



Audio and video reflections to promote social justice

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine how 15 graduate students enrolled in a US school leadership preparation program understand issues of social justice and equity through a reflective process utilizing audio and/or video software.

Design/methodology/approach – The study is based on the tradition of grounded theory. The researcher collected 225 weekly audio/video reflections in addition to field notes and participants' written narratives.

Findings – Findings from the data analysis indicate participants perceive the use of audio and video as a valuable tool to increase their awareness and responses to addressing oppressive school practices as leaders for social justice.

Originality/value – Those who prepare school leaders might consider the use of audio/video reflections as an effective tool to examine the evolution of school leadership identities in an effort to interrupt oppressive school practices.

Keywords United States of America, Undergraduates, Schools, Leadership, Social justice, Information media

Paper type Research paper

There are inherent challenges in preparing school leaders to take a more critically conscious stance towards issues of social justice and equity. Programs that emphasize the need for transformative educational school leaders require critical thought and reflection with regard to personal beliefs, lived experiences, and cultural identity. Attempts may include building the capacity and will to transform school leaders to deliver policies and practices that address the lived realities of disenfranchised populations[1]. Sometimes such discussions center on disparities facing children of color (Ladson-Billings, 1994); school policies that fail to serve marginalized populations (Marshall, 1993; Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin, 2005); or long-standing achievement gaps between mainstream and marginalized children in US public schools (Apple, 1993; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Marshall and Olivia, 2010). School leaders must interrupt practices that perpetuate the belief that some groups of children are intrinsically more able than other groups of children due to class, skin color, language, sexual identity, or gender (Shields, 2003). The leader-in-training needs to be aware of leadership as a powerful intervening variable in determining whether children from diverse backgrounds are successful or not (Reyes *et al.*, 1999; Scheurich and Skrla, 2003). One means of promoting the courage and skills necessary to take strong stands for social justice and equity is to provide aspiring school leaders with safe spaces to reflect on their school leadership identity and the impact of their active stances.

The central purpose of this study is to examine how graduate students understand issues of social justice and equity through a weekly reflective process utilizing audio and/or video software. Although US school leadership preparation programs claim



to embed reflective processes within their curriculum and pedagogy, the number of programs that have brought such innovative practices to fruition is quite limited (Lopez, 2003; Marshall *et al.*, 2010). This study explores how three practicing and 12 preservice school leaders enrolled in an administrative program in the USA within the state of Ohio utilize Audacity and digital videos to reflect on their role as stewards of social justice and equity within US P-12 public schools. This inquiry began when the researcher received a Civic Engagement Grant in the fall of 2009 to investigate how to provide aspiring school leaders/practicing school leaders with spaces to critically examine and interrupt oppressive US school practices (also see Marshall and Olivia, 2010; Theoharis, 2007; Tooms and Boske, 2010; Valencia, 1997; Young and Brooks, 2008).

The article begins with a brief literature review regarding the significance of reflection and developing a school leadership identity. The researcher situates the discussion on social constructionist theory and attempts to move beyond the boundaries of educational leadership literature to foster an understanding regarding school leaders and their ways of knowing. Next, the researcher shares the methodology, findings, and discussion. The article concludes by exploring the use of audio and video reflections to support aspiring school leaders in developing new socially constructed school leadership identities to promote social justice and equity work.

Literature review

Overcoming oppressive perceptions of marginalized populations entails reconsidering the way in which school leaders are prepared. Furman and Shields (2005, p. 124) stress social justice is not based on a single attribute, but “a broad and holistic conception of learning”. Addressing issues of social justice are paramount to consciously act on ensuring education is just for all children (Shields, 2003). The use of reflective practice provides space for school leaders to deepen their understanding of self and their role in perpetuating oppressive school practices. The underlying goal for self-transformation begins from within (Elson, 1989; Terrell and Lindsey, 2009). Being both reflective (concerned with) and reflexive (responsive), which is at the heart of human existence, is instrumental to enhancing awareness of and commitment to actions taken and choosing what people live (Noddings, 2003). The challenge is finding ways to engage aspiring school leaders in practices that interrupt hegemonic[2] practices by permeating beyond school walls to improve the learning conditions and outcomes for children from disenfranchised populations.

A school leaders’ ability to critically reflect on the impact of lived experiences deepens, strengthens, and restores new identities (Elson, 1988). Social constructionist theory suggests identity is a socially constructed reality (Searle, 1995). The process involves an on-going mass-building of worldviews through dialogical societal interactions. These interactions gradually become embedded within human social existence through education and upbringing (Gergen, 1999). The experiences influence an individual’s thoughts, beliefs, use of language and traditions that legitimize what it means to become part of the identity of contemporary social citizens. Therefore, if school leaders’ identities are socially constructed, their identity development is relative to social contexts.

Too often, the main focus of understanding personal growth (i.e. comprehension, application, synthesis, and evaluation) centers on the cognitive domain rather than the challenges associated with developing the affective domain – the influence of values, beliefs, motivation, personal character and consciousness (Bloom, 1965; Krathwohl *et al.*, 1964).

Promoting reflective and reflexive practices serves as a valuable analytic tool for school leaders as they deepen their understanding regarding the interconnectedness of identity and the promotion of social justice work in public schools. This reflective process is vital to their development of strong, self-determining school leadership identities (Elson, 1988; Gorski, 2003; Noddings, 2003). Such examination fosters critical understanding regarding the influence of cultural, political and social contexts in the lives of marginalized student populations (Pounder *et al.*, 2002).

Those who prepare school leaders make curricular decisions impacting to what extent, if any, candidates increase their ability and willingness to deepen understanding regarding the intersections of personal identity and promoting equity and social justice. Curricular decisions, such as these, center on opportunities for candidates to engage in reflective activities. These pedagogical practices call for candidates to engage in risk-taking behaviors, which tend to be more effective when faculty intentionally create a climate of emotional safety (Capper *et al.*, 2006). It is essential for aspiring school leaders to feel safe, secure, and open to self-discovery. The establishment of safe reflective spaces encourages students to deepen their understanding, empathic responses and responsibility to address issues of equity and social justice. Noddings (2003) suggests creating safe spaces involves authentic caring – a moral attitude informed by complex skills promoting the emotional well-being of others. An emphasis is placed on the need for people to feel protected and safe in order to share experiences through their own words, images and feelings.

Context of the study

Students in this study enrolled in the university's first "Leading for Social Justice" course offered to preservice and practicing school leaders[3]. Students engage in activities centered on the following:

- increase awareness and responses towards issues of social justice and equity (Capper *et al.*, 2006; Furman and Shields);
- engage in critical inquiry that promotes social justice oriented practices through transformative pedagogy and transformational learning (Brown, 2004, 2006; Henderson and Gornik, 2005);
- encourage reflective practice to further develop a student's school leadership identity by looking within (Terrell and Lindsey, 2009); and
- immerse students in transformative field-based projects to improve the educational experiences of all children by creating spaces for preservice leaders to build bridges between themselves and those they serve, especially those who live on the margins (Boske, 2009a, b; Greene, 1995; Langer, 1953; Skrla *et al.*, 2009).

Each week students documented, described, and analyzed their lived experiences, beliefs and developing school leadership identity through audio and video reflections. Reflections capture how students understand the reflective process as well as events that further develop their school leadership identity. Students also discuss the impact of events they deem significant and to what extent, if any, they influence their decision-making practices. Students choose whether they utilize audio or video for their weekly reflections. Students are not limited to the time they have to share their thoughts each week. Students are provided links through the course homepage to download free

Audacity software for audio reflections. Students also have access to on-line tutoring sessions (for audio and video reflections), on-line technical support, and in-class training regarding audio and video recordings/uploading to Blackboard.

Methodology

The overarching question for this study is: how do graduate students understand issues of social justice and equity through a weekly reflective process utilizing audio and/or video software? Based in the tradition of grounded theory, this study examined how graduate students understood issues of social justice and equity through a weekly reflective process utilizing audio and/or video software (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The rationale for the selection of this methodology is based on what Charmaz (2006, p. 130) describes as an “approach that places priority on the phenomena of study and sees both data and analysis as created from shared experience and relationships with participants and other sources of data”, which includes the researcher. The method afford the researcher with a focus on one context, namely that of how participants understand issues of social justice and equity through audio and video weekly reflections.

Participants

A total of 15 graduate students from Ohio including one Black student (male), one Asian (Chinese), and 13 White students (seven males and four females) participated in this study. All of the students identify as heterosexual. One student identifies as an English Language Learner and spoke her native language at home. All of the participants identify as Christian. Three students hold school leadership positions (one high school assistant principal, one high school principal and one central office administrator). Of the remaining ten participants, seven hold teaching positions in US public schools and three are not employed in schools.

Data sources

A total of 15 weekly reflections (ranging from 10-40 minutes in length) are collected from each student for a total of 225. Students who choose to create video reflections post a link on Blackboard for peers in the “Leading for Social Justice” course as well as a password for the university’s UTube. Some students choose to post their video reflections on YouTube and provide a link for students in the course. Each week students respond to 10-25 questions centered on issues of identity (Delpit, 1995; Leary and Tangney, 2003; Tooms *et al.*, 2010), social justice (Furman and Shields, 2005; Marshall and Olivia, 2010), equity (Skrla *et al.*, 2009) and cultural proficiency (Terrell and Lindsey, 2009). Students respond to open-ended questions based on Terrell and Lindsey’s (2009) culturally proficient leadership framework and upload their responses to Blackboard, the university’s Utube or YouTube. All audio and video reflections are transcribed. Students are provided feedback to check for accuracy throughout the course.

Analytic process

The data consists of participants’ reflective responses, which are gathered via standardized open-ended weekly questions that allow for freedom in response as well as written narratives regarding students’ experiences with audio and video software. All reflections are transcribed and coded. Charmaz (2006, p. 46) suggests, “Coding is the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data”.

Open coding was used to break down, analyze, compare and categorize data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Incidents and events are labeled and grouped via constant comparisons, which leads to the emergence of themes, properties and patterns within the texts of the reflections (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Analytic memos are created throughout the research process to track data and establish patterns (Charmaz, 2006; Maxwell, 2005). Open codes are combined with other conceptually similar open codes to form axial codes. The axial codes are collected, placed into categories, and developed into the themes presented in this study. The methods support the study's internal validity by triangulating the data with field notes, audio/video reflections and written narratives (Fielding and Fielding, 1986; Maxwell, 1992). Emergent themes are used as a framework to present the findings based on:

- how participants understand the use of audio and video software as a tool for the reflective process; and
- how participants utilize audio and video reflections to understand issues of social justice and equity as school leaders.

The actual analysis consists of naming the data with the content of the reflections (Charmaz, 2006). This is followed by constant comparison, which provides a more selective focus regarding the most frequently recurring codes (Charmaz, 2006). Conceptual categories are identified, which reflects commonalities (Harry *et al.*, 2005). Theoretical saturation is achieved when new data about the categories no longer emerge from the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

Limitations

The limitations of weekly open-ended reflective questions center on the researcher's interpretation of cultural competency and a student's ability and comfort to respond freely to questions posed (Scheurich, 1997). Findings are specific to the students enrolled at one US Northeastern University's "Leading for Social Justice" course. This study centers on the experiences of predominantly White students with two Students of Color. Despite these limitations, this work contributes academic knowledge regarding ways to encourage and promote critical consciousness in preservice school leaders that extends discussion about social justice and equity issues in US public schools.

Findings

Findings indicate participants perceive the use of audio and video as a valuable tool to increase their awareness and meaning-making regarding their role as leaders of social justice. Three emerging themes reveal the following:

- (1) emotional safety;
- (2) understanding the learner self; and
- (3) transformative changes in self.

Emotional safety

Audio and video reflections offer new opportunities, experiences, and approaches to deepening participants' ways of knowing and responding to those they serve. Within the first month, they express feelings of anxiety during the reflective process. For instance, Jonathan, a White male high school principal, notes, "Using new software and getting

comfortable with this open space was really tough at first. Once I became more comfortable with myself, I knew it was okay.” Others noted becoming familiar with the power of voice and learning how to allow themselves to openly express their thoughts are also new experiences. For instance, Barbara, a White female teacher, stresses how she “dealt” with her anxiety by editing her audio reflections, because she became “nervous about what might come out of her mouth if she just kept talking off the cuff”. Tyson, a White male, notes how often he would “stop the recording” or “rephrase his thoughts” or “cut out some parts that came out wrong”.

They also express the need “sound right”, “not offend their peers with real thoughts”, and “make their reflections sound good.” Participants recognize the use of audio creates spaces to examine the influence of voice through a person’s tone, volume, pace of speech, silence, laughter, and voice fluctuation. For instance, Parker, a White male stresses, “my power of voice was finally heard. It was weird to feel free like that.” And for Audra, a White female, she stresses how “doing these recordings really put me out there and did not let me hide behind the written word.” For participants in this study, they express the need to utilize “politically correct language”, stress the significance of “sounding friendly” or “having a nice voice.” For Rachel, an Asian female, “the way my voice sounds tells other people how I really feel about social justice and what areas I am uncomfortable”.

Participants identify the reflective spaces and choice of medium as opportunities for risk taking. For example, Sidney, a White female recognizes how “recording her voice allows her to keep thinking about these issues, but writing it down would block that process”. They recognize written words provide more “rigid” spaces to “control” their words and emotions; however, audio/video reflections create “more open spaces” for “freedom of expression.” As participants become more comfortable with the sound of their voices, silences, and tones, they recognize how their anxiety levels decrease. For instance, Parker, a White male, compares his initial discomfort with audio reflections:

I didn’t like reflecting like this. I sat here and talked into a microphone listening to myself think out loud. It’s was hard to share what I was really thinking. What if I said things that sounded offensive? Now, I find myself sitting with silences and realizing they are okay [...]

Participants realize deepening their understanding of the impact of lived experiences translates into the need for safe spaces. For instance, Tanya, a White female, notes the need to “feel comfortable and not judged for being the leader I am now [...] but realizing it’s okay to take baby steps at getting there.” Such spaces afford them opportunities to pay closer attention to the ways in which they speak about issues of social justice and equity as well as their ability to challenge themselves and others to think critically. Many feel uncomfortable with silence and recognize their need to “fill” silence with “talk”. As they progress through the reflective process, they recognize these “silences” as “purposeful” and “meaningful”. For example, Thomas, a White male, stresses, “I realize it’s okay to sit and just be quiet while I am responded to the questions. Sometimes I just need to think about it for a minute.” Other participants utilize the spaces to openly express thoughts they “normally” would have “hidden” including how a question “took them by surprise” or considering how they may “never have stopped to think about that before.”

For those who choose to utilize video for their weekly reflections, they emphasize the significance of visual contexts as well as audio in understanding their stance on issues of social justice and equity. At first, Martha, a White female, stresses her tendency

to “write everything down first before shooting the reflection just to make sure she has everything right.” Others emphasize the need to “look professional”, “be aware of body language”, and “be careful” not to “expose your true self”. The visual context is deemed “more intimidating”, because as Tyson stresses, “you have nowhere to hide [. . .] it’s just you and that camera.”

Creating emotional safety is critical to participants in this study; however, they also recognize how text creates barriers that often provide a different type of safety:

I used to write everything down before I would read it out loud and record it. I wanted to say the right thing, because I was scared of what might come out of my mouth. But I learned something. I can rehearse what I want to say, but it isn’t helping me understand who I really am [. . .] the student I misjudged in the hallway and made cry saw the real me. Making these reflections is scary. I cannot hide. The real me comes out if I just let go. I no longer write down my responses. I don’t even read the questions ahead of time. I live in the moment rather than being afraid of what I might say. I learn so much more about myself this way.

Participants recognize difficulties associated with examining their experiences, identifying feelings associated with those experiences, and realizing the implications of these discoveries in how they serve children. Some participants express “shame”, “guilt”, and “shock”. Barbara, a White female asks herself:

Did I really say that? I can’t believe I just said that, but I did. I really need to look into this [. . .] I don’t know why that just came out of my mouth.

And Wallace, a White male, stresses, “I can’t believe after listening to myself how often I am one of those people who are still marginalizing and oppressing our students.”

The use of audio and video as a medium for their reflections provides participants with spaces to express their challenges, frustrations, and anxiety of identifying as resistors of change; however, they also stress the need for support and guidance throughout utilizing these spaces, which encourages them to continue their journeys or to “shut down”. As Marcus, a Black male, notes:

I feel encouraged and that makes all the difference. I know people care about what I have to say and that someone is really listening, because the questions asked of me let me know someone is there all the way.

For these participants, creating emotionally safe spaces affords them larger spaces to broaden their awareness and take risks, which they deem significant to developing themselves as leaders for social justice.

Understanding the learner self

Addressing issues of social justice and equity are new concepts to participants. Because they are not familiar with the term social justice or its implications for children and their families in US public schools, addressing unjust school practices through audio and video reflection is often identified as “uncomfortable”, “emotional”, and “stressful”. They describe themselves as deepening their awareness of US social and political movements and as well as their role in perpetuating oppressive school practices. Students of Color share lived experiences of racism and classism as well as negative assumptions made by members of the dominant culture, because of a person’s alleged immigration status or native language. They recognize the need to utilize the spaces to deepen their role

in empowering other marginalized groups, but realize the need to deepen their understanding of self first. For instance, Rachel notes:

I forget to see the children living in poverty and overlook what they live as I have forgotten what I live [...] I realize now I need to understand me before I can empower others.

White students examine their role in perpetuating oppressive school practices throughout the reflective process recognizing the role of power, privilege, and entitlement. Some White males express frustration, anger, and sometimes even rage regarding issues of power and privilege. Many of these participants raise their voices, identify emotions such as anger and outrage, and one White male struck his text book with his open hand in an effort to express his frustration with the author who did not seem to acknowledge the marginalization he experiences as a White male. Specific issues centering on power and privilege through audio/video reflections provides another layer of insight for White males as they grapple with the implications of their racial identity in serving children and families from disenfranchised populations. Two White males express the need to “shut down” and use silence to demonstrate their need to remain “silent”, because they “felt defeated” by issues presented in texts. As these participants work through the reflective process, their voices calm, their speech slows down, and their silences are justified as “thinking about the material.” They emphasize the need “to come to terms themselves” and these “very difficult issues”:

I feel like I should crawl into a hole and stay there (silence). This stuff is really beating me up (silence). I didn't think I had all this power and privilege. It's frustrating for me to think the world is as bad as the authors make it seem [...] maybe it is [...] (silence). I don't know where to begin right now (silence). It's overwhelming (silence) (Parker).

White males make conscious efforts to address silences and feelings such as being overwhelmed. The audio reflections provide spaces to explore themselves as leaders as well as deepen their understanding of how people understand them through voice. For instance, as Parker notes, “I realize now I have the freedom to carry on a meaningful dialogue with myself and look within and confront issues I realized I really need to face.”

Participants recognize the need for spaces to examine their emerging school leadership identities. The fluidity of using audio and video is appealing to participant, because, as Rachel notes:

I can keep developing who I am and don't feel restricted. I get used to doing this type of work and then I think I will miss it when I finish this class.

Participants emphasize the need for faculty to provide opportunities in which they are not judged for their biases and preconceived notions, specifically for marginalized populations. Faculty feedback is noted as essential to this growth-oriented process:

I appreciate knowing someone can really hear what I am saying and I didn't see it myself. I like the questions asked of me when I turn in my reflections, because I can talk about them next time, think about them during the week, and they really help me talk it through. It's like we are carrying on a real conversation and someone is cheering me along no matter what mistakes I make along the way (Barbara).

These spaces are deemed “significant” to becoming more attuned to their “real” or “true” selves. The “power of spoken words” and meaning-making provide a context for participants to contemplate the implications of oppressive terminology used

throughout these reflections including, “subgroups”, “disabled kids”, “SPED kids”, and “poor kids”:

I found the words just rolling off my tongue when I spoke. I wouldn't do that in a written reflection. I would have caught myself, but when you just respond to a question openly, it's amazing what comes out of your mouth. Obviously, I think this way, but I didn't realize it until I started making these audio reflections. I have a lot to work on (Samantha, a White female).

In order to further develop the learner self, participants stress the need for intellectual and emotional guidance throughout the reflective process. They express the need for faculty to ask “critical questions” and engage in their reflective practices by “pushing” them to think about “what is really being said”. When faculty support participants in engaging in a wide range of emotions throughout the reflective process, they allow themselves to “feel” and “express themselves in new ways”:

I discovered I cannot only talk this way during my reflections. I have to live this way outside of recording. I looked inside and didn't like what I saw. I need to change from the inside out and it can't stop just because I leave my school (Rachel).

Participants realize their initial inability to express themselves verbally due to limited vocabularies, unfamiliarity with the courses areas of interests, and limited spaces to think critically about marginalized populations in schools. Using audio/video as a medium for reflection shifts participants' focus from summarizing texts to critically reflecting on themselves as learners.

Transformative changes in self

Participants describe a change in the way in which they understand themselves as school leaders, and their ability and willingness to articulate their stance on social justice and equity issues. They recognize sitting taller in video reflections, annunciating words they deem significant in supporting their claims, and feeling comfortable responding to reflective questions without reviewing them before recording. During reflections 10-15, participants shift their focus from focusing on self to attending to issues of invisibility for students who live on the margins. They engage in language centered on models of ethical schooling including, justice, care, and equity. They question who benefits from the structures as well as who defines the existence of such structures? For instance, Jonathan notes the need to “act out of compassion” and “use his privilege to reach the people who need it the most”. They develop an ethic of caring which evolves from an initial focus on self, to broadening awareness of “others”, to developing meaningful relationships, and to protecting those who are underserved.

They make considerations in more holistic ways, including caring, empowering, and honoring. This shift in how they articulate their ways of knowing include identifiers such as bridge builders (advocates who eradicate social injustices and inequities), catalysts (people who interrupt hegemonic practices) or movers and shakers (people who create alliances to promote socially just practices). They emphasize the need to continue participating in the reflective process beyond the final course date. Participants recognize these spaces as transformative due to opportunities including engaging in dialogue with self and others who are different, yet often grounded in moral and ethical principles.

Many express the desire to incorporate audio and video reflections on their campuses in language arts and social studies. For instance, Rachel how her audio reflections

are used as spaces for her peers to consider the implications of their school practices. Her principal asked her permission to share her reflections openly with her peers to provide spaces for others to develop understandings of various people:

I was so surprised to hear from the school leader and teachers about my reflections. They were honored I shared them with them. They took my stance on issues of social justice seriously. Many of the teachers told me they felt the same way, but did not have the courage to express their thoughts in the way I expressed mine. The audio helped my school leader and teachers feel my passion for the children who have been forgotten because they do not have the money to afford the resources we offer at school. The teachers heard my pain and guilt I felt because I was one of the people who perpetuated practices that did not serve all children. The audio reflections were a powerful tool for helping people understand the reflective process and how I changed as a school leader (Rachel).

Participants emphasize the need to continue the reflective process and utilize audio and video as tools to express the need to develop meaningful relationships with children and families, especially those from underserved populations. They emphasize how the process and technology provide new ways of knowing and responding. For example, Martha, a White female, stresses how her reflections are used to share her thoughts with colleagues on her team in an effort to encourage them to engage in similar processes to understand the implications of self and decision making. Another participant Jonathan uses audio and visual reflections to build bridges between teachers and students on his campus in order to foster critical, collaborative thinking. And Rachel's reflections provide possibilities for teachers and school leaders to understand the complexities of this growth-oriented process in an effort to address the injustices of children living in poverty.

Participants in this study emphasize the need to consider the use of audio and visual reflections as tools to look within and reflect on the impact of their school leadership identity on decision-making practices. For instance, Marcus initiates a social justice group for young Black males on his campus to provide safe emotional spaces for students to critically reflect on the implications of their identities in being successful in school. Participants express interest in providing youth and faculty with opportunities to reflect on the impact of their identities in leading for social justice and ability to interrupt oppressive practices. The integration of technology and reflective practice affords these participants opportunities to reconsider the need to integrate innovative pedagogy and tools to inspire others to work toward using their voices for meaningful change.

Discussion

Findings suggest using audio and video reflections creates spaces for school leaders to express levels of anxiety regarding awareness, ability, and willingness to address issues of social justice and equity in US public schools. Utilizing this medium offers participants fluid spaces to broaden understanding of self and provide a holistic conception of learning (Furman and Shields, 2005). By creating emotionally safe spaces, participants engage in the reflective process, deepen their understanding of lived experiences and understand their role in perpetuating oppressive school practices. The use of audio and video provides a conceptual model centering on the creation of innovative reflective spaces for transformative change, which further develops participants' understanding of their school leadership identities and need to lead for social justice (Shields, 2003) (Figure 1). The dotted lines suggest this model is multilayered and complex with transformative

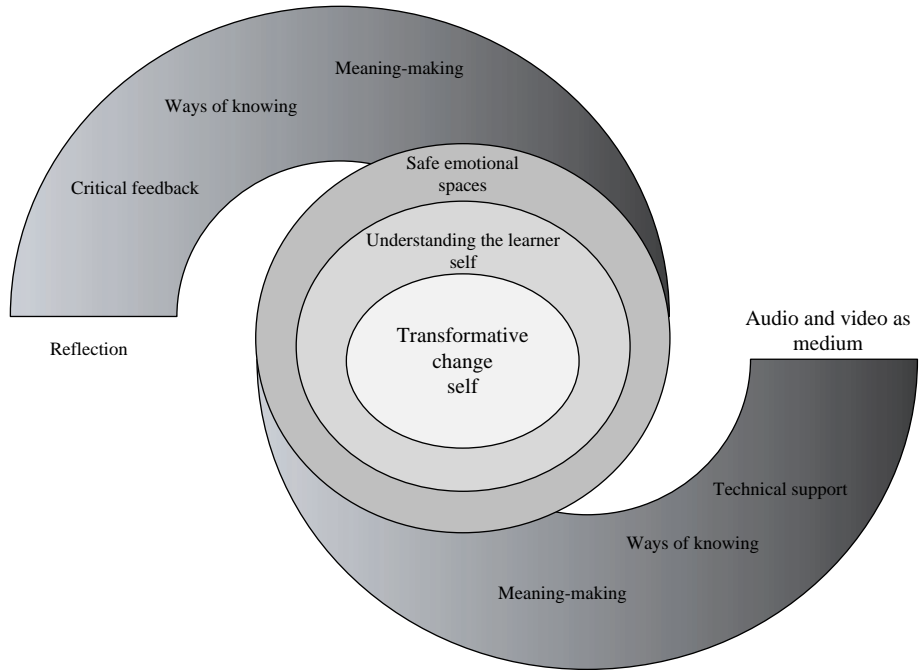


Figure 1.
Framework for merging
audio/video as medium
and reflection for
transformative change

change occurring due to interactions between reflective practices, audio/visual mediums, sense of knowing, ways of understanding, and the learner self. For example, critical feedback may influence the participant's willingness to engage in technical support or meaning making with the reflection process may influence in drawing meaning from using technology as a tool for developing ways of knowing. Reflective tools document participants' emotionally laden process of looking within, their meaning-making processes, and transformation of self (Boske, 2009a, b). Encouraging both reflective (concerned with) and reflexive responses through audio/video as medium are instrumental to increasing awareness and commitment to addressing issues of social justice and equity within participants' professional and personal lives (Noddings, 2003).

As they gain insight to understanding the influence of identity, emotions, and lived experiences, they utilize technology as a vehicle for developing new ways of knowing, which support processes aligned with transforming their willingness and ability to interrupt oppressive school practices (Langer, 1953; Terrell and Lindsey, 2009). They emphasize purpose, passion, and call for school leaders to embark on reflective practices centered on addressing issues of social justice and equity; however, they that despite an increase in their awareness, developing self as the learner may be uncomfortable at times, so there is a need to promote safe emotional spaces for those who engage in this type of work (Capper *et al.*, 2006).

Although participants may express good intentions to empower those who live on the margins, they also realize good intentions are not enough to interrupt oppressive school practices on their campuses (Shields, 2003). What is essential is a critical look at self and immersing oneself in an ongoing, supportive process in which faculty provide guidance

in building participants' intellectual capacity (Brown, 2006). This ongoing process influences how they understand and make-meaning from their lived experiences, which alter their learner self and new ways of knowing and responding to the world are internalized into their leadership identities.

As participants critically acknowledge the creation of transformative selves (Elson, 1988; Shields, 2003), they realize the need to understand empowering those who live on the margins is not something a school leader can do for others, but creates spaces under which school leaders can engage in such practices. However, participants describe throughout their reflections the need to understand the impact of socially constructed realities and decisions made for those who have been silenced (Searle, 1995). Merging technology and reflective practice engages participants in the community of dialogue with self and others. They make meaning from engaging with their environments through sensory exploration (i.e. sight, sound) (Boske, n.d.), which creates spaces participants to consider their actions and reflect upon their impact (Ellsworth, 2005; Springgay, 2008). They recognize how their new transformative selves are both self and co-constructed (with peers, family members, instructors, and community at large) and are embedded within specific cultural, political, and societal contexts. Participants utilize their new boundaries, which influence their ability to engage in changes through the agency of individuals.

Conclusion

It is evident educational leadership programs must strive to provide safe spaces for students to develop dispositions toward interrupting hegemonic school practices through activism (Marshall and Olivia, 2010; Sleeter, 1996). Social justice leaders are agents of change in schools and understand the impact of their identity in addressing the lived experiences of disenfranchised populations. This stance perpetuates the need for discovering the influence of reflecting on the emotional-laden process of deepening empathic responses and ways of knowing (Langer, 1953; Terrell and Lindsey, 2009), which are necessary steps to committing to social justice and equity work (Brown, 2004, 2006; Marshall and Olivia, 2010; Theoharis, 2007).

Further inquiry is needed to understand how audio and video reflections support the exploration of developing a school leader's identity towards the promotion of social justice oriented work as well as understanding how transformative leadership is defined within international contexts. Further inquiry is also needed to understand to what extent, if any, school leaders sustain their new school leadership identities to promote this type of work; how they negotiate these identities in schools when they are perceived as threatening to the status quo; and to what extent, if any, do they continue to merge technology and reflection to understand self and facilitate moral dialogue.

Faculty who engage in the preparation of school leaders should consider the significance of providing safe reflective spaces for students to deepen their understanding of what it means to lead for social justice. The most significant insights from this study suggest the need to provide spaces for school leaders to explore negotiations of identity within organizational contexts. Critically assessing how to implement supportive, nurturing spaces requires a hypersensitive assessment of programmatic climate. This framework is both complex and demanding; however, if school leaders are willing to deepen their critical consciousness and engage in transformative leadership practices by addressing issues of social justice and equity in schools, then faculty must be willing

to implement new approaches that offer opportunities for transformation and meaningful change. This type of work is essential to school leaders who perceive themselves as catalysts for transformative change.

Notes

1. Marginalization due to person's race, class, gender, ability (both mental and physical), religion, immigration status, language and sexual identity (Marshall and Olivia, 2010).
2. The belief that one cultural group is superior over another group (e.g. Whites are superior to Blacks or heterosexuals are superior to people who identify as lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/queer (LGBTQ)) (Joseph, 2002).
3. Coursework included weekly audio and video reflections (Terrell and Lindsey, 2009), dialogue regarding the development of self-identities and school leadership identity (Delpit, 1995; Leary and Tangney, 2003), equity audits (Skrla *et al.*, 2009), social justice research (Furman and Shields, 2005; Marshall and Olivia, 2010) and artmaking (Eisner, 2002; Greene, 1995; Langer, 1953; Shapiro, 2010).

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