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CULTIVATING SOCIAL JUSTICE PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL:
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE
THROUGH THE PRINCIPALSHIP

Dissertation
By

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with Derrick Ciesla, Rodolfo Morales, and Marybeth O'Brien

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Cultivating Social Justice Pedagogical Knowledge and Skill: Instructional Leadership for the Advancement of Social Justice Through the Principalship

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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 find a need for further research that examines 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 the cultivation and enactment of social justice

pedagogical knowledge and skill across diverse contexts.

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Last, but certainly not least, I am reminded that the source of inspiration for this research is, in fact, my former school community, the Mendell Elementary. I had the distinct privilege to serve the brilliant students and incredible families of that community, shoulder to shoulder with an amazing faculty for 12 years. Their devotion to inclusion, excellence and the cultivation of student agency, inspired me to study the intersection between instructional leadership and social justice leadership. Leading that beautiful community was the gift of a lifetime; a gift I hope to pay forward as I work with leaders and educators committed to the advancement of social justice through excellent teaching and learning. Together, all of us must "lead our schools better than we found them." Our students are ready. The question is, are we?

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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 leithvision, 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 all together, 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)
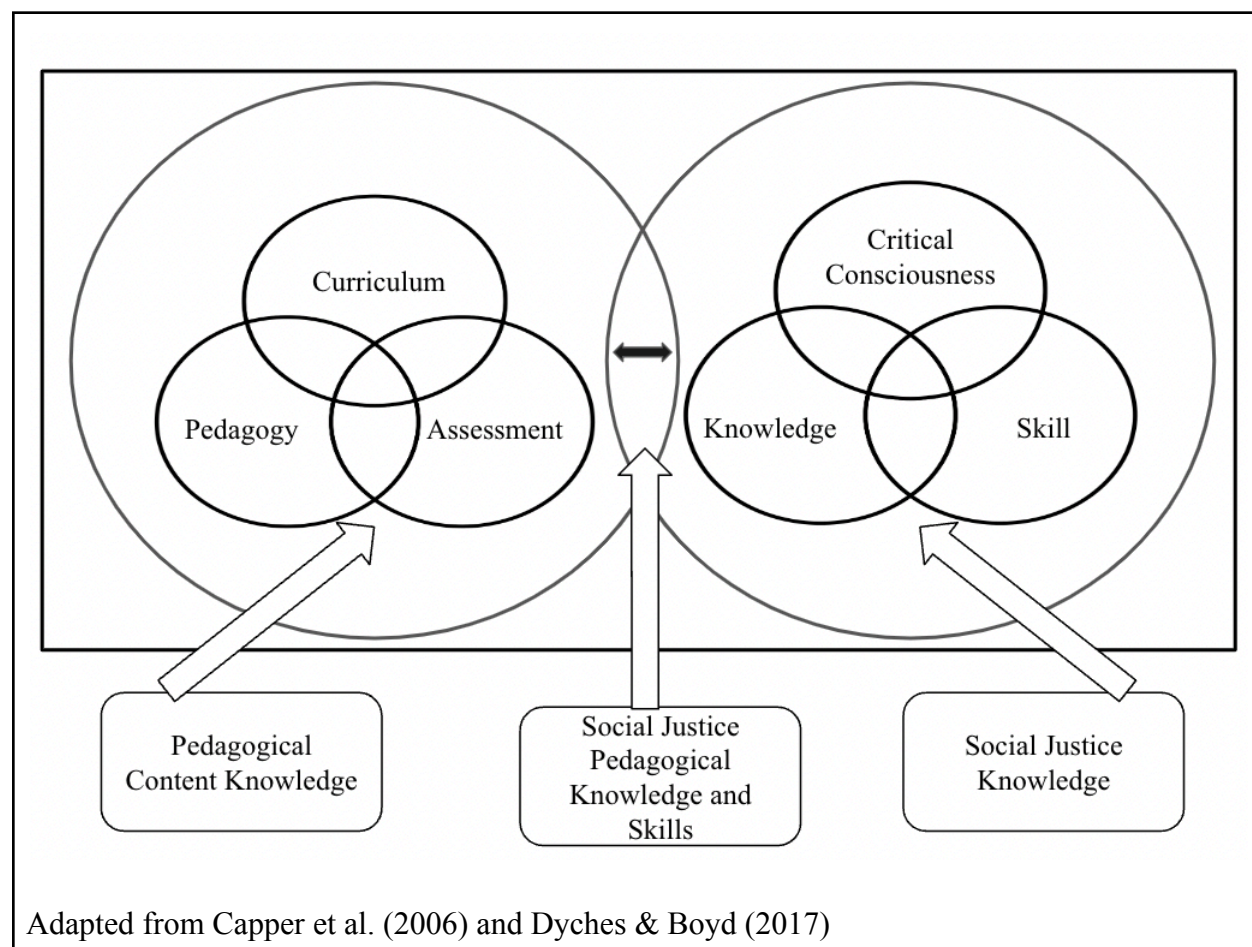
Capper and colleagues (2006) argue that in order to develop leaders for social justice, leadership preparation programs must bridge social justice knowledge with pedagogical content knowledge, a concept more explicitly defined as the development of social justice pedagogical knowledge. Our research focuses 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 Three.

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 for the purpose of identifying 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]

Instructional Leadership for the Advancement of Social Justice Through the Principalship

School leaders are called upon to cultivate the conditions necessary to successfully educate all children. Sometimes school leaders emphasize instructional leadership as the primary strategy for the advancement of student achievement (Murphy, 1988; Riehl, 2000; Wang et al., 2013; Grissom et al., 2013). However, this approach can be agnostic to the deep and pervasive history of structural and systemic inequities in schools (Khalifa et al., 2016, Noguera & Alicea, 2021). Many of the factors contributing to these inequities - including deficit thinking (Diamond, Randolph & Spillane, 2004), the disjuncture between school culture and student identity (Delpit, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 1999) and disproportional identification and segregation of students of color within special education settings (Blanchett, 2006)- are not directly addressed by instructional leadership practices.

Other times school leaders emphasize social justice, prioritizing the development of school culture, policies and structures that center and affirm minoritized students (Khalifa, et al., 2016; Theoharis, 2007, McKenzie et al., 2008, Mayne, 2019). However, these approaches may not explicitly center the development of teacher pedagogical content knowledge and skill (Dyches & Boyd, 2017; Shaked, 2020). Thus, a leader's dual responsibilities to instructional leadership and social justice leadership can be in tension (Shaked, 2020).

Preparation programs for leaders (Capper et al., 2006; Furman, 2012) and teachers (Dyches & Boyd, 2017; Mayne, 2019) are beginning to integrate instructional leadership into a social justice framework. However, limited research examines how school leaders leverage instructional leadership to develop educators' social justice pedagogical knowledge and skill

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[4] Chapter 3 was authored by Julia Bott

(SJPKS), through curriculum, instruction and assessment. This study explores this by addressing three research questions:

(1) How do principals understand social justice pedagogical knowledge and skills?

(2) What instructional leadership practices do principals employ to grow teacher's social justice pedagogical knowledge and skills?

(3) How do teachers experience these practices?

Conceptual Framework

As described in Chapter One, the conceptual framework for our overarching project crosswalks pedagogical content knowledge with critical consciousness, social justice knowledge and skill as a model for understanding social justice leadership (Capper et al., 2006; see Figure 3.1, sections A and B). This intersection between pedagogical content knowledge and social justice knowledge can be described more precisely as the development of social justice pedagogical knowledge and skill (Dyches & Boyd, 2017) (see Figure 3.1, section D). Our general conceptual framework does not delineate how leaders leverage curriculum, pedagogy and assessment to build social justice knowledge and skills in educators (Stronge et al., 2008; Brazer, 2013). Therefore, I will employ a tripartite conceptual framework integrating the concepts of pedagogical content knowledge and social justice knowledge, defined as social justice pedagogical knowledge, with a third dimension: instructional leadership practices (see Figure 3.1, section C).

Principals regularly use instructional leadership practices - such as supervision and evaluation, professional learning and data-driven planning cycles - to support the development of educator pedagogical content knowledge and skill (Donaldson, 2013; Sebastian and Allensworth,

2012; Park, 2018). Therefore, integrating instructional leadership into this conceptual framework provides a narrower lens for considering specific instructional practices employed by leaders to build the knowledge and skill of educators as social justice practitioners (see Figure 3.1, section E).

Figure 3.1

Instructional Leadership for Social Justice Pedagogical Knowledge and Skill Framework
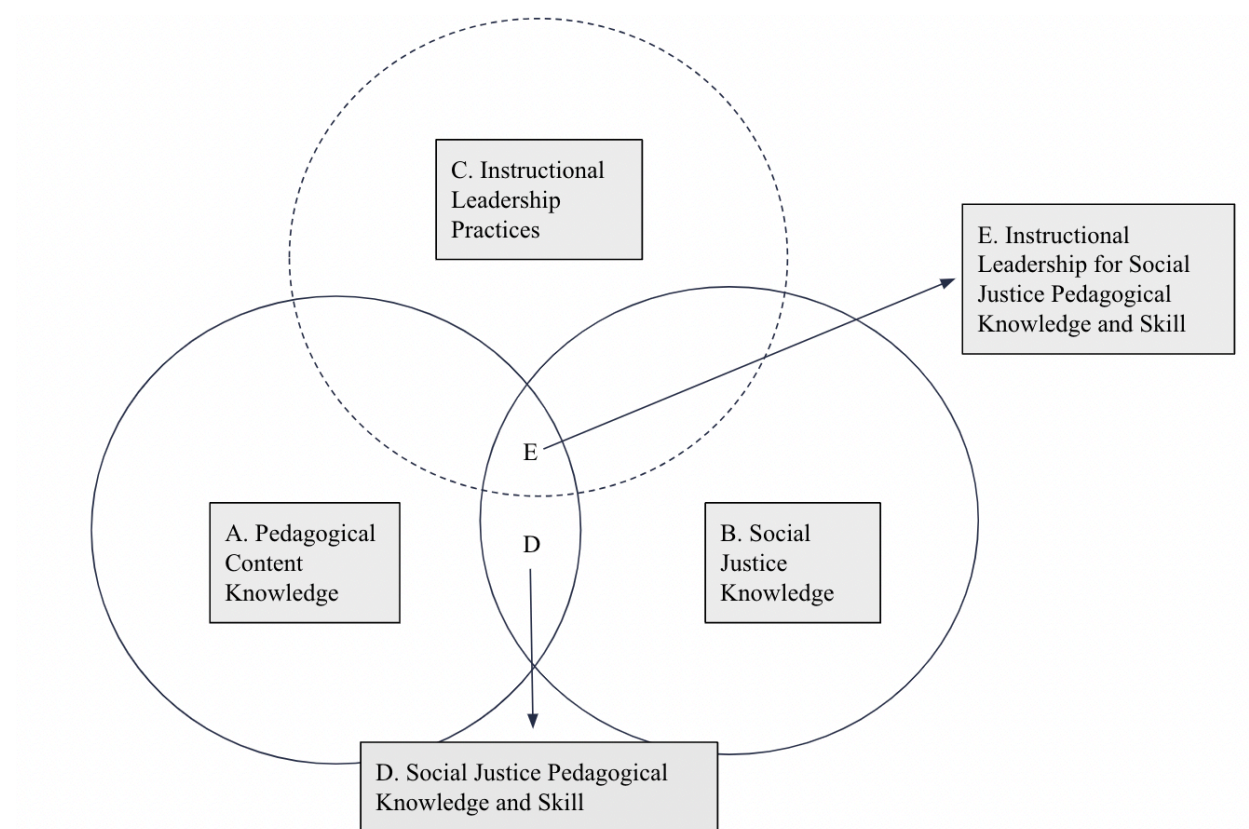
Relevant Literature on Instructional Leadership and Social Justice Leadership

Two bodies of research contextualize my study. The first, literature on instructional leadership practices, focuses on how to build educator knowledge, skill and capacity through curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. The second, literature on social justice leadership practices, emphasize critical consciousness, social justice knowledge and skill.

Instructional Leadership

School principals' instructional leadership improves the quality and effectiveness of classroom teaching and strengthens student learning outcomes (Murphy, 1998; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Heck & Moriyama, 2010; Francois, 2014). Instructional leadership involves leadership behaviors that prioritize instruction and learning through vision and goal setting, fostering a culture of learning and actively supporting curriculum, instruction and assessment (Murphy, 1990; Hallinger, 2005; Grissom et al., 2013). Within these categories, scholars have sought to delineate specific practices commonly implemented by school leaders enacting instructional leadership, including supervision and evaluation (Donaldson, 2013; Ebmeier, 2013), professional learning (Youngs & King, 2002; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012), curriculum development (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) and collaborative, data-driven instructional planning (Park, 2018; Ferrell & Marsh, 2016).

One strategy used by school leaders to build educator instructional capacity is supervision and evaluation (Smith et al., 2019; Donaldson, 2013; Ford et al., 2017). Supervision and evaluation is a lever that increases educator effectiveness when it builds educator pedagogical content knowledge, facilitates reflective practice and guides targeted instructional improvements through feedback (Atkinson, 2012; Tuytens & Devos, 2014, Ford et al., 2017). A recent study of secondary educators' experiences with evaluation feedback indicated that perceptions of evaluation clarity and quality directly impacted educator self-efficacy and willingness to make adjustments to practice (Smith et al., 2019). In this context, quality was defined by the specificity of feedback as it relates to pedagogical approaches, subject-specific content and/or curricular

support (Ford et al., 2018). In essence, teachers preferred feedback that directly addressed the instructional core (Elmore, 2007).

Another high leverage instructional leadership strategy is professional development. Research indicates that principals serve an integral role in collaboratively designing, implementing and sustaining coherent professional development aligned to the instructional vision (Youngs & King, 2002; Hallinger & Heck, 2011; Li, Hallinger & Walker, 2016). Additionally, leaders set the conditions for effective adult learning by cultivating an emotionally safe and well structured learning environment that promotes meaningful collaboration (Leithwood et al., 2010; Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Li, Hallinger & Walker, 2016). For example, Liu and Hallinger's (2018) recent study of the relationship between principal leadership and professional learning identified positive effects of principal-facilitated professional development on educator self-efficacy and learning. The structures, supports and conditions for educator development directly impacted perceptions about content quality, value and transferability.

A third instructional leadership strategy is data-driven decision making. Data-driven decision making is identified as a critical strategy for continuous improvement in school reform initiatives (Breiter & Light, 2006; Spillane & Miele, 2007). Recent research highlights the role and responsibility of the school principal in setting the organizational conditions necessary for educators to effectively use data to inform instructional decision making (Park, 2018; Farrell and Marsh, 2016; Rigby, 2014). Because the relationship between data-driven instructional practices and student achievement is influenced by a number of factors (Park, Daly & Guerra, 2013; Spillane, 2012), there is often a high level of variability in instructional responses (Coburn & Turner, 2011; Supovitz, 2012). Therefore, research indicates that the nuance of how principals

frame, structure and facilitate educator data use through strategic "data conversations" and other professional learning opportunities, directly impacts the quality and fidelity of instructional decisions (Park, 2018, p. 617). In order to situate these instructional leadership practices within the context of this research study, it is also necessary to synthesize the scholarship examining social justice leadership.

Social Justice Leadership

Literature from the field posits several intersecting and overlapping definitions of social justice leadership (Shields, 2004; Marshall, 2004; Theoharis, 2007; Theoharis & , 2015). Social justice leaders are equity activists who strive to disrupt inequities and marginalization through accelerated student achievement and inclusive cultures (McKenzie et al., 2008; Furman, 2012). They focus on establishing rigorous academic environments, reshaping service delivery through inclusive scheduling and course assignment, and building educator capacity to educate diverse learners (Theoharis & Scanlan, 2015). This study synthesizes research from the field using the lens of Capper and colleagues' (2006) tripartite framework: critical consciousness, social justice knowledge and social justice skill.

Critical consciousness is an essential component of social justice leadership (Friere, 1973; McKenzie et al., 2008). Scholars argue that critical consciousness enables leaders to help students "recognize, understand and challenge inequitable social norms and practices" (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995b). However, in order to foster students' critical consciousness, leaders must possess a deep understanding of power relations and systemic inequities (Capper & Theoharis, 2006; Brooks & Miles, 2006) so they can provide meaningful opportunities to develop educator consciousness and inform practice (Ezzani & Brooks, 2019).

In their framework for leadership preparation programs, McKenzie et al., (2008) argue that leaders must be equipped with the knowledge and skills to develop educators' consciousness of oppressive forces in schools. To do this, they posit that leaders must know how to implement professional development that illuminates patterns of inequities within instructional and behavioral practices, facilitate courageous conversations, and enact strategic recruitment and retention efforts to diversify voice and elevate counter-narratives.

Social justice knowledge refers to leaders' understanding and knowledge of "evidence-based practices that can contribute to an equitable school" (Capper et al., 2006, p. 213). This knowledge is broad, encapsulating the benefits of structural reform such as detracking to promote inclusive education (Katzman, 2007; Scanlan & Lopez, 2012; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014), leadership content knowledge related to special education and language acquisition (Villegas & Lucas, 2007), and an understanding of effective, culturally affirming instructional practices (Cooper, 2009; Milner & Laughter, 2015; Capper et al., 2006). For example, DeMatthews and Mawhinney's (2014) case study of two urban school leaders aspiring to disrupt pervasive patterns of segregated learning for students with disabilities, found that leaders leveraged social justice content knowledge about effective inclusive practices in three key areas: culture building, resource allocation and professional development. While approaches differed, both leaders recognized the relationship between inclusive learning opportunities for students with disabilities, and the structural, pedagogical and adaptive practices needed to advance social justice in their contexts.

Finally, social justice leaders need particular skills to enact social justice in schools. An ability to use data to highlight inequities, promote counternarratives, and organize professional

development for culturally responsive teaching, enables leaders to "translate their understanding and awareness into action" (Capper et al., 2006, p. 213). Furman (2012) argues that social justice leaders must develop a capacity for reflection and action within personal, interpersonal, communal, systemic and ecological dimensions, in order to successfully advance social justice. Thus, a leaders' ability to translate knowledge to action can be the difference between intention and impact.

In alignment with this tripartite conceptual framework, this literature review explores instructional leadership and social justice leadership as distinct areas of school leadership. However, in order to understand the impact of instructional leadership on educator social justice pedagogical content knowledge and skill, it is necessary to synthesize research exploring the intersection between instructional and social justice leadership.

Intersecting Instructional Leadership and Social Justice Leadership

Researchers have begun to examine how leadership preparation programs develop both instructional leadership skills and social justice knowledge so that leaders may enact "social justice pedagogical knowledge" through practice (Forman, 2012; Dyches & Boyd, 2017; Mayne, 2019). Social justice pedagogical knowledge is defined as the intersection between pedagogical content knowledge, or knowing how to teach content, and social justice knowledge (Dyches & Boyd, 2017). Furman and Sheilds (2005), refer to social justice pedagogical knowledge as the "pedagogical dimension" of social justice leadership, arguing that school leaders must prioritize the development and execution of curriculum and pedagogy around the "values of social justice" (Furman, 2012, p. 197). Furman integrates this pedagogical dimension into a conceptual framework for social justice leadership preparation programs through praxis. Furman asserts that

school leaders must be prepared to leverage assessment skills to "audit" teacher quality, examine opportunity and achievement gaps and evaluate educator cultural competency to enact strategic, equity centered improvement plans (see further Bustamante et al., 2007). Furman suggests improvement plans should include professional development for educators related to socially just pedagogy (see further Kose, 2007).

Shaked's (2020) recent analysis of the theoretical relationship between instructional leadership and social justice leadership highlights the potential alignment between both forms of school leadership. Shaked advances that school leaders should receive "professional legitimacy" for the integration of instructional leadership within the goals of social justice leadership because of their natural overlap (p. 90). Shaked advocates for greater focus on supporting school leaders to leverage instructional leadership for the advancement of social justice.

Within the current educational landscape, school leaders are charged with strengthening teaching and learning and disrupting social inequities (Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, 2015). A lack of integration between these goals serves to reinforce a problematic dichotomy between leadership for equity and leadership for academic excellence. Therefore, my research study explored how school leaders integrate instructional and social justice leadership strategies in order to fulfill both goals and cultivate educator capacity as social justice practitioners.

Methods

I employed a qualitative, collective case study (Creswell & Gutterman, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2006; Yin, 2009). I selected the collective case study design because multiple cases were "described and compared to provide insight" within a single school system in Massachusetts

(Creswell & Gutterman, 2019, p 477). Due to the fact that case studies are bounded by place, time, and/or participants, this approach was applicable to the proposed scope and limitations of my research (Creswell & Gutternman, 2019; Yin, 2018).

I employed purposive, non-probability sampling to select participants for my research study (Miriam & Tisdell, 2016). First, I worked with the district administration to purposefully select two school leaders with three or more years of experience who self-identify, or are recognized by district leadership, as being effective social justice leaders. I then employed purposive sampling to identify three to four teachers at each site whom the principal identified as directly influenced by their instructional and social justice leadership practices (Creswell & Gutterman, 2019). I attempted to select a balance within the groups of leaders and teachers by race, gender and grade level assignment.

Data Collection

My qualitative, collective case study required a multifaceted approach to data collection to provide an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon I investigated (Creswell, 2014). I gathered and analyzed two types of data: interviews and documents.

My primary data was semi-structured interviews with selected principals and educators from each school community. The semi-structured format began with my "questions to be explored," and responded flexibly to the "emerging worldview" of the respondents (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 111).

Each school leader interview followed a set of core questions aligned to the first two research questions. My interview protocol organized questions into four categories: context setting, instructional leadership, social justice leadership and the relationship between

instructional leadership and social justice leadership (see Appendix B). Additionally, I

interviewed three educators at each school to collect data aligned to the third research question.

The Interview protocol focused on how educators experienced their leaders' instructional

practices to determine if and/or how these learning experiences developed their SJPKS (see

Appendix C). Interviews lasted 30-60 minutes and were conducted in person, audio-recorded,

and transcribed using the web-based program, Otter.

A second source of data was documentation, an important part of the "research setting"

(Miriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 162). I conducted a targeted analysis of documents that emerged as

relevant to my investigation (Bowen, 2009). I used the research team's document/artifact review

notetaker to support my analysis (see Appendix D). Interviews and document analysis were cross

referenced to further investigate or verify leaders' understandings and explanation of practices

and educators' perceptions of those experiences.

Data Analysis

Following the first round of a priori coding (see chapter 2), I further analyzed the data as

it related to my research questions. To interpret the data collected, I used a deductive coding

process to code data for reference to specific instructional leadership practices (ILP), social

justice leadership practices (SJLP) and intersecting instructional and social justice leadership

practices that build educator SJPKS (IL+ SJLP) (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Guided by my

conceptual framework, I engaged in a third round of deductive coding leveraging my research

questions to organize the coding process. First, I coded leaders' understanding of SJPKS by the

components of critical consciousness (SJL-CC), social justice knowledge (SJL-SK) and social

justice skill (SJL-S). Then I coded leaders' use of instructional leadership practices to cultivate

educators' SJPKS by the three core practices delineated in my conceptual framework including supervision and evaluation (ILP-SE + SJPKS), professional learning (ILP-PL + SJPKS) and collaborative planning cycles (ILP-CPC + SJPKS). Finally, I coded educators perceptions and experiences of those practices including the specific practices they referenced, supervision and evaluation (IL-SE), professional learning (IL-PL) and collaborative planning cycles (IL-CPC) and the aspect of SJPKS it fostered, including critical consciousness (SJPKS-CC), social justice knowledge (SJPKS-K) and social justice skill (SJPKS-S). For example, a leader may have referenced their use of collaborative planning cycles (ILP-CPC) to coach educators on forms of bias embedded within texts and tasks (ILP-CPC+ SJPKS). Educators may have experienced that practice (ILP-CPC) as building their social justice skill (SPJKS-S). Finally, I synthesized the data to form conclusions about the potential impact of specific strategies on educators' SJPKS.

This study attempted to investigate how school leaders understood and enacted instructional leadership as a lever for the development of educator social justice pedagogical knowledge through curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Furthermore, it examined how educators experienced those instructional and social justice strategies. Interviews and document analysis provided insight into the correlation or possible misalignment between school leaders' understanding, intent and actions and educators' reflections about those experiences.

Findings

In the following three sections, I describe how principals understood and developed SJPKS through instructional leadership practices and how educators experienced these practices. First, I show how principals understood SJPKS. Next, I explore instructional leadership practices they employed to grow teacher's SJPKS. Finally, I examine how teachers experienced these

practices as influencing their capacity as social justice practitioners.

Principals' Understanding of SJPKS

Elementary and secondary leaders articulated their understanding of SJPKS within their distinct contexts. Some themes were shared, including critical consciousness, social justice knowledge and social justice skill. However, leaders' unique positionality and context informed different conceptualizations of each of these components.

Elementary Principal

Cherry Hill is a mid-sized elementary school in the Olympia school district serving students in grades kindergarten through four. Principal Adams, a seventeen year veteran White educator, has spent her entire career in the district. This is her fourth year as the principal of Cherry Hill Elementary. Principal Adams self identifies as a White, queer woman and an able-bodied parent of a child with a disability.

Critical Consciousness. Principal Adams' reflections touched on many of the tenets of critical consciousness as factors in the development of educator SJPKS, including critical self-reflection. Specifically, she articulated an awareness of how her positionality informs her lens as both a parent and school leader of a growingly diverse school community. She stated,

> I have a daughter…with a significant disability. I've got my son who has…two moms…
> We live this every day. …I have to be aware of the disability lens and what it means to be
> able bodied…and that I'm privileged for that and to think about how we talk about our
> students with disabilities, … are we looking at what they can do versus their deficits?

Principal Adams reflected that her identity as an able-bodied woman and a school leader, positions her with privilege, power and a responsibility to ensure that educators in her

community recognize and affirm the assets of children with disabilities. She also noted that her lived experience as a gay woman in a same sex marriage provides another vantage point. This informs her world view and commitment to building her own capacity to understand and support gender-diverse community members. She continued:

> I've had someone…whose family also had two moms…be upset that their child is asked not to talk about their family because it's making other people uncomfortable…and 'that's not normal.' So…we are super mindful…because my son will wear his pride shirt and I'm like, ' please don't get made fun of today. '...That's what kind of keeps me going… I'm meeting more transgender people…that's an area that I'm definitely growing… to help me understand so I can then be a voice too while also not taking away their voice…I don't want to just be the person that's pretending I understand it when that's not really something I identify with. So…I try to facilitate outside of work conversations with people so I can also learn, if they're willing to teach me….

She also described the importance of creating space for staff to explore their own intersectional identities and belief systems, stating:

> I do a lot of identity work with our staff, having them get to know themselves. How…their socio-political understanding of their beliefs, influence or intersect each other…and kind of get them to filter that through into understanding that…children are being raised to think differently than maybe that they were raised.

Principal Adams argued that if staff better understand the origin and influence of their perspectives, they are more equipped to "make certain things visible" for students and create safe, accepting and affirming spaces for students to "talk about and understand struggles" they

and others are facing, Some of this "identity work" was fostered through a community-wide, multi-year book study. She explained that this pushed her educators to "get to know themselves…how they've come to believe the things they believe and… look at their sociopolitical make-up and notice how different parts of themselves may or may not intersect with others."

In essence, Principal Adams' critical consciousness was nuanced. She demonstrated a self awareness that while her identity as a queer woman provides unique perspective and insight into the importance of celebrating and affirming student differences, it does not make her an "expert" in all forms of diversity. She too, must be a learner and assume responsibility for engaging in that learning. Furthermore, Principal Adams intentionally cultivated space for educators to explore their identities, belief systems and biases so that they, in turn, could create the conditions for students to share, question and grow. Thus, Principal Adams expressed and enacted a commitment to the cultivation of critical self-reflection, an essential component of critical consciousness, within herself and her teaching faculty.

Social Justice Knowledge. Building upon this foundation, Principal Adams stressed developing educators' social justice knowledge as vital for their effectiveness as practitioners. She promoted educators' knowledge of their students' diverse, intersectional identities in order to "cultivate a sense of belonging" in their classroom communities. For example, she stated,

> We talk a lot about different family structures at the elementary level… embracing people's cultural and linguistic differences…We also want staff feeling okay with asking questions and correcting yourself…getting them comfortable with trying to speak or become more fluent in DEI language…we talk a lot about the civil rights of students.

Principal Adams recognized that in order for her educators to create "safe and affirming" classroom communities, they must first know, understand and respect who their students are culturally, linguistically and as members of broader communities. Further, she acknowledged her responsibility in setting conditions for staff to ask questions and take risks on their journey to better understand their students, while ensuring that they know and respect students' civil rights. She also argued that staff must have a deep understanding of their students in order to effectively consume and adapt curriculum to be more culturally affirming and responsive to their unique needs.

Social Justice Skill. Finally, Principal Adams expressed the importance of educators having the skill to enact their growing consciousness and social justice knowledge through practice. For example, Principal Adams argued that all educators must have the skill necessary to cultivate a classroom culture where "all students feel the joy, the energy because like, every kid knows that they're safe, that they belong. That messaging has been performed from the moment they walk in until the moment they leave…it just breeds acceptance everywhere." She argued that cultivating an inclusive classroom culture requires educators' capacity to "set the table" for student success by implementing appropriate social-emotional supports, structures and routines and building authentic relationships with each of their students. In order to hold herself accountable to building educators' skill to enact "social emotional learning (SEL) practices," she explicitly articulated a measurable student learning goal related to this priority as part of her performance evaluation, with clear action steps for educator skill development and implementation.

Furthermore, Principal Adams asserted that in order for all students, including neurodiverse learners, to be successfully included in the least restrictive setting, teachers need to acquire the skills to plan and teach collaboratively. She posited that effective collaborative teaching structures require shared ownership for all students and a capacity to "learn from the expertise of their [teaching] peers" so that educators can "provide more or less support [to students and each other] as needed." While she felt that many classrooms and teachers were currently "on an island" due to current structures, she aspired to cultivate the conditions for a more inclusive culture, strengthened by collaborative planning and teaching practices, to grow across the building.

Additionally, Principal Adams posited that inclusive classroom cultures require not only the implementation of strong tier one SEL practices and collaborative teaching structures, but also educator skill to enact "restorative practices" in order to "shift the focus from punishment to repairing harm." Principal Adams established a specific, measurable professional practice goal prioritizing educator capacity building around restorative practices with clear action steps for implementation to ensure accountability

Finally, Principal Adams sought to cultivate educator skill to make informed and responsive adjustments to curriculum based on student identity, lived experiences, or need. For example, she discussed working with her fourth grade team:

> They had a unit, they had some kids that were really struggling with…loss of a parent or addiction…things like that, and just part of their home life. So they did because of Winn Dixie, and they were able to really unpack some of the character struggles… I think when certain teachers sort of noticed the power of a book ..that [students] can really connect

with, [teachers] wanted to find more and more books that maybe certain populations in

their class could connect with. I try to get them to get excited about letting kids see

themselves in the curriculum.

She reflected that while many educators were not yet "advanced" in making culturally

responsive adaptations to curriculum, she was intentional about creating conditions to cultivate

and empower that thinking with her faculty. This intentionality is reflected in Principal Adams'

performance goals which demonstrated an explicit focus on initiating "school wide conversations

about social justice" and "identifying professional development opportunities for staff on matters

related to the four domains of social justice," including building educator capacity to identify

"forms of bias" in curriculum.

In summary, Principal Adams identified the importance of cultivating critical

consciousness both in herself and others, building social justice knowledge and empowering

social justice skill development as essential components of her work to foster educators' SJPKS.

Secondary Principal

Principal Ferrington is the leader of Olympia High School, a large secondary school in

the Olympia district serving students in grades nine through twelve. A 30 year veteran educator,

Principal Ferrington had served in multiple roles including 14 years as an administrator. He is in

his second year as the principal of Olympia High School. Principal Ferrington self identifies as a

White, cisgender man "heavily involved in social justice movements."

Critical Consciousness. Like Principal Adams, Principal Ferrington emphasized the

importance of building educators' critical consciousness as an essential component of his SJPKS

development. Instead of focusing on critical self reflection in himself or his educators, Principal

Ferringon emphasized a different tenant of critical consciousness: the need to grow his faculty's understanding of structural and systemic inequities. For example, he stated,

> We recognize that we have systemic, historic marginalization that happened for certain populations of people. How do we recognize where that came from, how it occurred, and how we can break down those barriers to make tomorrow brighter than today. And… we've looked at the caste systems. It's very difficult for people to break out of the caste system…So…how do we, as educators, recognize those influences, work through those influences, and increase people's knowledge about it without polarizing people.

Principal Ferrington dedicated time to growing his educators' consciousness about the origins and current manifestations of structural and systemic barriers by leveraging a community-wide book study. This approach, he asserted, helped to build educators' awareness and knowledge of the pervasive effect of oppressive "influences" so that they would be better equipped to disrupt and overcome barriers within their educational context.

Social Justice Knowledge. Principal Ferrington also argued that educators need opportunities to grow their knowledge of research-based practices in order to build their capacity as social justice practitioners. While he agreed that educators must acquire knowledge of their students, his focus was on developing understanding of "student needs" such as a lack of positive role models, family capacity or employment opportunities. This knowledge, he argued, would help educators remove "barriers" and more effectively connect students to alternative pathways to success. Principal Ferrington noted that while some students respond to "Tier 2 and Tier 3" interventions within the school, others require alternative support including community partners, to realize their potential. He explained that he tries to "model" the identification of alternative

pathways to success for his educators:

> It's like, I just know that kids need help…so it's trying to find those strong male role
>
> models that these kids can…relate to that can help them have a brighter future for
>
> tomorrow. So we have a community liaison…. He actually goes to some homes with the
>
> kids and makes sure everything's okay. He'll take a kid up to a Big Brother program and
>
> will take the kids out and talk to him…he just somehow tries to break the cycle.

In essence, Principal Ferrington argued that when educators know their students' needs they can more effectively "connect" students with existing resources in order to provide "multiple opportunities for students to find success." While linking students to external resources is a research-based practice, Principal Ferrington approached this practice through a deficit lens, emphasizing the perceived limitations of students' families, peer groups or community support and the need to "help" students "overcome" these perceived limitations.

> Additionally, Principal Ferrington acknowledged that educators need to build knowledge of the forms of bias and effective practices to respond to and disrupt bias when they see it happening. As he stated:

> We started off with our coaches…and now training our staff members on…what is bias
>
> and what does it look like? What does it mean to be anti racist? You know how do you
>
> approach it when you have a situation in front of you that can be polarizing….So it's
>
> about…increasing their understanding of it…

Principal Ferrington recognized that in order to be effective social justice practitioners, educators need to know how to identify and disrupt bias, both in their own thinking and practice as well as with their colleagues.

Social Justice Skill. Finally, Principal Ferrington reinforced the importance of building educators' capacity to enact social justice practice by intentionally developing specific skills. First, he highlighted the importance of educators possessing the skill of both communicating and maintaining high expectations for all students. For example, he argued that "in the classrooms itself, each day should come and look like, 'It's okay. You're going to get there.' So really a belief in people- a belief that you can get them there. That they can do hard things." He stressed the need for all students to access high-quality instructional materials and for educators to possess the skills to implement rigorous content while maintaining the belief in all students' ability to meet expectations.

Second, he posited that teachers should have the knowledge and skills to implement consistent and equitable grading practices so that all students have a fair chance at success. He explained, "We have changed the whole grading thing- the lowest grade a student can get is a 50. So we are not burying some students because they had a bad quarter. " He elaborated that they were creating opportunities for teachers to norm on grading priorities and expectations and building the skills necessary to consistently implement a more equitable grading system. He believed this was important because teachers required both the "technical" skill to implement equitable grading systems and the "adaptive" belief that the pathway to measuring academic success should be differentiated and responsive to student needs. Evidence of this strategy is corroborated by news sources and press releases that describe Principal Ferrington as a leader who advocated for rigorous course selection and eliminated barriers to AP courses and dual enrollment for students.

Finally, he consistently emphasized the importance of educators providing "multiple opportunities for student success" within and beyond the classroom. Reflecting on his arrival two years ago, he characterized the school as having a dominant "culture of demotion, not a culture of promotion." Students were tracked into static levels of coursework, with students of color, multilingual learners and students with disabilities disproportionately placed in the lowest levels, with the least access to rigorous, grade level curriculum and pedagogy. As principal, he has actively worked with his faculty to move towards "deleveling" or at least limiting levels within the school, while at the same time, raising educator expectations and expanding student access to high quality instructional materials and practices so that "all students have the same opportunities for success."

In summary, Principal Ferrington's emphasized the importance of building educator consciousness of structural and systemic inequities, knowledge of student needs and skill to communicate and uphold high expectations and implement equitable grading practices to maximize opportunities for student success.

Instructional Leadership Practices to Grow Educator SJPKS

Having discussed how Principal Adams and Principal Ferrington understand SJPKS, I now turn to explore the instructional leadership practices they employ to grow SJPKS in their educators. Evidence showed that both principals engaged in three main practices: formative feedback, professional development, and collaborative planning. The unique context of their respective school communities influenced how each leveraged these practices to foster educators' SJPKS.

Formative Feedback to Grow Educator SJPKS

Both principals highlighted the importance of providing formative feedback to educators on teaching for social justice and equity through observation, debrief and collaborative planning sessions that were not directly tied to the evaluation process. For example, Cherry Hill elementary Principal Adam described,

> We look at… how do we have conversations….[Teachers] notice that there's conversations amongst students and they've got questions or they're saying things that maybe come out a little insensitive, even though it's not intended that way….How do we navigate those conversations together? So I sit with a lot of staff to help them…with the how, more like a school counselor might, to answer or facilitate the conversation.

In essence, Adams functioned like a coach, supporting teachers to unpack experiences, perceptions, and practices. She was a thought partner, supporting teachers to navigate "the discomfort of the situation" and find culturally and identity-affirming responses. She emphasized formative feedback over a formal "evaluative" structure, because she found it created space for teachers to share struggles: "[They are] more willing to come to me and say, 'Hey, this happened today. I did the conversation and here's how it went.'" She recognized that such vulnerability required "bravery" to ask for guidance or reflect on practice, because "each staff member is on their journey with this."

Similarly, secondary Principal Ferrington leveraged formative feedback as a strategy to "meet my community where it is at" and advance the work. For example, he explained that rather than addressing observed staff practices or behaviors directly using "loaded language" such as "DEI" he took a more "covert" approach, saying something like: "Hey, listen, I'm just trying to… include people. I'm just trying to make opportunities for people. And then when we see

(students) that have been marginalized, we confront it, but in the way we try to understand, you know, hey, why did you say what you said?" This approach, he argued, was less "polarizing" and therefore, invited more honest reflection, laying the foundation for change.

Professional Development to Grow Educator SJPKS

Another instructional leadership practice both principals emphasized as essential for the cultivation of educator SJPKS is professional development. Both leaders identified the role or desired support of outside expertise to provide professional development to educators. Furthermore, both leaders described internal efforts to plan and implement professional development in service of SJPKS development. However, they took different approaches to leveraging internal expertise.

Outside Expertise. Both leaders looked to outside experts to support planning and facilitation of content for educators. Principal Ferrington leveraged a local university to build educator knowledge of antiracist practices, using a "train the trainer model" with his leadership team. He explained that they partnered with this university,

> …as part of a training course where we train our administrators and some of our
> coaches…and then they're training some of the staff. We're doing things like, 'what is
> bias? What does it look like? What does it mean to be anti racist.' You know, how to
> approach it….

Principal Ferrington's goal for this partnership was to increase administrator and coaches' understanding of DEIB, so that they, in turn, could affect the broader teaching community.

Furthermore, Principal Ferrington advocated for externally developed and imposed expectations on the teaching of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging across content areas.

He saw this as something that was currently lacking:

> What we're finding here is that it would be much better if…you could get the states to …give a playbook of how to implement this through the standards that are taught within all of our schools so it doesn't become this polarizing issue. And then we would have more armor to defend ourselves and say we're doing this because if your kid goes to public school in the state… these are the standards you must teach.

In essence, he argued that clear and common standards for teaching social justice across the state would empower schools to prioritize and actualize educator social justice capacity development through professional development, unencumbered by resistance from the socio-political context.

Principal Adams also expressed a desire for external support for SJPKS capacity building, specifically through the role of the new DEIJ Director. She maintained the role of the Director was to "work with our curriculum and curriculum coordinator" to start building more culturally and linguistically relevant curriculum and cultivate educator capacity to implement the curriculum responsively. Principal Adams argued that while she tried to foster educators' capacity to interrogate and adapt curriculum through a culturally and linguistically responsive lens during collaborative team meetings, both she and her faculty required more explicit training, tools and coaching to build this knowledge and capacity more systematically. Thus, she explained that although she had the collaborative planning time, structures and conditions to build this skill set within her educators, she craved targeted, external professional development for herself and her educators to deepen and extend SJPKS capacity.

Internal Expertise. Both leaders also identified strategies for internal professional development. However, there were differences in how internal expertise was utilized.

Specifically, Principal Adams was directly involved in the planning and facilitation of professional learning opportunities, while Principal Ferrington sought to leverage his distributive leadership team to advance this goal.

Principal Adams utilized both staff-wide and optional book studies as a vehicle for developing educator SJPKS. For example, in order to build educator understanding of the purpose and process of implementing restorative justice practices, she co-hosted an optional book study centered around a core text, attended by approximately one third of the faculty. Principal Adams utilized this alternative professional development structure outside of contractual requirements as an opportunity to build both knowledge and more organic and authentic investment in the practices.

Principal Adams also utilized monthly, hour-long staff meetings as means to provide targeted professional development aligned to the goals of cultivating educator SJPKS. For example, Principal Adams described a staff meeting where she introduced a tool for interrogating curriculum for specific forms of bias with her faculty. The intent of this session was to help faculty enact critical consumption and adaptations of curriculum during collaborative planning meetings. She saw this learning session as a "launching conversation" for deeper learning and planning that needed to follow. Thus, she leveraged multiple vehicles for adult learning to ensure that SJPKS concepts introduced during school-wide professional development transferred to more localized planning for practice at the grade and classroom level.

As noted previously, Principal Ferrington invested in professional development led by an outside partner. He expressed a two-fold goal for this partnerships: enhancing his leadership team's SJPKS and building their capacity to foster this knowledge and skill in his educators. To

that end, he attempted to leverage weekly leadership meetings with his administrators and

curriculum directors, as a "structure to advance" the professional learning the leadership team

had engaged in across their respective departments. However, he also reflected that competing

district priorities and initiatives posed barriers to the level of attention devoted to this work. He

expressed that there was "never enough time" to adequately address this topic within their

leadership team meetings and ensure professional development translated to action across the

community.

Thus, while both elementary and secondary principals identified the essential role of

external and internal expertise in professional development for SJPKS, the multi-tiered

organizational structure of the secondary school influenced and at times impeded the transfer of

learning and capacity building across the organization. Furthermore, both leaders expressed

frustrations with external support from the district and/or state.

Collaborative Planning Meetings to Grow Educator SJPKS

A third instructional leadership tool both leaders described as a vehicle for educator

SJPKS is collaborative planning meetings. However, due to the size and structure of the school,

elementary Principal Adams had more consistent access and direct influence over educator

common planning time than secondary Principal Ferrington.

Principal Adams described engaging enthusiastically with her teachers during common

planning time:

> So I am going into certain grade level meetings, which ones we have to pull way back on
>
> and which ones were like, Okay, we're gonna develop this really freaking crazy
>
> idea. Let's do it, you know, and they'll just kind of roll with it. And the number of risks

they'll take during the day academically to [say], 'Like hey, I want to move away from

the curriculum more…that story that's in Wonders, I want to do this story with these

skills…Because this story is going to mean something to my students?' I'm like, go for it.

In essence, Principal Adams was empowering her teachers to center their students' identities and

lived experiences, critically consume curriculum for representation and relevance, and make

strategic, student-driven enhancements without compromising standards or skill alignment.

While she expressed a desire for greater support and professional development from the district

DEIB director to advance this work, it is clear that she is leveraging common planning time as an

intentional time and space to support this learning and thinking.

Due to the size and structure of the school community, Principal Ferrington attempted to

employ distributive leadership, by way of curriculum directors, to support educator curricular

and pedagogical capacity building during department level PLC meetings. In order to ensure that

DEIB was centered and prioritized in department planning meetings, Principal Ferrington

leveraged the structure of their weekly leadership meetings as a time to "norm" on the focus and

expectations. However, as he noted, there were many competing district priorities and initiatives,

and this, he argued, impacted the consistency and fidelity of their focus on SJPKS. Furthermore,

he explained that despite efforts to modify the schedule, logistical challenges limited the amount

of time department leads were able to facilitate collaborative team meetings with their respective

departments. That being said, Principal Ferrington argued that it was essential for educators to

have structured time to meet together to "perfect their craft" and learn how to translate DEIB

knowledge to practice.

Teacher Perceptions of Instructional Practices to Develop SJPKS

In the final section of the findings, I will explore how educators experienced their leaders' efforts to cultivate their SJPKS. I interviewed six educators: three from Cherry Hill (a novice kindergarten teacher, an experienced second grade teacher and a mid-career third grade teacher) and three from Olympia (a novice foreign language teacher, a veteran department chair, and a mid-career associate school leader, with student facing responsibilities). All six educators found value in (a) their school leaders' messaging about social justice, as well as (b) their support for educator risk taking. However, elementary practitioners' perceptions of how leaders demonstrate these factors differed from secondary educators. Furthermore, although all six educators referenced (c) instructional leadership practices as a lever for their SJPKS development, they perceived varying impact due to effectiveness or inconsistencies in the instructional infrastructure.

Messaging a Vision and Commitment to Social Justice

Educators from the Cherry Hill Elementary School consistently described the positive impact of their principal's messaging about her vision and commitment to social justice on their practice and priorities of the broader school community. For example, Mrs. Anderson, a veteran 2nd grade teacher at Cherry Hill Elementary, stated:

> I think our principal, in particular…stresses…including everyone…We talk a lot about the different books that you have,…the conversations that you're having with your kids in the classroom and the holidays that you're celebrating throughout the year. There's a whole lot of things going on within the community of the school that are trying to be inclusive….So I think that there are a lot of good things…in place, and I think it helps because our leader is very driven to help include everybody.

Mrs. Horn, a mid-career, 3rd grade teacher at Cherry Hill echoed this perspective, noting:

> Our principal is very, very, very, very big-on- I've never had a principal like her- on
> equity and diversity. You know, inclusionary practices… She tries to have us, our
> leadership team and the culture of the school (support) the culture of the students here.
> Do we have trusted adults for every single kid…outside of their teacher? Are we
> becoming aware of racial bias that's happening in our school every day? …Taking a look
> at my classroom library. Taking a look at what am I doing? What I'm reading to them,
> what comments am I making? She's very big on tapping into that and…being vulnerable
> enough to call yourself out…'Are you teaching in a way that's hitting every kid in your
> classroom? If you're not, let's fix it.'

These quotes illustrate the broader pattern: educators at Cherry Hill are clear on their principal's vision of and commitment to social justice, and how this translated to specific instructional practices.

In contrast, educators at Olympia High School felt their principal demonstrated a -weak dedication to social justice due to a lack of prioritization and follow through. For example, Mrs. Gordon, a mid-career curriculum director from the World Language Department at Olympia High School, described the instructional vision of the school as "academic excellence for every student" and "student connection" to educators and/or support system. This aligned with Principal Ferrington's focus on high expectations and providing students with multiple opportunities for success as essential skills for social justice practitioners. However, when reflecting on the prioritization and consistency of social justice practices across the school, Mrs. Gordon noted,

I feel like there are certain people…in Olympia (High School) that are super passionate

about this. And we are trying very hard...to make more leaders aware of it…I would love

for all departments, every single department should be sending emails about Ted Talks

about Native American Heritage, for example. The math teacher and English teacher

should be doing it…It should be a school wide effort, right. But…that's not

happening…And I think…it's the captain of the ship who needs to make it a priority…I

think that needs to come from above, with those messages going out to everybody.

Although Mrs. Gordon articulated that there are pockets of SJPKS development occurring within

the community, she perceived a lack of coherence school wide because of a gap in consistent

prioritization from the school principal.

Similarly, Associate Principal Scott, a novice leader at Olympia High School, voiced

concerns with the lack of consistent action behind the principal's expressed commitment to

social justice. On the one hand, Associate Principal Scott acknowledged intentional efforts to

build the leadership teams' SJPKS through professional development with an outside

organization. However, he also expressed frustration with the lack of commitment and

accountability for implementation across all levels of the organization, stating:

We (administration team) did all this PD, but where was the follow through or action

plan? I personally stopped going because I had a situation in this building where I had a

teacher refer to students of color as all the students on an IEP, and that teacher still works

in his building…so I said, I'm not going to the DEI training if we're going to allow this

stuff to continue.

Thus, while Associate Principal Scott recognized that the school had "taken a small step"

forward, he felt that the school leader needed to commit to and communicate the prioritization of this work, because "the expectation should be that we are moving at a faster pace and doing things a little bit more intentionally."

Leader Support for Educators to Enact Social Justice

Consistent with their perceptions of their principal's commitment to social justice, educators at Cherry Hill Elementary described Principal Adams as actively supporting their efforts to enact social justice in their classrooms. For example, first year kindergarten teacher, Ms. Kelly, stated:

> So, one of the things that I started with within this past month was preferred names. I told my students…we should all be able to go by the names that we want to go by, and [Principal Adams] supported me in that decision…So it's simple things like that. But it's giving the students that feeling of empowerment of 'oh, I'm allowed to be myself'

Ms. Kelly expressed a feeling of empowerment to take risks specifically related to fostering student belongingness because of her perception that "my principal has my back…I know she's going to support what I do."

Similarly, third grade teacher Mrs. Horn reflected on her leader's efforts to cultivate a safe environment for risk taking and learning amongst faculty related to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. She noted that during COVID, Principal Adams offered a voluntary, virtual book club as a space for adult self reflection. While she appreciated the time to reflect and learn with colleagues, she also valued Principal Adams' engagement as an "equal participant" rather than a "leader." This decision, she reflected, both humanized her leader and fostered greater vulnerability and risk taking among the participants.

In contrast, educators at Olympia High School perceived inconsistent support from the high school principal to take risks to enact social justice in their respective classrooms, departments or the greater school community. For example, curriculum director Mrs. Gordon described an annual World Language and Diversity Week her department coordinated and facilitated for students and faculty as a highlight among their school-wide equity initiatives. However, she felt frustrated by the lack of leadership support for a school-wide assembly in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month. She stated,

> I don't think it was a priority for the school leadership to make an assembly for the whole school. But that would have been a perfect opportunity…because we sent the emails, we advocated for it…and it wasn't a priority, I think, for the leadership to make that happen. So…I think these are specific action steps that need to happen…if it's not the school leaders' priorities…it's just not going to ripple down to all the teachers in the building.

In essence, Mrs. Gordon expressed a perception that efforts to promote and advance social justice within her department or a designated "week of service" were tolerated, but endeavors to expand the work across the school more overtly and consistently were not endorsed.

Similarly, novice foreign language teacher Ms. Healey, echoed these sentiments, stating that although she felt supported by her peers and curriculum coordinators within her department to grow her content knowledge and skill, she desired opportunities for more explicit DEIB training and social justice capacity building through professional development within the school community. However, when she brought these requests to her school leader, she experienced a lack of follow through. She emphasized, "So I don't know how much more I personally could

say we need DEIB training and everybody else in the building keeps saying hey, we need DEIB training. And it's still- we're not being heard, right?"

Instructional Leadership Infrastructure for Educator SJPKS

All six educators across both elementary and secondary settings, referenced instructional leadership practices as a lever for social justice capacity building. However, the perceived impact of these differed based on the quality and fidelity of the practice and the infrastructure to support it within the school.

Infrastructure for Supervision/Evaluation and Coaching for SJPKS. Educators in both schools described feedback, particularly formative coaching conversations, as a critical lever for their development as social justice practitioners. For example, elementary school educators reported cohesive and effective structures to support adult learning and growth. Third grade teacher Mrs. Horn described both formal and informal coaching from the principal and instructional coaches, as well as the implementation of the state-mandated supervision and evaluation process. Mrs. Horn noted that informal observations were "much more valuable to her, because they occurred more frequently and because she had a "trusting relationship" with her principal and school administration. These practices helped her grow her SJPKS. Mrs. Horn explained:

> So I know if they come to my room, and I'm having an off day or I'm not doing great…I can go to them and say 'hey, like that wasn't my best work, as you know.' And they say, 'Yeah, we know"...and then they can tell me, for example, 'that was not the best practice of how you should partner or engage diverse students.' So having that informal communication frequently makes me a better, more inclusive teacher.

In contrast, secondary school educators described inconsistent structures for supervision, evaluation and coaching across their school community, particularly between departments. For example, Associate Principal Scott reported a lack of oversight and accountability for teaching and learning between curriculum coordinators and educators in some departments. He noted that teachers within some departments were rarely observed or provided with specific, actionable feedback. This, in turn, naturally limited opportunities for targeted feedback on their SJPKS.

However, curriculum director, Mrs. Gordon, described a much more comprehensive and consistent system for formal and informal feedback within her department. Mrs. Gordon articulated her personal commitment to a layered and differentiated approach to feedback. This included "constant conversations" about curriculum, pedagogy and assessments for new educators, "monthly one on one" feedback sessions, as well as her execution of the formal evaluation process, differentiated by experience levels and evaluation track.

Mrs. Gordon went on to describe how she leverages these formal and informal feedback practices to grow educators' SJPKS. For example, she described how she shares research articles and actionable resources related to social justice and equity with her educators and then discusses them during observation debrief sessions. This helps educators make immediate connections to a concept and their practice, and leverage resources to build more culturally sustaining curricula and learning environments. Thus, the fidelity of formative and summative feedback practices was largely dependent on the capacity of the department leader due to a lack of clear infrastructure for supporting this practice across the school.

Infrastructure for Professional Development for SJPKS. Both educators at elementary and secondary level emphasized the value and potential impact of professional development on

their SJPKS development. Practitioners in both schools articulated disappointment with the content, structure and facilitation of district-wide professional learning in general and a consistent desire for school-specific professional learning experiences related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. However, they described different experiences with school-based professional development content, delivery and transferability.

Although Cherry Hill educators described frustration with the inapplicability of district-based PD to their practice, all three noted how Principal Adams strategically leveraged "staff meetings" as a structure to provide meaningful school-based professional development. They also described how she embedded opportunities to develop critical consciousness and SJPKS within this school-based learning structure. For example, novice early childhood educator, Ms. Kelly, described how Principal Adams utilized staff meetings to model and discuss effective strategies for student de-escalation and reengagement. She explained:

> So something that we've talked about a couple of times in our staff meetings is how to respond to students when they're having a meltdown- a lot of big feelings. And so that is something that I've integrated a lot into my classroom…And so it's those practices…I notice that a lot in my classroom that makes a big difference for them because, as [Principal Adams] says, they're like getting cues for their emotions from you.

Ms. Kelly found these professional development discussions immediately applicable to her knowledge and skill development as an "inclusive" educator, particularly when working with neurodivergent students.

This was echoed by another veteran second grade teacher, Mrs. Anderson, who reflected on the value and impact of school-based professional development. She also found it helpful to

work through a "spectrum of scenarios" through an equity lens and identify and discuss "the steps you would take." She also appreciated the scaffolds of "sentence stems" and "strategies for support."

Both new and veteran educators appreciated the opportunity to deconstruct relevant challenges related to student regulation and engagement, and generate effective strategies to build more inclusive and accessible classroom communities. However, educators did articulate that staff meetings are not currently utilized as a structure to build educator knowledge and skill related to equity-centered planning or pedagogy, an area they all agree needs greater attention and support.

In contrast, secondary educators described that while the administration/coaching team had access to externally-led professional development directly related to diversity, equity and inclusion and belonging, there is not a clear infrastructure or accountability mechanism to ensure that this learning is transferred to educators across departments. For example, Associate Principal Scott highlighted the disconnect between leadership learning and accountability for educator knowledge and skill development. He explained that over the course of the previous year the leadership team engaged in a ten-session professional development series related to DEIB. However, he did not see a commitment or strategy to ensure transfer to educators across departments:

> I think as associates that was our frustration. I…felt that the district was just checking the box…there was no follow through. Usually, I'm used to there being follow through and practices being implemented and looking across the table at the rest of the administrators and saying, 'Hey, where are we at with this? Here's the action plan and following up with

the action plan. When you don't follow up the action plan…your evaluation reflects that.'

I can tell you that didn't happen last year.

This lack of transfer to educators was echoed by novice Foreign Language teacher, Ms. Healey, who stated:

We do have our district professional development and some of them were useful

information. But again, I feel like those PDs are more geared toward…our core classes.

There's only bits and pieces that often our department grasps...I feel like our time could

definitely be used much more valuably elsewhere on learning about something else…for

the longest time, I've been telling them that they need to do a DEIB training for teachers.

Ms. Healey elaborated that while there was district PD to support educator knowledge and skill

development on universal design for learning, for example, she had not yet experienced any

professional development at the district or school level directed related to planning and teaching

for equity. She also did not see an explicit connection between universal design for learning and

social justice knowledge and skill.

Infrastructure for Collaborative Planning Teams for SJPKS. Finally, both elementary

and secondary educators underscored the value and impact of structured time to collaboratively

plan with their grade level/department level peers, to deepen and align their content knowledge

and pedagogical skill. Furthermore, at the elementary level, educators described how structured

collaborative planning time is also leveraged to develop their SJPKS, specifically related to

curriculum consumption and adaptations. However, at the secondary level, educators described

inconsistent opportunities to engage in collaborative planning sessions due to scheduling

constraints.

All three elementary school educators described consistent structures for collaborative planning and learning on their respective grade level teams. Furthermore, all three identified specific ways these structures directly support their pedagogical knowledge and skill development. For example, veteran grade two teacher, Mrs. Anderson explained:

> We have a lot of (grade level planning meetings) meetings and the coach works closely with our principal too at those meetings. The meetings are definitely geared toward…differentiation. It's helping us to understand what that is and incorporate it...So our meetings are purposeful. Then…it's required that we bring them back into the classroom…we always have the support of our coach …she attends the meetings and will help us if we need the support.

This was echoed by mid-career third grade teacher, Mrs. Horn, who described the structure of the collaborative learning cycle and it's direct impact on her practice:

> It's once every 6 days…we try to take each of the subjects and span them out through the input of counseling staff. So maybe, first week in the month is counseling staff with our third grade team...The next week we focus on writing...The third is math sentence starters…- those to me are the most helpful- they are tangible- we get things from them.

Both Mrs. Anderson and Mrs. Horn emphasized a focus on curriculum implementation, pedagogical strategies and understanding student needs, both academically and social-emotionally. Furthermore, all three educators referenced the role of "data" during collaborative planning time in some capacity, although they did not describe consistent protocols or tools for data analysis and action planning.

These educators explained how their collaborative planning meetings are sometimes also

leveraged to grow their capacity as social justice practitioners. For example, third grade teacher

Mrs. Horn reflected that common planning time can be a place to discuss "differentiation"

strategies, explore "multicultural pieces you might be doing with students" related to the content

you are teaching or their lives, and really just reflect on the "culture you are building" in the

classroom. She stated:

> I experience common planning time being able to communicate openly about the need for
>
> curricular adjustments for our students. It's a very comfortable, vulnerable space. I don't
>
> feel rigid…But again, we consider, as a grade level, and we pick, for example, another
>
> writing (prompt) next year… we're allowed to have that freedom because of our
>
> admin...they trust us to use our best judgment…for the kids in front of you.

> However, much like their school leader, Principal Adams, all three educators also noted

that they wanted more time and support to critically consume and adapt curriculum to be more

culturally and linguistically affirming and better meet the needs of their students. For example,

an educator argued:

> If you have students from different backgrounds, different cultures, it's having the time to
>
> really maybe delve into that culture….from all different aspects. The problem with
>
> that…it seems the current situation we teach in is that we're so driven by scripted
>
> curriculum and data, that there's just little time to…delve into all of these things that
>
> might help incorporate their cultures…in terms of diversity…If there was time, it would
>
> be…thoughtfully creating a culture and learning units where the kids learn content but
>
> also it centers around their cultures.

In contrast, while secondary educators all agreed that collaborative planning time was a valuable

planning and learning structure, technical barriers related to scheduling and coverage often limited their ability to consistently meet during the school day. For example, novice educator Ms. Healey explained, "Unfortunately, we really don't have the set time. It's really our prep period, that, if you're fortunate enough to have, like, another colleague free at that same time, then you could use that time to be like, 'Hey, what are you doing now?'"

Secondary World Language Curriculum Manager, Mrs. Gordon, also found collaborative planning time essential for educator pedagogical knowledge and skill development as well as to ensure coherence across the department. She explained that her department meets monthly after school for an hour to "discuss curriculum and instruction and matters that need to be kind of discussed as a whole team to make sure we're all on the same page." Furthermore, she described her efforts to differentiate that time by providing "small group PLC" for teachers to work with "language and level groups." However, like Ms. Healy, she too expressed frustration with the structural limitations of common planning time:

> My team of teachers…need more common planning time, because the only common planning time they get right now is after school once a month…to expect these teachers to be able to concentrate and focus and do good PLC work at the end of the day is just…senseless…they don't have enough lesson planning, or co-lesson planning time at all, that's kind of a structural problem.

As a result, while Mrs. Gordon identified and prioritized regular opportunities for individual coaching conversations with her educators related to SJPKS, she did not currently feel common department planning time was a viable structure to support this work.

Discussion

I now turn to discuss these findings. First, I reflect on my positionality and limitations to the study. Second, I discuss how my study both applies to and extends my tripartite conceptual framework for SJPKS. Third, I suggest implications for practice, policy, and research.

Positionality and Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. I will highlight four. First, my positionality as a White, female woman and former elementary school principal, impacted my perception of the leaders and educators I interviewed and the instructional and social justice leadership practices I analyzed. Furthermore, a through-line to my professional experiences is a commitment to and pursuit of both academic excellence and equity. I acknowledge that I brought these lived experiences and convictions to my research on this topic. While I attempted to reduce the impact of potential bias by partnering with colleagues to conduct interviews, engaging in rounds of coding and analyzing findings through data triangulation, I acknowledge that my positionality influenced my lens, perceptions, interactions and analysis.

Second, I had access to limited data due to the time constraints of the data collection window as well as the specificity of site and participation selection. I intended to interview three school leaders and their respective educators but was only able to secure two, given the size of the district and availability of participants. The small sample size and roles of the participants impact the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, at the secondary site, two of the educators I interviewed also carried leadership responsibilities, which may have impacted their perspectives or experiences.

Third, participant selection may have been impacted by self-perception accuracy (Yammarino & Atwater, 1993).. Leadership participants were identified by Superintendent

Meyers based on their self-identification as social justice leaders. Their reflections are not necessarily representative of the knowledge, skills and experiences of constituents in job-alike roles. Additionally, the educators I interviewed at both sites were identified by the school leaders. Although I requested that leaders identify educators with a range of experiences and perspectives around their efforts to cultivate SJPKS, the selection of participants was influenced by the leaders' subjective interpretation of educators' mindset, capacity and practice.

Finally, while I was able to cross-reference interviews with document reviews, I was unable to conduct observations of adult learning structures such as professional development and/or common planning time. Thus, I relied on a comparison of leader and educator reflections and corresponding documents to cross reference findings.

Application of Tripartite SJPKS Framework

My study both confirms and extends my conceptual framework for SJPKS. My first research question asks how principals understand the development of SJPKS. Findings validate my tripartite conceptual framework for SJPKS, indicating that both principals consider all three components of social justice knowledge - critical consciousness, the development of social justice knowledge and the cultivation of social justice skill - as essential (section B, Figure 3.2). However, each leader emphasizes different aspects of these components.

Figure 3.2

Instructional Leadership for Social Justice Pedagogical Knowledge and Skill Framework
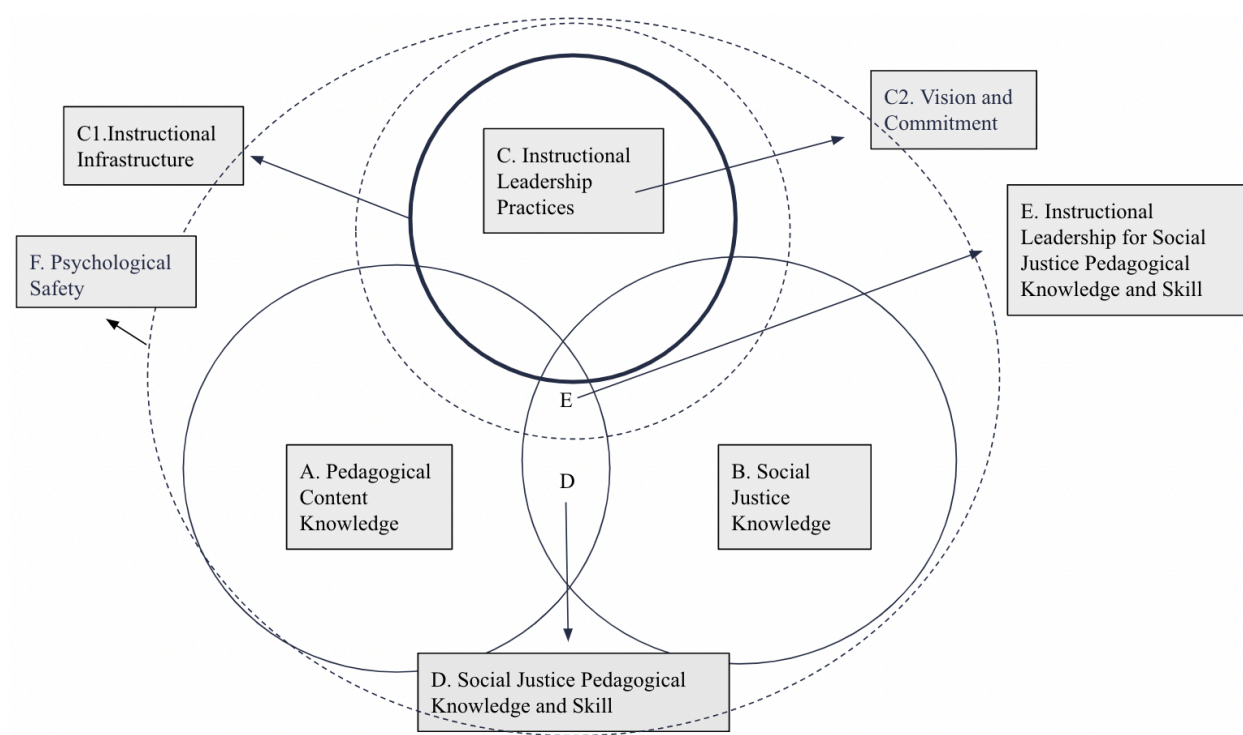
First, critical consciousness refers to one's ability to "recognize, understand and challenge inequitable social norms and practices" (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995b). In order to foster this in students, however, scholars argue that school leaders must possess a deep understanding of power relations and systemic and structural inequities (Capper & Theoharis, 2006; Brooks & Miles, 2006) so that they can provide opportunities for educators to develop their own consciousness and inform their teaching practice (Ezzani & Brooks, 2019). Both leaders understood the essential role of critical consciousness, although they did so with different levels of coherence. Principal Adams viewed critical self-reflection as paramount to the development of critical consciousness and foundational to the development of social justice knowledge and skill. She focused on critical self reflection and identity exploration, creating intentional space for all educators to reflect on identity, beliefs and the influence of the sociopolitical context fostered perspective taking, and ultimately the identification and disruption

of unconscious bias. She also talked about how her positionality as a White, queer, able-bodied woman influenced her perspective and influence, both positively and negatively.

In contrast, Principal Ferrington's lack of critical self reflection impacted his awareness of his responsibility and personal accountability to disrupt biases in his perspectives and leadership. He highlighted the importance of building educators' understanding of structural and systemic inequities and how they manifest within the school context. However, he did not position himself within this system of inequalities or express awareness of his own bias, privilege and contributions to that system. He described solutions as outside the sphere of his direct control or authority. For example, he looked to external partners to train educators on social justice, linked students to resources beyond the instructional core to address their "needs," and expressed a desire for the state to justify social justice leadership so he would be empowered to take action without the risk of "polarization."

Second, social justice knowledge is leaders' understanding and knowledge of "evidence-based practices that can contribute to an equitable school" (Capper et al., 2006, p. 213). Both principals emphasized the importance of supporting their educators in getting to know and understand their students as fundamental to their capacity for effective social justice practice. However, they framed the identities, experiences and needs of students differently. Principal Adams exhibited an asset-based orientation, arguing that learning about students' unique racial, cultural, socio-political and linguistic identities, belief systems and values sets the conditions for strengths-based relationship building and affirming pedagogy. In contrast, Principal Ferrington focused on students' social, academic or familial "needs" in order to help educators provide "multiple opportunities for success" by accessing services such as mentorship and social skills

groups. He ignored student and family funds of knowledge and inherent assets, conveying a deficit narrative about minoritized students that is ultimately at odds with SJPKS development.

Finally, Capper et al., (2006) assert that social justice leaders need particular skills to "translate their understanding and awareness into action" (p. 213). While both principals asserted the importance of social justice skill development, they prioritized the development of distinct skill sets. Principal Adams emphasized the cultivation of student belongingness, collaborative teaching practices to foster inclusive classrooms and culturally responsive curricular adaptations as essential skill sets for effective social justice practitioners. Her focus centered around the instructional core - the interaction between the teacher, student and content and its relationship to social justice (section D, Figure 3.2). Thus, she cultivated educators' capacity to shift that core for the advancement of social justice, by leveraging specific instructional leadership practices related to curriculum and pedagogy (section E, Figure 3.2).

In contrast, Principal Ferrington focused on communicating high expectations for all students, facilitating equitable grading practices and providing multiple opportunities for student success beyond the classroom as essential skills for his educators. In general, his emphasis was on educators' skills or practices that extended beyond the scope of curriculum and pedagogy. In this way, despite his expressed belief that social justice leadership and instructional leadership are "one and the same," he approached social justice skill development as separate from daily instructional planning and teaching practices. Thus, his underdeveloped social justice knowledge inhibited his understanding of SJPKS, and therefore his capacity to leverage instructional leadership practices to cultivate educators' SJPKS.

Extension to Tripartite SJPKS Framework

While most of my findings to my first research question confirmed aspects of my conceptual framework, findings to my second and third research questions largely extended this framework. These questions explored how principals' instructional leadership practices influence educators' SPKPS development, from both leaders' and educators' perspectives. Principals regularly use instructional leadership practices - such as supervision and evaluation, professional learning and data-driven instruction planning cycles - to support the development of educator pedagogical content knowledge and skill within curriculum, instruction and assessment (Grissom et al., 2013; Donaldson, 2013; Sebastian and Allensworth, 2012; Park, 2018).

Consistent with my conceptual framework, both principals employed the three research-based instructional leadership practices identified (section C, Figure 3.2) to grow their educators' SJPKS (section D, Figure 3.2) tThey differed in implementation and effectiveness due to context, infrastructure as well as the leaders' level of social justice knowledge (section B, Figure 3.2).

 Most of my findings to these research questions extended my tripartite SJPKS Framework. Specifically educators offered deeper insight into three additional variables that impact educator perceptions of the influence of instructional leadership for SJPKS:

- the leaders' vision and commitment to social justice (section C2, Figure 3.2)
- support for educator risk taking, defined in the framework as psychological safety (section F, Figure 3.2)
- the instructional infrastructure (section C1, Figure 3.2)

Since these were not originally explicit, I modified the framework to emphasize the interplay between these factors, instructional leadership practices and SJPKS (Figure 3.2).

Leader Vision and Commitment to Social Justice. The leaders' vision and commitment to social justice was identified as a precondition to success. Elementary educators described their leaders' vision and commitment to social justice as positively influencing school culture, priorities and teacher practice. Furthermore, their descriptions of this vision yielded insight into the leaders' level of critical consciousness, social justice knowledge and skill (section B, Figure 3.2). Finally, these educators understood that teaching for social justice requires critical reflection, knowledge of culturally and linguistically affirming content and pedagogy, and the capacity to implement collaborative, inclusive practices to support diverse learners. Thus, the leaders' vision and commitment to social justice reinforced the intersection between social justice and pedagogical content knowledge, otherwise known as SJPKS.

In contrast, secondary educators expressed frustration with a lack of coherence and follow through, stemming from the leaders' unclear vision and wavering commitment to social justice. Educators did not identify a clear connection between pedagogical content knowledge and social justice knowledge. Thus, the leaders' unclear messaging about the vision and commitment to social justice led to incoherence across the school and a perception of siloed and disjointed priorities.

Leader visioning was not explicitly referenced as an instructional leadership practice (section C, Figure 3.1). Yet visioning is highlighted in the instructional leadership literature (e.g., Murphy 1990; Murphy, 1998; Waters et al., 2003; Hallinger, 2005). Furthermore, a clear vision for social justice leadership can influence how educators understand the relationship between pedagogical content knowledge and social justice knowledge, creating meaning and purpose for the adult learning practices they experience. However, a leader will be unable to communicate a

clear vision for social justice through curriculum, pedagogy and assessment if they have underdeveloped social justice knowledge. Therefore, while visioning was added to instructional leadership practices (section C2, Figure 3.2), it is important to note that instructional leadership practices converge with social justice knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge at the center of the framework. This reinforces the importance of developing and communicating an intersectional vision of instruction and social justice through SJPKS.

Leader Support for Educator Risk Taking. A second way my findings extend this framework is by adding support for risk taking (section F, Figure 3.2). All six educators described psychological safety as a factor that impacted their perceptions and experiences, either positively or negatively. For example, elementary educators 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. Conversely, secondary educators perceived a lack of acknowledgement for attempted practices, inconsistent accountability for application of social justice practices and unclear messaging as undermining their efforts to advance social justice through curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

While support for risk taking is directly related to the implementation of instructional leadership practices for SJPKS framework, it is neither explicitly identified nor referenced in my original conceptual framework. Furthermore, it should be noted that creating the conditions for educators to take "intellectual and emotional risks towards social justice" is part of Capper et.

al's (2006) framework because of its importance (p. 212). Therefore, cultivating psychological safety was added to the perimeter circle of my revised conceptual framework, signifying the overarching role of support for risk-taking across all components of the framework.

Instructional Infrastructure. A third way my findings extend this framework involves instructional infrastructure. Although all six educators identified one or more instructional leadership practices as a lever for their social justice capacity building, educators' experiences were heavily influenced by perceptions of infrastructure for support. For example, at the elementary school, educators reported clear cycles of learning for collaborative planning meetings aligned to school-wide instructional priorities. These structures provided the conditions for educators to begin to critically examine curriculum - norm on instructional practices to support diverse learners and align tiered supports. Similarly, they described how staff meetings were consistently leveraged to build educator social justice content knowledge and skill capacity. In contrast, at the secondary level technical constraints such as scheduling barriers, and systemic challenges including inconsistent adult learning structures, and a lack of accountability for the leadership team to transfer knowledge, resulted in uneven implementation of SJPKS. In essence the strength and coherence of the instructional leadership infrastructure influenced educators' perceptions about how each practice fostered SJPKS development.

While the distinct instructional leadership practices were woven into the original conceptual framework, the infrastructure that supports those practices was not explicitly identified. However, the instructional infrastructure ensures that those instructional leadership practices function with fidelity and consistency in alignment with the intended goal of educator SJPKS and desired outcomes for students. Thus, the systems and structures supported by the

instructional infrastructure, now incorporated in the revised conceptual framework (section C1, Figure 3.2) are essential for quality control, coherence and the meaningful intersection between social justice knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge in practice.

In summary, elementary and secondary educators identified common factors as key influencers in their perceptions of their SJPKS development. Some of these factors, such as theirprincipal's vision and commitment to social justice and support for educator risk taking were not directly related to the instructional leadership practices encapsulated within the original conceptual framework. However, they very clearly "set the table" and conditions for social justice learning and capacity development to occur. Thus, they were integrated as important extensions to the revised framework. Furthermore, the infrastructure of instructional leadership practices across the building including supervision, evaluation and instructional coaching, professional development and collaborative planning meetings, appeared to influence educators' perceptions of its role and impact as a lever for SJPKS. Thus, it is clear that it is not just the leaders' knowledge of social justice leadership and instructional leadership practices, but also their capacity to implement systems and structures to support the implementation of those practices, which ultimately impacted educators' experiences and perceptions of SJPKS. As a result, this was also integrated into the revised conceptual framework.

Implications for Practice, Policy & Research

I conclude by discussing implications for practice, policy, and research. First, this study points to critical consciousness as a foundational component of social justice leadership. Comprehensive knowledge of social justice practice and a strong infrastructure for skill enactment are insufficient if a leader lacks critical self-awareness. Leaders require opportunities

to examine their positionality and deepen their awareness of how bias, privilege and power perpetuate structural and systemic inequities within their context. This, in turn, will support leaders in cultivating educator critical self reflection.

Furthermore, leaders must have explicit training in effective tools and resources to support educators' SJPKS development within curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. For example, leaders expressed a desire for training in social justice curricular frameworks to support educators with anti-bias curriculum consumption and adaptations. Similarly, they would benefit from training in instructional coaching for culturally and linguistically affirming pedagogy grounded in a research-based framework. Training and implementation of vetted social justice instructional frameworks would promote quality, fidelity and coherence of practice across grade and department teams.

In addition, findings highlight that leaders would benefit from explicit coaching and support on how to develop and communicate a clear vision for social justice. The ability to collectively cultivate and message a vision conveys a leader and school's values, priorities and commitments, and is therefore instrumental to SJPKS cultivation. In order to support educators to enact this vision, leaders also necessitate strong modeling, coaching and feedback to create the conditions for intellectual and emotional risk taking. Finally, this study illuminates the relationship between SJPKS, instructional leadership practices and the infrastructure that supports them. It suggests that school leaders not only need on-going professional development, coaching and support to grow their understanding of SJPKS, but of equal importance, their capacity to implement strong systems and practices for instructional leadership. One without the other, is simply insufficient.

While most leaders and educators referenced the role of formative coaching and feedback, supervision and evaluation is both a research-based and mandatory practice in districts across the country. Although some states and districts have begun implementing evaluation rubrics that explicitly reference equity and/or social justice, others have not, and even less have offered formal training on how to leverage these evaluation tools to provide explicit feedback related to SJPKS. Both an audit of tools and professional development practices related to supervision and evaluation process with a lens for social justice leadership and capacity building is a recommended policy adjustment.

In terms of future research, this study illuminated differences between the elementary and secondary context. While some of the challenges at the secondary level were related to a lack of visioning, prioritization and support as well as an inconsistent instructional infrastructure, they may also illuminate complex variables impacting secondary principal leadership for SJPKS. It would be helpful to study a series of secondary settings across districts, to identify how different leaders organize their schools and leverage distributive leadership to build educator instructional and social justice capacity.

Chapter Four[5]

Discussion

The Olympia School District aimed to meet the needs of their increasingly racially and ethnically diverse student population. Throughout our studies, leaders highlighted both 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 leaders' 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.

Some leaders demonstrated critical self-reflection as they narrated how their upbringing and identity markers influenced their beliefs and notions of social justice leadership. Superintendent Meyers, for example, shared his experience as a first-generation immigrant and multilingual learner to inspire his team to ensure that students' needs are met. His ability to simultaneously recognize systems of oppression he navigated while also owning the privileges he holds as a White male demonstrated his ability to negotiate multiple truths as he reflected on his positionality.

Similarly, Principal Adams described her own identity as a White woman in a predominantly White female field that aims to serve communities of color. She described how her comfort level in discussing issues of race did not equate to her knowing more than others. In fact, Principal Adams reflected on instances where she learned from families of color about

racial and cultural differences. Principal Adams pointed to such instances as critical moments for her own growth. Principal Adams' ability to reflect on her upbringing and current experiences empowered her to think critically about race, power and privilege as she collaborated with her educators.

Superintendent Meyers and Principal Adams were able to critically self-reflect in ways that led to personal and professional growth. Their critical self-reflection allowed them to consider how their perspective may be similar and/or different from that of their community members. Additionally, they both exhibited humility as they described their trajectory towards learning more about race and power as well as doing more to break down barriers for students.

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 leaders' 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.

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, Ms. 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 appear to 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, experiences and contexts influence an individual's 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 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, barriers impede educational leaders' abilities to cultivate SJPKS. Leaders expressed how politicized 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 the political landscape and educational policies in schools.

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

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.

Socioeconomic class		Age

Physical, emotional, developmental (dis)ability		Gender

Religious or spiritual affiliation		Sexual orientation

Nationality		Race

Socioeconomic class — Age — Gender — Sexual orientation — Race — Nationality — Religious or spiritual affiliation — Physical, emotional, developmental (dis)ability

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 confident	Slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Quite confident	Extremely confident	CAA
At your school, how often are you encouraged to think more deeply about race-related topics?	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	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