

A Course Model for Developing Culturally Proficient School Leaders

Diane Reed, Rebecca Bustamante, Carol H. Parker, Rebecca Robles-Pina, Anthony J. Harris

Abstract

School leaders must be culturally proficient in order to effectively lead twenty-first century schools. They must be able to interact with people from a variety of cultures and devise strategies that enhance education in diverse settings. Nevertheless, few graduate programs in educational leadership require students to complete courses in cultural proficiency. This article describes the development and implementation of the course, *Cultural Proficiency for School Leadership*, which was developed for a graduate educational leadership program at a state university. Emphasis is placed on how cultural knowledge and awareness can positively influence school leaders' understanding of the importance of cultural proficiency.

The realities of a globally interdependent world and increasingly diverse schools are apparent. Scholarly responses to these realities have produced a wealth of literature to inform culturally relevant instruction and leadership in schools (Banks & McGee-Banks, 2001; Bennett, 2003; Bustamante, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2002; Reihl, 2000; Sleeter & Grant, 2003).

Literature in educational leadership suggested that school leaders influence school culture (Deal, 1993; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000) and recent empirical studies confirmed that school leaders can enhance the benefits of cultural diversity and encourage positive intercultural relations in schools (Henze, Katz, Norte, Sather, & Walker, 1998; Salvaggio, 2003). For some time, multicultural education theorists, Banks & McGee (2001) have explored the impact of school policies, curriculum, and instructional materials on the success of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Global education scholars further contended that, in an increasingly global world, educators will need to be more attune to world cultures, geography, and second language teaching and learning methods (Diaz, Massialas, & Xanthopolous, 1999). Yet, Smith and Czarra (2003) found that most U.S. educators have had little to no training in global education.

This literature, in addition to several other studies on cross-cultural organizational leadership (Hofstede, 2001; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004), suggested that school leaders must have the ability to understand and constructively act upon diversity and socio-cultural processes in schools. One obvious way that graduate programs in educational leadership can enhance culturally sensitive leadership preparation is by requiring courses that explicitly and effectively address school diversity issues.

This article describes a model course titled, *Cultural Proficiency for School Leaders* that was piloted over a four semester period at one state university in the southern United States. The course represents a valuable approach to preparing school leaders to confront the modern realities of diversity and globalization. Course content is interdisciplinary and activities focus on integrating diversity and leadership theory, assessing school culture, and strategically implementing "real life" action plans in schools.

Rationale for the Course

Standards outlined by the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC), which serve as guidelines for university principal preparation programs, include numerous statements related to preparing school leaders to meet diverse student needs. Examples include focusing on teaching and learning and examining personal and professional values that reflect a code of ethics. The standards also emphasize

the recruitment, selection, and retention of teachers with diverse backgrounds. Threaded throughout the standards is a focus on the development of school leaders who understand school culture, examine their own assumptions, beliefs, and practices, and communicate appropriately and effectively with community stakeholders. Graduate programs in educational leadership are under increasing pressure to align their programs with these ELCC standards.

Murphy (1999) suggested that university programs are not sufficiently preparing educational leaders and are in need of change. We contend that the need to prepare aspiring and practicing school administrators to lead in diverse and global settings is an area for improvement in course offerings and program design.

Nevertheless, despite this need to address issues of diversity and globalization through university course offerings it appears that few universities require a course with a title related to leadership in a diverse society. We conducted a content analysis of course offerings in graduate educational leadership or administration programs at 75 universities that are members of the University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA). Our findings indicated that only 12% of the 75 universities actually listed at least one course with a title related to leadership in a diverse society as part of the required curriculum. Course titles typically contained one of the following terms: diversity, multicultural, multilingual, cross-cultural, culture, or societal factors. As an acknowledged limitation, we do clearly recognize that the concepts of diversity and globalization in schools may be integrated into the content of other course offerings that do not include these terms in their titles or course descriptions. This percentage is meant to be descriptive in nature and may not fully indicate actual course offerings or content.

We do contend, however, that while most educational administration programs may “cover” diversity issues in other courses or infuse it throughout the curriculum, studies in higher education (Hurtado, 2001; Marshall & Oliva, 2006), suggested that students need inter-group dialogue and purposeful engagement with content about diverse cultures in order to actually develop intercultural sensitivity and culturally competent leadership. We suggest that these studies, combined with the challenges school leaders face in promoting academic achievement for all students, supports our position that educational leadership programs should require at least one course that clearly addresses educational leadership in a diverse and global world.

Course learning outcomes must specifically focus on the awareness, knowledge, and skills required to develop culturally competent educational leaders (Sue & Sue, 2003), as well as prepare them to effectively promote culturally competent policies, programs, and practices in schools and districts.

Model for the Course

The *Cultural Proficiency for School Leaders* course was specifically designed to provide aspiring and practicing leaders with relevant coursework to explore how culture and historical-political-social factors influence people in schools. Emphasis was placed on how this knowledge and awareness could positively influence school leaders' understanding of the importance of cultural proficiency as a guide to long-term improvement in schools.

In a focus group, we explored potential course content based on research and personal and professional experiences working in public schools and teaching graduate courses in educational leadership and counseling. We generated a list of potential objectives, topics, processes and activities, and assessments for the course. Additional input from colleagues in the Educational Leadership and Counseling Department at the university was solicited through informal interviews.

Based on a thorough review of relevant literature on multicultural education, culturally relevant instruction, cross-cultural leadership, and school culture, we decided to apply Lindsey, Robins, and Terrell's (2003) concept of cultural proficiency for schools as our overall theoretical framework in organizing the course. We believe that this model of cultural proficiency currently provides the most comprehensive framework for analyzing how educational leadership, organizational culture, and diversity merge in the school setting. We selected the text, *Cultural Proficiency: A Manual for School Leaders, Second Edition*

(Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2003) and supplemented the practitioner-oriented text with numerous theoretical and research-based articles related to the topics discussed in our classes.

Course Objectives

Course objectives included the following:

Students will be able to:

1. Recognize biases and the potential for discrimination in all people.
2. Develop an awareness of their own attitudes, values, and behaviors toward different groups.
3. Collect data on school culture through observations, document analysis, and review of existing school data.
4. Use a model of cultural proficiency for school improvement.
5. Design an action plan to improve cultural proficiency in their school or organization.
6. Understand the roles of formal and informal leadership in promoting cultural proficiency.
7. Explore culturally appropriate approaches to teaching, learning, and community outreach.

Course Topics

Course topics emerged during our focus group discussions. We generated ideas based on our interdisciplinary reviews of current and seminal texts and empirical literature relevant to culturally relevant instruction, cultural competence, and leading diverse organizations. We are a racially and ethnically diverse group of educators, therefore topics emerged from our own personal worldviews and experiences, as well as our professional experiences working in schools and teaching in higher education

The course topics included:

1. diversity (e.g., worldview, economics, education, cultural uniqueness, and within-group differences);
2. stereotypes and the impact on attributions of others (race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, persons with disabilities, persons with economic disadvantage);
3. nonverbal communication (proxemics, kinesics, paralanguage, and high-low context communication); intercultural communication, differences between and among groups when communicating across cultures;
4. awareness of personal biases and the potential for discrimination in all people;
5. racial and cultural identity models (Black Identity Development Model, Asian American Identity Development Model, Hispanic American Identity Development Model, Racial/Cultural Identity Development Model, White Racial Identity Development Model, Multiracial Identity Development Model);
6. cultural proficiency continuum (cultural destructiveness, cultural incapacity, cultural blindness, cultural pre-competence, cultural competence, cultural proficiency);
7. essential elements of cultural proficiency (assess culture, value diversity, manage the dynamics of difference, adapt to diversity, and institutionalize cultural knowledge);
8. roles of culturally proficient school leaders as they relate to the essential elements of cultural proficiency (teachers- observe and instruct, site administrators- lead and supervise, district

- administrators – implement policy, parents and community – articulate expectations, and school board members- set policy);
9. school culture and core values;
 10. conflict management;
 11. research on effective school leadership;
 12. barriers to cultural proficiency; and
 13. community outreach and service learning.

Course Activities and Assessments

Course content was delivered using strategies that modeled the skills needed for culturally competent school leadership. These skills included collaborative problem-solving, self-assessment, organizational assessment, inquiry, group and individual reflections, and planning and goal-setting for continuous improvement. Some specific course activities included, but were not limited to the following.

Ground rules. As the establishment of ground rules was especially important for the course, students were taught to implement the concepts of ground rule development for group interaction (forming, storming, norming, and performing). “Agreements” (Singleton, 2005) were also made and included the willingness to: stay engaged, accept discomfort, and realize that some topics may not have closure. Student conversations were often difficult because they were influenced by individual and social norms and, therefore, tended to stimulate high emotions. Consequently, students must feel that the environment is safe enough for open discussions to occur.

Ground rules assisted in the establishment of expected class behaviors, which evolved from participant engagement in collaborative discussions with the aim of ensuring participant ownership of the norms established. This process typically took from 15 minutes to an hour, depending on the class dynamics. From a more academic point of view, ground rules appeared to help students apply critical thinking and reflection skills to the classroom setting and understand their own roles within that environment.

Ground rules should be explicit, formal, and monitored by the whole group. They should be used to assess and improve the quality of the group’s interactions. No more than five to seven ground rules should be identified. They should then be displayed to be visible during class. Ground rules may then be changed with the permission of the group.

Reflection journals. To encourage reflective practice and an additional outlet for debriefing, an 8 1/2 x 11 inch spiral notebook was used as an in-class reflection journal. Near the end of each class session, participants were asked to briefly reflect on what was discussed and its impact on their views of leadership. The following questions guided their reflections: (a) What was difficult?, (b) What was enlightening?, (c) What are some of the implications for educational leadership? Participants were encouraged to continue to add to their journals during the days that class was not in session. They were required to share the parts of their reflections when comfortable sharing. This activity encouraged meaningful group discussion. The instructor occasionally collected the reflection journals to check for learning/understanding.

Personal essays/reflections. Students were asked to complete two short (1-5 pages) personal essays. Prompts for the first assigned essay included: Think about your life... (a) “How have you been affected by your diversity?”; (b) “When did you become aware of the diversity around you? Identify significant points in your life that reflect your awareness of diversity?”; and (c) “Think of a time when you did not respond well to the diversity in your environment.” Graduate-level writing was expected. Participants shared life experiences that they felt comfortable sharing with the rest of the class. A final essay was then completed at the end of the semester. Questions to ponder included: (a) “What did you learn about yourself from your participation in this course?” and (b) “How will you use what you have learned?”

Book and film essays and presentations. Students were asked to select and read a book or film that would broaden their understanding of cultural competence and proficiency. Every student had to make a

different selection. After reading the book, students were required to write a 2-3 page essay that (a) summarized the book, film, or training video; (b) discussed how it personally enlightened them; and (c) described its implications for educational leadership. Finally, students were asked to prepare a 5-10 minute “talk” on their book or film. Those who presented a film or training video were asked to show some mini-clips and highlight how the film or video could be used as a training tool to teach other educators about cultural proficiency.

Service learning. In some of the semester courses, we required students to participate in a community-based service learning project. The students were required to design, implement, and reflect on a project centered addressing a specific need in a school regarding cultural proficiency. For example, one student prepared a professional development for teachers at a school with a diverse student population. The professional development guided the teachers in devising a plan to address the instructional inequities in instruction in gifted and talented, general education, and special education classes. Another example is that of two students who planned and implemented a “Math Enrichment Night” a program designed to assist students in improving math scores on state standardized assessments.

Culture audits and action plans. The major capstone project was a “culture audit” of each student’s school or district. A “culture audit” is a tool for assessing school culture by examining policies, programs, practices, artifacts, history, traditions, events, quantitative data, etc. Like a financial audit, it can be used to reveal strengths and weaknesses in the way schools address the needs of diverse groups. The culture audit contained two phases and focused on specific previously identified domains for observation (Bustamante, 2006). Based on data gathered through school “walk through” observations with checklists, document analysis, and demographic information, school improvement action plans were developed to effectively support the success of all students by enhancing organizational cultural proficiency. Students were required to identify strengths in their schools’ development toward cultural proficiency, as well as identify need areas. They had to develop short and long term action goals to address need areas.

Assessment of Course Objectives

The students were provided guidelines for requirements to earn grades of A, B, C, or F. The students were responsible for deciding which grade they would earn for the course based on which requirements they met. The grades and requirements were as follows:

Meets Expectations (B grade)

**These represent the minimum requirements for this course.*

1. Attend every class. Arrive on time and stay for the entire class time.
Due to the highly interactive nature of this class, regular attendance and participation in all class meetings is important and expected. As graduate students, you are expected to be on time and stay in class for the entire meeting session. Attendance is mandatory unless medical or extreme personal emergencies arise. In this case, please notify the professor in advance. Missed assignments must be emailed to the professor and must be received within 24 hours. According to university policy [800401], a student may not be penalized for three or fewer hours of absences (one class) when exams or other assigned class work has not been missed. However, when a student misses more than three hours of class, the student must complete an instructor-approved make-up assignment and may risk receiving a reduced final grade.
2. Complete all assigned readings prior to class.
Additional readings will include articles that will be distributed in class by the professor. In-class written and oral responses will be based on these readings so it is essential that you be prepared. Turn in ALL assignments ON TIME.
3. Participate fully in every class session.

All students are expected to fully participate in each class. Specific group norms will be established and should be respected at all times. Norms play an important role in this course since sensitive social and personal issues will be explored and discussed.

4. Maintain reflection journal.
Please bring an 8 1/2 x 11 inch spiral notebook to class to use as an in-class reflection journal. Near the end of each class session, you will be asked to briefly reflect on what was discussed and its impact on you and your views of leadership. You will be required to share the parts of your reflections that you are comfortable sharing.
Use the following questions to guide your reflections : (a) What was difficult?, (b) What was enlightening?, (c) What are some of the implications for educational leadership? The professor may occasionally collect the reflection journals to check for learning/understanding.
5. Complete 2 short personal essays/reflections as assigned.
Essay #1: Think about your life... (a) How have you been affected by your diversity?, (b) When did you become aware of the diversity around you?, (c) Identify significant points in your life that reflect your awareness of diversity?, and (d) Think of a time when you did not respond well to the diversity in your environment. Prepare a 1-5 page paper (narrative style, double spaced) to address the questions/statement above. Graduate-level writing is expected. Share parts of your life experiences that you feel comfortable sharing in class.
Essay #2: (a) What did you learn about yourself from your participation in this course? and (b) How will you use what you have learned? Prepare a 1-5 page paper (narrative style, double spaced) to address the questions/statement above. Graduate-level writing is expected. Share parts of your life experiences that you feel comfortable sharing in class.
6. Conduct a Culture Audit in your school or organization.

A “culture audit” is a tool for assessing school culture by examining policies, programs, practices, artifacts, history, traditions, events, quantitative data, etc. Like a financial audit, it can be used to reveal strengths and weaknesses in the way schools address the needs of diverse groups. Based on this data, school improvement action plans can be developed that can more effectively support the success of all students by enhancing organizational cultural proficiency. The culture audit that you will conduct contains 2 phases:

- a. A demographic study. Use the demographic study that you are completing for ASE 662/672 Practicum for Administration (Internship)
 - b. Two participant observations (“walk-throughs”).
You will be a participant observer in assessing how culturally proficient your school currently is. You will be given a cultural proficiency observation checklist to guide you in your walk-through observations and anecdotal note-taking. “Walk-throughs” must be made on two separate occasions and in different places (teachers’ lounge, hallways, cafeteria, playground, classrooms, etc.). This will be practiced in class. A copy of your observational checklists and notes must be turned into the professor.
7. Complete a Cultural Proficiency Leadership Action Plan based on your audit findings.

Once data has been collected and analyzed from your culture audit, you will use this information to identify strengths and weaknesses in your school’s policies, programs, and practices, and create an Action Plan to improve cultural proficiency in your school and school community. Your total action plan should not be more than 12 pages. The format of the final action plan will be discussed in class but should essentially contain:

Exceeds Expectations (A grade)

1. Perfect attendance. 0-1 excused absence with make-up assignment.
2. All of the requirements for a B grade must be fulfilled, plus the following additional requirements:
3. Select and **read an additional book** that would broaden your understanding of cultural competence and proficiency. Every student must select a different book. After reading the book,

write a 2-3 page essay that (a) summarizes the book, (b) discusses how it personally enlightened you, and (c) describes its implications for educational leadership. Then, give a 5-10 minute “book talk” on the book. Sign-ups for presentations will be made available in class.

OR

4. **Select a film or training video.** Give a class presentation by briefly summarizing the film (5 minutes) and highlight how it could be used as a training tool to teach others about cultural proficiency. Pick out a 5 minute clip or clips to illustrate your points. This presentation can be done with one other person (in pairs). The total presentation should not exceed 15-20 minutes. Sign-ups for presentations will be made available in class.

Below Expectations (C grade)

Failure to meet the requirements of *any 2 of B grade expectations 1-4.*

Failure to Meet Expectations (F grade)

Failure to meet the requirements of *expectations for B and C grades.*

Course Feedback and Responses

The course was taught as a pilot for four semesters by three different professors. Summative and formative evaluations in the forms of open-ended questionnaires and student reflections were conducted at the end of the semesters and at mid-term. In addition, the professors reconvened to discuss challenges and opportunities in teaching the course, including how they perceived the students responded to the course content (e.g.: interactions and reactions during class discussions of the different topics, assignment quality, and barriers encountered in teaching the course).

Students were asked to respond to three questions:

1. *How useful is this course in preparing principals? Should it continue to be offered?*
2. *What are some key strengths of the course?*
3. *What could be improved?*

Samples of their responses were as follows:

Question 1: *How useful is this course in preparing principals? Should it continue to be offered?*

African American Female Student Number One: “I believe the course is both useful and necessary. So many issues we have covered have addressed the ‘elephant in the room’. This course should be continued because educational leaders need to be prepared to appropriately deal with the cultural differences that are increasing in our schools.”

Caucasian Male Student Number One: “I believe that this course is important in preparing principals. This course makes them aware of the importance of culture and diversity and the effects of ignoring them. I think that this class should continue to be offered.”

Caucasian Female Student Number One: “This course is very useful for preparing principals b/c [sic] so much attention is centered on student achievement in relation to TAKS scores [sic] (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills), when meeting the needs of diverse learners is just as essential to student success [sic].”

Hispanic Male Student Number One: “I feel that this course is beneficial in preparing principals. It allows an open forum for individuals to discuss things that often times are downplayed in other classes and at the professional level. In turn, the class should continue to be offered. It allows students to prepare themselves for the problems of tomorrow in an effective proactive way”.

Caucasian Female Student Number Two: “Cultural proficiency is definitely a subject that has dramatic effects on a campus, but one that does not get a lot of attention. I am glad I had the opportunity to discuss and think about these issues in a safe environment like our cohort. I value some of the feedback from the class regarding many uncomfortable issues and I feel that this course could be of great benefit to administrators.”

Question 2: *What are some key strengths of the course?*

African American Female Student Number One: "Conducting the culture audits is a relevant practice for current/future administrators. This is a valuable tool that can be utilized in a variety of settings."

Caucasian Female Student Number One: "A strength of this class is the fact that the topic was heavily discussed and focused on [sic]. There were no sporadic topics or discussions [sic]. Secondly, all of the knowledge that was gained is applicable to our everyday lives and our careers. Thirdly, the class was small, which is a very good point b/c [sic] the environment was set in a manner in which people felt comfortable to share their most intimate thoughts on a sometimes delicate subject [sic]."

Caucasian Male Student Number One: "This class was always open to discuss [sic], and that is imperative for a class like this. I think that the work load was adequate and useful."

Hispanic Male Student Number One: "I think of two strengths when I reflect back on this course: openness and truthfulness. I enjoyed the openness of the class as it allowed each individual to bring something to the table and share. It also shared the truth about the changing face of education [sic]. No longer is it simply a race issue when looking at our schools, but many, many more things that we must now make ourselves aware of [sic]."

African American Male Number One: "One of the strengths of the course was providing a safe environment where everyone felt comfortable sharing their ideas and talking about sensitive issues. I think this was one of the first courses where I learned as much from my classmates as I did from the professor, which is a great thing. I felt that the professor was very knowledgeable in the content area and it showed in the way she lead the discussions and provided feedback."

Question 3: *What could be improved?*

African American Female Student Number One: "Class meeting times were a it overwhelming; [sic] especially on state testing dates. More time to research our topics would improve the course."

Caucasian Male Student Number One: "I think that the only way that this class could improve is if there were opportunities where scenarios were discussed, and we would have to figure out the most culturally proficient way to solve the issue."

Caucasian Female Student Number One: "The time factor was an issue. An earlier time would have been better. The action plan assignment didn't seem to benefit the class [sic]. The discussions were more appealing and interesting."

Hispanic Male Student Number One: "If I were to improve upon anything in the class I would have allowed for personal research. The action plans were great and so were the provided articles. However, I would have liked to have seen outside research done in an area of interest. Almost like an extension beyond the book/movie [sic] reviews."

African American Female Number Two: "As much as I didn't think that I would like the reflection journal, those writings became my favorite part of the course (especially since no one else read them). I would suggest ending the class with a thought provoking question each time. Secondly, I suggest building in a debriefing time to each class. While our cohort is pretty close knit, others might need to breathe after getting so 'personal' with others."

In addition to answering structured questions, the students were asked to complete a final reflection for the last class meeting. This reflection allowed students to express their personal feelings regarding the concept of cultural proficiency. Excerpts from some of the students' reflections indicated the following thoughts:

"Before taking the class I had the belief, just as many do that, I was culturally accepting, I had the view that everyone was the same, that no one was better than anyone else and that everyone was equal. I quickly learned that part of my belief was not accurate. Everyone is not the same and the correct thing to do is to recognize the differences in everyone and every culture and highlight these differences."

"Initially, I hated this class. Several times after class, I contemplated dropping the course. I hated this class because I felt forced to face emotions that I had put away and did not want to feel for the rest of my life. The discussions in this class, especially the one in which we identified our own biases and the one in which we discussed one incident in which we have been discriminated against or have witnessed incidents of discrimination helped me realize that just because we do not discuss difficult issues that have impacted us and may impact others does not mean that the issues do not exist! Now at the end, I can truly say that I love this class and I am glad that I stayed."

"The lessons and conclusions that I have drawn from this class will help me as an administrator in several ways. First of all, my efforts to make organizational change will involve culturally relevant motivators that

include students, faculty, and the community. Secondly, I will not overlook the need to prepare for crises. As a proactive administrator, I will have a plan in place to address any cultural conflicts that might arise for students and faculty. And finally, I will begin to develop a culturally proficient campus culture by guiding my campus through a self-reflective process similar to the one I continue to undergo as a result of this course [sic].”

The comments from students were randomly selected from the comments submitted by all students in all courses through *Blackboard* discussion links and excerpts from the final reflections over the time that the course has been offered. The comments indicated that in general the students believed that the course was beneficial for the preparation of aspiring and practicing school leaders. They felt that the dialogue was difficult but necessary for improved student achievement and addressed issues faced by students and school personnel each day. The climate in the classroom felt safe and the students felt free to dialogue openly.

The students' comments indicated that they felt that time to debrief after class was important. In addition, it appeared that students were not clear about the purpose of the cultural audit and how it might be used at a campus. Some students mentioned that they would have liked to spend more time analyzing scenarios and completing personal research.

We discussed individual experiences regarding interactions that occurred in our classes informally and in structured focus groups at the end of each course. Throughout the courses, we kept journals of events that we considered important for the improvement of the course. Our comments included (a) issues that individuals who choose to teach the course must consider and (b) strengths and challenges that we faced during instruction.

The issues that should be considered by individuals who choose to teach cultural proficiency include the following:

1. The professors must be comfortable with themselves when facilitating the “difficult dialogue”.
2. The professors must be comfortable delivering “emotionally loaded” information.
3. The professors must be prepared to discuss tough topics when there is pressure to divert the discussion to safe topics (i.e.: gender and socioeconomic status).
4. There appeared to be more difficulty facilitating classes where the students were homogeneously grouped versus classes where students were heterogeneously grouped. In the homogeneous groups, the students were more reluctant to discuss topics such as sexual orientation and white privilege. In the heterogeneous groups, students appeared to be more open to discuss all topics presented. They appeared to be more open to accept and discuss their personal biases and to attempt to change their perceptions of various cultural groups.
5. Because the topics are difficult to discuss, professors must consider that their course evaluations may lower. We believe that this occurs because some individuals are not comfortable with the course topics, therefore they do not like the course and those feelings are projected on the professor.
6. We felt that this course was emotionally draining to instruct because it was easy for emotions that may have been suppressed to resurface due to the discussion of the topics in regard to bias, prejudice, and discrimination.
7. It is imperative that ground rules be established during the first class meeting and enforced during all class meetings or revised if the initial ground rules are not effective. The ground rules delineate clear boundaries for class interaction.
8. Professors should be careful not to impose their values onto the students.

We identified strengths of instructing the course. These strengths include the following:

1. Openness and truthfulness in the discussions among the participants and us.
2. Students were willing to step out of their comfort zones.
3. Students had the opportunity to reflect on the impact of their own worldview regarding leadership.
4. Students related their ideas to leadership in a diverse and global world.
5. Students learned how to assess the cultural needs of their campuses.

6. Students identified their own biases and reflected on how they would address these biases. In addition, the students learned the impact of imposing their biases on others.

We also identified challenges that we faced while instructing the course. Those challenges included:

1. More time was needed to discuss and debrief after the discussions. We were constrained by the 2 hours and 50 minutes that we had to meet for class. Students wanted to discuss more; we encouraged them to write their thoughts in their reflection journals.
2. Facilitating the “emotionally loaded” topics was difficult.
3. We felt that there were not enough opportunities to get students involved in service learning projects and community-based research.
4. More work needs to be done on refining our cultural audit. In addition we need to work on helping students understand more clearly the purpose and implications for the use of the cultural audit.

Conclusion

Topics addressed in this course go beyond the cultures of diverse ethnic groups. Other topics key topics addressed included gender, sexual orientation, linguistic diversity, persons with disabilities, and persons with economic disadvantages. Development of this course is ongoing and continues to evolve. We hope that our experiences in the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of the content and delivery of the course offers insights to instructors who may be interested in developing a course in cultural proficiency for school leaders in principal preparation programs at other universities. We believe that aspiring and practicing school leaders, who had the opportunity to enroll in the course, ended the semester with an awareness of self and an enlightened perception of the school leader's role regarding the inclusion of all students, teachers and staff, and parents in the school community.

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