers and postsecondary faculty, the ADP benchmarks identified the knowledge and skills high school graduates must possess in English and mathematics to be successful in first-year, credit-bearing college courses and/or qualify graduates for the postsecondary education or training needed for good entry-level jobs that pay a family-sustaining wage and offer opportunities for advancement (p. 8).

Currently, 23 states reported that their standards were aligned with post-high school 21st century workforce skills as defined by the Achieve report. New York State utilizes standards aligned with career and college readiness (not verified by Achieve). These schools require students to complete a curriculum that is aligned with English and math standards to “ensure all students graduate ready for college and career success” (Achieve, 2008, p. 28). Twenty-one states are planning to update their curriculum in the near future in order to incorporate the skills needed in the 21st century (Achieve, 2008).

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In the report, *Closing the Expectations Gaps*, it is reported “At the national level, there have been significant shifts in the exposure of white students to students of any racial or ethnic identity other than their own” (p. 9). African American and Hispanic students attend schools that are more segregated.

Close to 50% of African American and Hispanic students do not earn a high school diploma. These facts have a negative impact on students’ knowledge and preparedness for the future. Some of the strategies mentioned to assist more students in graduating include teacher preparation that includes multicultural competency training, accountability, and the possible redesign of school systems. Schools with a high minority population receive less state and local funding, have more teachers with less experience, and a lower number of students who are college bound (The Education Trust, 2006). Exploring possible interventions and support programs to reduce the dropout rate of Hispanic and African American students is important when considering changing demographics (Achieve, 2008).

In an attempt to reduce the academic achievement gap, *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) required that educators focus on the minimum competencies needed in reading, mathematics and science. However, there is an obvious achievement gap when comparing white students’ academic performance to African American, Hispanic, and low-income students. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) determined that 38% of white students were proficient in reading in 2007. However, only 12% of African American students, 14% of Hispanic students and 15% of low-income students were proficient in the same area (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2006). In math, 42% of white students met proficiency requirements while only 14% of African American students were able to perform at the same level. A similar trend proved true in

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the area of science; only 7% of African American students were able to meet proficiency standards compared to 39% of white students. A mere 15% of low-income students reached proficiency in writing compared to 41% of white students. These results are alarming since graduates possessing even the basic competencies will struggle in the “high-skill, high-wage service economy in the 21st century; students graduating without even these fundamental skills will drown in the fast-paced environment of this technological era” (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2006, p. 8).

According to the Education Trust (2006), when African American and Hispanic students receive high quality teaching and support, they are successful academically. However, many of the schools with a high percentage of low-income and minority students have three times the number of “out-of-field” teachers (teaching outside of their certification area) compared to other districts (The Education Trust, 2006). The Education Trust reports that Harvard University educators have found a correlation between high-quality teachers and student achievement. Yet schools that educate the largest number of minority students receive the smallest amount of funding and have a high number of teachers on staff without the background and experience to teach them (The Education Trust, 2006). As stated in the introduction of “*Yes We Can: Telling Truths and Dispelling Myths about Race and Education in America*” written by the Education Trust:

More than 50 years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, most children of color in this country are still denied the education they need. The education they need to find meaningful and well-paying jobs. The education they need to thrive in college. The education they need to participate fully in this nation’s economic and civic life. The education they need to join and continue the fight for a truly just

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society (p. 1).

The literature supports the trends of changing demographics and the student population becoming more diverse in the 21st Century, but at the same time in many communities, African American, Hispanic students are attending schools that are more segregated. White students are more likely to attend schools with students from diverse backgrounds (Fry, 2007). The academic achievement gap continues to be an issue and African American and Hispanic students are twice as likely as white students to drop out of school. According to *Partnership of the 21st Century*, NCLB focuses on minimum standards and not mastery of subject content. Basic competency in English, math and science will not adequately prepare students for the high tech world of the 21st century (Partnership of 21st Century, 2008). High quality teachers have a positive impact on student achievement. Therefore, as schools become more diverse, the minority becomes the majority, and segregated schools persist, students need to be prepared for a culturally diverse 21st Century and also need 21st Century skills to be successful in a society that demands more education, more technological skills and a global perspective (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008). Segregated schools cause a burden for students from diverse backgrounds because these schools receive less funds and less qualified teachers (The Education Trust, 2006). Students from diverse backgrounds need the knowledge and awareness to work effectively with people from diverse backgrounds. White students also need to prepare for a world that is linguistically, ethnically, and culturally diverse, which may be very different from the world they experience in their community.

Limitations

The results in this study should be viewed with caution and consideration of the limitations including small sample size, possible social desirability (when participants

answer survey questions in a desirable way), geographic location of schools, and utilization of the MCI instrument.

One limitation of this study was the small sample size used. Although 81 principals and 31 superintendents were invited to participate in the study, 43 participants completed the survey. The researcher selected a cluster of school districts in rural, suburban and urban (small city) settings to assess because there was limited research previously conducted. Urban and suburban schools were combined to create an urban/suburban category because of the similarities in demographic profile and lack of sufficient numbers of urban school districts. In this way, the study will add to the body of research. However, the small sample size limits external validity or generalizability of the study.

A second design limitation is the possibility of social desirability as a result of utilizing a self-reported instrument, a factor related to the general validity concerns when self-reported data form the basis for measurement. Multicultural social desirability occurs when someone thinks they interact with minorities effectively and in a positive way (Sodowsky, Kuo-Jackson, Richardson, Corey, 1998). Constantine and Ladany (2000) noted that social desirability has been connected with multicultural competency self-reported instruments, but that reported multicultural awareness and knowledge does not necessarily imply that these educators will be skilled and culturally aware (Constantine & Ladany, 2000). Therefore, utilizing a qualitative approach or a more detailed quantitative measure would be recommended.

A third limitation was the language used in the instrument. The term “client” was used several times in the instrument, which is not the language principals and superintendents utilize when describing their stakeholders. This presents a possible threat

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to internal validity. In the introduction letter mailed to participants and in the survey instructions, a disclaimer was added to the instructions to define the term “client.” Three questions in the survey, numbers 11, 22 & 33, were more appropriate for counselors than educators. These questions asked the following, “I use innovative concepts and treatment methods”, “I am successful at seeing 50% of the clients more than once not including intake” and “In the past year, I have had a 50% increase in my multicultural case load.” An attempt was made by the researcher to contact the author to modify the instrument, however, as a result of time constraints, the original scale was used in its entirety. Permission to modify the terminology of the instrument was not received from the author, therefore, the instrument was utilized in its original form.

The fourth limitation is the geographic location of the schools in the sample. Most of these schools are in suburban and rural communities and may not be reflective of the larger population in New York State. Therefore, those who wish to generalize the findings to the greater population must take care is assuming that this population adequately represents their populations of interest.

The final limitation of this study is the use of the MCI instrument. Investigating multicultural competencies and diversity can be a sensitive area, and some participants may not be interested in answering questions about multicultural competencies. The researcher received feedback from a few participants who were confused about the purpose of the study since their school districts were not very diverse. The MCI is still a new instrument; it was created in 1998, originally developed to assess multicultural competencies among counselors. Utilizing the MCI in the field of education with principals and superintendents is a new endeavor. Other instruments have been used to assess multicultural competencies of supervisors and administrators including the

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MAKSS, The *Modified Multicultural Questionnaire (MCQ)* and *Modified Diversity Action Survey* (Boske, 2007). Using a follow-up qualitative study in each district to assess the unique needs of each school is recommended.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Communicating and collaborating with teams of people across cultural, geographic and language boundaries--a necessity in diverse and multinational workplaces and communities. Mutually beneficial relationships are a central undercurrent to accomplishments in businesses-and it's not only top managers who represent companies anymore. All Americans must be skilled at interacting competently and respectfully with others (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2006, p. 10).

The business world is not alone in its need to incorporate global change; education systems must also adapt and address the needs of a changing population. Teachers are most often the first and most influential educational personnel who interact with students on a regular basis. Research indicates that many pre-service teachers may not have the background to teach students from diverse backgrounds and think that racism and sexism are non-existent (Ahlquist, 1991; Carpenter, 2000).

In the Ahlquist study, prospective high school teachers in a Multicultural Foundations of Education course were surveyed to assess their "levels of consciousness about multicultural education and racism" (Ahlquist, 1991, p. 159). Thirty-one students participated in the survey (one student dropped the course). An inventory served as pre-assessment regarding students' beliefs, values, and perceptions. As the semester progressed, conflicts, challenging discussions and uncomfortable emotions were addressed in the course. Ahlquist utilized a prejudice reduction strategy during the semester. As a result of the study, Ahlquist found that a common stereotype among people in the United States includes "the belief that poor people, people on welfare, and some minorities were poor because they were lazy" (Ahlquist, 1991, p. 159). If we accept

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the premise as stated by Ahlquist, that some teachers in the U.S. have biased attitudes about minority students, that the world is becoming more culturally diverse, and that some teachers may not be prepared to educate a changing population, then knowledge of multicultural competencies becomes a necessary tool for teachers in the 21st century. System leaders are confronted with both educating their communities and creating opportunities to heighten multicultural awareness.

Bridges, an author, consultant, and speaker who has assisted numerous international organizations to cope with change, asserts that change is difficult for many individuals. Self-reflection and professional development can assist teachers and administrators to consider their weaknesses (Bridges, 2003). Bridges has conducted numerous studies on organizational change. According to Bridges:

Before you can begin something new, you have to end what used to be. Before you can learn a new way of doing things, you have to unlearn the old way. Before you can become a different kind of person, you must let go of your old identity. So beginnings depend on endings. The problem is, people don't like endings (Bridges, 2003, p. 23).

Ettlie, Bridges & O'Keefe (1984) researched the impact of change on an organization. One hundred and ninety-two companies were included in the sample of 59% top level managers. A general model was evaluated by assessing the organizational innovation process in businesses and how they adapt to change. Organization size was a factor considered in this study in addition to the support that top managers need to implement a radical change (Ettlie, Bridges & O'Keefe, 1984).

As schools become more diverse, knowledge of multicultural competencies is critical for educators who need to consider who they are, where they came from, how

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they prioritize their values, their traditions, their biases, their prejudices, and their overall awareness of “isms” including racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, etc. (Sue, Arredondo, McDavis, & Roderick, 1992). Educators need to realize that they may not have all the answers, that there are things yet to learn about the students they serve. When they realize that these changes will benefit their classrooms to create a more inclusive and accepting environment, educators will be more committed to restructuring their methods or strategies in order to reflect a more diverse community (Daniel, Roysircar, Abeles and Boyd, 2004).

According to Connerley & Pedersen (2005), “Multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills increase a person’s intentional and purposive decision-making ability by accounting for the many ways that culture influences different perceptions of the same solution” (p. 7). Connerley and Pedersen have extensive experience working with organizations and doctoral students regarding the training and development of diversity awareness in the workplace. Pedersen is an expert in the field of multicultural counseling, and is an American Psychological Association fellow. These scholars support the adaptation of Sue, Arredondo, McDavis & Roderick’s model of Multicultural Competency and applying it to the educational setting.

The multicultural counseling competencies have been endorsed by numerous organizations including the American Counseling Association and the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (Connerley & Pedersen, 2005). Sue, et al (1992), created the first multicultural counseling competency resource entitled, “Multicultural Counseling Competencies: A Call to the Professions.” This document acknowledged the importance of multicultural competencies. The awareness, knowledge, and skill set of multicultural competencies originally developed by Sue et al. has been extensively used

and is an appropriate foundation for leadership (Connerley & Pedersen, 2005). As

Connerley & Pedersen stated:

Adapting the philosophy underlying the multicultural counseling competencies to leadership leads to the understanding that all leader interactions are multicultural in nature. There are always sociopolitical and historical forces that influence the beliefs, values, practices, and worldviews of both leaders and followers; and ethnicity, culture, race, language, and other dimensions of diversity need to be factored into leader preparation and practice (Connerley & Pedersen, 2005, p. 77).

Although the concept of multicultural competencies was originally a construct addressed by the counseling profession, administrators and teachers also need to possess the knowledge, skills and ability to work with a diverse population and the changing needs of students (Connerley & Pedersen, 2005). The superintendent is one of the most important and influential leaders in a district. An effective superintendent and leader can have a positive impact on increased student achievement and overall school improvement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Murphy, 2002; Schmoker, 2001; and Leithwood, Seashore, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). If these leaders have such a tremendous potential impact on their communities, then their role as visionary leaders who embrace multicultural competencies becomes more important, especially as the U.S becomes more culturally diverse.

In 2007, Fry in conjunction with the Pew Center conducted an analysis based on the U.S. Department of Education's Public School Universe Survey and National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The Pew Hispanic Center is a nonpartisan research group which regularly conducts in-depth analysis regarding the Hispanic population in the U.S. The findings represent a comparison between 1993-94 data and 2005-06

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information (Fry, 2007).

In June 2007, a 5-4 decision by the Supreme Court did not support the plans of several schools in Louisville and Seattle to desegregate. This decision has encouraged further investigation and discussion regarding schools that have used race as a factor to desegregate (Fry, 2007). Shortly after this Supreme Court decision, the Pew Center investigated the current state of school integration in the nation. The results of the survey indicate that white students are becoming more exposed to multicultural students because of the increase in the Hispanic population (including Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Cubans, and others). In 1993-94, 34% of white students attended a “nearly all-white” school compared to 21% in 2005-06 (Fry, 2007). African American and Hispanic students have become more isolated in the school setting compared to white students: 29% of Hispanic students and 31% of Black students attended a “nearly all-minority” high school in 2005-06 compared to 25% of Hispanic and 28% of Black students in 1993-94.

When considering the new challenges facing teachers and system leaders, it is clear that educators need to attain the skills required to serve not only a growing Hispanic population but also to better facilitate this demographic change for the pre-existing, predominantly white population who will also be affected. As the landscape of public school education changes, schools need to be responsive to the changing needs of the student population. If white students attend schools that are more diverse, and African American and Hispanic students attend schools that are more segregated, teachers need to be aware of the academic challenges facing both populations, including achievement gaps, cultural conflicts and multicultural education. Residential segregation is causing school segregation, and many minority students attend schools that are struggling.

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Schools in racially segregated and low income communities tend to have weaker educational systems, more student mobility and a higher percentage of students from homes from English Language Learners (The Education Trust, 2006).

According to the New York State Education Department Chapter 655 Report (2006 version) schools in New York State have become more segregated as well. The Chapter 655 report of Laws of 1987 is created for the Governor and submitted by the Board of Regents and the State Education Department. The report provides an analysis of two documents: *New York the State of Learning* and the *Statewide Profile of the Educational System*. The data were submitted by superintendents from each district in New York State.

In this report, the need/resource capacity is used to identify the unique needs of students in each district. Their definition states:

The need/resource capacity index was developed by assessing each school district's special student needs and ability to provide resources relative to the State average. This classification scheme more clearly indicates where in the State system some children are failing because they have not been provided the resources necessary to succeed (Chapter 655 Report, 2006, p. 8).

Some of the low need districts are located in suburban communities outside of New York City, Rochester, Syracuse, Buffalo, the Capital District and the Central Adirondack Region. The high need resource capacity districts (refer to Glossary, Appendix G) are in different areas in New York State. Minority students represent 75% of the population in the Big 5 districts in New York State (Syracuse, Rochester, Yonkers, Buffalo and New York City). Eighty-four percent of minority students attended schools in either a high need district or a school in one of the Big 5 districts (Chapter 655 Report). An additional

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10.7% of minority students attended schools in other high need resource capacity districts. These schools served a large percentage of students from poor and diverse backgrounds. Only 10% of minority students in New York State attended schools in average need resource capacity school districts. Forty-one percent of white students attended a high majority and low minority school. Sixty-seven percent of minority students attended a high minority school in New York State. These patterns of segregation have not changed since the fall of 1984. The number of minority students who attended a high-minority school increased between 2000 and 2004 (an increase of 29,000 students). African American, Hispanic, and low-income students disproportionately attend schools in low-income and minority communities where public education opportunities place them at a disadvantage.

Ninety-four percent of students who attend low-need capacity schools attend college (this represents the largest percent of students going to college compared to high need schools that send fewer students to higher education). Rural, high-need districts pay teachers the lowest amount, an average of \$45,000 while low-need districts pay the highest teacher salaries, an average of \$69,042. According the New York State Chapter 655 report of 2006:

Poverty has a pervasive effect on children's physical, emotional, and cognitive health. Research has documented that low-income children are more likely than others to go without necessary food, shelter, and health care; less likely to be in good preschool programs or day care settings; and more likely to be retained in school, drop out, become teenaged parents, and be unemployed. Despite the inability of schools to control the economic situation of their students, this report documents the relationship between poverty and achievement for two reasons.

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First, society has a responsibility to ensure that all children learn, regardless of their family circumstances. Second, we hope that the documentation of this relationship will inspire solutions that will remove children from the devastating circumstances of poverty (p. 102).

This information will be important when considering factors in public schools in upstate New York because many of these districts historically have been rural, farming communities with very little diversity.

According to Duke & Ming (2007), administrators need to follow six steps to develop the knowledge and skills needed to lead districts in a time of changing demographics:

(a) Administrators should clearly understand the meaning of student diversity in schools, (b) Administrators should understand the implications of low student academic performance, (c) There is a difference between valuing diversity and working toward an inclusive learning community, and administrators should understand the implications of this difference, (d) Administrators should ensure that professional development address cultural diversity as an integral part of school procedures, (e) Administrators should assign specialists who are experts in multicultural education to assist teachers in designing instruction, (f) Administrators should identify and assign differential roles in different personnel in the school (Duke & Ming, 2007, pps. 21-23).

The process should begin with self reflection and three important questions:

How can I help my teachers to feel empowered as they work with diverse populations?; How can I help teachers develop a positive attitude about all students academic potential and social behavior?; and Do my teachers feel that

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they have the necessary skills to succeed in a multicultural environment? (Duke & Ming, 2007, p. 21).

As superintendents and principals face the challenges of changing demographics, communicating with their community members to assess their needs and develop professional development plans are important steps to effectively plan for the future.

History and Definition of Multicultural Competencies

In order to understand the degree to which educators possess multicultural competence, one of the first questions that must be addressed is how multicultural competence can be assessed, which requires a careful definition of the term. Sue et al. (1982) published a paper on cross-cultural counseling competencies. This paper was the catalyst for research, theoretical work and explorations in the field of multicultural education and the counseling profession. The researchers identified the changing needs of the client/student population and the necessity for the counseling profession to adapt to the changing demographics. They included the beliefs and attitudes, knowledge and skills needed to work with a diverse population (Sue et al., 1992). These categories have become important principles for other diversity models. In addition to the Multicultural Counseling Competency Model, numerous educational organizations have incorporated the importance of multicultural competencies. The National Council for Accreditation of Teaching Education (NCATE) has a statement regarding diversity which states:

The unit designs, implements, and evaluates curriculum and provides experiences for candidates to acquire and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates can demonstrate and apply proficiencies related to diversity. Experiences provided for candidates include working with diverse populations,

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including higher education and P–12 school faculty, candidates, and students in P–12 schools (NCATE, 2008, p. 4).

The American Association of School Administrators professional standards (1993) state that superintendents should be able to:

Exhibit multicultural and ethnic understanding and sensitivity, describe the role of schooling in a democratic society, demonstrate ethical and personal integrity, model accepted moral and ethical standards in all interactions, describe a strategy to promote the value that moral and ethical practices are established and practiced in each classroom and school, and describe a strategy to ensure that diversity of religion, ethnicity, and way of life in the district are not violated (American Association of School Administrators, 1993, p. 8).

Sue et al's. model provides educators with an opportunity to consider their personal experiences in regards to race and culture and to explore how their worldview may impact their interaction with others who are from different cultural backgrounds. The multicultural competencies foundation concepts used by these researchers are also appropriate to consider for the field of education. Principals and superintendents need the ability, knowledge, and skills, to work with culturally diverse populations (Sue et al., 1992).

Multicultural Training, Skills and Preparation

Extensive research has been conducted on multicultural training and creating an inclusive and culturally sensitive environment in the workplace (De Meuse, Hostager, & O'Neill, 2006; Rynes & Rosen, 1995). Noe & Ford (1992) report that it is important to consider the best vehicles to share multicultural information and diversity with organizations. One strategy includes initial training in developing conceptual frameworks

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to assess the impact of training on the organizational behavior and performance followed by consideration of strategies for effectively managing diversity in the organization (De Meuse, Hostager, & O'Neill, 2007). Diversity in the workplace is frequently presented as a “problem” especially in popular media sources including *Fortune*, *Business Week*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. Over the years, there has been an abundance of literature committed to diversity, however, very little research has been devoted to the effectiveness of diversity initiatives (De Meuse et al., 2007). De Meuse et al. conducted a pilot study for 57 managers and management professionals to survey and explore the effectiveness of the training before a company-wide diversity program was implemented (a Workplace Diversity Survey (WDS) developed by De Meuse & Hostager was utilized as a pre- and post-assessment). De Meuse & Hostager (2007) determined that the training was effective and would be beneficial for the company. According to the researchers:

If the set of four WDS items actually measured a single unidimensional construct, one would expect a high coefficient alpha score (i.e., one exceeding 0.70)...reliability scores ranged from a high of 0.89 (emotional reactions dimension) to a low of 0.76 (organizational outcomes dimension). Consequently, these results indicate that the WDS assesses the five dimensions of diversity in an internally consistent manner and that these constructs are interrelated (De Meuse, et al., 2007, p. 41).

Workshop participants had a higher score (pretest to post-test) that was statistically significant in emotional reactions, judgments, behavioral reactions, and organizational outcomes, after the training (De Meuse, et al., 2007). Rynes and Rosen (1995) surveyed 785 human resource professionals regarding diversity training. Six thousand surveys of 99 scaled questions in addition to 19 open-ended questions were

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mailed to members of the Society for Human Resource Management. According to respondents, the majority of training took place for a day or less (72%). Eighty-four percent of the organizations follow-up immediately after training to determine if the training was effective. Less than 1/3 continue with any type of follow-up diversity training evaluation. Half of the training program respondents reported a mixed or neutral reaction to diversity training. Training adoption (why some companies choose to adopt diversity training) and Human Resource Managers perceived training success were the two independent variables. There was a positive correlation among the adoption of diversity training with organizational size, increases in diversity in the workplace, and management belief and support. Thirty-three percent of the participants believed that the diversity training was successful (Rynes & Rosen, 1995). Diversity training frequently includes information about stereotypes, biases, and assumptions. Less than one-third of organizations that utilize diversity training conduct follow-up and program evaluation, and many diversity programs last for only one day. Organizations tend to lack the proper follow-up needed to follow-up and evaluate the impact of the diversity training (Rynes & Rosen, 1995). One important finding in the study was the perceived importance of top level managers' support of the diversity training. The *Logit Analysis of Factors* was used to predict or consider probability associated with adoption of diversity training. In this study, there was a positive association among size, diversity of the workforce, management beliefs, and the organization and training adoption (Rynes & Rosen, 1995). Diversity training was more frequently found in larger organizations (1,000-9,999 and >10,000). When considering perceived success of diversity training, 63% of participants thought that the training was quite successful or extremely successful over time. These figures are consistent with other studies (Rice, 1994; Hay Group, 1992) that consider

perceived success of diversity training (Rynes & Rosen, 1995). The commitment of leaders was an important aspect of the success of the training. Although participants stated that diversity training had a positive effect, many also believed that the impact for the training was not long-term (Rynes & Rosen, 1995).

Teachers and administrators need training and education to understand the demographic and cultural needs of their populations (Bennett, 2001). A popular vehicle for providing professional development is online delivery. Kitsantas & Talleyrand (2005) researched a new aspect of teacher preparation by utilizing online resources. This study investigated various aspects of using online instruction in addition to traditional methods in the classroom. For the purpose of the Kitsantas & Talleyrand study, the definition of multicultural competence is as follows:

A teacher's ability to be aware of his or her own cultural identity and biases, to gain a worldview which encompasses learning about worldviews of groups who are culturally different from him or herself, and to develop culturally responsive teaching strategies that are inclusive of the cultural norms of all student groups (Kitsantas & Talleyrand, 2005, p. 627).

Kitsantas & Talleyrand considered ways in which online resources can improve multicultural awareness and competencies. According to Kitsantas & Talleyrand, when teachers are introduced to multicultural training resources, they are more comfortable with diversity in the classroom. One strategy recommended based on the review of literature includes a web-enhanced instructional model that includes self-regulation, observational learning, emulation, self-control. In the self-regulation learning phase, teachers can observe learning by modeling observed during the learning process. In the self-regulation phase teachers can learn how to adapt to change during field visit

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experiences. The teachers who need additional instruction can watch the observation again to sharpen their multicultural competency skills (Kitsantas & Talleyrand, 2005).

Cifuentes and Murphy (2000) studied the effectiveness of distance learning on two school districts in different geographic locations. In a case study, Cifuentes and Murphy considered the impact of the Cultural Connections program, which is a distance learning resource. A case study approach was used to consider the impact of the Cultural Connections program. The participants included two teachers and their students, three teacher-observers, and two faculty members from Texas A & M University. As a result of the study, four themes were evident including: growth, empowerment, comfort with technology and mentoring. They found that both teachers and students had an increased understanding of diversity, meaningful relationships and awareness after participating in the Cultural Connections program.

To determine the effectiveness of the program, researchers reviewed portfolios to evaluate teaching and learning, student interviews before and after their involvement with the program regarding perceptions of border-schools, and assessment of the mentor relationship among participating teachers. The researchers suggested that using online resources can have an impact on the level of students and teachers' cultural awareness by providing opportunities to build relationships. According to Cifuentes and Murphy,

Border-school students involved in Cultural Connections grew and matured in many areas, including increased cultural sensitivity. They learned to appreciate their distant partners. The combination of distance learning and multimedia technologies proved effective in helping young adolescents make sense of their experiences and in promoting multicultural understanding (p. 10).

Sleeter (2001) determined that pre-service teachers were more positive about

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diversity after taking a multicultural course. Sleeter presented a review of 80 studies that explored the impact of preservice teacher education strategies. Some of the strategies included cross-cultural immersion programs and multicultural education classes in addition to program restructuring. Although there is extensive research on pre-service programs, more research is needed in the field of multicultural education and how to prepare teachers to work effectively with diverse populations. The cultural gap among students and teachers continues to grow as the student population becomes more diverse. According to The Education Trust,

Approximately 90 percent of K-12 teachers in the U.S. are white, while 36 percent of the national school population are students of color. This contrast underscores the critical role of white teachers in challenging racial bias in the curriculum and in school culture. A prerequisite for effectiveness in this effort is a willingness to confront one's own attitudes and privileges (King, 2000, Introduction section, ¶1).

Sleeter (2001), Smith (1998) and Weiner (1993), presented information about the effectiveness of cross-cultural, community-based immersion programs. In the immersion programs, teachers and students live in culturally diverse communities in order to experience the real issues facing them. Several teachers have written about their experiences, describing how they became more culturally competent educator as a result of their experiences (Sleeter, 2001).

Cochran-Smith, Davis, and Fries (2004) conducted a review of multicultural education over the years. Their findings suggest that centralized multicultural education throughout the teacher preparation program versus numerous individual courses is more effective (Trent, Kea, & Oh, 2008). They also made the following recommendations:

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incorporation of multiple perspectives, transformative learning experiences for pre-service teachers and educators, expanded knowledge base and curricula to challenge traditional knowledge, inquiry-based approaches, and research to determine the effects of multicultural teacher preparation (Trent et al., 2008).

Trends and Changing Demographics

Ovando (2002) & Ovando & Troxell (1997) conducted two important studies that consider superintendents and principals' perceptions of multicultural competencies. In Ovando & Troxell's 1997 mixed methods study, they considered multicultural competencies of leaders in a school with a diverse student population. Twelve multicultural experts were interviewed regarding their perceptions of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes superintendents should possess to be a leader in a culturally diverse school setting (Ovando & Troxell, 1997). For this study, a multicultural expert was defined as "the scholar who specializes in the area of multicultural education" (Ovando & Troxell, 1997, p. 417). Fourteen principals from the "largest school districts in a central state" participated in an interactive process that allowed communication with other superintendents. There were three high schools, four middle schools, and seven elementary schools represented. The experience of the participating principals ranged from 3 to 27 years. Principals with a minimum of three years of experience and a successful record of working with diverse populations were invited to participate in the study.

The study suggested that multicultural competencies were important for leaders who work with all students, including, but not limited to, students from diverse and traditional backgrounds. The most important themes included knowledge of cultural background, awareness of the needs of the local community, attitudes that promote

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relevant standards, and skills necessary to create a nurturing, inclusive school environment.

Ovando & Troxell's (1997) mixed method study included a three stage design to investigate the competencies superintendents needed to work effectively with all students in a diverse school district. Both multicultural experts and superintendents agreed on the knowledge, skills and awareness needed to lead culturally diverse districts. There was also overlap with competencies needed by school leaders as defined by the American Association of School Administrators (Ovando & Troxell, 1997).

In the early stages of this study, researchers interviewed multicultural experts regarding their attitudes about education as well as the superintendents leading their school districts. Twelve interviewees participated in the research study (nine were phone interviews). In the second phase, fourteen superintendents from large school districts were selected to participate in the study. Superintendents were asked questions about their perceptions of the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to work with diverse populations and lead a district effectively.

Both of studies (Owen & Ovando, 2000; Ovando & Troxell, 1997) address the importance of considering multicultural competencies and the changing needs of students as schools become more diverse. Suggestions for improving educational administration programs and professional development opportunities were explored in Ovando's study (2000). As a result of the study, some strategies to educate aspiring leaders were suggested: field based experiences, visits to diverse schools, courses in multicultural education, reading multicultural literature and the scheduling of guest speakers. These practical solutions may assist districts to plan for the future. These studies also relate to other research (Fry, 2007; Partnership for the 21st Century, 2008) regarding the

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importance of ongoing professional development as demographics change. Many concepts mentioned in this study emphasize the impact of the leader on the community, the professional development needed to educate staff, and the knowledge needed to lead school systems in a changing world.

Multicultural Competency Instruments (MCI)

Dunn, Smith, and Montoya (2006) conducted an in-depth meta-analytical, quantitative study that addressed the internal reliability of multicultural competency instruments. Multicultural competency instruments were first developed in the 1980's. More than 800 documents addressed multicultural competencies in mental health training and testing. There were several main instruments and topics discussed in Dunn et al., *Multicultural Counseling Inventory (MCI)*, *Cultural Counseling Inventory-Revised (CCCI-R)*, *Multicultural Awareness Knowledge Skills Scale (MAKSS)*, and *Multicultural Counseling Awareness Scale: Form B (MCAS)*. The researchers used ten databases to conduct their search.

After studies were identified, Dunn et al. coded 800 articles by categorical variables: publication outlet, research design, sample selection, participant professional/employment status, mean age of participants, number of participants in the sample, race/ethnicity of participants, percentage of female participants, and internal consistency reliability coefficient. One hundred and thirty-seven were quantitative (slightly fewer than 17%) and 68% of these were peer-reviewed journals. Sixty-nine of the 800 documents were thesis papers written for master's degrees. The majority of studies, 82%, utilized self-reported data. There may be a correlation between the instruments and "the tendency of the participants to respond in a socially desirable way" (Dunn et al., 2006, p. 472). The social desirability bias is a limitation mentioned in

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several studies that utilized self-reported data. Social desirability bias makes it more difficult to determine the support and training needed to improve participants' awareness and skills.

Green et al. (2005) presented a review of literature in his study involving multicultural instruments. A number of assessments including *Cross-Cultural Counseling Inventory*, *Multicultural Awareness-Knowledge-and Skills Survey*, *Multicultural Counseling Awareness Scale-Form*, and *Multicultural Counseling Inventory* were described in the study. According to the National Association of Social Workers, multicultural competencies are an important attribute for any social worker as a result of changing demographics and a more diverse client population (Green et al., 2005). The impact of changing demographics has also become increasingly important for the business and education fields in addition to counseling (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2006).

In Granello & Wheaton (1998), Pope-Davis et al. (1995), Sadowsky et al. (1998) and Sadowsky et al. (1994), the MCI instrument was found to be both valid and reliable when conducting pre and post tests of social work students. Researchers also tested the reliability and validity of the MCI by considering the MCI score of knowledge, relationship and awareness and the correlation to the high level of multicultural counseling skills (Green et al., 2005). In this study, professional social workers and social work students were participants. The sample included six hundred randomly selected participants who possessed a MSW and 300 hundred randomly selected MSW students (78% were practicing social workers, 25.2% graduate students). Two hundred sixteen social workers and 73 MSW students participated in the study. Alpha reliability for 3 subscales include: $r=.74$ multicultural counseling knowledge, $r=.76$ multicultural

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counseling awareness, $r=.79$ multicultural counseling skill. These values suggest that internal consistency in these areas is adequate to good. The alpha reliability coefficient for the Multicultural Relationship subscale was $.63$. This indicates acceptable reliability for the MCI.

A multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to explore “criterion-related validity” (Green et al., 2005). The results supported the “criterion-related validity.” Wilks’ Lambda was $.853$, $F=12.23$, (statistically significant at $p=.001$). The group difference means for relationship and skill were statistically significant, $p<.01$. The numbers obtained in this study were similar to Sadowsky’s (1994) original work. In a study conducted by McFadden, Herie, Dumbrill, and Maiter (2003), social work distance learning students’ outcomes were evaluated after they took an online multicultural course. They found “positive pre and post changes on the multicultural awareness and multicultural skills subscales of the MCI and consistent reliability (McFadden, Dumbrill, & Maiter, 2003). Walters and Wheeler (2000), conducted a pilot test of the MCI on 442 social work students and reported similar findings to earlier studies, r values of $.65$ to $.84$ internal consistency on the four subscales which supports consistency of the reliability of the MCI (Green et al., 2005). First year students who had multicultural training experienced higher scores on the MCI Multicultural Skills and Multicultural Awareness subscales than students without multicultural training.

A number of the studies included in Green et al.’s literature review represent a “small, biased, unrepresentative sample of social worker attitudes” (Green et al., 2005, p. 193). Respondents frequently stated that they, “always interacted favorably with minority clients” (Green et al., 2005, p. 205). Numerous studies regarding multicultural competencies have presented mixed results with regards to the self-reported instruments.

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In some studies the *Marlowe-Crowne* or other instruments are utilized to determine “social desirability.” Social desirability occurs when participants in a study answer questions in a “favorable way” (which may inflate their score on the assessment). The *Marlowe-Crowne* (1964) is a 33 question survey that is used to determine if social desirability could be a contributing factor. Sodowsky et al. (1998) considered social desirability in their study by utilizing the *Multicultural Social Desirability Scale* (Sodowsky, 1998; Sodowsky et al., 1993). When they surveyed 176 university center staff, they found that the Multicultural Social Desirability scores suggested that the two social desirability scales were independent. An adapted *Multicultural Social Desirability Scale* was used with 26 questions.

The adapted scale had “an average item-to-total correlations of .32 and .35 and Cronbach alphas of .75 and .80, respectively, which compared well with similar internal consistency reliabilities reports on much longer social desirability scales (e.g., the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale) and faking good or bad scales (e.g. in the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire) (Sodowsky et al., 1998, p. 258).

Data were collected from social workers who were also participating in another study regarding the attitudes and competencies of social workers. Six hundred randomly selected members of a professional organization were chosen (300 earned a MSW). Among the 344 social workers who responded, 84.1% were working at an agency. In the sample, 75% were social work practitioners (216) and 25% (73) were social work graduate students. As a result of this study, it was determined that social workers responded consistently to the 40 questions on the MCI and the subscales. Alpha reliabilities for the multicultural subscales included Multicultural Skills $r = .79$,

Multicultural Knowledge $r = .74$, and Multicultural Awareness $r = .76$.

According to Green et al.,

The internal consistency reliabilities of the four subscales, as measured by coefficient alpha, were remarkably similar to the means for coefficients repeatedly obtained and reported by Sodowsky and colleagues in a continuing series of studies and to those reported by other investigators. As in the case of these earlier studies, the relationship scale (.63) was the only scale in the present study that failed to exceed .70 (Green et al., 2005, p. 200).

This study presented the first national assessment of social workers' multicultural competencies and identification of reliability and validity of the instrument.

Is there a correlation between the number of years administrators have worked in their field and their multicultural competency? Sodowsky, Taffe, Gutkin, & Wise defined multicultural competencies as an "awareness of race, ethnicity, culture, language, and power status and awareness of how these variables operate in the lives of their clients" (Sodowsky, et al., 1994, p. 137). In study 1, the sample consisted of 604 psychology students, psychologists, and counselors in the Midwest. In the second study, 320 counselors at universities were randomly selected. The profile included a range of experience and education: 70% of principals and superintendents had a bachelor's and 62% had a master's degree (Sodowsky et al., 1994).

In-depth research about the MCI instrument was conducted for the first study (Sodowsky et al., 1994). The purpose of both studies was to develop an instrument that would assist the counseling and psychology field as the need to assess culturally competent counselors increased. The second study, "attempted to develop validity support for the factor structure of the MCI" (Sodowsky et al., 1994, p. 142). Four

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hundred MCI surveys were sent to three hundred and twenty counselors. The “assumption that acquiring knowledge and skills is sufficient to be a culturally skilled” was a limitation in this study (Sodowsky et al., 1994, p. 145). The attitudes regarding cultural and racial concepts on the counseling relationship is missing from the assessment. As a result of the two studies, four factors were determined to be relevant: knowledge, skills, awareness and relationship, the last a factor recently added. The “factor structures from study 1 and study 2 indicated coefficients of factor congruence of .87 for Multicultural Counseling Skills, .80 for Multicultural Awareness, .78 for Multicultural Counseling Relationship and .75 for Multicultural Counseling Knowledge (Sodowsky et al., 1994, p. 144).

Sodowsky, Kuo-Jackson, Richardson, & Corey, surveyed 176 counseling center staff to evaluate their multicultural competencies. Sodowsky et al. found that multicultural knowledge improved with training. Participants who did not attend a multicultural training workshop, had a mean score of 119.19. Participants who attended at least one multicultural course, had a mean score of 126.16. Participants who attended a multicultural course, completed research, and participated in at least one workshop had a mean score of 131.35. There was a decrease in the Social Desirability and Feelings of Social Inadequacy Scales when participants attended multicultural training (no multicultural training = 16.93, participants who attended at least one multicultural course, research or workshop = 16.07, participants who attended all three including a multicultural counseling course, research, and a workshop = 15.71). African Americans had the highest mean score on the Multicultural Relationship scale (27.18) and white participants had the lowest $M = 24.43$. African American $M = 33.64$, Hispanics $M = 32.69$ and Asians $M = 31.32$ had a higher score than white $M = 28.21$ participants on the

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Multicultural Awareness scale. African American $M = 42.65$, Asian $M = 39.15$, and Hispanics $M = 39.15$ scored lowest on the Feelings of Social Inadequacy and Locus of Control Race Ideology scale (Sodowsky et al., 1998).

Boske's study (2007) included 945 superintendents who were members of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). The purpose of this quantitative, single-stage descriptive study was to consider several factors including the diversity, the standards, and the personal, cultural background of participants. This study investigated perceptions of superintendents regarding multicultural education and attitudes. Moderate scores on multicultural attitudes and the *Modified Diversity Action Survey* (DAS) created by Southwest Missouri State University, (Martins, 2004) were determined through regression analysis. There was a positive correlation between multicultural attitudes and diversity actions as described in Boske's report,

The correlation for men's multicultural attitudes and diversity action ($r=.0340$) was lower than women's ($r = 0.455$). Both values were statistically significant ($p<0.01$). The correlation between Whites' multicultural attitudes and diversity actions ($r = 0.365$) was lower than minority participants' multicultural attitudes and diversity actions ($r = 0.532$) (Boske, 2007, p. 498).

Electronic surveys were sent to 6,700 members of the AASA organization in 2006. These members were from the U.S. as well as other countries. Boske (2007) considered four subgroups including perceptions, cultural diversity, pre-service training, and staff development. The *Modified Multicultural Questionnaire (MCQ)* and *Modified Diversity Action Survey* (DAS) were used in this study. Superintendents who worked in districts with 25% or more of their school's population categorized as multicultural scored higher on both assessments when compared to superintendents who worked with less than 25%

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diversity in their school's population. Superintendents who worked with a population that had 75% or more identified as low income scored significantly higher than superintendents with less than a 75% poverty level. The scores of superintendents with an E.L.L. population of 25%-75% were higher than superintendents with less than a 25% and more than 75% E.L.L. population. Multicultural attitudes (MCQ) study group Mean score was 0.386, men 0.340, women 0.455, whites 0.365, and minorities .0532. There was a correlation between the diversity of the population and the higher score on the assessment. One concern regarding the design of the survey was the potential for participants to answer questions in a "desirable" way (Boske, 2007). Participants may have answered questions favorably if they wished to appear more knowledgeable and culturally sensitive. If this were the case, their score would be higher or inflated and may not be accurate.

In Bellini's quantitative study (2003), the relationship between multicultural competencies of rehabilitation counselors and vocational results was explored. The sample included 155 vocational rehabilitation counselors in a Northeastern state who completed the MCI assessment. Bellini also completed a demographic survey in 2000 (spring), and tracked client outcomes from the previous year (Jan. 1998-Sept. 2000). Sixty-two percent of the 155 counselors were women with a mean age of 48.7 and 14 years of experience as counselors. Eighty-two percent earned a graduate degree and 58% had a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling. The *Multicultural Counseling Inventory* was a 40 question survey which research has shown to be both reliable and valid. Four independent variables were statistically significant with the three vocational rehabilitation (VR) results for rehabilitation rate: "rehabilitation rate, $F(11, 49,117) = 49.68, p < .0001$ vocational training rate, $F(11, 49,117) = 68.43, p < .0001$ and service cost,

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$F(11, 49,117)=12.13, p<.0001$ ” (Bellini, 2003, p. 168). Internal reliability (Cronbach’s alpha) for the MCI was .89. The mean MCI score was 122.3 with a SD of 13.19 for white counselors and 137.51 with a SD = 9.93 for minority counselors. The independent variables were statistically significant for rehabilitation rate: $F(11,49,117) = 49.68, p<.0001$, vocational training rate, $F(11, 49,117) = 68.43, p<.0001$, and service cost, $F(11, 49,117) = 12.13, p<.0001$ (Bellini, 2003).

In another study, Granello and Wheaton (1998) surveyed 180 vocational rehabilitation counselors in the Midwest who participated in a study to assess their multicultural competencies using the Multicultural Counseling Inventory (Sodowsky et al., 1994) and the *Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale* (1994). This is a 40 question Likert scale, four points with an additional answer, “does not apply.” The Marlowe-Crowne is a 33 question survey with true-false questions. A few demographic questions were added to the surveys. There is a risk of social desirability; however, this was minimal according to the results of the Marlowe-Crowne survey.

African Americans scored statistically significantly higher on the Marlowe-Crowne than white counselors. A t-test was used to determine that African American counselors had a significantly higher score on the MCI Multicultural Awareness ($t = -3.19, p=.002$) and Multicultural Relationship ($t = -2.50, p = .013$). The results were not statistically significant when alpha level was .02 for skills and Knowledge subscales or for all four subscales combined, Skills = .01, Knowledge = -.03, MCI total scale = .13 (Granello & Wheaton, 1998). The t-test for the Marlowe-Crowne was statistically significant and white Americans scored lower than African Americans. There was a correlation between race and the Marlowe-Crowne score that was approximately .24, a very low number in terms of practical significance, and power was approximately .82.

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The results of the Marlowe-Crowne indicated small statistically significant correlations on the MCI subscales of Awareness $r = .18$, Relationship $r = .27$, Knowledge $r = .18$, and the MCI full scale $r = .22$ (Granello & Wheaton, 1998). Rehabilitation counselors in the field rated themselves as the most culturally competent in multicultural skills, then relationships, followed by knowledge and awareness (in that order). The skills ranked the highest and were similar to Sodowsky et al.'s earlier study (1994).

Stone (2003) considered the “the influence of demographic and educational variables on self-reported, multicultural competencies of certified therapeutic recreation specialists” (Stone, 2003, p. 1). Five hundred certified therapeutic, recreational specialists from the U.S. and Canada were invited to take the MCI instrument. The certified, therapeutic recreational specialists reported high scores in the areas of skill and relationships as well as high levels of cultural competency.

In summary, the literature provides important information regarding current demographic trends, multicultural competency instruments, multicultural education, training tools and best practices. The validity and reliability of the MCI is adequate though reliability other than internal consistency has not been evaluated. Concerns about validity result from participants' tendency to respond in socially appropriate ways, which is described in the literature as a ‘social desirability bias’ (Sodowsky et al., 1998; Sodowsky et al., 1993). The MCI was the instrument most used and with the clearest research basis, including an adequate delineation of psychometric properties. Therefore the MCI was determined to be the best instrument to utilize for this research study.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this quantitative single-stage descriptive study was to explore the multicultural competencies needed for superintendents and principals to effectively lead in a time of demographic change. Two years ago, a collaboration of leaders in upstate New York created several committees to study the shift in demographics and the importance of preparing graduates for the 21st century (Mitchell, 2008). This group of administrators and business professionals has become a resource for the education and business world as professionals consider changing demographics and the impact on various communities.

In this study, superintendents and principals in the 31 component school districts of a Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) in upstate New York were invited to participate in a study employing an online survey to assess their perceptions of multicultural competencies. The BOCES in this study is the second largest in geography in New York State among the 37 BOCES regions. The Board of Cooperative Education Services is a public organization created in 1948 by the New York State Legislature to assist school districts in sharing educational and program resources. The BOCES has a governing board of members from the component school districts. The 31 component school districts include “3 city school districts, 3 union-free school districts, 1 common school district and 24 central school districts. The total enrollment in the component districts, kindergarten through grade 12 is approximately 45,000 students” (Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex BOCES, n.d.). Refer to Glossary, Appendix G.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher used the Oregon Department of Education definition of cultural competency:

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Cultural competence is a developmental process occurring at individual and system levels that evolves and is sustained over time. It requires that individuals and organizations: Have a defined set of values and principles, demonstrated behaviors, attitudes, policies and structures that enable them to work effectively in a cross-cultural manner (Mowry, 2005, p. 1).

This definition addresses the importance of multicultural competency while including the global challenges for principals and superintendents. The focus on multicultural competencies is simply a beginning to developing inclusive strategies, policies and training for educators and community members.

The thirty-one component school districts in the BOCES under study in upstate New York included rural, small city, and suburban schools. English language learners, students with special needs, students from ethnically diverse backgrounds, or students from low income backgrounds were represented in the participating districts. Based on 21st century demographic predictions, these districts will likely become more culturally diverse (Lee et al., 2007). Using the following research questions, this study explored a number of factors related to cultural diversity in the 21st century that will impact the 31 component school districts.

Guiding Questions

1. Do principals and superintendents differ in their perceptions regarding multicultural competencies needed in the 21st century?
2. Do rural and urban/suburban principals and superintendents differ in perceptions of multicultural competencies needed in the 21st century?
3. What level of awareness do principals and superintendents possess regarding their multicultural competencies?

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4. Is there a relationship between multicultural competencies and effective communication as perceived by principals and superintendents?

Population and Sample

The 31 component school districts in upstate New York from which participants were invited to participate are located in five counties covering 2,686 square miles. According to the BOCES website, school districts include “three city school districts, three union-free school districts, one common school district and twenty-four central school districts. The total enrollment in the component districts, kindergarten through grade 12 was approximately 45,499 students (Refer to Appendix G).

Among the 31 superintendents and 81 principals from high schools, middle schools and elementary schools invited to participate, forty-three completed the entire survey including 15 superintendents (48% response rate) and 28 principals (35% response rate). Two administrators had opted out and 5 provided only partial survey responses answering only demographic questions on page 1. These were not included in the analysis.

Procedure

The researcher received permission from Dr. Gargi Roysircar-Sodowsky, the developer of the MCI to utilize the MCI in this research study. Institutional Review Board approval was granted by the Sage Colleges IRB, which included a participation agreement by the BOCES unit involved. *SurveyMonkey*, an online survey tool, was used to adapt the MCI for electronic collection in addition to four demographic questions (refer to Appendix D).

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Instrumentation

The MCI (Sodowsky et al., 1994) is one of the most commonly used instruments utilized to assess multicultural competency in the counseling profession since 1998 (Sodowsky et al., 1994). This instrument was originally created by Sodowsky et al., in 1994. The MCI measures multicultural competency skills and has been used in numerous educational and clinical studies internationally (Appendix E). The MCI is a survey with 40 questions utilizing a Likert scale with answers ranging from “very inaccurate (1) to very accurate (4).” The higher the subscale score for each of the four areas (Multicultural Skills, Multicultural Awareness, Multicultural Relationship, and Multicultural Knowledge), the higher the multicultural competency skills. The full scale Multicultural Skills has 11 items, Multicultural Awareness has 10 items, Multicultural Relationship includes 8 items and Multicultural Knowledge includes 11 items (Sodowsky et al., 1998).

A total MCI score of a 120 or higher indicates high multicultural competency, a MCI total score of 110 or less indicates low multicultural competency. In other studies, scores ranged from 40-160 on the MCI (Roysircar, Gard, Hubbell, Ortega, & Webster, 2002).

Data analysis techniques include a comparison of total MCI mean scores (40-160 range) in addition to analysis of the mean subscale item scores on each subscale. Each item used a ranking of 1 to 4. The researcher calculated different mean item scores per subscale based on the 1-4 item ratings because each subscale has a range of 8-11 questions with total possible subscale totals ranging from 32 to 44. Therefore, mean subscale scores could not be compared.

In addition to the MCI, the researcher included demographic questions that asked participants for information regarding (1) experience working in a diverse setting, (2)

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experience living in a diverse setting, (3) years of teaching, (4) administrative experience, and (5) multicultural training.

The MCI survey (Sodowsky et al., 1994) was selected for this study because reliability and validity have been established. According to the Green et al. study (2005), MANOVA was used to determine criterion-related validity. The results of the study supported criterion-related validity of the MCI when comparing two groups, Wilks Lambda=.853, $F=12.23$, $p=.001$ (Green et al., 2005). A copy of this instrument was not included as an Appendix because of the copyright agreement with the author. This survey has been utilized extensively in the counseling profession (Sodowsky et al., 1994; Sodowsky et al., 1998).

Explanation of Design

Although the original MCI (Sodowsky et al., 1994) was a paper and pencil test, it was adapted for the current study with permission from the author to utilize an electronic format. The electronic style may have been easier for participants because they could complete the survey at their convenience. The electronic format was also more environmentally friendly.

A small pilot was conducted with 3 principals and 1 superintendent before distributing the survey to participants (data from the pilot was not included in the study). Feedback from the pilot survey led to adding to the survey script a definition of 'client' and a statement regarding skipping questions not relevant to the participant.

Reliability of the Instrument

According to Sodowsky et al. (1994),

“The full scale has shown a mean Cronbach’s alpha of .87 (Pope-Davis & Dings, 1994; Sodowsky et al., 1994; Sodowsky et al., 1998). The mean Cronbach’s alpha

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for Multicultural Counseling Skills (11 items) is .80; for Multicultural Awareness (10 items) .78; for Multicultural Counseling Relationship (8 items) .68; and MC Counseling Knowledge (11 items) .77 (Ottavi et al., 1994; Pope-Davis & Dings, 1994; Pope-Davis et al., 1994; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1994; Sadowsky et al., 1998).” The MCI is based on multicultural counseling competencies and the work of Dr. Derald Wing Sue (1982).

Procedures

Each of the 31 superintendents and 81 principals in the population were invited to complete the online survey via *SurveyMonkey*. In two of the smaller schools, the superintendent also served as the principal. The superintendents in each district received an email invitation from the district superintendent followed by one from the researcher. Information regarding the study was outlined in the introduction letter that also served as consent (refer to Appendix A & A1). One week after the invitation was sent to principals and superintendents, a reminder was sent electronically to each participant. The researcher received eight emails from participants who shared their feedback regarding the instrument or asked for clarification about the survey procedure.

Before conducting statistical analysis, the researcher calculated scores for the MCI by utilizing a rubric sent by the author that included some reversed items. The author of the instrument did not support the addition of a fifth answer “N/A” to protect the integrity of the instrument and scale. Additional instructions were provided for participants regarding the use of language in the assessment. The term “client”, used in the instrument, was defined as parents, students, faculty, staff, and members of the community.

The predictor variables investigated were demographic variables and experience

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of superintendents and principals; the criterion variable was multicultural competence as measured by the MCI.

Participants were also given the option to skip a question in the survey that that was not relevant to them or they did not wish to answer.

Data Collection Procedures

Names and email addresses of principals and superintendents of the 31 component school districts were accessed from a website for the upstate New York schools. Responses for the surveys were kept confidential, physically kept in a locked filing cabinet in the home of the researcher. Individual names and districts were not associated with responses. Surveys were coded and the list of names and codes were not kept in the computer.

SurveyMonkey included a collection feature for responses. Responses were tracked via email address and were saved in a spreadsheet which was then later downloaded to a statistical analysis package. The identity of the principals and superintendents who participated was protected. Actual surveys were collected and maintained electronically. The researcher was the only person who had access to the data. Survey data were destroyed at the end of the study. Survey responses were not associated with the name of the principal/ superintendent or their school district. The survey was voluntary, confidential but not anonymous, because each survey was associated with an email address. Email addresses were used to track survey responses.

Participation in the study posed minimal risk for principals and superintendents because their responses regarding multicultural competencies could be controversial. For this reason, the surveys were confidential.

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Data Analysis Techniques

After collecting survey data, a number of statistical tests were utilized to analyze data. The statistical analyses included t-test, ANOVA, Correlation, Cronbach's alpha, and descriptive statistics. A t-test was used to compare the mean scores of principals and superintendents, rural principals and urban/suburban principals, and rural principals and rural superintendents. Internal reliability was calculated by using the Cronbach's alphas. A t-test was also used to analyze additional factors including the impact of multicultural courses. Correlation was utilized to consider the relationship between variables.

Data analysis techniques included a comparison of total MCI mean scores (40-160 range) in addition to analysis of the mean subscale item scores on each subscale. Each item used a ranking of 1 to 4. The researcher calculated different mean item scores per subscale based on the 1- 4 item ratings because each subscale has a range of 8 -11 questions with total possible subscale totals ranging from 32 to 44. Therefore, mean subscale scores could not be compared.

After data was transferred to an Excel spreadsheet, the researcher reviewed survey results to determine if any incomplete surveys would need to be eliminated. Five participants completed only the 4 demographic questions and did not answer the MCI. This information was not included in the analysis. The researcher also coded data and sorted by district type, position, descriptive statistics, and MCI scores.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The results of this study on perceptions of principals' and superintendents' of multicultural competencies were divided into four sections: 1. Do principals and superintendents differ in their perceptions regarding multicultural competencies needed in the 21st century? 2. Do rural and urban/suburban principals and superintendents differ in perceptions of multicultural competencies needed in the 21st century? 3. What level of awareness do principals and superintendents possess regarding their multicultural competencies? 4. Additional tests and information contributed to an understanding of the data. SPSS (version 16) and Excel 2003 were used to calculate the statistical results for the self-reported perceptions of multicultural competencies as measured by the MCI (Sodowsky et al., 1994).

Characteristics of Participants

One hundred and twelve principals and superintendents from upstate New York were invited to take an electronic survey. School districts that were examined included urban (small city), rural, and suburban schools. For the purposes of this research study, urban and suburban were combined to create an urban/suburban category and a rural category represented schools from small towns and rural settings. Only three school districts among the 31 component school districts were small city schools and the demographic characteristics of these schools were similar to the suburban districts. Therefore, the urban and suburban schools were combined into one category.

Participants were asked "How long have you worked in your current position?" Forty-three percent (18) of the respondents said they had worked in their current position for 0-3 years (18), 28.6% (12) answered they had worked in their current position for 3-6 years, 19% (8) had worked in their current position for 6-10 years and 9.5% (4) had

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Table 1

Years of Experience in Current Position

Years in Current Position	N = 43
0 – 3	18
3 – 6	12
6 – 10	8
>10	4
No Response	1

worked for more than 10 years (4) (Table 1).

All participants had some teaching experience including 2.4% (1) with 0-3 years, 9.5% (4) with 3-6 years, and 31% (13) with 6-10 years of experience. Fifty-seven percent (24) had more than 10 years of experience (Table 2).

Table 2

Teaching Experience

Years of Teaching	N = 43
0 – 3	1
3 – 6	4
6 – 10	13
> 10	24
No Response	1

Thirty-eight percent (16) worked in a setting with culturally diverse populations; 62% (26) did not answer the question. Participants were asked if they have ever “lived in a diverse community” Twenty-six percent (11) reported that they had lived in a diverse community, 9.5% (4) answered that they had never lived in a diverse community and

Table 3

Experience with Culturally Diverse Populations

Variable	N = 43
I have worked in a diverse community	16
I have not worked in a diverse community	27
I have lived in a diverse community	11
I have not lived in a diverse community	4

other participants 65% (28) did not answer the question (Table 3).

Fifty-four percent (22) of the participants had attended multicultural workshops/training/counseling, and 46.3% (19) had not attended any training (Table 4).

Table 4

Prior Multicultural Training/Counseling

Variable	N = 43
Attended multicultural training	22
Did not attend multicultural training	19
No Response	2

Race, gender, and age were not included in the demographic section of the survey in order to protect the confidentiality of the participants. Because a Master’s degree is required for administration, participants were not asked about advanced degrees earned .

Research Question One: Do principals and superintendents differ in their perceptions regarding multicultural competencies needed in the 21st century?

Hypothesis: H_0 = There is no difference in perception of multicultural competencies of principals and superintendents.

The first research question of the study included the comparison of means of principals and superintendents total MCI score (Table 5). A t-test for independent means was used for this analysis. The total MCI score of principals was $M = 110.39$, $SD =$

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Table 5

Differences between Principals and Superintendents

MCI Scale	M	SD	P
Mean Score of Principals (N = 28)			
MCI Awareness	2.59	.506	.790
MCI Knowledge	3.01	.449	.099
MCI Skills	3.19	.391	.178
MCI Relationship	3.34	.432	.159
Mean Score of Superintendents (N = 15)			
MCI Awareness	2.55	.464	.785
MCI Knowledge	2.78	.415	.094
MCI Skills	3.03	.309	.150
MCI Relationship	3.14	.430	.162

Note. Scoring: 4 point Likert type scale; Significant when $p < .05$, $M > 2.50$ equals average competency (mid-point); $M > 3.50$ equals above average.

20.79, $n = 28$ and the total MCI score for superintendents was $M = 111.80$, $SD = 15.92$, $n = 15$, $p < .05$. Although the total mean score for principals was higher than superintendents, the difference was not statistically significant. Principals scored higher in each subscale category including knowledge, awareness, skills, and relationship. The MCI subscale scores for principals includes; MCI (Relationship: $M = 3.34$, $SD = .432$) compared to the MCI (Relationship: $M = 3.14$, $SD = .430$), for superintendents, principals' MCI (Knowledge: $M = 3.01$, $SD = .449$) compared to superintendents' MCI (Knowledge: $M = 2.78$, $SD = .415$), MCI (Awareness: $M = 2.59$, $SD = .506$) compared to the superintendents' MCI (Awareness: $M = 2.55$, $SD = .464$), MCI (Skill: $M = 3.19$, $SD = .391$) compared to the superintendents' MCI (Skill: $M = 3.03$, $SD = .309$). Both

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principals and superintendents consider themselves most competent in Multicultural Relationship and least competent in Multicultural Awareness. A distribution of MCI subscales scores are included in Appendix H.

Research Question Two: Do rural and urban/suburban principals and superintendents differ in perceptions of multicultural competencies needed in the 21st century?

Hypothesis: H_0 = There is no difference in perception of multicultural competencies between rural and urban/suburban principals & superintendents.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) test (one-way) was conducted to evaluate the group differences between rural and urban/suburban principals (See Table 6). A t-test for

Table 6

Differences between Rural and Urban/Suburban Principals

		Df	F	Sig.
MC Relationship	Between Groups	1	6.602	.016**
	Within Groups	26		
	Total	27		
MC Knowledge	Between Groups	1	1.847	.186
	Within Groups	26		
	Total	27		
MC Awareness	Between Groups	1	.106	.747
	Within Groups	25		
	Total	26		
MC Skill	Between Groups	1	.212	.649
	Within Groups	26		
	Total	27		

Note. Significant when * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

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independent means was completed to compare the difference among rural and urban/suburban principals. The sample included only one urban/suburban superintendent, therefore, a comparison of rural and urban/suburban superintendents and principals could not be completed. Rural principals scored higher than urban/suburban principals in all categories except Multicultural Competency Relationship though the difference was not statistically significant. The differences between groups on Multicultural Relationship were $F = 6.60$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$. Differences between the two groups were statistically significant only for Multicultural Relationship.

When considering rural principals and rural superintendents the mean difference is not statistically significant (See Table 7). The total score for rural principals MCI Multicultural Skills, Knowledge, Awareness, Relationship ($M = 110.89$, $n = 19$, $p = .39$, 1 tail) and the total score for rural superintendents was MCI Multicultural Skills, Knowledge, Awareness, Relationship ($M = 112.40$, $n = 14$, $p = .39$, 1 tail). Aggregate scores for both rural principals and superintendents indicate that they consider themselves to have low multicultural competency skills (110 or less).

Table 7

T-Test for Rural Principals & Rural Superintendents

MCI Scale	M	P (1 tail)	P value (2 tail)	Df value
MCI				
Rural Prin. (N = 19)	110.89	.39	.79	29
Rural Sup. (N = 14)	112.40			
Total	(33)			

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Research Question Three: What level of awareness do principals and superintendents possess regarding their multicultural competencies?

Hypothesis: H_0 = There is no difference in multicultural competency awareness among principals and superintendents. A t-test for independent means indicates that there is not a significant difference among principals and superintendents Multicultural Competency Awareness MCI subscale scores. Principals' MCI (Awareness: $M = 25.9$, $SD = .506$) and superintendents' MCI Multicultural (Awareness: $M = 25.5$, $SD = .464$, (Table 5).

Research Question Four: Is there a relationship between multicultural competencies and effective communication as perceived by principals and superintendents?

Question 4 was not addressed in the study because the results did not provide data that allowed a statistical analysis. The data gathered from the MCI instrument did not generate information about communication. A correlation test illustrated the relationship between subscales, however, the MCI included only two questions that addressed communication. For example, forty-five percent (19) of participants stated that "I have difficulties communicating with clients who use a perceptual, reasoning, or decision-making style that is different from mine," was very inaccurate and 17% or somewhat accurate. Twenty-four percent (10) of participants stated that "I am familiar with nonstandard English" was very accurate, 19% (8) stated that this was somewhat inaccurate, 50% (21) somewhat accurate, and 7.1% (3) very accurate and one skipped the question.

Additional Analyses

After conducting tests to support the original research questions, additional tests were utilized to consider reliability, relationship among variables and other trends. A

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Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the relationship among knowledge, skills, awareness and relationship subscales of the MCI (See Table 8).

There was a strong positive correlation between Multicultural Competency Awareness and Multicultural Competency Knowledge that was statistically significant at .610,

**p =.01 level. There was a strong positive correlation between Multicultural

Competency Skills and Multicultural Competency Relationship of .407 at p =.01 level.

Multicultural Competency Skills also has a strong correlation with Multicultural Competency

Table 8

Relationship among MCI Subscales

	MCS	MCA	MCR	MCK	N=43
MCS					
MCA	.530**				
MCR	.407**	.291			
MCK	.413**	.610**	.430**		

Note. **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

MCS= Multicultural Skills; MCA= Multicultural Awareness; MCR= Multicultural Relationship; MCK= Multicultural Knowledge

Knowledge of .413, p=.01, and Multicultural Competency Skill & Multicultural Competency Awareness .530, p =.01 (statistically significant for all subscales).

A t-test was conducted to consider the mean differences among principals and superintendents who completed one or more multicultural courses. Participants who completed at least one or more multicultural courses had a higher mean score, M =

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119.43, $p = .001^{**}$ (1 tail), $p = .003^{**}$ (2 tail) that was statistically significant on the MCI when compared to participants who had never taken a course, $M = 101.44$, $p < .05$ (See Table 9). Sixteen principals & superintendents in the study who had never taken a multicultural course had total MCI ($M = 101.44$) compared to 23 principals & superintendents who had taken at least one or more courses whose MCI total ($M = 119.43$). Pope Davis et al. (1995) also found that the total MCI score improved with multicultural training. In yet another study, Ottavi, (1994) found that the total MCI score was enhanced by multicultural training. D'Andrea, Daniels, & Heck (1991) established that school psychology and education students' post-test scores on the MCI showed significant improvement after taking a multicultural course.

Table 9

Value of Multicultural Courses

Variable	N	M	P 1 tail	P 2 tail
No multicultural courses completed	16	101.44	.001**	.003**
One or more multicultural courses completed	23	119.43		.

Note. Significant when $*p < .05$ (1 tail), Significant when $**p < .01$ (2 tail), $df = 28$

Cronbach's alpha coefficients, a measure of internal consistency, were calculated to assess the internal consistency of the subscales including; Multicultural Awareness, $r = .73$ (10 items), the Multicultural Relationship, $r = .66$ (8 items), Multicultural Skills, $r = .80$ (11 items), and Multicultural Knowledge was $r = .80$ (11 items). These results were relatively consistent when compared to the measures of internal consistency measures obtained in the original study by Sodowsky. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients

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obtained by Green (2005) were $r = .74$ Multicultural Knowledge, $r = .76$ Multicultural Awareness, $r = .79$ Multicultural Skills, and $r = .63$ Multicultural Relationship (Sodowsky et al., 1994; Sodowsky et al., 1998) (Table 10).

Table 10

<i>Internal Consistency</i>		
MCI	Sodowsky Study 1	Current Study
MC Skills	.83	.80
MC Awareness	.83	.73
MC Knowledge	.79	.80
MC Relationship	.65	.66

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this quantitative research study was to explore the perceptions of current principals and superintendents regarding multicultural competencies needed in the 21st century. Multicultural competencies are becoming increasingly important as changing demographics create new challenges for educators and the business world. The guiding research questions included the following:

1. Do principals and superintendents differ in their perceptions regarding multicultural competencies needed in the 21st century?

Principals' mean scores were higher for each subscale of the MCI including Multicultural Awareness, Relationship, Skill, and Knowledge and total MCI score. However, the difference between principals' total mean score and superintendents' total mean score was not statistically significant at $p < .05$. The highest subscale for principals & superintendents was Multicultural Relationship. The lowest subscale for principals & superintendents was Multicultural Awareness. The data in this current study support the hypothesis: There is no difference between principals and superintendents perceptions of multicultural competencies. Since there are no other studies that could be located that utilized the MCI to assess principals and superintendents' perceptions of multicultural competencies, a direct comparison was not possible. The results of this study are important in considering factors that have an impact on multicultural competency and supervision.

2. Do rural and urban/suburban principals and superintendents differ in perceptions of multicultural competencies needed in the 21st century?

A one-way ANOVA was used to compare the means of rural principals and

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urban/suburban principals. Although rural principals had a higher score on three subscales including Multicultural Knowledge, Awareness and Skills, the difference was not statistically significant. There was a difference in mean scores among rural principals and rural superintendents, at $p < .05$. The mean score for rural superintendents was 112.40 compared to the mean score of rural principals of 110.89, which was not statistically significant at $p < .05$. However, when comparing urban/suburban principals and rural principals within groups, there was a statistically significant difference on the subscale Multicultural Skills. There was no statistically significant difference between rural principals and rural superintendents for the other subscales, Multicultural Knowledge, Multicultural Awareness and Multicultural Relationships. Therefore, the null hypothesis is supported by the data because there was no significant difference between rural principals and urban/suburban principals. The null hypothesis was not rejected.

3. What level of awareness do principals and superintendents possess regarding their multicultural competencies?

The mean score for the Multicultural Awareness subscale for principals was 25.9 and the Multicultural Awareness subscale for superintendents was 25.5. Principals possessed a higher mean score on this subscale, however, the difference was not statistically significant. The level of awareness for this sample is relatively the same. The null hypothesis was not rejected.

4. Is there a relationship between multicultural competencies and effective communication as perceived by principals and superintendents? As the methodology became clear, the data would not support question 4 as it was originally developed. Therefore, question 4 was not addressed in this study.

Additional tests were conducted including correlation, t-test for independent

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means, and Cronbach's alpha coefficients. A correlational analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between the MCI subscales, Multicultural Awareness, Multicultural Knowledge, Multicultural Skills, and Multicultural Relationship. In this study, there were moderate to strong positive correlations between Multicultural Awareness and Multicultural Skills, Multicultural Relationship and Multicultural Skill, Multicultural Knowledge and Multicultural Skill & Multicultural Knowledge and Multicultural Awareness. The strongest positive correlation was between Multicultural Knowledge and Multicultural Awareness ($r = .610^{**}$, $p < .05$). The moderate relationship between Multicultural Awareness and Multicultural Knowledge is important when considering multicultural competencies. When a participant has more multicultural knowledge it may be that their awareness increases or it could mean the reverse—remembering that correlation does not imply causation. Sleeter (2001) and Sodowsky et al. (1998) contend that when educators have more experience and knowledge their multicultural awareness is positively influenced, which is supported by the findings in the current study.

A t-test for independent means was conducted to explore the difference in mean scores between participants who had completed one or more multicultural courses and participants who had not taken any multicultural courses. The mean score for principals and superintendents who took one or more multicultural courses was statistically significant in all subscales when compared to participants who did not take a multicultural course. Principals & superintendents who took at least one course possessed a mean full scale score of 119.4 which indicates mid-high competency (high Multicultural Competency = a MCI score > 120). This finding is interesting and although the sample size was small the data support the benefit of multicultural training and

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increasing awareness of educators and business leaders (Kitsantas & Talleyrand, 2005; Sleeter, 2001; De Meuse, et al., 2006). Though the t-test comparing means of principals and superintendents who took a multicultural course does not answer a research question in this study, it is valuable information that is related to the purpose of this study and became evident when the demographic information and MCI scores were analyzed. When educators receive information about multicultural competencies, they become more aware and knowledgeable regarding diversity (Green et al., 2005; Kitsantas & Talleyrand, 2005; Cifuetes & Murphy, 2000, Sodowsky et al., 1998). Sodowsky et al. surveyed 176 university counseling center staff and evaluated their Multicultural Competency scores. In this case, Multicultural Knowledge increased with multicultural training. Staff who did not complete any multicultural course had a mean score of 119.19, 1 course = 126.16, and 1 course, research, and 1 workshop=131.35 (Sodowsky et al., 1998). African American, Hispanic, and Asian participants possessed a higher mean than white participants in Sodowsky's study (Sodowsky et al., 1998).

According to Boske, superintendents who worked in a diverse setting with more than 75% low income students had a significantly higher score on the *Modified Multicultural Questionnaire* (MCQ). Superintendents who worked in a setting with more than 75% low income students had a significantly higher mean score on the MCQ than superintendents who worked in a setting with less than 75% low income students (Boske, 2007). Boske also found that white participants' multicultural attitudes and actions, $r = 0.365$, were lower than minority participants' multicultural attitudes and diversity actions, $r = .0532$. Superintendents who have exposure and experience working with culturally diverse populations may possess higher multicultural competencies because of experience, knowledge and awareness. The connection between higher multicultural

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competency and racial identity was not addressed in the current study, however it is an interesting opportunity for future research.

The internal consistency of this study calculated using Cronbach alpha were similar to results of Sadowsky's study 1 (1994). The internal consistency of the current study includes scores that range from .65-.83 using Cronbach alpha. These results are remarkably similar to Sadowsky's Study 1, when the MCI's reliability was originally evaluated. These results support the premise that the MCI has good internal consistency. Numerous prior studies have established acceptable internal consistency by utilizing correlation (Green, 2005; Bellini, 2003; Granello & Wheaton, 1998).

One of concerns of evaluating multicultural competencies is social desirability. In most studies evaluating multicultural competencies there are concerns about reliability and validity of such measures. In the current study validity was not assessed however, other studies have evaluated construct validity (Sadowsky et al., 1994; Sadowsky et al., 1998; Green et al; 2005, Granello & Wheaton, 1998).

Implications for Educators & Business Leaders

Future Research

In addition to administrator preparation programs, professional development can also assist administrators to prepare for the 21st century. According to Glass, Bjork and Brunner (2000), superintendents need to possess strong communication skills; therefore, superintendent preparatory programs should include the following ten components:

“(1) strategic planning, (2) student rights in terms of due process, (3) changing demographics, (4) personal time management, (5) site based management, (6) effective public relations, (7) staff recruitment, (8) empowerment of staff, (9) administrator-board relations and (10) staff and administrator evaluations” (Glass, Bjork and Brunner, 2000,

p. x). There is also a need for further research, exploring the competencies of principals, superintendents and teacher as schools continue to become more culturally diverse. Since multicultural competencies have not been widely recognized as an area of focus, additional research is needed to provide feedback to school leaders.

Other studies have explored the connection between racial identity, ethnicity and multicultural competencies. In numerous studies, African Americans, Hispanics and Asian Americans had a higher score on the MCI which indicates higher multicultural competence (Sodowsky et al., 1998; Granello & Wheaton, 1998; Bellini, 2003). The higher MCI score for African Americans, Hispanics and Asians, may be reflective of more multicultural experiences (Sodowsky et al., 1998). Boske also found that African Americans had a higher score on the MCQ compared to whites. Her findings included a connection between superintendents who worked in a more diverse setting and higher multicultural competence (Boske, 2007). Researching the link between racial identity and ethnicity among principals and administrators will be important in the future. Also considering how culture can impact the perception of multicultural competencies is critical. For example, according to Sodowsky, social desirability may be a factor for Asians because of the need to “save face” and avoid embarrassment (Sodowsky et al., 1998). Investigating the factors that contribute to a higher multicultural competence should be explored with principals and superintendents.

In the future, additional work evaluating educators in different settings, including rural, urban and suburban communities, will be beneficial to educators and business leaders. The 31 component school districts utilized in this study were selected because of their interest and research conducted in their region to consider new ways to prepare students for the 21st century. As the result of two studies conducted in the upstate New

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York region by the Tech Valley Standing Committee in 2006 & 2008, one of the regional needs identified in their report, stated that the region needs the following: “Proven ways to engage students with disabilities, speakers of other languages, members of ethnic communities, and the economically disadvantaged in order to close the achievement gap that currently exists” (Mitchell, 2008, p.2). As the upstate New York region continues to develop as a technological leader, considering 21st century skills and preparing for a global society becomes more important. The global corporation, Advanced Micro Devices, which is building of a new computer chip manufacturing facility in upstate New York will bring new jobs and major changes to the Saratoga region, one of the more populated areas of the catchment area in which these data were collected. Many local colleges and universities are preparing for the 21st century by adding innovative programs that will better train community members for more modern and technological jobs and careers. Hudson Valley Community College has a new certificate program, Overhead Electric Line Worker Certificate. TEC-Smart (Training and Education Center for Semiconductor Manufacturing and Alternative and Renewable Technologies) will provide a “state-of-the-art education facility in Malta that will allow Hudson Valley to train 500 to 600 technicians in the Capital Region’s growing Tech Valley is expected to need over the next five to 10 years” (Hudson Valley Community College, Introduction section, ¶2).

Recommendations

As a result of 21st century demographic predictions, the districts used in this study and most other districts in the country will become more culturally diverse in the 21st Century (U.S. Census, 2006, Fry, 2007; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2006; The Education Trust, 2006; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). In other studies, researchers

considered the impact of changing demographics in large, culturally diverse school districts (Ovando, 2002; Ovando & Troxell, 1997). By assisting districts that may be less diverse than larger urban communities, school leaders will have the advantage of becoming better prepared for a very different world and a diverse workforce environment, which includes people from various cultures, religions, ethnicities and beliefs. (Figures 1 and 2). This is a possible benefit of increased multicultural competencies (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008).

As a result of this study, the researcher recommends the following:

- Implement a multicultural competency workshop series/training program, follow-up and evaluate the effectiveness of the training and the needs of the organization.
- Evaluate the unique needs of the district and business community and create inclusive policies, procedures and mission statement for the organizations.
- Utilize technology to enhance the instructional environment to include global/international learning opportunities for students.
- Incorporate multicultural competency training in administration and teacher preparation programs and business training programs.
- Investigate best practices of similar districts and business communities that work with diverse populations.

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Figure 1. Reactive Response to Changing Demographics

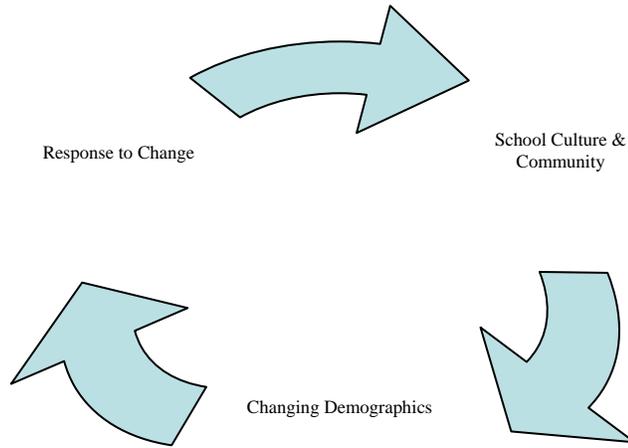
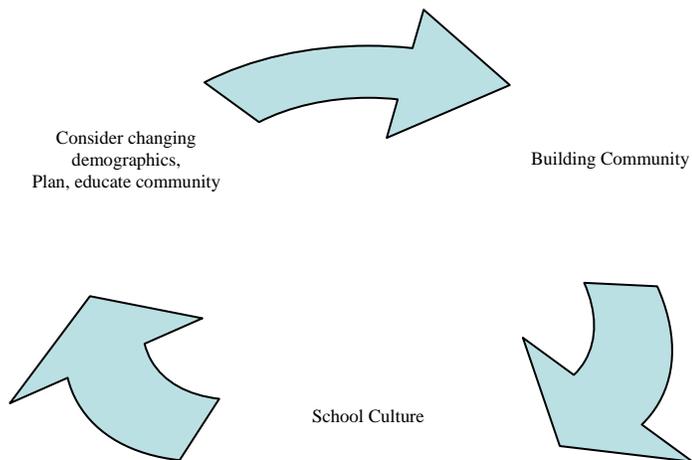


Figure 2. Proactive Planning and Preparation for Changing Demographics



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Summary

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the perceived multicultural competencies of superintendents and principals. During the last year of this research study some major changes have taken place in the United States including the election of the first African American President, President Obama, and the appointment of the first Hispanic Supreme Court Justice, Sonia Sotomayer. However, the world is still plagued with incidents of miscommunication and conflict among people from diverse backgrounds. Increased multicultural competency is important for educators and the business community, in addition to others who work and live in communities across the country.

Educators need to collaborate with the business world in order to consider the 21st century preparation needed for our global economy and a diverse workforce (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008).

Current changing demographics are acting as a catalyst (Partnership for the 21st Century, 2006), providing districts with an opportunity to better prepare students for the 21st century and our changing world. Multicultural competency training and planning can assist districts in responding to and preparing for change in the future.

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APPENDIX A

Superintendent Introduction Letter

November 2008

Dear _____ :

I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership Program at Sage Graduate School. As _____ indicated at a recent Chief Executive Officers' meeting, I am a member of a team that is conducting research in the 31 component school districts of _____. We met with Dr. _____ on August 26, 2008 to discuss our studies. I am seeking your support as a leader in your district and hope that you will be able to assist me.

As part of my research, I am undertaking a quantitative study of principals and superintendents' perceptions of the multicultural competencies (knowledge, skills, and ability) needed to work with the increasingly diverse population of the 21st century. According to the U.S. Census (2001), the current population of historically underrepresented people is 31% and is expected to reach 50% by 2050 (Lee et al., 2007). These trends could impact the 31 component school districts of _____.

The recent announcement of AMD's plans to build a new computer chip manufacturing facility in Malta will bring new jobs and major changes to the Saratoga region. The results of this study can provide feedback to educators as they prepare for the arrival of AMD and will be shared with the professional community.

In my study, I plan to utilize a survey which includes 40 self-reported questions on a Likert scale (Sodowsky et al., 1994). This survey is applicable to administrators and educators even though it was originally used by the counseling profession. **I am sending you the survey link, included at the end of this letter.** Participation in this study is voluntary and confidential. To ensure the confidentiality of each individual, participants will be recognized by an identification code known only to the student investigator. If the results from this research study are published, your name and individual district will not be used in any reports. Confidentiality is important and I plan to protect participants by keeping survey data in a secure, locked filing cabinet and will destroy surveys at the end of my study.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with my doctoral study. This study has been approved by the Sage College's Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about me or the study, please let me know. I can be reached by email at mcultural@sage.edu or you may contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Connell Frazer, at the Sage Colleges by email at frazec@sage.edu or by telephone at 518-244-2326.

Sincerely,

Lisa Carr
mcultural@sage.edu

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APPENDIX A1

Principal letter

Dear _____ :

I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership Program at Sage Graduate School. _____ recently introduced our studies at a Chief Executive Officers' meeting. I am a member of a team that is conducting research in the 31 component school districts of _____ BOCES. We met with Dr. _____ on August 26, 2008 to discuss our studies. I am seeking your support as a leader in your district and hope that you will be able to assist me.

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The recent announcement of AMD's plans to build a new computer chip manufacturing facility in Malta will bring new jobs and major changes to the Saratoga region. The results of this study can provide feedback to educators as they prepare for the arrival of AMD and will be shared with the professional community.

In my study, I plan to utilize a survey which includes 40 self-reported questions on a Likert scale (Sodowsky et al., 1994). This survey is applicable to administrators and educators even though it was originally used by the counseling profession. **I am sending you the survey link, included at the end of this letter.** Participation in this study is voluntary and confidential. To ensure the confidentiality of each individual, participants will be recognized by an identification code known only to the student investigator. If the results from this research study are published, your name and individual district will not be used in any reports. Confidentiality is important and I plan to protect participants by keeping survey data in a secure, locked filing cabinet and will destroy surveys at the end of my study.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with my doctoral study. This study has been approved by the Sage College's Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about me or the study, please let me know. I can be reached by email at mcultural@sage.edu or you may contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Connell Frazer, at the Sage Colleges by email at frazec@sage.edu or by telephone at 518-244-2326.

Sincerely,

Lisa Carr
mcultural@sage.edu

Perceptions of Current Principals & Superintendents

APPENDIX B

Script for Survey:

I would appreciate your assistance with this research project. The title of my research study is “Perceptions of Current Principals and Superintendents Regarding Multicultural Competencies Needed in the 21st Century.”

The study is being conducted by Lisa Carr from Sage Graduate School under the direction of Dr. Connell Frazer. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because I am focusing on principals and superintendents in the 31 component school districts of _____ BOCES.

Completing the survey implies your consent to participate. The survey should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. You will only be able to access the survey once.

Your participation is voluntary and your identity will be kept confidential. You may disregard any specific questions you do not wish to answer. The term “client” in this survey refers to people in the community faculty, staff, parents, stakeholders, and students.

Please contact me if you have any questions about this research. I can be contacted at mcultural@sage.edu and (518) 479-3916.

Sincerely,

Lisa Carr
mcultural@sage.edu

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APPENDIX C

Follow-up script for email reminder 1

Dear _____

About one week ago a survey was mailed to you, asking for your feedback regarding Multicultural Competencies. I am you a reminder and the link for the survey. If for some reason you prefer not to participate, please let me know.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lisa Carr
Sage Graduate School Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX D

Demographic Questions & Script

Revised Script for Survey:

I would appreciate your assistance with this research project. The title of my research study is “Perceptions of Current Principals and Superintendents Regarding Multicultural Competencies Needed in the 21st Century.”

The study is being conducted by Lisa Carr from Sage Graduate School under the direction of Dr. Connell Frazer. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because I am focusing on principals and superintendents in the 31 component school districts of _____ BOCES.

Completing the survey implies your consent to participate. The survey should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. You will only be able to access the survey once.

Your participation is voluntary and your identity will be kept confidential. You may disregard any specific questions you do not wish to answer. The term “client” in this survey refers to people in the community including, faculty, parents, students, and stakeholders.

Please contact me if you have any questions about this research. I can be contacted at mcultural@sage.edu and (518) 479-3916.

Sincerely,

Lisa Carr
mcultural@sage.edu

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Four demographic questions were included to assess additional information about the sample including:

1. Please specify your level of multicultural training and experience:
I have worked in settings with culturally diverse populations
I have lived in a diverse community
I have never lived in a diverse community
I have never completed a multicultural course.
I have completed one multicultural course.
I have completed two or more multicultural courses.

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2. Have you attended any workshops on multicultural training/counseling: Yes No

3. Years of experience in current position:

0-3

3-6

6-10

More than 10 years

4. Years of Teaching Experience

0

0-3

3-6

6-10

APPENDIX E

The Multicultural Counseling Inventory (MCI)

A copy of the Multicultural Counseling Inventory (MCI) and rubric cannot be included due to the author's copyright contract. The researcher received permission to utilize the MCI in this study via mail on October 17, 2008.

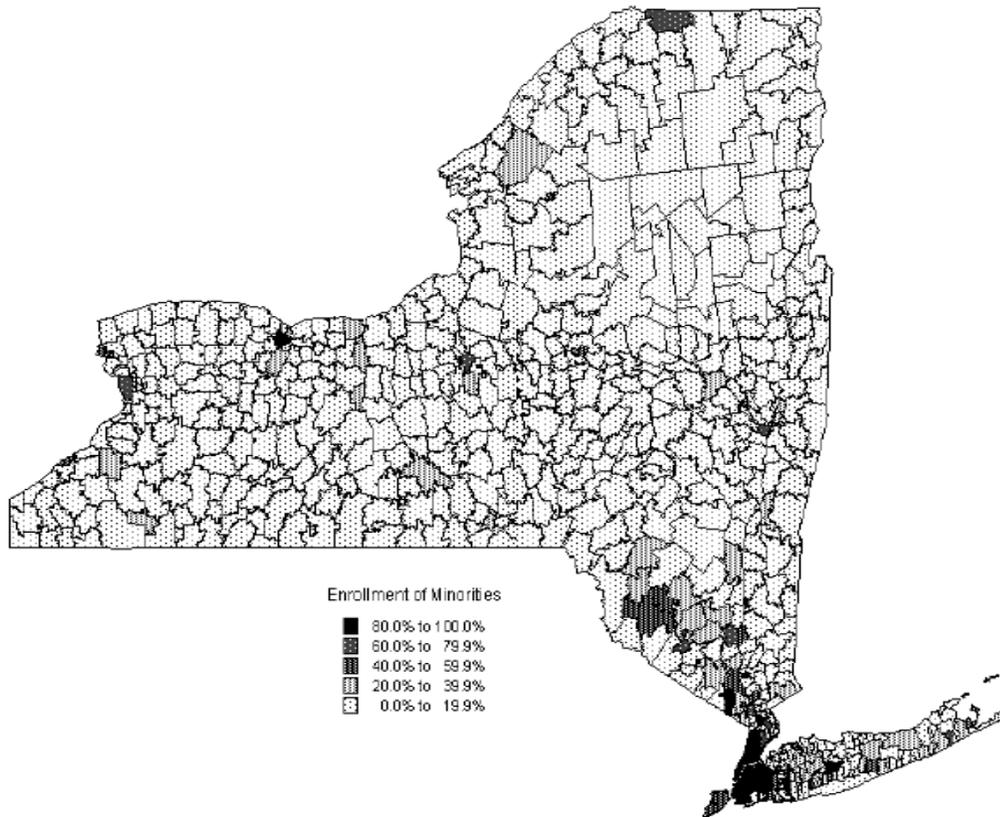
For additional information about the MCI, contact the author, Dr. Gargi Roysircar-Sodowsky:

Director, Multicultural Center for Research & Practice
Department of Clinical Psychology
Antioch New England Graduate School
40 Avon Street
Keene, NH 03431-3516
(603) 357-3122 ext.342
(603) 357-0718 FAX

g_roysircar-sodowsky@antiochne.edu

APPENDIX F

**Map of Public School Districts Showing
Minority Enrollment by District
New York State
Fall 2004 (Chapter 655 Report)**



APPENDIX G

Glossary

Term	Definition	Source
High Need	High percentage of students in poverty, low income and property resources	Chapter 655 Report
Low Need	Low percentage of students in poverty, high income and property wealth	Chapter 655 Report
Rural	“All districts at or above the 70th percentile (1.188) that have: 1) fewer than 50 students per square mile; or 2) fewer than 100 students per square mile and an enrollment of less than 2,500.”	NYSED website
Urban/Suburban	“All districts at or above the 70th percentile (1.188) that have: 1) at least 100 students per square mile.”	NYSED website
Union-free school districts	“A union free school district is a school district generally formed from one or more common school districts to operate a high school program, which common school districts cannot do. Currently, not all union free school districts operate a secondary school program.”	Spackenkill School District website

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Glossary (continued)

Common school district	Created by legislature in 1812, elementary schools (kindergarten through eighth grade).	Spackenkill School District website
Central school	Created by legislature in 1812, elementary schools (kindergarten through eighth grade).	NYSED website
High Majority	81-100%	Chapter 655 Report
Medium Minority	21-80%	Chapter 655 Report
Low Minority	0-20%	Chapter 655 Report

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APPENDIX H

Distribution of MCI Questions

