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Riehl, Carolyn J
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The Principal's Role in Creating Inclusive Schools for Diverse Students: A Review of Normative, Empirical, and Critical Literature on the Practice of Educational Administration

Carolyn J. Riehl
University of North Carolina

Public schools in the United States are serving a more heterogeneous student population now than ever before. Drawing on normative, empirical, and critical literatures, this review explores the role of school administrators in responding to the needs of diverse students. Three administrative tasks are highlighted: fostering new meanings about diversity, promoting inclusive school cultures and instructional programs, and building relationships between schools and communities. Administrative work that accomplishes these tasks can be thought of as a form of practice, with moral, epistemological, constitutive, and discursive dimensions. Inclusive administrative practice is rooted in values of equity and social justice; it requires administrators to bring their full subjectivities to bear on their practice, and it implicates language as a key mechanism for both oppression and transformation.

A brief and serendipitous perusal of the history of American education is enough to suggest that diversity has been a continual challenge for school leaders in this country. For example, in the 1850s in New York City, over half of the city's residents were immigrants, and leaders of the Public School Society struggled with the educational implications of the city's rapidly changing demographics (Kaestle, 1973). During the next decade, in such cities as Atlanta and Nashville, the common school movement gained momentum as school leaders realized that black children were being educated in philanthropic, church-related schools while there were no schools available for poor whites (Racine, 1990). In 1899, the school district in East Orange, New Jersey, established a system of experimental ungraded classes for "backward pupils." When a principal was asked why there were only black students in his school's class, he replied that there were no backward whites in the school (Tyack, 1974). In 1935, "tolerance assemblies" were held at Benjamin Franklin High School in New York City to familiarize students with different cultures—Japanese, Puerto Rican, Italian, and Slavic—in order to reduce intergroup tension in the school and improve ethnic students' self-esteem (Montalto, 1981). And since the late 1990s, rural school districts in the South have been working to meet the needs

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of immigrant children, from families lured to factory and agricultural jobs, whose primary language is not English.

As these examples illustrate, for well over a century educators in the United States have confronted the question of how to organize and administer schools for diverse students. Indeed, since its inception, American public education has served an increasingly varied student population drawn from an increasingly pluralistic society. Every generation has struggled with what it has perceived to be a dramatic influx of "new students" (Grubb, 1995). Ethnic/cultural groups and persons from lower socioeconomic classes have sometimes fought bitterly with mainstream educators for the curriculum and instruction that they feel is most appropriate for themselves (e.g., Ravitch, 1974, Spring, 1986; Katznelson, 1981) but, in general, assimilation has been the dominant approach to diversity in the public schools, and equality of opportunity through homogenization has been the goal (Adams, 1997; Baptiste, 1999). Educational administrators have tended to be supportive of this approach. Ellwood Cubberley, a key figure in the early history of educational administration, promoted the notion that common forms of schooling would help create a unified society and best serve American public ideals (Kowalski, 1995). Succeeding generations of administrators have espoused treating teachers and students equally, regardless of their social class, race, or ethnicity. However, complex tensions between the ideal of equality and the realities of control and stratification permeate American life, and these fundamental contradictions affect educational institutions and their administrators as well (Burroughs, 1974; Kaestle, 1973). Thus, school leaders in every era have had to ponder both the rhetoric and the reality of how they address questions of diversity in school.

Despite the recurrent nature of the theme of diversity, American public schools arguably serve a more heterogeneous population now than ever before and are under increasing pressure to effectively educate a student body that is diverse in terms of race and ethnicity, social class, gender, national origin and native language, sexual orientation, and physical disability. Hodgkinson (1988) estimated that, in the class due to graduate high school in 2000, 40 percent could be classified as "culturally different" from English-speaking, white European Americans, and 24 percent were born in poverty. African American and especially Hispanic populations are growing more rapidly than the white population, and children from these groups are much more likely to be poor (Baptiste, 1999; Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, 1990). Projections suggest that by the year 2020, only 49% of the school-aged population will be white, 26% of all children will be living in poverty, and 8% will speak a primary language other than English (Natriello et al., 1990).

Minority and lower-income populations tend to be concentrated in urban areas: forty percent of the nation's African Americans are located in eleven central cities, while over half of the population of Mexican Americans are found in just five metropolitan areas. Although large cities are more homogeneous than in the "balmier days of big city education" (Bidwell, 1992), they now serve a more disadvantaged population. While only about a third of the nation's poor live in cities, child poverty rates are highest in cities (31%, compared with 24% in rural areas and 13% in suburban areas) (Natriello et al., 1990). Mobility and homelessness are growing problems, especially in cities. While estimates

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vary widely, in 1990 the annual school-age homeless population was somewhere between 270,000 and 750,000, with as many as 43% of those students failing to attend school regularly (Stronge, 1992).

Recent estimates indicate that over ten percent of the school population, or just under six million students, are being served under Chapter 1 and IDEA funds for students with disabilities (U. S. Department of Education, 1998). African American males are disproportionately represented in special education programs; gender and race are implicated not only in special education placement but also in outcomes (Harry & Anderson, 1994; Lipsky & Gartner, 1997).

These figures suggest that the challenges and opportunities posed by diversity are growing. Moreover, while it still has its proponents, consensus around the strategy of assimilation to a common school experience and core American culture has weakened considerably. Groups defined by difference in terms of ethnicity, social class, or mental or physical handicap are claiming their own particular forms of subjectivity and strongly resist being treated merely as a category or social variable by mainstream policy makers or educators. Even those groups, such as Asian Americans, which have been labeled with positive stereotypes are resisting those characterizations, claiming more diversity and decrying the "monolithic monotone" that sets one minority group against another (Lee, 1996). Groups that had appeared to be cohesive, at least to outsiders, are now clearly not, so that consensus about educational goals or strategies is often difficult to achieve (Marshall, 1993). Race and gender are increasingly viewed not as inherent or ascribed characteristics but as social constructions, the product of an intricate web of personal and situational factors (McCarthy & Crichlow, 1993). Indeed, personal identity appears to have much less to do with attributes that can easily be counted and categorized and much more with the tasks, social relationships, and contexts within which an individual learns and develops (Heath & McLaughlin, 1993).

In this new environment, the idea that all students should be acculturated to a single way of knowing or behaving is contested[1] and the concept of cultural pluralism is receiving more serious attention as a social and educational ideal (Appleton, 1983; Baptiste, 1999). Activist scholars working to promote the values of cultural difference and social justice at the far or near margins of traditional models of schooling (e.g., Asante, 1991; Cummins, 1997, 1986; Delpit, 1995; Foster, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994; 1992; Sears, 1993) are joined by those working within more centrist streams of educational policy and practice (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 1997; O'Day & Smith, 1993; Rossi, 1994) to acknowledge that provisions must be made so that all students, whatever their personal characteristics or social backgrounds, can succeed in school.

Thus, there is a growing literature on how schools can more effectively serve diverse student populations. This literature focuses on matters regarding education policy, school finance, the social organization of schools and classrooms, relationships between schools and students' families and communities, teacher education and professional development, curriculum, instructional methods, and assessment processes. In each of these domains, while the local school administrator has a role to play, that role may be more or less indirect and is typically addressed only obliquely in the research. There is a smaller body of research, however, which more thoroughly explores what school administrators can do to

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promote schooling that is fully inclusive and serves diverse students well. In addition, the more general scholarship on school organization and administration can provide theoretical and empirical insights to help describe the roles of administrators in fostering effective education for diverse students.

In this integrative review, I draw on these areas of research and scholarship to develop an understanding of educational leadership in the service of an increasingly pluralistic society and with diverse constituencies. My goal is to review and integrate a variety of normative, empirical, and critical perspectives in order to develop a comprehensive approach to school administration and diversity. Although leadership can be dispersed across many persons and roles in educational contexts, and indeed is usually more effective as a distributed practice (e.g., Barth 1990, 1988; Dunlap & Goldman, 1991; Lieberman, 1988; Little, 1988; Pounder, Ogawa, & Adams, 1995), I focus here on the school principal. Principals occupy positions that carry unique responsibilities and opportunities, and they work within a particular tradition of practice with its own strengths and weaknesses. Probing the role of the building-level administrator with regard to student diversity is not meant to isolate that role from others in the social and political fabric of the school, nor to overstate the importance of the formal school leader, but instead to help clarify the contributions of those who hold a well-established position and to suggest ways in which their work can be more effective. Following a brief discussion of the school principal's position within the school, I review three broad types of tasks that face school principals as they work to serve diverse students, and then explore how the concept of "practice," especially discursive practice, can contribute to a fuller understanding of their work.

Can Principals be Agents of Inclusive Education for Diverse Students?

Given the historically poor record of American public schools in meeting the educational needs of low-income students and students of color and improving their life chances (Tyack, 1974), one might inquire whether the formal leaders of schools can possibly have an affirmative role in creating schools that are more inclusive and that serve diverse students more effectively. This is not a gratuitous question. Most social movements are not predicated on the expectation that the formal heads of established organizations will routinely be the agents of change, although exceptions do occur. One of the assumptions embedded in the scholarly literature on school administration and diversity written from a critical theory perspective is that a genuine commitment to diversity would require administrators to attend to the fundamental inequities in schooling, to disavow the institutions which they purportedly lead, and to work toward larger projects of social and institutional transformation. Within the context of this perspective, it is not surprising that practicing administrators are portrayed as conservative, if not repressive (Capper, 1993a; Evers & Lakomski, 1991; Foster, 1986). Rizvi (1993), for example, argues that schooling is inherently a conservative context in which racism, classism, and sexism are present but subsumed under a "fiction of tolerance" between social groups and a "myth of neutrality" about administrative work. Administrators are subject to the same kind of hidden curriculum about discipline and control that teachers and students experience. Like teachers, they not only experience but also reproduce,

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sometimes unwittingly, conditions of hierarchy and oppression, in particular by fostering compliant thinking instead of critical reflection. These ideas are echoed in McNeil's (1986) study of the hierarchies of behavioral control established by principals and enacted by teachers through their curricula and teaching methods, in Marshall's research on the socialization of novices into the "assumptive worlds" of school administration (Marshall, 1992; Marshall & Mitchell, 1991), and in Britzman's (1991) study of student teachers who experienced administrative pressures to adjust to the way things are and protect the status quo in schooling. Some scholars (e.g., Foster, 1986; Parker & Shapiro, 1993) suggest that administrators who do become committed to social change will experience conflict as they are expected to maintain institutions which they no longer see as legitimate.

Pessimism about administrators as agents of change also predominates in less radical inquiries into administrative practice. For example, in an early and thorough ethnography of a school administrator, Wolcott (1973) concluded that although principals are often looked to as agents of change, they tend to monitor the continuity of both institutions and society. Salley, McPherson, and Baehr (1978) found that organizational conditions often mitigate against administrators' ability to innovate. Given their roles, preparation, and traditions, as well as the contexts in which they serve, administrators are not fundamentally oriented toward change (Fullan, 1991; Sarason, 1996). Administrators are steeped in a structural-functionalist perspective that tends to view the existing social order as legitimate, that espouses the values of democracy and meritocracy, and that adopts a managerial orientation instead of a socially transformative one. Administrators do not willingly admit publicly to problems along the dimensions of race, class, or gender in their schools, even when they privately acknowledge their existence (e.g., Herrington, 1993; Lee, 1996; Winfield, Johnson, & Manning, 1993).

These studies do not present an optimistic vision of educational administration as promoting diversity and equity in radically transformative ways. Nonetheless, in the sections that follow, I trace theoretical and empirical work that opens up multiple possibilities for inclusive practice for school principals.

Leadership Tasks that Respond to Diversity

One of the central tenets of organizational theory is that tasks are primary elements around which organizational structures and cultures can be effectively designed (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Perrow, 1986; Scott, 1998). Similarly, tasks are foundational for understanding the work of individuals (e.g., Doyle, 1983; Resnick, 1987; Rogoff, 1990). Three broad classes of tasks face educational administrators as they respond to diversity; principals' approaches to these tasks determine the degree to which their practice can be characterized as inclusive and transformative. The task categories are fostering new meanings about diversity, promoting inclusive practices within schools, and building connections between schools and communities.

Fostering New Meanings about Diversity

Much of the literature on school reform both emanates from and is directed toward professional and technical processes internal to schools, particularly

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around the central activities of teaching and learning. New (or renewed) instructional methods, such as project-based learning or constructivist learning, new organizational configurations, such as smaller schools, small class sizes, or block scheduling, new forms of assessment and accountability, such as portfolios and high-stakes gateway testing, and new norms of teacher practice that emphasize collaboration and professional growth are examples of reform initiatives that address fundamental structures and processes within schools. With most of these reforms, efforts have been made to explore their potential utility in improving educational experiences and outcomes for diverse groups of students.

However, numerous analyses of educational change have demonstrated that school reform will not take hold unless broad constituencies, including students, parents, and the general public, as well as educational professionals themselves, both understand and invest in the changes (e.g., Metz, 1990b; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). This conclusion derives in large part from sociological theories of schools as institutionalized organizations (Meyer & Rowan, 1978, 1977; Meyer, Scott, & Deal, 1983; Scott, 1995) and from theories about organizational sensemaking (Weick, 1995). Both perspectives are based on a fundamental understanding of organizations as cognitive accomplishments and social constructions, in which meaning-making is a primary dynamic. As institutionalized organizations, schools embody a complex array of understandings, beliefs, and values that find legitimacy through their acceptance by the broader public and that are encoded in school structures, cultures, and routine practices. Schools are, in effect, constructed around the meanings that people hold about them. Real organizational change occurs not simply when technical changes in structure and process are undertaken, but when persons inside and outside of the school construct new understandings about what the change means.

In this regard, the role of the school principal is crucial. Although meanings are negotiated socially, that is, through a shared process (Miron, 1997), leaders typically have additional power in defining situations and their meanings (Angus, 1996; Greenfield, 1984; Smircich & Morgan, 1982). In schools, administrators are often in a better position than others to influence what things mean (Rallis, 1990). Anderson (1990) describes three strategies by which principals influence meaning-making: through the day-to-day management of meanings among organizational stakeholders, through the mediation of conflict when open contention arises, and through the cognitive task of resolving contradictions within their own ideological perspectives. Administrators can employ a variety of rhetorical and dialogic strategies in communicating new understandings. Opportunities for promoting new meanings include official ceremonies, public relations events, meetings, and the like (Strike, 1993). Moreover, since meanings are encapsulated in organizational structures and routines, administrators can help change meanings by changing the routine ways in which things are done and how the school organization is designed (Meyer, 1984).

These ideas can be applied to the case of reforming schools to respond to the needs of diverse students. The development of inclusive structures and practices must be accompanied by new understandings and values or they will not result in lasting change. Principals are key agents in framing those new meanings. Cooper (1996) provides an illustrative example. He describes a school involved in detracking, in which the principal was committed to making the stable struc-

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tural changes, such as smaller classes and hand-scheduling of students, that would help detracking to work. However, as Cooper argues, the principal was unable to create a new, shared meaning about detracking with several influential groups of persons, namely veteran teachers and the parents of students in upper-track classes. As a result, the detracking initiative was eventually abandoned and the principal resigned.

Fostering new understandings and beliefs about diversity and inclusive practice involves more than simply communicating particular understandings so that they become diffused through an educational context; it also means supporting the generation of new meanings within that context. Groups and individuals are thus not simply the recipients of new meanings, but their co-creators. A key strategy available to school principals for accomplishing this is the promotion of democratic discourse within the school community. Numerous scholars, writing from normative and critical traditions as well as from empirical perspectives, have explored how democratic discourse processes in schools can engender educational practices that serve the needs of diverse students (e.g., Corson, 1995c, 1995a; Ellsworth, 1989; Perry & Fraser, 1993; Rusch, 1998). Many of these draw on theories of communication developed by philosophers such as Habermas (1990) and Bakhtin (1981/1935). Sirotnik and Oakes (1986), for example, borrow Habermas' notion of an ideal speech situation to suggest that democratic discourse in schools must be characterized by free exploration, honest exchange, and non-manipulative discussion in light of critical questions such as "who benefits from what goes on here?" Rollow and Bryk (1993) claim that schools that serve all students well are "marked by sustained debate over the key ideas that vie for moral authority and what these ideas mean in terms of specific school improvement plans" (p. 102). Such discourse promotes trust within the community, increasing the capacity for larger problems to be addressed, so that "over time, a detailed scrutiny of existing organizational practices becomes possible." Corson (1995c) describes discourse norms that subvert trust in the classroom, including the unrestrained use of the imperative by adults toward children, the use of the right to speak last, the use of the right to interrupt or censure, and the use of the right to praise or blame in public. These norms can be applied equally to discourse among adults.

Scholars acknowledge, however, that transformative democratic discourse is not often present in schools; liberal forms of discourse are more common (Keyes, Hanley-Maxwell, & Capper, 1999). At least four factors make transformative discourse an elusive goal. First, since public education is embedded in and reflective of capitalist social relations, it can easily succumb to capitalism's "homogenizing and assimilatory forces" that deny social and cultural diversity among its members (Corson, 1995c). For example, when subordinate groups become critical of their own language and worldviews, they are in effect accepting capitalist social hierarchies, and truly democratic discourse becomes impossible. Second, democratic discourse is not automatically linked to questions of social justice and equality; administrators and teachers may engage in free and honest discursive exchanges that in fact never question issues of justice or equality (Blase, Blase, Anderson, & Dungan, 1995). Third, democracy carries its own coercive dangers. Following Foucault (1980), Hargreaves (1994), Strike (1993), Zeichner (1991), and Anderson and Grinberg (1998) argue that democratic contexts can become contrived and inauthentic when more subtle forms of control, including the internalization of "correct" behavior through self-regu-

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lation, replace explicit hierarchies of power (c.f., Wodak, 1995, on the disciplinary control exercised through women's leadership behaviors; also Blase & Blase, 1995). And fourth, it is often difficult for school administrators to even notice the issues about which democratic discourse might be generated. If they are not attuned to the unobtrusive forms of control they exercise and how they legitimate particular social constructions of reality that may privilege some students at the expense of others, they certainly cannot promote discursive exploration of them (Anderson, 1990). For example, administrators make diversity invisible in their schools by failing to notice the full extent of demographic patterns in their schools, or by promoting practices that are sensitive to diversity but that are not tightly connected to the core instructional program of the school (Capper, 1993a).

Enabling more groups and individuals to participate in meaning-making processes in schools can be threatening for school leaders, particularly in communities where trust is low (Cibulka, 1978; Watson, 1978). However, Chicago school reform provides a good example of how wider participation can enhance the role of the principal (Hess, 1993; Rollow & Bryk, 1993). By reestablishing the fundamentally political nature of school governance and taking it out of the exclusive hands of educational professionals, the new governance model of local school councils in Chicago has increased everyone's participation, including that of the principal. Cibulka (1978) reports that in democratic discourse processes, principals often need to exercise strong leadership in helping build the community power base, by informing the public of educational problems, training community members in leadership skills, and building bridges between faculty and community members; ironically, when school leaders align with community members, they often strengthen their own power base and capacity for meaning management within traditional administrative hierarchies (Watson, 1978).

Promoting Inclusive Practices within Schools

A second task facing school administrators is to help create specific conditions and practices within schools that address the needs of diverse students. This task centers around two dimensions: promoting forms of teaching and learning that enable diverse students to succeed and molding school cultures that embrace and support diversity. Administrators can act in direct ways to impact the school culture but their role with regard to inclusive instructional practice is more indirect. Current work on administrators' instructional leadership (e.g., Leithwood, 1994; Murphy & Louis, 1994) casts it as supportive, facilitative, or catalytic, with administrators helping to establish the goals, obtain the resources, stimulate the understandings, change the structures, and promote the practices that improve learning experiences and outcomes for students. Research on instructional leadership, however, rarely explores issues of student diversity and learning explicitly. Thus, knowledge about how leaders promote inclusive instructional practices in schools must often be inferred from broader work.

Promoting Inclusive Teaching and Learning.

In the 1970s, a line of inquiry known as "effective schools research" sought to explore the school conditions under which students performed better than their socioeconomic background might have predicted. Though this research

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was questioned on theoretical and methodological grounds, its conclusions were taken seriously as providing guides for school improvement (Edmonds, 1986, 1979; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Rosenholtz, 1985). One of the core factors identified as contributing to school effectiveness was strong instructional leadership, enacted through administrators' high expectations for student achievement, high visibility and frequent visits to classes, high support for staff, and strong goal and task orientations. Ironically, the effective schools research was conducted in schools serving diverse students and was interpreted as having direct relevance to urban schools and disadvantaged students (e.g., Clark, Lotto, & McCarthy, 1980; Lezotte & Bancroft, 1985), but the model was quickly appropriated as a general model for school improvement and there was minimal probing of the school conditions or leadership qualities which specifically made a difference for diverse students. Critics of effective schools research have further argued that the effective schools research promoted an assimilationist approach to urban education and left important dimensions of multicultural contexts unexplored (Dantley, 1990), and that it described an overly rigid model of leadership centered around "absolute and rational activity" that could be achieved through an almost formulaic set of behaviors (Dillard, 1995).

In an important interpretive review of research on effective schooling, Rosenholtz (1985) argued that teachers in urban schools serving low-income and minority students were often disaffected because they rarely experienced the psychic rewards of student success. However, in successful urban schools teachers were not only more satisfied but also tended to report feeling more certain about what they were doing. Rosenholtz concluded that, in schools serving diverse student populations, the most important contribution administrators could make would be to help increase teachers' certainty about their goals for student achievement and their ability to meet these goals and to know when they did so. Effective principals' actions included hiring and socializing new teachers carefully, buffering teachers from intrusions on teaching, providing substantive feedback to teachers on their teaching, and helping to create norms of continuous improvement in the school.

Rosenholtz's observation that teaching diverse students can be difficult and unrewarding was echoed in other studies of the relationship between student cultural and socioeconomic background and teacher satisfaction (e.g., Dworkin, 1987; Metz, 1990a). Such research, however, stimulated further efforts, beyond the effective schools' research, to find organizational conditions in schools that helped teachers to overcome the "iron law of social class" (Louis & Smith, 1992, p. 124) and foreshadowed significant work on the development of schools as professional learning communities for teachers (e.g., Fine, 1994; Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; Talbert, 1996). Louis, Kruse, and Associates (1995) extended this work by looking specifically at professional community in urban schools. They concluded that restructuring schools to be professional communities helps to improve teaching quality and raise student achievement and thus may be an important strategy for reform in all schools, but it is "particularly pressing for urban schools, where other resources supportive of school reform are limited" (p. 10). They further suggested that administrators have an important role in the development of professional community in at least two ways: through their attention to individual teacher development and by creating and sustaining networks of conversation in their schools around issues of teaching and learning.

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Research on culturally relevant or culturally responsive teaching, in contrast to these lines of inquiry, begins more explicitly with the premise that culturally diverse students pose opportunities instead of problems for teachers (e.g., Ball, 1996; Ball, Williams, & Cooks, 1997; Foster, 1995, 1993; Hopkins, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1992). In these models, teachers promote learning among culturally diverse students when they honor different ways of knowing and sources of knowledge, allow students to speak and write in their own vernacular and use culturally compatible communication styles themselves, express cultural solidarity with their students, share power with students, focus on caring for the whole child, and maintain high expectations for all. The role of administrators typically is not explored in the literature on culturally responsive teaching, but by extension it may be inferred that administrators can promote these strategies for teaching by demonstrating them themselves in their work with parents, teachers, and students. Just as the effective schools' research was quickly applied to schooling in all contexts, research on culturally relevant teaching is sometimes interpreted as providing a generic model of good teaching for all students. Ladson-Billings (1995), however, stresses that the framework's particular application for cultural minority students should not be lost, in part because they tend to have less access to good teaching of any kind.

Research in the sociology of education indirectly provides additional insight into the role of administrators in fostering inclusive practices for teaching and learning. This body of research has examined the impact of various organizational conditions of schools, including school size and class size, school choice options, and ability groups, curricular tracks and other forms of curriculum differentiation on diverse students (e.g., Gamoran, 1996, 1992; Lee & Smith, 1997; Lee, Smith, & Croninger, 1997). This research rarely investigates school administration itself, but coupled with research on administrators' instructional leadership which suggests that principals play a key role in the improvement of teaching and learning by influencing the organization of instruction (e.g., Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982), it appears that principals could foster inclusive teaching by examining the impact of various organizational alternatives on the stratification of access to instruction and on student achievement, and by making appropriate changes that promote both equity and excellence for all students.

Molding Inclusive School Cultures

Beyond the improvement of instruction, another approach to creating schools that can serve the needs of diverse students more effectively focuses on creating school cultures that are inclusive of multiple forms of diversity. Baptiste (1999) provides a helpful definition. "Multiculturalism," he writes,

> is a comprehensive philosophical reform of the school environment essentially focused on the principles of equity, success, and social justice for all students. Equity is the result of changing the school environment, especially the curriculum and instruction component, through restructuring and reorganizing so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social classes experience educational equality and cultural empowerment. Success is demonstrated through parity representation of achievement of the school or district's students across racial, ethnic, cultural and social classes. Social justice in schools is accomplished by the process of judi-

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> cious pedagogy as its cornerstone and focuses on unabridged knowledge, reflection, and social action as the foundation for social change. (p. 107)

This definition parallels the fifth of Grant and Sleeter's (1994) five approaches to multicultural education, moving beyond simple acknowledgement of diversity to a social reconstructivist critique. Theory, research, and practice in this area reflect notions of school culture as the norms, values, and understandings that are manifested implicitly or explicitly through structures, activities, and interactions within the school (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Firestone & Louis, 1999; Sergiovanni, 1994). As Baptiste (1999) suggests, school culture encompasses the instructional program itself as a central carrier of values and commitments. The literature on inclusive school cultures mirrors conceptual and empirical work on multicultural and culturally responsive teaching (e.g., Delpit, 1995; Foster, 1995, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1994; 1992) but is far less developed. Much of the knowledge on how principals can foster inclusive school cultures and practices is either normative (e.g., Reed, 1978; Walker, 1997) or is based on modest single case studies. However, both literatures tend to converge on a core set of dimensions of inclusive administrative practice:

- adopting a personalizing strategy and treating children as individuals rather than as representatives of a social group (Katz, 1999; Sather, 1999; Winfield et al., 1993)
- appreciating the cultural knowledge that students bring to school and using it to help teachers and principals learn students' cultures (Katz, 1999; Parker & Shapiro, 1993)
- embracing interethnic conflict when it occurs and using it as an opportunity for making positive changes (Miron, 1997; Walker, 1999)
- creating a caring environment and a high level of cooperation among students, teachers, and families (Deering, 1996; Katz, 1999)
- holding high expectations for all students (Baptiste, 1999)
- focusing on academic achievement and providing appropriate supports (Cuban, 1989; Dwyer, 1986; Katz, 1999)
- reconfiguring school structures through looping and detracking to ensure equal and effective access to instruction (Katz, 1999; Blase et al. 1995)
- encouraging teachers to examine their practices for possible race, class, or gender biases (Parker & Shapiro, 1993; Reed, 1978; Shakeshaft, 1993)
- taking strong steps to work with parents, meeting parents in their homes and work sites, establishing linguistic equity by providing translators whenever needed, and developing parent competencies in leadership and other areas (Katz, 1999; Miron, 1997; Parker & Shapiro, 1993)
- taking an advocacy approach regarding various forms of discrimination or inequity (Bishop, Foster, & Jubala, 1993; Katz, 1999; Korinek, Walther-Thomas, & Laycock, 1992; Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; Sears, 1993)
- maintaining an environment of critique and deconstructing the regularities of practice that serve to disempower some persons and groups (Keyes et al., 1999; Skrtic, 1995).

Of all of these strategies, advocacy and critique probably go farthest to differentiate liberal administrative practice that promotes "learning for all" from transformative practice that explicitly seeks justice and social transformation. Once again, however, the normative literature calling for advocacy and critique over-

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shadows the scant empirical evidence about how this is accomplished. Recent studies of detracking reform illustrate just how difficult advocacy and critique can be. Tracking has long been implicated as one of the key mechanisms for stratification and unequal treatment of students in schools (Oakes, 1985). Principals support and promote the inclusion gained through detracking when they help to establish new class assignment processes, when they provide resources so that teachers can learn to teach heterogeneous groups, and when they help teachers generate the kind of assessment information that will make the impact of tracking and detracking more visible. But teachers, parents, and others can systematically dismantle principals' efforts to reconstruct new meanings about ability and achievement, and can draw on a variety of political strategies and institutional dynamics to subvert or dismantle detracking (Cooper, 1996; Wells & Oakes, 1996; Wells & Serna, 1996).

Building Connections between Schools and Communities

The third task facing school principals who serve diverse students is based on understandings of the embeddedness of schools, both within the neighborhoods and communities in which they are located and within the network of organizations and institutions through which students move. As the needs of students grow more complex and the number of institutions who deal with youth and children increases, consequently increasing the array of organizations within a neighborhood, it is more apparent that schools cannot function as isolated entities. Effective administrators understand these interorganizational and community dynamics and seek to position schools to take advantage of positive resources offered by other institutions, to buffer students (and the school) from the negative impact of other institutions and sometimes the community itself, and to provide services that meet students' needs while also strengthening the communities in which they live (Englert, 1993). This task, then, has two prongs: mobilizing schools within processes of community development and working with other organizations to deliver coordinated services to children.

In this area, theorists often refer to Berger and Neuhaus's (1977) concept of mediating institutions, which they defined as "people-sized" institutions that stand between individuals and larger social institutions and organizations (c.f., Cremin, 1978; Nisbet, 1962; Seeley, 1981). Common examples of mediating institutions are the family, churches, and voluntary associations. Sometimes schools are considered to be mediating institutions, working on a slightly larger scale than the family to socialize individuals into broader social processes. Other theorists posit that schools themselves are one of society's dominant institutions and that students interact most effectively with schools when that interaction is mediated by other institutions such as advocacy groups or parent associations.

In either case, the implication is that schools are embedded within broader community-based organizational fields and that they are central, not only to improving the life experiences of individuals, but also to efforts to improve the social fabric of neighborhoods and communities. Community development projects can incorporate schools as the target for development, or as a catalyst for the development of other institutions or the neighborhood as a whole (Miron, 1997). These alternatives are represented in various approaches to community

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organizing. For example, Williams (1989) describes organizing strategies, patterned after those of Saul Alinsky (1971), that challenge the power of school bureaucracies to define reality for citizens and to withhold educational benefits or to distribute them unequally. In this view, schools are seen as working within existing power structures, and the purpose of community organizing is to hold schools more accountable. In contrast, the model proposed by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) grounds community development as an "assets-based" strategy, in which organizers locate and develop all of the capacities, skills, and assets held by a community's individuals and institutions, including the schools. In the former model, school administrators are often the target of activism and must work to minimize conflict between the school and its community (Summerfield, 1971). In the latter model, positive partnerships between schools and other entities are the foundation for both educational renewal and community regeneration.

There is a very limited amount of systematic research on this dimension of school-community relationships. As Chicago school reform proceeds, some theorists (Crowson & Boyd, 1992) expect it to provide a new model for a neighborhood-based politics of education built on local responsiveness. At present, however, the school administrator's role in community development is poorly understood.

More work has been done in the area of coordination of services; in fact, in comparison, this aspect of school-community relations has been enjoying a boom for about a decade, although the basic idea is nearly a century old (Dryfoos, 1994). Most analysts assume that students who are diverse along dimensions of race/ethnicity, social class, national origin, or physical handicap have more need of services provided by multiple organizations and institutions than do other students. In their examination of child- and youth-related services, Kirst, McLaughlin, and Massell (1990) cite two primary problems: a high level of underservice, and the severe fragmentation of social service delivery. These two primary problems create at least five additional problems: youth needs are defined as discrete and viewed in isolation from one another; there is a discontinuity in care from one agency's jurisdiction to another; agencies may have competing goals that reduce the effectiveness of each; a lack of communication across agencies prevents the provision of adequate resources for meeting social problems; and fragmentation of service leads to youths perceiving themselves to be disempowered pawns of complex and disorganized systems. Within this critique, which is echoed by others (e.g., Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1995), schools are viewed as the most logical choice to be the anchor or hub of services, since children interact with schools on a continuous basis and problems can be detected and addressed as they arise. Collaborations anchored in schools can be curriculum-based (drawing multiple agencies into the educational mission of the school), service-based (focusing on social services that typically schools address only peripherally), or both.

This obviously has implications for school administrators, who must negotiate the interpersonal and interorganizational dynamics that arise when separate organizations try to work together (Crowson & Boyd, 1993). A decade or so into the current phase of coordinated-service initiatives, some success stories have been documented (Dryfoos, 1994). For example, Miron (1997) describes a

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successful collaboration between the Friends of the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts and the Orleans Parish School Board, which resulted in the opening of a new arts-based school that serves an inner-city population, and a collaboration between the Boys' and Girls' Club of Santa Ana, California and the local elementary school across the street to combat gang violence in the neighborhood. On the other hand, many impediments to successful collaboration have been noted (Capper, 1996; Crowson & Boyd, 1996; Kahne & Kelley, 1993; Langman & McLaughlin, 1993; Smrekar & Mawhinney, 1999; White & Wehlage, 1995; Yowell,1996). For example, collaborations are jeopardized when agencies have uneven commitments to the partnership or when there are significant differences in the power and legitimacy of partner organizations. Collaborations are risky if the partner organizations fear losing their distinctive missions, or if the everyday structures and routines of the agencies are incompatible. Most seriously, if organizations try to protect their own "core technology" they may simply be unwilling to engage in new actions or strategies; the services being coordinated will change little and transaction costs for coordination will yield few additional benefits.

It is not yet clear whether coordinated services will deliver on the expectations held for this approach to meeting the needs of children and youth. However, it is already apparent that if school administrators consider service coordination to be a part of inclusive administrative practice, they must focus on issues of implementation as well as outcomes, they must articulate coordinated services as an integral part of the mission of the school, and they must work to change school accountability systems to reflect these new relationships and obligations.

The Practice of School Administration

In the preceding sections, I have suggested that school administrators who seek to respond to diversity in their schools attend to issues of meaning construction, promote inclusive school cultures and instructional practices, and work to position schools within community, organizational, and service-related networks. I now turn to the question of how these tasks are accomplished.

In her study of an African American school principal, Dillard (1995) makes three observations about school leadership. First, she suggests that effective leadership actions are grounded in subjective interpretations and understandings that arise from the leaders' own personal biographies, situated within collective histories of their cultural groups. Second, she argues that concern, care, and advocacy for the individual needs of students are critical, especially in diverse cultural contexts. And third, she claims that effective school leadership is transformative political work, with principals working on behalf of particular values, projects, and peoples. Dillard's conclusions are echoed in other studies of educational administrators who represent gender, ethnic/racial, and cultural diversity (e.g., Brunner, 1998; Lomotey, 1993)

These observations move administration well beyond the application of knowledge and skills, as a science of administration might suggest, and also beyond the aesthetic performance that an art or craft of administration might imply. Moreover, they move beyond the notion of praxis, as action informed by reflection (Freire, 1970; Schon, 1983). Dillard's observations point in the direc-

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tion of school administration as a form of *practice*. In relating Dillard's conclusions to a broader concept of practice, I refer to formulations of the moral, epistemological, sociological, and discursive dimensions of practice.

For example, McIntyre (1981) developed a philosophical approach to social practice as moral action. His ideas provide the grounding for an articulation of a practice as both having inherent moral qualities and fostering ethical goods. In McIntyre's view, practices are activities that compose a way of life. Practices are conducted together and over time; they ritually address fundamental human needs. Practices are socially established and presume community and history; a practice cannot be abstracted from its past, because the past is embedded in the practice itself. Finally, practices foster perception, because they create a distinctive horizon (Dykstra & Bass, 1997; Stortz, 1999). Cherryholmes (1988) also presents an ethical notion of practice as activities performed on a regular basis, constituted by rules that organize and give them coherence, and made with reference to values and interests that become sedimented in the rules and practices themselves. Drawing on these formulations, school administration can be viewed as a practice insofar as it draws on ethical traditions, honors the community from which it emerges and which it serves, creates a "horizon" that envisions what schools create and where they might lead, and pursues valued moral aims. Numerous researchers have begun to explore the moral dimensions of school administration (e.g., Beck, 1994; Evers, 1985; Lakomski, 1987; Smith & Blase, 1991).

Epistemological understandings of practice suggest that persons come to knowledge through their actions. This idea is inherent in theories of situated cognition (Wenger, 1998) and is prominent in feminist epistemologies (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986, and others). In this vein, Britzman's (1991) study of student teachers illustrates the false tensions between knowing and being, thought and action, theory and practice, and knowledge and experience. Engaging in practice is a way of coming to know and since practice is also a way of encountering one's own subjectivity in the world, it is also a vehicle for coming to know oneself and articulating one's identity. It would be impossible to assume that actors could be disengaged from their own social histories and their subjectivities. Hence, Rizvi (1993) argues that women and persons of color who are school administrators "are socially situated actors who are caught up in power relations of gender, ethnicity and class in ways that are not arbitrary but are historically constituted, and may not be entirely understood by them" (p. 215). These power relations not only define the women themselves but also inform their practice.

Sociological understandings of practice (e.g., Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1984) suggest that practices are derived from and constitutive of larger social structures and processes. Even more, practices represent the mutually constitutive relationships between individual agency and social structure; persons are constrained in their practice by the norms and routines of the institutions in which they are situated, but they also can transform those institutions through their individual choices and actions. These ideas are echoed in Foucault's (1977) notion of a disciplinary practice as the discourses, norms, and routines that create "regimes of truth" and regulate the actions of individuals, but not in totalizing ways that prevent the regimes from being undone (Anderson & Grinberg, 1998).

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Numerous theorists (e.g., Bourdieu, 1991; Cherryholmes, 1988; Foucault, 1980; Gee, 1990) have explicated the discursive nature of social practices and, conversely, the nature of language as a form of practice. That is, language use is inextricably connected to rule-based actions that define reality, generate meanings, and constitute social forms and relations. These ideas have been applied in empirical studies in educational administration, a field that has for some time understood the primacy of language and communication (e.g., Gronn, 1983). For example, Anderson (1991) observed that principals use a "conflict-free vocabulary" in schools as a form of disciplinary practice to create a culture of harmony and consensus. Corson (1995b) observed discursive power as it was exercised in governance meetings in New Zealand and found that ideological control over individuals was exercised partly through the strategic use of language to privilege certain interpretations of events. Further, Corson found that the exercise of power through language was made easier when those with interests in a matter under discussion were unequally represented around the table. Similarly, Robinson (1995) observed a group discussing a school policy about uniforms and concluded that the principal's exercise of legitimate power was compromised by the failure to adopt democratic discursive strategies of openness and the public testing of ideas.

These ideas about practice suggest a range of implications for educational administration. First, if educational administration is a form of practice, as opposed to a science or art, then it may validly rest on normative theories as well as empirical research. Thus, the paucity of research on inclusive administrative practice appears as somewhat less of an impediment to the field, and guides to action may be sought in the normative and critical literatures as well as through the practical reasoning and reflective practice of administrators themselves.

Second, if administrative practice is both moral and epistemological in nature, then the values that help administrators to compose their practice ought to be addressed in administrator preparation programs. Capper (1993b), Englert (1993), Grundy (1993), and others suggest that a moral approach to educational administration would entail a concern for suffering and oppression, a commitment to empowerment and transformation, aggressive advocacy on behalf of students, and an emphasis on values, in addition to a critical stance toward leadership and authority, the power of the intellect, and the relentless emphasis on management ideologies of structural-functionalism and instrumental rationality. Giroux (1992) argues that educators must become "engaged and transformative critics," combining a discourse of hope with forms of self and social criticism that enable educators as cultural workers to challenge the practices of privilege that mark schools as reproducers of privilege and oppression (p. 242). These perspectives would need to be represented more prominently in administrative preparation.

Third, if practice is connected to identity, then it matters who administrators are. Studies of the beliefs and behaviors of women and persons of color who serve as school administrators provide new insights into the dynamics of subjectivity and practice. This line of inquiry is beginning to gain momentum (e.g., Benham & Cooper, 1998; Bloom & Munro, 1995; Dunlap & Schmuck, 1995; Goldring & Chen, 1993; Lomotey, 1989). It suggests that neither administrators themselves nor others involved with schools should ignore the particular knowl-

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edge, values, styles of action, and ways of being that diverse administrators bring to their work. Schools will move farther and faster in becoming inclusive if they capitalize on the contributions of their diverse leaders.

Fourth, if administrative practice is fundamentally a form of discursive practice, then normative theories of administration might address language use more directly and empirical studies of administration might adopt a variety of methods for examining administrative discourse from critical vantage points. Foster (1986), for example, proposes a critical model of school leadership that defines leadership as a "language game" and exposes the linguistic distortions by which administrative power is wielded. Fairclough (1995) and others advocate "critical language awareness" on the part of educators (c.f., Anderson & Grinberg, 1998). Dantley (1990) argues that principals must help teachers establish a dialogic ambience that encourages critical analysis and "the articulation of hope."

Conclusion

According to Anderson and Grinberg (1998), Foucault would have maintained that, as a practice constituted by power relationships, school administration is fundamentally incapable of asking critical questions, not because it seeks to serve dominant interests but because it is "trapped within a discourse of efficiency, productivity, and effectiveness that make problematization or critical reflection difficult" (p. 344). In this review, I have tried to integrate disparate literatures which, taken together, offer a more positive image of the potential for school principals to engage in inclusive, transformative practice. When wedded to a relentless commitment to equity, voice, and social justice, administrators' efforts in the tasks of sensemaking, promoting inclusive cultures and practices in schools, and building positive relationships outside of the school may indeed foster a new form of practice. The critical and theoretical guideposts have been set; the proof will be in the corpus of empirical work on administrative practice in the service of diversity that hopefully will emerge in the coming future.

Note

[1] This characterization does not quite represent the situation with regard to students with disabilities. For these students, a dual system of education has persisted for decades, and the current emphasis on "full inclusion" represents the drive toward a unitary, not a divided, system of education that includes both "special" and "regular" education students

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Author

CAROLYN J. RIEHL is assistant professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro; cjriehl@uncg.edu. Her interests include school organization and administration, administrative discourse, and equity in schooling.

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