

Principal preparedness for leading in demographically changing schools: Where is the social justice training?

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Abstract

This multi-case study sought to construct meaning using a cultural capital lens in relation to educational leadership preparation programs building the capacities of social justice leaders in demographically changing schools. Data revealed principals' perceptions about preparation, expectations and general beliefs and assumptions related to leadership for social justice emphasizing contradictions between principals' equity-oriented rhetoric and their underlying beliefs and assumptions affecting their diverse school populations. The implications for research and practice include opportunities that principals and principal preparation programs have to implement to keep leadership for social justice at the forefront of the charge to equitably educate all children.

Keywords

social justice, leadership, principal, equity

To meet the many challenges in the next decade, twenty-first century principals need to develop skills and strategies that are critical for providing a positive learning environment for a highly diverse student population. Researcher, Brown (2006: 585) asserted, 'Schools in a racially diverse society will require leaders and models of leadership that will address the racial, cultural, and ethnic makeup of the school community'. Therefore, 'leadership preparation programs must change in a way which provides increased knowledge to improve equity and equal opportunities for all racial and ethnic groups' (Brown, 2006: 588).

Despite the rhetoric, Cambron-McCabe and McCarthy (2005) lamented that leadership preparation programs do not adequately prepare school leaders to address such issues and asserted that a consciousness about the impact of race and class on schools and students' learning is at the forefront of social justice. They describe social justice as relating to moral values, justice, respect and equity necessary for preparation and support of principals in urban school settings (Cambron-McCabe and McCarthy, 2005), yet Davis et al. (2005) argued that the training has not been

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sufficient for principals who lead urban schools and graduates do not have the necessary support systems to expand their leadership capacities.

For the purposes of this study, an examination of principal preparation for leading in demographically changing or urban settings was investigated by exploring cultural competence, education equity and social justice as related to the challenges of leading increasingly diverse environments. Derived from a synthesis of the relevant literature, three research questions emerged which guided this study:

1. What are the perceptions of principals regarding the effectiveness of their preparation programs in preparing them to lead in demographically changing or urban settings in relation to cultural responsiveness, education equity, and social justice?
2. How do principals create the conditions for the promotion of cultural responsiveness, education equity, and social justice in their demographically changing or urban schools?
3. What are the perceptions of principals regarding their effectiveness in leading others in the promotion of cultural responsiveness, education equity, and social justice?

Conceptual underpinnings of the study

Two conceptual frameworks guided this study: Bourdieu's (1977a) cultural capital theory and social justice (Marshall and Oliva, 2010) for educational leadership. Cultural capital theory was employed by the researchers to explore the misrecognition by school personnel, specifically principals, that the culture and values of the dominant class are the culture and values of the entire society (Bourdieu, 1977a, b). Bourdieu (1977a) defined cultural capital as the general cultural background, knowledge, disposition, and skills that are passed from one generation to the next. Bourdieu created the term cultural *capital* because, like money, cultural resources can be translated into social assets. He contended that cultural capital is dependent on social class whereby children from wealth inherit a significantly different cultural capital than children from working-class origins. Consequently, in schools, because cultural resources such as knowledge, practices and artifacts are differentially valued by society, they can lead to different quantities and types of advantage, or none at all (Bourdieu, 1986).

Subsequently, in the education system, school leaders profess to serve all the children's interests but are really disposed to serving the interests of children who already have access to the kind of values and environment the school system promotes (Bourdieu, 1977a, b). In addition to a cultural capital lens, leadership for social justice theory was used to bring into focus the idea of creating educational preparation programs that have a strong emphasis in social justice as a set of beliefs that emphasizes equity, ethical values, justice, care and respect (Marshall and Oliva, 2010) in educating all students, regardless of race and class, with a high-quality education; and therefore closing the achievement gap between white, middle class students and minority students.

For children who live in poverty or wealth, their social class specific habitus influences the way they perceive school and the opportunities they see as realistic and attainable (Bourdieu, 1977b). Furthermore, it can be argued that school districts and individual schools within these districts maintain a specific group habitus. Based on a multitude of factors, the group habitus can operate in ways to propel or disrupt academic progress (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). The intent of this inquiry was not to prescribe action plans for impoverished settings but rather to illuminate the potential for a different reality; a reality where school leaders are developed and where change is possible.

In addition, the researchers wanted to emphasize the principles designed for social justice preparation for educational leaders that require developing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to understand social justice and its implications for our schools. To this end, Marshall and Oliva (2010: 22) posited, 'Social justice demands deconstructing those realities in order to disclose the multiple ways schools and their leadership reproduce marginalizing and inequitable treatment of individuals because their identities are outside the celebrated dominant culture'. Furthermore, as the school setting changes, both in student population demographics and with accountability issues, the socialization of the principal is essential.

Viewed as a process of learning a new role, both types of socialization, professional and organizational (Greenfield, 1985), should be given consideration in the preparation of the principal. The academia preparation involves the professional socialization provided by the information, skills and principles that an individual will need to carry out their leadership role regardless of the school (Crow, 2007), while organizational socialization focuses on the context of schools facing demographic changes. Crow noted that this type of learning emphasizes 'how things are done here' and includes the particular values, norms, and requirements of the school where the individual becomes a leader (Crow, 2007: 3). Crow further argued that the academy should socialize their aspiring principals to the profession, while school organizations socialize their principals to the environment and expectations of the organization (Crow 2007: 4). This acclimation to the institute will allow the principals to be effectual members of the school (Schein, 1988). Both aspects of socialization, professional and organizational, are important if social justice leadership is to be achieved (Marshall and Olivia, 2010). Ultimately, Brown (2004) posited, 'If the field of educational administration is really serious about preparing leaders conscious of and committed to diminishing the inequities of American life, then the current models of preparation are not up to the task' (Brown, 2004: 81). Graduate degree candidates, according to Ryan and Katz (2007), need opportunities to focus on the meaning of social justice and its implications for them as leaders in their school community. Ryan and Katz (2007) contended that the challenge lies in designing the process for developing social justice-oriented pedagogy. As professors in educational leadership preparation programs attempt to create a pedagogy for 'just thinking, reflecting and acting in schools' (Ryan and Katz, 2007: 46), the traditional notion of instructional leadership must be challenged. The social justice leadership discourse calls for preparation experiences that are very different from the theory and research that the academic disciplines provide; rather, aspiring leaders must be 'masters of their own minds – reflective, inquiry-based, and full of the cultural capital they need to transcend the challenging circumstances of being a school leader' (Wenglinsky, 2004: 5). Some educational leadership scholars argue that race and racism in society must be an integral aspect of the knowledge base (Lopez et al., 2001; Parker et al., 1999), and candid discussions of oppression and discrimination are vitally important to critically reflect on their own participation in these social systems (Pounder et al., 2002; Young and Laible, 2000).

Methodology

This multiple case qualitative study, conducted in four demographically changing or urban schools in Missouri, a Midwest state in the United States, explored the connection between principals' perceptions and experiences as leaders in demographically changing or urban areas and their responses to or promotion of culture, equity and social justice. A multiple case study design was selected for this inquiry allowing the researchers to 'delimit the object of the study, the case'

(Merriam, 1998: 27) and 'study it to achieve as full an understanding of the phenomenon as possible' (Merriam, 1998: 28).

Participants

The school districts and the four participants were selected (Creswell, 2003) to 'facilitate the expansion of the developing theory' (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007: 73) because of their experience (at least five years), gender, race and level of principalship (elementary, middle, high schools). First, the urban school districts were purposefully identified based on their districts' metropolitan locations and diverse student populations, using data from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website (<http://dese.mo.gov/planning/profile/000000.html>). Merriam based purposeful sampling on the premise of wanting 'to discover, understand, and gain insight . . . [to] select a sample from which the most can be learned' (Merriam, 1998: 61). Once the school districts were identified based on the definition of an urban setting, the researchers used the Missouri School directory 2010–2011 (MODESE, 2010) to identify the total number of principals that represented these districts: 17 High School Principals; 22 Middle School Principals; 84 Elementary Principals. Next, the researcher identified from the directory the number of years in education for each principal. Any principal with less than five years was removed from the list. From the remaining group of urban principals ($n = 70$), the sample was stratified using specific criteria such as gender, race and level of principalship (elementary, middle, or high school setting). From this stratified sample, four participants were selected randomly. As Merriam and Associates (2002) highlighted, 'If there is some diversity in the nature of the sites selected (an urban elementary and an urban high school or middle school, for example) or in participants interviewed . . . results can be applied to a greater range of situations by readers or consumers of the research' (Merriam and Associates, 2002: 29). The four participants provided the researchers with multiple perspectives to compare and contrast while also providing a manageable unit of analysis. Of the four, two were from the same district: one, a Caucasian male principal in high school; the other, an African American female principal in middle school. Additionally, two principals were from elementary schools in different districts: one, an African American female; the other, a Caucasian female.

Instrumentation protocol

Semi-structured interviews were conducted consisting of experience and opinion open-ended questions (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2003) relating to the effectiveness of the participant's preparation regarding cultural responsiveness, education equity and social justice. Interview questions were aimed at eliciting principals' perspectives on their preparation for leading in demographically changing or urban settings; current challenges involving culture, equity and social justice issues; and their suggestion for improving their preparedness in relation to social justice leadership.

Each principal was interviewed, face to face, using eighteen open-ended questions and the interviews lasted approximately one to two hours. After the initial interview, two follow-up telephone interviews were conducted to explore further the emerging themes. The questions for these subsequent interviews were determined following the initial analysis of the first interview. Each interview was audio-taped and later transcribed by the researchers. Member checking was conducted to verify the accuracy of the transcripts and confirmed by each participant that their stories were portrayed as intended (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2003). The researchers took field notes during the interview process to record information not reflected on the audio-tapes.

Observation protocol

The researchers spent all of a school day in a complete observer role (Creswell, 2003), studying each subject in their natural professional setting(s) and role(s). The participants determined the selection of the day. These observations served two purposes, as articulated by Emerson et al. (1995): (1) they allowed the researchers to become familiar with the setting and to develop a working relationship and rapport with the subject, and (2) they allowed the researcher to share a 'day in the life' with the subject and to document this experience in writing along with gathering school documents.

Document analysis

Throughout the analysis, research notes and memos helped to document the significance of elements of the data and reflected the refining of initial concepts into categories and then into themes. In addition to the raw data materials such as interview tapes, transcriptions, achievement data and written correspondence to teachers and parents, these notes and documents served to trace the progression of the analysis. In addition, other documents, as suggested by the principals, such as the school's school improvement plan and professional development plans, were analyzed.

Data analysis

The concurrent nested model allowed the researchers to examine multiple levels (Creswell, 2003: 221) so that the interview data, observation data, and document analysis were collected separately, but the analysis and interpretation were combined to 'seek convergence among the results' (Creswell, 2003: 222). Data analysis was conducted using an iterative process that identified common themes and triangulated multiple data sources (Huberman and Miles, 2002). Through ongoing comparative analysis of the data with the emerging categories, relationships between the categories were identified, further helping to refine the data collection.

Description of the school sites

Site 1: Attainment high school. Attainment High School (pseudonym) was set on the south side of the district boundaries, situated prominently in the neighborhood and visible from major intersections. Attainment High School was considered an integral part of Attainment Town which was centrally located in the greater metropolitan area with a population just under 30,000 people. Attainment Town had experienced several changes over the past decade. Once a destination-suburb, Attainment Town now had high mobility rates, increases in black and decreases in white populations, and losses of jobs in the past decade.

Attainment High School draws from a working class community with a wide range of socioeconomic levels. The enrollment area includes a range from subsidized housing, apartment complexes, small, single dwelling homes to larger upper bracket subdivisions. Attainment High School enrollment was approximately 1300 students with 55% Black, 38% White and 7% Hispanic, Asian, and Indian. Almost half of the students at Attainment High qualified for Free or Reduced Price Lunch. The graduation rate improved slightly from 2007–2011, with 88.7% of the class of 2011 completing their high school credits. Additionally, of those graduates, about 40% entered a two year college and 25% entered a four year college or university. Attainment High School 'Met' adequate yearly progress (AYP) standards in the area of mathematics for 2011 and 'Not Met' in

communication arts in two of the four subgroups. The school was described as 'Non-Title 1 School Improvement Year 4' as designated by the School Accountability Report Card on the DESE website in 2012, and as with years prior to 2011 an obvious disparity existed between the White and Black subgroups in the areas of communication arts and mathematics.

Site 2: Fairness elementary school. The second site for this multiple case study was a demographically changing suburban school in a large district sharing boundaries with the greater metropolitan area and its struggling public school system. Fairness Elementary School (pseudonym) sat on a hill with a sprawling, grassy lawn leading to the front of the building and an extended circle drive overlooking a modest subdivision. It was picturesque, with rows of mature trees and visible signage announcing school events, the school mascot and the name of the building. The well-equipped playground stretching around the back of the building surveyed a middle to upper-middle class socio-economic subdivision. It presented as the perfect neighborhood school overlooking the ideal middle class community.

Fairness Elementary School experienced a significant demographic change from 2007–2011 with the addition of a subsidized housing complex within the school's boundaries. After a long tradition of school pride and community support, Fairness Elementary was experiencing some growing pains. Once touted as a beacon in the district and recognized as a Blue Ribbon School, Fairness now struggled with meeting AYP and managing student behaviors. Fairness was identified as *School Improvement Level 2* with annual proficiency targets not met in the areas of communication arts and mathematics during the 2008–2011 school years. In addition, an obvious disparity existed between the White and Black subgroups.

Fairness Elementary boasted 507 students with 59% White, 24.5% Black, 13.4% Hispanic, 2.2% Asian, and 1.0% Indian. The Black population increased over 15% since 2005 while the White population decreased almost 15% in the same period of time. In addition, the school witnessed a significant increase in the number of students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch from 2006 to the current school year. The seemingly sudden changes within the community and school were not apparent cause for alarm for parents or staff, according to the principal, but certainly consumed the conversation during the interview. A sense of helplessness juxtaposed against a sense of rigor created a comfortably tense environment.

Site 3: Justice middle school. The third site for this multiple case study was within the same district boundaries as Attainment High and will be referred to as Justice Middle School (pseudonym). Justice Middle School was positioned at the opposite end of the district boundaries from Attainment High, residing on the far north end. Justice Middle School was nestled on a quiet side street with small to mid-sized houses, a public golf course and a cemetery sharing several acres of adjacent land. The building, though well-kept and manicured, appeared barren from the outside with little landscaping or unique features. At first glance, the inside of the building appeared sterile, with concrete floors and a large, open foyer serving as a commons with scattered round tables and several trophy cases. The researchers quickly observed, however, that the site provided a convenient gathering space for students and a suitable location for bulletin boards recognizing and celebrating student successes.

Justice Middle School had the largest enrollment of the three middle schools in the district with 819 students: 391 Black, 328 White, 89 Hispanic and 11 other. The school had not met AYP requirements since 2005 in communication arts and mathematics. They were currently on *School Improvement Year 4, Non-Title*, as designated by the Annual Performance Report (APR) and AYP

on the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website. In addition, an obvious gap existed between the achievements of the subgroups. In communication arts, 33.7% of the Black subgroup scored proficient, 53.5% of the White subgroup scored proficient, and 38.4% of the Hispanic subgroup scored proficient. The Free and Reduced Price Lunch (F/R) subgroup scored 34.5% proficient, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) subgroup scored 28.6% proficient, and the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) subgroup scored 13% proficient. In the area of mathematics, similar scores presented with the Black subgroup at 33.7% proficient, 53% proficient from the White subgroup, and 31.9% of the Hispanic subgroup scoring proficient. The subgroup identified as F/R posted 32.5% proficient, IEP subgroup was 33.7% and the LEP subgroup was 13.6% proficient. In all six subgroups in the areas of communication arts and mathematics, adequate yearly progress was not met.

Site 4: Knowledge elementary school. In a third district, the fourth site for this multiple case study was concealed three blocks away from the bustle of the main drag. If not for the school crosswalk signs, Knowledge Elementary School (pseudonym) would remain hidden within the lower socio-economic, working-class neighborhood that enclosed the enrollment boundaries. Knowledge Elementary School was one of eight elementary schools in the district of nearly 6500 students. The building population from 2005–2011 remained relatively consistent with 61% Black, 30% White, 4.5% Asian and 4% Hispanic from the 375 students enrolled. Over 70% of the students at Knowledge were eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch. Proudly, Knowledge Elementary School was the only K–5 building in the urban district that was identified as *Title I No Sanctions* by the School Accountability Report Card on the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website. Although no subgroups met AYP in communication arts, four subgroups out of five met AYP in mathematics. The school was significantly behind the Annual Proficiency Target for 2011, and the percent of students who were proficient or advanced, plus the percent of students who were on track using the growth calculation, decreased in communication arts and increased in mathematics.

Demographics of case study participants

Principal 1. The first participant, Peter Yarrow (pseudonym), a Caucasian male in his mid- to late fifties, was the principal at Attainment High School with ‘thirteen years of serving the needs of my students, teachers, and parents’. Prior to his tenure at Attainment High, he served as an Assistant Principal in two neighboring school districts at middle and high school levels. Principal Yarrow was a self-described ‘conservative educator’ whose philosophy on education ‘goes back to your inner core beliefs’. He explained, ‘How your parents raised you . . . and your background. My background was how my parents raised me to be tolerant and not look at color. My high school experience . . . my experience in the marine corps . . . my experience in college . . . I’ve dealt with racism but as far as thinking about and making decisions based on race, I don’t think that way. I don’t . . . not who I am’. Peter had lived in the area most of his life and grew up in a white, middle-class suburb within the greater metropolitan area for which he worked.

Principal 2. The second participant, Joni Mitchell (pseudonym), a Caucasian, female in her mid-fifties was born and raised in the school district in which she served. During the late nineties, Principal Mitchell served on the School Board in which she is now a principal. In addition, her two daughters graduated from the public school system in which Fairness Elementary School was

located. Principal Mitchell had been an elementary principal in a nearby district having served five years prior to returning to her hometown where she had served for the past seven years. In the interview, it was clear that Principal Mitchell was struggling with the demographic change and had difficulty differentiating between the enrichment of cultural differences in her building and the threat to 'the way things used to be around here'. She noted that once this school was the 'flagship of the district', but with this changing demographic student population this was not the case.

I will get here by 7:15 . . . my teachers have to be here at 8:30 so that gives me an hour unless early bird teachers sit and chat. I am here until at least 6:00 so 11-12 hours a day . . . every day. That is what you have to do . . . can't answer phones when I'm in the cafeteria and teachers want to see you out and about. Can't just sit back like the old days. I don't ever remember seeing my principal in my room-different day and age . . . trouble at school . . . trouble at home.

In attempting to serve her diverse population and forge collaborative relationships with parents, Principal Mitchell shared her beliefs:

I don't care if your child is white, pink, polka dotted, or green. My responsibility as an educator is to make sure that when your child leaves us . . . they are prepared for the next level . . . bottom line. That's how I operate . . . that's my bottom line. I don't care what color they are. Let me have your child that is respectful and responsible, and we can teach them . . . regardless of their I.Q. We can teach them because all kids can learn but at their own ability level.

Principal 3. The third participant, Donna Summer (pseudonym), was a middle-aged African American female administrator in her sixth year at Justice Middle School in the Attainment School District. Principal Summer served as assistant principal for five years in a large metropolitan area across the state and four years as a principal in a rural area 30 miles south of her current district. Principal Summer laid claim to having the highest middle school enrollment in the district with an equal number of staff and resources as the schools with 200 fewer students. Early in the interview it was evident to the researchers that Principal Summer believed in celebrating student successes. On the interview day, the researchers observed bulletin boards that displayed the names of high achieving students and an assembly with gift cards to local restaurants and stores as incentives to reach a goal. Principal Summer explained:

I have fundraisers . . . I put that money right back into the kids . . . so I keep some of the activity money so I can buy and have incentives for the students . . . do drawings on Friday . . . planners, gift cards, Blockbuster, Wal-Mart has donated gift cards. It is celebration, oh yeah. I have been conducting those since the day I started.

In reflecting upon her arrival to Justice Middle School, Principal Summer shared:

It is not us [administration] against them [teachers]. When I came here, it was very much like . . . you are making me do this. No, we are here for kiddos . . . that's the main goal . . . why we are here . . . not here for us, here for them. But how do you get the teachers to perform. I have to go through them to get what I need from the children. I have to accommodate their needs as well as make them accountable for kids' needs . . . which helps to build that culture. We have to partner to get there and I tell them this is your school we have to make it ours . . . have to feel good about where we come to work.

Principal 4. The fourth participant, Gloria Gaynor (pseudonym), was an African American woman in her mid-to-late fifties. Principal Gaynor had served as principal at Knowledge Elementary School for the past nine years. Prior to her tenure at Knowledge, she served in a nearby urban district as an elementary principal and leader for eleven years. The researchers felt immediately comfortable with Principal Gaynor as she greeted students in the breakfast line, spoke to parents and prepared students for morning announcements. She spent a considerable amount of time during the announcements discussing ways students could be successful at Knowledge to include their academics and behavior. The 18 minute address ended with a school pledge to ensure accomplishment throughout the day. The researchers noticed Principal Gaynor's grounding in celebration as she congratulated a birthday boy, cheered a young scholar who stopped her in the hall to demonstrate his understanding of a vocabulary word and awarded pencils to the student announcers. As she said, 'Well, we actually almost celebrate everything'.

Principal Gaynor was a seasoned leader with many experiences to draw upon and a flair for storytelling. In retrospect, the researchers conjectured that by hearing Principal Gaynor's story, it gave 'voice for these participants, raising their consciousness, or advancing an agenda for change to improve the lives of the participants' (Creswell, 2003: 11). She spoke about becoming a new principal:

... I do not care where you go, urban, rural, suburb, mostly ritzy community ... if you take with you core things all people have to have ... you will be successful. Things happen in urban not in ritzy ... I see more elite communities as having parents on a different level that perhaps have a different perspective about what education should be. All parents have expectations but don't always mesh with the school.

Discussion of findings

Data analysis was conducted using an iterative process that identified common themes and triangulated multiple data sources (Huberman and Miles, 2002). Transcripts and observation field notes were repeatedly read and coded. The coding scheme was consistently reevaluated to avoid making premature judgments and to stay open to organizing the data in various ways. Over the course of the data analysis, consensus emerged among all of the participants that minimal emphasis was placed on their preparation coursework to prepare for leading in culturally diverse schools with a social justice focus. Regardless of the preparation, whether it was a traditional program or one with an urban focus, none of the principals espoused their preparation experiences as particularly conducive to leading urban schools. Although two principals remembered coursework that provided discussion along these lines, overall they were not afforded the opportunity to gain a contextual or experiential understanding of diversity and equity within their preparation programs. Principal Yarrow stated:

When I was in Enlightenment School District (pseudonym) in the early 90's with the magnet program, there was a professional development focus on different races. That's all; I don't really remember any class or activity that impacted me.

Similarly, Principal Gaynor shared:

In my masters' program, they focused on multiculturalism. We had discussions about urban versus suburban but not a lot. I cannot remember anything specifically from my classes. I had a mentor when I

first became a principal. He helped me . . . gave me wonderful, excellent tips to stay connected with the community of teachers and parents. The community was different from what I was accustomed to but he told me to always give them [parents] a voice.

As discussed in the literature, to become culturally competent school leaders, candidates must have opportunities to grow and develop in awareness, and time to reflect on how their attitudes, values and past experiences affect their leadership (Bustamante et al., 2009). It was surmised that raising school leaders' awareness of their biases and privileges was an important step in becoming culturally competent and responsive as well as being knowledgeable of instructional strategies and competent in communicating with those who are different. To this end, Principal Summers spoke about one class in her masters' preparation that focused on socioeconomic status and 'how it [socioeconomic status] drives all decisions and how you work through scenarios and so forth' but fell short of describing it as beneficial in preparing her to lead a diverse community. Ms Summers explained that she had taken time to consider the question prior to the interview, yet was only able to draw upon one professor in one course that made an effort to discuss economic circumstances that may affect students in school. She noted,

The professor talked all about SES, and how to deal with the lowest students, their families, class, certain levels of class . . . and the prevalence of that throughout your career. I have always been sensitive to kids and I know there are differences in race, color, class, but I look at it as color-blind. You are a kid first!

In a follow-up question about the need for preparation that addresses the specific needs of urban leadership and social justice issues, she stated:

Those conversations are difficult and we do not want to talk about it. Ask someone of color how they feel about it . . . what they have been accustomed to and how they have been treated. I think it is a very good idea to have discussion, round table, and research for urban leadership. I wish it would have been a focus in my programs.

From the review of literature, the research also indicated that a critical component of a candidates' coursework should be immersion in cultures and environments that provide experiential learning. Service learning and cultural immersion of students were found to assist the development of awareness, knowledge, and skills related to interacting with diverse groups (Bustamante et al., 2009). To this end, Principal Mitchell shared that she did not recall any coursework that helped her 'be a better principal to all my kids' but emphasized a trip to visit schools in New York City that made a lasting impression. She shared:

On my school board, we visited Harlem, spent time in the schools . . . in the urban core schools to see what was working for them and why it was working for them. It was an awesome experience that I will remember for a very long time.

In addition to having the awareness, knowledge, and skills deemed necessary to lead with a social justice and culturally responsive focus, Cooper (2009), requires one to uncover his or her own blind spots to understand and counteract inequity. Each of the participants, although steadfast in their commitment to 'success for all children' and 'fair and equitable [schooling] for all kids', provided insufficient evidence to support this. The principals captured the rhetoric of social justice

leadership but lacked the understanding of what it might take to address and implement ‘effective leadership intervention for equity’ (Marshall and Oliva, 2010: 44).

In the literature, West (1999) emphasized the need to respond to cultural diversity in a way that understands and appreciates the nuances of difference and advocates for embracing a new cultural politics of difference whereby individuality is expressed and assimilation is rejected. In addition, Bustamante et al. (2009) acknowledged that leaders often emphasize the importance of acceptance, caring and inclusion when talking about their schools but do not move beyond the occasional, celebratory multicultural events to address social divisions and discriminatory attitudes. Without exception, each principal shared stories of care and concern. Principal Summers summed up an experience with one of her students and his teachers:

There was a situation last year . . . this kid did not come to school. He had a team of teachers he really liked. I talked to them and we did a home visit. He had just a little bed and a cover. He lived in the basement of another family. They started collecting clothing items for him and got him back to school. You just have to show you care about them. If they know you care, it makes a difference.

Convincingly, all principals emphasized the need to maintain a welcoming school environment that was inclusive and affirming for all students. Each principal proudly presented their school throughout the walkthroughs and observations of the building. Principal Summers took time to draw attention to various displays and bulletin boards touting tolerance, acceptance and integrity. Principal Mitchell was especially proud of the culturally diverse collection of materials and books in the school library. She also mentioned a committee charged with planning multicultural events for the students and staff throughout the school year. Similarly, Principal Gaynor discussed efforts to include students who may not stay at Knowledge Elementary for an extended period of time due to their missionary affiliation. She expressed concern in making sure no matter how long a student stayed at her school; they feel welcomed and included in all the school activities. Contrary to conveying a message of honoring all cultures, however, Principal Yarrow was not particularly sensitive to students’ requests to hold a talent show during Black History month at Attainment High School. In fact, he responded, ‘Okay, so how is a talent show related to Black History? Help me to understand. Okay, let us do it on a Saturday. Let’s plan . . . let’s have something really good—and then it just falls apart’. In addition he commented, ‘A lot of our [Black] students are very sensitive and don’t want a Black History Month’.

The current example centralizes the theme of color blindness by not creating the conditions that accentuate the *voice* or experiences of people of color as a way to ‘name [their] reality’ (Ladson-Billings, 1998: 13). Ultimately, the words and actions from the school leader ‘reflect their perspectives about race and demographic change but also reflect those things that they paid attention to, ignored, or valued in their role as school leaders’ (Evans, 2007: 168). The aforementioned example by Principal Yarrow suggested that he constructed meanings about race consistent with a color-blind ideology, which ‘minimized the salience of race and ignored the potential significance of demographic change’ (Evans, 2007: 172).

Rather than just tolerate or celebrate cultural diversity, the principals can lead their schools in implementing culturally relevant instruction across grade levels. Prior to the advent of federal and state accountability policies, academic student success was often measured when 80–90% of students were passing achievement tests (McKenzie et al., 2008). The remaining population were predominantly students of color, students living in poverty, those who learn differently and students who spoke a home language other than English (McKenzie et al., 2008). Thus, the inequities in

schools were often 'hidden' in the data until the federal directive to disaggregate performance scores shed light on those who are taught well and those who are not (Johnson, 2000). It seems imperative, then, that school leaders know what skills and strategies teachers should employ and be confident in helping teachers become socially just and culturally relevant in their practices. To this end, Grant and Sleeter (2007) posited that the first step for principals is identifying good teaching and the second step is teaching teachers to teach all students effectively.

As noted in the descriptions of the settings, each school faced the reality of attempting to close the achievement gap in at least one area as identified on the Missouri Assessment Program. In addition, every principal made reference to the importance of providing good instruction for all his or her students. In fact, Principal Yarrow referenced himself as an 'instructional leader rather than a manager or disciplinarian' responsible for observations and conferences; while Principal Summers mentioned 'authentic activities' and Principal Gaynor referenced a 'great instructional program'. None of the principals, however, was specific in their expectations of effective, culturally relevant instructional leadership.

Principal Yarrow mentioned 'best practices' as part of his walkthrough efforts to see good instructional practice but was either unwilling or unable to discuss particular cultural strategies with the researchers. Along the same lines, Principal Mitchell pondered her reality of 'so how are we missing that population or why are they still not coming around [academically] in our schools' but fell short of describing a definite plan. The rather serious challenge of teaching and learning in a demographically changing or urban school, coupled with the published disparities between groups of students, would seem to create the condition for principals to lead the charge in providing effective instructional leadership and possibly, more importantly, promoting culturally relevant instruction. Other than hit and miss references to prominent researchers in the field and having 'some really good teachers', all principals fell short in promoting (or at least discussing) the conditions for effective instruction, culturally relevant instruction or building the capacity of teachers to engage students in a culturally responsive curriculum. As noted in the literature, Schein (2004) warned that espoused values focus on what people say or want others to believe but may not accurately reflect the organization, or bear little resemblance to what happens within the organization.

Morgan (2006) conjectured that leaders who understand the day-to-day rituals, language, values and beliefs of an organization's culture may better realize desired goals and objectives in the future. Regardless of the limited understanding principals had in leading for social justice, one thing resonated from each of the participants: the desire to lead a diverse population effectively and raise achievement scores. Moreover, the willingness to follow district initiatives and attempt new ideas permeated their responses throughout the interview process.

Of the many issues that were discussed in the literature regarding leadership for social justice and culturally competent school leaders, all principals accentuated decisions they made, programs they started and ideas they shared to ensure the success of all of their students. Principal Gaynor described her plan of action when arriving at Fairness Elementary School: '...three things... instruction, parent involvement, and social issues'. She followed,

We always talk about data, instructional practice, and everything about instruction. After a few years, you never hear about somebody trying to discuss field trips in a grade level meeting. No one misses grade level meetings. We work as a team... a good team.

Principal Mitchell spoke of her desire to understand better her African American population in order to lead the building in meeting the needs of '...that population that is still not coming

around' and in doing so questioned her own abilities: '... [A]m I doing something to not meet their needs?'. In response to her concerns, she elicited the guidance of William Jenkins, author of several books about educating African American children. In conversations with Mr Jenkins, she gleaned that she cannot lower expectations even though parents may be 'resisting high standards', and that she can 'understand the message but can't be the deliverer'. She also solicited the support of a male African American district administrator regarding the possibility of scheduling Mr Jenkins to speak to the entire district. Clearly, Principal Mitchell had the right intent and the desire to take action for the sake of her increasingly diverse population and changing demographics; however, underlying assumptions of deficiency and limitations continued to permeate the conversation, thus creating complex contradictions between her rhetoric and actions. One advances social justice, according to Cooper (2009), by 'serving as a cultural worker who affirms rather than fears cultural difference'.

Ultimately, the perceptions of principals regarding their own effectiveness produced mostly surface level examples and haphazard stories. Inasmuch as each participant aspired to make a difference in all students' lives and as much as each participant touted exemplary educational practices and programs within their schools, all struggled to provide evidence of their effectiveness. It was obvious to the researchers that the day-to-day routines, tight schedules and unexpected inconveniences consumed a great deal of the administrators' days. More importantly, too many instances described by the principals had undergirding biases and assumptions that reflected deficit thinking, resistance, color blindness, personal and professional contradictions and ideological contradictions.

Emerging themes from the findings

Using the data set, the following themes emerged: (1) Addressing the achievement gap through programs, policies and practices but not preparedness; and (2) Acknowledging the disparity gap through messages, meanings and manifestations. In accord, these two themes vividly depict how public school principals perceive their preparation to address educational needs of a diverse population and how they respond to issues of culture, equity, and social justice.

Addressing the achievement gap through programs, policies, and practices but not preparedness

The school leaders in this study unequivocally demonstrated persistently working toward the goal of high achievement for every child. They were determined to make academic progress as verified on the state testing results, including the disaggregated results of all the subgroups. Consequently, during the interview a great deal of time was spent discussing how their preparatory programs addressed strategies and resources principals used to address increasing achievement scores. Due, in part, to achievement test scores being the currency required to legitimize school success in the public eye, the principals' focus appeared constricted to that single yet simultaneously overpowering goal. On the one hand, principals spoke eloquently of the strategies and plans being incorporated to improve test scores and raise achievement. On the other hand, the concern of why it might be important to understand the cultural diversity within a school to achieve academic success was not discussed, nor was the focus of the academic success on students becoming effective citizens who might address any social injustices. It seemed ample for these school leaders to focus on student achievement, perhaps at the expense of preparing students to live in a diverse community.

As Principal Yarrow discussed the district directive and his school's focus on standardization of the curriculum:

We feel like we are doing it the right way rather than just a lot of school call themselves PLC high schools but we are following the Dufour model. We're focused more on high stakes testing and AYP [Adequate Yearly Progress] than ten years ago. But since kids are kids, the issue of diversity isn't as important."

Principal Mitchell, too, was obviously proud of her focus on achievement and acknowledged student success through celebration:

We have academic celebrations every few weeks. We recognize students who have made progress in terms of academics, perfect attendance . . . if improving still recognized. On Friday, for example, we're having a pep rally first thing to recognize those students who made proficient and advanced on the MAP [last year] to encourage them to do the same thing this year.

From every angle of the large commons area in Principal Summer's middle school, the researchers were able to identify students' accomplishments. The wall-sized bulletin boards were filled with the names of students who scored proficient and advanced on their MAP tests from the previous year. The names of students on the honor roll and students with special recognition in a particular subject were recognized. She summed up her expectations with, 'We all have to be accountable. If they fail, we failed them. That's how I feel about it'.

Principal Mitchell was committed to working with her staff to ensure each grade level spent quality time under her direction discussing and analyzing data. When addressing the achievement gap, she stated:

One of the things is looking very closely at data on students. What we're trying is to do more with practices and differentiated instruction. Those students who are not getting it in the traditional setting then we are identifying those students . . . working on exactly what they need. We're hoping that will close the gap.

However, never in this conversation did Principal Mitchell address how preparing her teachers for the changing student population might address the achievement gap. She shared, 'last year we were the highest in reading scores but didn't meet AYP' and ' . . . in communication arts our Black population didn't meet, and in math our Hispanic and School as-a-Whole didn't meet'. However, the focus of her strategies was on programs, as she noted:

We have AIMS Web. In reading, we have . . . depending on their scores . . . we have Read Naturally group basically working on fluency. Over time we are hoping to raise that fluency piece and then once they get at grade level in fluency, we move them onto the . . . computer program is Head Sprout to work on comprehension. Then we also have AR which is Accelerated Reader.

For Principal Summers data consumed her thoughts and discussions as well:

I review the failure list . . . get test scores . . . MAP scores and analyze that data. I see where the kids fall down then we target those areas. We look at everything across the board . . . basic or below have tutoring then peer mentoring. So anyway, we look at data and those kids who are struggling. We identify those and how we do that is looking at failure rates, progress reports, teachers print off slips every Wednesday.

As part of leadership preparation, leadership programs must prepare school leaders ‘to develop various, proactive systems of support . . . focused on student learning needs in specific areas. In addition, principals must know how to create systems that consistently and frequently provide feedback (at least weekly) to these teachers about their teaching’ (McKenzie et al., 2008: 128). To this end, after a detailed explanation of how his building was using data to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of individual students and groups of students, Principal Yarrow was vague in his response when asked if the work he and his teachers were doing to increase achievement and address the gap between majority students and English language learners, special education students and other minority populations was working:

Probably sped, yes, more so . . . we don’t have a lot of ESL kids, got a few . . . got one teacher a couple of hours . . . our Hispanic population does pretty well . . . more of a female population. We do have more kids from different countries than we did. We had kids from two to three Middle Eastern countries . . . Iran kids . . . Iraq kids . . . kids from about four different Central American countries . . . pretty good on English.

When pressed about identifying good instructional behavior to meet the needs of all students, the high school principal narrowly discussed the idea:

I have changed my focus the last couple of years and focused more on instructional leader rather than management and disciplinarian. I have changed my walkthrough format . . . last year to going in and leaving a note with a smiley face, great job, to these [provided researchers a copy of current form]. It’s got two things on it – Marzano and district . . . then tear off . . . give to the teacher . . . that way they get immediate feedback.

Similarly, Principal Mitchell seems to miss the mark on identifying good instructional behavior:

My motto has always been the Colin Powell idea of keep your best teachers happy. If I can keep my best teachers happy, I’m never going to be able to fix the negative Nancy’s. I’m never going to fix them. I’m going to tell them this is what you need to do. So keep your best teachers happy . . . and I tell them in evaluations . . .

However, it is not enough for leaders to acknowledge that they know what skills and strategies teachers need to effectively teach all students, these leaders must also know how to help teachers to become socially just in their practices (Grant and Sleeter, 2007). As part of every principal’s plan to provide support and attention to students who struggled with learning, each discussed the multiple structures and systems they had in place to prevent failure. To address student achievement, a schools’ organizational structure must be examined, especially when considering leadership for social justice. For example, Principal Mitchell devised a comprehensive use of federal monies to target low-achieving students:

So I have hired two additional coaches that come three days a week and work with my Title I teacher and help with the small pull out groups . . . they’re retired teachers, 550 teachers . . . so they understand what reading needs to look like. So they come Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays . . . help out with small groups.

According to Frattura and Capper (2007), separate pull-out programs typically segregate and track students of color, low-income, ELL, and students with disabilities. The researchers noted a lack of acknowledgement by the principals regarding separate programs within their own buildings in addition to the aforementioned programs. The researchers asked specifically about the diversity of the building, yet, the special education population was not mentioned during any of the interview process. The researchers confirmed from each of the principals that they considered their schools to be 'inclusive' despite their use of resource rooms, pull-out programs, and lower-track courses. Thus, according to Marshall and Oliva, in so doing, 'educators are ironically segregating students in the name of inclusion' (Marshall and Oliva, 2010: 179).

Acknowledging the disparity gap through messages, meanings, and manifestations

As a result of demographic change and the growing presence of people of color in historically White neighborhoods, many school leaders are faced with their own biases often founded on ignorance and fear (Cooper, 2009). Principal Mitchell recounted the glory days of her school when the school was 'swarming' with PTA moms and the hub of the upper middle class community. Then, over time in addition to a poor economy and more working parents, a new 900 unit apartment complex was built. 'It is a HUD house. It came on board very quietly.' She posited:

Somehow the Fountains (pseudonym) picked up speed and went in and really came online about three years ago. The population for the Fountains is all inner city. They just called their friends and neighbors . . . and those apartments rent anywhere from \$800–1200 a month but it is subsidized so anyone coming in over there is going to get free or reduced lunch, plus subsidized housing. They need every service in the book because they're for the most part poor parents and so they come up here and immediately want to bring all their baggage to us. The seven years I've been here my free and reduced was about 18% when I came . . . we're now sitting at 63%. That's a huge culture shock in a short amount of time to the point that the district didn't really realize what was going on. Didn't really listen until our scores . . .

Such examples of deficit thinking can perpetuate inequities (McKenzie et al., 2006) and shed light on underlying assumptions, values, and attitudes that may have become embedded in the school.

In light of the school's diversity, Principal Mitchell said that her toughest challenges involved handling discipline problems among African American students (mainly boys), low achievement of African American students and attempting to build positive relationships with African American parents. She emphasized an equity-oriented stance regarding the diversity of the student body but spent considerable time characterizing the Black population in a negative light. For example, her response to understanding the culture within the building:

. . . listening to conversations . . . the level of noise in my cafeteria is a perfect example because the Black culture is a louder culture for the most part. It's dominated by women . . . the women in that culture are large and in charge . . . they really are . . . so don't mess with their baby. I ride buses a lot . . . it helps me figure out who lives where and who's going where and who's saying what. I watch clothing that kids have when they come to school because our black culture has the very latest. Everything matches from head to toe. They spend a lot of money on hair, on nails, on technology. So just looking at that culture . . . looking at how my PTA meetings have changed over time . . . used to have a lot of support . . . not as much now.

While Principal Yarrow also conveyed equity-oriented intentions in discussing the demographic change, he did not discuss taking any proactive steps to address the negative attitudes expressed by students. He stated, 'I don't see color . . . I really don't . . . when I make decisions I don't think in color. I don't really think you should think in those terms. You should think of what is best for your kids'. The principal spoke of color-blindness as an apparent badge of efficacy reflecting his neutrality, seemingly unaware of the cultural complexities and social tensions that could be affecting his school. On another issue, he posited that, ' . . . one thing that I am proud of at this school is we have a lot of openly gay kids . . . sure there is bullying and harassment that goes on but for the most part kids are tolerant otherwise they wouldn't be so open about it'.

Principal Gaynor had strong convictions about serving all children equally well. As she declared, 'I just believe in equity . . . equal for all kids. I don't deal with inequities very well. I want everything fair for kids . . . opportunities for all kids'. As an African American administrator, she recognized cultural bias in some of her teachers but was reluctant to pinpoint specific examples and instead focused her attention on holding teachers accountable through difficult conversations. She was a self-described 'reflective person' who believed in educating all children "'in spite of all the things happening over here in their lives'. 'We can't change that [students' home lives] so what are we going to do about it?'. In light of this conversation about demographic change and cultural difference being enriching, she seemed reticent in her ability to lead a diverse educational community.

However, she may have unintentionally marginalized her Latino population when she explained:

My Hispanic kids for example are a very loyal group of children and families. So loyal in fact that they won't snitch on each other. If there is an issue and I am trying to get information . . . they won't tell. So being sensitive to that and having to really understand how to talk to those kids is important.

Often, administrators and teachers 'do not have a clear, accurate, or useful understanding of the degree of inequity present in their own schools' (Marshall and Oliva, 2010: 265) and lack the 'courage to facilitate and engage in hard dialogue about race, culture, class, language, and inequality with their staff and families and then make decisions that exemplify their commitment to equity and cultural responsiveness' (Cooper, 2009: 719).

School leaders shape and manipulate the interpretation of issues and events in their schools. To make sense of things, ' . . . leaders determine what to emphasize, downplay, or ignore in their words, actions, behaviors, and decision making'. (Evans, 2007: 162). From the interviews, the data indicated that all of the principals considered themselves to be equity-oriented leaders. They desired to provide a high-quality, equal education to all students regardless of cultural, racial, or socioeconomic background. Nevertheless, all of the principals evaded, to some degree, the questions confronting systemic inequities and underlying organizational values and beliefs that contribute to inequitable practices.

The principals were well-versed in analyzing disaggregated testing data and comfortably knowledgeable in addressing the achievement gap using the data to guide their action plans, but when asked how they identified inequities within their own building or supported the development of socially just practices, the responses were austere. For example, the high school principal initially rebuked the question by declaring, 'That makes no sense at all', but after clarification by the researcher, he responded:

We address inequities and policies but I don't know if it is because it is a black issue or white issue or race. Attendance and poverty . . . well there's white schools with attendance and poverty that they address with different policies . . . so don't know that the policies are based on race . . . hope they are not.

Principal Mitchell responded with equal ambiguity:

First and foremost when I have a parent that wants to come in that I have an inkling they may want to play the race card, immediately I say . . . you are probably thinking that I can't be fair because your child is . . . whatever [race].

However, later in the interview, that principal drew the researcher's attention to a disparate number of Black males sent to the recovery room (behavior intervention strategy):

It worries me that when I look at the statistics in the recovery room . . . it is Black males. So how are we missing that population or why are they still not coming around in our school? Am I doing something to not meet their needs?

Delving deeply into social justice issues requires challenging the status quo. One of the elementary principals, for example, was in a simple way conducting an equity audit (McKenzie et al., 2008; Skrla et al., 2008) by 'auditing' the school's data for inequities by race. Much the same way as the No Child Left Behind Act (2002) has required districts to disaggregate data and address problematic situations, so must education leaders initiate conversations that point to systemic inequities in addition to the achievement gap. For example, by identifying racial disparities within school programs such as advanced placement and gifted classes, special education programs, clubs and teams, and the aforementioned discipline rates, principals draw attention to the quality of the programs in which students are placed or excluded. As Principal Summer surmised, 'I guess it would have to be through observation and if there is a certain policy that really is not one that we feel is equitable for all kids, then we have to review that and change it'.

In this way ' . . . the system of the school and the attitudes, assumptions, and practices of its educators are all largely in control of the educators, which means that systems can be redesigned and attitudes, assumptions, and practices can be changed so as to create equitable and excellent schools' (Marshall and Oliva, 2010: 271). Marshall and Oliva (2010) conjectured that, ' . . . inequitable outcomes are not merely the result of deficiencies in the students, nor of the communities from which they come, as often assumed to be the case. Instead, inequitable outcomes often result from systemic organizational practices and policies' (Marshall and Oliva, 2010: 7).

Conclusions

Based on the study findings, the researchers concluded that the goal of achieving academic success with students from demographically changing or urban schools, as part of the federal mandate to educate everyone's child, dominates the discourse of leaders in the field. However, undergirding this discourse is the lack of social justice preparation; either in their preparatory programs or in professional development opportunities afforded them in their school districts. Since this task requires educational leaders to rethink and restructure what expectations they hold for students and how their schools are organized to support teaching and learning this lack of perceived preparation is important. Unfortunately, there is a significant disconnect between a leader's perceived responsibility to close the achievement gap through high expectations and data-driven instruction; and their lack of awareness and inability to identify the biases, assumptions, and inequities that may be perpetuating the very gap they are attempting to close. Leaders are addressing the achievement gap through substantive programs, policies, and practices, but

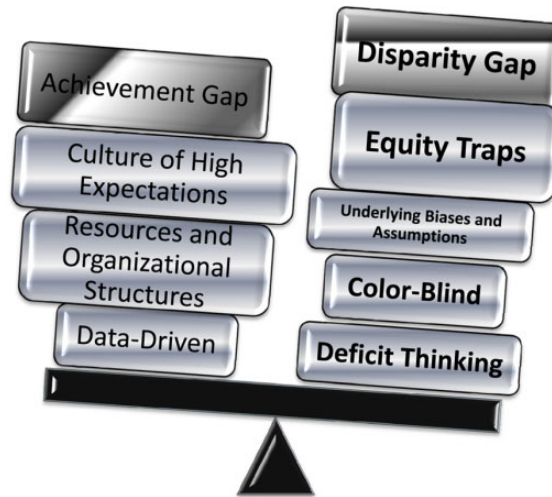


Figure 1. The paradox for the principals understanding social justice.

are failing to acknowledge the disparity gap that hinders their ability to move toward equity in schooling and justifies the messages, meanings, and manifestations that perpetuate negative attitudes and deficit thinking. All of the principals considered themselves to be equity oriented leaders and they wanted to provide an equal education to all students regardless of cultural, racial, or socioeconomic background; however, their deficit thinking created a paradox, as illustrated in Figure 1.

The researchers also concluded that in regard to principal preparedness to lead in demographically changing or urban schools, preparation programs, as perceived by these principals, seemed inadequate in meeting their needs. These Principals lacked opportunities within their programs to examine their own personal and professional beliefs, to participate in consciousness-raising activities, to experience cultural immersion projects, to develop skills to identify inequitable policies and practices and good instructional behavior, to name a few. If leadership in the 21st century, amid increasing diversity, demands school leaders who can address the racial, cultural and ethnic makeup of the school community and provide the knowledge to improve equity and equal opportunities for all students, then preparation programs must heed the advice of Marshall and Oliva (2010):

To move forward for social justice, educators need the strategies, revolutionary ones . . . for rethinking and taking leadership for school practices to better meet diverse students' needs. Also, educators need the language to translate intellectual concepts into practice and experiential understandings. They need guidance, encouragement, examples, and support to practice leading . . . (Marshall and Oliva, 2010: 4).

Implications for practice

The study findings indicate the vital need for principals to be prepared to address diversity issues related to culture, equity and social justice in their urban school settings in order to address achievement and disparities between majority and minority populations. Similarly, the

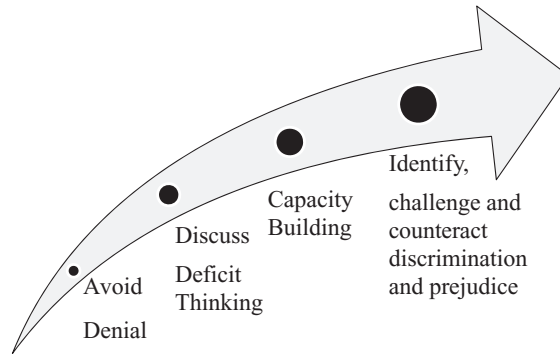


Figure 2. Stages of development for social justice leadership preparation.

findings supported the emphasis by Davis et al. (2005), Larson and Ovanda (2001), Marshall and Oliva (2010) and Theoharis (2007) of the need for principal candidates to participate in preparation programs designed to build the capacities of social justice leaders. Moreover, a more substantive, coherent preparation program focused on opportunities for candidates to reflect on how their attitudes, values, and past experiences affect their leadership is essential for leaders in demographically changing and urban settings.

Also suggested from the findings is a need for principals in the field to have the strategies and tools necessary to identify, challenge, and counteract discrimination and prejudice. In the review of literature, the researchers identified two reasonable strategies to this end, namely culture audits and equity audits: culture audits to identify underlying organizational values and beliefs; and equity audits to identify racial disparities within programs and practices. Both strategies build the capacity of school leaders to develop a more comprehensive, insightful understanding of equity and inequity relationships in their current systems.

Represented in Figure 2 is the type of continuum leading to leadership for social justice that these researchers recommend. In order to get to the place of identifying and challenging discrimination and prejudice, it is necessary to go through some of these stages of development which must be provided in leadership preparatory programs.

Ultimately, the challenges of demographics and inequities remain unsettled despite recent attempts in licensure (NAESP, 2001) to prepare leaders and policies (NCLB, 2002) to address inequities. McKenzie et al. (2008) proposed a structure and content for an educational leadership program to prepare principals for social justice work. They asserted the following three goals: (1) they must raise the academic achievement of all the students in their school; (2) they must prepare their students to live as critical citizens in society; and (3) both of these goals can only be achieved when leaders assign students to inclusive, heterogeneous classrooms that provide all students access to rich and engaging curriculum. Moreover, 'educational leaders need better preparation and encouragement to be accountable for serving a diverse and changing public' (Cooper, 2009: 695).

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