

Developing Equity and Social Justice Leaders in Educational Leadership Preparation Programs:
A Three-Manuscript Analysis of Program Practices, Faculty Pedagogy, and Conceptualizations
of Social Justice Leadership

A Dissertation

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by

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Abstract

This dissertation is comprised of three manuscripts and presents a line of research aimed at contributing to the development of aspiring leaders' social justice competences in hopes of improving the educational experiences of historically marginalized students in U.S. public schools.

The first manuscript examines educational leadership preparation program emphases, pedagogical approaches, and needs regarding equity and social justice competence development. This study elicited program coordinators' perceptions on four key social justice competences and found they were optimistic about their capacity to develop aspiring leaders for effective practice in diverse contexts. Analysis of the data, however, revealed disparities between reported emphasis and pedagogies, suggesting the preparation may lack theoretical grounding and the transformative learning experiences capable of developing equity and social justice leadership competences. The study captured the contemporary preparation program landscape and provides a moment-in-time snapshot which will serve the field as a benchmark point for comparison in future research.

The second manuscript systematically reviewed the empirical research on social justice leadership to understand how the field of educational leadership defines and frames the disruptive leadership orientation. The literature search of peer-reviewed journals from 2010 to 2021 yielded 25 empirical research studies of relevance to the topic. Analysis of the literature identified precursors to social justice leadership, a better understanding of its applied definition, as well as insight into how leaders develop social justice leadership orientations. The findings include that the field "defines" social justice leadership as leadership that recognizes the unequal circumstances of marginalized groups in schools due to race, class, gender, disability, sexual

orientation (and other historically and currently marginalized conditions), and acts to eliminate those inequalities by redistributing resources and fighting injustice for the ultimate aim of creating equitable schools and advancing human rights. The findings also reveal a coherent or commonly-held definition would only go so far in bringing the field closer to providing ideal support for social justice leadership competence development.

The third manuscript is a multi-case study of preparation program faculty that explores the relationship between faculty mindsets and instructional design to understand how equity and social justice learning experiences become manifest. The findings reveal a strong relationship between faculty equity and social justice commitments and their approaches to their courses. Faculty continuously make slight changes to activities to further align the course with their mindsets and utilize discourse, simulations, and case studies to complement a core group of assignments. The faculty in each case were influenced by their backgrounds and lived experiences in prioritizing what was most important and central to their commitments. In case one, that was observed in the ways he challenged dominant structures and centered students and scholars of color. In case two, that was observed in the ways she emphasized equity for all school stakeholders. In case three, that was observed in the ways he developed awareness of sociopolitical contexts and how those contexts would influence leadership decision making.

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APPROVAL OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation, “Developing Equity and Social Justice Leaders in Educational Leadership Preparation Programs: A Three-Manuscript, Analysis of Program Practices, Faculty Pedagogy, and Conceptualizations of Social Justice Leadership,” has been approved by the Graduate Faculty of the School of Education and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my beautiful friends and everyone who ever said, “You got this!”

También le dedico este trabajo a mi familia, que aunque no me entienden muy bien, ni saben de qué se trata esto, siempre me han apoyado y están muy orgullosos.

And to all the kids who have been left behind.

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**Overview of Three Manuscripts Examining Social Justice Leadership in Educational
Leadership Preparation Programs**

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Overview of Three Manuscripts Examining Social Justice Leadership in Educational Leadership Preparation Programs

Every student in U.S. public schools should have access to an excellent education. When schools strive for equity and excellence, virtually all students in those schools thrive with no patterns of differences in academic success based on race, ethnicity, culture, neighborhood, income, or home language (Howard, 2019). Much of the challenge of creating equitable and socially-just public schools is overcoming entrenched institutions and systems which perpetuate inequities. While most of these barriers exist beyond the school building or district, school leaders, through their stewardship, are still able to impact student outcomes (Grissom et al., 2021; Leithwood et al., 2004). Highly efficacious principals have been found to ameliorate inequities in educational opportunities resulting from bias, systemic racism, and historical injustice (DeMatthews, 2016). For educational leadership preparation programs (ELPPs), this provides an opportunity for ensuring that aspiring leaders develop the competences which will result in effective, equitable, and socially-just practices.

Statement of the Problem

By design or by negligence, the educational enterprise in the U.S. has produced different results for different groups of students (Reardon, 2013). For many students, families, and communities, the process of schooling has been an experience in violent assimilation with students asked to lose or deny their languages, cultures, literacies, and histories (Paris & Alim, 2017). The systemic and structural nature of this outcome has ensured that students of color continue to suffer the effects of inequity and injustice today. Simply put, U.S. public schools continue to fail historically marginalized students (DeMatthews, 2016; Theoharis, 2007). The rising call to close achievement gaps and improve student outcomes has forced school, district,

state, and national leaders to work towards ensuring that historically marginalized students not only have the same educational opportunities as other students, but that the opportunities they are exposed to address their needs and allow them to flourish. Accordingly, ELPPs have moved to redesign in ways that best develop aspiring leaders' equity and social justice competences (Taylor et al., 2009).

Well-prepared leaders contribute to a school's overall success and have positive impacts on student outcomes (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Grissom et al., 2021). Good leadership alone, however, is not enough to dismantle the historically embedded structures which perpetuate inequities. The status quo has not been effective for all students, so new approaches are required to equip leaders with the tools necessary for success (DeMatthews, 2016). Social justice leadership may serve to address the persistent gaps in education opportunities as it is a framework oriented towards disrupting the very systems that perpetuate the inequities (Theoharis, 2007).

To date, not enough is known about how prepared in-service leaders are when they take on the stewardship of K-12 public schools. Nor do we know how effective ELPPs have been in their approaches to developing social justice leadership competences. The field of educational leadership has shifted towards equity and social justice, with most program coordinators reporting optimism about their approaches to social justice competence development (Dexter et al., 2022), but that optimism seems premature or unfounded as ELPPs have largely failed to coalesce around one coherent definition of, or framework for, social justice leadership, underutilize essential instructional tools, and lack the necessary resources and training (Moragomez et al., 2022). Research is still needed in every aspect of the educational leadership continuum, from recruitment of aspiring leaders, preparation of aspiring leaders, effectiveness of

in-service leaders, professional development of in-service leaders, and leader retention. The aim of this dissertation is to better understand the educational leadership landscape as it pertains to social justice and equity, to understand how it is defined and operationalized, uncover faculty pedagogical approaches to embedding equity and social justice learning experiences, and capture an estimation of current ELPP capacity to produce effective leaders.

Literature Base

Equity- and Social Justice-focused School Leadership

Leadership for social justice provides the theoretical and conceptual framework for equity-focused practices, steering organizations in ways that facilitate accounting for biases, identifying and dismantling systems that are racist, perpetuate inequality, and disadvantage groups of students (Jean-Marie, 2008; Khalifa et al., 2016; Shields, 2010; Beachum & Gullo, 2020). While empirical evidence showing direct effects of social justice leadership on student outcomes remains limited, numerous studies have illustrated how schools with large numbers of minoritized students, primarily Black and Brown students, successfully met the needs of all students (Howard, 2019). Studying how racially, economically, and linguistically diverse schools improved student outcomes, Howard (2019) found race-conscious visionary leaders were a common thread among the participating schools. The leaders in the study had an “authentic and unyielding belief in students’ success (p. 136). Like those leaders, social justice leaders work to improve schools’ organizational structures, physical appearances, staff and faculty morale, and relationships with students and other stakeholders. Through the promotion and implementation of culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies, social justice leaders meet the needs of increasingly diverse students in (increasingly) diverse communities, eliminating deficit-based mindsets and demanding school environments that celebrate and deploy diversity as a resource

(Khalifa et al., 2016). Today's inequities are viewed as products of historically embedded structures that purposely create two unequal results which cannot be eliminated in "one stroke" (Zhang et al., 2018, p. 58).

Educational Leadership Preparation Programs

After addressing numerous critiques about their capacity to properly prepare school leaders (Farkas et al., 2003; Levine, 2005;), many ELPPs responded by reflecting and redesigning programs to meet the demands of the accountability era (Cheney & Davis, 2011). Driven primarily by research on leadership practices evidenced in *good* schools, some ELPPs coalesced around the common characteristics of those programs attended by leaders who were deemed successful (Orr & Orphanos, 2011). Darling-Hammond and colleagues (2009), for example, explored the approaches of eight innovative principal development programs "that are known to address key issues in developing strong leaders" (p. vii). Using in-depth, case study methodology, the authors found the pre-service programs shared the following common features:

- research-based content that is aligned with standards and focused on instruction, organizational development, and change management;
- curriculum coherence linking goals, learning activities, and assessments around a set of shared beliefs, values, and knowledge about effective organizational practice;
- field-based internships with expert supervision;
- problem-based learning pedagogical strategies such as case methods, action research, and projects that link theory to practice and provide reflection opportunities;
- cohort structures which promote collaboration, teamwork, and mutual support;

- mentoring or coaching;
- collaboration between institutions and school districts to create coherence between learning and practice as well as pipelines for recruitment, preparation, hiring, and induction.

Campanotta and colleagues (2018) explored five exemplary programs through interviews with directors and found that key design elements included selective admissions requirements; coursework and method of delivery which is current, aligned to standards, and includes simulated applications and real-time situations; targeting of quality candidates pre-selected by districts with open enrollment; and a cohort that progresses as an interactive team. In both studies, participation in an exemplary program led to increased learning about effective leadership practices and engagement in those practices.

Numerous studies, however, have shown ELPP graduates are still unprepared to lead effectively in diverse schools and unable to demonstrate rudimentary understanding of the surrounding discourse (Young et al., 2009). Equity- and social justice-focused preparation programs are growing in number, but are still uncommon (Laura, 2018). Accordingly, it stands to reason that leaders in the field lack the theoretical base to practice leadership in equity- and social justice-oriented ways.

Making Sense of Equity, Social Justice, & Related Terms

Perhaps contributing to the current incoherence in ELPPs' conceptualization and operationalization of equity- and social justice-minded leadership is the complexity regarding social justice and its related terms. Many leadership frameworks and theories concerned with social justice have emerged and are often used interchangeably. While most, if not all, can be organized within a social justice umbrella, they are distinct and emerged independently from

critical studies in various fields. These include, but are not limited to, transformational leadership, transformative leadership, Critical Race Theory (CRT), culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL), applied critical leadership (ACL), LatCrit, servant leadership, ethical leadership, and democratic leadership. Equity and social justice leadership *as praxis*, practice informed by reflection, encompasses many characteristics of the above frameworks, sharing the common trait of being antiracist, inclusive, culturally responsive, and transformative (Gooden & Dantley, 2012; Horsford, 2011; Jean-Marie, 2008; Santamaría, 2014; Tillman, 2008). As the practice of equity and social justice leadership continues to remain contextual, experiential, and largely defined by each individual school or community (Bogotch, 2002; Zhang et al., 2018), a cohesive, widely held definition remains elusive.

Overarching Conceptual Framework for the Dissertation

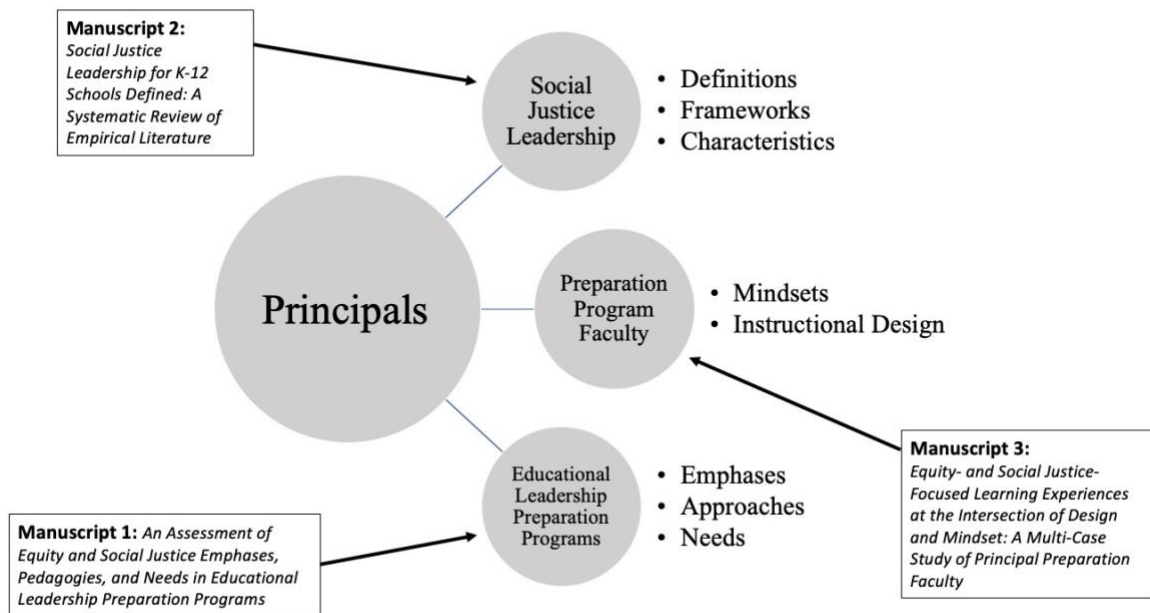
In ELPPs, recruitment efforts can be designed to recruit aspiring leaders who are predisposed to social justice orientations. However, it is unrealistic to believe ELPPs have the capacity or resources to do so in successful and sustainable ways. Accordingly, ELPPs must mostly rely on the teaching and development of social justice competences pre-service. This dissertation focuses on the ways the ELPPs and their faculty navigate the program structures to provide social justice learning experiences and produce leaders able to meet the needs of today's diverse schools.

The primary purpose of this dissertation is to contribute novel understandings to the field of educational leadership that will result in eliminating marginalization in schools and gaps in educational opportunities. The increasingly diverse makeup of student populations within U.S. schools where students of color now represent over half of the population (Guillaume et al., 2019; Minkos et al., 2017; National Center for Education Statistics, 2022) suggests school

leaders must be prepared to lead in diverse school contexts. The overarching framework centers school leaders, pre- and in-service, as catalysts to school improvement and improved student outcomes. School leaders, however, must learn to practice complex leadership that will disrupt the status quo and not perpetuate inequities. Their learning, in the form of knowledge, skill, and competence development, will be influenced by the ELPP they attend, the capacity and approaches of faculty within the ELPPs, their level of commitment to equity and social justice, and their understanding of social justice leadership when they begin their practice. As such, the studies in this dissertation were designed to capture the current state of ELPP efforts to develop equity and social justice competences, to assess how faculty design and deliver their courses to ensure students are exposed to equity and social justice learning experiences, and to better understand how social justice is defined and framed in educational leadership contexts. Figure 1 illustrates the relevant pathways to social justice leadership and situates the three manuscripts within that conceptualization. Pre- and in-service leaders' paths to effective social justice leadership practice will be contingent on the design and approaches of ELPPs, the capacity of social justice-oriented instructors to design and deliver meaningful learning experiences, and their own social justice leadership competences as well as commitments.

Figure 1

Aspiring Leader Pathways to Social Justice Leadership, Annotated with the Contribution of Each Dissertation Manuscript



Manuscript Summaries

Manuscript 1: Social Justice Competences in Educational Leadership Preparation

Programs: An Assessment of Relative Emphasis, Pedagogies, and Needs

Through a needs assessment survey of the 600+ principal preparation programs in the U.S., the study rendered a national picture of ELPP emphasis, pedagogical approaches, and needs in regard to a suite of social justice competences. With an n of 107, and a representative sample of respondents, the study captured the degree to which program coordinators perceive they are addressing the development of social justice competences, as well as an analysis of their collective efforts. The findings reported were primarily descriptive, but included statistical analysis of the relationships between categorical variables.

The results indicate there are many ELPP program coordinators who feel they are addressing social justice competences successfully, dedicating a whole course or multiple

courses to equity and social justice competence development. However, the primary and secondary learning activities used in their programs reveal an overreliance on less active, traditional pedagogies, illustrating a missed opportunity to complement the traditional teaching practices with active or interactive learning tools that might better serve to bridge theory and practice. With program coordinators also reporting they lacked the necessary resources, professional development, and the instructional tools, to properly develop student competences, the overall findings indicate principal preparation for social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion competences remains inconsistent across U.S. ELPPs.

Manuscript 2: Social Justice Leadership Practices for K-12 Schools Defined: A Systematic Review of the Empirical Literature

The focus of the systematic literature review is to better understand how the field of educational leadership defines and frames social justice leadership. The literature search parameters helped identify 25 relevant studies. Analysis of the studies revealed consistently cited sources in the social justice literature. The authors included in the review relied on published studies from the early 2000s covering various theories, frameworks, and types of leadership. The primary definition of social justice leadership within the studies included in this review is based on Dantley and Tillman's (2006) and Theoharis's (2007) descriptions which identify race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other marginalized conditions as areas central to leadership practices. More recent contributions in the literature, such as democratic practices and critical citizenship expand the reach and focus of social justice leadership. Taken together, they facilitated drawing a consensus definition (to the degree that a consensus definition is possible). The field characterizes social justice leadership as leadership that recognizes the unequal circumstances of marginalized groups in schools due to race, class,

gender, disability, sexual orientation (and other historically and currently marginalized conditions), and acts to eliminate those inequalities by redistributing resources and fighting injustice for the ultimate aim of creating equitable schools and advancing human rights. Further, the review identified the social justice leadership frameworks and models cited by the authors. They include frameworks to guide ELPP approaches and practices; frameworks to guide the work of K-20 social justice educators; assessment tools for ELPPs; and theoretical frameworks the authors apply as research lenses in their work.

Manuscript 3: Equity- and Social Justice-Focused Learning Experiences at the Intersection of Design and Mindset: A Multi-Case Study of Faculty Approaches to Principal Preparation

This multi-case study captured the perspectives of three equity- and social justice-minded faculty on the importance of equity and social justice learning experiences and their efforts to ensure aspiring leaders have access to experiences which develop their capacity to practice equity and social justice leadership. Data for this study were collected via semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed that faculty commitments to equity and social justice converge with instructional design decisions to produce meaningful learning experiences for their students. The faculty maintained the integrity of an inherited course while making the necessary tweaks in alignment with their equity and social justice mindsets and approaches to instruction. Many factors influenced their instructional design, including their identities, lived experiences, student demographics, course format, and program characteristics. The study found an influential relationship between mindsets and instructional design approaches and the resulting student experience. The faculty in the cases made design decisions to decenter whiteness and traditional paradigms, center scholars of color and students from marginalized communities, and leaned on

their commitments to equity and social justice to deliver transformative learning experiences for the purpose of developing aspiring leaders' leadership competences. This study contributes to the field of educational leadership by capturing the relationship between faculty mindsets and their instructional planning and actions which embed learning experiences that develop school leaders' ability to lead for social justice and equity within their schools, a topic which remains under explored in the literature base, as well as the unique set of conditions that resulted in well-received and effective equity- and social justice-infused family and community engagement courses in one ELPP. The study also identified research opportunities including the exploration of race pedagogies in educational leadership.

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**An Assessment of Equity and Social Justice Emphases, Pedagogies, and Needs in
Educational Leadership Preparation Programs**

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Abstract

Purpose: As urgency grows for social justice-minded school leaders, understanding how educational leadership preparation programs (ELPPs) develop social justice competences is increasingly important. This study captured program coordinators' perceptions of their emphasis, pedagogical approaches, and needs on four key social justice competences from the literature to better understand the current pedagogical landscape regarding social justice competences, reveal areas of need, and establish a knowledge base to drive future research.

Methodology: Data were collected through a 17-item, needs assessment survey created for this study, including three open-response questions eliciting program needs. The survey was sent to the program coordinators of all 605 known U.S. ELPPs at the time of study launch.

Findings: The findings indicate principal preparation for social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion competences remains inconsistent across U.S. educational leadership preparation programs, where some programs report success while others report lacking the capacity, resources, and/or design intentionality.

Research implications: Analysis of the data reveal opportunities for future research and suggest integration of experiential learning and active/interactive pedagogies in the middle of the classroom-to-workplace continuum would serve to complement traditional pedagogies in service of developing social justice leadership competences.

Keywords: educational leadership, school leadership, principal preparation, social justice leadership

An Assessment of Equity and Social Justice Emphasis, Pedagogies, and Needs in Educational Leadership Preparation Programs

Our public schools embody a dual existence, serving as springboards to success and prosperity for some while remaining obstacles to success for others (Reardon, 2013). This dual reality points to the unfulfilled promise of the common school as the great equalizer capable of fulfilling the decades-long pursuit of equitable educational opportunities for all students (Noguera, 2020). School leaders, alongside the teachers they lead, play an important role in eliminating opportunity gaps and creating the ideal learning environments where all students are able to thrive. By extension, it is critical to prepare aspiring leaders for practice oriented towards equitable and socially-just outcomes.

Persistent disparities in student outcomes suggest: 1) that traditional, status quo, practice(s) do not sufficiently serve the educational needs of all students or today's diverse schools and communities, and 2) to date, efforts to ameliorate the discrepancies are producing less-than-desirable results. These disparities lead to inequitable life outcomes as student achievement is a strong predictor of future income and social mobility (Hanushek et al., 2019). The purpose of state-sanctioned schooling, often viewed as a pathway to economic success, has also been a "largely assimilationist and often violent White imperial project, with students and families being asked to lose or deny their languages, literacies, cultures, and histories in order to achieve in school" (Paris & Alim, 2017, p. 1). The structurally and historically embedded inequities present in U.S. schools cannot be eliminated in one stroke and require complex, intentional decision-making and leadership practices (Zhang et al., 2018, p. 58). Leaders' capacity to practice equity- and social justice-focused leadership and tackle these challenges depends on factors such as an educational leadership preparation program's (ELPP) approach to

teaching and developing the necessary competences. A growing demand for the success of all students, particularly Black, Brown, disabled, and economically disadvantaged students, has forced the field of educational leadership to move away from traditional approaches to facilitate the creation of critical spaces and discourses, empower communities, and adopt social justice leadership practices (DeMatthews, 2016).

The purpose of this study is to understand the pedagogical landscape regarding equity and social justice in the U.S., how ELPPs teach leadership for equity and social justice, and to inquire into their readiness to develop those competences in aspiring leaders. This study employs a needs assessment to identify the gap between expected and actual practice as perceived by program coordinators in hopes of improving ELPP performance in producing leaders able to address the educational needs of all students. This national study not only captures the current pedagogical landscape regarding social justice competences in the U.S., it reveals unexpected areas of need and opportunities for meaningful reflection and change in educational leadership as well as principal preparation.

Literature Review

Educational Leadership Preparation Programs

The field has repeatedly published studies detailing the characteristics of effective or exemplary ELPPs (see Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Crow & Whiteman, 2016; Cosner, 2019) and the general leadership competences necessary for an effective principalship (see Hallinger & Heck, 1996, 1998; Leithwood et al., 2004; Leithwood et al., 2020; Hitt & Tucker, 2016). ELPPs build up aspiring leaders' competences through emphasis and pedagogical approaches (Taylor et al., 2009; Osterman & Hafner, 2009), selecting which specific competences to develop based on the program's focus, the standards to which they are

held accountable, and the leadership frameworks that inform their curricula (i.e., Hitt & Tucker's Unified Framework, The Ontario Leadership Framework, etc.).

When it comes to leading diverse schools, however, researchers report ELPPs have only marginally integrated equity and social justice themes, leaving many graduates feeling unprepared to lead effectively (Theoharis, 2007; Young, 2015). As traditional preparation programs outnumber equity- and social justice-focused programs, it is likely that practicing leaders lack the theoretical base to practice leadership in equity- and social justice-oriented ways (Laura, 2018). This is a matter of great concern as student populations grow more diverse and our developing understanding of disparities in educational opportunities and academic achievement begins to expose the complex and systemic nature of the problem. As such, aspiring leaders are expected to show greater capacity than ever and will need a sophisticated set of skills for problem solving in today's educational contexts, emphasizing the importance and urgency of candidate preparation. Current leadership approaches have ensured that disparities in educational opportunities and academic achievement persist in most K-12 schools. However, alternative approaches where visionary leaders have an unyielding belief in students' abilities, acknowledge race, and engage families and communities, have been effective in closing achievement gaps and helping students succeed (Howard, 2019).

Over the last two decades, a body of scholarship has emerged contributing to our understanding of leadership for equity and social justice. Capper and colleagues (2006) offer an aspirational framework for program assessment, describing what equity and social justice leaders must know, believe, and do. Their framework suggests ELPPs must attend to critical consciousness, knowledge, and practical skills focused on social justice to prepare leaders for social justice practice. Furman (2012) has conceptualized social justice as praxis, critical

reflection, and action based on personal, interpersonal, communal, systemic, and ecological realities to develop the necessary capacities in aspiring school leaders. McKenzie and colleagues (2008) describe a deliberate ELPP design that aims to develop leaders who raise academic achievement of all students, help students become critical citizens, and create inclusive heterogeneous classrooms.

Fitzgerald and Militello (2016) suggest programs need to be even more intentional in providing social justice experiential learning opportunities and community representative curriculum, shifting the laboratory of learning from the classroom to the community to work *with* communities, as opposed to *in* them. Hernandez and Marshall (2016) found that aspiring leaders respond in equitable and socially just ways to specific pedagogical practices such as readings, reflections, discussion, equity audits, and goal and implementation plans. Equity-oriented activities, for example, resulted in aspiring principals setting goals of academic achievement for all students even with varied and often ill-informed views on race and social class. Standards, often serving as de facto curriculum (Young et al., 2017), have also been updated to include equity, social justice, diversity, and inclusion emphases in ELPP's development of aspiring leaders. Rivera-McCutchen (2014) found that most existing equity- and social justice-oriented leaders are either already predisposed towards those orientations or were self-taught, yet ELPPs continue to be viewed as primary sites for social justice leadership development and may serve to fill the remaining ranks of school leaders with equity- and social justice-minded leaders (Laura, 2018).

Equity- and Social Justice-focused School Leadership

School leadership is key to overall school success and positive student outcomes (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood et al., 2004; Grissom et al., 2021), but indicators of

effective leadership, such as aggregated measures of student achievement or other school-level variables, do not necessarily demonstrate that all students benefit equally from effective leadership as it is commonly defined. The structurally and historically embedded inequities present in U.S. schools require complex, intentional decision-making and leadership practices. Leadership for social justice allows for a dual focus on effective leadership and social justice, providing guidance for equity-focused practices and outcomes, steering organizations in ways that facilitate accounting for biases, identifying and dismantling systems that privilege, are racist, and perpetuate inequality (Beachum & Gullo, 2020; Jean-Marie, 2008; Khalifa et al., 2016; Shields, 2010). In a companion study of ELPP approaches to leadership competence development, programs were also found to lack fully realized curricula, pedagogies, or approaches necessary for development of equity and social justice competences (Dexter et al., 2022). The conceptual complexity around social justice terminology (DeMatthews & Izquierdo, 2020) may be a hindrance to building the capacity of ELPPs to develop equity- and social justice-minded leaders.

Social justice leadership is a relatively recent term arising from concern for social equity, reorganization, and progress to ensure certain members of society received their fair share (Lewis, 2016). As a leadership framework, it is viewed as a source of leadership practices that are attentive to disrupting inequitable systems “by actively engaging in reclaiming, appropriating, sustaining, and advancing inherent human rights of equity, equality, and fairness in social, economic, educational, and personal dimensions” (Goldfarb & Grindberg, 2002, p. 162). It is understood and accepted that social justice leaders guide schools to transform school cultures, expose inequities and injustices, and advocate for marginalized students (Theoharis,

2007). Dantley and Tillman (2010) pose these five characteristics as embodied by social justice leaders:

1. Consciousness of the broader social, cultural, and political context of schools;
2. Critique of the marginalizing behaviors and predispositions of schools and their leadership;
3. Commitment to the more genuine enactment of democratic principles of schools;
4. Moral obligation to articulate a counterhegemonic vision or narrative of hope regarding education; and
5. Determination to move from rhetoric to civil rights activism. (p. 23)

Leadership orientations concerned with social justice or social justice-adjacent principles are often misconstrued, misunderstood, or used interchangeably. While most, if not all, may be organized within a social justice umbrella, each of these orientations are distinct and should be understood individually. These include, but are not limited to, transformational leadership (see Hallinger, 1992; Leithwood, 1994), transformative leadership (Freire, 1998; Brown, 2004; Shields, 2010), Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Bell, 1992), culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) (see Ladson-Billings, 1995; Khalifa et al., 2016; Gooden & Dantley, 2012), applied critical leadership (see Santamaría & Santamaría, 2015), and servant leadership (see Crippen, 2004; Greenleaf, 1970). Each of the above aims to improve social and/or educational experiences for all students. Most entail some degree of adoption of social, cultural, and political awareness and activism that would need to be shared at the building level through the mission, vision, and culture of the school. Culturally responsive school leadership, currently the most ubiquitous of the frameworks, “serves as a liberatory and affirmative systemic leadership response to the

historically based ways that schools have contributed to or been complicit in the marginalization of Indigenous and minoritized students and communities” (Khalifa, 2018, p. 600).

Equity and social justice leadership *as praxis*, practice informed by reflection, captures the necessary commonality of being antiracist, inclusive, culturally responsive, transformative (and transformational), and leading to equitable outcomes if and where inequities are present (Gooden & Dantley, 2012; Horsford, 2011; Jean-Marie, 2008; Khalifa, 2012; Santamaría, 2014; Tillman, 2008). By “connecting social justice to educational leadership, we can *direct* these possibilities to creating new and just communities” (Bogotch, 2002, p.154). However, the research literature is not yet definitive on the practice of equity and social justice leadership. Zhang and colleagues (2018) conclude the mostly qualitative and descriptive literature suggest it is subject to individual and contextual factors and largely defined by each individual school or community. In his treatise on the theoretical and practical possibilities of social justice, Bogotch (2002) insists meanings of social justice are subjective and objective criteria do not even exist. While the work of adopting an equity or social justice orientation requires building towards coherence and includes critique and reinvention, “social justice breathes meaning and life into our educational practices” (Bogotch, 2002, p. 153).

Conceptual Framework and Research Questions

In this study, we use the acronym JEDI (justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion) to convey our current understanding and conceptualization of equity and social justice. Justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are common threads between leadership frames and the foundational theoretical tenets that guide equity and social justice leadership. This includes foundational sources such as CRT (Bell, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1998) and emancipatory education (Freire, 1998), as well as social justice leadership (Jean-Marie, 2008), transformative

leadership (Shields, 2010), and CRSL (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Khalifa et al., 2016). A review of international research on school leadership for social justice, equity, and diversity confirms this conceptual structure (Gumus et al., 2021), revealing the most commonly used concepts for social justice research are leadership, social justice, principal, diversity, equity, inclusion, inclusive education, multicultural education, culturally responsive leadership, and moral leadership. In the review, the terms are primarily clustered as: (1) leadership for social justice, equity, and diversity, (2) inclusive education leadership, and (3) race and identity and transformative leadership. For purposes of simplification as well as getting to the heart of what equity and social justice leadership specifically means for educational leadership, the authors chose to use the acronym JEDI to encapsulate the desired leadership competences. We define JEDI leadership as leadership encompassing practices which aim to:

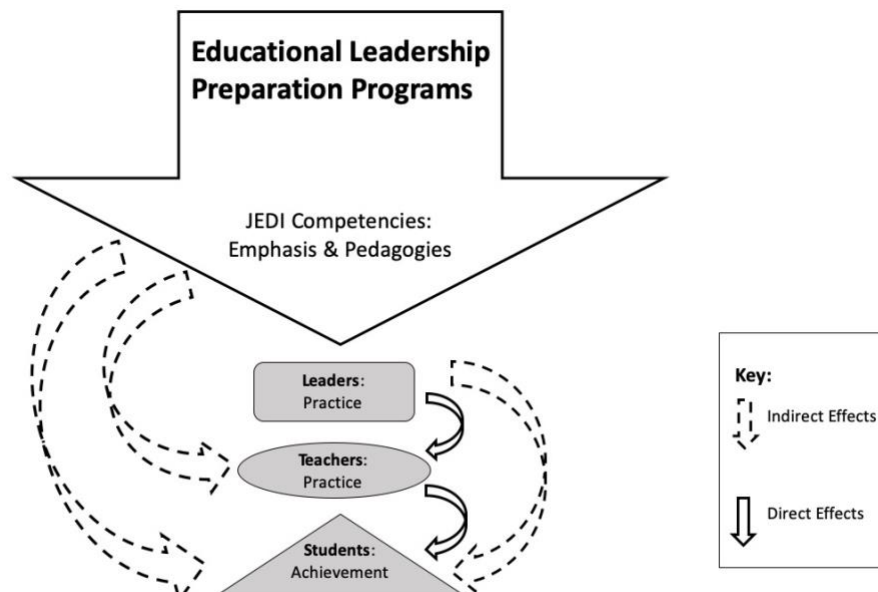
- promote social **justice** in schools and the broader society by identifying and dismantling systems that privilege, are racist, and/or perpetuate inequality;
- account for biases and provide **equitable** educational opportunities for all students, especially those who have already been subjected to inequities;
- foster **diversity** and affirming climates by promoting culturally sustaining pedagogies and asset-based mindsets and;
- ensure **inclusion** of marginalized students, marginalized groups of students, and all stakeholder voices.

The conceptual framework for this study arises from a broad view of ELPPs' influence on aspiring principals (Orr & Orphanos, 2011) and principals' indirect effects (Supovitz et al., 2010; Leithwood et al., 2004; Leithwood et al., 2020; Grissom et al., 2021) on student outcomes. Figure 1 is a representation of the relationships between ELPPs, school leaders, teachers, and

students, illustrating an ecosystem of direct and indirect pathways between them. The design of programs, with emphasis on particular competences and skills, such as those oriented towards JEDI, and the pedagogy necessary for their development, directly impacts leaders and their eventual practices in schools, which in turn indirectly impacts teachers and students through a cascading effect. This close examination of ELPP approaches to JEDI competences is warranted as demands for school leaders to produce equitable student outcomes grow increasingly urgent.

Figure 1

JEDI Leadership Preparation Effects Model



To learn about the current status of U.S. ELPPs’ design, emphasis, and pedagogies, our research questions focus on the top portion of Figure 1, investigating the ways in which ELPPs enact their foci on JEDI competence development in their students:

1. What do educational leadership preparation programs report as their emphases on the development of JEDI competences?

2. What do educational leadership preparation programs report as their pedagogical approaches to the development of JEDI competences?
3. What do ELPPs need in order to improve the development of JEDI competences of aspiring leaders in their programs?

Methods

Data were collected through a 17-item needs assessment survey created for this study. To accurately capture ELPPs' preparation of students to address inequity and injustice, the survey design included a suite of four JEDI competences. The authors drew from the current literature on leadership for social justice, equity, inclusion, and diversity (as well as empirically supported leadership competences) to generate the following four JEDI competences:

(a) Leading for equity and inclusion within schools (Shields, 2010; Furman, 2012; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Hitt & Tucker, 2016)

(b) Leading schools in diverse communities (Khalifa et al., 2016; Horsford et al., 2011; Santamaría, 2014)

(c) Leading schools for social justice in the broader society (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005; Jean-Marie, 2008; Jean-Marie et al., 2009)

(d) Recognizing and accounting for implicit bias, microaggressions, and systemic racism (Brooks & Watson, 2019).

Respondents were asked to report the degree of emphasis for each of the four competences. The response options were, "I don't know," "none," "small assignment," "unit assignment," "unit," "whole course," or "multiple course sequence." They were also asked to report the primary and secondary learning activities used to develop the competences, and given

open-ended question regarding program needs in developing equity/social justice-minded leaders.

Data Collection and Sample

The survey was sent out through Qualtrics Software (December, 2019) to the program coordinators of all known U.S. ELPPs (N=605). Program coordinators' names and contact information were identified by searching each program's website. We received 116 responses of which nine were incomplete, resulting in a sample of 107. The 107 participating institutions constitute a representative sample of U.S. ELPPs in that they include all aspects of the spectrum of educational leadership preparation program characteristics. The sample's diverse characteristics include representation from 34 U.S. states, institutions both private and public, secular and religious, and offering every route to licensure including Master's, Ed.S., Ed.D., Ph.D., certificate, and alternative. The sample includes 57 of the 106 University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) members at the time of data collection, and 5 institutions previously recognized for excellence by UCEA/The Wallace Foundation's Exemplary Educational Leadership Preparation Program Award. Further, their diversity is illustrated by the participation of institutions from every U.S. geographic region, in all types of institutional settings, with every type of delivery method, as well as institutions recognized as producers of diverse leadership pipelines. Over 75% of programs reported following some combination of state, NELP, and PSEL standards.

In addition to the institutional characteristics shared above, the respondents reported the role(s) which they served in. Asked to check all that apply, the majority of our respondents were either program coordinators/directors, department chairs, or a combination of both (87%). Below are the aggregate sums for respondent roles.

Table 1*Role of Survey Respondents in Aggregate*

Role	Count	%
Clinical faculty	18	12
Department chair	23	15
Program coordinator/director	76	51
Tenure-track faculty	31	21
Dean	1	1

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed with Stata (16.1 for Mac) and NVivo (Version 12). Descriptive statistics and frequencies were generated to represent current ELPP practices. Chi-square tests of independence were used to systematically evaluate the relationships between emphasis on each of the four JEDI competences and each of the following categorical variables of program descriptors: degree of emphasis, primary learning activities, degrees offered, standards used, modes of delivery, and a dummy *need* variable generated to indicate which programs reported at least one need. For all cases including frequencies less than 5, Fischer's exact test was applied in lieu of the chi-square test to assess the null hypothesis and confirm statistical significance.

Independent t-tests were conducted to determine if there were differences in emphasis (considered a continuous variable for t-test purposes) for each JEDI competence based on whether or not the programs reported a need. Data assumptions were tested for violations. We applied the Shapiro-Wilk test to confirm normal distributions and Levene's test for homogeneity of variances to confirm equal variances by level of need (yes = 1, no = 0).

Multiple rounds of inductive coding were used to classify the open-ended responses describing ELPPs' needs. In the first round of coding, actual needs were separated from non-

needs. In the second round of coding, the needs were analyzed and sorted by type of need. Next, the responses were coded for the specific nature of the need. A final round of coding categorized the needs by locus of control, internal or external to the program, regarding the ability to create the necessary changes.

Findings

Research Question 1: What do educational leadership preparation programs report as their emphases on the development of JEDI competences?

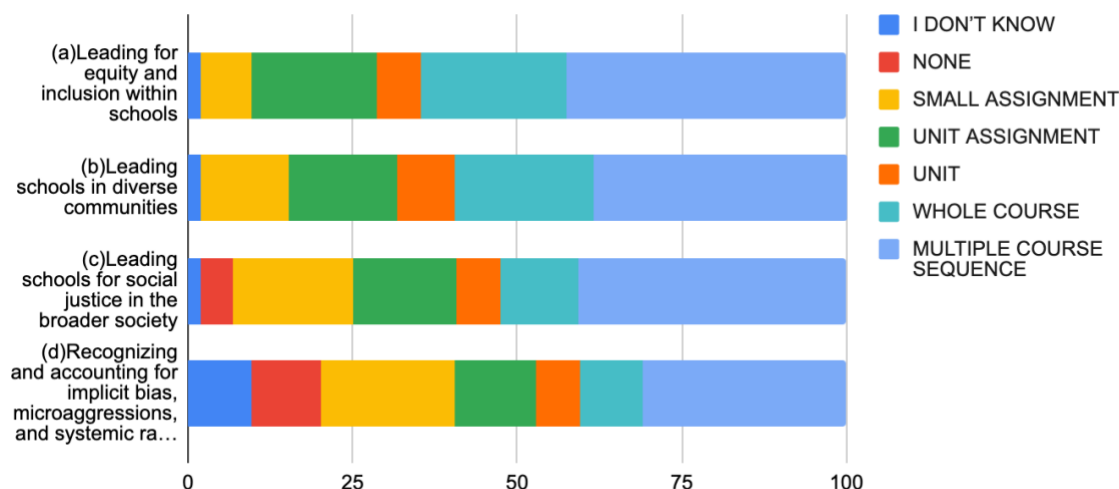
Program coordinators reported on the degree of emphasis (amount of time) devoted in their program to the four JEDI leadership competences. For each of the four competences, program coordinators most often indicated that they were addressed across a multiple-course sequence (see Figure 2). This suggests that all of these topics are raised at some level of emphasis within some variety of courses already taught, perhaps integrated with other topics more so than the focus of those courses. The emphasis of a whole course was the next most selected option for the first two competences, (a) *leading for equity and inclusion within schools* and (b) *leading schools in diverse communities*. In contrast, for competences (c) *leading schools for social justice in the broader society*, and (d) *recognizing and accounting for implicit bias, microaggressions, and systemic racism*, the next most selected option was one small assignment.

A majority of programs reported emphasizing the development of competences (a) through (c) either as a whole course, or within multiple courses. Less emphasized was competence (d) *recognizing and accounting for implicit bias, microaggressions, and systemic racism*, where the majority of programs addressed this competence through a small assignment, a unit assignment, or a unit (if addressed at all). Including “I don’t know” and “none” responses, emphasis for competence (d) was as likely a small assignment or less as it was a whole course or

greater. Of note, about 16% of respondents did not know their program’s emphasis for these four areas, and another 16% of respondents stated their ELPP put no emphasis at all for the last two competences, on (c) leading for social justice in the broader society and (d) recognizing and accounting for implicit bias, microaggressions, and systemic racism.

Figure 2

(RQ1) Emphasis for Teaching JEDI Competences



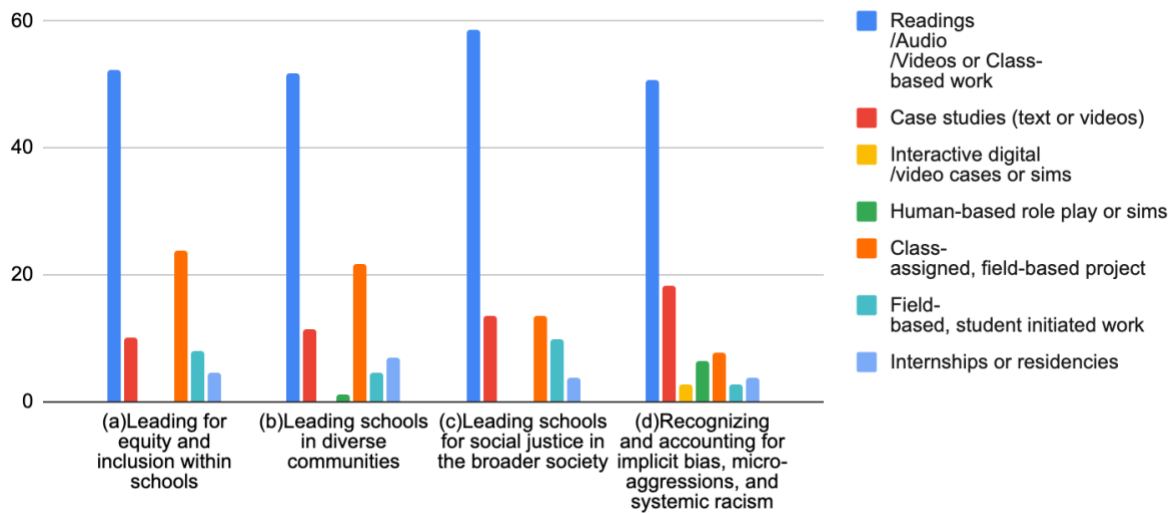
Research Question 2: What do educational leadership preparation programs report as their approaches to the development of JEDI competences?

Program coordinators also reported which one pedagogical tool, or mode of instruction, was primarily used to teach each competence. They were given nine options along a classroom-to-workplace continuum ranging from traditional, classroom-based activities and learning tools to field-based, on-the-job experiences (see key at right in Figure 3), along with “other” and “I don’t know.” The primary mode of instruction most often selected for all four competences was *Readings/Audio/Videos or Class-based work*. The second-most selected option among these four competences varied, but was either *Class-assigned, field-based project* or *Case studies (text or videos)*. For all four competences, the least often selected options were the two learning activities

in the middle of the continuum, *Interactive digital/video cases or sims* and *Human-based role play or sims*.

Figure 3

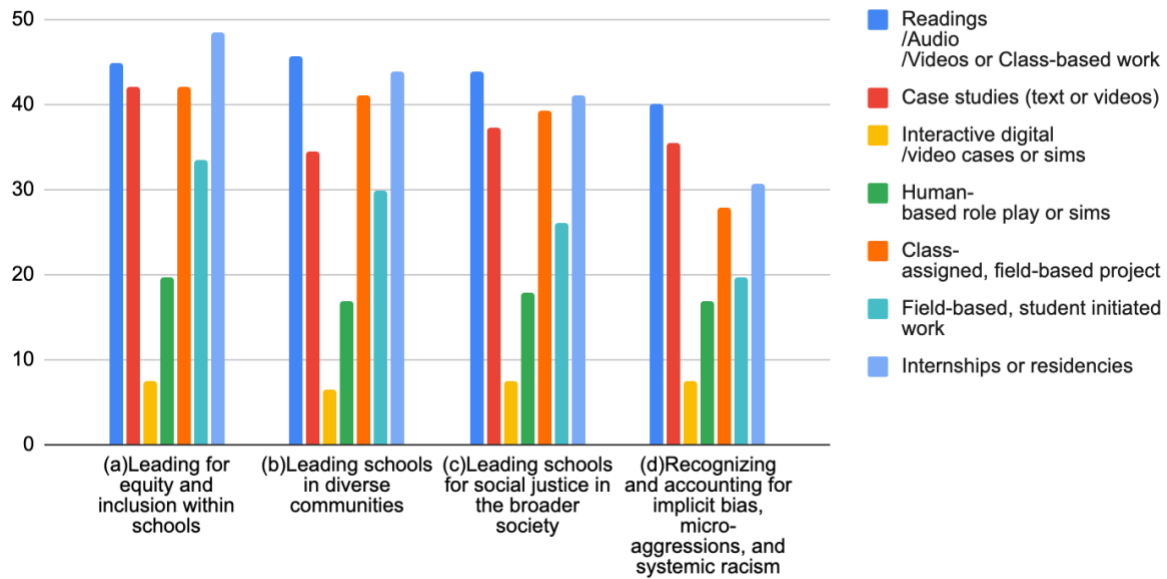
(RQ2) Primary Approaches to Teaching JEDI Competences



Program coordinators were also asked to indicate the secondary mode of instruction for each competence, and could check all that apply. For all four competences the most often indicated choices were the same modes they indicated as primary modes, *Readings/Audio/Videos or Class-based work*, *Case studies (text or video)*, but also frequently indicated was *Internships or residencies* (see Figure 4). Again, the least selected activity was *interactive digital/video cases or sims*.

Figure 4

(RQ2) Secondary Approaches to Teaching JEDI Competences



Research Question 3: What do respondents indicate their ELPPs need in order to improve the development of JEDI competences of aspiring leaders?

Open-ended Responses

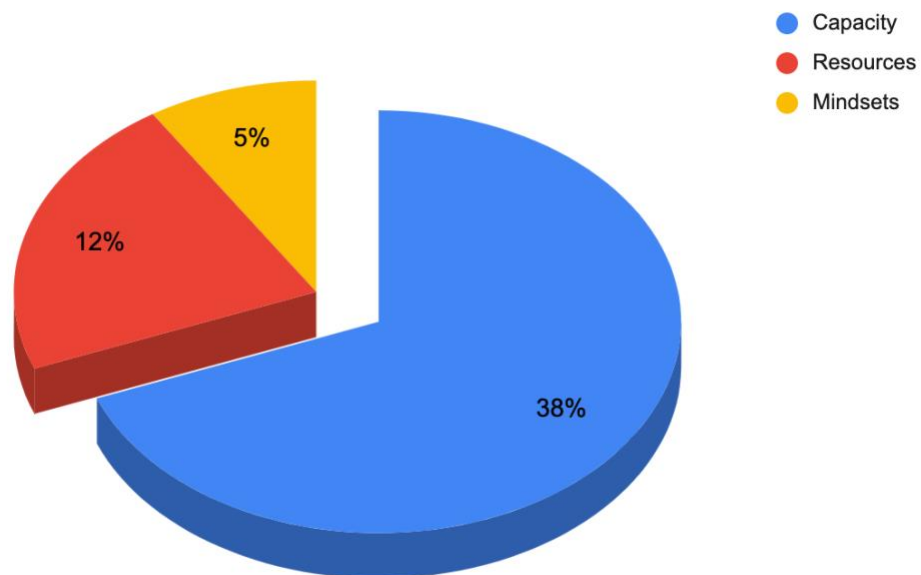
The first round of coding sorted out program coordinators' responses as actual needs versus non-needs, which were then also analyzed to inform our overall findings. Examples of non-need responses were statements related to program status and were sorted as *none* (e.g., "we do not have needs in this area"), *ongoing* (e.g., "this is something we are working on"), *strength* (e.g., "we already do this well"), or *agree* (e.g., "equity is very important"). These non-need responses made up 45% of total responses; about 7% of total responses were coded as *agree*, and an additional 5% were coded as an area of *strength*.

In the second round of coding, the needs responses (i.e., the remaining 55% of all total responses) were analyzed and sorted by type of need. Three categories of types of needs were identified: capacity, resources, and mindsets (see Figure 5 for their relative percent of total responses). Responses suggesting improvements to the program's quality and effectiveness were

coded as *capacity*, and constituted the majority at 38% of the overall total. All responses stating a lack of data, capital, materials, personnel, or time were coded as *resources*, making up 12% of the overall total. To be coded as *mindset*, the response indicated faculty and/or others involved in program decision-making were not yet buying-in or were actively pushing back against equity/social justice needs. This was the least prevalent need, at 5% of the total.

Figure 5

Distribution of Reported Needs for Teaching JEDI Competences Grouped by Type of Need

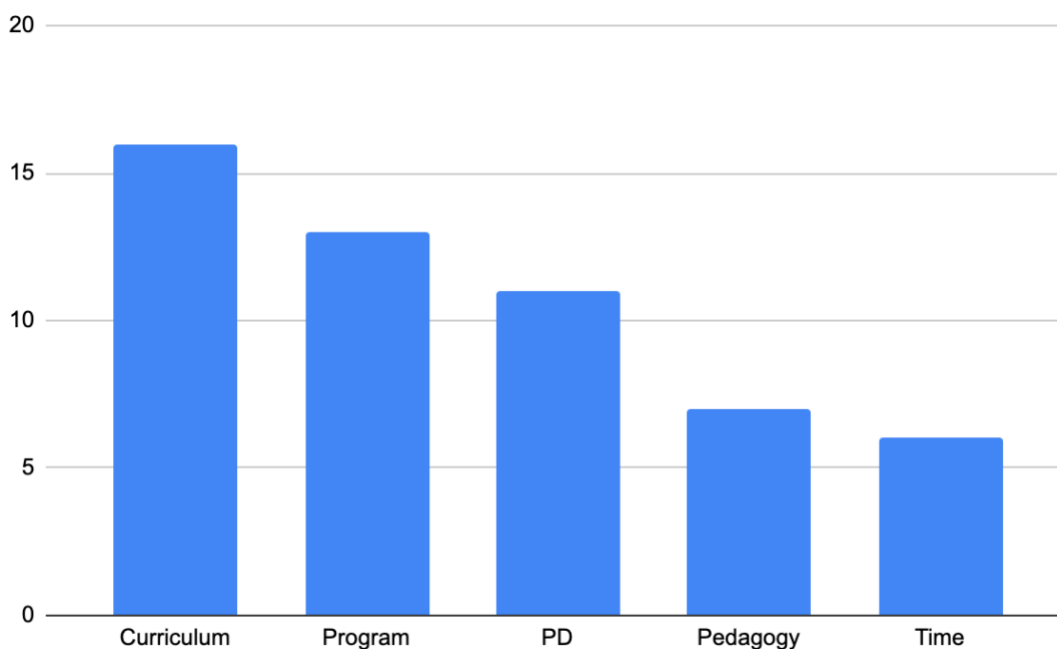


Next, all need responses were re-coded to identify the specific nature of the need. In this round of coding, the needs were found to be related to either curriculum, the design or makeup of the program, faculty professional development, new pedagogical approaches and/or pedagogical tools, and time (in general in order to complete work and collaborate, but also for students in their field experiences) (see Figure 6). To a lesser extent, not included in the figure, they also reported needs related to funding support and personnel.

A final round of coding categorized the needs by locus of control, internal or external to the program, regarding the ability to create the necessary changes. The authors deemed the majority of stated program needs would be considered internal (i.e. under a program’s ability to create the necessary improvement).

Figure 6

Distribution of Needs for Teaching JEDI Competences Grouped by Nature of Need



Upon final review of the open-ended responses, the authors noted a few additional takeaways. When comparing codes for all responses (needs and non-needs), “none” was by far the most prevalent response (almost double the next most prevalent, which was curriculum). The programs reporting no needs were evenly distributed throughout the United States with no discernable patterns. The programs resided in rural and urban states and regions, and offered online, hybrid, and face-to-face delivery formats. Five of the 29 programs reported equity/social justice as a strength of their program; all 5 indicated use of interactive pedagogies, serve rural

pipelines, and with one exception, follow PSEL standards. Four of the 5 are located in traditionally conservative U.S. states.

Relationships Between Variables

To determine if a difference between observed data and expected data is due to a relationship between the variables or to chance, chi-square and Fischer’s exact tests of independence were used. The null hypothesis, the two variables are independent, was tested for associations between the pairs of categorical values. For most variables, there was no statistically significant association between the primary learning activities used per competence and need expression, types of degrees offered and need expression, or modes of delivery and need expression.

There were a few exceptions. There is a statistically significant association between the degree of emphasis for competence (a) *leading for equity and inclusion within schools* and need expression (see Table 2). In addition, the relation between the emphasis on the JEDI competence and the primary learning activity used to develop it was also statistically significant for competences (c) *leading schools for social justice in the broader society* and (d) *recognizing and accounting for implicit bias, microaggressions, and systemic racism* (see Table 3).

Table 2

Relationship Between Need Expression and Degree of Emphasis by Competence

Degree of Emphasis	No need	Need	Chi-square / Fischer’s Exact
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competence (a)			
I don't know	1	1	$\chi^2(5, N = 98) = 11.24, *p = .032$
Small assignment	4	4	
Major assignment	14	4	
Unit	1	5	
Whole course	14	8	
Multiple course sequence	17	25	

Note. $* = p < .05$.

Table 3

Relationship Between Degree of Emphasis and Primary Learning Activities by Competence

Degree of Emphasis	Rdgs/ Audio/ Vids or class- based work	Case studies	Interactive digital/video cases or sims	Human- based role play or sims	Class- assigned, field- based project	Field- based, student- initiated work	Internships/ Residencies	I don't know	Chi-square / Fischer's Exact
(competence c)									
I don't know	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	$\chi^2(25, N=82)$
Small assignment	12	4	0	0	2	0	0	0	$= 102.23,$
Major assignment	4	2	0	0	2	3	1	0	$*p = .048$
Unit	4	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	
Whole course	5	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	
Multiple course sequence	23	2	0	0	5	2	2	0	
(competence d)									
I don't know	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	$\chi^2(48, N=77)$
None	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	$= 139.51,$
Small assignment	12	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	$**p = < .001$
Major assignment	5	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Unit	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	

Whole course	1	1	0	4	1	0	0	0
Multiple course sequence	15	3	0	1	4	2	3	0

Note. * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .001$.

Discussion of Findings and Implications

In general, our findings support previous assertions seen in the educational leadership literature that ELPPs need further capacity to prepare leaders to address social justice needs in K-12 schools. Most respondents stated specific program needs or that they are currently in the process of improvement, indicating many ELPPs are in active cycles of revision and redesign and open to intervention and change. This reveals an opportunity for ELPPs to use the findings in this study as a point of reference to drive future redesign efforts for program improvement. By benchmarking against our findings, ELPPs may revisit their theories of action to ensure the emphasis and pedagogical approaches for development of JEDI competences are up to the task of preparing aspiring principals for the increasing demands of the principalship. Further, while the majority of needs respondents stated are under program control, the results suggest that a lack of resources or capacity prevents, or has prevented, programs from making any necessary changes. These results perhaps can provide support for institutional funding requests, in the hopes of improving future ELPP performance in producing equity and social justice leaders.

Considering the inability of school leaders to close achievement gaps (or more appropriately, opportunity gaps) would suggest self-reported, high emphasis on JEDI competences is not consistent with school leader preparedness or current educational outcomes (Theoharis, 2007; Reardon, 2013; Reardon et al., 2019; Hanushek et al., 2019). On the surface, ELPPs' emphasis on JEDI competences is at the very least adequate for competences (a) through (c). As reported by program coordinators, ELPPs are dedicating time in multiple courses to

students' development of JEDI competences. Based on survey design, the authors can deduce coordinators' intentions to indicate a degree of emphasis across multiple courses, but it is not possible to know if that is the equivalent of *more than* a whole course. This signifies program coordinators do perceive their ELPPs are engaged in the development of JEDI competences, with adequate or considerable emphasis on JEDI-oriented competences in accordance with existing standards. However, the inadequacy of the standards themselves, often criticized for reductionist construction for giving only broad guidance and potentially having a negative impact on JEDI competence development (Celoria, 2016; DeMatthews, 2016), indicates ELPP approaches may be lacking not only emphasis, but tailored pedagogies, critical frameworks, and intentionality as well. Deliberate design having long been accepted as a necessary characteristic of effective principal preparation programs (McKenzie et al., 2008), shifting some ELPPs' perceptions of their relative capacity to develop effective JEDI-minded leaders may be a necessary first step.

Analysis of the reported primary and secondary teaching activities illustrates that ELPPs continue to rely on traditional class-based activities (such as lecture, readings, and discussions) and the field experiences to develop aspiring leaders. Pedagogical activities residing in the center of the classroom-to-workplace continuum (see key of Figure 3) are underutilized as complementary tools, perhaps missing opportunities to provide rich, contextual learning experiences in lieu of additional supervised time in the field. Research shows that traditional, lecture-heavy pedagogy is not the most efficacious approach to developing aspiring leaders' knowledge, skills, or leadership self-efficacy (Anderson et al., 2018). Thus, ELPPs' actual approaches to developing learners' JEDI competences are at the very least as important as emphasis, as some approaches may negatively affect the benefit of whatever time is spent in

courses to develop aspiring leaders' competences. Maximizing student learning is dependent on not only emphasis, but also the ideal combination of instructional techniques.

The paucity of active and interactive pedagogies within faculty repertoires provides an additional, yet unreported need. This confirms previous research showing that ELPPs continue to practice traditional pedagogies which rely on texts, classroom discussions, and field experiences to prepare aspiring leaders (Anderson et al., 2018; Byrne-Jiménez et al., 2017). Approaches which include problem-based learning, individual and group reflection, class-assigned, field-enacted projects, action research and inquiry projects, and analyzing case studies are well supported in the research base and accepted as best practices for preparing leaders for school improvement (Ni et al., 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Second generation active learning approaches (Cosner, 2020) such as clinical simulations, digital simulations, and class-embedded, field-enacted leadership experiences offer new ways to build upon previous research about the efficacy of active learning approaches (Crow & Whiteman, 2016; Orr & Orphanos, 2011). Recent publications support the use of interactive pedagogies such as digital cases, clinical simulations, and digital simulations to develop decision-making skills and other leadership competences (see Dexter et al., 2020).

Adult learning theory offers that transformative learning occurs as the result of disorienting experiences that challenge one's views and experiences (Mezirow, 1997), prompting new meaning-making through reflection and contextualized learning experiences. The top three primary approaches reported—readings; class-assigned, field-based projects; and case studies—may not provide the building blocks necessary for transformational or powerful learning experiences. For example, the field-based learning opportunities that are readily available to learners may not take them out of familiar settings. Readings and cases do not make learning

visible as students engage in meaning-making, which diminishes instructors' ability to gain insight into learners' thinking and provide effective guidance and feedback. The degree to which aspiring leaders engage authentically with difficult topics such as equity, social justice, race, racism, and privilege may determine whether they are able to adopt or develop JEDI mindsets. As exposure to purposeful, instructor-facilitated active/interactive experiences may lead to the knowledge building and change needed of pre-service leaders, these findings further underscore existing calls for the field to develop efficacy measures for approaches to developing JEDI competences (see Brown, 2006; Gooden & O'Doherty, 2014). Unfortunately, these findings do not provide the sorely needed empirical research on pedagogies, but in capturing the breadth and depth of ELLP's preferred pedagogical approaches for developing JEDI competences it highlights areas primed for research and/or intervention.

Qualitative analysis of reported equity/social justice needs indicate the main priority for ELPPs is curriculum, which suggests ELPPs are addressing the long-held critique of failing to adapt curriculum to address the new demands of leading in diverse schools (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). It also confirms that the standards-based curriculum these ELPPs report may not adequately prepare aspiring leaders (Celoria, 2016; DeMatthews, 2016). Respondents also reported needing professional development, including training in a variety of pedagogies, and additional resources (including data, research, and greater support from the field). These findings beg the question, where might additional materials, resources, and training come from? Currently, external funding opportunities within the field of educational leadership are limited to fiercely-competitive IES grants and the occasional support from non-profit organizations. To wit, the Wallace Foundation's University Principal Preparation Initiative committed \$47 million to develop models for principal preparation, but only included 7 preparation programs out of the

600+ in the U.S. alone. Our educational homes, UCEA and AERA (American Educational Research Association) Division A, offer workshop and professional development, but do not have the capacity to provide ELPPs with the necessary resources for impactful reform. If ELPPs are to meet the demand for equity- and social justice-minded leaders capable of eliminating disparities in educational opportunities new means and methods will need to be marshaled toward this end.

The statistically significant relationships between the degree of emphasis on the competence and need expression in the case of competence (a) *leading for equity and inclusion within schools*, as well as primary learning activities in the cases of competences c) *leading for social justice in the broader society* and (d) *recognizing and accounting for implicit bias, microaggressions, and systemic racism* are interesting and suggest two things. First, ELPPs are increasingly comfortable with addressing issues of educational equity and are indeed in the process of weaving forms of equity competence development in their course offerings, revealing continuous efforts to improve and indeed willingness to report needs for equity and social justice development. Second, it is confirmation that ELPP's conceptualizations of issues related to social justice and systemic racism are still quite nascent, and when these competences are taught, it is done primarily through a default model of traditional pedagogies at the extremes of the school-to-workplace continuum consisting of readings, discussions, and the residencies.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way programs delivered principal preparation and the murder of George Floyd and ensuing Black Lives Matter movement has changed our understanding of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. They likely pushed ELPPs to reconsider all aspects of their program, from delivery format to curriculum and focus to keep

pace with the dynamic, evolving nature of these two social phenomena. Even so, it does not diminish our need to understand where things were or the importance of capturing and analyzing ELPPs at a moment in time.

Even if ELPPs are addressing JEDI competences in multiple courses, the pedagogical approaches and adherence to shallow standards may prove such emphasis inadequate in the end. The findings in this study support the argument that standards-based expectations, without heightened application of active/interactive pedagogies and critical leadership theories may not adequately prepare aspiring leaders for the demands of today's schools. Leadership matters, but as disparities in achievement persist despite efforts to eliminate them, and pre-service leaders continue to be prepared through traditional pedagogical approaches and internship experiences, it stands to reason a new (and audacious) paradigm shift in principal preparation is warranted to construct a more effective approach. How ELPPs prepare aspiring leaders is critically important because well-prepared, highly-efficacious leaders just might be able to bridge the divide between the two types of schooling in the U.S. and fulfill the promise of the common school. While ELPPs clearly have mobilized to begin to answer the call for action on equity and social justice in educational leadership, the results in this study indicate the preparation of aspiring leaders for the demands of today's schools leaves considerable further ground to travel.

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**Social Justice Leadership for K-12 Schools Defined: A Systematic Review of the Empirical
Literature**

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Abstract

The field of educational leadership has studied the significant impact of leadership on student achievement. However, our collective understanding of leadership for addressing the historical marginalization of underprivileged students and persistent inequities in educational opportunities continues to emerge. While this type of leadership is often referred to as social justice leadership, how it is defined remains to some degree unsettled. The specific purpose of this study was to identify the empirical research on social justice leadership to discern the ways social justice leadership is defined and framed in educational leadership contexts. The literature review of peer-reviewed journals from 2010 to 2021 yielded 25 empirical research studies of relevance to the topic. Analysis of the literature identified precursors to social justice leadership, a better understanding of its applied definition, as well as insight into how leaders develop social justice leadership orientations. The findings include that the field “defines” social justice leadership as leadership that recognizes the unequal circumstances of marginalized groups in schools due to race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation (and other historically and currently marginalized conditions), and acts to eliminate those inequalities by redistributing resources and fighting injustice for the ultimate aim of creating equitable schools and advancing human rights.

Keywords: social justice, leadership, equity, principals, K-12, preparation programs

Social Justice Leadership for K-12 Schools Defined: A Systematic Review of the Empirical Literature

The question of how K-12 leadership should address the persistent inequity of educational outcomes in U.S. public schools continues to plague the field of educational leadership (Brown, 2004, 2006; Furman, 2012; Gooden & Dantley, 2012; Gooden & O'Doherty, 2014; Guillaume et al., 2020; Theoharis, 2007). Since the early 2000s, the literature has repeatedly called for a shift towards a new approach to educational leadership that is critical, disruptive, and responsive to the effects of racism and oppression on historically marginalized students (DeMatthews, 2016; Jean-Marie, 2008; Marshall & Oliva, 2006). Increasingly, but inconsistently, referred to as social justice leadership, this approach to leadership adopts a consciousness of the broader social, cultural, and political contexts of U.S. schools and assumes a responsibility to all students in order to address marginalization (Theoharis, 2007), discipline gaps (DeMatthews, 2016), and access to educational opportunities (Furman, 2012). As one of the few frameworks in educational leadership that extends across multiple dimensions of schooling, social justice leadership has been positioned as a direct response to the shortcomings of the status quo (DeMatthews, 2016). Its inclusion in preparation program mission and vision statements is widespread, yet the field does not show consistent application of an informed, widely accepted model of social justice leadership in educational leadership preparation program (ELPP) curriculum, pre-service leader competence development, or in-service leader development. In spite of the increased policy emphasis on leadership there is still limited research on the ways in which in-service leaders address the inequitable outcomes for marginalized students and students of color (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Guillaume et al., 2020; Ishimaru & Galloway, 2014; Theoharis, 2007). Integral to addressing this specific gap in

the literature is the necessity to first understand how social justice leadership is currently defined or framed for application in educational leadership and K-12 contexts.

Literature Review

Historical Context of Social Justice in Educational Leadership Preparation

At the outset of the twenty-first century, social justice and leadership oriented towards social justice outcomes became an educational administration concern (Furman & Gruenewald, 2004; Shields, 2003) due to public demands for accountability around persistent and increasing achievement and opportunity gaps. Terms closely related to social justice, such as equity, diversity, and inclusion also grew in response to the inequitable conditions and limited access to high-quality, culturally-responsive educational opportunities. At the intersection of justice and education, social justice leadership was amplified for its potential to address educational issues that not only spill over into society, but are also a result of social structures that perpetuate them.

Initially, social justice concerns in education were focused on equality for women and minorities, but over time, those concerns evolved to include the interests of all historically marginalized students and/or groups of students (Lewis, 2016). Social justice issues remained largely deprioritized within ELPPs in favor of traditional topics such as organizational theory, the principalship, school law, finance, and human resources (Shoho, 2006). As calls for intervention and the infusion of social justice into all aspects of principal preparation grew in the '90s and leading up to the *No Child Left Behind* accountability era, ELPPs increasingly embedded social justice aims into program mission statements and course curricula (Hytten & Bettez, 2011)—to wit, the majority of job announcements for academic educational leadership positions in the 2020s include social justice language in its description of the position expectations (see University Council for Educational Administration, n.d.). ELPPs across the

U.S. are emphasizing and embedding social justice competences across their courses, with a majority of surveyed programs dedicating a whole course or multiple assignments over two or more courses to social justice competences (Moraguez et al., 2022). However, in aggregate little is known about the effects of ELPP emphasis or the degree of coherence in the wider field of educational leadership.

Social justice leadership, proffered as a model for redressing achievement and opportunity gaps, has received increasing scrutiny, as discussions of it have become more frequent and prominent. Capper and Young (2014) identified limitations of educational leadership for social justice, illustrating the field's emerging conceptualizations of a social justice leadership framework. They remarked that social justice practitioners lacked an understanding of inclusive practice, often advocating for special populations and neglecting others. The authors suggest social justice leaders should make student learning and achievement the center of their work and become attuned to the range of student differences and their intersections. Such critiques of social justice leadership are still in alignment with current research and reflect continued inconsistencies in ELPPs' capacity to develop social justice leaders (Moraguez et al., 2022) as well as the ability of practitioners to affect social justice outcomes, highlighting theoretical, methodological, and empirical needs in the field.

Explicating Social Justice and Social Justice Leadership

Rooted in theology (Hudson, 1981, as cited in Jean-Marie et al., 2009), social work (Koerin, 2003, as cited in Jean-Marie et al., 2009), as well as curriculum and pedagogy (Freire, 1998, 1996, as cited in Jean-Marie, 2009), social justice has long been a topic of study in various fields including law, philosophy, and economics. While difficult to define, there is a long history in the United States of educators centering their work around what could be considered concepts

of social justice (Jean-Marie, 2008), with aims targeting the needs of underserved students. Bell (1997) characterizes education for social justice as “both a process and a goal” with “full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs” as the ultimate objective (p. 3). Today, social justice leadership remains a complex, multiform orientation dependent on individual and contextual factors, subject to local school and community input (Bogotch, 2002; Yukl, 2010; Zhang et al., 2018).

Social justice in educational leadership is further defined by those individuals who pursue it such that they “believe that injustice in our schools and communities is neither natural nor inevitable” and that leaders must “reach for greater opportunity and justice for all children” (Larson & Murtadha, 2002, p. 135). More recently, reacting to calls for research on how leaders enact social justice in practice, Dantley and Tillman (2010) conducted a synthesis of the social justice leadership literature and posed these five characteristics as embodied by social justice leaders:

- (1) a consciousness of the broader social, cultural, and political context of schools;
- (2) the critique of the marginalizing behaviors and predispositions of schools and their leadership;
- (3) a commitment to the more genuine enactment of democratic principles of schools;
- (4) a moral obligation to articulate a counterhegemonic vision or narrative of hope regarding education; and
- (5) a determination to move from rhetoric to civil rights activism. (p. 23)

Complicating our understandings of social justice leadership (a leadership orientation) are the related concepts such as social justice (a communal effort dedicated to creating and sustaining a fair and equal society in which each person and all groups are affirmed) and social justice leaders

(persons who address inequitable outcomes for marginalized students) and adjacent terms like equity, inclusion, and diversity. Learning about one concept of social justice/social justice leadership often requires learning about multiple at once as they are largely entangled in the existing literature base. This systematic review was designed with purposely narrow parameters to try to explicate social justice leadership from social justice in other contexts and from the leaders who enact social justice in practice.

Purpose and Guiding Questions

The primary purpose of this systematic review of literature is to identify the empirical research on social justice leadership to bring to light current definitions and frameworks for social justice leadership since Dantley and Tillman's 2010 synthesis that captured characteristics of social justice as embodied by social justice leaders. The following questions guided the initiation and development of the study: What is social justice leadership? How is social justice leadership defined in recent research? Building on that synthesis, a secondary purpose is to provide scholars, practitioners, and ELPPs an additional resource to inform preparation and school improvement efforts in order to promote coherence in the field. Such coherence could provide directions for new research on principal practices or ELPP approaches to competence development.

Methods

The fundamental research question is: How does the field define or frame social justice leadership? And secondarily is there coherence for that definition in the social justice leadership literature? The systematic review of literature was conducted following the procedures outlined by Petticrew and Roberts (2008), who define a systematic review as one that strives to comprehensively identify, appraise and synthesize all the relevant studies on a given topic.

Accordingly, the literature search and selection process followed a predefined procedure and criteria, and the relevant data were extracted and synthesized. In an effort to avoid bias, a transparent set of criteria was applied and interpreted consistently across stages, and all identified studies were double-screened. The review was also benchmarked against Hallinger's (2013) three-level analytic rubric to ensure full inclusion of key literature review features which include a statement of purpose, sources and search procedures, data extraction, data analysis, presentation of findings, limitations of the review, and implications of the review. This study of social justice leadership definitions and frames follows established research traditions and contributes to foundational literatures in new ways by addressing the need for timely synthesis and analysis of social justice leadership research (Marshall & Rossman, 2016) to inform preparation, practice, and action in the field of educational leadership.

Design of the Search Procedure

The search was conducted digitally across multiple platforms, which included Google Scholar and the following education databases: (1) ERIC, (2) Academic Search Complete, (3) Education Full Text, (4) Education Index Retrospective: 1929-1983, (5) Education Research Complete, (6) Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, and (7) SPORTDiscus. Google Scholar was used in tandem with the academic databases to intentionally cast a wide net and ensure inclusion of multi-disciplinary depositories and any relevant grey literature. In the academic databases, titles, abstracts, and keywords were searched using Boolean operators for the key words and combinations of the key words: social justice AND (leader* OR admin* OR principal*). Using the available search tools, the results were limited to peer-reviewed, U.S. studies published in English between 2010 and 2021 with full-texts. The specific dates were selected purposely as a manageable range which would build from the landmark research of the

2000s (see Brown, 2004; Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Furman, 2012; Theoharis, 2007), update the research base by capturing the subsequent shifts in the field resulting from the accountability and high-stakes testing era, and bridge the research to the beginning of the Black Lives Matter movement. Search results were narrowed by subject, eliminating all articles not specifically designated as *education* and/or *social justice*. After removing duplicates, the search yielded 261 unique articles. In Google Scholar, the search included “social justice leadership” articles published since 2010. The search yielded an additional 207 relevant articles, of which 12 overlapped with the academic database results and were removed (n=456).

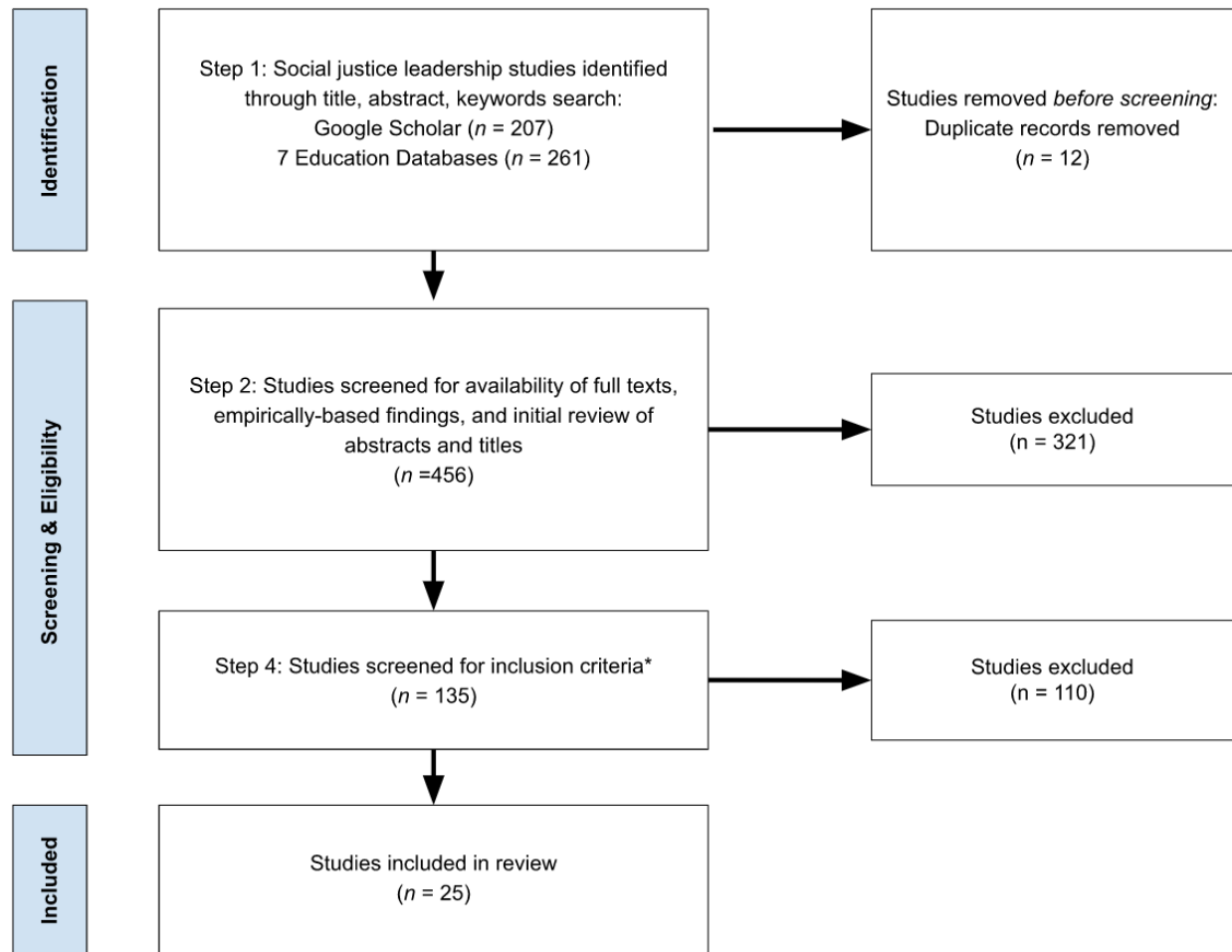
Two rounds of screenings, first of titles and abstracts, and then of full texts, were conducted to ensure the studies met the criteria for inclusion, which in addition to the parameters listed above, included the following criteria:

1. it is about U.S., K-12 school contexts,
2. it is about social justice leadership leadership, *or* closely aligned, adjacent leadership approaches such as equity leadership *aimed* towards social justice outcomes
3. it is building level leadership (no district leaders or superintendents, etc.),
4. it is an empirical study.

The first round of screening titles and abstracts allowed the exclusion of 321 studies from the search results (n=135). Applying the same protocol to the screening of the remaining 135 full texts, 110 additional studies were excluded (n = 25). See PRISMA (Page et al., 2021) flow diagram below.

Figure 1

PRISMA Flow Diagram Showing Selection Process



Note. Adapted from van der Linden et al. (2021).

Extraction Process

In this phase, pertinent information was gathered to answer the research question and describe the evidence base. After selection, each article received a close reading to gain deeper understanding of its focus and contexts. Descriptive metadata such as authors, year of publication, methods, units of analysis, contexts of analysis, and conceptualization of social justice leadership were extracted and recorded (see Table 1). Then, data were scrutinized for evidence of definitions for social justice leadership and/or leadership frames. Text were extracted and imported into NVivo (Version 12) for analysis.

Table 1*Articles Included in Review, Organized by Date Published*

No.	Author(s)	Year	Methodology	Units of Analysis	Context of Analysis	Sample Size	Conceptualization of Social Justice Leadership
1	Reed & Johnson	2010	qualitative case study	principal	the role of spirituality in the enactment of social justice leadership	n=1	"Social justice leadership"
2	Shields	2010	conceptual study	principals	assessing the utility of transformative leadership to enact educational and social change	n=2	"Transformative leadership for social justice"

3	Affolter & Hoffman	2011	qualitative study; autoethnography, narrative inquiry	social justice leadership and antiracist teachers	disrupting the leader versus teacher dichotomy to facilitate equitable and socially just schools; racism	n=1	"Social justice leadership"
4	Khalifa	2013	ethnographic study	school leadership for alternative school at-risk students	promoting parent and student self- advocacy for school inclusion and social justice	n=1	"School leadership advocacy for social justice"
5	Venegas-Garcia	2013	qualitative study; grounded theory	Latina/chicana activist educators	understanding the relationship and intersections of activism, identity, and theories of leadership for social change	n=7*	"Leadership for social change or as conduit to social justice"

6	Ishimaru & Galloway	2014	Delphi technique panel study; literature review	leadership practices	continuum of equity-focused leadership	n=54	"Equity-centered social justice leadership"
7	Santamaría & Jean-Marie	2014	qualitative, phenomenological, case study	principals	how cross-cultural experiences impact their leadership practices	n=5	"Educational leadership for social justice and equity"
8	DeMatthews & Mawhinney	2014	cross case study; secondary analysis	principals	actions, values, and orientations that foster inclusion and social justice	n=2	"Social justice leadership"
9	Rivera-McCutchen	2014	qualitative study	principals	social justice-oriented leaders reacting to teacher prejudice	n=4	"Social justice leadership"

10	Khalil & Brown	2015	case study	administrators within a large urban district	conceptualizing a social justice leadership framework that identifies urban teacher qualities	n=15	"Social justice leadership"
11	DeMatthews	2015	case study	principal	principal's sensemaking leading for social justice and inclusion	n=1	"Social justice leadership"
12	Wiemelt & Welton	2015	qualitative study; counterstorytelling	principal	equity-minded leadership operationalized through social justice for emergent bilingual students	n=1	"Social justice leadership"
13	DeMatthews	2016	literature review	student discipline and suspension data	how school leader biases influence student discipline	unknown	"Social justice leadership"

					decisions		
14	Bishop & McClellan	2016	multicase study	principals	rural school leaders' perceptions and support of LGBTQ students	n=5	"Social justice leadership"
15	DeMatthews & Izquierdo	2016	multiple case study	principals	the role of school leadership in developing inclusive dual language programs	n=6	"Social justice leadership"
16	Peterson & Vergara	2016	qualitative study	Latina/o school leaders	leadership for reduction of educational disparities	n=10	"School leadership for social justice"
17	Bennett & Murakami	2016	exploratory case study; cross-case analysis	principals	analysis of school principals through a heroic and post-heroic	n=4	"Leadership for transforming schools through social justice agendas"

					leadership theory		
18	Albritton, Huffman, & McClellan	2017	multisite case study	principals	perceptions of diversity in high-poverty, rural schools	n=6	"Social justice leader/leadership"
19	DeMatthews	2018	multiple case study; secondary analysis	principals	navigating challenging school- community contexts to practice social justice leadership	n=3	"Social justice leadership"
20	Sun	2019	qualitative study	principals	how Black and Hispanic leaders promote social justice	n=6	"Social justice leadership"
21	Warner	2020	qualitative study	principals	school leaders' awareness of social justice issues	n=6	"Social justice leadership"

22	Guillaume, Saiz, & Amador	2020	qualitative, phenomenological study	principals	how leaders operationalize applied critical leadership to affect social justice change	n=10**	"Social justice leadership praxis"
23	Shields & Hesbol	2020	multiple case study	principals	identifying the inclusive practices implemented for a socially-just education	n=3	"Socially-just leadership"
24	Liou & Liang	2021	qualitative case study	school administrators	social justice beliefs and practices of sympathy based on asset-oriented school leadership	n=4	"Sympathetic leadership as social justice leadership"
25	Okilwa, Cordova, & Haupt	2021	qualitative study	principal	effective principal leadership for refugee	n=1	"Leadership oriented toward equity and social justice"

students

Note. *Only two of the seven were principals and were included in this study. **Four of the participants were in administrative positions at the time of the study, but all graduated from a principal preparation program.

Data Analysis

Overall, basic methods of holistic within-case analysis, cross-case analysis, and conventional and directed content analysis were followed (Cresswell & Poth, 2018; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). This included holistic analysis of each individual case, followed by making decisions relevant to the coding phases, such as the level of analysis, number of concepts to code for, whether to code for existence or frequency of a concept, how to distinguish among concepts, development of rules for coding the texts, what to do with irrelevant information, coding the texts, and analyzing the results. Once extracted and imported into NVivo, data were analyzed in two phases. In the first phase, text was deductively coded according to the research question (see Table 2). In the second phase, text was inductively coded according to emerging themes and patterns to facilitate synthesis and cross-case analysis (see Table 3). Analytic memos were written after every round of coding.

Table 2

Process of Coding for Definition or Framework in Phase 1

Code	Description	When to use	When not to use	Example
Definition	Author(s) cite a definition of social justice leadership from the literature or generate their own	Use when social justice and leadership are combined and isolated from other terms	Do not use when social justice is excluded, replaced with other types of leadership such as transformational leadership	“Social-justice educational leaders are concerned principally with addressing and eliminating marginalization in schools”
Framework	Author(s) cite a working framework for social justice leadership from the literature or generate their	Use when a framework for social justice leadership is identified	Do not use in place of practices or a list of practices; when structure/grouping is missing	“The leaders oriented their practice towards social justice through an emancipatory framework which included...”

Table 3*Process of Coding for Definition or Framework in Phase 2*

Themes	Conceptual Categories	Codes
What is social justice leadership?	social justice leadership characteristics or attributes	social justice leadership
Where does knowledge about it come from?	sources that inform definitions and understandings	sources
How has that knowledge evolved over time?	developments in the literature base	evolution
What type of leadership does it resemble or align with?	transformative leadership as social justice leadership and vice versa	transformative leadership
What is the consensus definition or attributes of social justice leadership?	definitions offered as common, general, or consensus	consensus
How is social justice leadership different from leadership?	ways that social justice leadership is more than leadership	differences
What are or have been the challenges and critiques of social justice leadership?	challenges of social justice leadership	challenges
	critiques of social justice leadership	critiques
What is known about individuals that practice social justice leadership?	social justice leader characteristics or traits	social justice leaders
Where do social justice leadership orientations come from?	origins or social justice leadership orientations	orientation origins
How is social justice leadership enacted by leaders of color?	ways that leaders of color enact their own social justice leadership	leaders of color

How do researchers frame social justice leadership?	epistemological foundations	theory
	purpose for framing	impetus

Positionality Statement

As the sole researcher in this study, I recognize personal reflection along with disclosure of my personal experiences and opinions will serve to identify bias as it presents itself, facilitating navigation of those instances objectively. I am from a historically marginalized and minoritized group and was in some ways a victim of the U.S. public school system. While I generally enjoyed the compulsory years of my education, I later came to realize I had been deprived of a quality education and would spend 28 years (and counting) addressing education gaps. However, I have since been a teacher in the U.S. public school system and find myself a champion of educators and the public schools, seeing them for their potential as much as their shortcomings. As a researcher who focuses on justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion within the field of educational leadership, I am also an insider—one that aspires to disrupt the status quo of inequity-perpetuating traditional leadership.

Results

In attempting to answer the research questions *How does the field define or frame social justice leadership, and is there evidence of coherence in the literature?*, many other related questions were answered as well. Particularly in the second phase of coding, numerous themes emerged that articulate the evolution and theoretical foundations of social justice leadership. The themes also include critiques, challenges, origins of social justice identities, and how leaders of color embody/enact social justice leadership. Below, the results are organized thematically (as seen in Table 3), beginning with the foundations of social justice leadership definitions and ending with social justice leadership frameworks that were identified in the review. Findings

regarding the characteristics and practices of social justice leaders were also located in that literature, but are not discussed herein consideration of length and relation to scope of the fundamental research questions.

The Foundations of Social Justice Leadership Definitions

The studies by the authors of the 25 included papers analyzed in the literature review revealed reliance on numerous sources ranging all the way back to 1935. Among those sources, there were several that were repeatedly included. Primarily, authors relied on published studies from the early 2000s covering various theories, frameworks, and types of leadership. In the second round of coding, text were coded for the citations used to define or describe social justice leadership. The citations given, which were coded as “sources,” are listed below in chronological order (by date published) to capture some sense of the nature of the progression. In Table 4 you will find the list of coded sources, and in Table 5 a list of the top 16 most cited.

Table 4

Sources Coded in 2nd Phase and Their Frequency, Organized by Year Published

Year Published	Author(s)	Frequency
1935	DuBois	1
1977	Dworkin	1
1990	Young	1
1992, 1997	Bell	2
1993/1995	Harris	1
1994, 1995, 2000, 2001	Ladson-Billings	2

1995	Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas	1
1996	Grant & Gomez	1
1997	Fraser	1
2000	Gale	1
2000, 2004	Kumashiro	1
2000	Riehl	1
2001	Larson & Ovando	2
2001	Skrla & Scheurich	1
2002	Bogotch	6
2002	Gewirtz & Cribb	1
2002	Goldfarb & Grinberg	4
2002	Larson & Murtadha	1
2002	Rapp	1
2002	Riester, Pursch, & Skrla	1
2003	Fraser & Honneth	1
2004, 2006	Brown	6
2004, 2010	Shields	4
2004, 2007, 2009	Theoharis	15

2005	Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy	2
2005	Furman & Shields	1
2005, 2007	Kose	2
2006	Brooks & Miles	1
2006, 2009	Dantley & Tillman	7
2006	Jansen	2
2006	Oakes & Rogers	1
2006, 2016	Ryan	3
2007	Brayboy et al.	1
2007	Capper & Fraturra	1
2007	Goddard	1
2008	Dantley et al.	1
2008	Jean-Marie	2
2008	McKenzie et al.	2
2009	Anderson	1
2009	Cooper	1
2009	Gerstl-Pepin & Aiken	1
2009	Jean-Marie, et al.	1

2009	Marshall & Oliva	1
2009	Rawls	1
2009	Wasonga	1
2010	Lopez, González, & Fierro	1
2011	Theoharis & O'Toole	1
2012	Fuller	1
2012	Furman	9
2012	Santamaría & Santamaría	1
2013	Lopez	1
2014	Beabout	1
2014	DeMatthews & Mawhinney	1
2016	Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis	1

Table 5

Top 16 Authors Organized From Most to Least Frequently Cited

Year Published	Author(s)	Number of Citations
2004, 2007, 2009	Theoharis	15
2012	Furman	9
2006, 2009	Dantley & Tillman	7

2002	Bogotch	6
2004, 2006	Brown	6
2002	Goldfarb & Grinberg	4
2004, 2010	Shields	4
2006, 2016	Ryan	3
1992, 1997	Bell	2
2005	Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy	2
1994, 1995, 2000, 2001	Ladson-Billings	2
2006	Jansen	2
2008	Jean-Marie	2
2005, 2007	Kose	2
2001	Larson & Ovando	2
2008	McKenzie et al.	2

Among the authors included in this study, George Theoharis was cited most often by the authors analyzed in the literature review. In the extracted data for phase 1 (the main social justice leadership code), he was cited 55 times. For comparison, the next most referenced author was Gail Furman with 23 citations.

Consensus Definitions and Attributes of Social Justice Leadership

The sources listed above informed the authors' understanding of social justice leadership and allowed them to form a working definition of social justice leadership for their theoretical,

conceptual, and/or research design frameworks. The studies included in the review provided numerous definitions of social justice leadership (see Table 6), most of which are derived from other sources (i.e., they cite other authors). However, in some studies definitions were generated through the process of data collection and/or analysis and presented by authors as novel contributions to the field (those cases are italicized in Table 6).

Table 6

Social Justice Leadership Definitions

Review Study	Cited Source(s)	Definition
DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014	Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Theoharis, 2007	investigates, makes issue of, and generates solutions to social inequality and marginalization due to race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other forms of diversity
Rivera-McCutchen, 2014	Goldfarb & Grinberg, 2002	reclaims, appropriates, sustains, and advances inherent human rights of equity, equality, and fairness
	Brown 2004; Theoharis, 2009	creates inclusive communities, and rejects traditional paradigms for educating historically marginalized populations
<i>Khalil & Brown, 2015</i>	Khalil & Brown, 2015	demands competencies that systematically and equitably meet the cultural, social, emotional, and linguistic needs of diverse communities

DeMatthews, 2015	Wasonga, 2009; Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Furman, 2012; Theoharis, 2007; Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011	interrogates school policies, cultures, and community expectations; identifies oppressive and unjust practices; employs democratic processes to engage marginalized communities; and substitutes unjust practices with equitable and culturally appropriate ones
DeMatthews, 2016	DeMatthews, 2015; Dantley & Tillman 2010	is aware of inequities and unequal circumstances confronted by marginalized groups and is fixated on addressing these inequities
Bishop & Mcclellan, 2016	Brown, 2006; Dantley & Tillman, 2006	investigates factors that cause or perpetuate social inequities or oppression and proposes solutions to eliminate these inequities; disrupts status quo
	Marshall & Young, 2006	fosters a better quality of life for everyone
<i>DeMatthews & Izquierdo, 2016</i>	DeMatthews & Izquierdo, 2016	identifies the various educational and social needs of diverse student and family populations, and acts in an inclusive, fair, democratic, and consistent manner to address those needs despite challenges or obstacles
Peterson & Vergara, 2016	Lopez, 2013	focuses on systemic inequities, radical structural transformation, and moral purpose
DeMatthews, 2018	Fraser, 1997; Fraser & Honneth, 2003; Young, 1990	distributes goods and resources equitably and recognizes marginalized communities fully

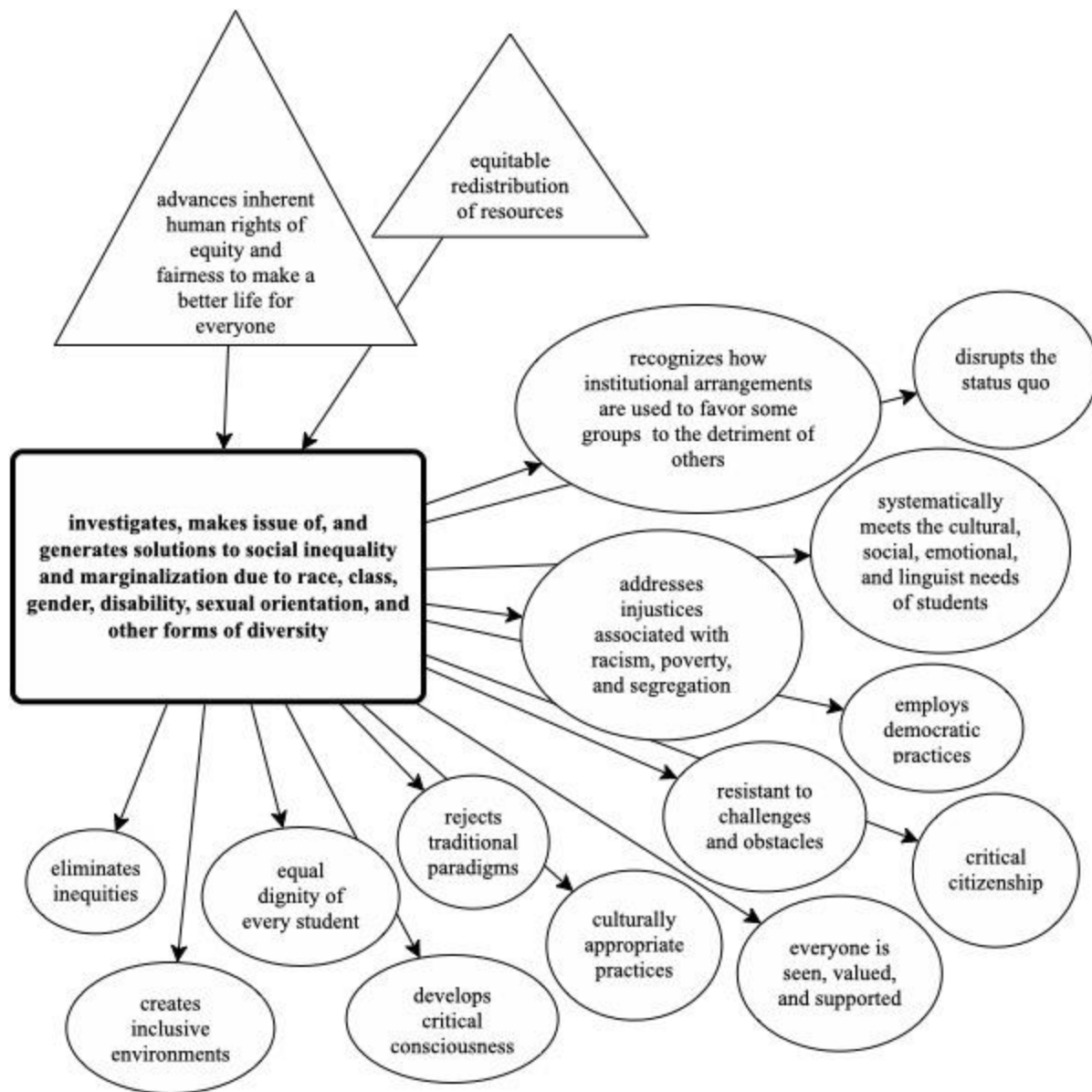
	Goddard, 2007; Ryan, 2006; Shields, 2004	addresses injustices associated with racism, poverty and segregation
	Ryan, 2016	advocates for inclusion, educating participants, developing critical consciousness, nurturing dialogue, emphasizing student learning and classroom practice, adopting inclusive decision- and policy-making strategies, and incorporating whole school approaches
<i>Sun, 2019</i>	Sun, 2019	recognizes and understands how institutional arrangements and practices are used to favor some groups to the detriment of others
	Sun, 2019	is about equal rights, equal opportunities, and equal dignity for every student— regardless of race, gender, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, and socioeconomic status
	Khalifa et al., 2016	is about how to develop, facilitate, and promote an environment where all students are able to learn and to become critical and responsible citizens, irrespective of their geographical origin, family background, and skin color
<i>Warner, 2020</i>	Warner, 2020	ensures that all schools and regions have the same needed resources and access to them in order for them to be successful; human, financial, and emotional resources; and that everyone is seen, heard, valued and supported

The primary definition of social justice leadership within the studies included in this review is based on Dantley and Tillman’s (2006) and Theoharis’s (2007) descriptions which identify race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other marginalized conditions as

areas central to leadership practices. The concept map in Figure 2 shows this description (rectangle), how it was informed by earlier conceptualizations that value human rights, fairness, and equitable distribution of resources (triangles), and how it then served as a foundation for newer additions in the literature to build on (circles). The more recent, nuanced understandings, such as democratic practices and critical citizenship expand the reach and focus of social justice leadership. Taken together, they facilitated drawing a consensus definition.

Figure 2

From Social Justice Leadership Definitions to Consensus Concept Map



To the degree that consensus is possible, the field defines social justice leadership as leadership that recognizes the unequal circumstances of marginalized groups in schools due to race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation and other historically and currently marginalized conditions, and acts to eliminate those systems and structures that perpetuate inequalities by redistributing resources and facilitating the development of new structures that meet the cultural, social, and emotional needs of students and communities. Further, social justice leadership

directly tackles the negative effects of racism, poverty, and segregation for the ultimate aim of creating just and equitable schools, creating critical citizens, and advancing human rights.

Social Justice Leadership Frameworks, Models, and Theories

Not all of the studies in this review provided a framework for their studies, but 11 of the 25 studies in this literature review referenced at least one social justice framework either as their theoretical/conceptual framework or actual framework for leadership practice (see Table 7). While most of these studies referenced older, widely cited frameworks to draw themes out of their reviewed literature, four included original, author-developed frameworks. This included Ishimaru and Galloway (2014); Khalil and Brown (2015); Wiemelt and Welton (2015); and Bennett and Murakami (2016). See the notes section of Table 7, for the makeup and purpose of the framework(s).

Table 7

Referenced Social Justice Frameworks

Review Source	Framework	Note
Shields, 2010	Brown's 2004 Transformative Principal Preparation Framework	Combines adult learning theory, transformative learning theory, and critical social theory; for the preparation of leaders; emphasized transformative leadership; motivated by lack of empirical work on transformative leadership

Ishimaru & Galloway, 2014	Continuum of Equity-Focused Leadership Practices	10 practices; grounded in research literature, social justice, culturally responsive, organizational leadership, and ISLLC standards; not a new theory, but a framework for merging the empirical evidence to date and existing theory
DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014	Brown, 2004; Capper, Theoharis, & Sebastian, 2006; Furman, 2012; McKenzie et al., 2008	Reference “social justice leadership frameworks or models” that can be used to guide the development of programs or as tools to analyze case studies to stimulate awareness of inequities in schools
Khalil & Brown, 2015	3 C’s Social Justice Leadership Framework	Framework for hiring culturally competent urban teachers
Wiemelt & Welton, 2015	Critical Bilingual Leadership or Liderazgo	Breadth of leadership capacity needed to support emergent bilingual students; integrates literature on bilingual education, social justice leadership, and LatCrit
Bennett & Murakami, 2016	Heroic & Post-Heroic Leadership for a Social Justice Agenda	Reconsideration of core leadership practices; redefined heroic and post-heroic leadership models; Theoharis-like leadership for U.S.-Mexico border state schools
Bishop & McClellan, 2016; Albritton et al., 2017	Theoharis’s 2007, 2009 3-Pronged Framework of Resistance	Inclusivity and student achievement at the core; moral course of action

Sun, 2019; Guillaume et al., 2020	Furman's 2012 Praxis-Dimensions-Capacities Framework for Social Justice Leadership	6 dimensions/qualities social justice leaders should possess; to assist educational leadership preparation programs; theoretical framework of Sun's study
Guillaume et al., 2020	McKenzie et al.'s 2008 Leadership Framework for Social Justice	Framework that educators for social justice must possess as a platform for their leadership; 3 tenets; adds citizenship, inclusion, and curriculum to Theoharis, 2007
	Santamaría & Santamaría's 2012 Applied Critical Leadership	Used to operationally define social justice leadership; addresses perceived gap in the literature on what social justice leaders are and do; considers the work of educational leaders who lead with a critical lens; 9 tenets; tied to transformational leadership, critical pedagogy, and CRT
Shields & Hesbol, 2020	Shields's 2009, 2011, 2016 Transformative Leadership Theory	Used to examine research questions in study; builds on social justice leadership and culturally relevant pedagogy; critical leadership theory that focuses on inclusion, equity, excellence, and social justice; transformative leadership reemergence

The social justice leadership frameworks and models cited by the authors include frameworks to guide ELPP approaches and practices (Brown's 2004 Transformative Principal Preparation Framework, Praxis-Dimensions-Capacities Framework for Social Justice Leadership); frameworks to guide the work of K-20 social justice educators (3 C's Social Justice

Leadership Framework, Critical Bilingual Leadership or Liderazgo, Leadership for a Social Justice Agenda, 3-Pronged Framework of Resistance, Leadership Framework for Social Justice, Applied Critical Leadership); assessment tools for ELPPs (Brown, 2004; Capper, Theoharis, & Sebastian, 2006; Furman, 2012; McKenzie et al., 2008); and theoretical frameworks the authors apply as research lenses (Continuum of Equity-Focused Leadership Practices, Transformative Leadership Theory). Many of the frameworks were also designed for targeted leadership practices. They include leadership for schools along the U.S.-Mexico border (Bennett & Murakami, 2016), the social justice leadership of leaders of color and those who choose to practice through a critical, culturally-responsive lens (Guillaume et al., 2020), leadership practices which best support emerging bilingual students (Wiemelt & Welton, 2015), and a framework to assist urban school leaders in hiring culturally competent teachers (Khalil & Brown, 2015).

Developments in Social Justice Leadership Literature

To Define or Not Define Social Justice Leadership

The data also revealed ways today's consensus understanding of, and discourse on, social justice leadership developed over time. By 2004, the term social justice leadership had made its way into the educational leadership lexicon (see Bogotch, 2002; Brown, 2004). The social justice leadership narrative at that time began with the oft repeated description of the model as the elimination of marginalization in schools due to race, gender, class, disability, sexual orientation, and other forms of diversity (Theoharis, 2007; see also Affolter & Hoffman, 2011; Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Furman, 2012; Shields, 2010; Shields & Hesbol, 2020). Theoharis further contributed to that by juxtaposing social justice leadership with traditional leadership, which he asserted failed generations of students and was in need of deconstruction, describing how

decades of “good school leadership have created and sanctioned unjust and inequitable schools” (Theoharis, 2007, p. 253). In later work, DeMatthews further extended this idea, asserting social justice leadership stands as an antithesis to traditional leadership in that it seeks equity across all school experiences and opportunities (DeMatthews, 2015).

Also in the leadership lexicon is the recognition that social justice leadership is not defined by these authors as a concrete, constant set of steps to take, because they also emphasize that context is central to individual school leaders as well as schools and communities. They assert that the experiential aspect of social justice leadership makes it difficult to define because leadership emphases and decision making is dependent on the unique needs of students, faculty, staff, and communities (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014). Thus, authors reason that social justice leadership will vary by school, district, region, and state, shifting under the weight of the inequity and injustice specific to location and demographic variation at any given time. Scholars make clear that a direct definition that captures an accurate, complete, or objective definition of social justice leadership is not possible (Bogotch, 2002; Guillaume et al., 2020; McKenzie et al., 2008). Bogotch (2002) goes as far as insisting all models of social justice leadership should continuously remain “reinvented and critiqued” (p. 154).

Of note in the early literature on social justice leadership is the relationship some authors observed between transformative leadership and social justice leadership. Shields (2010) noted that transformative and social justice leadership have been simultaneously described as the same model by different names, or as models that build on one another and share the same goal of transforming schools to provide students equitable resources and educational opportunities. That is, they both challenge traditional paradigms and reconstruct educational contexts that better serve marginalized students. Shields (2010) argues that “transformative leadership and

leadership for inclusive and socially just learning environments are inextricably related” (p. 559, as cited in Rivera-McCutchen, 2014).

Common to both transformative and social justice leadership as well as culturally responsive leadership is the discourse in the literature which situates schools as “critical sites of contestation within the context of broader social change efforts” (Ishimaru, 2013; Khalifa, 2012; Wilson et al., 2013; as cited in Ishimaru & Galloway, 2014, p. 99). Wiemelt and Welton (2015) emphasize in their work that when leaders center transformation and social justice outcomes, they address issues of power and privilege in school systems, manifesting liberation, democracy, equity, and justice. The authors credit transformative and social justice leadership with the capacity to lead to educational change and success for students across all minoritized populations (Shields, 2010; Cooper, 2009; Theoharis, 2007, 2008, as cited in Wiemelt & Welton, 2015). While evidently similar, the literature demonstrates a divergence between transformative and social justice leadership in their origins, purpose, and scope. Transformative leadership is grounded in an activist agenda for the purpose of individual, organizational, and societal transformation (Shields, 2010). Social justice leadership grounded in creating equitable schools for the purpose of eliminating marginalization and oppression (Jean-Marie, 2008).

Leadership, Antiracism, and Intersectional Justice

The findings revealed frequent acknowledgement of the racist foundations and entanglements of the U.S. educational system, and scholars beginning to see not just schools, but also leadership as a tool for radical transformation of communities and society. Citing Bell (1992) and Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995, 2001) among others, some authors of the studies argue that leadership (and teaching) must be antiracist if it is to address the inequities which exist due to America’s history of systemic racism (see also Affolter & Hoffman, 2011; DeMatthews,

2016, 2018). Affolter and Hoffamn (2011) make clear that addressing the effects of racism and the norms that facilitate racism within educational contexts is predictably difficult and prone to cause discomfort and disruption as leaders and teachers alike face “challenges, barriers, and consequences” (p.361) when they center antiracism in their social justice practices. These authors assert that when leaders participate in social justice leadership, however, their work is made easier when a supportive coalition of other social justice advocates such as other administrators, teachers, parents, and staff participate along with them (Affolter & Hoffman, 2011). The authors conclude that creating the sort of environment that would be conducive to social justice and antiracist leadership is possible but requires leadership practices that cultivate a collaborative culture that celebrates diversity, is asset-based, and focused on the success of marginalized students (Affolter & Hoffman, 2011).

Several authors in this study raise the unique challenge that school discipline presents for school leaders. In his literature review, DeMatthews (2016) found that Black, Latino, and special education students are disproportionately ensnared by school discipline and suspension practices and policies, highlighting the biases teachers and leaders “transfer through their disciplinary decisions” (p. 7). DeMatthews reported that Black students are 3.78 times more likely to be referred to the principal for the same or similar behavior as their white peers (Skiba et al., 2011, as cited in DeMatthews, 2016). According to DeMatthews (2015, 2016, 2018) and Peterson and Vergara (2016) the over-representation of Black students in discipline referrals and suspension/expulsion data reveals racial discrimination that may have deleterious effects on life outcomes, including a well-documented school to prison pipeline (DeMatthews, 2016, 2018; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Peterson & Vergara, 2016). Khalifa (2013) adds that disproportionate treatment of students of color is also visible in their placements in special

education classes and low-level tracks. DeMatthews (2015) claims the origins of these failures are related to the intersection of race- and class-based discrimination that culminates with students being misidentified and ill-served (as opposed to merely underserved) in K-12 schools. If these racialized contexts and outcomes are to be redressed, DeMatthews (2016) argues that leaders must question (and must be taught to question) their own biases, challenge outdated school policies, critically analyze racialized student data trends, and organize and collaborate with teachers and families to facilitate and/or demand change.

Several studies have explored how school leaders' understandings of race, culture, equity, and leadership were a product of their identities and sociopolitical contexts. Khalifa et al. (2016) found that students are particularly vulnerable to teacher and leader bias when there is demographic mismatch within school administrations and faculty. In their case study on sympathetic leadership, Liou and Liang (2021) assert that this lack of representation of faculty and leaders of color in schools contributes to systemic bias and negative educational expectations. Khalifa et al. (2016) called upon school leaders of all colors to respond with cultural responsiveness and create new contexts in which student assets, including race and ethnicity, contribute to their academic success, as Black, Brown, and other minoritized students continue to be disadvantaged by historically oppressive structures. In his ethnographic study, Khalifa (2013) articulates the concept of advocacy as essential to social justice leadership in that it should seek to enlist the collaboration of students, parents, and community members to eliminate marginalization, especially for at-risk students.

This community-based approach to addressing marginalization and inequity of educational opportunities expanded on social justice leadership understandings of the time by including stakeholders outside of the school building in shared decision-making and partnering

in student advocacy work (Khalifa, 2013). Specifically, the leader in Khalifa's 2013 study taught families of at-risk students strategies for teaching students self-advocacy skills that allow them to avoid behaviors that trigger disciplinary and exclusionary practices. Khalifa (2013) concluded that while schools need to become more culturally relevant via leadership and pedagogy to meet the needs of students, and not force students to adapt to a white-privileging meritocracy, self-advocacy gave students a tool to preempt biased teacher inclinations to marginalize.

Further exacerbating the complexities of social justice leadership conceptions and enactment is the emerging awareness that it is also subject to intersectional understandings, interpretations, and applications; *and* subject to influence by a leaders' own intersecting identities. Multiple authors in this study addressed the intersectional construction of educational injustices, which they associated with how race, culture, gender, economic status, ability, and immigration status intersect and produce webs of oppression (DeMatthews, 2018; Liou & Liang, 2021; Wiemelt & Welton, 2015). They raised that social justice leadership is tasked with addressing educational issues of inequity and injustice such as the overrepresentation of Black and Brown students in special education classes and low-level academic tracks (DeMatthews, 2015), the subtractive schooling experiences of English language learners (Wiemelt & Welton, 2015), the erasure of LGBT students from educational spaces (Bishop & McClellan, 2016), and the pathologizing of Black students' behavior as seen in discipline data trends (DeMatthews, 2016). Together, these authors suggest that leadership practices that value and celebrate students' racial identities, knowledge systems, literacies, and cultural capital stand counter to educational injustices by disrupting interconnected systems of oppression. Liou and Liang (2021) suggested in order to disrupt identity- and race-related structures that perpetuate inequity and injustice, aspiring leaders should engage in authentic classroom and virtual simulations as well as key

signature assignments (e.g., participatory action research and service-learning projects) as a method to cultivate racial and other intersectional forms of consciousness on issues pertaining to institutional oppression and power. Wiemelt and Welton (2015) warned that leaders must critically analyze how they foster a culture of care that sees to students' social, emotional, and academic needs across multiple intersecting identities if they are to build meaningful relations and support students' academic success. Further, Santamaría and Jean-Marie (2014) found evidence indicating educational leaders from underserved backgrounds have the ability to “critically tap into intersecting aspects of their identities and experiences, using these attributes as resources that positively impact their leadership practice in multicultural, complex, and multidimensional educational contexts” (p. 355).

Shared Decision Making, Inclusion, and Democratic Practices

The study of social justice leadership also identifies a shift from entity to relational conceptions of leadership. DeMatthews and Izquierdo (2016) called for more politicized approaches where schools are sites of struggle against inequity of resources and exclusion from educational opportunities, and Lopez (2013) and Peterson and Vergara (2016) for a focus on systemic inequities, structural transformation, and moral purpose. Ishimaru and Galloway (2014) called for distributed leadership as necessary for the transformation of norms and schools, the unequal reallocation of resources, and essential sharing of power. The findings in studies emphasizing relational concepts of leadership, and its democratization, also expanded on the notion of inclusion and inclusivity. In addition to commonly held definitions of inclusion (e.g., the mainstreaming of special education students and the inclusion of marginalized students in the life of the school), it also came to represent the inclusion of other stakeholders in leadership decision making.

Inclusive and democratic practices became a priority in the social justice leadership literature as authors recognized that inclusive communities were more likely to reject traditional paradigms and to participate in curricular decision making that improves teaching and learning. Multiple studies found that social justice leaders dedicated efforts towards creating welcoming and collaborative school environments with shared responsibility and accountability (DeMatthews, 2015; Rivera-McCutchen, 2014; Shields, 2010; Shields & Hesbol, 2020). Specifically, they advocated for inclusion as well as “educating participants, developing critical consciousness, nurturing dialogue, emphasizing student learning and classroom practice, adopting inclusive decision- and policy-making strategies, and incorporating whole school approaches” (Ryan, 2016, p. 9, as cited in DeMatthews, 2018). Incidentally, the literature base of this study offers multiple suggestions that social justice leaders are responsible for educating adults as well as students within their spheres about the dynamics of power. Sun (2019) recommended that the leadership strategy of requiring teaching the marginalized about their marginalization and the systems which are responsible for it was necessary because in the study, the leaders believed inequity perpetuating policies are often out of their realms of influence. Sun (2019) concluded that informed and empowered students (and parents) make for ideal citizens that will be prepared to influence policy in the future.

Challenges of and for Social Justice Leadership

The nature of social justice leadership, an orientation meant to disrupt the outcomes of traditional models, suggests there are challenges and dilemmas of not only enacting social justice, but also in identifying it, teaching it, and researching it. Social justice leadership efforts can be slowed by resistance or the lack of a coherent approach. Several authors concluded that while all jobs pose challenges, challenges to social justice and equity work slow the pace of

educational reform and as such present an urgent issue for educational leadership (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Theoharis, 2007). A primary challenge is related to the purpose of this literature review. It has already been established that social justice leadership is difficult, if not impossible, to define (Bogotch, 2002; DeMatthews, 2015; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; McKenzie et al., 2008), at least in part because it looks different across schools due to the various “individual, social, political, and organizational variables that impact schools and communities” (DeMatthews, 2015, p. 140). This contextual aspect of how scholars define it in turn contributes to the sense of confusion around social justice leadership and some related terms. The concept of social justice is often used as a descriptor or synonym for other adjacent types of leadership, frameworks, orientations, and teaching and leadership practices (DeMatthews, 2018; Hytten & Bettez, 2011; North, 2006). With no agreement on a direct definition, even among the most recent studies in this literature review authors called for resolving the meaning and purpose of social justice leadership in education (Guillaume et al., 2020) so that it is operationalized ethically, responsibly, and effectively.

Several authors identified that perhaps the largest of challenges is that social justice leaders often meet resistance from within the school, district, community, and beyond (Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Theoharis, 2007). Theoharis (2007) described internal and external challenges including the physical and mental demands of school administration, resistant staff, privileged parental expectations, the “momentum” of the status quo, bureaucracy, lack of resources, harmful state and federal regulations, and less-than-ideal principal preparation. New policies and mandates often obstruct social justice programs that have been put in place to address a need or to reduce the harm or ineffectiveness of previous programs (Sun, 2019). Resistance, then contributes to school contexts and influences a leader’s ability to achieve social justice outcomes,

increasing or decreasing the degree of difficulty depending on the amount of resistance experienced and how that resistance is deployed.

Another challenge identified by authors is that certain areas of the country may be especially resistant to social justice leadership, particularly regarding diversity, equity, antiracism, and justice for students outside of the mainstream (Bishop & McClellan, 2016). For example, certain schools in the South, Midwest, or rural areas of the U.S. have proven less safe for LGBTQ students than schools in urban, affluent, and college-educated regions of the country (Kosciw, Greytak, & Diaz, 2009, as cited in Bishop & McClellan, 2016). Urban districts and schools face their own unique challenges (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014). The challenges are made more daunting when there are limited resources and inexperienced teachers, and leaders are asked to transform schools with histories of segregation, red-lining, deficit-thinking, and marginalization of students of color, students with disabilities, and English language learners (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Sun, 2019).

A final challenge to social justice leadership enactment is that it is heavily dependent on characteristics of the leader that go beyond skills and knowledge. Social justice leaders need to be committed and have the moral courage to persist in the face of resistance and other challenges (Shields, 2010). New leaders with social justice orientations can struggle with feelings of inadequacy that limit their ability “to fully and authentically engage in social justice leadership work” (DeMatthews, 2015, p. 160), suggesting a need for mentorship, in-service professional development, and other supports for new leaders. One study also revealed an additional source of internal resistance, the need for leaders to resist their own biases (Albritton et al., 2017), an implication for principal preparation programs which should be developing aspiring leaders’ critical consciousness as a precursor to social justice orientations. One final observation

identified by a study in this review has particularly pointed implications for the field; this is that principals tend to think of themselves as social justice leaders even when they are not as evidenced by persistent inequities in K-12 schools (DeMatthews, 2015).

Social Justice Leadership Critiques

In addition to challenges, critiques have been levied at social justice leadership from within the field of educational leadership. The first critique that emerged in the literature review was the need for a commonly held conceptual framework to guide practice (Karpinski & Lugg 2006; Lugg & Shoho 2006; Shoho et al. 2011, as cited in Rivera-McCutchen, 2014). It stands to reason, as the antithesis to status quo school leadership paradigms, a thoroughly defined concept of social justice leadership—to the degree possible—would be essential for true educational equity and justice. This particular critique captures the reality that educational leadership preparation programs have yet to adopt an informed and widely accepted model of social justice leadership (Guillaume et al., 2020; Moraguez et al., 2022). Related to attempts at defining social justice leadership, the research reveals a tendency to narrowly define the concept (e.g. race, gender, sexuality, etc.). Scholars argue that narrow conceptions run the risk of excluding all that are not represented by scholars' or leaders' individual frames of reference (Shoho et al., 2011; Cambron-McCabe and McCarthy 2005; Lugg and Shoho 2006; Radd 2008, as cited in Rivera-McCutchen, 2014).

A final critique revealed in the review is the disconnect between theory and practice, which Dantley and colleagues (2008) described as wide as a gulf:

The problem in this context is the gulf between rhetoric and reality. Thus, the noble intentions of social justice are becoming more codified and solidified in the language and imaginations of many educators. However, these intentions are mired when these same

individuals value social justice in terms of verbal articulation and not social action. (p. 124)

Rivera-McCutchen (2014) suggested social justice leaders needed to not only embody the qualities described in the social justice leadership literature, but more importantly, they needed to walk the walk of social justice leadership.

Social Justice Orientation Origins

The data also provided some insight into how leaders develop social justice orientations. Lived experiences, often of an educational nature, have a profound effect in nurturing individuals to adopt social justice orientations. Theoharis (2007) indicated that some principals have social justice orientations when they begin their leadership positions. While some of those orientations are a result of past experiences, it is unclear where the others originate from (DeMatthews, 2015). Four studies in this literature review related the origins of social justice orientations of school leaders in their research. All participants in these four studies happen to be from marginalized communities, but their experiences are unique and should not be considered representative of all leaders of color or from historically marginalized communities.

Venegas-Garcia (2013) related how school leaders identifying as Latina/Chicana associated their identity at an early age with educational struggle and failure. Their negative experiences in educational institutions served as motivators for social activism and a catalyst for social justice work. These leaders applied the lessons learned to helping others navigate educational spaces. Ultimately, the experiences resulted in heightened social awareness, strengthened identities, and a sense of social responsibility (Venegas-Garcia, 2013). Others also identifying as Latina/Chicana reported family-related lived experiences as their social justice orientation origins. Significant, perhaps traumatic, events their family experienced instilled a

strong sense of social justice and moral responsibility. The experiences shaped their identities as activists and leaders (Venegas-Garcia, 2013). Black and Hispanic leaders in Sun's (2019) study reported a combination of families, mentors, and education as influencing the development of their social justice orientations.

Leaders in the Peterson and Vergara (2016) study connected their social justice orientations to experiences related to equity and social justice movements. They had been involved with farm workers' rights, the civil rights movement, or with educational or legal disparities in U.S. communities. Their burgeoning commitment to social justice later became the foundation for their moral imperative to work as educational leaders (Peterson & Vergara, 2016). In multiple studies researchers reported that leaders described feeling a call to serve as social justice activists. They experienced a need to give back to the communities from which they were products (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012; Santamaría, 2013; Shields, 2010, as cited in Santamaría & Jean-Marie, 2014). Similarly, a desire to foster a sense of solidarity with communities of color prompted an Asian American leader to pursue leadership opportunities (Liou & Liang, 2021). In the study, the leader was moved to impart her knowledge of the effects of racialized contexts in schools and to improve students' experiences (Liou & Liang, 2021). Interestingly, the authors also described how the leaders enacted their unique forms of social justice leadership. Venegas-Garcia (2013) found Latina/Chicana activist educators utilized their positions of power to serve as "conduits to social justice," creating caring and emancipatory spaces for all stakeholders, facilitating learning, increasing educational opportunities, and the promotion of leadership within the school's community (p. 687). Sun (2019) describes the Black and Hispanic leaders in her study as practicing people-oriented leadership for social justice that results in a school culture built around relationships and educational spaces that celebrate

diversity and individuality. The leaders in Liou and Liang's (2021) study demonstrated an ethic of care centered on authentic and caring relationships and challenging deficit ideologies on communities of color. Across the studies the leaders described held in common that they strived for inspired instructional leadership, ensuring rigorous pedagogy by visiting classrooms daily when possible. As one school leader described: "When kids and teachers see the principal every day, it makes a difference. . . It shows my commitment, and it is also kind [of] reminding everyone of what we're all supposed to do and the purpose of why we're all here every day" (Liou & Liang, 2021, p. 424).

Discussion

This study set out to identify the ways researchers are defining and conceptualizing social justice leadership, where those conceptualizations come from, and what that means for the educational leadership field. The findings illustrate how the field has coalesced around a handful of authors' descriptions of social justice leadership that have become commonly held in the literature over the last two decades. The data analysis revealed the sources authors relied upon for their social justice leadership theoretical, conceptual, and/or research design frameworks, the foundational roots to their conceptualizations of social justice leadership, as well as a consensus definition. In the process, the results of the review also chronicled noteworthy social justice leadership developments spanning over 20 years.

The social justice leadership definitions are primarily made up of contributions from a handful of authors and studies (see Bogotch, 2002; Dantley & Tillman, 2006, 2010; Furman, 2012; Goldfarb & Grindberg, 2002; Theoharis, 2007, 2009). Collectively, they mark the contours of social justice leadership and, as findings noted above, define it as leadership that recognizes the unequal circumstances of marginalized groups in schools due to race, class, gender,

disability, sexual orientation and other historically and currently marginalized conditions, and acts to eliminate those inequalities by redistributing resources and fighting injustice for the ultimate aim of creating equitable schools and advancing human rights, essentially. As social justice leadership is also considered contextual and experiential and therefore impossible to directly define (Bogotch, 2002; McKenzie et al., 2008), it begs the question, what are we to do with a consensus definition? Is that definition, and the various other descriptions included in the results enough to capture the full breadth of social justice leadership? Does it indicate coherence in the field? Or, should we not worry about general definitions and be more concerned with the practice of social justice leadership, for specific contexts, and impact on student achievement?

In fact, it appears there is also some consensus in the literature that social justice leadership will look differently at each individual school and be enacted differently by each individual leader (Bishop & McClellan, 2016; Bogotch, 2002; DeMatthews, 2015, 2018; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Guillaume et al., 2020). The field, then, should consider the ways social justice leadership becomes manifest at the intersection of location, demographics, and leadership to develop (multiple) frameworks that support pre-service competence development and in-service practice improvement. As such, a common definition may be less urgent than a commitment by pre- and in-service leaders to identify the local influence of their educational contexts, to self-reflect on the limitations of their commitments and abilities, and to infer the effect those contexts will have on their leadership decision making. Doing so would allow them to operationalize an elevated level of awareness into context-informed competences and practices. As for ELPPs, it becomes essential that they develop the processes by which aspiring leaders and leaders gain these new understandings.

An early critique of social justice leadership theory relates to the perceived tendency to narrowly define the concept and the danger of excluding marginalized students (Rivera-McCutchen, 2014; Shoho et al., 2011). This critique suggests that a consensus, commonly held definition that is not narrowly defined is best, but as other critiques explored above, multiple narrowly-defined conceptions of social justice leadership may actually be best. Say for instance, if through empirically-supported research, frameworks for a multitude of combinations of intersecting marginalizations could be generated, it would possibly increase inclusion of marginalized students in leadership practices. In this way, prescribed practices would be context-specific, mostly, and connect the theory of social justice leadership to grounded practical work that is in line with a school's reality. In a way, the "narrowly defined" critique is accurate, but not in the way the authors intended. Whether narrow or broad, one definition for social justice leadership may not serve the needs of diverse communities and schools, particularly if the definition is not accompanied by context-specific and empirically-supported leadership practices.

With emerging research, scholars today are better able to address the needs of leaders who serve marginalized students. Scholars have written about ways leaders handle resistance and make their work sustainable. The political climate of the Trump era, along with the Covid-19 global pandemic, and the Black Lives Matter movement, however, raises the concern that leaders and the teachers they lead are not equipped to handle quite this level of resistance (see Borter et al., 2022). School boards, superintendents, teachers, and principals across the entire U.S. are being accosted over real, made up, and perceived educational issues such as masking, CRT, library books, curriculum, and gender and sexuality (Borter et al., 2022; Will, 2022). Of special concern is the effect anti-LGBTQIA legislation and rhetoric will have on trans, gay, or questioning students (Parris et al., 2021). Southern, Midwestern, and rural areas with high

poverty rates have already been found to be less safe for students identifying as LGBTQIA (Bishop & Mcclellan, 2016).

Additional research is needed to address all of the questions that remain about social justice leadership. The review revealed some ways leaders of color develop their social justice orientations, but more research on origins, especially for white leaders who are over-represented in the principalship, would help us understand the role of ELPPs, lived experiences, and individual characteristics in developing social justice orientations. Further, it seems imperative the field engages in challenging white supremacy and developing aspiring leaders' antiracist orientations by deconstructing whiteness in principal preparation courses (Tanner & Welton, 2021).

While pre-service preparation is important, research is also needed for in-service training. The following questions are primed for inquiry: How are practicing principals being developed and/or supported after completion of their leadership program? If they happened to attend a program that did not emphasize equity or social justice, what is being done to fill the gaps in their preparation? What interventions exist? How widespread are the interventions, and how effective are they?

Another area that is worthy of research is the reported disconnect between theory and practice. Researchers should follow leaders into the field to determine the degree to which they are practicing what they learn in their program. Some literature suggests most leaders claim to be social justice leaders, but in actuality practice traditional leadership (DeMatthews, 2015). While funding is and will most likely always remain a challenge for the field of educational leadership (Sun, 2019), the lack of funding for research and resources to develop aspiring leaders and

support practicing leaders is a problem that needs a solution, however bleak the prospects of finding such a solution may be.

The parameters for this study were purposely narrow. It is a limitation of the study that identification criteria included mostly qualitative studies with 60 or less participants and excluded social justice-adjacent research (i.e., equity and diversity). Considering the most up-to-date information on these pressing educational issues are likely found in conceptual papers, or papers with methodologies historically considered less reliable, it may be an ideal time to reconsider what should be treated as legitimate research and how we are to disseminate that scholarship. Sophisticated research designs are necessary if we intend to capture more direct conceptualizations of intersectional social justice, but a paradigm shift in the way we think about non-empirical, conceptual, and even qualitative research is also necessary. Otherwise, we may not be able to address educational inequity and injustice in U.S. schools as deliberately as is needed.

Conclusion

The findings in this review further elucidate our collective understanding of social justice leadership, adding context to frequently oversimplified descriptions of complex processes. They provide a rendering of social justice leadership and illustrate why it has become ubiquitous in today's educational discourse. This systematic review of the literature provides a narrative of social justice leadership from the early 2000's to 2021 and a prevailing consensus social justice leadership definition. It also cataloged the models, theories, and frameworks social justice leadership is sourced from and explored the relationship between antiracism and social justice leadership, the nascent understandings of intersectional justice, and the shift to shared decision making, inclusion, and democratic practices. The findings contribute to the literature base in

meaningful ways, including by nudging us ever closer to effective social justice practice and the elimination of marginalization and inequity in U.S. schools. With that said, many questions and gaps in the literature remain, including, but not limited to the effectiveness of ELPP approaches and in-service development, or how best to serve students with marginalized identities.

Limitations

As previously stated, findings are drawn from the empirical studies which met the search criteria and screening protocol. Most of the studies included in the review were qualitative studies based on either interview or survey methodology with 1 to 54 participants. The author is aware the search criteria may have excluded social justice-adjacent research (i.e., equity and diversity) with significant, relevant results. This exclusion was done intentionally to examine the veracity of social justice as an umbrella term which captures equity, diversity, and inclusion in addition to social justice. Future research will focus on finding the missing data as it exists.

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**Equity- and Social Justice-Focused Learning Experiences at the Intersection of Design and
Mindset: A Multi-Case Study of Principal Preparation Faculty**

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Abstract

As urgency grows for equity- and social justice-minded leaders and leadership practices, insight into faculty practices for embedding equity and social justice learning experiences will serve to improve our understanding of how educational leadership preparation programs develop social justice competences. This qualitative, multi-case study captured faculty perspectives on the importance of equity and social justice learning experiences and their efforts to ensure aspiring leaders have access to experiences which develop their capacity to practice equity and social justice leadership. Data for this study was collected via semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed instructors maintain the integrity of the course while making it their own, in alignment with their equity and social justice commitments and approaches to instruction. Many factors influenced their instructional design, including their identities, lived experiences, student demographics, course format, and program characteristics. The study informs future research efforts aiming to understand how faculty approach the development of equity and social justice leadership competences, and how their mindsets may influence their course design, preparation, and delivery.

Keywords: faculty, higher education, pedagogy, equity, social justice, school leadership, principal preparation

Equity- and Social Justice-Focused Learning Experiences at the Intersection of Design and Mindset: A Multi-Case Study of Principal Preparation Faculty

The institutions and systems which are responsible for educating our students were designed in ways that have rendered them largely unresponsive to the needs of Black and Brown students (Brown, 2004; Capper & Young, 2014; DeMatthews, 2016). Accordingly, our school leaders are called to compensate for the resulting gap in educational opportunities through the practice of leadership that specifically focuses on equity and social justice to meet the needs of all students. A leader's ability to do so may be dependent on many factors including their lived experiences, the degree to which they already embody an equity or social justice mindset, and the capacity of their preparation programs to develop their equity and social justice leadership competences (Berkovich, 2017; Guillaume et al., 2020; McLean et al., 2008). Educational leadership preparation program (ELPP) faculty capacity to maximize student learning within their courses to develop well-prepared school leaders is also dependent on factors such as their own preparation, mindsets, and the design and curricular focus of their ELPP (Berkovich, 2017; Theoharis, 2007). By implication, faculty must be able to effectively operationalize the available resources and structures at their disposal to ensure their instructional planning and practices provide learning experiences that effectively develop equity and social justice leadership competences, while compensating for any ELPP incoherence or other shortcomings.

Purpose

The purposes of this study are to understand how equity- and social justice-minded faculty approach their family and community engagement (FACE) principal preparation courses, the pedagogies they employ to develop and assess the desired competences, and the resulting learning experiences of their specific approaches. Specifically, the research questions are:

1. In what ways do faculty mindsets inform their efforts to design equity- and social justice-focused learning experiences?
2. How are faculty commitments enacted through their instructional design?
3. What learning experiences, in the form of activities or assignments, do faculty produce to develop and assess equity and social justice leadership competences?

ELPPs present faculty a multitude of contexts which require navigating for them to carry out their responsibilities. Faculty's instructional design must consider standards, curriculum, and resources when making decisions about which competences to develop, how much emphasis to give each competence, and which pedagogical approach they will use to design and deliver courses that prepare aspiring leaders for the principalship. This remains true even when faculty inherit fully-developed, institutionally-approved courses with preset syllabi, texts, standards, and intended outcomes. From such a starting point, as is the case for this study, faculty are still able to considerably alter many aspects of the course to make it their own. The instructional design decisions they make can result in fundamentally different courses. Ultimately, faculty and program quality are predictive of aspiring leaders' learning and graduates' school improvement practices (Jacobson et al., 2011; McCarthy, 2015; Ni et al., 2019).

This study contributes to the field of educational leadership by capturing faculty instructional planning and actions which embed learning experiences that develop school leaders' ability to lead for social justice and equity within their schools, a topic which remains sparse in the literature base. It will also provide insight into the relationship between faculty mindsets and their instructional design approaches and how that relationship affects the resulting student learning experiences. Knowing this may improve our understanding of the capacity of

ELPPs to prepare aspiring leaders for today's schools and the ways in which programs facilitate or impede faculty efforts. This study will also enrich our awareness of the factors which motivate faculty and others to work towards equitable and socially-just educational outcomes.

Literature Review

Educational Leadership Preparation Programs

The rising call for pedagogy in educational leadership that centers equity and social justice over the last two decades (Taylor et al., 2009) has been a result of the increasingly diversifying demographics of K-12 schools and the apparent failure of traditional leadership to close achievement and opportunity gaps. Currently, over 50% of school children are of color, and that number is expected to reach 55% by 2024 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). In response, ELPPs have been catalyzed into reform and redesign efforts, shifting the vision and mission of their programs towards equity and social justice. In the most recent research, however, ELPPs have been shown to only marginally integrate equity and social justice themes (Young, 2015). When they do, they often rely on traditional methods such as readings, discussion, and class-based work (Dexter et al., 2022). When combined with limited or emerging understandings of social justice and systemic racism (Moraguez et al., 2022), it suggests that principals in the field may not have received the learning experiences necessary for the development of effective equity and/or social justice leadership competences.

Berkovich (2017) asserts that principal preparation programs reveal their intentions for equity and social justice by the construction and design of their programs. They describe three types of principal preparation program approaches to social justice: traditional designs with a general management and leadership focus; attitude development design with a focus on developing students' critical consciousness about power structures, privileges, and inequity; and

the activist design with activism oriented learning goals. Berkovich also pairs each design with a related admissions policy. Traditional programs align with open policy admissions. Attitude development programs admit students with social justice leanings, and activist programs require social justice commitments. The admission policy and design are not always paired as such, creating additional tensions between program goals and actual outcomes. Open admission policies, for example, ensure faculty teach aspiring leaders with broad ranges of commitments to social justice (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005; Evans, 2007), while activist oriented programs are more likely to place participants with strong social justice commitments in preparation courses. As such, program admissions policies present either challenges or opportunities for faculty.

Deliberate construction and intentional design embodying effective course formats, student demographics, curricular focus, emphasis, and instructional tools and resources, has long been accepted as a necessary characteristic of effective principal preparation programs (McKenzie et al., 2008). When that construction and design is in alignment with individual faculty mindsets and commitments, their jobs are made easier, and faculty function as a natural extension of the program and its goals. When there is misalignment, equity- and social justice-minded faculty may still meet their own intended outcomes by compensating for program-related shortcomings. ELPPs have also been found to lack systemic assessment processes which make misalignment likelier (Black & Murtadha, 2007; Burkovich, 2017).

Instructional Design

The research base and standards which inform ELPP practices do not address how instructors should approach the development of leadership (or other) competences, but do present practices such as problem-based learning, critical reflection, and other active pedagogies

as effective in bridging theory and practice, Such practices are characteristic of exemplary programs (Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2022; Dexter et al., 2020). Multimedia methods, cases, simulations, technology, action research, and reflection are increasingly offered as pedagogical strategies for active learning approaches (Crow & Whiteman, 2016) with simulations representing a promising pedagogical approach for the exploration of complex issues such as racism (Taylor et al., 2009). Research also reveals that peer-to-peer interactions and working in collaborative groups foster engagement and facilitate knowledge building, resulting in transformative learning experiences (Kaivola et al., 2012). In their recent report on high-quality principal learning, Darling-Hammond and colleagues (2022) found evidence in the research literature to suggest that programs designed to help principals meet the needs of diverse learners do so by providing applied learning opportunities and reflective projects. Opportunities such as action research, field-based projects, cultural autobiographies, cross-cultural interviews, and analytic journals facilitated knowledge and skill development for meeting the needs of diverse learners by deepening aspiring leaders' "understanding of the ways in which biases associated with race, class, language, disability, and other factors manifest in society and schools and how principals can work toward more equitable opportunities and outcomes" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2022, p. 8).

For online programs, which continue to grow dramatically (Gemin & Pape, 2017), empirical studies have been published indicating both asynchronous and synchronous components are pivotal for effective learning and engagement (Crawford-Ferre & Wiset, 2012; Major, 2015). Montelongo and Eaton (2019) found students' learning and engagement were positively influenced by discussion boards, videos, video conferencing, and opportunities to connect synchronously. However, learning skills and building knowledge around complex topics

such as multiculturalism, equity, diversity, race, and privilege are difficult to navigate asynchronously (Montelongo & Eaton, 2019). These conversations must be facilitated by an instructor, or they can become distractions (Montelongo & Eaton, 2019). In a study identifying evidenced-based practices for online learning, Lockman and Schirmer (2020) found the strategies that are effective in online teaching are the same as for face-to-face teaching; including multiple pedagogies and learning resources to address different student learning needs, high instructor presence, quality of faculty-student interaction, academic support outside of class, and promotion of classroom cohesion and trust. They also report students particularly valued synchronous online tools and instructor feedback (McCarthy, 2017, as cited in Lockman & Schirmer, 2020).

While studies on pedagogies and their effects are sparse, small, and/or descriptive and further research is needed (Byrne-Jiménez et al., 2017), Dexter and colleagues (2022) confirmed the default pedagogy of ELPPs remains a combination of readings, audio-visual, and class-based work; class-assigned, field-based projects; and internships. Their needs assessment findings suggest the default pedagogy does not provide the developmental instructional sequences necessary to build high levels of competence in pre-service leaders (Dexter et al., 2022). In a related study, Moraguez and colleagues (2022) found emerging, but inconsistent, ELPP approaches to the development of social justice and equity competences. Programs lacked the necessary resources, professional development, and the instructional tools that might bridge theory and practice (Moraguez et al., 2022; Anderson et al., 2018).

Faculty Mindsets for and Reflection on Pedagogy

Mindsets or awareness of issues related to diversity and equity are important prerequisites of social justice leadership (Brown, 2006). Increasingly present in educational leadership

discourse, reflexive practices offer opportunities to develop practical knowledge, increase personal awareness and awareness of others, change beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors, build agency as a learner, and gain empathetic understanding (Van Beveren et al., 2018). The process of reflection is defined as the critical review and questioning of practices consequently resulting in careful consideration, documentation, and action in response to “new understandings” and “altered perspectives” (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002, as cited in Pedrosa-de-Jesus et al., 2017, p. 457). As a catalyst for social justice leadership, reflection allows for the analysis of power relations operating within structural and social contexts (Acquah & Commings, 2015) and facilitates social transformation through the emergence of new forms of knowledge and social structures (Morley & Dunstan, 2013; Suarez et al., 2008), as well as resistance to dominant practices (Morley & Dunstan, 2013). Reflection serves many purposes in education that have implications for students and faculty alike. While reflection is a critical first step in developing equity and social justice understandings, it is also a valuable practice for those already oriented towards equity and social justice, as mindsets are not binary and continue to develop. Through reflection and intentional instructional design, university faculty may serve as advocates for social justice leadership through practices aimed at raising the conscious awareness of aspiring leaders regarding the marginalization of students based on race, gender, sexuality, national origin, social class, and ability (Taylor et al., 2009).

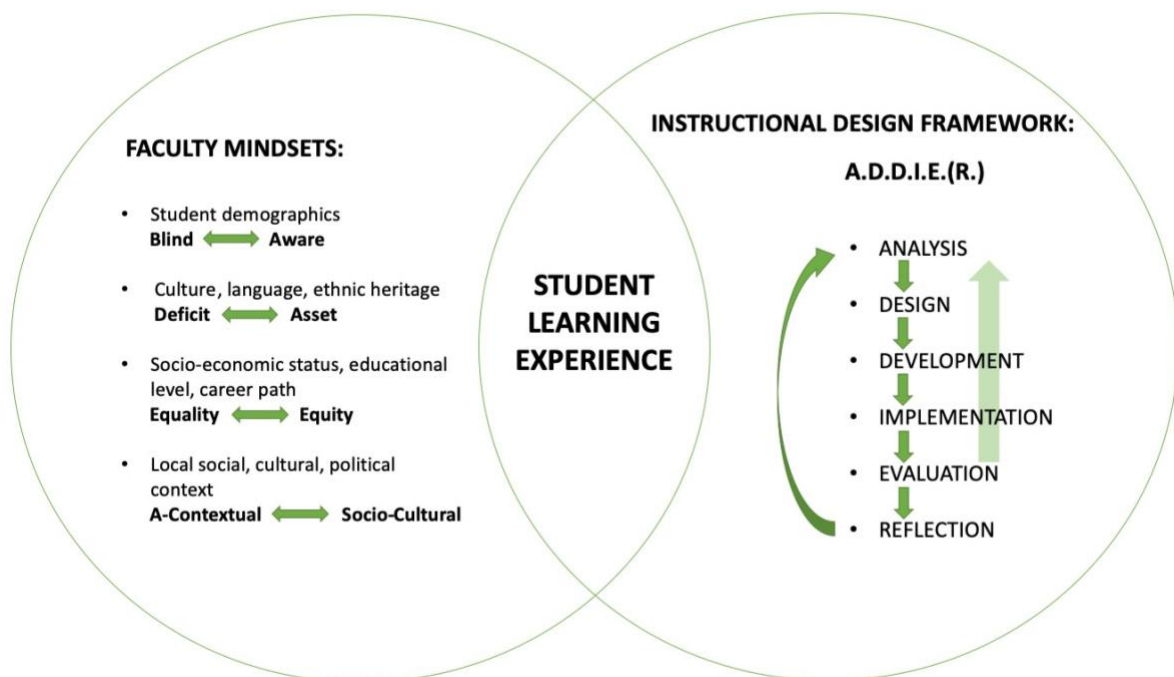
Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework depicts an informed assumption of how mindsets and instructional approaches converge to give rise to a unique set of learning experiences. Thus, students (aspiring leaders) are exposed to learning that is the product of design and construction decisions informed by a mindset or values system. Figure 1 captures our vision of that

relationship and highlights how mindsets comprises faculty attention to student demographics, their attitudes toward different cultures, students' socioeconomic status, and schooling backgrounds, as well as the influence they perceive from the local contexts. The ADDIE instructional systems design framework, widely used in academia and industry (Molenda, 2003; Molenda & Pershing, 2003; Gustafson & Branch, 2002; Branson, 1978), was adapted and applied as shown in Figure 1 to serve as an analytical lens by which to situate the choices instructors make when developing effective course content. As faculty prepare to teach a course, their instructional design decisions converge with their unique equity and social justice commitments to produce student learning experiences. This conceptual framework allows us to leverage an understanding of how mindsets influence course design and to render a description of the process.

Figure 1

Mindsets + ADDIE(R) Instructional Design Student Learning Product Model



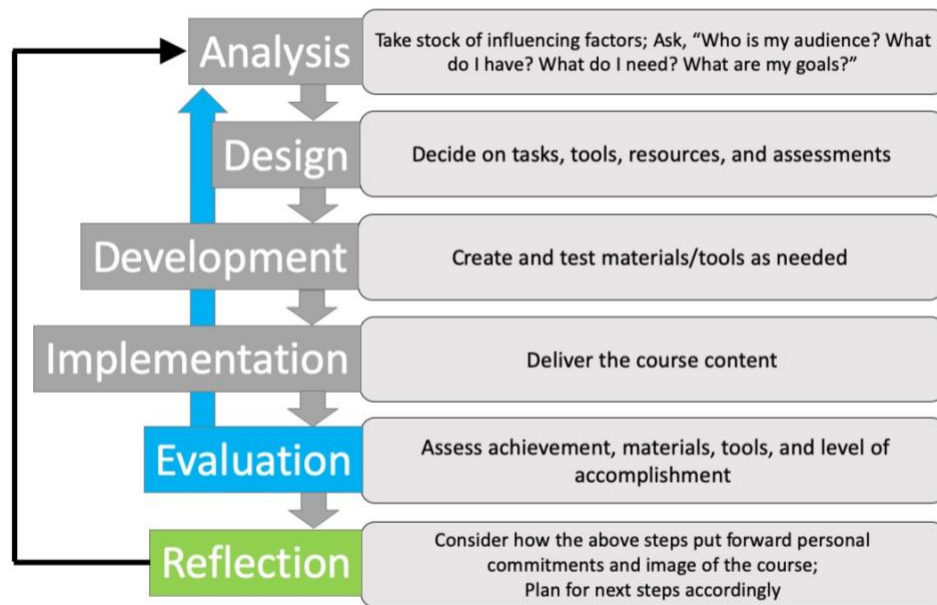
The ADDIE instructional systems design framework includes five instructional design steps: analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. In the *analysis* step, designers consider all factors relevant to the project to collect the necessary data in anticipation of the upcoming steps. This step allows designers to take stock of their resources, audience, and own background knowledge—as well as the communal, institutional knowledge inherited from their organization and colleagues. In the next two steps, designers *design* and *develop* the tools necessary for their project. The next step is the *implementation* or delivery phase of the framework. The final step of the original framework, *evaluation*, allows for assessing the effectiveness of the tools, materials, experiences, and overall success.

In the adaptation, faculty serve as designers and a reflection phase was added to the framework as a linking step between evaluation and analysis. A period of isolated reflection at the conclusion of a course allows faculty to be critical of their performance, to impartially process evaluation phase data, and to apply that data in further course revision and preparation. This step is consistent with the scholarship of teaching and learning which emphasizes the importance of reflection for growth and improvement (Hutchings et al., 2011). Of particular importance to equity and social justice teachers and practitioners, reflection is situated as an important step between *being* for equity, social justice, and anti-racism and *doing* the work necessary to challenge the status quo (Gooden, 2020). Further, reflection allows for introspection, stretching of thoughts in the right directions (i.e., race, equity, and justice), asking questions about the experiences, or the “values, strategies, and assumptions that make up our ‘theories’ of action” (Schön, 1987, p. 25), and the positioning of the tacit knowledge gleaned from the outcomes towards making improvements when moving forward. The ADDIE(R) framework isolates reflection from evaluation to provide additional time and emphasis on the processes of meditation, consideration, planning, and meaning making of observations to build

further coherence and effectiveness (of actions). This novel step facilitates informed decision-making and action—clear and deliberate course revision and redesign for more successful future iterations.

Figure 2

ADDIE(R) Instructional Design Framework



Methods

The study is a multi-case study of faculty approaches to embedding equity and social justice learning experiences in an on-line (synchronous and asynchronous) FACE course at a mid-Atlantic university. Case study research involves the study of a case (or cases) within real world contexts or settings (Yin, 2014). The cases in the study are bound by location within the same university and leadership program and the successive nature of the courses taught.

Case Identification Parameters

The case identification parameters are location, timeline of course delivery, mindsets, and immutable course expectations. Each of the three equity- and social justice-minded faculty

participating in the study taught a leadership for FACE course at Benjamin Rush University (BRU), a public mid-Atlantic university. This occurred in the Summer 2020, Fall 2020, and Spring 2021 semesters. None of the instructors were required to create the course from scratch. Each had access to the previous semester's course syllabus, materials, and pre-filled site on the course learning management system. There was continuity from one semester to the next with each instructor starting with a completed, but flexible, framework. The culture in the program at BRU conveyed that upon receiving the course, each instructor was allowed to individualize according to their preferences to create the desired learning experiences while meeting course objectives. All three faculty embedded their own set of distinct equity and social justice learning experiences into their courses as purposeful pedagogy to develop aspiring leaders' social justice competences.

The nature and importance of FACE in educational leadership programs has historically facilitated the inclusion of critical conversations and learning experiences around topics such as inequity, privilege, and racism in the course curriculum and design, making it an ideal setting for the cases included in this study. In addition, it is important to note this course was included in a BRU initiative to use digital simulations. In it, instructors were encouraged to use, and supported in the use of, digital simulations as complementary learning tools for the development of leadership competences.

Participants

Case Study 1

Dr. Revis (pseudonym), a white male in his early 30s, last taught the course in Summer 2020 for the third and final time at BRU, before changing institutions to become an Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership and program coordinator at a midwestern university. He

grew up in the south and started his teaching career at a charter school that intentionally recruited underserved students in the community.

Case Study 2

Dr. Mandell (pseudonym), a Black female in her early 60s, is a Senior Instructor of Education at BRU. She has over 40 years of experience in education and has served in her current role for almost six years. Prior to working at BRU, she worked as a teacher, associate superintendent, and interim superintendent of a mid-small school district in the state where BRU is located. Dr. Mandell was involved in the original planning and creation of the FACE course which is the subject of this study. She last taught the course in Fall 2020.

Case Study 3

Dr. Ballard (pseudonym), a Black male in his 30s, began teaching the course as a co-teacher in Fall 2020 with Dr. Revis, continued as co-instructor with Dr. Mandell in Fall 2020, and in Spring 2021 assumed sole responsibility for the course, continuing in this role through the time of this writing. He got his M.Ed. and Ed.D. in educational leadership at BRU while a practicing administrator, and currently serves as the director of an equity center committed to positive engagement between the university and the surrounding community. Prior to working at BRU, Dr. Ballard worked as a high school teacher in a low-income, predominantly Black school and as an associate principal in a diverse elementary school.

Data Sources

Data were collected via semi-structured interviews and course syllabi. See semi-structured interview protocol in Appendix A.

Data Analysis

Interviews were transcribed and imported into NVivo (Version 1.3.2) software for coding and analysis. The analysis approach was primarily holistic analysis of each entire case to provide

case descriptions and case themes, followed by cross-case analyses to generate cross-case themes (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). Initial deductive coding aligned with the conceptual framework and identified text describing or related to faculty mindsets, instructional design, and learning experiences. Inductive and axial coding techniques were utilized to reveal additional connections and themes within the qualitative data. Analytic memos were generated after each round of coding in order to capture key themes, emic concepts, connections to theory and the literature, and cross-case similarities, differences, and meaningful connections (Maxwell, 2013). During the analytic phase, close attention was paid to identification of practices used to deploy social justice learning, how faculty made sense of and conceptualized student learning for social justice competences, how they navigated programmatic and other factors, and the instructional impetus for each approach. Syllabi were examined to confirm faculty recollections and for clarification of details.

Findings

RQ1. In what ways do faculty mindsets inform their efforts to design equity- and social justice-focused learning experiences?

The conceptual framework for the study includes a faculty mindset protocol imagining what aspects shown to impact equity that an educator may be blind to or aware of. This includes the implications of student demographics, viewing students of color and their communities through a deficit or asset lens, understanding the difference between equality and equity, and utilizing socio-cultural contexts as a means for making sense of and addressing students' needs. Evaluation of each instructor's interview revealed experiences, knowledge, values, and commitments that placed them on the equity- and social justice-conscious side of each dimension on the protocol (depicted to the right of the continuums shown in Figure 1).

The faculty were selected for this study primarily because they were identified as having equity mindsets. Through this study, the authors were able to confirm those equity mindsets, but we found that “equity” does not quite capture the instructors’ true mindsets. To begin with, the instructors had a deep understanding of educational inequities and how those inequities perpetuated negative outcomes for students. They viewed equity as the “big” problem of practice in need of a solution. Then, they also proved aware of the social justice issues in education that conspire with inequity to prevent groups of students from reaching their ultimate potential. They are in fact committed to the pursuit of equity and social justice in K-12 schools and are motivated to develop effective aspiring leaders by those commitments. Finally, their identities and lived experiences (roots of their equity and social justice commitments) grant them unique perspectives and understandings of exclusion, racism, oppression, and privilege that they enthusiastically share with students. Each “tweaked” their courses to align more closely with their approaches and commitments to both equity and social justice.

As is common in educational leadership, the three faculty were all former teachers. Two of them had leadership endorsements, with one previously serving as an associate principal and the other as an associate superintendent. What might make them unique is that their teaching journeys included working with the most underprivileged and underserved students in our society. In these experiences lie additional roots to their equity and social justice commitments. The instructors are all educators at heart that believe in the promise of K-12, public education.

The Big White Guy in the Room (Case 1, Dr. Revis)

Dr. Revis is critically conscious of his identity, the power and privilege that identity evokes, and the ways he can subconsciously affect others. Accordingly, he works to decenter whiteness and dominant paradigms while centering scholars of color and historically marginalized students. Motivated by a desire to make the course directly related to social justice

and to create distance between traditional schemas of family engagement and a social justice approach, he added texts and changed the assignments to address equity and social justice issues explicitly. Dr. Revis describes himself as “the big white guy in the room.” His white male identity makes him mindful of how whiteness is often centered while other racialized identities are marginalized within academic spaces and educational contexts. Accordingly, he applies this awareness to his teaching and course design, where he emphasizes the dangers of race neutral mindsets. He shared he is cognizant of how the work of teaching in higher education (and in K-12) is iterative, and says he is always learning and amending because “critical consciousness is never arriving at an endpoint.”

The reality of the aspiring leader pool at BRU and other institutions is that student demographics will trend mostly white and mostly female. This reality informed how Dr. Revis prioritized equity and social justice in his course design process, assuming that the course would need direct and explicit instruction as well as learning experiences that address whiteness, white privilege, race, racism, antiracism, diversity, and traditional paradigms. While resistance or pushback was minimal, as he expected, the occasional student questioned whether the course was “a class about FACE or a class about racism?” This type of resistance made Dr. Revis feel justified in his overall approach. He acknowledged certain students often think they are equity and social justice warriors “but have very little actual understanding, skills, or dispositions.”

The Civil Rights Activist (Case 2, Dr. Mandell)

Dr. Mandell grew up in the rural south and is the daughter of a Baptist minister and historically black college or university (HBCU) professor. In 1963, she was one of seven girls to desegregate a school in her hometown. Dr. Mandell is motivated by the persistence of gaps in K-12 educational opportunities and values the humanizing effects of multicultural education and culturally responsive school leadership.

Dr. Mandell has had many influences that serve as motivators and catalysts to designing and delivering high-quality FACE courses. Among them are Muhamad Khalifa's work on culturally responsive school leadership and Ann Ishimaru's work on parent empowerment. She has also been influenced by a disconcerting experience in her work as an associate superintendent where she unintentionally failed to serve the needs of parents in her district in the way she now knows is essential for parent empowerment and student success. This particular experience changed her and ensured she has been committed to more authentic family and community engagement ever since.

Equity Center Director (Case 3, Dr. Ballard)

Dr. Ballard's father was a police officer, but he has experienced racial profiling and harassment from police officers who judged him by his skin color and/or clothing. Dr. Ballard acknowledged he had to fight for his place in advanced level courses and needed support from teachers and counselors to maximize his potential. He is motivated by a philosophy that sees education as a great equalizer and was drawn to become a teacher and administrator as a result. He works to ensure all students, especially those traditionally underserved, have the same opportunities he did.

When asked where equity and social justice leadership were situated in the priorities for FACE as he planned and prepared the course, Dr. Ballard responded that he serves as director of an equity center, implying equity is central to his leadership and teaching models. His preparation and instruction is informed by the philosophy that "laws and policies that created the inequities are intentional, leadership has to be intentional too." As a student in K-12, Dr. Ballard had to "fight for his spot" and hoped to be judged by his intellect and not his athletic ability. On occasion, a caring teacher provided the right amount of encouragement or advice and helped him

along his educational journey. That support contributed to his educational philosophy and appreciation of the power of educators in influencing student outcomes. These lived experiences provide him a perspective and level of awareness of educational inequities that are unique to Black males. Accordingly, an additional layer to his approach to FACE is about applying an asset lens to see the positives about students, schools, and communities and tapping into those assets to maximize student learning.

Summary

Common to all three faculty is the acute awareness of the persistent gaps in educational opportunities; how students have been and continue to be marginalized by their skin color, identities, socioeconomic status, and educational needs; and the inequity of resources and other injustices associated with K-12 schools. They were also conscious of the historical and systemic nature of racism and the resulting negative effects they have on students and families. These understandings are foundational to who they are and what motivates them to work towards improving their courses and better prepare K-12 school leaders to address inequities. The faculty's mindsets informed their efforts to design equity- and social justice-focused learning experiences by ensuring their specific commitments to equity and social justice were externalized in their approaches and design decision making processes, similar to how a researcher would apply a theoretical lens when evaluating data.

RQ2 . How are faculty commitments enacted through their instructional design?

Because of the nature of the program and history of the course, these faculty inherited a fully developed course. Thus, with full program support and autonomy, their work represented more incremental adjustments to the course, while retaining the same standards, course outcomes, and assigned state leadership competences. Below are descriptions of faculty analysis,

design, development, implementation, evaluation, and reflection when devising and embedding equity and social justice learning experiences in the FACE course, described in terms of the ADDIE(R) portion of the conceptual framework. The descriptions also include an analysis of how other factors may have influenced their instructional design.

Analysis

In this early phase, the faculty were guided by their equity and social justice mindsets when taking stock of the courses they inherited and the steps they would take to revise them according to their commitments and approaches. Because the course was inherited in a completed state, they were free to focus their efforts on making the slight adjustments that would put their vision and the course in alignment. Generally, the faculty took this opportunity to establish course goals, inventory their resources, and make determinations about what additional work would be required.

As the first instructor in this sequence, the course Dr. Revis inherited was likely the least social equity- or social justice-focused. He described the inherited course as having “equity sort of sidelined or compartmentalized.” As such, he took on the task of making it explicitly about equity and social justice. Because his students would be coming from predominantly white spaces, he anticipated students would say, “there are no black students in my school” or “this doesn’t apply to me.” He prepared to be deliberate about placing race at the forefront of the course and helping the predominantly white, female students understand it “does apply to you.”

Dr. Mandell was part of the process to design the original course, about three years prior to her teaching it in Fall 2020. In that process, the discussions centered around the decision to make *equity* the primary focus and *trust* the underlying framework. She and another faculty member leading the design were motivated by the pressing problem of persistent gaps and

students from historically marginalized groups not thriving. Dr. Mandell related that the program positioned FACE as the first course taught to new students entering the educational leadership program purposefully because as she saw it, students must learn that “treating every child equitably has to be at the core of every leaders’ beliefs and if you don’t tap into the community where they come from you can’t tap the learning.” She reported Khalifa’s work on culturally responsive school leadership heavily influenced her thinking and decision making in Fall 2020.

Dr. Ballard described education as a “great equalizer” that can lead to achievement and success when leaders are intentional in their approaches to addressing persistent gaps around equity, achievement, and opportunities between students of color and their peers. For these reasons, he described equity and social justice as his core and what he leads with when designing and teaching a course. He was driven by a goal to make it explicitly understood that equity is not separate from leadership, and “it can’t be outsourced.” In his view, the persistence of the gaps should force leaders to acknowledge the historical inequities and how the myriad ways they may manifest “into [their] current context if [they] are to lead a K-12 school.” Equity and social justice, thus, were woven into every component of the course. An additional core competence that influenced his thinking around leadership for FACE was self-reflection, resulting in thinking about ways to embed self-reflection opportunities throughout the course as well.

Dr. Ballard’s analysis and initial design efforts involved identifying the topics which should be covered in the synchronous sessions, those requiring difficult conversations and instructor facilitation. Compensating for the format and limited number of synchronous sessions, Dr. Ballard’s approach relied on providing students the processes for problem solving that could be operationalized in multiple contexts. His stated goal was “to give them some muscle memory around the thinking” that fosters leadership problem-solving.

A notable difference between the faculty's analysis approaches was the aspect of the course which they chose to emphasize. Dr. Revis's analysis was focused on his students. He was responsive to their previous feedback and anticipated their needs as well as the resistance they would provide based on BRU student demographics. Dr. Mandell focused on new developments in the field and ensured any discoveries were incorporated into her course. D. Ballard's approach prioritized helping students learn to solve equity and social justice problems of practice without having to know everything on the topic.

Design & Development

The design and development decisions instructors made in this study revealed the nuanced approaches they each took to embedding equity and social justice learning experiences in the FACE course. Individually, they each redesigned core course assignments, or added additional assignments, with varying purposes to further align learning experiences with their unique approaches, intended foci, and personal commitments. This resulted in three very distinct student experiences over the course of each instructor's semester. Descriptions of the specific assignments will be provided under RQ3.

Dr. Revis's analysis suggested the course was not only limited in its approach to equity and social justice, it relied heavily on traditional schemas of family and community engagement. Accordingly, he took a more targeted approach during design and development that infused equity and social justice throughout and shifted the central tenets of the course by switching the order of the readings. Instead of starting with what he referred to as "older, more canonical readings and research about family and community engagement," Dr. Revis started with current perspectives from "scholars of color and about students from more marginalized communities...Spanish speaking communities, migrant communities, Asian communities." As

he explained, his students were able to look at the white, middle-class dominant view as the outlier or “the thing to critique from the perspective of all these other things that we had already learned rather than sort of tacking on equity perspectives at the end, which is what happens in a lot of courses.” Dr. Revis’ impetus for redesign of course assignments included attempts at surfacing students’ underlying assumptions, creating resources the aspiring leaders would be able to rely on in the future, and helping them avoid unintentionally recreating or reproducing structures of dominance when assignments were not specifically race or class conscious.

Dr. Mandell invited practitioners (principals or superintendents) to visit her class to talk about FACE, which she dubbed “leadership voices” in the syllabus. She described that these speakers “enriched” the course and brought “such a dimension” to the discussion of leadership practice for FACE. The changes to the assignments she made were aimed at creating authentic practice experiences that brought home her basic equity concept of the course: “everyone is different and has to be valued.” Dr. Mandell’s impetus for redesign of course assignments included students learning about their individual community contexts, what inequities exist within those contexts, and what the implications were for their leadership practice. She also added or redesigned assignments that granted students opportunities to engage in difficult conversations because to build trust with your stakeholders, as she saw it, “you have to have intentional and sometimes difficult conversations around difficult topics.”

Pressed for time to fully cover the equity and social justice topics he wanted to include, Dr. Ballard began to redesign the live, in-class time to better suit student learning. For example, in attempting to facilitate opportunities for individual and group conferencing, he devised strategies to shift from lecture heavy sessions to sessions with built in work time and utilized Zoom functions, such as breakout rooms, in similar ways to how a classroom teacher would use

a conference table (or hallway). Dr. Ballard's impetus for redesign of course assignments included helping students understand the histories of their communities, how that history influences students' needs and leadership practice, and allowing for critical self-reflection throughout the course. He also redesigned activities to include increased opportunities for group work and commented that "it is hard to lead for equity by yourself."

Drs. Revis and Ballard both modified their activities to ensure the learning experience was meaningful and rigorous. Dr. Revis hoped as a result students would either develop competence or their underlying assumptions would surface. Dr. Ballard operationalized historical contexts and their impact on leadership and added reflection opportunities to his activities. Dr. Mandell organized her learning activities around her core message, what she saw as the basic equity concept that "everyone is different and has to be valued."

Implementation

The ways in which the instructors in this study delivered the course content were largely similar, with the use of traditional pedagogies such as readings, discussions, lectures, and case studies, and interactive instructional tools such as digital and clinical simulations. The courses were all online, alternating between an asynchronous week and one synchronous night every other week. Reading assignments traditionally fell on asynchronous weeks and most paper/presentation assignments were due prior to the synchronous sessions. Simulations were usually completed asynchronously, with the debrief sessions being held during synchronous sessions. Class time was generally made up of small and whole group discussions, short lectures, small and whole group case study analysis, small group work time, guest speakers, and the occasional partnered simulation.

Also common to all three instructors was prioritizing student engagement and a shared feeling of regret that the course format and schedule did not allow for additional in-person time with students. Just how the three instructors provided for student engagement in light of these perceived limitations varied somewhat, and in ways suggestive of their theory of action for developing leaders for social justice. Dr. Revis's implementation included additional work time embedded in the live sessions as a form of scaffolds for complex assignments, as well as increased discourse opportunities for the sensitive topics around race, racism, inequity, and social justice. Dr. Ballard's implementation included additional work time embedded in the live sessions, particularly for students to work in collaborative groups. Dr. Mandell's implementation uniquely included guest speakers as indicated above.

Evaluation

In this study, faculty evaluation processes were evident throughout all aspects of the course design and delivery, but primarily centered around effectiveness of student assignments, teacher quality, and whether students met intended course outcomes. The FACE course does not include student assessments such as traditional exams or papers. Instead, students were assessed through a combination of assignments, discussions, and overall engagement. While these three faculty placed varying weights to different evaluative elements of the course, they all relied on the culminating activity of "Family Engagement Plan" for measuring overall student achievement. Included for each case are moments when faculty identified specific course needs and began their processes of making course corrections to further develop FACE according to their mindsets, theories of action, and the ways they imagine aspiring leaders are spurred into development.

Dr. Revis relied on assignments to make students' thinking visible and reveal any underlying cultural biases. During one learning experience, Dr. Revis realized that while students were not doing anything technically wrong in handling the concerns of an irate parent, their race neutral approach was unintentionally empowering parents from already dominant groups. He revealed he forgot to teach them that race always matters and changed the way the assignment would be introduced to make that point explicit. He found that some group assignments did not work as expected because of the different school contexts each student came from. He also found certain assignments required too much specificity and technical knowledge, which he realized was unfair to ask of his students. Dr. Revis repeatedly stated that the work of teaching equity and social justice is iterative. His instructional design decisions were constantly being amended because "critical consciousness is never arriving at an endpoint. It's always responding to and always seeing something new."

When asked about assessing student learning, Dr. Revis lamented not being able to observe aspiring leaders' actual family and community engagement practice in their future K-12 settings. Instead, he assessed them by identifying the key words and phrases in student writing that made their learning visible, illustrating whether or not they were absorbing the course content. Primarily through the culminating assignment, Dr. Revis evaluated whether student work reflected the key learning goals for the course, whether students were addressing the important problems of practice connecting FACE and equity, and whether they were utilizing outdated strategies and metrics of FACE.

While Dr. Mandell felt gratified by course evaluations indicating students were having positive experiences in the class and learning the course content, she recognized it did not reveal much about course content. She reported she made sure to focus on the content when grading

student work. She often found herself receiving additional confirmation that students were getting the content after the fact when references to FACE appeared in assignments turned in for other courses she taught. Students shared they felt “they could learn and breathe” in her course.

Student assessment is a “growing edge” for Dr. Ballard. Ideally, he would prefer to assess students based on their eventual leadership practices. He thinks “a true way to assess [student learning] would be like following up in a couple of years and seeing what sort of things they’ve experienced, how it matched to what we’re teaching, and how it’s actually in their practice.” Because that is not feasible in an initial licensure program, he instead assesses the success of the course holistically, considering assignment results, course evaluations, pre- and post-semester student self-reflections, and the culminating activity to discern that students indeed “get it and they get the process” as indicative of their development of equity and social justice competences. He is constantly assessing informally throughout the course as well as from synchronous session exit tickets. Collectively, he uses all data points to revise the course and prepare for the following semester.

One activity that stood out to Dr. Ballard revealed students’ inconsistent understandings of sociopolitical contexts and how those contexts must influence leadership decision making. In this example, an assignment that requires FACE leadership practice that may involve notifying law enforcement, he found his students were not taking into account the community’s relationship with law enforcement, which he found concerning because he acknowledges “community policing is a huge social justice issue right now” that will have implications on their practice. As a result, he has already elevated the discourse around sociopolitical contexts and felt he saw an increase in student awareness. Dr. Ballard’s evaluation process did identify an ongoing need—students have varying degrees of equity understandings and some require more time to unpack complex topics and for critical self-reflection.

When asked how she knew students were learning, Dr. Mandell responded, “Isn’t that the million dollar question for every teacher?” While each instructor described their processes for assessing student progress, there were no mentions of traditional assessments. What they did mention were the assignments, exit tickets, course evaluations, and the pre- and post-semester student self-reflections. The assignments (primarily the culminating engagement plan) and exit tickets, which occur during the course, were the two opportunities to compare student output to benchmarks related to course learning objectives. The instructors used these to look for evidence of student learning, identifying the words or phrases which suggest “they get it” or are getting it.

Reflection

In this study, in the first two cases the faculty were not able to act on the results of their reflections as they passed the course on to another instructor. Unlike Dr. Ballard who continues to teach the course, Drs. Mandell and Revis did not go on to apply the changes identified in their final reflections. Given the opportunities, they indicated they would do a few things differently in the next iteration of the course. Yet, the three instructors reported similar practices in thinking about their equity and social justice approaches and how well the course they delivered served to prepare aspiring leaders for effective leadership of K-12 schools.

Dr. Revis is reflective of his identity and how he impacts others. His instructional design process begins with this understanding and is influenced by it at every phase. He is deliberate about also helping others, particularly those from the dominant culture, to be reflective about their identities, privileges, and marginalizing behaviors. In the interview, Dr. Revis illustrated his reflexive nature when discussing assignment design shortcomings, his tendency to over-engineer his courses, and his constant struggle to provide adequate feedback for everyone on each assignment. He is aware his feedback is often delayed, and timely, actionable feedback “is where

learning happens.” His reflection is influenced by the pressure to find the perfect balance between workload and manageable feedback. He remains hopeful about his personal development in general, “the longer I teach the better I get and the better my courses get.”

Dr. Mandell has a process for reflecting on her teaching of a course. She writes everything down. She writes down what worked, what didn’t, what needs reconsideration, and what she did wrong. She admitted she is prone to always wanting to change and improve and reports that what influences this drive to make changes are her equity and social justice commitments, which demand that she be up to speed on the latest research, frameworks, and pedagogies.

While Dr. Ballard feels the course format is limiting, he has found ways to compensate for it. In alignment with his preferred approaches to developing aspiring leaders’ competences, he indicated he favored meeting with students weekly instead of biweekly to ensure they have enough time to process the course content and explore areas where their understandings are limited to begin with. He indicated that asynchronous assignments and discussion boards in particular serve a purpose, but do not facilitate robust discourse. He also finds it is difficult to have certain conversations on Zoom “when you’re talking about their beliefs on race and community.”

Dr. Ballard found his decisions about redesign to be effective and was content with the evolution of the course. His focus on social justice and the inclusion of sociopolitical contexts were embedded successfully and student resistance was virtually nonexistent. His reflections were primarily centered around maximizing the efficiency of live, synchronous sessions, utilizing asynchronous sessions strategically, and developing students’ equity and social mindsets to the best of his ability.

All three faculty engaged in reflective practices, with each engaging in their own way. Dr. Revis's reflections are responsive to student feedback. Dr. Mandell shared she is very reflective of her practice and history, using past mistakes as motivation to ensure the best learning experiences for her students. And Dr. Ballard engages in critical self-reflection to question his equity and social justice commitments in the hopes of continuing to learn and grow.

Summary

In summary, these faculty are driven by their unique equity and social justice perspectives to gradually design, redesign, amend, reshape, and revise student learning experiences so that they are in alignment with their approach to FACE. While they would like to do the design/redesign work in one fell swoop, faculty do not have the time to do it, and even if they did, they need the benefit of their own teaching experiences to learn what needs to be changed. They assigned similar core assignments, but in each case the purposes and intended outcomes were slightly modified to match their approaches to fostering students' attention to equity and social justice. The student learning experiences ended up being different in each course, but the instructors were satisfied their designed learning experiences worked, considering their course evaluations. Thus, they each expressed a sense of satisfaction with their iteration of the course, but the urgency of persistent inequities in K-12 schools kept them thinking the courses needed to be even better. The program they taught in was seen as supportive of prominently emphasizing equity and social justice leadership. That feeling of support enabled them to take the inherited course and to shape it further into the course they envisioned.

RQ3. What learning experiences, in the form of activities and assignments, do faculty produce to develop and assess equity and social justice leadership competences?

The instructors described the learning activities and experiences they provided to engage students in equity and social justice leadership learning and competence development. Among the responses were a core group of assignments that constituted the bulk of the learning experiences and resulted in the course grade. We also share how each instructor “tweaked” the assignments to make them further aligned to their own goals and approaches to the course, and their bigger ideas regarding how school leaders are prepared to value and act on equity and/or social justice.

Community Portrait

Dr. Revis’s community portrait assignment asked students to engage a cultural tour guide that would take them out of their familiar zone and deeper into the community. Students were to submit a video presentation of their experience, including what they learned about their community. Dr. Revis kept this assignment as it was “a good point of departure” that made students’ thinking about cultural diversity visible, surfacing underlying assumptions, exposing implicit biases, deficit mindsets, and overall lack of cultural awareness. Dr. Revis explains the reason for his approach:

I think a lot of people, teachers especially, think they have a good understanding of equity and diversity or social justice...very few of them come in with a humble understanding of their own skills and dispositions in that regard. So that first assignment, they’re asked to do something...[with] a cultural diversity element that is getting their thinking visible...which is so important. You can’t just say, “Do you support equity? Do you support diversity?”...an assignment like this, the work requirement is on describing the community, identifying someone to be your tour guide...All those are choices that

students make...they make their implicit biases explicit that way...it's a way of getting their subconscious out on the page.

For Dr. Mandell, the message behind the community portrait is “you need to know the community you serve.” Students are to walk or drive a part of the community with a community partner, a tour guide, preferably someone they do not know. In presentation format, students describe what they saw and reflect on what it means for them as a leader. They are asked to consider the demographics of the community, who the members and players are, and what inequities they may have noticed.

Dr. Ballard described his community portrait assignment similarly to the community portrait assignment of Dr. Mandell's, requiring students to walk or drive with a guide to get to know the community, but he also emphasized learning the history of the community. His students were required to engage a guide who is familiar with the neighborhood and can share the history of the community and its people. A learning outcome of the assignment is understanding how the past influences the present, and students were assessed on their ability to reflect on their environments and how that reflection plays out in their current as well as the aspirational role of leader. He also added a map requirement. Students were tasked with creating a map of the community, highlighting key partners and the resources available to the school.

Diversity Reflections

The diversity reflections were originally intended as a book review in Dr. Revis's course, but he instead turned it into a critical practice brief with suggestions for actions that would address the underlying race, diversity, equity, or social justice issue of the text. He viewed the briefs as practical tools that would make great resources. Students were required to read and submit a critical practice brief for one of the books on the list, but they eventually received access to all of the briefs their classmates submitted.

In Dr. Mandell's version of the diversity reflections assignment, students chose a book to read and review from a list of books related to issues of race, diversity, equity, and social justice. They reflected on their reading and submitted a summary that included their own key insights and takeaways, as a way to prompt introspection.

Dr. Ballard's diversity reflection assignment was primarily a book review. However, to him it was also about their "ability to reflect on themselves and situate themselves within their context," a core competence around equity leadership that is a key component of his class.

Cases

Dr. Revis, a self-proclaimed fan of case writing pedagogy, included two case writing assignments in his course. The first was as an individual assignment where the context was based on the student's experience and their community portrait. The second was a group assignment with a composite of experiences making up the context. In both cases, students had to include a professional development program for community engagement. For these assignments, Dr. Revis hoped students would apply course content to their reflections on past experiences, seeing them in new light and imagining how they might have gone differently or turned out differently now that they are armed with new knowledges and frames of reference.

Dr. Mandell described complementary equity case studies and readings on asset-based community engagement and community cultural wealth that she assigned to shift students towards a "funds of knowledge" conceptualization of student and community resources. She describes her reasoning for the readings:

I try to talk a little bit about the financial term of equity...that equity has to do with the value of your home, for example, but equity, when we are talking about people, it is, do you value them? Do you value that they, as human beings bring something to the table

and therefore you're gonna tap [into] that, not find out all the problems that they have.

And so the articles that they do in asset-based community engagement, lead them to, you know, the glass is half full versus half [empty]...you know, some of the clichés that go along with all of that stuff...that's a fundamental first class conversation that's, I think, really important.

Dr. Ballard described his use of complementary equity and social justice case studies and readings on critical self-reflection. Students engaged in one case study per synchronous session, often learning lessons about trust and building relationships. For example, in one case he emphasized to students “that an angry parent may not be angry with you, but at a system they do not trust. Your primary response should be to try to rebuild that trust.” The critical self-reflection readings were inspired by the work of Muhammad Khalifa and Zaretta Hammond. For Dr. Ballard, a core competence of leadership is critical self-reflection, especially through an equity lens. He describes the purpose:

And so what that looks like is this idea that you know yourself, you know your assumptions, your biases. And if you don't know yourself, you have a critical partner that you can reflect with...someone that pushes you to constantly go towards that more equitable outcome.

Simulations

Dr. Revis's course had students engage once each with three types of simulation experiences (a digital case, digital simulation, and virtual clinical simulation) over the semester. Each of the experiences involved addressing a family and community engagement problem of practice from a leadership perspective. The simulations were not specifically equity- or social justice-focused but allowed students to apply content knowledge in the rehearsal of reality-based

school leadership. In the debriefs, an essential component of simulation pedagogy, Dr. Revis and students addressed the problems of practice as well as the overarching issues related to family and community engagement such as practices that marginalize some families, the need for asset-based mindsets when engaging culturally diverse families, and eliminating the concept of race neutrality from leadership practice “because no case is race neutral,” as he explained. To Dr. Revis, family engagement is also informed by the stakeholders and “has to look different for fascist, white families...race matters...no case is race neutral...and it has to be part of the decision making.”

Dr. Mandell’s students engaged with two types of simulation experiences (a digital simulation and clinical simulation) that focused on engaging with families regarding student behavior and addressing a parent’s concerns about curriculum. In both of the simulation experiences, her students practiced applying content knowledge and navigating difficult conversations. In the debriefs, Dr. Mandell emphasized the basic equity concept that everyone is different, and parents have to be valued for who they are and where they come from even when they are “crazy.” Especially when parents are wrong, demanding something that would ill serve the school’s students, they are to be treated respectfully and with dignity. They do not have to be appeased, but at least heard. This is something Dr. Mandell feels is fundamental to the concepts of equity and social justice and consciously models for her students.

Simulations in Dr. Ballard’s course took on additional urgency in the wake of the George Floyd murder and were debriefed through an intentional lens more closely related to equity and social justice. As a Black male who has experienced police prejudice and racial profiling, he assigned a simulation in which students (in a leadership role) have to decide how to handle a situation where a phone is found and social media information on the phone reveal high school students are drinking alcohol at a party. Among the many decisions his students make within the

simulation is the option to call for police intervention. Of note, in the aftermath of Mr. Floyd's murder, Dr. Ballard recalls none of the students in Dr. Mandell's class chose to notify the police. When his students engaged in the simulation the following semester, every student chose to notify the police. Of note, in the class completing the simulation immediately after Mr. Floyd's murder, none of the students chose to notify the police. In the most recent completion of the simulation, every student chose to notify the police. This discrepancy informed Dr. Ballard's understanding of the assignment. He realized the earlier, contextualized outcome was a result of the events which students had been exposed to. The design of the assignment, however, when distanced from those social contexts, did not result in the intended learning. Accordingly, Dr. Ballard reimagined the introduction and debrief of the assignment in an attempt to teach students each community is going to have different relationships and varying levels of trust with law enforcement. Leading schools in communities that do not have trusting relationships with the police will have implications for leadership practice. Community policing is a critical social justice issue and Dr. Ballard explained how he is intentional about making sure his students "understand the sociopolitical context of their decision making in their environment, in a school district, but then also in the nation." Dr. Ballard intended for the course simulation experiences to go beyond equity and trust. Dr. Ballard's own lived experiences motivated him to ensure students considered all sociopolitical contexts which might inform their decision making. For example, he wanted them to see leadership practice alternatives, such that if and when high school students are drinking alcohol at a party, the characteristics of the community's relationship to the police may dictate that visiting the home yourself may be preferable to requesting police intervention.

Family Engagement Plan

The family engagement plan was the final assignment and major assessment in the course for all three instructors. The plan addressed the dilemma that was introduced in the individual case study and included a specific program or plan of action with at least two action components. Students were evaluated on the metrics that would be used to measure success, the stakeholders involved in the plan, and the degree to which students moved away from traditional family engagement schema (e.g., counting the number of parents who show up to an open house). As Dr. Revis said, this assignment connected “the cerebral ideas of theory and the actual actions.”

Dr. Mandell said of her version of the family engagement plan that it “leans into the things they saw in that community and how they are going to address something in that area.” The plan is not implemented, but it is considered a resource they can further develop as needed in the future. Dr. Mandell does not see the family engagement plan as directly related to equity or social justice. However, students are forced to center equity and social justice in the plan by connecting it back to inequities they identified in the community portrait assignment, the initial course assignment.

Dr. Ballard’s version of the family engagement plan assignment is centered around a problem of practice that they are looking to redress (e.g., how to get more Hispanic students into advanced placement courses). Notably, he described how students worked in groups “under this philosophy that I believe that...it’s hard to lead for equity by yourself.” Accordingly, they were expected to bring their diverse expertise to bear in identifying best practices and embedding them as strategies in the plan. They were assessed on their ability to think as a group, identify a problem of practice, plan strategically, set reasonable goals, and measure outcomes and use data in equitable ways.

Summary

While the faculty essentially inherited the list of core course assignments, they each individualized them in ways that aligned with their approaches to the course and personal commitments to equity and social justice. Interestingly, they each leveraged a particular assignment to showcase those personal commitments to equity and social justice and to assess students' acquisition of the intended knowledge and skills. For Dr. Revis, the case writing activities included a race and racism professional development plan that made his students think about how to teach what they learned to develop the capacity of teachers and staff in their future schools. Dr. Mandell leaned into the family engagement plan and the need to build trusting relationships with parents and other members of the community in order to support and foster student achievement. For Dr. Ballard, the simulation experiences gave him the opportunity to develop students' understanding of sociopolitical contexts and how they would impact leadership practice.

Also, while discussions do not get listed in the syllabus, there was a pattern of similarity between the faculty in the way they repeated various forms of the following sentence stem, “we talk about...,” when responding to the question about learning activities. Our takeaway about this shared characteristic is that faculty view class discussions as learning experiences, and this component is part of each assignment. These discussions appear complementary to the core assignments in engaging students in equity and social justice competence development. Given how faculty reference discussion in the overall scope or framing of the course, it appears that the things they “talk” about may serve as connective tissue that holds the course together, and linking the learning experiences. This was a surprising finding that suggests this may also be an area for future research.

Discussion

Overall, these instructors were given autonomy to make the FACE course their own and the influence of their equity mindsets is evident in their course planning, implementation, and assignments. While there were general similarities among their approaches, as each built upon the other as she or he worked through the ADDIE(R) process, nuanced differences emerged related to personal histories and race. The findings emphasize that especially for a course oriented toward social justice leadership there are multiple layers of context at work, under the control of the ELPP more so (i.e., program commitment to social justice leadership, course format and frequency and overall amount of time allotted, and assessment procedures) and less so (i.e., race, and background and history of the instructor).

The course design considerations of these faculty and the program level's intention of the course outcomes indicates this ELPP fits what Berkovich (2017) describes as one aiming at attitude development design with a focus on developing students' critical consciousness about power structures and privileges. Because this aligned well with these instructors' intents, they felt supported by the program and for the most part enjoyed positive student reviews. This suggests a need for ELPPs to step back and consider the coherence of their public commitments to social justice leadership, students they recruit into the program, and the specific aims of the assignments. Programs may also consider if the delivery format and frequency of meetings provide the sort of setting described as necessary (Montelongo & Eaton, 2019) to allow for complex equity discussions and equity work, a theme echoed by these instructors wishing for either more frequent or in-person meetings to foster unpacking of complex topics, making connections, and allowing for robust discussions.

ELPPs must also consider how to assess their intended outcomes for prospective leaders' equity or social justice minded leadership to avoid overreliance on traditional measures (i.e., quizzes, tests, final exams) or course evaluations. For all three faculty, student feedback on

course evaluations was overwhelmingly positive, which is seemingly desirable, but negative feedback could suggest instructors are pushing students in areas that require it, making them uncomfortable and forcing them to account for those feelings. While we cannot assume there is anything inherently bad about these instructors' predominantly positive feedback, it is also possible that it might be indicative of something that needs addressing. These instructors agreed that eventual leadership in a school would be the best assessment but recognized that wasn't feasible and instead relied on their holistic sense of whether students "got it," considering assignments, exit slips, and course evaluations. The development in educational leadership of simulated practice exercises used systematically offers some promise for repeatable observable formative and summative evaluation of equity- and social justice-minded leadership (Crow & Whiteman, 2016; Dexter et al., 2020). Interviews or observation protocols are alternate avenues ELPPs might explore (Darling-Hammond et al., 2022).

These cases also raised the personal characteristics of the faculty as influential on course design, something not entirely under the control of ELPPs. Faculty engaging in teaching about race, racism, privilege, and oppression often find themselves in spaces that are dangerous (DeSoto, 2008), polarized, and racially tense (Tucker, 2008). Particularly challenging for Black faculty, courses related to race and diversity are often mandatory and may be filled with students who lack the necessary commitments to the topics. While the Black faculty experience is not monolithic, Black faculty often engage in a "professional, emotional and physical labor" that is likely underestimated (Perry et al., 2009, p. 81, as cited in Closson et al., 2014) and are forced to take extra caution in every aspect of their preparation to avoid racial battle fatigue. Closson and colleagues (2014) found that Black instructors often navigate these concerns by creating a safe space where white students are comfortable being vulnerable, feeling able to say something offensive without being frozen in time as a "way to process to eventually recognize their own

flawed thinking” (Closson et al., 2014, p. 84). They must walk the fine line between making students comfortable enough to engage, but uncomfortable enough that they are forced to think critically and explore their assumptions (Closson et al., 2014). Race pedagogy should require risks and vulnerability, while empowering students and faculty alike (Closson et al., 2014). As the two Black faculty in these case studies did not experience resistance from the predominantly white students, it suggests they have designed and delivered their courses in a manner that allows students to feel safe and empowered. But, it does beg the question, have they been pushing their students far enough in their explorations of race, racism, and privilege? These concerns about race pedagogy and faculty-student interactions merit further inquiry.

Finally, these cases also revealed the faculty’s theories of action for developing leaders for equity and social justice. The ways they described how they situated equity and social justice at the outset of course design, how their mindsets informed their efforts to design equity- and social justice-focused learning experiences, and the specific foci of their instruction amounted to them bringing their theories of action to the surface. Ultimately, the theories of action represented their models for teaching and learning, their understanding of the inputs needed to spur students into critical review, reflection, and action in response to “new understandings” and “altered perspectives” (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002, as cited in Pedrosa-de-Jesus et al., 2017, p. 457). The three instructors’ models for teaching and learning varied somewhat, but all seemed effective in delivering the intended course content and anticipated outcomes. ELPPs would be well served to not only consider their own commitments to equity and social justice, but also help instructors develop their own theories of action for aspiring leaders' social justice competence development.

Conclusion

The study found an influential relationship between mindsets and instructional design approaches and the resulting impact on student learning experiences. The faculty in the cases made design decisions to decenter whiteness and traditional paradigms, center scholars of color and students from marginalized communities, and leaned on their commitments to equity and social justice to deliver transformative learning experiences for the purpose of developing aspiring leaders' social justice leadership competences. These cases add to the educational leadership field's understanding of the capacity of ELPPs to prepare aspiring leaders for today's schools and the ways in which programs facilitate or impede faculty efforts, enriching our awareness of the factors which motivate faculty and others to work towards equitable and socially-just educational outcomes. Additional research should explore the race pedagogies of faculty; how students perceive race instruction from Black, Brown, and white instructors; the effectiveness of equity and social justice discourse as a learning activity; the effectiveness of assignment-based student assessment; effectiveness of instructional pedagogies; as well as additional inquiry into ELPP faculty support and development. Also, as these case studies reveal a unique situation where faculty autonomy, course pre-design, student demographics, and faculty mindsets all coalesce to facilitate compelling student learning experiences, this may serve as an example of what is possible and provide an opportunity for the field to explore more optimal examples of how these teaching and learning situations come together. As such, it would also be beneficial to conduct similar research of like-minded faculty within programs with different contexts from those at BRU.

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Appendix A

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Background Information

- Tell me about yourself. I'm interested in what brought you to your current institution, what you did previously, where you are from, that kind of thing.
- When did you last teach Family and Community Engagement? How many times have you taught Family and Community Engagement?
- What is your role/title at your current institution? Is this the same as when you last taught Family and Community Engagement?

Preparation (Analysis, Design, & Development)

- Tell me where equity and social justice leadership was situated in the priorities for Family and Community Engagement as you planned/prepared?
- What motivated you to prioritize equity and social justice learning experiences in [specific way] Family and Community Engagement?

Teaching (Implementation & Evaluation)

- Is the development of equity and social justice competences a specific outcome goal of the Family and Community Engagement course? If so, which competences?
- What activities or learning experiences did you provide to engage students in equity and social justice leadership learning/competence development?
- You mentioned (activity). How did this activity connect to the bigger idea in your mind of equity and social justice leadership?
 - What about for (activity)? [Repeat]
 - What role did the simulations play in supporting your approach to developing equity/social justice leadership competences for Family and Community Engagement? If so, how?
- How did you know the learning experiences were effective?

Reflection (Reflection)

-
- What were some of your takeaways from the last time you taught Family and Community Engagement? What did you think worked? Didn't work?
 - How did your takeaways inform your practice(s)?
 - What is your process after a course ends? (How do you bridge one semester to the next?)
 - How did students react to the learning experiences?
 - Did you encounter any resistance? (What happened?)
 - What about your program facilitates your work?
 - What about your program makes your work more difficult?
 - What else do you/would you need to be more successful in your efforts to develop equity and social justice leadership competences?
 - Is there anything else you would like to share that I may not have asked about?
-