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CULTIVATING SOCIAL JUSTICE PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL:
EDUCATIONAL LEADERS DISRUPTING DEFICIT THINKING REGARDING BLACK
MALES

Dissertation
By

Derrick Ciesla

with Julia Bott, Rodolfo Morales, and Marybeth O'Brien

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Cultivating Social Justice Pedagogical Knowledge and Skill: Educational Leaders Disrupting
Deficit Thinking Regarding Black Males

by

Derrick Ciesla

Dr. Martin Scanlan (Chair)
Dr. Ingrid Allardi (Reader)
Dr. A. Lin Goodwin (Reader)

Abstract

Many district and school leaders have leveraged instructional leadership or social justice leadership to advance student achievement for minoritized students. While research has examined these approaches separately, we identify a potential gap at the nexus between instructional and social justice leadership. In particular, we need further research examining how leaders bridge instructional and social justice leadership practices to disrupt educational inequities. Our study examines how educational leaders weave instructional and social justice leadership skills to cultivate others' social justice pedagogical knowledge and skill. Employing a collective case study framework, this study explores how a mid-sized urban district's superintendent and school leaders cultivated and promoted the social justice pedagogical knowledge and skill of others. Data was collected through interviews, surveys, and document reviews. The primary research participants included one superintendent, two assistant superintendents, three central office leaders, five school leaders, and six teachers. Our findings highlight four themes: the importance of leaders' critical self-reflection perceptions of district-level infrastructure and strategic planning, school-level instructional infrastructure and capacity building, and gaps in social justice pedagogical skill. This research has implications for

practice, policy, and existing literature related to cultivating and enacting social justice

pedagogical knowledge and skill across diverse contexts.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my beloved Grandfather, Thaddeus "Ted" Ciesla. Your unwavering belief in me has been the cornerstone of my journey, instilling the confidence that allowed me to believe in myself. Thank you for being my source of inspiration and encouragement.

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Urban school districts strive to meet the needs of increasingly diverse learners and address the pervasive and enduring opportunity gaps impacting minoritized students* (Hussar & Bailey, 2013). Since the establishment of public education, racially, ethnically, linguistically, and ability-diverse students have faced persistent barriers that directly impede access to high-quality teaching and learning (Edmonds, 1979; Delpit, 1995; Khalifa et al., 2019, Ezzani, 2021). Many factors contribute to the lower achievement of minoritized students, including teacher beliefs, assumptions, and biases rooted in deficit thinking, (Diamond, Randolph & Spillane, 2004; Ott & Kohli, 2022), the disjuncture between school culture and student identity (Delpit, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007; Kohli, 2012; Goodwin, 2016), as well as the disproportionate identification and segregation of low-income students of color within restrictive special educational settings (Artiles & Zamora-Durán, 1997; Artiles, 2003; Blanchett, 2006; Kozleski & Thorius, 2014; Tefera et al., 2023).

Many districts and leaders have responded to these inequities by leveraging instructional leadership as a central strategy to develop educators' content knowledge and pedagogical skill to accelerate the achievement of underperforming students (Elmore, 2007; Hallinger & Wang, 2015; Hopkins et al., 2013; Chenoweth, 2021). Instructional leadership generally refers to leadership behaviors that prioritize instruction and student learning through the work of visioning and goal setting, fostering a culture of learning and actively supporting curriculum, instruction and assessment in service to student achievement (Murphy, 1990; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Hallinger, 2005; Grissom et al., 2013).

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[1] This chapter was jointly written by Julia Bott, Derrick Ciesla, Rodolfo Morales and Marybeth O'Brien

Several scholars posit that these conceptions of instructional leadership fall short by omitting the effects of institutional and structural barriers on minoritized [2]students (e.g., Khalil, D., & Brown, E., 2015; Mckenzie et al., 2008; Theoharis, G., 2007). These scholars assert that the current educational landscape demands equity-centered school and district leaders who can leverage social justice leadership skills to disrupt educational inequities (Brown, 2004; Theoharis, 2007; Rigby, 2014). Specifically, they argue that social justice leadership is a way to increase the belongingness, outcomes, and purpose of schooling for many minoritized students (Alsbury & Whitaker, 2007; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2004; O'Malley & Capper, 2015; Theoharis, 2007; Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011).

While previous research has looked at these approaches separately, we integrate them, exploring how social justice leaders leverage instructional leadership strategies to address educational inequities (Shaked, 2020). Referring to this integration as "social justice pedagogical knowledge and skill" (Dyches & Boyd, 2017), our study will examine how school and district leaders cultivate and promote educators' (administrators and teachers) social justice pedagogical knowledge and skill (SJPKS).

O'Brien's study investigates how a superintendent develops their social justice leadership: critical consciousness, knowledge, and skills to enact "just" practices that contribute to improving schools, coupled with the way they develop capacity within the district and school leaders. Bott's study examines how principals leverage instructional leadership skills to influence the development of educators' SJPKS. Ceisla's study examines how principals disrupt deficit thinking and encourage asset-based instructional practices to promote the success of Black males

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[2] The term "minoritized" is a concept that refers to groups or individuals who have been marginalized, disadvantaged, or subjected to social, political, or economic inequality based on their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or other characteristics

who have experienced trauma. Morales' study explores the strategies and approaches used by school principals to confront teachers' race-based bias towards students, as well as explore how racial differences among principals and teachers may influence the strategic approaches taken. Table 1, highlights the individual questions each researcher explores, providing further specificity and nuance to our study.

Table 1.1

Overarching and Individual Research Questions

Overarching Research Question	
How do educational leaders cultivate and promote social justice pedagogical knowledge and skill?	
Researcher	Individual Research Questions
Marybeth O'Brien	1. How does a superintendent develop and understand their own social justice pedagogical knowledge and skill? 2. How does a superintendent enact their social justice pedagogical knowledge and skill to develop the capacity of district and school leaders?
Julia Bott	1. How do principals understand social justice pedagogical knowledge and skill? 2. What instructional leadership practices do principals employ to grow teachers' social justice pedagogical knowledge and skill? 3. How do teachers experience these practices?

Derrick Ciesla	1. How do school leaders disrupt deficit thinking and encourage asset-based instructional practices to promote the success of Black males who have experienced trauma?
Rodolfo Morales	1. How do principals - as racial beings working in contexts imbued with individual, institutional, and cultural racism – confront teachers' race-based bias toward students?

Literature Review

Two bodies of empirical literature situate our study: instructional leadership and social justice leadership. In the domain of instructional leadership, studies focus on supervision and evaluation, professional learning, collaborative data-driven decision-making, and leadership content knowledge. Studies in the domain of social justice leadership focus on disrupting deficit mindsets, developing critical consciousness, and developing social justice pedagogical knowledge.

Reviewing these two bodies of literature, we conclude that existing research does not fully capture the interrelationship between instructional and social justice leadership, specifically how instructional leadership is implemented to advance the goals of social justice leadership.

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership has been identified as a key lever for the advancement of student achievement at both the school and district level. Extensive research considers the roles and responsibilities of the principal as instructional leader (e.g., Robinson et al.,

2008; Leithwood et al., 2004). Research shows that central office leaders of successful districts "spent significant proportions of their workweek personally guiding and leading the instructional processes in their districts" (Hentschke et al. 2009, p. 331), and that effective school and district leaders organize systems to support and focus on instructional improvement (Adams, 2016; Barnes et al., 2010, Malinga et al., 2022)

Seminal research identifies several essential components of instructional leadership that directly impact the quality of classroom instruction and student learning (Edmonds, 1979; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) conceptual framework for principal instructional leadership identifies three core dimensions: defining the school vision, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive learning climate (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Leithwood, 1994; O'Donnell & White, 2005). Within these dimensions, school and district leaders often leverage supervision and evaluation, professional learning, data-driven practices, and leadership content knowledge to build the pedagogical knowledge and skill of educators. In the sections below, we provide a description of each dimension.

Supervision and Evaluation

Instructional leaders play a pivotal role in ensuring the implementation of teacher evaluations and feedback cycles. Researchers have found that instructional leaders use their discretion when supervising and evaluating teachers (Donaldson & Woulfin, 2018; Jones et al., 2022; Marsh et al., 2017). For example, to ensure the effectiveness of feedback cycles, principals may prioritize the use of teacher evaluation systems as a mechanism for coaching as opposed to a state policy for evaluations and accountability (Donaldson & Woulfin, 2018). In studying the

motivations behind the inflation of evaluation scores, Jones et al. (2022) found that principals may provide a higher rating to enable productive feedback conversations and prioritize teacher morale and principal-teacher relationships. As a result, school leaders preserve their time and maintain their self-efficacy as instructional leaders. However, school leaders may also inflate scores to avoid necessary but challenging conversations.

Organizational structures and environmental contexts also influence the implementation of teacher evaluation systems. Marsh et al.'s (2017) study examines how the organizational context of New Orleans schools impacted the implementation of a new teacher evaluation system. The study found that the system's implementation was shaped by the district's decentralization, the charter school system, and the district's response to Hurricane Katrina. Governing systems, leader-capacity, and pre-existing collaborative structures influenced how schools either complied, modified, or ignored the district's expectations for teacher evaluations. For example, some school leaders modified the teacher rubric to include school-specific priorities that were influenced by the contextual realities of teaching post Hurricane Katrina. Other schools adopted a new rubric altogether, whereas some complied with state expectations as prescribed. The authors suggest that policymakers should consider the organizational context when designing evaluation systems and provide support for schools to adapt to local needs.

The effectiveness of teacher evaluation systems as tools for promoting professional growth, relies heavily on instructional leaders. In particular, instructional leaders with strong content knowledge, and those who empower teacher leaders and coaches, are better positioned to improve the instructional capacity of educators (Nelson et. al, 2007; Hill and Gross, 2013). Additionally, instructional leaders who can coach with student-centered feedback may also have

more success in developing teachers' capacity (Allen et. al, 2011).

Guerra et. al (2022) posit that teacher evaluation itself is insufficient if cultural responsiveness is not centered during the process. In analyzing a commonly used textbook that aims to prepare principals for instructional leadership through observation and feedback, they found that culture was often obfuscated throughout the text leading to implicit exclusion of culture. While the unit of analysis is limited to one text, this text's prominence and popularity highlights a continuing white-centric approach to observation, feedback, and evaluation. Thus, while supervision and evaluation is an essential instructional leadership practice, leaders may not possess the knowledge and skill to use a culturally responsive lens and therefore negate the efforts to improve teacher practice.

In sum, current literature shows how administrators engage in supervision and evaluation to identify trends in educators' pedagogical knowledge, skills and practices. These trends can inform the content, structure and integration of professional learning opportunities school leaders develop, to which we now turn.

Professional Learning

A key lever that school and district leaders utilize to influence educator instructional capacity is professional development (Newman, et al. 2000; Liu & Hallinger, 2018; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Hallinger and Heck, 2011). Research on the impact of professional development in schools indicates that it is most effective when it directly addresses instruction and student learning outcomes, fosters educator collaboration, and provides opportunities for sustained, continuous learning (Smylie et al., 2001; Garet et al., 2001; Youngs & King, 2002).

Researchers have found that in order for professional development to build content

knowledge and develop pedagogical skill, leaders must ground it in a coherent framework of teacher and student learning (Youngs & King, 2002; Penuel et al., 2007). For example, Sebastian & Allensworth's (2012) conducted a multi-school research study on the impact of secondary-level principal leadership on instruction and achievement. They found that academic demand and classroom behavior were stronger among educators within schools who perceived that they participated in high-quality professional development and where there was clear alignment and coherence within the instructional programming of the school.

This was echoed in Donaldson's (2013) examination of the opportunities and barriers school leaders' face in the development of educator effectiveness. In a cross-district study of 30 principals' perceptions of the factors that influence educator improvement, Donaldson identified professional development as the most referenced and utilized human capacity lever. In addition, Donaldson found that when principals received more extensive development in building educators' instructional capacity, they considered themselves to be more successful and impactful in positively influencing educators' instructional practices. Thus, the development of principal knowledge and pedagogical skills for instructional leadership can influence the quality and coherence of educator learning at the school level.

Similarly, districts regularly leverage professional development to build the capacity of principals and their leadership teams (Waters & Marzano, 2006; Honig & Rainey, 2015; Leithwood, 2013). For example, Barnes and colleagues' (2010) longitudinal research study on the impact of a sustained district-based professional development program examined the transformation of principals from managerial to instructional leaders. Most of the participating leaders reported a deeper understanding of instructional leadership practices, including why and

how to change current practices. These "refinements" in practice and increased levels of strategic thinking and planning articulated by many leaders occurred not only because of what they were learning but, of equal importance, because of how their learning was structured (p. 263). Specifically, district-based professional development participants were engaged in a "community of practice" model, through which they had facilitated opportunities to actively learn with their job-alike peers. Thus, the district-based professional development provided school leaders with "time, content, connections" and "instructional formats," paired with "spiraling curriculum" to deepen and extend principal learning and scaffold application (p. 255).

Additionally, in a longitudinal study, Adams' (2016) explored the impact of district-implemented professional learning on school principal instructional leadership skills. The study yielded evidence of growth in school leader communication and facilitation skills directly related to educator instructional knowledge, pedagogy, and practice. However, much like the findings from Barnes et al., (2010), the impact of professional learning on school leaders' instructional leadership practice is directly related to the content, structure, and process for leadership development. In this context, system leaders are trained to facilitate a collaborative inquiry model for principal learning strategically designed to develop leaders' capacity as reflective practitioners and collaborative learners. In essence, the focus and structure of the sustained professional learning resulted in increased leader effectiveness in active listening, prompting, and probing. This, in turn, translated to clearer communication of the instructional vision, more effective facilitation of educator learning, and increased opportunities for collaborative planning within teams of educators and leaders. Thus, the quality, structure, and sustainment of professional learning directly impacted the principal's instructional leadership

skills.

Professional learning is regularly utilized to cultivate school leader and educator instructional knowledge and skill. However, effective professional learning must also be responsive to data. Therefore, school and district leaders design systems and structures to support instructional decision making. The following section describes how leaders organize, implement and support data-driven decisions to develop educator knowledge and skill and sustain instructional improvements.

Collaborative Data-driven Decision Making

The use of data to drive instructional decision-making is a common and integral strategy to both school and district-level instructional reform initiatives (Spillane & Miele, 2007). At the school level, researchers have examined how school leaders set the conditions for effective data use through selecting data (Farrell & Marsh, 2016), framing the purpose and guiding principles for data use (Park et al., 2013), supporting educator sense-making (Datnow & Hubbard, 2016; Farrell & Marsh, 2016), and building collaborative and high functioning teams (Young, 2006). Furthermore, studies indicate that because the knowledge and skills needed to effectively use data are distinct and complex, and because so many forms of data exist (Marsh, Bertrand, & Huguet, 2015), educators and leaders require targeted opportunities to develop strong assessment literacy and inquiry skills that lead to effective instructional adjustments (Mandinach & Gummer, 2013).

Park's (2018) case study analysis illuminates how principals and instructional coaches in elementary schools facilitated "data conversations and routines" to develop educators' data inquiry skills and inform instructional decision-making (p. 628). Park found that although the

establishment of routines created the structure and conditions for learning, the particular data discussion moves employed by the leaders were essential in developing educators' inquiry stance and disrupting deficit thinking. Three specific discussion moves that leaders leveraged were triangulation to develop a deeper understanding of the context, reframing to advance an asset-based approach to problem-solving, and pedagogical linking to help educators connect student learning to instructional practices and curricular resources. Thus, effective data-driven instructional decision-making requires leaders to establish collaborative structures and enact strategic facilitation moves in order to translate to effective instructional practices.

The role of data-driven instructional decision-making in district-level reform is equally complex. Slavin et al.'s (2012) longitudinal study of district-wide data reform strategies sponsored by the Center for Data-Driven Reform in Education (CDDRE) demonstrates how multiple factors contributed to data interpretation, implementation, and impact on student achievement. Specifically, the CDDRE provided district and school-level leaders with support, not only interpreting root causes from their benchmark data but of equal importance, selecting and implementing instructional programs backed by rigorous research and targeted to their areas of need. While findings did not indicate significant growth in student achievement in years one or two when the focus was on assessment literacy and interpretation, there were positive, statistically significant effects during years three and four. This is when district and school leaders and educators began to take action by supporting educators to make concrete and targeted shifts to instructional practices and/or implement research-based programs to address gaps. These findings illuminate the complex interrelationship of data-driven instructional decision-making at both the district and school level. Furthermore, they highlight the importance

of balancing efforts to build leaders' assessment literacy with action to change teaching and learning. Strong district and school instructional leaders must do both.

While supervision and evaluation, professional learning and data-driven decision making can be effective strategies for educator development and school improvement, the quality and impact of these practices is also dependent upon the content knowledge of the educational leader (Stein & Nelson, 2003). Therefore, we will round out our review of instructional leadership through a synthesis of the research on leadership content knowledge.

Leadership Content Knowledge

Pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1983) has been influential in understanding how teachers integrate content knowledge with pedagogical knowledge to make effective instructional decisions. Stein and Nelson (2003) have extended this concept to educational leadership by defining leadership content knowledge as the understanding of content subject matter and how it must be transformed for the purposes of instructional leadership.

Stein and Nelson (2003) differentiate how leadership content knowledge is used at different levels of the organization. Their framework delineates the progression of content knowledge within schools. Stein and Nelson argue that the first layer of content knowledge used within a school organization begins with an investigation of a subject matter. This progresses to how educators and students engage with the subject matter for the purposes of teaching and learning. The final layer includes how principals and districts develop the pedagogical expertise of educators. The authors posit that leaders have leadership content knowledge at all levels of an organization, albeit becoming less fine-grained in their use and application of it as administrative responsibilities increase.

Principals' leadership content knowledge affects the delivery of feedback they offer teachers (Nelson, 2010; Overholt and Szabocsik, 2013; Stein and Nelson, 2003). For example, Nelson (2010) conducted a case study of principals with different leadership content knowledge profiles. They found that a principal with strong leadership content knowledge engaged teachers in open-ended questions about students' mathematical thinking as part of their feedback process. In stark contrast, a principal with lower leadership content knowledge provided feedback by prioritizing instructional strategies over the actual mathematical content. Fuentes and Jimerson (2020) surveyed 90 principals and found that leaders with higher levels of leadership content knowledge were more likely to engage in instructional leadership activities and provide specific and actionable feedback.

Professional development can influence principals' leadership content knowledge. For example, principals who underwent 12 hours of professional development were better prepared to understand content-specific teaching practices and provide more direct feedback to teachers of balanced literacy programs (Overholt & Szabocsik, 2013).

However, Semingson & Kerns' (2021) historical analysis of the role of phonics in literacy illuminates a potential limitation to developing leadership content knowledge. Their study highlights the chronic misalignment between professional development focused on balanced literacy and existing research on the science of reading. Thus, a leader's content knowledge may be obsolete, and therefore counterproductive to improvement efforts. In order to drive meaningful change, leaders have a responsibility to ensure their content knowledge remains current and aligned to evidence-based best practice.

Leadership content knowledge is an important component of educational leadership, as it

allows leaders to understand the content subject matter and how it must be transformed for the purposes of instructional leadership. Professional development programs should prioritize the development of leadership content knowledge. Furthermore, leaders should use this knowledge to provide specific and actionable feedback to teachers in ways that lead to equitable outcomes for all students.

While effective instructional leadership practices have been shown to develop the pedagogical content knowledge and skill of educators, they may not explicitly address cultural incongruence, educator bias and/or structural and systemic barriers directly impacting minoritized students. To address these pervasive inequities, leaders must make a conscious choice to implement social justice leadership practices. In the second section of our literature review we turn to examine how social justice leadership is developed and enacted.

Social Justice Leadership

Social justice as a concept integrates the meanings of equity, fairness, and equality in society. Scholars have sought to apply this term across disciplines, including philosophy, sociology, politics, and, for this study, education. Rawls's (1971) definition of social justice builds on the underlying principle that since society is chain connected, when it is organized to benefit its least advantaged members, these benefits spread to all. Rawls emphasizes the importance of establishing a system that provides equal opportunities and resources for everyone, regardless of social status, race, ethnicity, or gender.

Education has been purported as the great equalizer; therefore, it is a site in which social justice takes center stage (Growe & Montgomery, 2003). Education is

critical in promoting social justice by creating inclusive learning environments that foster equity, diversity, and justice. School leadership, in particular, requires a "bold vision, significant knowledge, and skills, as well as the collaboration of many people" (Theoharis & Scanlan, 2021, p. xxxi). Furman (2012) asserts, "social justice focuses on the experiences of marginalized groups and inequities in educational opportunities and outcomes" (p. 194). This definition is supported by Wang (2012) as the persistent pursuit of educational equity across social identity groups in schools.

Social justice leadership encompasses a range of knowledge, skills, and practices that are unique to the context in which a leader serves. McKenzie et al. (2008) describe a core tenet of social justice leadership as instructional leadership. Specifically, they identify the two goals of social justice leadership as raising the academic achievement of all students and preparing students to live as critical citizens in society. It is paramount, therefore, for district and school-level leaders to translate these goals across the organization in order to develop educators' social justice pedagogical knowledge and close opportunity gaps (Reister et al., 2002; Khalil & Brown, 2015; Theoharis, 2007; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014).

School and district leaders committed to social justice leverage specific practices to build the consciousness, knowledge and skill of their educators in service to the advancement of educational equity. Two social justice leadership practices central to this work are disrupting deficit mindset and cultivating critical consciousness.

Disrupting Deficit Mindset

Deficit thinking disproportionately affects the lives of underrepresented and minoritized

children, families, and communities. Educators who display deficit thinking draw upon stereotypes that have been ingrained in the mainstream psyche and that characterize minoritized communities as intellectually, morally, and culturally inferior or deviant (Gorski, 2011). Deficit thinking reinforces the notion that there is a predetermined, correct way to behave, commonly referred to as the norm, and anyone acting differently is acting at a deficit. Because those outside the norm are perceived as lacking, educators that engage in deficit thinking believe these students must be fixed and transformed into biased-based conceptions of the ideal in order to succeed (Wong, 2022). School leaders, therefore, are responsible for challenging stereotypes and advocating for an inclusive and equal society. This can be accomplished by developing educators' capacity to generate counter narratives to stereotypes, promoting cultural responsiveness, recognizing cultural strengths and assets, and fostering critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Perry et al., 2003).

School leaders can use data driven decision making (DDDM) to disrupt deficit thinking (Park, 2018). It has been found that leaders can use data to highlight issues like educational opportunity gaps and inspire schools to take collective action (Park et al., 2013; Skrla et al., 2004). The examination of data by educators has been a catalyst for change in practice and heightened awareness of inequities in situations where educators were confronted with evidence that challenged their low expectations about the abilities of students. In particular, local implementation levels (DDDM) have been linked to a technical, rational model of continuous improvement practice. A provocative study by Parks (2018), found the following data discussion moves for disrupting deficit thinking:

- Triangulation- Using multiple data sources to confirm or disconfirm beliefs.

- Reframing Deficit thinking- Redirecting assumptions or beliefs about student learning to one that highlights their strengths.

- Pedagogical Linking and Student Centered Positioning- Examining relationships between student thinking to data and specific instruction practices.

Similarly, in a conversation captured by Horn & Little (2010), another way to disrupt deficit thinking is to use the strategy known as extending moves. Extending moves are explained as when someone asks another person or team to elaborate on how they came to a conclusion. Extending moves can disrupt deficit thinking in education by promoting a more inclusive and strengths-based approach to student learning through differentiation (Tomlinson, 2008). These extending moves build on ideas or data that have been presented in past conversations. Although that is a part of the purpose, the goal is not simply to clarify and create shared understanding. The use of these moves also leads toward specifying and revising the meaning of student learning data and the scope of instructional needs. Creating clarity and shared understanding is part of the goal (Horn & Little, 2010).

Therefore, data must be conceptualized within leadership theories and practices that place equity and learning at the center because both data and data use are socially, culturally, and politically co-constructed. Furthermore, educators interpret data through their preexisting beliefs and experiences, many of which are riddled with bias. In their literature review on culturally responsive school leadership, Khalifa, et al. (2016), propose data-driven culturally responsive school leadership as a way to align policy, curriculum, and school reform with values for equity and culturally relevant practices (e.g., such as equity audits). School leaders must be armed with strategies and practices to disrupt and counter deficit narratives (Park, 2018; Knapp et al., 2007).

In order to do this, school leaders should understand that they are cultural beings who are influenced by multidimensional aspects of cultural identity, even as they attempt to carry out leadership duties. Literature encourages such leaders to examine their own biases and how they impact their professional practices (Dantley, 2005a, 2008; Furman, 2012; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012).

School leaders committed to social justice engage their communities, including students, families and educators in culturally responsive ways (Khalifa et al., 2016). However, in order for leaders to be truly responsive to their communities' needs, they must engage in on-going, critical self-reflection about their own biases and acknowledge the structural and systemic forces that contribute to inequities within their context (Freire, 2000). Therefore, we now turn to the cultivation of critical consciousness as an essential strategy for social justice leadership.

Cultivating Critical Consciousness

Research indicates that teachers need to thoroughly understand their own cultures and the cultures of different ethnic groups, as well as how this affects teaching and learning behaviors, to effectively educate minoritized students (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Furthermore, literature demonstrates that many White teachers enter preservice programs and schools with little previous contact with racial groups other than their own (Milner, 2003) and with negative perceptions of students of color (Terrill & Mark, 2000). Therefore, leaders committed to social justice must cultivate the conditions to develop educator critical consciousness so they can understand their own biases, counter oppressive forces and empower students to become critical citizens for positive change (Seider & Graves, 2020).

Critical consciousness was developed by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire as an approach to help rural Brazilian peasants learn to read the written word and read the world (Freire, 2000). Critical consciousness has been conceptualized as having three components: critical reflection, recognition and rejection of societal inequities, political efficacy, one's ability to effect change, and critical action, actions taken to change society, (Watts et al., 2011). Research has suggested that fostering a commitment to the identification and disruption of systemic forces perpetuating inequities can be a gateway to academic motivation and achievement for minoritized students (El-Amin et al., 2017).

Partnerships between youth and adults can be a powerful force in developing motivation and action among more minoritized youth (Kirshner, 2015). For instance, in one study by (Christens & Kirshner 2011) when youth begin to exercise agency through collective ventures with adults, they not only strengthen their socio-political awareness, but also experience gains in psychological empowerment, both of which contribute to civic and political participation. Their findings demonstrate that collaborations that provide youth with access to broader social networks as well as opportunities to partner with adults on social campaigns addressing inequity, can strengthen youth's ability to resist, challenge, and contest societal inequalities.

 While existing research explores the nexus between instructional and social justice leadership as a strategy to develop the social justice knowledge and practices of aspiring leaders (Capper et al., 2006; Furman, 2012) and teachers (Dover, 2013; Dyches & Boyd, 2017; Mayne, 2019), there is a gap in the research as to how school and district leaders leverage instructional leadership to build the capacity of educators as social justice practitioners. This is significant, because district and school leaders are charged with the dual responsibilities of developing the

quality and fidelity of the instructional core through curriculum, pedagogy and assessment and disrupting structural and systemic barriers perpetuating inequities within their distinct contexts. A lack of coherence and integration between these goals can result in fractured instructional and social justice initiatives, thereby undermining implementation and reinforcing a problematic tension between the advancement of social equity and academic excellence. Our proposed research study seeks to contribute to filling this gap. We explore a possible bridge mediating this tension by examining how district and school level administrators intersect instructional and social justice leadership to build educator capacity as social justice practitioners.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for our proposed study draws on the instructional concepts of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and the social justice concepts of critical consciousness, social justice knowledge, and social justice skill to situate our work at the intersection of instructional and social justice leadership. Capper et al. (2006) posit a conceptual framework for leadership development that explicitly integrates the concepts of pedagogical content knowledge and social justice knowledge. Dyches and Boyd (2017) characterize this integration of SJPKS. Our conceptual framework draws from this scholarship, focusing on the relationship between instructional leadership and social justice leadership as it applies to leadership practices at the school and district levels (see Figure 1.1).

Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) is a crucial aspect of effective teaching, which requires teachers to possess knowledge of both the content being taught and the pedagogical strategies needed to convey that content to students effectively (Shulman, 1987). As reflected in Capper's model, pedagogical content knowledge is cultivated by attending to the specific

curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment practices used to grow the capacity of educational leaders as social justice practitioners (Figure 1.1, left).

Social justice knowledge refers to what leaders must "believe, know and do to lead socially just schools" (Capper et al., 2006, p. 212). This incorporates three dimensions (Figure 1.1, right). First is the development of critical consciousness, emphasizing the importance of building the leaders' awareness of "power relations" and "social construction" (p. 212). Second, it includes the need to build the leaders' knowledge base of "evidence-based practices," such as the benefits of inclusionary practices, that contribute to an equitable school (p. 213). Finally, it integrates skills, such as facilitating equity-centered data conversations, to enact justice in schools.

Figure 1.1

Conceptual Framework for Social Justice Pedagogical Knowledge and Skill

Adapted from Capper et al. (2006) and Dyches & Boyd (2017)
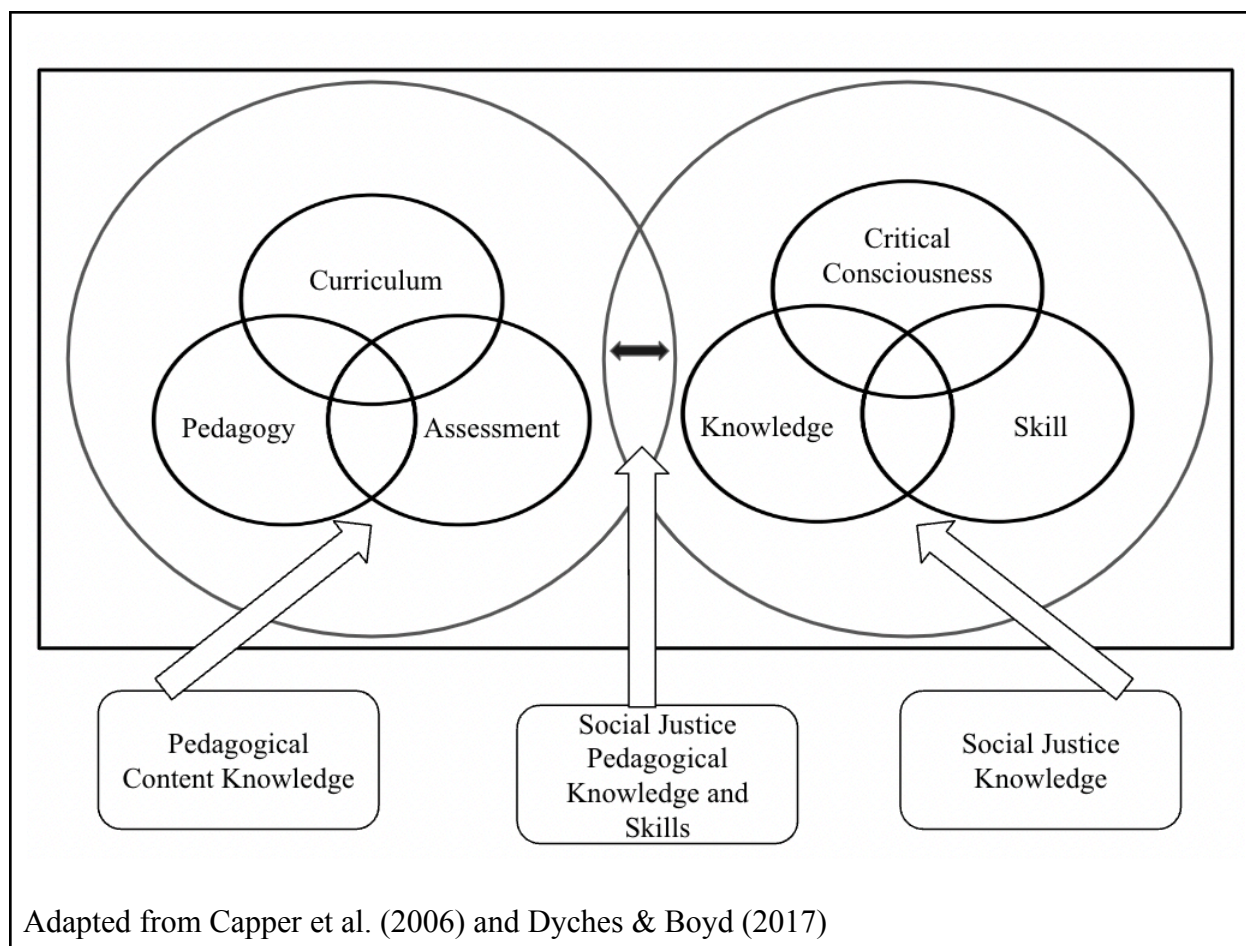
Capper and colleagues (2006) argue that in order to develop leaders for social justice, leadership preparation programs must bridge social justice knowledge with pedagogical content knowledge, a concept more explicitly defined as the development of social justice pedagogical knowledge. Our research focuses on practicing school and district leaders. We seek to examine the ways in which these administrators develop and apply SJPKS. Adapting the work of Capper et al. and Dyches & Boyd (2017), our framework explicates specific domains of SJPKS (SJPKS; see Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2

Domains of Social Justice Pedagogical Knowledge and Skill

Assessment: assessing the overall effectiveness and the impact of the program on the individuals in the district and/or schools and their ability to engage in the work

Assessment: how the consciousness, knowledge, and skills of future leaders are assessed

Pedagogy: the way the content is delivered across the district and in schools to "change "what and how we teach"

Pedagogy & CC: teaching methods that raises leaders and teachers consciousness about power, privilege, and associated issues.

Pedagogy & Knowledge: teaching methods focused on specific knowledge about related theories, subject areas, and evidence-based practices pertaining to equity

Pedagogy & Skills: teaching strategies that lead to the implementation of evidence-based practices or the practice that bridges the theories

Curriculum: content areas of the instructional program.

Curriculum & CC: content that raises the leaders and teachers consciousness about power, privilege, and associated issues

Curriculum, & Knowledge: curriculum focused on specific knowledge about related theories, subject areas, and evidence-based practices pertaining to equity

Curriculum & Skills: content that leads to the implementation of evidence-based practices or the practice that bridges the theories

Instructional (vertical axis)

Critical Consciousness (CC): leaders and teachers embody a social justice consciousness within their belief system- deep understanding of power relations and social construction

Knowledge: leaders and teachers know evidence-based practices that can create an equitable school - example: instructional policy - shaping or reshaping the way they are delivered

Skills: performances, processes, and activities that leaders and teachers facilitate and engage others in to enact CC & knowledge to practice

Social Justice (horizontal axis)

Adapted Capper et al. 2006 & Dyches and Boyd 2017

Our framework explicates the knowledge and practices educators experience as they apply SJPKS (Figure 1.2, shaded sections). It maps how each aspect of building pedagogical content knowledge (namely curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment) intersects with each aspect of enacting social justice (namely critical consciousness, knowledge, and skills). For instance, the intersection of critical consciousness with curriculum details how leaders and educators leverage curriculum for the purpose of raising awareness of power, privilege, and associated issues. This may entail principals leading a professional development through which educators learn to interrogate curriculum with a lens for bias. In turn, educators may strategically apply layered texts centering diverse perspectives to develop students' understanding of counter narratives. On the other hand, the intersection of critical consciousness and assessment details how leaders and educators assess their own effectiveness in developing social justice consciousness. For example, leaders may examine educator climate survey data to determine patterns in teachers' self-perceptions of cultural awareness and action. Relatedly, educators may integrate specific texts or tasks designed to monitor students' development of critical consciousness. Our overarching conceptual framework provides a multi-faceted lens through which we can investigate the nuanced interplay between the domains of instruction, namely curriculum, pedagogy and assessment and social justice leadership, including critical consciousness, social justice knowledge and skill.

Chapter Two[3]

Research Design and Methodology

The aim of this study is to investigate how district and school leaders cultivate and promote SJPKS. Within this broad focus of our collective study, our individual studies investigated the manifestation of specific practices district and school leaders leverage to foster SJPKS within their contexts, at both the school and district level (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1

Overview of Research Study by Group and Individual Researchers

Overview of Research Study by Group and Individual Researchers	
Overarching Research Question: How do educational leaders cultivate and promote others' social justice pedagogical knowledge and skill?	
Group Conceptual Framework SJPKS	
Theoretical Frameworks Social Justice Leadership and Instructional Leadership	
Name	**Individual Research Question**
	District Level Leadership
O'Brien	How does a superintendent develop and understand their pedagogical and social justice knowledge? How does a superintendent enact their pedagogical and

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[3] This chapter was jointly written by Julia Bott, Derrick Ciesla, Rodolfo Morales and Marybeth O'Brien

	social justice knowledge to develop the capacity of district and school leaders?

School Level Leadership	
Bott	How do principals understand social justice pedagogical knowledge and skill?
	What instructional leadership practices do principals employ to grow teacher's social justice pedagogical knowledge and skill?
	How do teachers experience these practices?
Ciesla	How do school leaders disrupt deficit thinking and encourage asset-based instructional practices to promote the success of Black males who have experienced trauma?
Morales	How do principals - as racial beings working in contexts imbued with individual, institutional, and cultural racism – confront teachers' race-based bias toward students?

In this chapter we describe our research design and methodology. We collaboratively designed protocols for collecting and analyzing data from our individual studies to ensure coherence and alignment. Furthermore, we worked together to collect data and cross-check individual data analyses using our collectively developed coding criteria. While each of us had unique foci, we engaged in the research process with an eye towards leveraging synergies.

Study Design

We employed a collective case study design to explore the research questions outlined above. (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Creswell & Gutterman, 2018; Yin, 2009). The collective case study design (Stake, 1995) was selected because multiple cases were "described and compared to provide insight into an issue" within a single school system in Massachusetts (Creswell & Gutterman, 2018, p 477). Evidence derived from multiple studies is often considered "more

compelling," and the study itself can therefore become "more robust," particularly when research procedures are replicated across sites (Herriot & Firestone, 1983, as cited in Yin, 2009, p. 53). Because case studies are bounded by place, time, and participants, this approach was applicable to the scope and limitations of our research questions, timelines, and context (Creswell & Gutternman, 2019; Yin, 2018). Thus, the collective case study methodology enabled our team to engage in an "in-depth exploration" of the specific cases within a select school system in relation to our specific research questions (Creswell & Gutterman, 2018, p. 477; Yin, 2014).

We will gather three types of data: interviews, documents and surveys. Use of a variety of data formats allowed us to triangulate our findings and deepen our collective understanding of the research problem within a specific, bounded district context (Creswell, 2014; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, Yin, 2014). An essential first step, therefore, was to define clear parameters for our bounded site so we could contribute the "analytic generalization" of the results to a broader theory (Yin, 2018, p. 38).

Site Selection

Our selected school district met several criteria, allowing our researchers to gather evidence for each individual study. Our site was a mid- to large-sized K-12 urban district in Massachusetts, allowing the researchers to study five schools, including at least one elementary school and one secondary school. Five schools provided our researchers with enough cases to develop an "in-depth understanding" of the leadership practices, while enabling those engaging in collective case study analysis to manage the scope and ensure adequate time for exploration across all cases (Creswell & Gutterman, 2018, p. 477; Yin, 2014). Additionally, our district site has a racially and ethnically diverse student body, where there are above 40% students of Color

and no less than ten percent Black/African American. Furthermore, our site included school

leaders with three or more years of experience, and who self-identified, and/or who were

recognized within the district as principals who actively engage in social justice leadership.

Finally, our site was a district with an espoused commitment to social justice leadership.

Specifically, the district had a vision, mission, and strategic plan that clearly prioritized social

justice as an essential strategy to disrupt structural and systemic inequities impacting historically

minoritized students. Furthermore, the strategic plan integrated descriptions of specific

leadership strategies, including supervision and evaluation, professional learning, and

data-driven instructional practices that were intended to support the development of educators'

pedagogical knowledge and skill as social justice practitioners.

Participant Selection

We employed a purposive, non-probability sampling to select participants for our

research study (Miriam & Tisdell, 2016). Purposive sampling is applicable when the investigator

seeks to "discover, understand and gain insight" into a specific phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell,

2016, p. 96). In our specific study, we sought to understand how educational leaders cultivate

SJPKS. Therefore, we invited participants to engage in our study based on specific criteria within

the groups of school leaders and educators chosen, proportionally represented by race, gender,

and grade levels. Here we describe the criteria we sought for participants overall. We identify

distinct criteria for participant selection in alignment with our respective individual research

studies in Chapter Three.

First, our study included a superintendent and five district-level administrators. This

allowed the researchers to gain insight into district-level leaders' understanding and beliefs about

their social justice pedagogical content knowledge and the district's commitment to the advancement of social justice as a strategy to disrupt systemic inequities. Additionally, we examined how the superintendent articulated and implemented specific instructional leadership practices to build educators' capacity as social justice practitioners. These practices included supervision and evaluation, professional learning related to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, and data-driven instructional practices.

Second, we identified five building leaders at the primary and secondary levels to be research participants in the study. These school leaders either self-identified and/or demonstrated through interviews or other data sources, a commitment to social justice and a track record of success in disrupting inequities impacting minoritized student populations in their current roles.

Third, we identified between six educators in two of the respective schools, who meet the criteria for each of our individual studies. This number of educators provided adequate insight into how educators within a school community experienced their leaders' instructional and social justice practices (Miriam & Tisdell, 2016). We attempted to select a balance within the groups of leaders and teachers by race, gender, and instructed grade levels whenever possible.

Data Collection

This qualitative, collective case study required a multi-prong approach to data collection in order to provide an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon we are investigating. In alignment with Creswell's (2014) definition of case study research, we explored a "bounded system (or case) . . .over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audio-visual material, and documents and reports) in order to report a case description and case-based themes" (p. 97). We collected the data from

August to January 2024.

Semi-structured Interviews

      The primary source of data across all studies was interviews. Specifically, researchers conducted semi-structured interviews guided by a set of questions aligned to our research questions. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) note, "interviews are necessary when we cannot observe behaviors, feelings or how people interpret the work around them" (p.108). Thus, individual, semi-structured interviews provided valuable insight into district and school leaders' and educators' thoughts, feelings, perspectives, and experiences.

      As noted previously, we applied purposive sampling to identify participants who self-identified as and/or demonstrated a commitment to social justice leadership and instructional practices (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Purposeful sampling was an appropriate strategy for the selection of interviewees because it allowed for a strategically selected sample that yielded "conclusions [which] adequately represent the average members of the population than does a sample of the same size that incorporates substantial random or accidental variation" (Maxwell, 2013, p.71). As illustrated in Table 2.2, the research team conducted 17 interviews which included the superintendent, five central office leaders, five principals, and six educators including four teachers and two department leads/associate leaders with teaching responsibilities.

Table 2.2

Interview Subjects

Participants	Number of participants
Superintendent of Schools	1
Assistant Superintendent	2
District/Central Office Leaders	3

School Leaders	5
Educators/Teachers	6

Note: The participant titles represent generic titles of personnel within school districts.

We utilized a semi-structured interview format to allow researchers to both guide the interview through a "list of questions to be explored" and respond flexibly to the "emerging worldview" of the respondents (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 111). Interviews provided researchers with insight into how district and school leaders leveraged instructional and social justice leadership practices to develop educator social justice pedagogical knowledge. The use of an interview protocol ensured coherent implementation of the interview process and consistent use of pre-developed interview questions across representative groups, including the superintendent, district leaders, school leaders, and educators (see Appendices A, B. and C). The interview questions aligned with the literature review and specific components of our conceptual framework. Each study's interview protocol is outlined in chapter 3.

Interviews were conducted in person or using an online video platform (e.g., Zoom). Interviews were audio-recorded using appropriate devices, and transcribed using the web-based program Otter, and archived on the Boston College secure server. Additionally, all participants and site locations were assigned pseudonyms to protect confidentiality. Researchers reviewed transcriptions in teams to ensure accuracy. Additionally, notes annotated during the interviews were integrated into our data review. All interview participants received a letter of intent explaining the purpose of the interview, a request for signed informed consent, and a confidentiality statement.

Prior to interviewing participants, we piloted interview questions with district and school leaders outside of the case study district to ensure the content and sequencing of questions was

clear, appropriately worded, and elicited useful and relevant responses (Singleton & Straits, 2018). This illuminated potential problems with our interview protocol that were addressed before we began the collective case study in our target district. Whenever possible, we conducted interviews in pairs and all interviews were shared and available for collective review and analysis.

Other Data

With interviews as our primary source of data, we also used documents and surveys. All four of our studies used documentation. Miriam & Tisdell (2016) define documents as "a wide range of written, visual, digital and physical materials relevant to the study (including visual images)" (p. 162). For the purposes of our study, we began by gathering publicly available information from the district website, including the district vision, mission, and any strategic planning documents that address social justice priorities or initiatives (Merriam & Tisdell, p. 96). Additionally, we listened in the interviews for reference to other relevant documents, including but not limited to memos, agendas and presentations, and minutes from various district and school meetings that related to our focus area. We gathered any documents that we had reason to believe would provide insight into the prioritization, messaging, and implementation of specific social justice and instructional practices at the district and/or school level. Furthermore, we examined the collected documents utilizing a standard tool and procedure (see Appendix D).

The final source of data gathered in one study was surveys. This study utilized cross-sectional surveys to better understand teachers' perceptions of their school's work towards ameliorating race-based bias (Desimone & Carlson Le Floch, 2004). The surveys included questions selected from Panorama Education's 360° Climate Survey (Panorama, n.d.). Surveys

were administered through Qualtrics, an online platform. Despite limitations, such as the generalizability of findings, surveys have been found to "provide meaningful, substantive, and informative data that may enrich our understanding of educational processes" (Desimone & Carlson Le Floch, 2004, p.4). Additionally, survey results support our triangulation efforts as we analyzed congruences and discrepancies from survey results with data from our interviews. To increase validity, we piloted and refined questions based on feedback from pilot test groups and triangulated data (Mills & Gay, 2019).

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of giving meaning to data by using codes, themes, or other categorizing techniques in order to address the research topic (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Our analytic process was ongoing and iterative (Creswell, 2014). Each researcher compiled and analyzed the information gleaned from interviews, documents, and surveys to identify emerging themes, patterns, and links. This informed the development of a system of codes for analysis. A code is "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldaña, 2021, p. 3). Coding is an iterative, multi-step process that allowed us to capture, interpret, and condense data.

We employed Dedoose software to support our coding and analysis of data. We used Dedoose to create a hierarchical structure for codes, organizing them into categories and subcategories. This began by importing our data sources into the program. All data was held on a secure BC server to protect confidentiality. Our team read through all of the transcribed interviews before starting the coding process. We then engaged in three separate rounds of

coding, as coding is not a single, linear process (Saldana, 2016). As a team, we engaged in an

initial cycle of coding using a priori codes of themes and concepts aligned to our respective

research question. Often researchers begin with a predefined list of codes, then inductively

modify and add to the list as they parse the data. Our a priori codes were based on existing

theories and emerging themes from the literature. These codes included aspects of instructional

leadership (IL) such as: supervision and evaluation (SE), professional learning (PL),

collaborative data decision-making (CDDM), and leadership content knowledge (LCK).

Additionally, our a priori codes included aspects of social justice leadership (SJL) such as:

critical consciousness (CC), social justice knowledge (SJK), social justice skill (SJS), and

deficit-thinking (DT). For example, an excerpt of a school leader who discussed the use of

professional development to engage teachers in reflecting on their bias was coded as (PL) and

critical consciousness (CC).

We then engaged in a second round of coding. As Saldana (2016) explains, "The primary

goal during second cycle coding is to develop a sense of categorical, thematic, conceptual, and/or

theoretical organization from your array of first cycle codes" (p. 234). In this cycle we focused

on rearranging codes into larger categories as needed, and coming to a consensus on code

norming to ensure inter-rater reliability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). We then moved into an

inductive analysis of our data by using in vivo coding. We initiated the formation of categories

and themes by the division of the qualitative data using in vivo coding, integrating the language

our interviewees use when describing their experiences to label the data. These emerging themes

or codes were gathered through interviews, documents and surveys in order to elicit findings. In

particular, we focused on key moments within interviews that described the use of instructional

practices such as supervision and evaluation (SE), professional learning (PL), collaborative

data-driven practices (CDDM), and leadership content knowledge (LCK). We were also open to

discovering other instructional practices that may have surfaced from our interviews. For

example, when interviewing principals, they may have identified specific facilitation movies and

or protocols that pushed educators to identify disproportionality in student performance thereby

illuminating inconsistencies in educator practices and expectations. This data set would be coded

in the first round to depict CCDM and DM while also revealing a new code focused on

facilitation moves (FM).

We looked for patterns and trends in codes to explore connections between how school

and district leaders promote instructional and social justice leadership to cultivate educators'

SJPKS. Themes included disrupting deficit mindset, identifying forms of bias in curriculum,

generating counter-narratives and culturally responsive instruction.

In our third cycle, we synthesized our analysis based on the emerging codes from a priori

and in vivo coding. We applied the codes to specific strands of qualitative data by systematically

identifying and tagging relevant data. During this phase, codes were added, deleted, revised, or

broken into sub-groups or collapsed into one another based on the data's alignment to our

research questions.

Upon completion of coding, we explored and analyzed the data using frequency and

co-occurrence matrices to expose patterns, relationships, and frequencies between codes. Next,

we analyzed and triangulated across data sources to further determine trends and connections

which supported the individual researcher in gaining a comprehensive understanding of their

research. Additionally, the team collaborated and co-analyzed sources to search for overlapping

themes, trends, and connections that emerged.

We used two types of memos to support our analytic process (Birks et al., 2008). We employed individual analytic memos to record reflections, and additional coding processes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In order to document our work, a memo codebook was created and used by all researchers to include notes, definitions, and rationale for each code. By utilizing multiple sources of data including qualitative interviews and document analysis, we corroborated and provide a more comprehensive and robust understanding of our findings.

Chapter Three[4]

Educational Leaders Disrupting Deficit Thinking Regarding Black Males

Although some consider education a great normalizer for achieving the American dream, that dream is frequently only realized by those in the racial and cultural majority of white Americans (Miller, 2011). Many K–12 students encounter significant challenges and stress in schools (American Psychological Association, 2019). Difficulties in school are more severe for young Black males, particularly those who have experienced trauma. Trauma can include racist historical or generational trauma, biased cultural stressors, experiences of discrimination, and family and community violence (Pumariega et al., 2021). Trauma disproportionately affects Black males. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 2016, 62% of individuals had directly experienced a traumatic event in their lifetime, 72% had witnessed a traumatic event, and 59% had learned of a traumatic event involving a friend or family member. K–12 males are underserved by schools, from preschool through high school and beyond (Wint et al., 2021). Educators who focus on student's perceived deficits contribute to an educational environment that is already difficult for these students (Ford, 2014). Despite efforts to close the academic opportunity gap between Black male students and their peers, many Black males, particularly those who have experienced trauma, face significant obstacles in achieving academic success (Ford & Moore, 2013).

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[4] Chapter 3 was authored by Derrick Ciesla

According to Howard (2010) and Wint (2021), the educational experiences of Black males are negatively impacted by a lack of diversity in the curriculum, textbooks, and teaching personnel. This may limit black males' sense of belonging and hinder their involvement and drive. Gershenson et al. (2016) noted that teacher diversity benefited Black male student outcomes. These researchers explained how increased racial diversity among teaching staff translated to significant benefits for students in the classroom. They recommended diversifying the teacher workforce to increase students' exposure to teachers of color. Black male students are frequently stigmatized as inadequate, disadvantaged, dysfunctional, or just plain different (Noguera, 1997). Trauma-informed instructional practices are critical to creating safe and inclusive learning environments for all students, including Black males affected by trauma (Balfanz, 2009).

The extent to which school leaders can challenge deficit thinking toward Black males, especially those who have experienced trauma, has not been well examined through research. According to Weiner (2006), deficit thinking involves seeing people or groups as lacking, inadequate, or inferior. In the context of Black males who experience trauma, deficit thinking can lead to a narrow and harmful understanding of their experiences, ignoring individual viewpoints and systemic factors contributing to their trauma. Through confronting deficit thinking, school leaders can advance asset-based instructional practices to promote the success and improve educational outcomes for Black males. Failure to remain steadfast in addressing the persistent underestimation of Black youth will lead to preservation of the status quo. These students are overrepresented in school disciplinary actions and underrepresented in advanced coursework,

with lower graduation rates than white students (Russell et al., 2014). Social justice school leaders must take an affirmingapproach to instruction, focusing on each student's strengths and potential rather than their shortcomings. Educational leaders can foster a more equitable and inclusive learning environment by challenging the deficit view of Black males, which is often exacerbated when students have a history of trauma (Shields & Hesbol, 2019). Educational leaders must prioritize social justice leadership work to identify and overcome systemic impediments to educational equity, such as race, class, language, and ability. Social justice leadership explicitly identifies and aims to solve the causes of historical and educational inequality; as a result, this strategy is crucial for halting injustice and inequity (Katsarou et al., 2010).

Given this context, my study explores the core research question: How do school leaders disrupt deficit thinking and encourage asset-based instructional practices to promote the success of Black males who have experienced trauma? It explores the intersectionality of instructional leadership and how educational leaders challenge race and gender-based inequalitiesin their learning communities. This study is grounded in Capper's theoretical framework, Capper et al. (2006). It examines the research questions through the domains of critical consciousness, social justice pedagogical knowledge and skill, and leaders' capacity to confront race-based bias about their students.

Literature Review

Three bodies of literature contextualize this study. First, I describe how deficit thinking is related to race. Next, I explore the use of culturally responsive pedagogy. Third, I examine the effects of trauma on the educational experiences of Black males.

Deficit Thinking and Race

In schools, black males are disproportionately affected by deficit thinking, a detrimental perspective that focuses on their perceived shortcomings rather than recognizing and nurturing their potential (Noguera, 1997). This can negatively affect Black males' academic success and well-being. Deficit thinking regarding Black males is not a new phenomenon. It has a long history of contributing to systemic racism, compounded by the belief in Black anti-intellectualism (Wint et al., 2021). These concepts were born in the era of slavery, which severed connections between Africans and the role models of their indigenous cultures (McWhorter, 2000). Historically, Blacks in America did not have access to culturally connected scholarship and were not provided with any formalized education (Anderson, 1988). In a provocative essay critiquing anti-intellectualism toward Blacks, McWhorter (2000) argued that anti-intellectualism continues to harm the black community. McWhorter notes:

> Anti-intellectualism is the product of centuries of slavery and segregation during which blacks were denied education, but it has been perpetuated by the powerful strand of separatism in black culture, a legacy of the 1960s, that rejects as illegitimate all things "White." The worlds of the school and books are seen as suspicious and alien things that no authentically black person would embrace (p. 74).

McWhorter identifies what he labels a 'cultural disconnect' from learning, placing the deficit thinking directly on the African Americans themselves (McWhorter, 2000). The negative self-conceptualization of a people ultimately results in the systemic reduction of their full dignity, worth, and skills to their diversity (Reed, 2021).

The methodical dehumanization of Blacks throughout the history of America has played a significant role in deficit thinking about Black males (Anderson, 1988). Black males have been depicted as violent and aggressive, stereotypes that have contributed to the perception that Black males are inferior to others and incapable of academic success (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). In a highly regarded sociological analysis of racism in the United States, Bonilla-Silva showed how racial inequalities persist even though most White Americans do not see themselves as racist because racism is systemic and institutionalized rather than a novel notion or practice of individuals.

In further support of this analysis, Shin (2006) asserted, "These constructions are maintained and reproduced by Whites who materially benefit from the social order" (p. 2). For example, in an illuminating study, Taylor (1991) discovered that a Black student's color alone is probably sufficient to put them at risk for poor school outcomes, to the extent that teachers have unfavorable racial preconceptions.

For minoritized Black males to experience meaningful change, communities must collaborate with school leaders and other stakeholders. In a recent study, Marsh and Walker (2022) examined nuanced mechanisms of inequity in Black males' academic achievement in one urban charter school. These authors concluded that if educators and other school personnel work in tandem with community members, they can reassess their negative misperceptions of

minoritized communities that perpetuate infractions rooted in anti-Blackness. A community-based approach can begin to dismantle the school-to-prison nexus. Furthermore, an Afrocentric education approach requires school personnel to understand the history and culture of people of African descent and to see students' full humanity.

Nonetheless, despite efforts to address the issue, chronic racism still exists in the lives of Black males. Racism is the formation and preservation of a racial hierarchy supported through institutional power (Solorzano et al., 2002). "While it is a small subfield in education, key studies over the past decade have deepened our understanding of the mechanisms by which schools systematically racialize, marginalize, and thwart the opportunities of students of color" (Claro et al., 2016, p. 183).

Achieving cultural competence in an organization requires the participation of racially and ethnically diverse groups and all underserved populations. These individuals are vital to the development and implementation of culturally responsive practices, program structure and design, and staff professional development (Gallegos et al., 2009); Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], (2015). Inequities and a lack of cultural competence are further linked to ongoing psychological wounds caused by traumatic experiences for many young Black students (Van Thompson & Schwartz, 2014).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

To improve the outcomes of Black males in school, the use of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) has shown promise. CRP has added perspective on reframing and rethinking instructional practices for the most marginalized students (Gay, 2000). Minoritized students have

inherent value in their cultural diversity and talents, which may be enhanced by learning intercultural subjects in the classroom (Howard & Terry, 2011). Thus, CRP is a second body of literature contextualizing my study.

CRP views all students as having value embedded in their cultural wealth and skills that can be developed through the classroom delivery of multicultural content and the teaching of student empowerment (Howard & Terry, 2011). In order to bridge the cultural divide, Ullucci and Howard (2015) urged teacher educators to present novel perspectives on educating children from disadvantaged backgrounds. In a similar vein, Gay (2010) argued in favor of encouraging future educators to take into account the cultures of their students.

CRP provides students with agency and empowers them to recognize the worth of their cultural backgrounds (Bandura, 2018; Paris, 2012). CRP urges teachers and school leaders to incorporaterace into the pedagogical practices of the classroom while also eradicating acceptance of white supremacy and racism (Milton-Williams & Bryan, 2016). CRP starkly contrasts deficit thinking which perpetuates inequalities and beliefs about Black males' limited educational attainment fraudulently attributed to inherent deficiencies in Black males (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

A CRP approach can foster a sense of belonging and school engagement by valuing the importance of students' cultures and lived experiences and leveraging them to help students connect to and engage with content (Harper et al., 2012). 2010). It is crucial to address and put into practice culturally and linguistically sustaining practices that recognize and value the

cultural backgrounds and lived experiences of Black males, in order to support their success. (Howard, 2003).

A CRP approach is asset-oriented, focusing on what is right - not wrong - with minoritized students (Ladson-Billings,1995). Ladson-Billings was able to find ways to improve the teaching profession by researching methods that have been proven successful in a range of classroom situations. She identified three broad categories of teaching that can be employed to improve learning outcomes. They include academic achievement, cultural competency, and sociopolitical awareness (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 75).

Trauma

The third body of literature contextualizing my study addresses trauma. One of the most consistent contributors to the racial achievement gap and the decline in student health and well-being is the trauma experienced by black male students (Davis, 2020). Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is a term given to describe various types of abuse, neglect, and other traumatic experiences that happen to individuals under the age of 18. Childhood abuse includes emotional, physical, and sexual abuse; neglect includes both physical and emotional neglect. ACEs also include experiences such as growing up in a house where there was substance abuse, mental illness, violent treatment toward a mother or stepmother, parental separation or divorce, or in a household where a member of the family was in prison. ACEs have a lifelong impact on an individual's physical and mental health, as well as their quality of life (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016; Felitti et al., 1998).

According to Felitti et al. (1998), there were dramatic links between the extent of childhood exposure to abuse or household dysfunction and increased risk factors for major

causes of mortality. ACEs harm children's developing brains so profoundly that the effects emerge decades later; in fact, they can cause chronic disease, mental illness, and violence (Colman et al., 2013). Trauma theory can aid in explaining various emotional and behavioral reactions to violence (Ginwright, 2018).

When experiences involving harm occur at developmentally vulnerable times in children's lives, especially throughout childhood, they "become embedded in or intertwined with the individual's development and maturation" (Bloom, 2013, p. 20). Many young Black males enter the school setting suffering from post-traumatic stress, which they view as a normal aspect of life (Van Thompson & Schwartz, 2014).

Research has shown that trauma disproportionately affects Black males, negatively impacting their education (Cohen et al., 2013). Anderson and Stevenson (2019) explored how Black men cope with racial trauma, arguing that Black males' resilience is often overlooked when faced with adversity. Their work emphasized the importance of creating culturally relevant interventions that acknowledge Black males' strengths and provide opportunities for them to process their trauma in a safe and supportive environment.

One of the most influential thought leaders on African American youth, youth activism, and youth development, Ginwright (2018), has written extensively on the significance of healing-centered engagement (HCE). HCE is a method of promoting the holistic well-being and healing of individuals and communities. It acknowledges the effects of trauma and structural oppression on individuals and seeks to build spaces and practices that promote healing, resilience, and empowerment for young people. Ginwright's work emphasized the role of community-based organizations in supporting healing and resilience among Black males.

Ginwright (2018) advocated a shift from deficit thinking toward understanding trauma as a natural response to systemic oppression. "Policymakers, educators, and youth workers must pay greater attention to how young people navigate racism, poverty, and unemployment in their communities" (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002, p. 83).

School leadership is embracing trauma-informed methods and models for creating safe places for students, notably Black young boys and men (Kataoka et al., 2018). The current research on trauma-informed schools emphasizes the importance of "whole-school" approaches to trauma as opposed to remediation approaches (Howard, 2019; Wiest-Stevenson & Lee, 2016).One example is the "Healthy Environments and Response to Trauma in Schools" (HEARTS) program. HEARTS aims to increase school-based knowledge of the effects of trauma, including among the leadership, front-line workers, and teachers. This type of policy endeavors to provide trauma-sensitive practices through professional development for staff, parents, and students (Guarino & Chagnon, 2018).

Maintaining progress and monitoring the impact of such endeavors is vital. By doing so, school leaders can emphasize the strengths and resources of Black male students, which can be used to aid in closing the achievement gap. (Jackson & Moore, 2017). In addition to trauma-informed policies and practices, creating culturally responsive learning environments that build upon the strengths and resilience of students and provide opportunities for academic and personal growth in conjunction with trauma-informed care will support the success of these historically marginalized students. (Hardy & Laszloffy, 2015).

Educational leaders have sought to disrupt deficit thinking about Black males who have experienced trauma by emphasizing their resilience and agency (Bandura, 2018). Their work

highlights the importance of creating culturally relevant interventions, promoting healing-centered engagement, and adopting a strengths-based approach to education and community building.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is adapted from Capper et al.'s (2006) research on school leaders and social justice and Dyches and Boyd's (2017) study on a model of social justice pedagogical and content knowledge. According to Capper et al. (2006), social justice leadership combines social justice knowledge, skills, and critical consciousness with leaders' pedagogical content knowledge through curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment to build equitable learning environments.

To create a more equitable and just educational system, social justice leaders must comprehend social construction and power dynamics while also concentrating on the requirements of marginalized and oppressed communities (Sleeter, 2013). To define goals and create a shared vision for all collaborators, educational leaders must know the evidence-based strategies relevant to equity. While Capper et al. (2006) proposed a conceptual framework for preparing educators for leadership development utilizing social justice, Dyches and Boyd (2017) combined pedagogical knowledge and social justice content knowledge to formulate social justice pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). In organizing my study, I combined these structures to form a Framework for Social Justice Pedagogical Knowledge and Skill (SJPKS; Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1

Conceptual Framework for Social Justice Pedagogical Knowledge and Skill

Adapted from Capper et al. (2006) and Dyches & Boyd (2017)
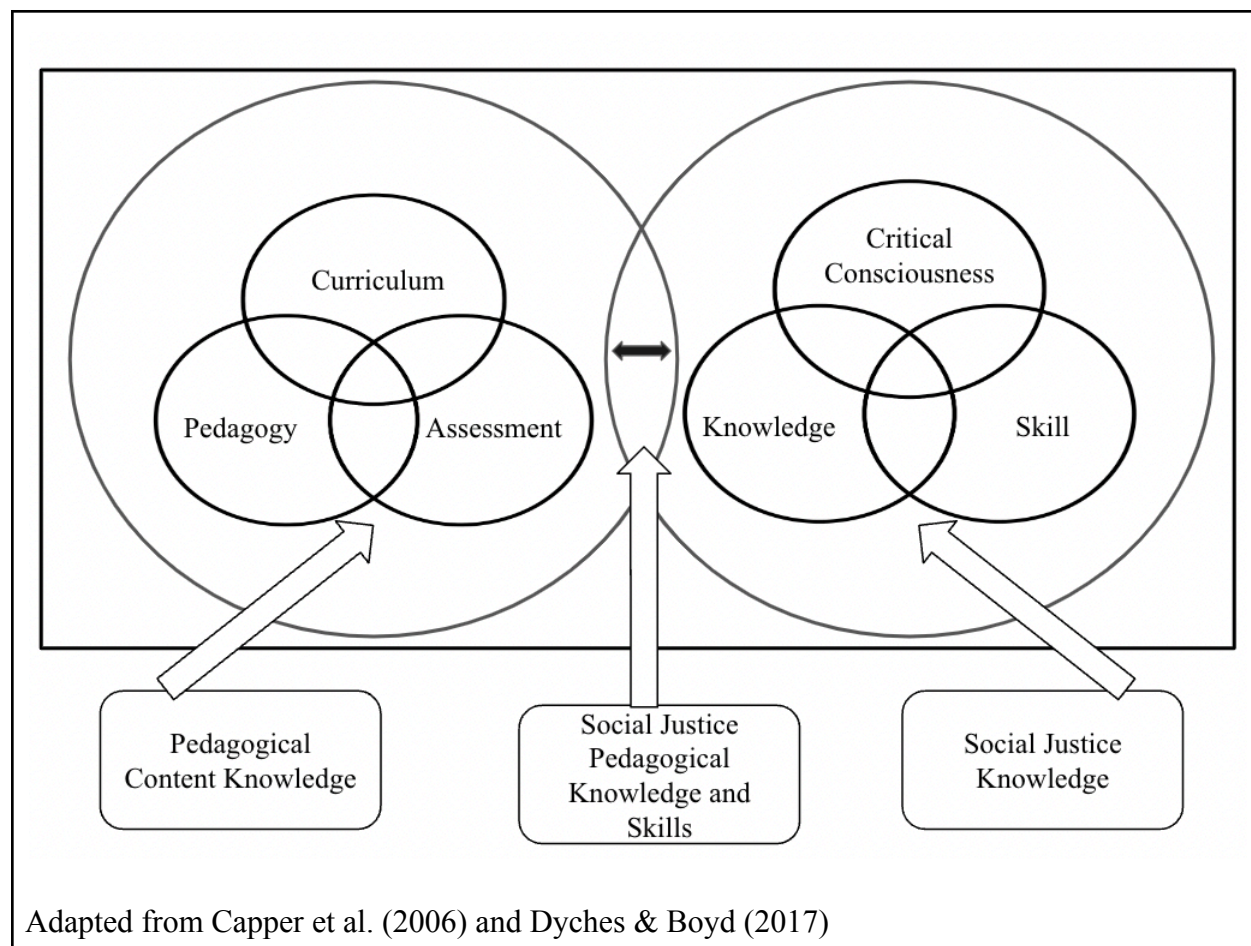
This framework aids in exploring interactions between approaches to leadership. It provided a lens through which I investigate how educational leaders incorporate social justice pedagogy into their instructional leadership practices, focusing mainly on asset-based practices that promote success for Black males who have experienced trauma. According to this framework, social justice leaders must cultivate critical consciousness, knowledge, and practical skills focused on social justice with their educators to enact a vision of social justice within their

school communities (Shaked, 2018). They must also do this while prioritizing curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment in their instructional leadership. Social justice-minded school leaders are more likely to use culturally responsive teaching practices as they support inclusive school climates (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Scholars contend that the current educational environment necessitates equity-focused schools and academic leaders who can utilize social justice leadership skills and competencies to disrupt and eliminate educational inequities (Brown, 2004; Rigby, 2013; Theoharis, 2007). In addition, social justice education must address how power operates within social institutions and systems and how this power perpetuates oppression towards Black males (Collins, 2021).

Methodology

In order to answer my research question, I conducted a qualitative case study of school leaders using a collective case study design (Stake, 1995). A collective case study necessitates exploring multiple cases simultaneously or consecutively as the researcher builds a more comprehensive awareness of a particular issue (Riahi, 2019; Yin, 1994). Due to the limitations of collective case studies regarding place, time, or participants (Creswell & Gutterman, 2019; Yin, 2018), this method was appropriate for my research's scope, timing, and context. A phenomenological approach was also used because each individual's lived experience is a multidimensional phenomenon that is psychologically oriented, culturally driven, and socially structured (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022; Aspers & Corte, 2019).

The research site was a mid-size public school district comprised of twelve schools in the Northeast United States. Each school's mission, vision, or strategic plan suggested a commitment

to social justice and equity. The district had a racially and ethnically diverse demographic, with at least 20% of the student population identifying as Black. The district also included a range of elementary, middle, and high schools, providing the researcher with access to numerous leaders with different backgrounds and experiences to interview.

The primary source of data for this study was semi-structured interviews. I recruited a total of seven leaders. All were either principals or worked with principals directly. My interviews explored participants' beliefs about race, deficit thinking, and trauma. Before administering the formal, semi-structured interviews with the study participants, I conducted pilot interviews with school leaders and teachers in my current district. I requested feedback on the questions' wording to allow me to address any unforeseen difficulties with my interview techniques (Saldaña, 2021). Based on feedback from pilot interviews, questions were reworded for clarity and to ensure data solicited matched the researchers objectives.

Semi-structured interviews use a format to "access participant's perspectives and understandings" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 109). Due to the flexibility of this interview process, follow-up questions could be asked, facilitating a more conversational dialogue (Freire, 2000). Interviews with school leaders ran for 45-60 minutes. The protocol was designed around fundamental questions associated with my research question. It grouped questions into two categories:

- Participant beliefs about race and bias regarding Black males,
- Specific asset-based strategies to foster the academic success of Black males, and
    (See appendix D for the full school and district leader interview protocol)

Interviews were audio recorded, and *Otter AI*, a web-based tool, was used to transcribe the interviews. The transcriptions were reviewed and re-reviewed several times to coordinate with the actual audio recordings and ensure the fidelity of the data. Transcripts were emailed to each participant for member checking. The member-checking process is a form of quality control that helps improve the reliability of what has been recorded during each interview (Harvey, 2015). Because member checking places some degree of influence on the participants, it allows them to examine, and in some cases enhance, the quality of the interview data (Birt et al., 2016). Member checking, also known as participant validation, fosters honesty and reliability, which ultimately results in participant responses that are more credible and dependable (Birt et al., 2016; Freire, 2000).

In order to triangulate findings, I also reviewed and analyzed district documentation, such as the district's strategic vision and school strategic plans. Data was collected from October to December 2023.

Data Analysis

Using my conceptual framework as a lens, I analyzed the data gathered from the interviews, district documents, and member-checking information to understand how school leaders were able to disrupt deficit thinking. To facilitate this process of identifying themes and patterns in the qualitative data collected, I used the qualitative data software *Dedoose* to *a priori* code the data collected during the semi-structured interviews. I highlighted specific keywords and phrases related to asset-based practices from the interview participants. During this process, I identified emerging themes related to the disruption of deficit thinking and encouraging asset-based instructional practices. In the study's findings, specific patterns, keywords, and

phrases emerged and were identified as codes. Thus, themes were attributed to the particular language of the data collected from the participants' experiences, addressing the study's purpose and the research questions.

To interpret the data collected, I engaged in cycles of coding the data for keywords and phrases related to culturally responsive instructional leadership and asset-based social justice skills and the intersectionality of the two. For a section of language-based or visual data, coding represents a word or brief phrase that symbolically gives a summative, salient, essence-capturing, or evocative feature (Saldaña, 2021). As coding is not a single, linear process, I conducted three independent rounds of coding (Saldana, 2016) and triangulated all data.

I used a thematic coding system (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The research employed Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis method, involving an active process of selecting materials aligned with the research question and study purpose, encompassing six sequential steps: familiarizing oneself, initial coding, thematic discovery, review of themes, defining and naming themes, and reporting the final themes and subthemes (p. 87).

Using Capper's and Dyches models, I utilized the key terms social justice knowledge and pedagogy and critical consciousness as initial codes to organize my data and begin to identify emerging themes. In the second round of coding the interviews were documented under pseudonyms.

Findings

The focus of this study was to explore how school leaders disrupt deficit thinking and promote asset-based instructional practices to encourage the success of Black male students who have experienced trauma. I organized my findings into four sections. The first theme that

emerged in my analysis is the importance school leaders place on social justice. Second, the evidence showed that school leaders recognized and addressed inequality and bias through the lens of critical consciousness. Third, I present leaders' methodologies to counteract deficit thinking. Lastly, I present data that indicates the insufficient implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy by school leaders in attempt to promote the success of Black male students.

School Leaders' Belief in the Importance of Social Justice

In my study, I found that school leaders described themselves as serving their school communities through a social justice lens. Five out of seven school leaders affirmed the importance of enacting social justice to meet the needs of the student population they serve. The participants' descriptions of the extent of their self-reflection proved crucial in influencing each individual's commitment to social justice. The more school leaders engaged in critical self-reflection, the more actively they championed social justice.

Conversely, a lack of critical self-reflection about social justice obstructed the school leaders' ability to enact culturally responsive practices proactively. Notably, those leaders who engaged in critical self-reflection about their leadership actions demonstrated a heightened capacity to enact social justice measures.

To illustrate, I describe two school leaders who clearly articulated their dedication to educating students with a social justice orientation. Principal Ferrington, a secondary school leader for the Olympia School District, expressed a working knowledge of the benefits of social justice and the ramifications of complacency and avoidance of the tenets of social justice. Principal Ferrington has spent thirty years in the field of education, with a primary focus on high school education. Principal Ferrington described his work at the high school as "heavily involved

in social justice movements." Throughout the interview, Principal Ferrington demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of social justice based on his responses to questions related to equity-centered leadership.

Principal Ferrington emphasized the importance of social justice and what it means to him, particularly in the context of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) efforts at Olympia, which he acknowledged are difficult. His religious beliefs provided a strong foundation for his efforts to promote social justice. Principal Ferrington stated, "To help people out fills me, and sometimes it's to your sacrifice." Principal Ferrington demonstrates critical self-reflection by drawing from his compassion for others and actively championing social justice to ensure fair and equitable distribution of school resources. He recognized that social justice commitments were potentially contentious within his school. He commented that he had to avoid divisive language when addressing race-related issues to prevent discomfort among staff. His goal was to promote unity rather than polarization. For example, Principal Ferrington stated:

> So, our work here is heavily involved with social justice movements. It's more covert than overt because some word choices can sometimes be polarizing. We need to be more galvanizing. It's about breaking down barriers that were in place to give people a better chance and opportunities that they otherwise wouldn't have unless you break these barriers. That's why I'm here.

Despite the subtlety of his approach, it aligned closely with the overarching aim of advancing social justice. Furthermore, his statement underscored a profound personal dedication to pursuing social justice. This commitment emanated from his perspective, deeply rooted in his faith, which imparted a sense of obligation. His resolve to initiate systemic changes to advance

social justice manifests this commitment.

Principal Ferrington acknowledged that his staff members have varying levels of understanding regarding the significance of implementing social justice. He expressed that he promoted social justice by modeling a positive example through his actions. Principal Ferrington recounted an action that he proclaimed promoted the importance of social justice. He emphasized the importance of hiring faculty and staff whose values aligned with the community's vision and mission, "One thing I did was intentionally diversify the people we have around us. That way, the kids here with us also see people teaching and representing them; the cornucopia of different things in the school are present with staff."

Principal Ferrington articulated that he aspired to build a staff who maintained a steadfast dedication toward the district's overarching vision and mission: To create lifelong learners while providing equal access and opportunity to all school community members. For instance, he remarked: "Now, the vision and mission isn't something we talk about outwardly. We try to live it through, you know, kind of a covert way." He expressed that his staff is inconspicuously discussing the vision and mission. Nonetheless, this participant emphasized incorporating culturally responsive practices as pivotal in his discernment process when selecting individuals to join his staff. Principal Ferrington commented that the interview and hiring process enabled him to onboard staff who could advance the district's goals and mission.

Principal Ferrington's personal experiences and reflections on his lived experiences and religious beliefs helped him to develop a strong commitment to equity work. His personal commitment and dedication were evident in his statements about challenging "the constraints of

the existing caste system." Principal Ferrington's methodical and subtle approach is a tactic to minimize the possibility of divisiveness while promoting positive discourse among stakeholders.

A second example of a school leader conveying a belief in the importance of fostering social justice within the context of education was Principal Williams. Principal Williams has been the principal at his current elementary school for the last eight years. Self-identifying as a first-generation Irish-American, he attributed his family's immigrant experiences to developing nuanced perspectives on significant socio-cultural intricacies. At the same time, Williams articulated how he fortified a capacity to confidently address matters of race and racism.

Principal Williams attributed some of his comprehension of social justice to his firsthand encounters from growing up in a family afflicted by poverty and alcoholism. Williams discussed the complex interplay of trauma from dealing with alcoholism and his family and the tribulations of being a first-generation Irish American. He described some of his challenges: "There was alcoholism and things like that. I'm Irish; my parents were from Ireland. We were very poor, but in Irish culture, you don't say anything." Williams also described some of his advantages, such as his family's values, which included prioritizing education and giving back to the community. Mr. William's deep reflection on his personal life experiences and his positionality in leading equity work allowed him to connect to the importance of social justice and reinforced his commitment to leading from a social justice lens.

He claimed that because of his formative years, he had gained an acute awareness of societal inequities and a sense of moral obligation. Principal Williams believed he successfully articulated his passion for social justice because he led by example: "I'm pretty hands-on. My philosophy is to keep the negative out. I keep it out by being out there talking to kids, talking to

teachers dealing with the issues; that's what I do; people liked that about me." Principal Williams expressed confidently that he is dedicated to "helping teachers, helping kids be good students, and trying to give them the same values that my parents gave me."

These two examples are illustrative of how school leaders expressed dedication to serving their school communities through a social justice lens. Both leaders demonstrated a strong commitment to social justice leadership and advocacy within the context of their schools and articulated an unwavering commitment to promoting social justice. Ferrington's covert yet dedicated effort to infuse social justice into Olympia High School's culture resulted from his self-awareness and positionality. Furthermore, he could self-reflect and champion social justice based on the beliefs that were instilled in him during his formative years. Similarly, Principal Williams expressed clear insight and reflection on his own personal experiences, which led to a strong commitment to social justice leadership. Williams conveyed that his parents' migration, driven by the singular goal of securing education for their children and witnessing their struggles, laid the foundation for his fervent advocacy for social justice.

While this theme was reflected in five of the seven participants (five), it was not universal. Two school leaders did not portray themselves as strong advocates for social justice. This was manifested most notably in their statements reflecting a less nuanced sense of critical self-reflection and cognizance regarding their own positions of power and privilege. For example, a secondary school leader was asked if he had witnessed inequitable practices and, if so, if he had done anything about it. He stated, " Like I said, I don't see it, but I'm not always in the classroom. We do trainings about social justice; I'm sick of them, just being honest." This school leader articulated that he did not notice or observe examples of inequitable practices in his

school environment and consequently did not discuss strategies for disrupting practices that might disadvantage specific populations of students. Additionally, hese two leaders also also did not view themselves as central to the district equity work and demonstrated less personal commitment to the district's mission and vision.

School Leaders' Recognizing and Addressing Inequity and Bias through Critical Consciousness

A second theme that emerged in the data was that in order to disrupt deficit thinking and address inequity, educational leaders must possess critical consciousness. As previously discussed, critical consciousness has been conceptualized as having three components: critical reflection, recognition and rejection of societal inequities, political efficacy, one's ability to effect change, and critical action, which is actions taken to change society. My interviews with school leaders from the Olympia School District revealed that three of the seven school leaders who participated demonstrated an understanding of key tenets of critical consciousness. Among these three leaders, there was variation in their levels of understanding and the degree to which critical consciousness influenced their leadership practices. Four of the seven school leaders demonstrated a less developed understanding of critical consciousness. I provide illustrative examples of each type.

Olympia High School Associate Principal Scott was a leader who clearly connected his understanding of critical consciousness to his leadership practices. Associate Principal Scott stated his purpose in education was to "create voices for Black and Brown students who haven't had a voice." Associate Principal Scott eloquently discussed the fundamental tenets of critical consciousness, advocating for policy reform in his school district and drawing from his personal

experiences to shed light on the challenges faced by Black male students. He highlighted the prevalence of stereotypes, biases, and a lack of cultural understanding within the school district.

He described how he disrupted established norms, "teachers think it's ok to support stereotypes of Black male students, saying things like there are way too many Black students in the class, the other parents should be notified just like if there were too many IEP students". Associate Principal Scott took action to confront teachers and have coaching conversations about their negative statements, as he felt the deficit thinking by teachers upheld inequity and contributed to the oppression of Black male students. He acknowledged the challenges of enacting social justice leadership through critical consciousness in a school where he is the only Black administrator. For instance, he remarked:

 I've accepted the challenge. I have to be comfortable with it. It's very uncomfortable

 being the only one….I want to be the voice of the students. I want to be a voice for the

 parents, and I want to be a voice within the community. I had one teacher of color and 12

 years of education. Before I went to college, I knew that that needed to change, and I

 wanted to be a part of the change.

Associate Principal Scott is dedicated to empowering Black male students and other minoritized populations using the tenets of critical consciousness by recognizing the societal inequalities that have been fostered in his school. He expressed he is in a position to challenge oppressive systems and work towards dismantling them. Associate Principal Scott asserts that having agency and the ability to critically self-reflect is key to fostering critical consciousness to affect change in school and is paramount in working toward equitable outcomes for Black males and other minoritized populations.

Another example of a leader exhibiting critical consciousness is Principal Adams. As principal at Cherry Hill Elementary School for the past four years, Adams identified various tenets of critical consciousness that she implemented to influence her practice. Adams emphasized the importance of creating positive relationships and inclusive learning environments with a focus on CRP. Adams stated she is often engaged in critical self-reflection as she is keenly aware of her positionality; she stated,

> My lenses are different. I was raised as a cisgender woman, my identity is a very gay woman. I have a wife at home, and we don't necessarily identify with the LGBTQ community. When it comes to having conversations about race and inclusivity, I do lean on my peers who are willing to help me. I make sure that I can communicate the message correctly because I don't want to take away the opportunity for the voices to be heard correctly. I work closely with our executive director of HR, and I know she gets exhausted sometimes being one of our few leaders of color. She and I have sometimes leaned on each other with certain conversations or PD for staff.

Principal Adams exhibited a discerning self-awareness, acknowledging the unique perspective she brings as a self-identified gay woman. She aptly recognized the existence of multiple perspectives while conscientiously refraining from positioning herself as an authority on matters of race or CRP. Adams openly embraced alternative insights, aiming to effect positive change for Black males and other minoritized students under her purview.

In contrast, four of the seven school leaders did not exhibit a deep understanding of critical consciousness. While they expressed a commitment to addressing inequities and biases against Black males and other minoritized students, they did not express an understanding of

how to enact leadership practices to address identified inequities. Political efficacy and agency are crucial components of critical consciousness required to bring about change from a social justice perspective. These four leaders did not view themselves as having agency and often referred to external forces needed to drive change.

One example of this can be seen in Principal Johnson, the alternative High School leader. Over his thirty-one years in education, he has occupied various leadership positions at the High School level, including roles as a special education administrator and assistant principal. In response to interview questions, Principal Johnson demonstrated a developing understanding of critical consciousness.

Principal Johnson acknowledged the existence of inequities within his school and district, stating: "Let's face it, adults give up on kids. I've seen it, and I don't do that. I refuse to allow people who work for me to do that." Principal Johnson was excited about his role in the district, asserting he wanted to "right the wrongs, ensuring kids have equal access to opportunities." While able to identify inequities, Johnson did not demonstrate the second component of critical consciousness, which involves political agency. In contrast, Principal Johnson indicated that he could not articulate leadership strategies he could leverage while aware of existing inequities and confident that the district could do better to drive change. When prompted regarding his approach to cultivating critical consciousness concerning equity and access for his Black male students, the respondent articulated, "through district professional development."

Principal Johnson spoke in general about the knowledge and thinking he gained through professional development for disrupting inequity and bias at his school. However, when I pressed him for specifics, an example escaped him. Principal Johnson's understanding of critical

consciousness was rooted in his commitment to his students. He addressed wanting to disrupt deficit thinking and inequalities in access to opportunities by using professional development to raise awareness. However, Principal Johnson struggled to articulate how his own leadership actions could impact change. He was aware of this gap, commenting on how professional development needed to be bridged into practice and that district infrastructure and policy needed to be aligned to support the implementation of equitable practices. Principal Johnson's lack of political efficacy and agency, key components of critical consciousness, diminished the efficacy of her social justice leadership. Principal Johnson provides one example of leaders who exhibited an emerging understanding of critical consciousness. Each of the three others were distinct. For instance, one school leader relied on intuition to assist students but lacked a structured plan to foster an equitable learning community. The leader stated, "It's easy to spot and identify students that need help. So there's nothing formal, so I guess you could say it's perception." Another school leader recognized systems of inequality however, he abdicated his responsibility to take action, stating, "You only have so many hours in the day. You only have so many people skilled enough to do it; it's just too much not to make excuses. there's too much going on." Common across all four of these leaders was a limited sense of their own agency and a reliance on external forces for driving change. The gap between intention and effective implementation demonstrated the complexity of addressing inequity and bias, underscoring the need for educational leaders to have a strong understanding of critical consciousness in order to be able to connect self-reflection, awareness, and action to effect change.

School Leaders' Disrupting Deficit Thinking

A third theme that emerged from my research was the diverse strategies educational leaders employed to counteract deficit thinking concerning Black male students who have experienced trauma. Five of the seven participating school leaders exhibited a nuanced, more sophisticated comprehension of deficit thinking. Moreover, these leaders actively endeavored to disrupt and challenge deficit thinking within their schools. Conversely, two participants exhibited less awareness regarding their own proclivity towards deficit thinking. I will share examples of each to illustrate.

Principal Adams at Cherry Hill Elementary School presented a compelling example of counteracting deficit thinking toward Black male students.According to Principal Adams, deficit thinking surrounding Black males and other minoritized groups was pervasive in her district and school. One initiative Principal Adams implemented to address social justice pedagogy involved implementing a book study. The book examined issues and policies regarding bias and style. By engaging teachers, staff, and students in thoughtful discussions centered around these issues, Principal Adams aimed to counter deficit thinking by fostering reflection on the diverse strengths and the potential of Black male students and other minoritized groups. She gave an example as she acknowledged an attempt to address potential bias:

> We conducted a book study on 'Unbiased' a few years ago, aiming to address unconscious bias and microaggressions within our staff. The study prompted reflection on the content consumed by our students, including books and images. This led to the realization that even vocabulary cards tended to portray negativity with images of people of color or those with disabilities, highlighting the need to recognize and address unconscious bias in the materials used.

As another example, Principal Adams made a deliberate effort to address and correct biases in the curriculum. The principal worked with educators to critically evaluate current materials to ensure they are inclusive, representative, and devoid of stereotypes. By taking these deliberate steps, the principal hoped to disrupt the thinking that Black male students are less capable than other students and instead push towards creating an atmosphere that values their rich diversity of perspectives and abilities.

Principal Adams acknowledged that disrupting deficit thinking was still a work in progress. She found having conversations with people frustrating,stating, "we get really stuck, specifically when discussing white privilege." She describes these conversations with staff and potential staff:

> It always goes back to socioeconomic status. The word privilege really throws them off. Even in my interviewing of candidates, we are not getting diverse candidates in for teaching. I still ask how they will make sure that they leverage their privilege to elevate our students of color. It really throws them off when I ask that. They're like, well, I don't have privilege. Most candidates respond by saying everybody thinks that I grew up very rich, and I'm like, they're missing the point, and I try to redirect it. Most of our staff do not yet recognize the influence that they could have in helping our Black and Brown students.

Adams recognizes that her attempt to disrupt deficit thinking is ongoing, and she approached the work through professional development and coaching staff members.

Adams provides an illustrative example of a pattern in the data that five of the seven principals exhibited involvingdisrupting deficit thinking. While the majority of leaders

participating in this study communicated a commitment to disrupting deficit narratives, two leaders made statements that reflected deficit thinking about students and/or groups of students within their learning environments. For examplereflecting on his professional journey into education and his positionality, Associate Principal James Russel commented on his service in the Marines and his professional fighting in mixed martial arts. He described these experiences as assets for his current role: "I like the Assistant Principal and Dean of Students role, dealing with discipline, safety, security, and attendance issues. My experience has groomed me for my job. I'm a boots-on-the-ground, hands-on kind of guy. I appreciate that aspect of education."

During the course of the interview, Associate Principal Russell consistently asserted that his high school abstained from engaging in deficit thinking. Russell contended that Black males were not underserved. For instance, he stated, "I initially want to say Black students, how they have really been underserved? If they have the same opportunities as everybody else, they are being served equally." He gave examples where all students had opportunity:

> We have so many sports, clubs and opportunities. We have leveled classes from
> advanced to honors and college prep. We also provide an Alternative Learning
> Center for students with special needs and things like that. I feel like everybody's
> got an equal shot here, and everybody can have an equal piece of the pie.

In order to explain gaps in representation, Associate Principal Russell suggested that Black males might be being underserved due to their experiences within strained family dynamics, marked by the absence of a nuclear family structure. He affirmed that simply looking at the school to correct inequities oversimplifies a complex web of influences. "I never say, tell me about your mother and father because that's rarely the case. I'm not assuming that there is a

mother, especially a father figure, which is less than 50 percent." This was a clear example of deficit thinking.

Associate Principal Russell's perspective did not take into account the systemic inequalities that hinder the equal distribution of opportunities that his school district provided. In addition, he did not mention in his comments the historical disadvantages that affect Black males and contribute to disparities.

Principal Russell spoke with conviction about his belief that deficit thinking regarding Black males was not present in his learning environment. He expressed that he firmly believes everyone has equal access and opportunity to school resources. His statement was contrary to his comments as he spoke directly to the perceived shortcomings of Black males, which by definition is deficit thinking. However, he acknowledged that he and his colleagues could unconsciously have bias. "I'd like to think that not me, not this White guy, but at the same time, maybe it's in there, and I'm making assumptions based on a demographic." Associate Principal Russell shares an anecdote where his bias may have unintentionally influenced his actions.

[A] … group of students were walking, and there were… three .. Cape Verdean, Latino students, girls, walking away from the front door, and in front of them there were about five or six White students … I stopped the three Cape Verdean girls. So, one of them goes: 'Well, what about them? Why would you tell them to turn around?' It just so happens the White girls wore uniforms … and were heading towards the Fieldhouse, where they belonged. And where are the other girls? They weren't wearing any uniforms. They were just kind of loitering. And .. they were like, 'Well, why don't you tell the White girls to leave? Why are you telling us to leave?' You know, and I think those things

happen. I do feel … Black students and Latino students are hyper-focused, for good reason.

He espoused a commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable educational environment, rejecting the assumption that certain Black males and minoritized students faced inherent disadvantages. For instance, he stated: " I like to think I'm an equal opportunity kind of thinker when it comes to serving students and serving their families." Mr. Russell conveyed that he treats all of his students fairly and equally, without regard to their race or ethnicity. He gives an example: "I'm not suspending Kyle Rodriguez, who is a student of color. I'm suspending the fact he was fighting [his behavior], you know what I mean? I don't know what else to say about that."

Yet despite these claims, Associate Principal Russell's examples demonstrated cognitive patterns of deficit thinking. . As a result, his ability to effectively implement systems and structures promoting social justice within the high school where he worked was hindered.

The two interviews highlighted above illustrate the broader pattern in the data., Five of the seven leaders actively confronted deficit thinking by tackling disparities in access to opportunities and raising awareness through specific professional development initiatives, cultivating a more inclusive and equitable academic environment. Conversely, two of the school leaders inadvertently demonstrated deficit thinking by perpetuating academic and societal stereotypes among Black male students and other minoritized students and failing to challenge systemic barriers and environmental influences that were prevalent in the school.

School Leaders' Insufficient Implementation of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Asset-Based Instructional Practices

The last overarching theme delineated in the data was the inadequacy in the integration of culturally responsive pedagogy and asset-based instructional practices by school leaders to disrupt deficit thinking and promote asset-based instructional practices to encourage the success of Black males who have experienced trauma. As previously stated, CRP recognizes the inherent value of each student's ethnic diversity and skills. Incorporating intercultural content coupled with the empowerment of students constitutes a pivotal catalyst for substantial improvement in learning outcomes by instilling a heightened sense of agency among Black males and other minoritized students.

Evidence showed that all seven school leaders acknowledged a deficiency in the implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy and asset-based instructional practices by school leaders, thereby impeding the success of Black males who have experienced trauma. Interrogating the data, I could not find instances where CRP was applied with fidelity. In this section, I provide four examples of school leaders exhibiting emerging efforts in the implementation of CRP.

Ms. Smith is an educational leader with twenty-three years of experience in the Olympia School District. She began her career as a Transitional Bilingual Education teacher and has since held various leadership positions, including Assistant Principal and Principal. Currently, she works intimately with school leaders at the district level. When I asked Ms. Smith what she does to implement culturally responsive pedagogy for Black males who have experienced trauma, she expressed cynicism and frustration:

> I haven't put anything in place. I feel as though the district still has a deficit way of
>
> thinking. Although we're very diverse, we're very white thinking, like white monolingual

English speaking. We want to say we're very Portuguese or very diverse. We're very

urban. We are not. It is disgusting, and I really get so upset the school committee is very

white. And it's very ignorant. So, when it comes to Black males with trauma, forget about

it. It's just they're not even aware that it is such a huge issue.

Ms. Smith reiterated that the district had not supported culturally responsive pedagogy.

As a follow-up question, I asked if there was evidence in the district that established

recommendations for specific instructional practices or interventions to promote Black males'

success. Ms. Smith responded by emphasizing personal efforts by individuals:

Just a personal experience. One of my students attended the alternative high school with

David[Principal]. Yeah. David loves those kids .. and he really made that student feel he

counted … and … if they end up there, it's like they're in heaven. I always call the school

if one of my students is going there, and he's like, okay, Nicole, you know, I'll take care

of them and don't worry about it … I know they have tutors available; it's not anything

that I've set like a protocol, but it's something.

Ms. Smith was emphatic with her response, stating that the district did not support

culturally responsive pedagogy but instead cited an alternative process of helping students by

placing them outside the traditional classroom.

While Ms. Smith perceived implementing culturally responsive pedagogy and

asset-based instructional practices as occurring only by individual school leaders, one of these

individuals - the aforementioned Alternative High School principal for the Olympia School

District, Principal Johnson - had a different perspective. Principal Johnson claimed that the

district, in fact, did have culturally responsive pedagogy. Johnson characterized the use of culturally responsive pedagogy as follows:

> So we have curriculum meetings and things like that with the department heads and coming from the superintendent, that they say … look, this curriculum is [that] kids can access it with equity. However, I still think that's something we really, really have to continue to focus on curriculum because … not that I'm saying it is [bad], I think it's something that could go by the wayside.

Another example is from Principal Ferrington of Olympia High School. When asked about how he implements CRP in school, he stated:

> You only have so many people skilled enough to do it. Where do you put your eggs? What basket do you put those eggs and that time into? We don't really have anything yet. Do I want to have something? Yeah, I want to have something. So it's creating a program for kids to help out, but we're not there yet. He was also asked about asset-based instructional practices for Black males who experienced trauma, and he stated they were not happening inside the classroom. However, he mentioned a personal anecdote of a Black student who needed help because the student's made a decision that resulted in expulsion. He provided examples of how he helped the student. He told the student, "I'm gonna hook you up with a rehabilitation center and a job and some support academically."

Principal Ferrington underscored the imperative of leading by example and establishing replicable systems for emulation by others. He also alluded to after-school clubs and said they were a potential alternative, offering community-based support for Black male students. He

affirmed the following: "We have clubs at the school, but nothing specific to be able to help out kids. But I think that kids need that."

Along the same line, Principal Williams, the elementary school principal, told a similar story when asked the same question. He gave the following example: "We have a kid now who experienced trauma and was very, I guess, violent." He stated the student became so dysregulated that classrooms were evacuated because the student would hit people, throw things, and spit on people. Principal Williams described some of the interventions to support the students. "We provided him with things he needed. He got breaks and counseling whenever he needed it. He had a different schedule that was less demanding to support his needs." Principal Williams explained that they also incentivized the student by letting him direct the after-dismissal vans for student pick-up to their appropriate area. He said that because of the support and interventions, "He's still with us, I haven't seen anything out of him this year at all. We got him with good teachers and support in terms of guidance." Principal Williams believed that identifying a severely dysregulated student and giving the student more attention using generalized resources that the school had available helped the student succeed in the school environment.

Asset-based instructional practices focus on leveraging students' strengths and cultural backgrounds to enhance the learning outcomes, in this case, for Black males. Asset-based instructional practices can be expressed by culturally competent teaching practices, coupled with CRP and providing opportunities for students to highlight their skills and strengths within the curriculum. Principal Williams and his staff perceived their efforts as a form of CRP and

asset-based instructional practices, although they could not formalize their approach or what they had done instructionally to improve the student outcome.

These four examples show that some leaders implemented asset-based instructional strategies within the school, while others advocated for addressing students' needs through external programs, thereby delegating responsibility externally. Rather than viewing solutions as integral components, they perceived them as supplementary, such as after-school clubs or alternative schools. This distinction highlights a critical need for leaders to explicitly prioritize integrating culturally responsive practices within the core fabric of the school to ensure a more comprehensive and effective approach to student needs.

Discussion

I will now discuss these findings. First, I reflect on my positionality and address the study's limitations. Second, I discuss how my research informs how school leaders enact instructional and social justice leadership to provide better outcomes for Black males. Last, I propose practical, policy-oriented, and research-related implications.

Positionality and Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. My positionality as a Black male school leader and my experiences as a Black male student created certain biases toward the research district and the participants in this study. I sought to mitigate any prejudice or stereotyping by conducting pilot interviews with school leaders from districts distinct from the one where the study was conducted. In addition, some interviews were conducted in pairs to calibrate findings with my research colleague. Another limitation was related to constraints on time and the use of

a relatively small sample size, necessitating interviews with only seven school and district

leaders. The small sample size limitsthe generalizability of the results.

Finally, my research relied on self-reports of school leaders. This study did not include

observations of the practices of school and district leaders. As a result, I could not assess how

critical aspects of instructional leadership, including professional development sessions,

facilitation of classroom planning times by leaders, or classroom walkthroughs were experienced

by educators or other district staff members. It is essential to acknowledge that the absence of

these observations has implications for the study's overall reliability.

SJPKS Framework Application

This study exploring how school leaders disrupt deficit thinking and promote asset-based

instructional practices to encourage the success of Black male students who have experienced

trauma was grounded in an integrated conceptual framework. My framework combined Capper

et al.'s (2006) description of school leaders' preparation regarding social justice and Dyches and

Boyd's (2017) work regarding the practical aspects of social justice pedagogical and content

knowledge (see Figure 3.1). I first discuss how my findings align with and depart from this

framework. I then discuss how a major aspect of my inquiry, trauma, was largely absent from my

findings.

Alignment with SJPKS Framework

According to Capper's framework, social justice leadership relies on the intersection of

critical consciousness, social justice knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge and skill.

As described previously, critical consciousness has three components: critical reflection,

recognition, and rejection of societal inequities, political efficacy, one's ability to effect change,

and critical action, actions taken to change society (Watts et al., 2011). It emphasizes engaging and including all learners regardless of race and social status while enacting specific mechanisms to achieve social justice and equity within the K-12 school systems. Findings from this research study suggest that educational leaders demonstrated some tenets of critical consciousness, but not all principals and leaders had developed all three components. Some participant leaders discussed their attempts at addressing Black males' and minoritized students' needs to receive equitable educational opportunities. These leaders enacted visions of social justice by enacting leadership strategies, modeling tenets of critical consciousness within common planning times and other structured platforms engaging their staff. In addition, leaders provided spaces through professional development to engage in recognizing and making efforts to disrupt bias. At the same time, others struggled to see evidence of inequity within their own school environments and demonstrated less critical self-reflection and awareness of their own positionality and unconscious bias. Research literature proposes cultivating and developing critical consciousness to disrupt and eliminate educational inequities (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Leaders fostered strategic thinking and communication skills, a deep understanding of systemic barriers, and an enhanced ability to resolve challenges despite societal constraints (Katsarou et al., 2010). Examples of participant leaders modeling their enactment of critical consciousness were apparent as they spoke of using comprehensive agendas and articulated the tenets of social justice.

Another key dimension of my framework is pedagogical content knowledge. My findings showed that school leaders attempted to ensure faculty and staff had strong pedagogical content knowledge by enacting instructional leadership. However, these leaders could not fully model or

develop specific strategies with staff, such as cultural competence, critical self-reflection, and the ability to translate CRP knowledge into skills. Leaders articulated the need for more professional development to support their efforts at developing staff capacity. The deficiency in the connection between instructional leadership and social justice leadership led to inconsistent instructional strategies supporting Black males and other minoritized students.

Similarly, gaps in the development of critical consciousness hindered some leaders' capacity to identify and address the inequities in their school communities. There are various implications for school leaders' practices of critical self-reflection and how such practices play a significant role in the overall practices of culturally responsive teaching pedagogy. Culturally responsive, self-reflective school leaders benefit from robust critical self-examination as they begin to recognize and mediate their biases that have been mainstreamed into systemic educational practices (Dyches & Boyd, 2017). School leaders can only address and change the existing conditions when they are able to recognize personal biases.

This study further illuminated how critically conscious school leaders who understand core tenets of social justice are more likely to embody equity-centered leadership and address disparities in student opportunities and outcomes. The work of such school leaders cuts across a range of issues central to student welfare, including participation in advanced coursework, reduction in suspensions and punishment, academic achievement, and culturally responsive and intellectually rigorous classroom instruction. Participant leaders demonstrated varying understandings of critical consciousness, employing this awareness to drive transformative changes within their schools.

Through staff discussion regarding bias-based and deficit thinking, some of the school leaders in this study were able to amplify the Black male students' voices. For critical consciousness to manifest in instructional and social justice practices, these school leaders actively served as catalysts for change. Conversely, certain participant leaders opted for a more covert approach, navigating social justice endeavors to avoid "polarizing" the school community and mitigating white fragility. Several of these leaders made statements suggesting that supplementary programs and resources were necessary to address equity gaps, as opposed to leveraging their leadership to effect internal change.The outcome left the work of disrupting inequality to outside resources and as a result permitted inequitable learning conditions to persist.

Participant leaders exhibited commendable intentions and distinctly disparate methodologies in addressing critical consciousness within their respective staff. However, it is noteworthy that the divergence in approaches appeared to yield a cancellation effect, as discernible evidence of progress was conspicuously absent from the public school data. The efficacy and impact of these divergent strategies on cultivating critical consciousness within the staff remain unclear, as the absence of demonstrable outcomes complicates the assessment of their effectiveness.

Trauma

Within this study, there was an absence of substantive discussion regarding Black males experiencing trauma. A significant segment of participant leaders either lacked the inclination or the proficiency to directly address the issue of trauma. Participant leaders superficially touched on the topic of trauma but avoided any substantive engagement.

Nonetheless, there are factors contributing to the limited attention given to the critical issue of Black males who have experienced trauma as a recurring factor contributing to the exacerbation of the racial achievement gap. The erosion of student health is also a direct influence of the trauma experienced by Black male students. When coping with trauma, Black males' *resilience* is often overlooked (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019). This research emphasized the importance of creating trauma-informed teaching practices that acknowledge Black males' strengths and provide opportunities for them to process their trauma in a safe and supportive environment. Another method promoting a trauma-informed practice is known as healing-centered engagement (HCE), which promotes the holistic well-being and healing of individuals and communities Ginwright (2018).

Recognizing and addressing the impact of trauma on Black males can allow school leaders to elicit critical consciousness and self-reflection. In doing so, these leaders can collaborate to develop professional development specifically focused on trauma-informed pedagogy. School leaders will discover means of utilizing informed and culturally responsive practices to help schools and communities provide support that allows Black males to see an asset-based, positive representation of themselves.

These findings confirm that research on instructional and social justice leadership aids in the outcomes of Black male students. CRP and trauma-informed pedagogy have added perspective on reframing and rethinking instructional practices for the most marginalized students, including Black males (Gay, 2000). Anderson and Stevenson (2019) explored how Black males cope with racial bias, arguing that Black males' resilience is often overlooked when faced with adversity. Minoritized students have inherent value in their cultural diversity and

talents and when learning experiences build upon this foundation, student achievement is enhanced (Howard & Terry, 2011). Finally, critical self-reflection, a component of critical consciousness, allows K-12 school leaders to learn about themselves, their biases, and their assumptions of others. Critical self-reflection also enables school leaders to grow and transform their potential, leading to a broader reworking of their school environments.

Implications for Practice, Policy and Research

In conclusion, the insights from this study have important implications for future research, policy, and practice. The findings emphasize the importance of intertwining instructional leadership and social justice leadership, creating a more impactful and inclusive education for Black male students. School districts can not make the assumption that school leaders enter the profession with a fully developed understanding of critical consciousness to enact social justice leadership in alignment with instruction leadership.

The commitment of school leaders to engaging in critical self-reflection is instrumental in shaping and fortifying the broader framework of culturally responsive teaching pedagogy. Culturally responsive, self-reflective school leaders benefit from robust critical self-examination as they begin to recognize and mediate their biases that have been mainstreamed into systemic educational practices (Dyches & Boyd, 2017). School leaders can address and change the existing conditions by recognizing personal biases.

This connection is crucial for practitioners to develop their knowledge and skills in both areas, ultimately leading to more equitable support for Black males, including those who have experienced trauma. Practitioners need to be well-equipped to address the unique challenges faced by this demographic. Numerous studies have been conducted on CRP and trauma-informed

practices (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995). However, there is a lack of research and literature that focuses explicitly on the experiences of Black males who have experienced trauma, as well as specific strategies to help them succeed.

School leaders must possess the necessary skills to address the distinct obstacles encountered by this specific group. Extensive research has been conducted on practices that consider systemic racism and the traumatic effects of it. School leaders should investigate incorporating asset-based instructional strategies that utilize culturally responsive pedagogy, allowing educators to appreciate and comprehend Black male students' unique backgrounds and lived experiences. Asset-based teaching approaches promote the development of strength-based methodologies while recognizing the unique strengths of Black male students. Integrating these elements into school leader education preparation programs, as well as incorporating project-based learning experiences where educators identify specific strategies, implement interventions, and reflect on outcomes, will help bridge the gap noted in this study between theory and practice. Also, districts and state licensure agencies should incorporate this training into administrative mentoring and induction programs to ensure that new leaders possess the expertise and abilities necessary to establish educational settings that are inclusive and validating for all students, irrespective of their cultural backgrounds. Addressing white fragility is crucial for school leaders navigating race and equity discussions. Novice school leaders need the knowledge and skills to develop the self-awareness and resilience required to engage in difficult conversations about race, privilege, and systemic inequities.

Furthermore, school leaders should investigate developing and improving student data collection to track bias and deficit thinking. Accountability measures should be integrated into

these programs to ensure school leaders actively apply their understanding of CRP and trauma-informed pedagogy to their leadership practices. This accountability may involve ongoing professional development, regular assessments, and reflective practices to encourage continuous growth and improvement.

Data collection should be explicitly conducted by implementing classroom observations and walk-throughs, examining student work with a specific "look for protocols," and conducting equity audits. Also, school leaders ought to investigate the curriculum for bias explicitly. Surveys for Black students can be created, asking how their teachers value and respect them. Moreover, advocacy is needed to influence educational policies at the local and state levels to advance educational equity.

Chapter Four[5]

Discussion

The Olympia School District aimed to meet the needs of its increasingly racially and ethnically diverse student population. Throughout our studies, leaders highlighted instructional and social justice leadership strategies to close opportunity and achievement gaps. Their identities, positionality and approaches all differed despite working within a district positing equity-centered priorities. In the following section, we will synthesize cross-cutting themes that emerged across our respective individual studies in response to our overarching research question: How do educational leaders cultivate and promote SJPKS? We will then identify implications for practice, policy, and future research related to social justice leadership.

Four Themes

Our individual studies explored how school leaders define, cultivate, and promote SJPKS in their contexts. Across our studies, four themes emerged: critical self-reflection, perceptions of district-level infrastructure and strategic planning, school-level instructional infrastructure and capacity building, and gaps in social justice pedagogical skill.

Critical Self-reflection

Critical self-reflection is one of the three key tenets of critical consciousness, along with critical motivation and critical action (Freire, 1973). Critical self-reflection is described as reflection that raises one's awareness of their own bias and beliefs on power and privilege (Capper, 2006). As echoed in the literature, critical self-reflection is important because it directly

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[5] This chapter was jointly written by Julia Bott, Derrick Ciesla, Rodolfo Morales and Marybeth O'Brien

connects to and influences a leader's capacity to promote SJPKS (Dantley, 2005a, 2008; Furman, 2012; Freire, 2000; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012, Seider & Graves, 2020).

It is important to note that the journey towards critical self-reflection is not linear, it is complex and nuanced. Throughout our study, we found that leaders demonstrated varying degrees of their own awareness. Our findings highlight these nuances while revealing patterns across respondents with higher and lower indications of critical self-reflection. In general, leaders who demonstrated stronger critical self-reflection were more apt to collaborate with their teachers to dismantle perceived inequities. On the other hand, leaders who demonstrated limited critical self-reflection were less likely to recognize the important role of other leaders in collaborating to lead the work and were more likely to have instances of biased and deficit mindsets.

Furthermore, some leaders also practiced strategies to cultivate relationships with educators, students and families in order to support the development of SJPKS. For example, Superintendent Meyers focused on learning directly from students during his listening tour. He leveraged this opportunity to be on the ground, learning from the students he set out to serve. As a result, he was able to gain the trust of students, teachers and families, as he enacted his strategic plan to center and address diverse students' needs.

Similarly, Principal Adams fostered the necessary conditions for educator risk-taking to support the development of their capacity to engage in critical self-reflection. Educators in her community described their principal supporting them to enhance curriculum and implement culturally affirming and engaging pedagogy. Different forms of support, including formative coaching conversations, explicit modeling and guided practice through professional development

structures, directly provided emotional and intellectual safety that allowed them to confront

feelings of uncertainty or self-doubt. Additionally, educators in her community reflected on how

she both modeled critical self- reflection and implemented practices to support their growing

awareness of their own intersectional identities and relationship to privilege and power.

On the other hand, some leaders demonstrated conflicting levels of awareness. Principal

Ferrington, for example, was able to name his identity as a White Christian male as influencing

his approach to leadership. In particular, he reflected on how his spiritual ideology had

influenced him to be a "servant" leader. However, Principal Ferrington also made several

comments that reflected racial bias and deficit thinking. Such comments included a description

of Black males as coming from dysfunctional families, as well as a messaging that he knew what

was best for Black children despite their own concerns over his biases. Despite the disconnect

between his critical self-reflection and biased comments, Principal Ferrington was highlighted by

news sources and press releases as a leader who advocated for rigorous course selection and

eliminated barriers to AP courses and dual enrollment for students.

Conversely, we also found that many school leaders did not demonstrate critical

self-reflection and were, therefore, seemingly unaware of their own biases. These leaders often

concentrated on addressing deficiencies, inadequacies, or perceived shortcomings within specific

groups or individuals in their responses to questions related to race, power, and privilege,

particularly in the context of Black male students. For instance, Principal William's reflection of

his upbringing as a first-generation Irish immigrant growing up navigating alcoholism and

poverty with his family led him to feel more connected with what he perceived to be the

experience of his students. He also shared an anecdote of a Black family communicating trust in

him, as well as a separate anecdote to demonstrate his willingness to go into the community where his students of color resided. Lastly, while he communicated a desire to break down barriers and close gaps for students of color, he also stated that teachers' race-based bias was not an issue and that there was no systematic way to identify when a student needs additional support. Principal William's comments mirror commonly debated issues related to critical self-reflection, such as leveraging perceived closeness to blackness to evade acknowledgment of biases, and almost portraying schools as a post-racial society, devoid of racism.

In order to overcome these barriers, our conceptual framework suggests leveraging the dimensions of pedagogy and critical consciousness to raise leaders' "consciousness about power inequities" (Capper, 2006, p.216). Weaving these two dimensions would support leaders in disrupting their own deficit thinking so that they can begin to develop critical consciousness, embrace asset-based thinking about minoritized students and communities, and support the development of their educators' SJPKS. As noted above, critical self-reflection is a journey. As leaders come to understand how their identity impacts their view of the world and influences their perceptions, assumptions, and biases, they progress toward more sophisticated levels of critical self-reflection. Additionally it is human nature to experience setbacks and regression on the journey towards critical self-reflection. Without the ability to critically self-reflect, leaders risk acting on unconscious biases and countering social justice efforts (Dyches and Boyd, 2017; Seider & Graves, 2020; Watts et al., 2011). Furthermore, a leader's lack of critical self-reflection directly impedes their capacity to cultivate the SJPKS of others.

While critical self-reflection is paramount to individual leaders' own cultivation and promotion of SJPKS, and therefore, an important first step to being able to develop others'

SJPKS, it is also the role of the district to ensure systems and structures allow for successful cultivation of SJPKS.

Perceptions of District-level Infrastructure and Strategic Planning

A second theme that emerged across our research studies was the influence of district-level infrastructure and strategic planning on the ability for SJPKS to be enacted across the district and schools. Across our studies there was evidence that elements of the district strategic plan were aimed toward initiatives to advance social justice, however, there were contrary positions on whether school-based leaders were able to enact said initiatives to promote SJPKS. Furthermore, leaders identified several compounding variables that negatively impacted their social justice leadership including district-level resistance, obstructive attitudes, and a lack of support from central office administrators. In the Olympia School District, there were varying perceptions of district-level support for SJPKS enactment and risk-taking, further influencing how leaders developed and cultivated SJPKS.

Three school leaders positively portrayed the district's support for enacting social justice leadership in schools. They communicated appreciation for the district's strategic plan which highlighted diversity and a call to action to increase equity. For example, one principal praised the superintendent for naming and addressing the core priorities of the district, putting leaders in positions to do the critical work of building inclusive communities for students of color. Similarly, another leader reflected on his twenty-year career in the Olympia District, noting that the present focus on equity and social justice had never been stronger. These were just a few examples of many who highlighted the Superintendent's core values, communicating a trust in his vision and an appreciation of how he fostered a sense of safety in risk-taking. In totality,

several leaders expressed a level of trust with the Superintendent's vision and leadership which, allowed for district-level infrastructure to move towards the critical work of cultivating SJPKS. One district-level infrastructure that was leveraged to develop leaders' capacity was professional development. School leaders described how the district provided professional development, through strategic partnerships to develop leader's awareness of how power, race, and privilege manifest within schools. On one hand, some school leaders stated that as a result of professional learning, they felt empowered to engage in critical conversations about how bias presents in the actions and habits of members within the school and district teams. They addressed this through professional collaboration, dialogue, and educator evaluation. On the other hand, school leaders communicated that district leaders often requested principals "pull back" or reverse decisions in order to relieve the tensions that arose through political or community-based resistance.

One principal shared more nuanced feelings about the district's support of social justice efforts. This school leader expressed that the district was taking the right steps in naming equity as a focus, pointing to professional development and leadership agendas to cultivate leaders' critical consciousness. However, the principal also recounted instances of pushback from the district, particularly around what they described as an equity-driven restorative approach to discipline. They identified tension as they acknowledged the district's efforts to cultivate leaders' SJPKS while simultaneously experiencing a lack of central office support

In stark contrast, four leaders were vocal in critiquing district support. For example, a district-level leader shared deep concern that the equity work in the district was still surface-level and at times superficial. They expressed a deep desire for increased urgency around action. At the school level, one principal recounted how their implementation of the "Black Lives Matter at

School Week" initiative was met with opposition and, ultimately, a directive from the superintendent to alter or eliminate the program. In another instance, the same principal was also advised to tread lightly when discussing issues of gender and sexual identity. Lastly, another school leader expressed frustration that conversations and professional development seemingly led to no action or change. This leader conveyed a lack of accountability for change as a pitfall in the district, noting that professional development started and ended as conversations without follow-through. Collectively, these leaders conveyed a desire for further support from district leadership.

While perceptions of district support were mixed, it is important to note that the two leaders who had positive experiences with the level of support were identified as leaders who demonstrated limited critical self-reflection. Alternatively, leaders who were most critical of district support demonstrated greater skill in critical self-reflection. In summary, leaders' perceptions of district support influenced their sense of efficacy and empowerment in enacting social justice leadership.

Within our conceptual framework, the intersection of curriculum and critical consciousness is leveraged to raise "consciousness about power, privilege, and associated issues" (Capper et al., 2006, p. 214). Our findings echo the importance of districts leveraging the dimensions of curriculum and critical consciousness to develop leaders' SJPKS, particularly within their strategic planning and professional development of leaders. These actions not only develop leaders' content knowledge and skill but also provide them with the emotional safety to take risks as they enact the district's vision. Of note, Capper et al. (2006), highlights the importance of emotional safety for risk-taking as prospective leaders develop SJPKS.

School-level Instructional Infrastructure and Capacity Building

A third theme that emerged across our research studies was the role and impact of a clear instructional infrastructure on a leaders' ability to effectively and consistently implement instructional leadership practices to cultivate SJPKS. School leaders leverage instructional leadership to improve the quality and effectiveness of classroom teaching and learning in order to advance student achievement (Murphy, 1998; Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2003; Tivnan & Hemphill, 2004; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Heck & Moriyama, 2010; Grissom et al., 2013, Francois, 2014). In order for leaders to leverage instructional leadership practices such as supervision and evaluation, professional learning, and collaborative planning cycles, they must also have a solid instructional infrastructure (Chenoweth, 2021). This includes systems and structures to support the consistency and coherence of these practices across their respective communities. This may include structured cycles of learning within common planning time, a strategic sequence of professional development intentionally aligned to instructional priorities, a well-defined system and protocol for instructional rounds, and/or a schedule and cycle for observation and feedback with normed protocols.

In schools with stronger instructional infrastructures, we found greater implementation of instructional leadership practices and more favorable educator reflections on the influence of those practices on instructional capacity. For example, Principal Adams emphasized the importance of consistent formative feedback, clear structures for school-based professional development, and cycles of learning for collaborative planning meetings as essential vehicles for the cultivation of educator SJPKS. In turn, educators across three different grade levels in this school community consistently described how these structures aligned to and reinforced

school-wide priorities. Furthermore, they discussed how engagement in these practices supported

their critical self-reflection, identification of curricular bias, and capacity to norm on

instructional practices that support diverse learners.Conversely, in schools that lacked this

infrastructure, we identified inconsistent and at times ineffective implementation of instructional

practices and priorities. Additionally, we found a disconnect in how educators experienced those

practices. For example, at Olympia High School both the school leader and educators identified

the negative impact of gaps in the instructional infrastructure on the implementation of

instructional practices to cultivate educator SJPKS. While Principal Ferrington highlighted

competing district priorities and scheduling barriers as contributing factors to the inconsistent

implementation, educators in his community identified different constraints. Specifically, they

highlighted inconsistencies in adult learning structures and priorities, along with a lack of

accountability for the leadership team to effectively convey social justice learning to their

respective teams. These factors contributed to an uneven implementation of SJPKS development.

In these counter-examples, the social justice capacity building became more fragmented, largely

dependent on the instructional leadership capacity and SJPKS of individual department chairs

and team leads.

　　While both examples illuminate the need for a consistently implemented, school-wide

infrastructure for instructional practices as a lever for SJPKS, it is equally important for leaders

to have the knowledge and skill necessary to leverage these practices. In essence, a strong

instructional leadership infrastructure does not guarantee that leaders have the prerequisite social

justice knowledge or skill to enact instructional leadership practices effectively. Therefore, it is

important that districts foster both the leaders' capacity to implement a strong instructional

infrastructure as well as their social justice knowledge. Our conceptual framework describes this knowledge of social justice as the need for "school leaders to know about evidence-based practices that can create an equitable school" (Capper et al., 2006, p 213). Finally, even with well-developed social justice knowledge, leaders also require support to build the skill of enactment.

Gaps in Leaders' Social Justice Pedagogical Skill

A fourth theme that emerged was a clear gap in school leaders' capacity to enact social justice pedagogical skill in order to develop this capacity within educators. As articulated in our conceptual framework, there is a distinction between the social justice knowledge of "evidence-based practices" leaders and educators require to create "more equitable schools" and the skills they must possess to enact that knowledge through praxis. Effective leaders for social justice must be equipped with both knowledge and pedagogical skills (Capper et al., 2006, p. 213). Data gathered throughout the current study indicated that many central office and school-level leaders demonstrated and articulated greater levels of knowledge about social justice leadership than skill set to enact this knowledge within their contexts. This was echoed by educators' perceptions and experiences in their respective communities.

Many school leaders highlighted the implementation of culturally competent and responsive professional development facilitated by an outsider partner, as a meaningful knowledge-building experience. The professional development was intended to build an understanding, awareness, and theoretical foundation of social justice principles within the context of education. Specifically, some leaders reflected that participation in these professional learning sessions deepened their consciousness of implicit bias, structural and systemic

inequities, and the socio-political factors that contribute to dynamics of power and privilege within different identity groups. However, several leaders also noted that these professional development sessions fell short because they did not sufficiently equip leaders with the requisite practical skills to effectively translate social justice knowledge into tangible, capacity-building actions with their staff.

This gap in support for skill development is exemplified by Principal Adams of Cherry Hill Elementary School, a school leader who demonstrated a well-developed social justice knowledge base. In order to build the knowledge of her faculty, Principal Adams initiated a book study to encourage staff members to engage in critical thinking regarding unconscious biases, as well as to understand the historical and systemic factors that perpetuate educational inequalities. In essence, Principal Adams designed this professional learning opportunity to cultivate educators' critical consciousness. However, Principal Adams also articulated that she desired coaching and support to ensure educators translated their developing consciousness to curricular planning and instructional practice to improve learning outcomes for students. Principal Adams was vocally craving support to cultivate her social justice skill development and ensure that educators' social justice knowledge actually transformed practice and contributed to a more equitable and empowering educational experience for minoritized students. These reflections were also echoed by her educators who acknowledged that their growth in knowledge did not directly translate to the skills necessary to critically consume curriculum, facilitate more culturally responsive and affirming pedagogy, and cultivate cultures of belonging for all students.

Likewise, an associate school leader expressed frustration when his efforts to enact the expressed values of the school and directly address the behaviors of an educator were

undermined. This associate school leader reflected that a great deal of intentionality was given to providing professional development to the leadership team in order to cultivate their knowledge and capacity to identify and enact antiracist practices. However, when an educator who used the "N-word" during a literature class was confronted with the harmful impact of their actions on students, other leaders interceded, defending the educator's actions and ultimately resisting accountability. Thus, while professional development focused on building awareness and understanding of power and privilege, it did not advance leaders' ability to transfer such knowledge to practice and actively confront issues of bias.

It is important to note that SJPKS is a developmental journey. One does not simply achieve it. The developmental nature of SJPKS signifies a process that includes progress and setbacks within different domains of SJPKS, rather than steady advancement. Additionally, multi-faceted identities and contexts influence an individual's stages of growth and willingness to progress on the developmental journey toward SJPKS. We see an example of this play out as leaders gain social justice content knowledge while simultaneously desiring to expand their skills to enact social justice leadership and transform their schools into more inclusive and equitable learning communities. As leaders build their capacities, they can further develop their SJPKS.

In summary, it was evident through multiple interviews, survey analysis and document reviews that district and school leaders are in various phases of building their social justice knowledge through the frame of critical consciousness. Grasping the principles and theories of equitable education is crucial for social justice pedagogical knowledge and foundational to the work of social justice leadership. Furthermore, as outlined by our conceptual framework, leaders for social justice also require specific skills to advance this work in their communities. However,

our study revealed a gap in leaders' development of social justice pedagogical skill due to an overemphasis on building their consciousness and content knowledge and a lack of district attention and strategic support for the development of skills. Building a strong social justice skill set in district and school leaders will empower them to create the conditions for the cultivation of educator SJPKS, even in the face of opposition.

The four themes from our studies shed light on how leaders cultivate and promote SJPKS, including through the use of critical self-reflection, district-level strategic planning and initiatives, school-level instructional infrastructure and capacity building, and gaps in social justice pedagogical skill. Additionally, we've identified how contextual factors, such as perceptions of district support, influence leaders' actions. Our exploration of SJPKS underscores the urgency to create equitable, socially just learning environments for students. We recognize how crucial it is for leaders to possess the critical consciousness, knowledge, and skills to lead this work. Without these competencies, efforts to foster a more inclusive and equitable education may not take effect.

Implications

Our research examined how educational leaders cultivate and promote SJPKS. The findings of this study carry implications for practice, policy, and future research related to social justice leadership and capacity building.

Leadership Practice

Our study illuminates several leadership competencies and practices that are essential for the successful cultivation of educators' SJPKS. These include the development of critical

self-reflection, implementing infrastructure for adult learning, and intentional support for skill enactment.

Findings from our study highlight the foundational role of critical self-awareness, a tenant of critical consciousness, in cultivating SJPKS. District and school leaders require intentional support to continue to build this self-reflection so that they consistently confront their own biases and their role in perpetuating inequities and responsibility for correcting them. Furthermore, leaders with stronger critical self-reflection are better equipped to create the conditions to cultivate it within their leadership teams and classroom educators, as evidenced by our comparison of teacher perceptions across schools. Support for critical self-reflection requires explicit professional development to build leader knowledge and understanding of their positionality, privilege, and power. Furthermore, leaders require regular coaching and feedback to ensure they are enacting this awareness to inform decisions and actions, disrupt bias and deficit thinking, and advance equity. Leaders at all levels of the organization should use explicit equity protocols that require deep reflection around the intended and unintended consequences of their actions.

Additionally, findings demonstrate that schools require a strong infrastructure in order to implement instructional leadership practices for the cultivation of educators' SJPKS. Leaders require explicit training, support, and models of instructional leadership infrastructures that promote coherent and consistent practices across the school community. Leaders of the Olympia District expressed how they used infrastructures for adult learning to cultivate SJPKS. However, leaders also demonstrated a need for professional development on how to build educators capacity for SJPKS through curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. To fill this gap, trainings may

provide leaders with strong models and guided practice to facilitate cycles of educator learning, tools and protocols for collaborative planning sessions, processes for supervision and evaluation and/or a clear framework for designing a strategic arc of professional learning.

Furthermore, findings suggest that even with a foundational knowledge of social justice content, curriculum and pedagogy, and a strong instructional infrastructure, leaders still require explicit support in social justice skill development to build this capacity in others. Data underscores a need for districts to identify clear and consistent frameworks for bias-based curriculum interrogation, protocols for culturally responsive data analysis, and/or culturally and linguistically affirming instructional practices to ensure fidelity across the system.

Additionally, findings showed that in the absence of explicit skills, leaders fall short of their goals of leading equity initiatives and building educator capacity. This was evidenced by leaders avoiding direct conversations with their direct reports, placating to adult emotions, and stifling equity-driven initiative. Data suggests that leaders require training in specific protocols for equity-framed data analysis in order to more effectively facilitate data reviews and action planning. Additionally, structures such as district and school-level instructional rounds using common observation tools that explicitly center equity practices and/or unit and lesson interrogation simulations can effectively build this capacity.

Our findings also demonstrate that even within the context of our study, in a state that touts its progressive ideals, there are barriers that impede leaders' abilities to cultivate SJPKS. Leaders expressed how conservative view-points, polarizing topics, and disagreements around the celebration of identities impeded their efforts. As a result, leaders leveraged their social capital, built coalitions, and strategically chose their words when communicating about social

justice work. Oftentimes leaders worked to find common ground or rebrand their goals in order to slowly move towards their vision, garner buy-in and prevent disharmony within their community. These skills are often overlooked by leader preparation programs and professional development. Such programs should aim to increase these skills as they are necessary for the strategic cultivation of SJPKS.

Finally, this research study illuminated inconsistencies between leaders and educators' perceptions and experiences of the prioritization, implementation, and support for SJPKS. Furthermore, several educators and leaders identified the need for clear systems and procedures of accountability for the implementation of social justice practices. Findings demonstrate that districts and schools would benefit from common observation tools that explicitly link expectations for the implementation of social justice knowledge and practices to the supervision and evaluation system and process. Additionally, district and school-level climate and culture surveys should explicitly identify components of SJPKS to gather data on student, family, and faculty perceptions of the implementation of practices. This data should be analyzed at the district and school level and leveraged to inform strategic planning and adjustments to leadership and educator practice.

Leadership Policy

Current federal, state, and local policy has begun to consider the complex set of challenges faced in the educational arena to ensure equitable experiences for students. Our study identifies some of the pervasive challenges within the educational system toward enacting social justice, particularly to personnel and practice.

This study illuminated the disconnect between district and school leaders' social justice pedagogical knowledge and the skill necessary for effective implementation. In order to ensure that leaders enter the field with both the necessary knowledge and skill set to advance this work, higher education programs must explicitly build leader capacity for SJPKS. Therefore, there is a need to reform higher education policy to ensure that leadership preparatory programs are accountable for teaching and developing leaders' SJPKS.

Likewise, in assuring leaders possess this knowledge and skill, and arguably the courage to do this work, certification, recertification, and evaluatory processes require revisions that would encapsulate elements of SJPKS. For sitting leaders, a focus on social justice should be required for endorsement and license renewal. This would support the advancement of social justice leadership along with a requirement for professional development points aligned to social justice and instructional leadership knowledge and skill development.

Districts, including superintendents, school leaders, and educators, should expect accountability for enacting SJPKS. While our study revealed that a district emphasized social justice knowledge development, findings also indicated an underdeveloped capacity for knowledge enactment. Requiring evidence of social justice practice through the evaluation system would hold district and school leaders accountable for supporting SJPKS development. Furthermore, implementing a robust audit of districts' educational programs, services, and policies will reshape schools' political landscape and educational policies.

While this study focused solely on one school district, it is evident that a school district is only one component of a larger system that encompasses the state and federal levels of policy. This highlights the necessity for an audit mechanism at both the state and federal levels.

Implementation of consistent audits should reveal inequities in opportunity, access, and achievement as well as key practices that improve the experience for minoritized populations. Such audits serve as a form of accountability for districts, state, and federal educational institutions to enact transformative educational change.

Key policy at the local level lies in the purview of school committees. Our findings suggest that school committees hold influence over how districts enact social justice and equity-driven initiatives, including politicizing and resisting social justice policies. In order to ensure current and future policies at the local level are revised to meet the criteria for an equitable approach to education, members of this governing body require knowledge to do this. Findings shed light on the necessity for policies that hold members of school committees/boards accountable for participating in training aimed at enhancing their capacity to assess policies through a social justice lens. Further, state and federal funding should be tied to assurances whereby local boards should be required to provide proof of credible professional development programs that support their development in this area in order for the districts to remain in compliance with such policy. Additionally, school committees and districts should provide proof of revisions or adoption of policies that demonstrate a move towards equity-driven practices.

Future Research

This study investigated the implementation of SJPKS by school leaders within the school environment. Our research indicates that many of the school administrators we interviewed currently lack the essential skills to consistently carry out capacity building for SJPKS in their respective communities. This can be directly attributed to the insufficient infrastructure and lack of effective and sustained capacity building within the school district. The aforementioned

limitations and trends identified through this study illuminate potential future research on leadership for SJPKS.

Our findings highlight the influence of contextual factors such as demographic shifts, racial tensions, and socio-political pressures, in enacting social justice efforts within a district. Additional research conducted in diverse contexts would contribute to validating findings and the generalizability of our results. For example, research can investigate how the size of a district or school may impact leaders' ability to implement equity-driven initiatives. Alternatively, research can explore how the political affiliations of key stakeholders and the community at large may influence the approaches leaders take as they enact SJPKS. Lastly, research can explore how demographic shifts in a community influences a district's vision for SJPKS.

This study referenced the impact of school committee policy and feedback on district and school level leadership decision making for SJPKS. Future research could investigate how processes of school board member appointment, such as elections or mayoral appointment, impact their comfortability in advocating for transformative changes in education. Research can investigate the impact of professional development on school committee members' ability to engage in equitable decision making. Furthermore, a study could investigate how school committee members' attitudes, perceptions, and recommendations change as a result of ongoing professional development on equity and socially just educational leadership.

Families and communities can be critical and influential partners at both the school and district level. Overall, our findings demonstrate a lack of deep and meaningful engagement with families around the work of social justice. In particular, many leaders communicated perceptions of family and community resistance towards social justice efforts, particularly among families

who identify as White. Additionally, one leader demonstrated deficit thinking when discussing families of color and their capacity to contribute to the priorities of the school community. Furthermore, many leaders communicated that families often have varying understandings of their district's vision, priorities, and strategic initiatives to advance equity and divergent experiences of implementation at the school level. While our collective study focused primarily on leader understandings, skills and actions, and educator experiences, this highlights the need for further research to explore family and community perspectives and experiences of leaders' and teachers' efforts to cultivate SJPKS.

Furthermore, while this study did explore how educators' experience their leaders' efforts to cultivate their SJPKS, it did not investigate the relationship between particular curricular or pedagogical practices and student perceptions, behaviors, or outcomes. Future research is needed to fully investigate the possible correlation between leaders' cultivation of SJPKS and students' level of critical consciousness, engagement, and/or achievement.

Finally, both district and school leaders referenced the pivotal role of external partners in their SJPKS capacity building. However, our findings highlighted an overarching disconnect between leader and educator knowledge building and skill development. Future research should investigate how districts and school communities leverage external partners to build SJPKS within their leadership and educator workforce, with a particular focus on evidence of application, accountability and follow-through.

Conclusion

Social justice leadership is complex and nuanced. Our research highlights how leaders' diverse identities and consciousness of power dynamics shape their approach to fostering equity

in schools and districts. The foundation for social justice leadership is laid through continual, critical self-reflection and a deep understanding of how structural and systemic inequities intersect and perpetuate within educational institutions. Furthermore, our collective studies highlight the important role of organizational infrastructure and strategic planning to set the framework for SJPKS development. While an infrastructure does not guarantee that SJPKS will flourish, it will not develop coherently within the school and district without it. Finally, our research illuminates the need for leaders to possess a comprehensive knowledge of research-based social justice practices and a well-developed skill-set that ensures enactment. It is the interplay of all of these factors- individual, school and district level- that creates the necessary conditions for the cultivation of SJPKS within educators across the organization.

Even with the necessary knowledge, skill and organizational infrastructure, leaders face invariable obstacles to the advancement of social justice within their context. Our research sheds light on leaders' urgency to enact social justice leadership, while also navigating contexts that are imbued with individual, structural, and institutional racism. As cities and states across the United States become majority-minority, much like the Olympia School District, the need to cultivate and promote SJPKS becomes increasingly necessary and complex.

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Appendix A

Superintendent Interview Protocol

Guiding Research Questions:

1. How does a superintendent develop and understand their own social justice pedagogical knowledge and skill?

2. How does a superintendent enact their social justice pedagogical knowledge and skill to develop the capacity of district and school leaders?

Coding

Research Question 1(RQ1)

Research Question 2 (RQ2)

Background Building (BB)

Instructional Leadership (IL)

Pedagogical Knowledge (PK)

Social Justice Leadership (SJL)

Critical Consciousness (CC)

Social Justice Knowledge (SJK)

Social Justice Skill (SJS)

Script

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to work with you and the district to gain a perspective on the district's work around instructional and social justice leadership. Our study

will examine how school and district leaders cultivate educators' (leaders and teachers) social justice pedagogical knowledge and practice. Each member of our team is studying an aspect of this topic. I am particularly interested in the superintendency, the way a sitting superintendent is developing their social justice knowledge and using this knowledge to develop the capacity of district and school leaders.

We are doctoral students at Boston College. All of whom have served as principals in various districts and district leaders. This work is important to us as we hope to gain insights and add to the field of education as it relates to topics of instructional and social justice leadership.

During our time together, I hope to gain insight into your background, your leadership as it relates to this topic, and the way in which you put this knowledge into practice. I want to thank you in advance for taking the time to meet with me. I expect this interview to take about an hour. With your permission, I would like to record our interview in order to have it transcribed and accurately recorded your responses. Please feel free to request that I stop recording at any time during the interview.

Superintendent Interview Protocol: Unstructured Superintendent Interview

Background Building/ Establishing Rapport with Participant

Please share your experiences as an educator prior to becoming the superintendent.

- What roles did you have?

- What did this work look like?

What inspired you to become a superintendent?

- What educational path did you take to get here?

- Share any additional influences or experiences that may have led to your journey toward the superintendency.

Social Justice Knowledge:

First, I would like to get to know a little about your orientation towards social justice:

- How do you describe your understanding of social justice? (SJK)

- In your opinion, what is the role of the superintendent in promoting social justice and equity work across the district, and how do you ensure that this remains a priority in your work as a superintendent? (CC, SJL)

- How have you come to understand these ideas?

  - What professional organizations or formal learning have you engaged in?

  - Are there any ways you support your growth in this area?

    - Formal or informal networks?

- How do you communicate your beliefs about social justice throughout the district and community? (SJL)

Social Justice Pedagogical Knowledge

Next, I would like to get an understanding of how your knowledge and learning translates to the daily work or goals you have for your district, leaders, and schools. For this component, we reference the terms social justice pedagogy. Social justice pedagogy, we define as the way that

your knowledge of social justice and equity is delivered across the district and in schools to "change" what and how things are done.

- Can you define your understanding of social justice pedagogy and how it informs your leadership of a diverse school district? SJL

- Can you describe a specific example of how you have addressed systemic barriers to equity and access in your district? (SJK, SJS)

Pedagogical and Social Justice Knowledge

We define social justice pedagogical knowledge and skill as the teaching strategies that lead to the implementation of evidence-based practices or the practice that bridges the theories around social justice with action.

- How do you enact strategies that develop this understanding across the district?

- How do you ensure that your district's curriculum and instructional practices promote social justice and equity for all students? (IL, SJPK)

- Can you describe your approach to the district's professional development opportunities related to social justice and equity, and how do you ensure that all staff members have access to this training? (IL, PK)

- How do you ensure that students from diverse backgrounds feel included and represented in the curriculum and school culture? (CC, SJK)

Social Justice and Community: Pedagogical Skill

We know that in this work, people embody a social justice consciousness within their belief system; this impacts the way they show up and consider the work, curriculum, and initiatives that districts and schools work to improve. I would like to learn more about how you learn about power, privilege, and associated issues related to social justice and equity and how this shapes the way you engage with the community you lead and serve.

- How do you engage with community members and families to ensure that their voices are heard, and their perspectives are considered in decision-making related to social justice and equity? (SJS)

- How do you develop an understanding of power relations in education? (CC)

- How do you work with the school community to help others recognize these power relationships? (CC, IL, SJS)

Overall, if there was one change you could make for the district in such a way that all resistance, challenges, and barriers were removed, what would it be and why?

Appendix B

School and District Leader Interview Protocol

Marybeth O'Brien + Julia Bott	
Purpose	Interview Questions
Background	● Please briefly share your position and tenure in the district.
Instructional Leadership	● What does instructional leadership mean to you?
Content Knowledge & Skills	● What practices do you use to build your teachers' content knowledge and skill?
Social Justice Leadership	*If the interviewee makes a clear connection between Instructional Leadership and Social Justice Leadership only ask question one below. ● What does social justice and/or equity-centered leadership mean to you? ● How do you as a leader communicate your beliefs about social justice to your stakeholders? ● What practices do you use to build your teachers' knowledge of social justice and/or equity-centered teaching? ● How do you see this influencing teachers' knowledge and capacity to implement social justice and/or equity-centered

	teaching? ● How have you come to understand these ideas about social justice? ● What professional organizations or formal learning have you engaged in? ● Are there any ways you support your growth in this area?
Social Justice Leadership Instructional Leadership	● Do you see a relationship between your work as an instructional leader and a social justice leader? ● What instructional practices do you use to build your teachers' knowledge and skill around social justice and/or equity centered teaching? ● .How do your teachers translate these instructional practices into their teaching for social justice and/or equity? How do you know?
Social Justice Pedagogical Knowledge	● How have you used data to monitor the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at promoting educational equity?
District	● In your opinion, what is the role of the superintendent in promoting social justice and equity work across the district?

	● Recognizing that equity is part of the strategic plan, how has the superintendent communicated and elevated this priority? ● Can you describe your approach to the district's professional development opportunities related to social justice and equity? ■ How do you ensure that all staff members have access to this training?

Marybeth O'Brien + Derrick Ciesla	
Purpose	**Interview Questions**
Background	● Please briefly share your position and tenure in the district. ● What roles did you have? ● What did this work look like?
Positionality	● What inspired you to become a school leader? What educational path did you take to get here? ● Share any additional influences or experiences that may have led to your journey toward being a school leader.

Social Justice Knowledge	- How do you describe your understanding of social justice/social justice leadership? - In your opinion, what is the role of the superintendent in promoting social justice and equity work across the district? - Recognizing that equity is part of the strategic plan, how has the superintendent communicated and elevated this priority? - How do you as a leader communicate your beliefs about social justice to your stakeholders? - How have you come to understand these ideas about social justice? - What professional organizations or formal learning have you engaged in? - Are there any ways you support your growth in this area?
Social Justice Pedagogical Knowledge	- How does your knowledge of social justice and equity inform your practice as a principal to improve outcomes for students? - Can you describe a specific example of how you have addressed systemic barriers to equity and access in your district? - What data or evidence do you collect to monitor the effectiveness of strategies and initiatives you have implemented to promote

	educational equity, and how do you use this information to inform decision-making and improvement efforts?
	- How do you enact strategies that develop this understanding across the district? - How do you ensure that your district's curriculum and instructional practices promote social justice and equity for all students? - How do you ensure that students from diverse backgrounds feel included and represented in the curriculum and school culture? - Can you describe your approach to the district's professional development opportunities related to social justice and equity? - How do you ensure that all staff members have access to this training?
Trauma (supports)	- Use dese data - recognizing Olympia is a diverse district not only by racial identity and student with a disability, socio-economic status how has that impacted Black Males. - What systems have you put in place to ensure that your school is meeting the needs of Black males who have experienced trauma? - Can you provide examples of specific instructional practices or interventions you have implemented that have been successful in

	fostering resilience and positive outcomes for Black male students who have experienced trauma? ● How do you collaborate with teachers, counselors, and other support staff to promote positive outcomes for Black males who have experienced trauma? ● How do you involve families and the wider community in supporting the asset-based development of Black male students who have experienced trauma? ● What types of professional development or training opportunities have you provided for teachers to enhance their understanding of trauma-informed and asset-based instructional practices for Black Males?
Trauma (gaps)	● We know that there are many barriers, including systemic and institutional barriers, that hinder the success of Black students and students with trauma. How have these barriers manifested in your schools? ● In your experience, how have you seen misconceptions hinder educators from providing asset-based instructional practices for Black males who have experienced trauma? ● In your experience, what do you feel has hindered the academic achievement of Black males who have experienced trauma?

	● How do you think deficit-based thinking impacts educators' interactions with black male students?
Social Justice	● In your opinion, what additional resources or supports would be beneficial to further the academic achievement of Black males with trauma?

Marybeth O'Brien + Rodolfo Morales	
Purpose	Interview Questions
Background	● Please briefly share your position and tenure in the district. ● What roles did you have? ● What did this work look like?
Social Justice Knowledge	● How do you describe your understanding of social justice? ● In your opinion, what is the role of the superintendent in promoting social justice and equity work across the district? ● Recognizing that equity is part of the strategic plan, how has the superintendent communicated and elevated this priority? ● How do you as a leader communicate your beliefs about social justice to your stakeholders?

	● How have you come to understand these ideas about social justice?
Social Justice Pedagogical Knowledge	● How does your knowledge of social justice and equity inform your practice as a principal to improve outcomes for students? ● Can you describe a specific example of how you have addressed systemic barriers to equity and access in your district? ● How have you used data to monitor the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at promoting educational equity?
	● How do you ensure that your school's curriculum and instructional practices promote social justice and equity for all students? ● How do you ensure that students from diverse backgrounds feel included and represented in the curriculum and school culture? ● Can you describe how the district's professional development opportunities related to social justice and equity have impacted your work as a principal? ● Follow up→ impact on teacher practice, impact on school-based PD

Expectations	● How do you know when a teacher has high academic expectations of students? ● How do you know when a teacher has low academic expectations of students?

Comfort
 	
Discussing Race
	● In the context of today's world, with both the Black Lives Matter movement and the anti-CRT movement influencing policies in schools, how comfortable do you feel talking about race?
	
	    ○ (follow up) What has contributed to your comfort level?
	
	    ○ (follow up) Would you say you feel more or less comfortable talking about race with folks that share your racial identity?

Bias	● Can you tell us how you've supported teachers to recognize their own biases, particularly as it relates to race and students?
	
	● Can you tell me about a time that you worked with a teacher or teachers that held low expectations of students of color?
	
	    ○ (probe on race-based bias)
	
	    ○ (follow up) What specific steps did you take?
	
	    ○ (follow up) What specific steps do you wish you had taken?
	
	    ○ (follow up) Were there any steps you purposefully avoided? Why?

| | ○ (follow up) How does/did the racial makeup of your staff influence your approaches? |
| | ○ (follow up) How does/did your racial identity impact your approach? |

Julia Bott + Derrick Ciesla	
Purpose	Interview Questions
Background	● Tell me more about yourself and a brief history of your work here?
Instructional Leadership	● What does instructional leadership mean to you?
Content Knowledge & Skills	● What practices do you use to build your teachers' content knowledge and skill? ○ Probe: Can you provide an example or a practice you use? ○ (follow up) How do you see this practice influencing teachers' content knowledge and skill?
Social Justice Leadership	*If the interviewee makes a clear connection between Instructional Leadership and Social Justice Leadership only ask question one below.

	● What does social justice and/or equity-centered leadership mean to you? ● How do you communicate your beliefs about social justice throughout your school and community? ● What practices do you use to build your teachers' knowledge of social justice and/or equity-centered teaching? ● How do you see this influencing teachers' knowledge and capacity to implement social justice and/or equity centered teaching?
Social Justice Leadership Instructional Leadership	● Do you see a relationship between your work as an instructional leader and a social justice leader? ● What instructional practices do you use to build your teachers' knowledge and skill around social justice and/or equity centered teaching? ● How do your teachers translate these instructional practices into their teaching for social justice and/or equity? How do you know?
Social Justice	● Can you provide examples of specific instructional practices or interventions you have implemented that have successfully fostered resilience and positive outcomes for Black male students who have experienced trauma?

	● How do you collaborate with teachers, counselors, and other support staff to promote positive outcomes for Black males who have experienced trauma?
Trauma (supports)	● Recognizing Olympia is a diverse district not only by racial identity and student with a disability, socio-economic status, how has that impacted Black Males.
	● What systems have you put in place to ensure that your school is meeting the needs of Black males who have experienced trauma?
	● Can you provide examples of specific instructional practices or interventions you have implemented that have been successful in fostering resilience and positive outcomes for Black male students who have experienced trauma?
	● (probe): How do you collaborate with teachers, counselors, and other support staff to promote positive outcomes for Black males who have experienced trauma?
	● (probe): How do you involve families and the wider community in supporting the asset-based development of Black male students who have experienced trauma?
	● What types of professional development or training opportunities have you provided for teachers to enhance their

	understanding of trauma-informed and asset-based instructional practices for Black Males?
Trauma (gaps)	● We know that there are many barriers, including systemic and institutional barriers, that hinder the success of Black students and students with trauma. How have these barriers manifested in your schools? ● In your experience, how have you seen misconceptions hinder educators from providing asset-based instructional practices for Black males who have experienced trauma? ● In your experience, what do you feel has hindered the academic achievement of Black males who have experienced trauma? ● (probe) How do you think deficit-based thinking impacts educators' interactions with black male students?

Julia Bott + Rodolfo Morales	
Purpose	Interview Questions
Background	● Tell me more about yourself and a brief history of your work here?

Instructional Leadership	● What does instructional leadership mean to you?
Expectations	● How do you know when a teacher has high academic expectations of students? ● How do you know when a teacher has low academic expectations of students?
Instructional Leadership Content Knowledge and Skills	● What practices do you use to build your teachers' content knowledge and skill? ○ Probe: Can you provide an example or a practice you use? ○ (follow up) How do you see this practice influencing teachers' content knowledge and skill?
Comfort Discussing Race	● In the context of today's world, with both the Black Lives Matter movement and the anti-CRT movement influencing policies in schools, how comfortable do you feel talking about race? ○ (follow up) What has contributed to your comfort level? ○ (follow up) Would you say you feel more or less comfortable talking about race with folks who share your racial identity?
Bias	● Can you tell us how you've supported teachers to recognize their

	own biases, particularly as it relates to race and students? ● Can you tell me about a time that you worked with a teacher or teachers who held low expectations of students of color? ○ (probe on race-based bias) ○ (follow up) What specific steps did you take? ○ (follow up) What specific steps do you wish you had taken? ○ (follow up) Were there any steps you purposefully avoided? Why? ○ (follow up) How does/did the racial makeup of your staff influence your approaches? ○ (follow up) How does/did your racial identity impact your approach?
Social Justice Leadership	*If the interviewee makes a clear connection between Instructional Leadership and Social Justice Leadership only ask question one below. ● What does social justice and/or equity-centered leadership mean to you? ● What practices do you use to build your teachers' knowledge of social justice and/or equity-centered teaching? ● How do you see this influencing teachers' knowledge and capacity to implement social justice and/or equity centered

	teaching?
Social Justice Leadership Instructional Leadership	● Do you see a relationship between your work as an instructional leader and a social justice leader? Please elaborate. ● What instructional practices do you use to build your teachers' knowledge and skill around social justice and/or equity centered teaching? ● How do your teachers translate these instructional practices into their teaching for social justice and/or equity? How do you know?

Derrick Ciesla + Rodolfo Morales	
Purpose	**Interview Questions**
Background	● Tell me more about yourself and a brief history of your work here? ● Please briefly share your position and tenure in the district. ● What roles did you have? ● What did this work look like?
Expectations	● How do you know when a teacher has high academic

	expectations of students? ● How do you know when a teacher has low academic expectations of students?

Comfort Discussing Race	● In the context of today's world, with both the Black Lives Matter movement and the anti-CRT movement influencing policies in schools, how comfortable do you feel talking about race?
	  ○ (follow up) What has contributed to your comfort level?
	  ○ (follow up) Would you say you feel more or less comfortable talking about race with folks that share your racial identity?

Bias	● Can you tell us how you've supported teachers to recognize their biases, particularly regarding race and students?
	● Can you tell me about a time that you worked with a teacher or teachers who held low expectations of students of color?
	  ○ (probe on race-based bias)
	  ○ (follow up) What specific steps did you take?
	  ○ (follow up) What specific steps do you wish you had taken?
	  ○ (follow up) Were there any steps you purposefully avoided? Why?

	○ (follow up) How does/did the racial makeup of your staff influence your approaches? ○ (follow up) How does/did your racial identity impact your approach?

Trauma (supports)	● Can you provide examples of specific instructional practices you have implemented that have resulted in positive outcomes for Black male students with trauma?
	
	  ○ (probe): How do you collaborate with teachers, counselors, and other support staff to promote positive outcomes for Black males who have experienced trauma?
	
	  ○ (probe): How do you involve families and the wider community in supporting the asset-based development of Black male students who have experienced trauma?
	
	● What systems have you put in place to ensure that your school is meeting the needs of Black males who have experienced trauma?

Trauma (gaps)	● We know that there are many barriers, including systemic and institutional barriers, that hinder the success of Black students and students with trauma. How have these barriers manifested in your schools?

	● In your experience, how have you seen misconceptions hinder educators from providing asset-based instructional practices for Black males who have experienced trauma? ● In your experience, what do you feel has hindered the academic achievement of Black males who have experienced trauma? ○ (probe) How do you think deficit-based thinking impacts educators' interactions with black male students?
Social Justice	● Can you define your understanding of social justice pedagogy and how it informs your leadership in this school district? ● How do you communicate your beliefs about social justice throughout the district and community? ● Can you describe a specific example of how you have addressed systemic barriers to equity and access in your district? ● What data or evidence do you collect to monitor the effectiveness of strategies and initiatives you have implemented to promote educational equity, and how do you use this information to inform decision-making and improvement efforts? ● What types of professional development or training opportunities have you provided for teachers to enhance their understanding of trauma-informed and asset-based instructional

	practices for Black Males?
	● In your opinion, what additional resources or supports would be beneficial to further the academic achievement for Black males who have experienced trauma?

Appendix C

Educator Interview Protocol

In this section, I have selected questions that will be asked of educators. These questions are aligned to four key areas: context setting, instructional leadership knowledge and practices, social justice leadership knowledge and practices, the intersection between instructional and social justice leadership and transfer across the organization. .

Question Key Alignment

Context Setting	CS
Instructional Leadership	IL
Social Justice Leadership	SJL
Instructional Leadership + Social Justice Leadership	IL + SJL
Transfer	T

Questions   Focus Area

These questions will include some variation of the following:

Name   CS

Years of experience in education

Role in the school

Years of experience in current role

Primary responsibilities

1. What is the instructional vision of the school?   IL

2. What specific structures or practices implemented by your school leader

   exist to support your development as an educator?

3. How do you experience these structures or practices as an educator?

4. How, if at all, do they influence your knowledge and practice?

5. What does it mean to be a social justice (or equity-centered) educator to you?   SJL

6. What specific structures or practices implemented by your school leader,

   support the development of your social justice (or equity) knowledge and skill?

7. How do you experience these structures or practices?

8. How, if at all, do they influence your knowledge and practice?

9. How, if at all, does equity or social justice intersect with the instructional vision   IL + SJL

   of the school?

10. What specific structures or practices support the intersection of instruction

    and equity?

11. How do you experience these structures or practices?

12. How, if at all, do they influence your knowledge and practice?

13. Do you think if I asked other educators in this community, I would get   T

    similar responses?

Appendix D

Document/Artifact Review Notetaker

Type of Document	
☐ Memorandum ☐ Internal Memo ☐ Community/Family Memo ☐ Agenda ☐ Data Records/Analysis	☐ School Improvement Plan ☐ District Improvement Plan ☐ School Committee Minutes ☐ Professional Development Plans	☐ Presentation ☐ Website ☐ Newspaper/Digital Media Article ☐ Press Release

Document Classification

☐ Personal (diary, notes)

☐ Official (press releases)

☐ Restricted Access (minutes, agendas)

☐ Open Access (organization reports, website, publications)

☐ Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Document/Artifact Characteristics

☐ Letterhead

☐ Slogan

☐ Department Information

☐ Notations

☐ Highlights

☐ Signatures

Date(s) of Documents:

Author(s)/Creater(s) of Documents, Position/Role:

Intended Audience:

Document Information:

A. Purpose of Document:

B: Evidence of Purpose:

C. Evidence of Authenticity

D. Evidence of Credibility

Appendix E

Criteria for Superintendent Selection

- Leads a mid-size urban district that is comprised of a diverse student population

- A minimum of three years of leadership experience at the superintendent level

- Served in the residing district for a minimum of two years

- Experience as an instructional leader at the building level

- Commitment to equity, which is evidenced by a mission and vision linked to addressing systemic inequities particularly related to minoritized populations

Appendix F

Social Identity Wheel

Name:_____

Years as a principal _____

Years as a principal at your school_____

Select and write down your **three most salient identities** in the corresponding boxes below.

Appendix G

Survey

Question Key Alignment & Interview Questions

Context Setting	CS
Cultural Awareness Adult	CAA
Cultural Awareness Student	CAS
Engaging All Students	EAS
Professional Development for Equity	PDE

Question	Responses					Code
How often do school leaders encourage you to teach about people from different races, ethnicities, or cultures?	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	CAA
How often do you	Almost	Once in a	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	CAA

think about what colleagues of different races, ethnicities, or cultures experience?	never while	
How confident are you that adults at your school can have honest conversations with each other about race?	Not at all Slightly Somewhat Quite Extremely confident confident confident confident confident	CAA
At your school, how often are you encouraged to think more deeply about race-related topics?	Almost Once in a Sometimes Frequently Always never while	CAA
How comfortable	Not at all Slightly Somewhat Quite Extremely	CAA

are you discussing race-related topics with your colleagues?						
How often do adults at your school have important conversations about race, even when they might be uncomfortable?	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	CAA
When there are major news events related to race, how often do adults at your school talk about them with each other?	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	CAA

How well does your school help staff speak out against racism?	Not at all well	Slightly well	Somewhat well	Quite well	Extremely well	CAA
How often do you think about what students of different races, ethnicities, or cultures experience?	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently		CAS
How comfortable are you discussing race-related topics with your students?	Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Quite	Extremely	CAS
How easy do you find interacting with students at your school who	Not at all easy	Slightly easy	Somewhat easy	Quite easy	Extremely easy	EAS

are from a different cultural background than your own?		
In response to events that might be occurring in the world, how comfortable would you be having conversations about race with your students?	Not at all Slightly Somewhat Quite well Extremely	EAS
When a sensitive issue of diversity arises in class, how easily can you think of strategies to address the	Not at all easy Slightly easy Somewhat easy Quite easy Extremely easy	EAS

situation?						
At your school, how valuable are the equity-focused professional development opportunities?	Not at all valuable	Slightly valuable	Somewhat valuable	Quite valuable	Extremely valuable	PDE
How often do professional development opportunities help you explore new ways to promote equity in your practice?	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	PDE
Overall, how effective has your	Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Quite well	Extremely	PDE

school administration been in helping you advance student equity?		

What race(s) do you identify as?	CS
How many years have you taught?	CS
What gender do you identify as?	CS
Which school do you work at?	CS