

Measuring Principal and Teacher Cultural Competency: A Need Assessment of Three Proximate PreK-5 Schools

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Abstract : Throughout the United States and within a myriad of demographic contexts, students of color experience the results of systemic inequities as an academic outcome. These disparities continue despite the increased resources provided to students and ongoing instruction-focused professional learning received by teachers. The researcher postulated that lower levels of educator cultural competency are an underlying factor of why resource and instructional interventions are less effective than desired. Before implementing any type of intervention, however, cultural competency needed to be confirmed as a factor in schools demonstrating academic disparities between racial subgroups. A needs assessment was designed to measure levels of individual beliefs, including cultural competency, in both principals and teachers at three neighboring schools verified to have academic disparities. The resulting mixed method study utilized the Optimal Theory Applied to Identity Development (OTAID) model to measure cultural competency quantitatively, through self-identity inventory survey items, with teachers and qualitatively, through one-on-one interviews, with each school's principal. A joint display was utilized to see combined data within and across school contexts. Each school was confirmed to have misalignments between principal and teacher levels of cultural competency beliefs while also indicating that a number of participants in the self-identity inventory survey may have intentionally skipped items referencing the term oppression. Additional use of the OTAID model and self-identity inventory in future research and across contexts is needed to determine transferability and dependability as cultural competency measures.

Keywords : cultural competency, identity development, mixed-method analysis, needs assessment

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