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Leadership Preparation Programs and Social Justice, Lessons Learned from a Graduate School of Education

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Leadership Preparation Programs and Social Justice, Lessons Learned from a Graduate School of Education

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this study to God and my family. Through God's faithfulness, mercy, and grace, I was able to complete this endeavor. Without God's presence and help, I would not have been able to have the strength, perseverance, or knowledge to finish this dissertation. His direction, mercy, and grace sustained me during this time, and He never left me.

My family has been my biggest fans. They have flooded me with love and support. My wife, Daphne, has been a constant supporter, and she is the love of my life. She has taught me about love, and she has been a true blessing to my life. My children, Coleman, Callie, and John, have taught me more than anyone. They are so special, and they bring me constant joy. I want to thank my parents, Nellie, Donald, and Tommie, for giving me their love and helping me along life's bumpy journey.

Finally, without my two grandmothers, Ann and Nelson, I would not be where I am today. Their wisdom, unconditional love, and constant encouragement were a steady diet for me as I grew into manhood. Without their example and advice, this journey would not have been possible. I praise God for their leadership, wisdom, and passion for God.

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I appreciate the members of my dissertation committee and their willingness to serve in this capacity. Their feedback, insight, and commitment to learning are appreciated and made a difference in my academic efforts. I am appreciative of the dissertation process, and they were instrumental in assisting me.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the influence of a graduate school of education on adult learning to determine if transformative learning has taken place. This qualitative study analyzed the stories and experiences of six graduate students to determine if there had been transformative learning and if transformative learning had influenced leadership behaviors that promote social justice in schools. A steady demographic shift over the years has resulted in schools with a higher percentage of minority and poor students. Many of these students are in marginalized in schools. In these marginalized schools, social justice reforms are necessary to address the needs of all students. As the principals encountered issues of social justice through the graduate school's courses, their awareness of social justice increased and their comfort level for discussing these issues was enhanced. The participants identified the professors' influence, diversity of the students enrolled in the courses, and the need for self-reflection as key components to their adult learning. This study suggests the need for leadership preparation programs to examine their curriculums and pedagogy to maximize transformative learning and the ability to promote social justice.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Chesterfield County principal is under fire for separating middle school students by race and gender.

Chesterfield-Ruby Middle School Principal Andrea Hampton told WSOC-TV she wanted to give each group of students a pep talk ahead of state testing.

"It was just a big mess," parent Darryl Lindsey said. "My kids came home really upset about it."

Many parents were outraged over meetings that happened inside the school. The district admits that the principal met with African-American students as a group as well as an all-girl group and an all-boy group.

In a letter sent home to parents, Hampton said the meetings were designed to help students and "to motivate each group to do their personal best" on a state test, but many people in the community view the meetings as divisive.

Chesterfield-Ruby Middle School issued a response:

"Chesterfield-Ruby Middle School Principal Dr. Andrea Hampton held several meetings with students on May 1 in preparation for the upcoming statewide Palmetto Assessment of State Standards testing. These meetings consisted of federally identified subgroups of students whom previous testing had shown achievement gaps on parts of PASS. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss previous test results among the subgroups, to set goals for the upcoming standardized test, and to deliver a "pep talk" to encourage students to do their best on the assessment. Hampton explained the purpose of the meetings to parents through the use of a letter to parents, the school's mass phone messaging system and the school's social media to clarify any misunderstanding about the meetings' purpose" (Bilkey, 2014).

Trends In Education

As schools continue to be scrutinized by government leaders, parents, and accountability systems, there is immense pressure on school leaders to produce results as measured by standardized tests, and graduation rates. Test scores must be raised each year, and students must perform at their highest level on achievement measures. Accountability systems are raising awareness to student achievement. Moreover, accountability systems in America are illuminating achievement gaps between white students and non-white students as well as the achievement gap between disabled students and non-disabled students. According to Murphy (2002), the modern school leader must create a balance between three important factors. These factors are school improvement, social justice, and building a democratic community. As a result, a different type of leadership has emerged in the midst of this accountability storm. This new type of leader will address the needs of all types of students and learners. This new leader will explore ways to eliminate programs, practices, and policies that create marginalized students. This new leadership will be challenging; however, it has the opportunity to transform schools with a more inclusive environment and promote social justice reform.

This leadership is a good start and will make large demands of a school leader's time; however, this is not enough. School leaders have to focus on school improvement, equity, and examine the performance of all subgroups present within the school population. As I examine and discuss this issue with both caution and respect, it is evident that everyone is not ready to have this conversation or face the inequality issues present in today's schools. The example of Chesterfield-Ruby Middle School in

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Chesterfield, South Carolina sheds light on an issue that many may not want to discuss or even acknowledge. When the story about this school broke throughout the community, many parents were upset and local media arrived on the scene. Parents of the black students were appalled at the fact that their children were singled out for poor test performance. Parents of the white students felt excluded by the principal's "pep" talk for only the black students. These responses demonstrate the polarizing influence of racial issues and the mounting pressure of accountability measures present in the nation's educational system.

This incident caused a response in this school district, and it was not the most pleasant of times for these school leaders. When the accountability system for South Carolina is analyzed, subgroup performance is a part of the school's measure of success. Therefore, it is natural for a school leader to look for multiple avenues and approaches to increase student performance on the different achievement measures. However, as this example further illustrates, school leaders must be careful and meticulous when handling these issues.

Despite the progress made to eliminate achievement gaps in this country, there are still significant differences in student achievement among different ethnic groups. In South Carolina on the End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP) in 2013, 88.7% of white students passed the Algebra 1 exam compared to 73% of African American students. When comparing disabled students to non-disabled students, the differences are greater. On the Algebra 1 exam in 2013, 85.6% of non-disabled students passed the exam compared to only 54.7% of disabled students. These differences are larger in Biology 1 with only 12.7% of white students failing the exam compared to 36.1% of

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African American students and 26.1% Hispanic students failing the exam in 2013. Educators also see differences on these exams when comparing students with full-pay meals and students with subsidized meals (SCDE, 2014).

On the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) in South Carolina, differences among the different ethnic groups can be seen at all grade levels and subject areas. In third grade reading on the 2013 administration of PASS, 10.7% of white students did not meet standard compared to 26.5% of African American students and 22.9% of Hispanic students. In third grade math on the 2013 administration of PASS, 18.9% of white students did not meet standard compared to 47.4% of African American students and 36.6% of Hispanic students. In 5th grade social studies during the same year, 18.7% of white students did not meet standard compared to 44.1% of African American students and 30.5% of Hispanic students (SCDE, 2014).

These trends can be seen on national assessments in the United States as measured by the mean scores on the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT). For critical reading in 2011-2012, white students had a mean score of 527 compared to 428 for African American students. On the mathematics portion during the same year, white students' mean score is 536 compared to 428 for African American students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). As these statistics indicate, there are differences in student achievement when comparing different ethnic groups in the United States.

Other trends and statistics are also alarming when we examine school discipline, teacher equity, college readiness, and early learning. The United States Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) released data on these four areas for the 2011 –

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2012 school year. The findings from this report reveals significant disparities in each of the four areas as students of color are more likely to be expelled, have access to far less experienced teachers, and less access to advanced courses in high school (USDE, 2012). Although only 16% of students are African American in schools, they represent 27% of the students referred to law enforcement and 31% of the students arrested for a criminal offense. White students comprise 51% of the student population; however, they represent only 41% of the referrals to law enforcement and 37% of school-related arrests (USDE, 2012). Many of these disparities start before students leave preschool. For example, African American students represent 18% of the preschool enrollment, but they represent 48% of the preschool population with more than one day of suspension (USDE, 2012). These three tables indicate other areas of concern as it relates to equity in schools.

Table 1.1: Students with access to the full range of math and science courses by race and ethnicity

American Indian	Asian	White	Two or more races	Hispanic	Black	Pacific Islander
47%	81%	71%	78%	67%	57%	68%

Source: United States Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2011-2012

Table 1.2: Percent of students enrolled in schools with more than 20 percent of teachers not yet certified by student race and ethnicity

American Indian	Asian	White	Two or more races	Hispanic	Black	Pacific Islander
2.1%	2.4%	1.5%	2.4%	3.0%	6.7%	1.8%

Source: United States Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2011-2012

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Students with disabilities face similar disparities in educational statistics. While students with disabilities represent 13% of the total school population, 25% of these students will be referred to law enforcement (USDE, 2012). Table 1.1 provides evidence that reflects the lack of opportunities for students of color to have access to a full range of science and math courses as compared to their white peers. While 71% of white students have this access, only 57% of black students and only 47% American Indian students have the same access. Table 1.2 shows that black students are more than four times likely to be enrolled in schools with more than twenty percent of the teachers not certified as compared to their white peers. Moreover, from the above two tables, it is evident that inequities in opportunities to take advanced courses and have certified teachers exist between students of color and white students.

When I enrolled as a graduate student in the Educational Leadership and Policies (EDLP) department in 2009, I had no intentions of exploring the idea of social justice. In fact, I did not have the term or concept on my radar. Moreover, none of my previous graduate coursework for my principal preparation program had even touched on the issues of social justice or the promotion of equity. However, my experience was about to change.

Although the term "social justice" was not used in the program, two of my professors took me on a journey of self-reflection and critical analyses of my belief and value system as both an educator and white man. Through this coursework, I began to look at issues in education with a more critical lens, began promoting more dialogue among my staff about race and how it influences schools, started examining ways to better serve all students and parents, and questioning many of the policies and practices

present in our school systems. Through my courses, I felt that I had benefitted from the experience and opportunity to have discussions with other graduate students and educators throughout the state of South Carolina. As I continued to reflect of this journey, I began to wonder if others had similar experiences.

I began to compare my experiences in my principal preparation program to these new experiences. In my principal preparation program, I had taken over thirty hours of coursework on management, school finance, instructional leadership, and school law. However, those experiences had been void of any discussion of social justice in schools. Therefore, I reiterate that the discussions on social justice and inequity were new to my consciousness to include both my personal and professional experiences. Due to this fact, I believe it made this adult learning more influential and relevant to me. The relevance and influence of this coursework were invaluable as I continue my work as a school leader.

Through my experiences and research, I began to understand more about adult learning. Also, as I listened to others, talked to others, and reflected on my own thinking, I began to create my own ideas about our world and formulate an interpretation about the best ways to approach school leadership. Mezirow (1997) identifies this type of adult learning as transformative learning. Moreover, he identifies transformative learning as an adult learning experience that moves individuals towards "autonomous thinking" (p.5). When adult moved towards a transformative experience, they have the ability to "become critically reflective of one's own assumptions and to effectively engage in discourse to validate one's belief through the experiences of others who share universal values" (p.9).

As I reflected on my own journey and adult learning, I began to have questions about the learning of others and how it compared to my own. These questions led me to do this study and to answere the following research questions:

1) In what ways have school leaders who have completed post-graduate coursework at a graduate school of education, experienced transformative learning as it relates to issues of race and social justice in schools?
2) In what ways has this mindful transformative learning shaped leadership behavior to lead others to a transformed perspective?

Moreover, it provided me with insights and answers to the most effective way to prepare leaders for social justice reform. Also, as I attempted to answer these questions, I was able to explore an effective curriculum for leadership preparation, transformative adult learning, and continue to learn more about my own transformation.

A curriculum that focuses on the promotion of social justice needs to have its roots in both teacher preparation and principal preparation programs. As I move through this study and examine the literature, I will offer further recommendations for leadership preparation programs and higher education.

As we continue to move further into the 21st century, school and students will benefit from educators with the care, concern, and courage to lead for social justice. I believe that this program has increased the promotion of social justice in the schools and assisted school leaders in transforming their thinking to move others in a direction of promoting social justice in the schools of South Carolina. This study will illuminate this belief through the stories and data collected from the participants. It is my hope that this study will increase the awareness of social justice, provide practical applications for school leaders to promote social justice in their schools, and provide recommendations

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for higher education to provide more meaningful experiences for their students to prepare them to lead the diverse schools of the 21st century.

As school leaders approach their work in the 21st century, a different approach to leadership must be considered with a social justice focus. This leadership must consist of different strategies, skills, and a strong moral commitment to explore ways to educate all students regardless of their background, race, learning ability, or socio-economic status. A focus on social justice is needed to address the shifting demographics of American society, meet the requirements of accountability mandates, and seek solutions to the present inequities present in education.

Data projections predict a sharp increase in minority populations over the next thirty years with the minority population becoming the majority by the year 2050 (Marx, 2006). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), by 2024, the overall percentage of white students will decrease to 46 percent (NCES, 2012). Lawmakers and policy-makers have increased the awareness and pressure of addressing the achievement gap by passing legislation that focusing on overall academic achievement and the performance of different racial groups (NCLB, 2001). Inequities in education are present throughout the institution of schools. These inequities include, but are not limited to, teacher quality, student discipline, course offerings, and special education identification (Office of Civil Rights, 2014).

Leaders can begin learning how to address these inequities by developing an awareness of the dynamics of inequity. An awareness of educational inequities will provide a foundation for exploring such topics as oppression, white privilege, and

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institutional racism. With an ongoing focus to develop this critical view of the education system, leaders will have a stronger background to develop other skills and strategies needed to promote social justice in their schools.

Purpose Of Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of educational leadership coursework on the behaviors and adult learning of school leaders in the area of social justice. As the literature reflects, school leadership preparation programs are often not providing relevant and meaningful coursework to empower school administrators to meet the challenges of advocating for social justice in the institution of school. In this age of accountability and emphasis on data, schools are pressured to show gains and improvement in the achievement of all students. Due to this pressure and the importance of equity, it is imperative that school leaders analyze the policies, practices, and perceptions that may hinder some groups of students from achieving a higher level of success in the classroom. This research will provide practical applications for school leaders to advocate for social justice in their schools. Furthermore, this research will provide insights and recommendations for institutions of higher learning to develop a meaningful, focused, and practical curriculum for school leadership preparation and development.

Overview Of Dissertation

This study continues as I frame my research and move forward with my discussion of social justice and leadership preparation. My dissertation consists of five chapters that include the introduction, literature review, design of study, findings, and

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conclusions. Through this research, I offer practical recommendations for the training of social justice school leaders as they tackle, face, and work through the education of all students.

In chapter two, I review current literature on social justice and the preparation of school leaders. This review of literature includes the definition of social justice, social justice leadership in schools, social justice leadership preparation programs, beliefs and practices of social justice school leaders, and recommendations from the literature for leadership preparation programs to promote social justice. This chapter will present research on the need for leadership preparation programs to address the issue of social justice as they prepare pre-service school administrators.

In chapter three, I will provide the framework and methodology for my research design. This chapter consists of 10 sections: (a) positionality (b) conceptual framework (c) research questions (d) theoretical framework and research methodology (e) research participants and setting (f) data collection (g) data analysis (h) ethical considerations (i) trustworthiness/ authenticity (j) limitations. From this description of the research, I will provide a framework for future research and provide a full description of this qualitative study. For this research, I investigated the following research questions:

1) In what ways have school leaders who have completed post-graduate coursework at a graduate school of education, experienced transformative learning as it relates to issues of race and social justice in schools?
2) In what ways has this mindful transformative learning shaped leadership behavior to lead others to a transformed perspective?

In chapter four, I present my findings from the interviews and qualitative data collected in my research. From this data, I tell the story of the adult learning experiences

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of students enrolled in the Educational Leadership and Policies courses at the University of South Carolina as it relates to social justice, meritocracy, institutional racism, white privilege, and other topics covered in the courses. These stories provide insight into the nature of adult learning and determine the role of leadership preparation in preparing adults for work with social justice. Furthermore, through this data collection, I will be able to consider the influence of the adult learning on the leadership practices of these school leaders.

As I completed this study, I found the stories of my participants to be fascinating. Furthermore, they were very similar to own experiences and adult learning journey. Self-reflection, diversity, and the professors made a difference in the learning of the participants in this study. Without these influences, the courses, assignments, and discussions would not have had the same meaning. This study illuminated differences in the responses of the black and white participants. Also, from the narratives of my participants, the possibility of new learning being transferred and conveyed to others under my participants' leadership is likely.

Finally, chapter five presents conclusions, recommendations for leadership preparation programs, and recommendations for future research. Through this research and experience, it is my hope that educators will gain an awareness of social justice work, universities will expand and improve their leadership preparation by focusing on issues of social justice, and school districts will establish hiring practices to place prepared social justice school leaders in the proper position of power and influence. Without this type of partnership, courage and collaboration, it will be difficult to change the culture and

climate of many school systems in America to reflect a positive, faithful commitment to educating all children.

Rationale And Uniqueness For Study

As an educational leader, I constantly feel the pressure to educate all students to their highest potential, eliminate achievement gaps between different subgroups of students, and create an inclusive environment for students at my school. When I entered the Educational Leadership Program at the University of South Carolina, I had no idea that my learning and professional growth would be enhanced in the area of social justice leadership. It was an area I had neglected and had been neglected in my professional growth and previous coursework in a principal preparation program. As I entered into this new learning, I had no idea about the different topics, conversations, and ideas that I would engage in as a learner. Through these experiences and transformative learning, I was able to consider ways that I could promote social justice in my school and district. Through my promotion of social justice, I continue to look for areas that I can work on to transform the ways schools are organized, operated, and led.

From my experiences in two classes at the University of South Carolina, I began to question the uniqueness of my experiences and consider the case studies of other educational leaders like myself. Are their stories similar to my story? Did they experience learning that led to a new mindset as it relates to social justice in schools? From these questions, I set out on a journey to evaluate the adult learning of some of my peers across the state of South Carolina. Moreover, I charged myself to determine how their learning led to action and changes in leadership practice to promote social justice in schools. This study seeks to better understand social justice leadership preparation and

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improve leadership preparation programs to enhance the abilities of school leaders to be advocates for social justice.

Three aspects of this research make it unique to the growing body of literature on social justice leadership in schools. First, this study examines the influence of a leadership program on the leadership approaches, beliefs, actions, and decisions made by practitioners in South Carolina public schools. In present literature, researchers identify multiple inadequacies present within leadership preparation programs and the large gap between theory and practice. Although all the coursework in the Educational Leadership and Policies Department at the University of South Carolina did not have a social justice focus, the department has made an attempt to increase the awareness of social justice issues and allowed graduate students to engage in discussions about both theory and practices related to social justice. Next, this study borrows many of the aspects and methodology from Theoharis' (2007) distinct study of seven Midwestern principals and applies it to school leadership in South Carolina. Finally, this study focuses on the experiences of the principal, the adult learning, and the professional growth of school leaders. Past research has focused on the excellent work of specific schools and the specific practices of the principal. For this study, I will start my examination with the leadership preparation program and determine how the program influenced principal practice and the leaders' ability to advance social justice in everyday practice.

As I wrote this dissertation, I experienced a wide range of emotions and experiences. For starters, it has been a journey that has allowed me to look at my own values, perspectives, prejudices, background, and experiences. Although I realize that my promotion of social justice is still emerging and changing, I have gained a greater

understanding of the concept. Moreover, through this process, I have developed a more critical consciousness as an educator when analyzing the practices, procedures, and policies that marginalize students throughout our nation's school systems. This critical consciousness has influenced my own practice and continues to shape and direct my leadership approach. As this journey continues, it is my hope that I will become bolder and more confident in leading schools for the promotion of social justice.

Next, the promotion of social justice requires a large amount of endurance. Obstacles are present at every crossroad, and the privileged majority invents ways to manipulate the system into their favor. By flexing their political power or by playing the system, students of color, students living in poverty, and other marginalized groups of students are left without the same quality of education enjoyed by others. Without endurance and courage, social justice leaders cannot break the barriers created by the adult stakeholders and make the necessary changes that will benefit all students.

Finally, I am embarrassed by my own actions as I reflect on many of my decisions as an instructional leader. For years, I neglected the promotion of social justice and failed to provide the best education for all students under my care. It was through my negligence, lack of knowledge and understanding, and my fear of changing the status quo that many of my students may have been held back from the best possible educational opportunities. Through my experiences as an educator, my coursework at the University of South Carolina, and my reflection upon my own practice, I have a better understanding of the call for action as it relates to social justice. From this dissertation, my wide range of emotions has pushed me to do this research so others may have a similar experience. From a similar experience and a facilitation of self-reflection, it is my hope that other

school leaders will analyze their own practice and look for ways to improve the promotion of social justice in their own context. Furthermore, it is my desire to assist leadership preparation programs in developing meaningful, practical programs that will prepare future school leaders for the diverse schools in our future.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Leadership For Social Justice

Schools leaders face a plethora of obstacles, conflicts, and challenges as they attempt to perform daily tasks and attempt to complete the work assigned to them. As schools continue to navigate and move through the age of accountability, there is growing pressure on administrators to produce "socially just" schools and school districts. Blackmore (2009) states that the current accountability system has created an environment where "the state is no longer able to ignore issues of educational inequality" (p.8). This pressure combined with the moral imperative to address inequities in schools requires a new kind of school leader.

This new school leader must be an advocate for all students and must be able to take action to make education more equitable for all students. Furthermore, these new school leaders must break down barriers and challenge the status quo while building community trust and developing meaningful relationships. As these issues are addressed, there are many others that must be confronted in order to have a paradigm shift in education and to alleviate the inequities within schools. School leaders must identify areas where inequities exist, and they must explore avenues to address these issues. By exploring methods to address the inequities that exist in schools, all students will have

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better opportunities for success. Without confronting these areas, school leaders will continue to observe significant achievement gaps in student achievement, disparities in special education referrals among different races of children, and a much higher percentage of students of color being expelled from school (SCDE, 2014; USDE, 2012; Losen, Hodson, & Martinez, 2014).

Accountability

This age of accountability requires school leaders to look at test data and student performanace on standardized tests. It requires school leaders to analyaze data to determine that groups and what teachers are performing at the benchmark scores. Moreover, the accountability movement has shined a brighter light on the achei vement gap between students of color and white students (Jerald, 2003). In this age of accountability, many school leaders have challenged the effectiveness of school reforms and high-stakes testing (Nicholas, Glass, & Berlinder, 2012; Lee & Reeves, 2012). However, inequities and differences in student achievement are still prevalent as Caucasian students are compared to students of color. Moreover, low-income students still score significantly lower than their peers from higher income families (Skrla & Schuerich, 2001). When we examine the achievement gap between white students and African American students on standardized tests, we find significant gaps remain unchanged since 1990 (Farkas, 2004). In 2004, in Washington, D.C., the average score on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test for an African American high school senior was roughly equivalent to the average score for a white student in the eighth grade (Farkas, 2004). These differences do not stop with just comparisons related to student achievement.

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In student discipline, African American students are three times more likely to be suspended than their white peers (OCR, 2014). Furthermore, students with disabilities are twice as likely to be suspended as compared to students without disabilities (OCR, 2014). In the 2007 – 2008 school year, 25% of high school math teachers that taught in schools where the majority of the students were African American were uncertified as compared to only 8% of high school math teachers in schools where the majority of the students were white (USDE, 2010). Accountability has illuminated the fact that schools are doing an effective job in educating white and middle-class students, but they are struggling to educate students from different backgrounds and cultures. In fact, Skrla and Schuerich (2001) identified five ways that accountability has enhanced school district leadership and displaced deficit thinking among school superintendents to include: (i) exposing the achievement gap, (ii) providing superintendents with a reason to aggressively deal with inequities, (iii) forcing collaboration among superintendents, (iv) abandoning the deficit model of thinking, and (v) setting high expectations for all students. The achievement gap can be exposed through the presentation of hard-core data to stakeholders within a school district. When the data is presented, teachers and administrators can see the need to address the inequities that exist between different groups of students. Moreover, according to Skrla and Scheurich (2001), this data illuminates the achievement gaps and helps to reduce the risk of district leaders taking changes and being aggressive with school reforms. Superintendents will need to develop a plan of action to address student learning needs, and they will collaborate with other school leaders to find best practices and approaches to increasing student achievement for all students. After the plan of action has been developed, there will be a need to monitor

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practices and policies to abandon excluding practices and replace them with more inclusive ones. As progress is monitored, school and district leaders can focus on student learning and have high expectations for all students.

Social Justice

The term social justice has been discussed in education and educational administration in some form for over three decades (Strike, 1982; Foster, 1986; Bates, 1983). In the 21st century, the term has become a more dominant topic in educational administration literature due to an increased focus on accountability (North, 2008). This term and idea has provided a variety of definitions, perspectives and viewpoints from researchers. In an attempt to provide a working definition for social justice, the Office of Multicultural Affairs (2014) defines social justice as "a broad term for action intended to create equality, fairness, and respect among peoples." Bogotch (2002) describes the idea of social justice as an on-going process that must be evaluated and reevaluated time and time again. By evaluating and reevaluating, social justice reformers can critically question and assess inequities. Moreover, they can better understand how internal and external forces work together to create these inequities. Bogotch makes the claim that the idea of social justice in a school setting and the results of the work for social justice are always unstable. This instability is due to an ever-changing society and the need to constantly assess the needs of a school to evaluate the needs of all students. He goes on to describe social justice as "a deliberate intervention that requires moral use of power" (p. 150).

As this concept of social justice is explored in more detail, it is important to understand the need for social justice in our society. In other words, by framing social justice in context with social oppression, others may be able to see its value with more clarity. In an attempt to assist others in understanding the need for social justice, Hardiman and Jackson (1997) defined the existence of social oppression as "when one social group, whether knowingly or unconsciously, exploits another social group for its own benefit" (p. 17). They continue with this definition by describing the "distinctness" of social oppression from physical force by stating "it is an interlocking system that involves ideological control as well as domination and control of the social institutions and resources of society, resulting in a condition of privilege for the agent group relative to the disenfranchisement and exploitation of the target group" (p.17).

Oppression can take on many forms in our society and in our schools. At the present time, many school reforms and school choice policies have created segregated schools throughout the United States. In New York, California, and Texas, over 50% of Latino students attend schools with a minority population of 90% or higher (USA Today, 2014). Currently, schools in the United States are at their highest rate of segregation since 1968 (Frankenberg, Lee, & Orfield, 2003). Other forms of oppression in schools can be seen in school funding. Per pupil spending can vary from one school to another; however, disparities are sometimes very large among schools with different demographics. For example, on average, schools spend $334 less on nonwhite students as compared to the white peers. When comparing more racially-isolated schools, the disparities are much larger. When comparing a school with over 90% minorities to a

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school with less than 10 percent minorities, the average spending is over $700 more per pupil in the predominantly white school (Spatig-Amerikaner, 2012).

The promotion of social justice can help address these issues, and school leaders can start the process of exploring ways to promote social justice and end social oppression in schools. Social justice leadership is the promotion of ending the school structures, programs, policies, and practices that oppress certain groups of people. Theoharis (2007) defines social justice leaders as leaders who "make issues of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically marginalizing conditions in the United States central to their advocacy, leadership practice, and vision" (p. 223). This definition encompasses many aspects of social justice leadership in schools, involves inclusive language that touches on the inequities that exist for certain groups of students in the United States, and focuses on the need to eliminate these inequities. For this study, I relied on this definition to create my own definition of social justice leadership. From this definition, I define social justice leadership as the deliberate act of promoting inclusion, equity, and equality among all groups of people.

Social Justice Leaders In Schools

There is a growing body of research that involves case studies with administrators in the field and their practice that promotes social justice in schools. In a study of four female principals defined as social justice leaders, Jean-Marie (2008) found that these four women had common practices to include reflective practice, providing professional development on diversity and different learning styles, emphasizing academic support programs and a strategic approach to building relationships with stakeholders. Theoharis

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(2007) did research on seven Mid-Western principals and discovered that these principals focused their time and effort on enacting social justice by raising student achievement, improving school structures, improving the capacity of teachers, and reaching out into the community. In another study of six principals who led for social justice and improved student achievement, Theoharis (2010) found that these principals utilized four main strategies. These strategies included the promotion of wide-spread inclusion in all classes, the continuous development of teachers to be more inclusive and aware of inequities, mass communication and increased community involvement, and the combination of these strategies to create a new focus for the school. Furthermore, in a literature review of the capacities needed for social justice leadership in schools, Furman (2012) found that school leaders have certain skills, capacities, and approaches to social justice promotion. These school leaders are persistent, reflective, inclusive, caring, action-oriented, and oriented toward a pedagogy that promotes social justice.

McCann's (2012) study of five white principals provided insights into the implications of race, leadership, and the promotion of social justice in schools. He found that these principals had developed an awareness of their racial identity, discovered the need to build trust and relationships with families of color, had a desire to have conversations with their teachers about race, and felt ill-prepared to meet the many challenges of promoting social justice. These five white principals felt very uncomfortable talking to their staff about issues of race and having discussions about racial matters. Vinzant's (2009) research on fifteen black principals delved further into race and social justice leadership by presenting the common themes from the principals' responses. These responses include the need for networking and mentoring as a support

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system for minority principals, a greater reported connection to minority students, the need to promote the learning for all students, and a feeling of immense "race-based" pressure to prove themselves as true leaders. Moreover, this group of black principals felt that the issue of race had an effect on every decision and every aspect of leadership in schools. These two studies reveal a difference in the responses and leadership styles between black and white principals.

In a study of three principals, two white and one African American, Eldridge (2012) discovered four common approaches to addressing inequities in schools. These approaches include building relationships with all stakeholders, improving school culture through listening, promoting effective teaching and learning through data analysis and observations, and modifying school structures to assist the school in reaching all students with a more inclusive approach to instruction.

From this study, there were differences when the two female principals were compared to the male principal. The male principal promoted social justice in his school with the same approaches and practices; however, he did not discuss his racial or cultural identity. On the other hand, the two female principals were more open about their racial and cultural identity and discussed many of their personal experiences.

As school leaders face the pressure of creating high expectations and positive educational outcomes for all students, there are some skills, knowledge, and competencies that must be at their disposable. In the area of social justice leadership in schools, researchers have identified certain capacities for school administrators to be social justice leaders in their local context. Shields (2004) found that leaders must

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facilitate meaningful dialogue about race, ethnicity, and class to challenge the status quo and take deliberate action to make changes. These deliberate acts must be surrounded by a belief system that promotes the success of all students. Scheurich (1998) found that schools with high percentages of students of color and from low-income families can be successful when change is promoted among all stakeholders. This change can be a reality when the school has a strong core belief that all students can succeed and certain cultural characteristics to include a high level of collaboration among teachers, a caring and nurturing environment, and an openness to try new ideas. These cultural characteristics and beliefs must be promoted by the principal of each school. Therefore, school administrators must be focused on creating a climate and culture where these ideals are given attention and a plan of action to address these ideals in schools.

Activities and practices of social justice leaders. Researchers have examined the practices of social justice leaders and have observed certain activities that define social justice leadership in schools. These activities range from deliberate activism to implementing staff development and training for teachers. One of these practices is implementing and maintaining a culture and climate that has high expectations for all students (Scheurich, 1998; Jean-Marie, 2008; Skrla & Scheurich, 2001; Vinzant, 2009, Blackmore, 2002). Social justice leaders are continuously analyzing school structures and redefining them to promote a more inclusive environment (Theoharis, 2007; Skrla, Garcia, & Nolly, 2004; Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008; Riehl, 2000; Sapon-Shevin, 2003; Blackmore, 2002). From this redefinition, schools are de-tracking students and moving towards more heterogeneous classroom. Moreover, social justice schools are eliminating pull-out programs that isolate students from their peers. These analyses are

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being done with the use of audits to determine where the inequities exist as it relates to resources, teacher quality, opportunities, and student achievement (Gooden, 2012; Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly, 2004; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004; Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008). Moreover, school leaders are examining their hiring practices to promote a more diverse teaching staff and employing teachers with an understanding of social justice (Jean-Marie, 2008; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004; Theoharis, 2007; Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly, 2004; Vinzant, 2009). Along with these practices, school leaders for social justice are reflecting on their work and their practices. Through this type of reflective practice, school leaders are able to better understand the need for social justice, able to look for strategies to cope with the resistance of social justice, and able to improve their existing practices (Jean-Marie, 2008; Theoharis, 2008; McCann, 2012; Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005).

Other practices involving social justice leaderships in schools include implementing meaningful staff development that enhances the capacities of teachers to expand their comfort in dealing with issues involving diversity, race, multiculturalism, and pedagogy that promotes the success of all students (Theoharis, 2007; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004; Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005;   Furman & Grunewald, 2004). When school leaders provide these types of staff development opportunities, there will be a great deal of dialogue and discussion about these topics. This practice of moral dialogue is evident in the literature and promotes the further development of faculties and staff to embrace their role in educating all children (Shields, 2004; Gooden, 2012; Theoharis, 2007; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004; Riehl, 2000; Theohari, 2008; McCann, 2012; Furman & Grunewald, 2004).

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Role Of Relationships In Promoting Social Justice

As school leaders continue to address the inequities that exist in educational quality and opportunity for all students, the literature provides numerous examples of the importance of relationships to promote social justice in schools. In order for leaders to promote social justice, they must build trust with all stakeholders, be committed to the community that the schools serve, and look for ways to connect the school and the community (McCann, 2012; Theoharis, 2008; Riehl, 2000; Jean-Marie, 2008; Theoharis, 2007). Moreover, in order for these relationships to continue and grow, there has to be a caring climate established in these schools. Students, parents, and all stakeholders must be treated with respect, and there must be an emphasis on the respect of students and their culture (Shields, 2004; Scheurich, 1998; Gooden, 2012). Some of the practices that help promote relationships and getting to know the community includes home visits and neighborhood walks (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004).

Resistance To Social Justice

As a trend, these examples of social justice leadership in schools also produced multiple examples of resistance. As these school leaders pushed forward with a social justice agenda, they face resistance from a variety of stakeholders in the school community. Some examples of this resistance must be noted since it is so prevalent for these leaders for social justice. Moreover, without addressing the resistance faced by school administrators, many leaders will be unequipped to handle the pressure of enacting social justice in education. For example, the principals in Jean-Marie's (2008) study experienced challenges in the form of lack of time as they had to deal with societal

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problems such as drug abuse, poverty, and teen pregnancy. These principals also faced staff resistance in attempting to meet the needs of all students. School leaders face multiple challenges to include lack of resources, lack of time, a bureaucratic system in education, staff resistance to changing the status quo, and subpar leadership preparation programs (Theoharis, 2007, McCann, 2012).

Social Justice In Leadership Preparation Programs

In a review of current literature on the topic of social justice in leadership preparation programs, existing literature cites weaknesses and inadequacies of these programs combined with a wide range of recommendations for improvement in the area of promoting social justice in schools (Brown, 2004; Hawley and James, 2010; Black and Murthada, 2007; Furman, 2012). These recommendations revolve around several themes present in the literature to include a focus on pedagogy, content, and program structure. In the pedagogy discussion, there will be a list of recommended activities and exercises that will enhance one's understanding of social justice leadership. In the content discussion, there will be a list of recommended topics that social justice school leaders must understand in order to have the knowledge and skills to lead schools to make learning possible for all students. This content includes reflective practice and analyses, conversations about race, the building of a strong, critical theoretical background, and the inclusion of meaningful case studies into the curriculum and content. In the program structure discussion, there will be recommendations that deal with the need to include a meaningful practicum and internship, the need to enhance and expand the selection process for leadership programs, the importance of designating a mentor, and the importance of creating a support system. Although this list is not inclusive of all of the

recommendations present in the literature, they represent the most cited recommendations in current literature.

Case studies and surveys on leadership preparation programs. In a national survey, Brown (2004) reports that only 14.3% of students in leadership education programs consider social justice to be the most important aspect of their curriculum. In a review of 18 universities with educational leadership preparation programs, Hawley and James (2010) found that most diversity-related issues were only discussed in a single course throughout the programs of study at these universities. In their case study research, Fossey and Shoho (2006) found that multitude of weaknesses and problems in five of the six leadership preparation programs investigated. They found curriculums that were unrelated, low admission standards for potential leaders, lack of quality research, and a weak faculty. In their study of 56 educational leadership programs and their course syllabi, Hess and Kelly (2007) found that only twelve percent of the course weeks of study focused on social justice issues, diversity, and oppressed groups in schools.

Other studies yield similar results, Black and Murtadha(2007) reported several weaknesses in leadership preparation programs including a lack of assessment of program outcomes, lack of connection with the needs of schools and school districts, lack of focus on the daily operation of schools and the issues faced by administrators on a daily basis, and a lack of growth in the number of leaders prepared to lead. In the area of social justice, Marshall (2004) decided that leadership preparation programs are unprepared to promote the ideals of social justice in schools due to an inadequate focus on social justice issues and an "isolated" approach to infusing social justice into the curriculum. This approach addresses the need to examine inequities and explore

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diversity on the surface level; however, this approach lack a real focus on daily practice in school leadership. Furthermore, the focus of most leadership programs is geared towards a management approach to social justice issues rather than an emphasis on the moral imperative that exists to create change.

In the academic world, there is a lack of quality research on social justice leadership in schools. According to Diem and Carpenter (2012), between 2006 and 2011, three of the top five educational research journals contained less than seven articles that related to the topic of social justice in schools. Without a focus on social justice in the curriculum of educational leadership programs, one is unlikely to observe a significant paradigm shift in the approaches, pedagogy, and content taught in these programs. However, researchers are clear in their suggestions and recommendations to educational leadership programs. At this time, there is distinct and clear pressure from the school accountability movement for colleges and universities to step to the plate to make the necessary changes to promote a more socially-just education system in the United States (Capper & Young, 2014; Poplin & Rivera, 2005).

In the following pages of this literature review, I will present numerous recommendations to the academic world to promote educational leadership programs that can move toward the advancement of social justice. These recommendations include a focus on pedagogy, reflective practice and analyses, the need for a meaningful practicum and internship, conversations about race, selection processes for these programs, the building of a strong, critical theoretical background, the development of a support system to include networking and a mentor, and the inclusion of meaningful case studies into the curriculum and content. As these recommendations are discussed, it is important to note

that this is not an all-inclusive list. However, it is representative of the themes present in this literature.

        Pedagogy for social justice preparation. In order for leadership preparation programs to make progress in promoting social justice in schools and prepare school leaders for their daily practice, researchers have recommended a paradigm shift in the pedagogical approaches to the curriculum. For starters, researchers have identified the need for school leaders to be aware of the meaning of social justice and how it relates to the school setting (McKenzie, et. al, 2008; Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009). In order to better understand the need for social justice, preparation programs must focus on assisting future school leaders in learning about misconceptions about human differences, challenging color-blind ideology, and discrediting the idea of meritocracy in schools (Diem & Carpenter, 2012). As they begin to understand the meaning of social justice, school leaders can begin analyzing school structures and practices to determine where inequalities exist in schools. By performing an equity audit of structures and practices, school leaders can begin to formulate action plans to address these issues. With these two examples, the research suggests that leadership programs must provide instruction on the meaning of social justice in schools. Moreover, leadership preparation must focus on the activity of the equity audit to allow practitioners to address inequity in schools with a plan of action, facilitate meaningful dialogue about inequities, and identify professional development needs for their schools (Furman, 2012; Jacobson & Cypres, 2012; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004; Marshall & Theoharis, 2007; Shields, 2004; Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008).

Staff development activities to promote social justice reform. Other activities recommended by researchers include requiring aspiring administrators to participate in neighborhood walks and do a cultural interview with a family that is not like them (McKenzie et. al, 2008; Marshall & Theoharis, 2007). From these activities, aspiring school leaders will have an opportunity to learn more about their communities and learn more about themselves as it relates to diversity, race, ethnicity, and class. Furthermore, other recommended activities include participation in diversity panels, cross-cultural interviewing, compiling a life history for an older individual from a different background, and participation in a prejudice reduction workshop (Brown, 2004; Furman, 2012; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). Also, researchers recommend that all aspiring school administrators complete a cultural autobiography (Brown, 2004; Furman, 2012; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). A cultural autobiography allows students to explore their own culture, beliefs, and awareness of their own racial and ethnic group (Banks, 1994). When students explore their own culture and beliefs, they begin to develop a "critical consciousness" (Friere, 1970). By developing this "critical consciousness", students begin to understand how their feelings, perceptions, and life experiences have been filtered in their own life story (Brown, 2004). By reflecting on one's cultural identity and what it means to one's existence, aspiring administrators will have a foundation for future discussions about others from different backgrounds, ethnicities, and races.

Finally, in the area of recommendations about the activities for preparing school leaders for social justice work, researchers suggest the need to visit schools where social justice leadership and practices are making a difference in the removal of inequities and injustices for students of color, poor students, and students with disabilities (McKenzie &

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Scheurich, 2004; Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008). These schools can be identified by observing their inclusive practices for all students and their commitment to educate all students with excellence. By seeking to find exemplars in the promotion of social justice, students in leadership preparation programs can find examples where social justice leadership is making a difference, can observe daily practices that influence positive student outcomes for all students, and develop meaningful relationships with other practitioners to help seek solutions in other settings. These pedagogical approaches are recommended to assist leadership preparation programs in meeting the needs of social justice school leaders for the daunting task of educating all students in present-day schools.

Recommendations for leadership preparation content. Scholars have made recommendations as it relates to the content of leadership preparation programs. The recommendations coincide with the pedagogical approaches to allow aspiring school leaders to have a more comprehensive experience in both practice and theory. With this combination, aspiring administrators will be able to face the daily challenge of leading for social justice and make progress toward the ideals of promoting social justice in schools. For starters, scholars promote the necessity of providing students in leadership programs with a strong background in critical theory. Critical theory can be utilized by school leaders to expolore which groups have power, privilege, and influence in schools. By understanding the position of different groups, school leaders can explore ways to end inequities that exist in schools and become advocates for marginalized groups of students (Sever, 2012). Being grounded in critical theory assists school leaders in discovering the many ways that schools marginalize many different groups of students and helps them to

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develop a "critical consciousness" (Gooden & Dantley, 2012; McKenzie et al, 2008; Hernandez & McKenzie, 2010; Brown, 2004; Capper, Theoharis, & Sebastian, 2006). The content of critical theory should be embedded into the leadership preparation curriculum to provide leaders with the tools needed to address social injustice in many different areas of school leadership (Pazey & Cole, 2012).

In addition to this critical theoretical background, school leadership programs must have a focus on conversations that help build comfort and skills in dealing with issues of race, ethnicity, class, and other topics that are not discussed in present-day schools. Researchers suggest that these conversations should look to challenge color-blind ideology, merit-based achievement, and race-related silences in schools, and these conversations should recognize class and ethnicity as a real consideration for school leaders (Diem & Carpenter, 2012; Shields, 2004; Furman, 2012). Moreover, these "courageous" conversations should take the time to examine white privilege, whiteness, and racial inequality (Marshall & Theoharis, 2007). Theoharis and Causton-Theoharis (2008) recommend starting with data analysis to assist in leading discussions about race, ethnicity, and class. These conversations will enhance aspiring leaders' comfort in dealing with issues of race and rational discourse, and it will promote these leaders to have these same types of conversations with their staff in the future to promote a critical consciousness within schools.

Focus On Reflection

As students in leadership programs advance through their coursework, scholars have promoted the need for reflective practice and analysis. Reflective practice and

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analysis requires students to stop and think about their behaviors and beliefs. By reflecting on practice, they can determine whether it matches up with their beliefs. Through this process, adjustments to practice may need to occur. This reflective practice and analysis will allow students to do a critical self-reflection of their own racial identities and prejudices (Diem & Carpenter, 2012; Gooden & Dantley, 2012; Marshall & Theoharis, 2007; Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008). Also, this focus on practiced reflexivity will continue to promote the critical perspective as students learn more about the marginalization of some students (Marshall, 2004). Brown (2004) recommends that leadership programs utilize a reflexive analysis journal during the work with racial dialogue and rational discourse to help facilitate personal professional growth and development in this area of social justice leadership in schools. As leadership preparation programs continue to deal with the complex issues of race in schools, they should provide aspiring school administrators with case studies that will allow them to practice tackling real problems that are present in schools (Jacobson & Cypres, 2012; Marshall & Theoharis, 2007; Black & Muradha, 2007).

Practical Experiences

Another structure that has been addressed in the literature involves the practicum for students in leadership preparation programs. Researchers have suggested that the practicum incorporate an intensive internship with a capstone project that is based on social justice leadership that takes these students from theory to practice (Reames, 2010; Marshall & Theoharis, 2007). By incorporating the project into the internship, practitioners can partner with school districts to learn more about the implementation of action plans and work through real problems at the local level (Jean-Marie, Normore, &

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Brooks, 2009; Black & Murtadha, 2007). During this time and an induction period, researchers have recommended the designation of a mentor to assist aspiring leaders in the completion of their coursework and internship (Jacobson & Cypres, 2012). McKenzie et. al (2008) suggests the need for the induction program to last at least two years and new school leaders develop professionally and acquire the skills needed to promote social justice. Other scholars have found the need for a strong support system that will allow for administrators to have an opportunity to talk through social justice issues with their colleagues on a regular basis (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004; Theoharis & Causton-Theorharis, 2008). As a positive and supportive practice, it is imperative that new administrators collaborate with principals with a successful track record of promoting social justice and principals that have developed an understanding of the complexity of these issues. Table 2.1 provides a summary of the recommendations from the literature for leadership preparation programs. These recommendations are in the areas of curriculum and pedagogy, content, and the selection and support process for the students.

Table 2.1: Recommendations for Leadership Preparation Programs

Curriculum and Pedagogy	Define social justice, equity audits, action plans, neighborhood walks, reflective practice and analyses, life histories, prejudice reduction workshops
Content	Combination of practice and theory, development of critical consciousness, dialogue and rational discourse, case studies
Selection and Support	Comprehensive selection process that collaborates with districts to encourage candidates with a propensity for social justice promotion and a strong teaching background, intensive internship, establishment of a mentoring program and networking structures, assist students in dealing with the stress of implementing a social justice focus, provide similar curriculum with teacher preparation programs to help aspiring teachers to focus on issues of social justice

New Leadership With New Skills

The literature suggests that educators must possess a variety of skills to lead in today's schools as they address the issues of social justice. These skills and strategies provide an opportunity for both professional and personal growth as school leaders become the facilitators and catalysts for social justice promotion in schools and society. These skills and strategies include a variety of approaches that require courage, collaboration, reflection, data analysis, and determination. In order to promote social justice, the literature has provided evidence that school leaders will engage the entire school family into transformation. This journey will be on-going and will require time to build capacity and relationships. Social justice leaders will interact with their community and parents to be inclusive and inviting to all stakeholders. This approach will demonstrate the value of all people and their cultures. Moreover, social justice leaders will explore multiple avenues to find community resources to assist families such as counseling services, job opportunities, and parenting workshops. This type of promotion will assist families in assisting their students in being more supported in schools. As schools build relationships with the community, they will show respect for their students and their culture (Shields, 2004; Scheurich, 1998; Gooden, 2012). Practices that may assist in the promotion of community relationships include home visits and neighborhood walks (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004).

Throughout the literature, leaders with social justice reform successes have displayed a willingness to work collaboratively with their faculties to enhance teacher capacity and teacher commitment to educating all students. This work will require respected dialogue to create a safe environment for professional growth in the area of

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social justice. Leaders can successfully promote a social justice agenda by deliberately facilitating dialogue about race, ethnicity, and class among all members of the school community (Shields, 2004; Scheurich, 1998). Also, leaders can promote meaningful reflection to influence daily practice in classrooms. As leaders develop their personnel and work collaboratively with them to seek solutions to the inequities present, schools have the potential to transform into more equitable spaces for all students.

The literature suggests that school structures must be examined as school leaders assess their curriculums, course offerings, teacher quality, and discipline statistics. Equity audits can be a valuable tool in addressing and discussing educational inequities that relate to resources, teacher quality, and student achievement (Gooden, 2012; Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia & Nolly, 2004; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004; Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008). By collecting this type of data, school leaders can make more informed decisions about student outcomes and inspire more meaningful dialogue with staff members about inequities present in schools.

School leaders face barriers, challenges, and resistance to the promotion of social justice. Some of these challenges and barriers include resistance from staff members, time constraints, and the demands of the job (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004; Theoharis, 2004). In order to face these challenges and advance the promotion of social justice, school leaders must find positive outlets for dealing with the stress and demands of this endeavor. Networking with other school leaders can assist in forming a support system to deal with resistance and provide an avenue for collaboration with other professionals to continue to seek solutions to educational inequities.

As social justice school leaders seek solutions and find strategies to deal with challenges and resistance, they will need to rely on the foundation of their values and beliefs. Social justice leadership contains a strong moral component. This moral component cannot be ignored as leaders attempt to address inequities and push against the challenges they will face (Marshall & Olivia, 2006; Blackmore, 2002). Leaders must stand up for their beliefs and provide others with the necessary "push" to see the world with a more critical view of the institution of schools. Without a strong belief system and the willingness to challenge the status quo, the promotion of social justice will not advance and inequities will continue to be ingrained as an accepted part of society.

As school leaders approach this new leadership, it must be handled with care. As Garza (2008) pointed out in his autoethnography, school leaders will face immense challenges from the adult stakeholders in the school system. His experiences as a superintendent forced him to consider all decisions as political, and required a great amount of "ethical stamina" to challenge a deficit-thinking society. This type of thinking promotes the idea that students are not academically successful due to their family backgrounds and lack of certain life experiences. In this way of thinking, educators can place the majority of blame on the home, socioeconomic status, and other factors outside of the students' control. Moreover, due to his views as a social justice advocate, he often found himself as an adversary to those who benefitted from their power and privilege (Garza, 2008).

The need to challenge existing school structures will make many uncomfortable. As James (2006) pointed out in his research, social justice leadership must begin to take on "another approach" to social justice called "inclusive leadership" (p.4). As school

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systems move towards a more meaningful, inclusive culture, the status quo must be challenged and the system must be changed (James, 2006). As leaders work with their faculty, there must be a culture that promotes adult learning. As adults rethink, consider, reflect, and understand different perspectives, the adults in schools can assist students to reach their potential. One of the key factors of achieving this new culture is the development of a different lens to view our schools and the children in our schools. We must see social justice through the lens of the marginalized students served in our schools.

However, the lens must not be filtered just based on racial differences, but it must extend to other areas of the student population like students with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students. For example, Larrabee and Morehead (2010) stressed the overwhelming data on the high number of negative experiences for LGBT students. They stressed the high percentage of LGBT students with negative experiences at school "suggest a need for action and attention" (p. 38). Larrabee and Morehead (2010) discovered that teach education programs can promote adult learning in the area of social justice for LGBT students by providing aspiring educators with an awareness of the marginalization of LGBT people, the promotion of meaningful and safe dialogue on the issues faced by LGBT students in schools, and the promotion of the idea that teacher leaders can be agents for change in a school culture. The authors provided insight into the power of teacher leaders in schools. Furthermore, they stressed the importance of equipping school leaders to support the efforts of these pre-service teachers and continue their own advocacy for social justice on a larger scale.

The promotion of social justice is on-going and ever-changing. As scholars have considered the practice of socially-just educational leadership, they have identified conflicting interests and limitations (Capper & Young, 2014). For example, educators talk about inclusion; however, this idea only applies to students with disabilities. Also, many students are not identified as marginalized due to the intersections of their identities and their differences (Capper & Young, 2014). Educators may not be aware of their intersections and differences. This causes a growing gap in practices and theory. Capper and Young (2014) asserted that school leaders "must consider how and to what extent promising practices in one area of diversity/differences might address the full range of student differences and their intersections" (p.160). Other scholars support this idea by pointing out the need for school leaders to be understanding in all areas of differences to include race, ability, religion, sexuality, and gender (Ward, 2005; Han, 2007). Educators must be considerate of all differences while focusing on the best practices that can be applied to all students.

Summary

As this literature has been presented, there are several key points for consideration. First, there is a need to look at successful, proven practices that promote social justice in schools and the material being taught in leadership preparation programs. In order for real, practical change to start occurring in school cultures, successful practice and theory must be taught in school leadership programs. This literature review provides research that can start the process of taking a hard and deliberate look at making these two items come together in a viable curriculum for school leaders.

Next, if a school leader has the opportunity to learn this new material and is able to have a meaningful experience as an adult learner, the school leader must have the soft skills and passion to put these things into action in a real school setting. As a high school principal, I know the components of quality teaching and learning. However, if I cannot present that information to other people and create an environment of staff buy-in and ownership, I may be very ineffective in creating a culture of change in my school. Therefore, as these recommendations for content and pedagogy are discussed, it is important to remember to include an emphasis on developing the skills needed to bring about these changes in school cultures and develop school personnel to reach their highest potential. In other words, school leaders must have the skills needed to utilize these practices that promote social justice. Also, they must have the skills to guide others to experience adult learning in the area of social justice.

Finally, as I present my research design in the next chapter, I am both excited and cautious about this study. This research will look at adult learners as they tackle the issues of social justice in both their personal and professional lives. As a student in a leadership preparation program, I can see the usefulness of understanding white privilege, social reproduction, social oppression, and other social justice issues. Moreover, I can see the existence of institutional racism in schools and identify many of the social, historical, and cultural factors that perpetuate the existence of institutional racism in schools through practices and policies. However, as I delve further into this research, I am reminded of an important truth related to leadership. Leadership is an art that requires a great deal of skill, practice, and courage. According to Kelehear (2008), "Leadership may be viewed as an art form; it can be described as interactional and relational, a sort of

choreography of human understanding" (p.3). This literature review has provided a list of technical skills that promote social justice in schools. Although this list is comprehensive, it is not all inclusive. Also, it does not take into account the need for a courageous leader who understands his or her craft like an artist. Where practice and theory can be mastered in a supportive environment with a courageous leader, the possibilities are unlimited. It is my hope that this research will both inspire and inform leaders to go forth with courage to lead schools into a new age of social justice promotion.

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CHAPTER III

Design of Study

Although the promotion of social justice in schools causes conflict, pain, and resistance, I believe these consequences are worthy of our time. This chapter consists of 10 sections: (a) positionality (b) conceptual framework (c) research questions (d) theoretical framework and research methodology (e) research participants and setting (f) data collection (g) data analysis (h) ethical considerations (i) trustworthiness/ authenticity (j) limitations.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of educational leadership coursework at the University of South Carolina on the behaviors and adult learning of school leaders in the area of social justice. This study is not an evaluation of the courses or the program of study at this graduate school of education. It is a study of the students who took the course and their learning experiences. The literature showed that school leadership preparation programs are often not providing relevant and meaningful coursework to empower school administrators to meet the challenges of advocating for social justice in the institution of school. However, in this age of accountability and emphasis on data, schools are pressured to show gains and improvement in the achievement of all students. Due to this pressure and the importance of equity, it is imperative that school leaders analyze the policies, practices, and perceptions that may

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hinder some groups of students from achieving a higher level of success in the classroom. This research will provide practical applications for school leaders to advocate for social justice in their schools. Furthermore, this research will provide insights and recommendations for institutions of higher learning to develop a meaningful, focused, and practical curriculum for school leadership preparation and development.

Positionality / Background

As a white, middle age, male principal, I have encountered race and racial issues in both my professional and personal life. These experiences have shaped my belief system about race and influenced my ability or inability to see other people's viewpoints or different perspectives. During my life, I believed that all people were different, but I treated everyone the same. Through this assumption, I felt my moral compass was enough to guide me through my life and my professional journey. However, as time passes, my assumptions are constantly being questioned by the experiences of others in our society.

Growing up in rural South Carolina, my first memories of people of color came on my father's tobacco farm in Marion County. As a young man, I drove tractors and helped out around the tobacco barns in the late 1970s and early 1980s. On my father's farm, everyone had to work together and everyone depended on each other to accomplish the tasks at hand. However, as my father formed groups, the African American workers were separated from the white workers in the field. My father gave the African American workers their own tractor and harvester to gather the crops. As he did this, I had the duty of driving the tractor for this particular group.

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Although I do not understand my father's thinking on this matter, I was quickly thrown into a different cultural context and required to survive as the only white group member. This experience was both uncomfortable and challenging. However, as the case with many preteens, I did my best to fit in with the crowd and found my niche in the group within a few short weeks. With the passing weeks, I became more involved with the group and observed many differences in their culture when compared to my own. Although I was in their group and felt as though I had somewhat assimilated into their culture, I was still an outsider in their circle. Furthermore, as they helped our farm to be successful and worked collaboratively with me in the fields, they were still not a member of my more dominate culture.

This practice of separation continued into my early years of schooling. My parents placed me in a private school, and I did not have interactions with peers of different ethnicities or races. However, as my father's farm began to fail, the price of private school tuition became too high. After three years of preschool at this private school, I entered first grade at a public school. At that time, I was placed in an "upper" level class and was surrounded by others like me. Although there were some African Americans in the class, they shared many of the same experiences and family backgrounds as my white classmates. Although my family did not practice any form of outward hatred toward people of color, my father frequently used the word "nigger". Also, my siblings and I were told to be nice to everyone, but we were warned not to get too comfortable with "those" people.

Although it is easy to judge my family at this time, I have to remind myself of the attitudes and perceptions of the time period. Desegregation was still a relatively new

thing in 1979 for South Carolina; therefore, race and race relations were not the most popular topic of the day. Furthermore, my parents and grandparents attended segregated schools for their entire educational careers. Therefore, their experiences and backgrounds created their foundation for their belief system about people from different cultures. My family's influence was well-meaning but flawed. This flawed influence shaped my belief system as I attended elementary schools in Marion, South Carolina.

As I continued through my schooling and entered high school, my interest in basketball was at a climax. I had participated in basketball at the local recreation center, and I had enjoyed some success as a league all-star. Having a desire to continue my success in high school, I participated in the try-outs for the high school team. As I worked toward this goal, I found myself in a different cultural world. I played high school basketball for four seasons, and I was the only white player on the team for two of those seasons. On the other two teams, I was one of two white players on a team of fourteen or fifteen players. While I considered this experience rewarding, enjoyable, and enlightening, I was not always comfortable and was often annoyed by my African American teammates. There were times when I felt ostracized from the group due to my background and race. Furthermore, I did not believe that they understood me or wanted to understand my position as a white member of the team. However, as I did as a youngster on the farm, I worked hard to fit in and assimilate with the rest of the group. Through this assimilation, I was able to be a part of some great teams and really grow up as a young man.

From these times together, I bonded with an African American teammate. Our bond was strong, and our friendship was genuine. We talked about our differences and

reminded each other of our similarities. He lived on one side of town in a local housing project, and I lived on the other on an all-white street. He took vocational courses to work on his job skills, and I was enrolled in Advanced Placement classes with a focus on college-readiness. He needed basketball to escape the harsh realities of life while I played for the pure joy of competition. Although we both had little money and no father at home, he was at a definite disadvantage in every aspect of schooling and society. He often attended classes at the high school with unqualified teachers. His class schedule incorporated a mixture of basic skills and learning a trade such as brick masonry.

As my life unfolded, I went to college and became a math teacher. From this experience, I worked hard to move up the educational ladder and was promoted to Assistant Principal. In my mind, my hard work had prepared me to be a school leader. I had worked hard, prepared diligently as a graduate student, and performed my best to be an advocate for students. As my career path continued to unfold, I found myself in the principal's chair. This experience would change my career and life as I learned a great deal about myself, leadership, and race.

In my first stint as principal, I was the leader of a middle school of almost 800 students and 80 faculty members. The school was almost 80 percent minority and geographically sat in the middle of three housing projects. For these reasons, the school was unpopular with the community and had a very negative perception with parents. The school had the most diverse staff in the district, and the school's report card rating was "unsatisfactory". As I considered the task ahead of me, it was both daunting and indescribable. I knew my work was going to be difficult, challenging, and uncomfortable. During my first years as a principal, I was not totally prepared for the

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challenge of leading this school. On most days, I was way over my head as I attempted to navigate the ship into safe waters.

During this time, I started working on my Ph.D. at the University of South Carolina. I enrolled in a class entitled Special Topics in Education. The course addressed the issue of race in our society and in schools. This course was rewarding, thought-provoking, and stress-causing. It provided a historical overview of race in schools along with the plethora of possible causes for the achievement gap. In this class, we would openly discuss the race issue among a group of educators and non-educators and among whites and non-whites. In a brief synopsis of the course curriculum, the instructor provided a statement on race and racism. I have included this quote in the Appendix A of this dissertation to illustrate the type of information presented. Moreover, the statement provides the professor's vision for the course as he attempted to challenge his students to look at the world in a different way.

From the curriculum and ideas presented, the class also provided some in-depth discussions in an open forum that challenged a group of South Carolinians to look at race with others from different races. At times, the discussions were heated with a great deal of animosity about certain issues. Stereotypes were thrown out of the window as African American participants and white participants both aired their distinct points of view and experiences into each scenario and discussion. From these discussions, a new set of perspectives were created that provided an opportunity to see the world through a whole new lens.

From this class on race, I began to hear about terms such as white privilege, institutional racism, and culturally relevant pedagogy. Researchers discussed these terms with a deliberate and passionate stance as they prepared others to look at the world through a much different lens. Although these terms were not foreign to me, I had never had the opportunity to reflect on their full meaning, consider their influence on me, or take the time to see their influences on the institution of school in America. This reflection caused a great deal of concern and created a certain defensive feeling in my inner being. As I started really internalizing these ideas, I also had to deal with the open discussions that were taking place every week. These discussions were lively, sometimes very intense, and incredibly new as people from different backgrounds, races, and personalities engaged in an open academic discussion about race on a college campus in Columbia, South Carolina.

From these discussions, my classmates and I were able to see different perspectives that were not bound by race, ethnicity, class, occupation, or gender. Moreover, as we let our guards down, real learning and growth began to take place over the course of the semester. The academic setting combined with the benevolent attitudes of most involved made the experience very rich. As the terms and ideas were discussed, the historical perspective provided the foundation for a great deal of the current policies and practices of today's schools. The history of standardized testing, bar exams, the tracking of students, and competency tests for teachers are all derived from a racist past in our country.

This historical perspective became a more difficult pill for me to swallow as I looked at my own practices as a school leader. I began to question my motives, my

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concern for all students, and my belief system as an educator. I wondered if I had truly analyzed the achievement gap at my school and examined the causes among my students. Although the knowledge in this class was not new, the dialogue was new and powerful. It became a springboard for my meetings with my administrative team and leadership team. Furthermore, having been involved in these discussions, I possessed more courage to press forward with increased dialogue in my daily interactions. From this experience, I felt empowered to lead more open discussions about race in schools. With new confidence, more awareness, and more information, I had a desire to press forward to lead schools to educate all children.

As I consider these aspects, schools are still very much a work in progress as we strive to be advocates for all students and confront decades of educational malpractice. This confrontation must be handled with care, concern, and compassion. Individuals have different backgrounds and perspectives about equity. As leaders interact with others, there will be some with negative attitudes towards equity and others with a lack of understanding of social justice. According to Skrla et al. (2009), we must "avoid demonizations" to be a leader or change agent for equity in schools. Although I am far from an expert on this subject, I have a deep desire to investigate further the effects of this class on the participants. Were they similar to my own or different? Did the experience of this class create a change in the participant's actions or practices in dealing with the issue of race in schools? Through this class, are participants equipped to tackle the institutional racism that exists in our schools? Why is it difficult to find more courses on college campuses that assist educational leaders in dealing with race issues in their daily practice?

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From these questions and more research, I was exposed to the term social justice leadership. Theoharis (2007) describes social justice leaders as leaders that make "issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions in the United States central to their advocacy, leadership, practice, and vision" (p.223). As I have reflected on my own adult learning and the discussions from my classmates at the University of South Carolina, I believe we were working towards the first step of becoming social justice leaders. As we became more aware of other perspectives, contemplated the historical context of many racist practices in schools, looked at our own belief systems, and started to think about how these practices affect students in our schools, we were definitely moving towards advocating for all students in a much different way.

As I move closer to answering my questions, I have started on a new journey to considering the influence of higher education, more specifically educational leadership preparation programs, on the practices of educational leaders in our society. With this issue of social justice, it is imperative that colleges and universities be ready and willing to prepare the educational leaders for the future. Although I am unsure of the overall influence of this class on all of the participants, I am sure that it encouraged me to think about many injustices in our school systems while challenging me to make a difference in the lives of young people. This experience has caused me to rethink many aspects of my leadership and reflect on my purpose as a school leader. As I have reflected and thought about the idea of social justice leadership, my emotions have gone from anger to embarrassment to motivation. From this experience, I have a desire to assist others in meeting the needs of all students by promoting the idea of social justice leadership. This

idea cannot be a cliché or catch phrase for educational leaders to throw around in a frivolous attempt to satisfy the masses. On the contrary, it must be handled with care and courage to make a difference in our society. Therefore, again, it is my desire and hope that my research will be meaningful, thought-provoking, stimulating, and useful to help promote social justice leadership.

Conceptual Framework

For this study, I used Mezirow's (1997) adult learning theory of mindful transformative learning. Mezirow (1997) describes transformative learning as the "process of effective change in a frame of reference" (p. 5). A frame of reference is acquired through "a coherent body of experience – associations, concepts, values, feelings, conditioned responses – that define an adult's "life world" (p. 5). In short, these frames of reference allow adults to make sense of our world and "understand our experiences" (p. 5). Mezirow (1997) goes on to state that a frame of reference can be composed of cognitive, conative, and emotional components and is made up of two dimensions, habits of mind and points of view.   Our habits of mind represent "habitual ways of thinking, feeling, and acting influenced by assumptions that constitute a set of codes" (p. 5). These codes are derived from our world and the influence of a variety of factors to include cultural, social, economic, and political. As we process information and continue to work through our learning, our habits of mind become "articulated in a specific point of view" (p. 6).

In this theoretical framework, adult learning has four distinct processes. Mezirow (1997) declares that these four processes of learning are:

1. **Elaborating an existing point of view**. Learners elaborate on their point of view by talking with others, receiving feedback from others, and finding out more about the point of view through exploration. During this process, the learner explores "further evidence to support our initial bias" (Mezirow, p.7). Adults are able to be influenced by discussing their ideas with others and receiving feedback through this dialogue.

2. **A new point of view.** A new point of view can be established through further discussion, examination of evidence, and through new experiences that reinforce the new point of view. The process of establishing a new point of view is bound on the experiences after feedback has been considered. As a learner has these experiences, it either reinforces or rejects the new point of view.

3. **Transforming a point of view.** In order for a point of view to be transformed, learners must engage in critical reflection to challenge their old point of view and develop the new one. In order for this new point of view to change our habits of mind, we must become aware of our own thinking through self-reflection and be aware of our personal bias. This type of transformation is often not possible unless the learner has a certain degree of discomfort from the new learning.

4. **Transforming a habit of mind.** As an adult learner moves through these processes, it becomes more difficult to reach the ability to change our habits of mind. In order to advance our thinking and increase the possibility of moving through these processes of learning, adult learners must have more evidence and "more interpretations of a belief available" (p.6 – 7). In order to have access to more interpretations, adult learners must engage in discourse on topics. Mezirow (1997) describes discourse as "a

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dialogue devoted to assessing reasons presented in support of competing interpretations, by critically examining evidence, arguments, and alternative points of view" (p. 6).

Effective discourse in adult learning. Mezirow's (1997) stance on adult learning relies heavily on the ability of adults to engage in effective discourse. As he states, "discourse becomes central to making meaning" (p. 8). Moreover, he describes the key elements of effective discourse in great detail. Effective discourse is achieved when adults have: (i) "full information"; (ii) is free to participate in the discourse and assume different roles in the process; (iii) have the ability to reflect critically on the information presented; (iv) are open-minded; (v) are respectful of others and their point of view; and (vi) "can make a tentative best judgment to guide action" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 10).

Effective discourse allows adult learners to see the world through a different lens and consider the world in another way. Again, this process is not easy or without a certain degree of discomfort. However, it is beneficial to the participants as they are able to consider the viewpoints of others and create new frames of reference. In order to become "autonomous, socially responsible thinkers", adults must engage in this type of learning (Mezirow, 1997, p. 8). This autonomy is described as the "understanding, skills, disposition necessary to become critically reflective of one's own assumptions and to engage effectively in discourse to validate one's beliefs through the experiences of others" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 9).

In order for adults to move towards transformative learning, educators must assist learners in becoming more "critical of their own and other's assumptions", provide

practice and model effective discourse, and provide "practice in recognizing frames of reference and using their imaginations to redefine problems from a different perspective" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 10). Educators must model and practice these key elements to assist adult learners for the 21st century. Furthermore, educators must have a strong foundation in these areas and be facilitators of the learning. By moving towards this model of transformative learning, adults can be prepared for the 21st century and possess the skills needed to be successful in the jobs of the future.

I selected this theoretical framework from my experiences in my coursework in the Educational Leadership Department at the University of South Carolina. The type of discourse described by Mezirow did not take place in all my courses; however, I was able to experience meaningful, effective discourse in two of my courses. These two courses were *The History and Policy of African American Education in the South* and *Education Policy: Leadership and Democracy in Changing Societies.* These courses were similar in many ways as they covered common topics and themes in education.

In *The History and Policy of African American Education in the South*, I was able to study the historical perspective of the inequities of education for blacks. By looking at history, the course presented a perspective that illuminated institutional racism and its influence on the quality of educational opportunities for African-Americans in America. For this course, students were required to interview someone that attended a segregated school and read *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860 – 1935*. Other assignments included watching videos about racism, stereotyping, white privilege, and cultural differences. These assignments provided the foundation for discussions and required students to reflect on their own beliefs.

I have provided a brief description of the course, but I believe it is important to understand the professor's belief and approach to the course. In the appendix, I have included his statement on race to provide an idea of the instructor's perspective on race. By including this statement in my study, I want to shed light on the course and the ideas presented to the students.

In the *Education Policy: Leadership and Democracy in Changing Societies* course, students explored the sociology of education in America. Students analyzed different theories of sociology in education and studied the theory of social reproduction introduced by Pierre Bourdieu. Other topics explored were the achievement gap, cultural capital, and white privilege. Throughout the course, the inequalities and inequities that exist in schools were presented to students.

The students were assigned a variety of readings to encourage discussion in the class and to facilitate students to reflect on their own beliefs. The major readings in the course were *Ain't No Making It: Aspirations and Attainment in a Low-Income Neighborhood* by Jay McLeod and *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life* by Annette Lareau. Each week, students were required to do assigned readings, write a response paper, and participate in class discussions.

In these two courses, I had to critically reflect on my own beliefs while placing myself in the position of others. Also, I had to engage in discourse on a variety of topics to include, but not limited to, white identity, institutional racism in schools, racism, social reproduction, and meritocracy. From this discourse, my emotions included anxiety, shame, fear, bitterness, anger, and confusion. The discourse made me question my belief

system and forced me to critically analyze my thinking in many areas of education. However, this critical analysis allowed me to focus on some important areas of my belief system and promoted important transformative learning to take place. Through the transformation of frames of reference, I was able to find a new viewpoint on my role as an educational leader. This new viewpoint caused me to investigate ways that I could promote social justice in schools and become an advocate for more students in my care.

Research Questions

For this research, I investigated the following research questions:

1) In what ways have school leaders who have completed post-graduate coursework at a graduate school of education, experienced transformative learning as it relates to issues of race and social justice in schools?
2) In what ways has this mindful transformative learning shaped leadership behavior to lead others to a transformed perspective?

Research Methodology

For this study, I collected stories from my subjects as it relates to their experiences with the ideas, concepts, and discussions that were introduced, presented, and analyzed in the Educational Leadership and Policies Department at the University of South Carolina. My stories came from subjects who were students enrolled in *The History and Policy of African American Education in the South* or *Education Policy: Leadership and Democracy in Changing Societies* taught between 2010 and 2013. Both of these classes focused on a plethora of issues related to social justice and the need for school leaders to be advocates for social justice in schools.

I utilized narrative inquiry methodology to engage in an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of the leaders' learning from their stories and experiences. This methodology allowed me to examine, analyze, and explore the stories of the participants

and attempt to understand how they experienced the courses at the University of South Carolina. Furthermore, this approach is based on the premise that humans are "story-telling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, p.2). Moreover, this method allowed me to understand how the participants viewed their own experiences as it relates to the other students in the class. By focusing on the stories, I was able to better understand the participants' backgrounds, viewpoints, and overall experiences in education. Through individual interviews and discourse with the subjects, I listened to their narratives from their past experiences, present reality, and future aspirations as a school leader as it relates to the promotion of social justice in schools. From these narratives, I analyzed their responses and make recommendations to leadership preparation programs to improve the promotion of social justice in our society.

As I reflect on the past, present, and future, my stories demonstrated the adult learning that took place during the coursework at the University of South Carolina. Moreover, these stories provided valuable feedback and information for other leaders as they look for ways to lead for social justice. Moreover, leadership preparation programs can use this information to better prepare future leaders for social justice advocacy. For this reason, I focused on the stories, experiences, and reflections of my participants through narrative inquiry.

Narrative inquiry allows researchers to "study the ways humans experience the world" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, p.2). Stories or narratives are an integral part of life and history, and they are extremely prominent in our culture. Leggo (2008) provides important commentary on this fact.

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"We are awash in stories. We are epistemologically and ontologically engaged in using stories as an integral way to sort who we are as people in relation to other people. We are all creatively engaged in processes of identity formation and transformation by attending to stories. Everybody lives stories, all the time, and everybody attends to the stories of others. And not only do we tell stories to ourselves and one another, but there are many stories that we have, at best, only limited access to, including the stories of dreams, fantasy, imagination, and memory. We hear and witness stories in our homes, in schools, in public spaces, in places of worship; we attend to stories on television and in movies; we understand the past in stories, and we seek to know the future in stories" (p. 3).

As participants told their stories, it provided meaning to different contexts and the complexity of their experiences as school leaders in the field. Also, these stories allowed me to better understand the transpiring of adult learning and make meaning of what has transpired as it takes leaders from beliefs to action. Clandinin and Connelly (1990) provide meaningful insight into the study of narratives by stressing the need for researchers to tackle the fact "that people are both living the stories in an on-going experiential text and telling their stories in words as they reflect upon life and explain themselves to others" (p.4).

I chose narrative inquiry methodology for this study because I knew I could relate to the leaders and their learning by discussing my own experiences from the coursework at the University of South Carolina. As Josselson (1996) suggested, narrative inquiry should be completed collaboratively within a relationship between the researcher and subject. From my experiences, I was able to elaborate on the stories of the subjects and engage them in deeper discussions of their learning and experiences.

Research Participants And Setting

For this study, participants had to meet a definite set of criteria. As I reflected on my personal experiences and my own learning, I wanted to study a diverse group of school leaders in South Carolina that have taken one or both of the following courses: *The History and Policy of African American Education in the South* and *Education Policy: Leadership and Democracy in Changing Societies* through the Educational Leadership and Policies Department at the University of South Carolina. Therefore, the criteria for selection as participants in this research would be: (1) worked as a school principal in a public school in South Carolina or served in another leadership role and (2) have completed coursework at the University of South Carolina in the above mentioned class. Both courses discussed issues of diversity, cultural reproduction, cultural identity, race, social class, and white privilege.

In order to obtain a sample for this study, I contacted the professors of the courses to create a potential list of subjects for my research. I implemented a purposeful, snowball sampling method to create a larger list of potential subjects (Maxwell, 2005). From this sample, I looked for willing subjects to share their life stories, discuss their adult learning from the classes, and provide access to their personal leadership narratives as school leaders in South Carolina.

After reviewing the recommendations and the potential list of participants, I contacted each leader via a human subjects approved contact letter. After sending this letter, I made a personal phone call or personal email. After determining the availability and willingness of the potential participants, I reviewed my list further to identify a

diverse group of subjects for my study. At that time, I contacted each participant and reviewed the human subject approval protocol. The sample was purposeful, but it was also convenient. The participants were available and willing to discuss their learning with me.

In this study, the participants were South Carolina public school principals and one community leader with leadership training from the University of South Carolina. These principals were diverse in gender and ethnicity. Furthermore, this group of participants represented different types of schools with differences in demographics, school size, and grade span. I wanted to seek diversity in participant selection to allow me to make comparisons between the different groups and gain further insight into the stories of these leaders as it relates to issues of social justice.

Description Of Participants

For this research, I had six participants. Their experiences were instrumental in assisting me with my research questions and caused me to reflect further on my experiences in the classes. I appreciate their willingness to participate and their courage to share their personal stories and feelings. Throughout the process, they demonstrated professionalism and genuine concern for the research. Moreover, I felt their responses were genuine, and their answers to the questions revealed their true feelings on the topics of social justice and adult learning.

The six participants were different in many ways, but they were very similar in other areas. There were three female and three male participants. There were three African Americans and three whites. There were five educators represented in the study.

In the next section, I will provide a brief description of each participant. I have provided each participant with a pseudonym to protect their identity.

Mr. Washington

Mr. Washington serves as a superintendent of a school district with approximately 3,000 students in South Carolina. He is an African American male with over twenty years of experience as an educator. During his career, he has served as a teacher, assistant principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent in four different school districts. His school district serves students on eight different campuses with a majority African American student population.

During Mr. Washington's tenure as superintendent, he has made positive changes to the climate and culture of the district. Moreover, he has demonstrated strong leadership traits that have help produce many different awards to the district and the schools located in his district. He believes in his students and the powerful influence of comprehensive mentoring programs to assist young people in achieving their goals.

Mrs. Gibson

Mrs. Gibson is a white female with over 25 years of experience as an educator in South Carolina. During her career as an educator, she has served as a high school teacher, assistant principal at a high school, and middle school principal. Currently, she serves as a middle school principal with approximately 700 students with a majority white student population.

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She has served as a principal for the past five years and supervises over 50 employees. As a leader of the school, she has been able to facilitate positive change as noted by the school's many recognitions at the state and local level. Mrs. Gibson is an active member o the state middle school association.

Preacher Man

Preacher Man is a white male residing in the coastal areas of South Carolina. Currently, he serves as Christian missionary in South America. In his role as a missionary, he trains pastors to plant churches in their respective countries and equip others to be Christian leaders. During his career, he has served as a pastor, missionary, and leadership consultant to both religious and secular communities. I chose Preacher Man due to our conversations before, during, and after class. During one semester, we carpooled to class each week. During the two-hour ride to Columbia, South Carolina, we were able to elaborate on our experiences, discuss the issues in greater detail, and examine our own adult learning.

Preacher Man has been a leader in many different capacities for over thirty years. His passions include his faith, family, and spending time with his friends. He enjoys cultivating meaningful relationships with others and acknowledges the positive effects on learning from these relationships. For this study, he is definitely unlike the other participants due to his lack of experience as a professional educator. However, his perspective will shed more light on the subject of adult learning and social justice issues. Furthermore, his perspective can be compared to the perspectives of the educators in this study.

Ms. Fleming

Ms. Fleming is an African American female with over twenty years of experience as an educator. During her career, she has served as a teacher and assistant principal. Currently, she serves as a middle school assistant principal at a school with approximately one thousand students in grades six through eight. The school has diversity in student population and course offerings as it serves as a magnet school for science and mathematics. During her tenure as an assistant principal, Ms. Fleming has served under several principals with different leadership traits and philosophies.

Ms. Fleming has taken a number of leadership courses and expressed excitement about the personal approach of the graduate school. She demonstrates a quiet confidence in her ability to lead others to different perspectives. She has learned a great deal from her supervisors and has learned about her strengths and weaknesses as a leader.

Mr. Jones

Mr. Jones is a white male from a northern state. He has served as an educator for over twenty years in South Carolina, and he has worked in the same district for his entire career. During his career, he has served as a teacher, assistant principal, and principal. Currently, he serves as middle school principal with approximately 500 students in grades seven and eight. During his coursework at the graduate school, he was exposed to a number of social justice issues in the areas of curriculum, discipline, funding, and teacher quality.

Mr. Jones is from a family of educators. His father was a school leader, and he had a strong influence on his career decision. As a middle school principal, he has had

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the opportunity to be a part of several professional organizations. Also, he has served as

an officer with these organizations. He is passionate about student learning, building

relationships, and adult learning. He has utilized several of the activities and readings

from his work at the graduate school to spark discussions and learning with his own

middle school faculty.

Mr. Williams

Mr. Williams is an African American male with fifteen years experience in the

field of education. He is my youngest participant, and he has served as a teacher and

assistant principal. He has experience at the elementary, middle school, and high school

level. He is a member of three professional organizations, and he is proud of his family

and their influence on him to be an educator.

Currently, Mr. Williams serves as a middle school assistant principal with

approximately 600 students in grades six through eight. The school's demographics

consist of about 50 percent white and 50 percent African American. From his days as an

elementary student, he has had dreams of becoming a principal due to the influence of

one of his principals. During his career, he has worked to change the stereotypes

associated with male African American educators by exploring professional opportunities

as a leader in curriculum and instruction.

Data Collection

In order to understand these participants and their adult learning, I wanted to hear

the stories of these leaders. Therefore, the stories were heard through interviews with

each participant. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted about sixty minutes for

each session. Each interview focused on the experiences of each leader and reflected on their stories from the past. However, these stories assisted me in understanding how these school leaders operate in present-day practice and how their past and present influence future leadership practices. I facilitated each interview by using semi-structured interview protocol. I utilized a semi-structured interview process to allow me to ask important questions and formulate new questions for more in-depth discussions on the different topics (Glesne, 1999). Glesne (2011) refers to this approach as "broad scale" and is "directed to understanding phenomena in the fullest capacity" (p. 134). My facilitation was guided by my interview questions as they were given the opportunity to share their adult learning experiences and their views on social justice issues.

Each interview was audio-taped and then transcribed. As I conducted the interviews, I did little to no note-taking to increase the comfort level of my subjects and facilitate increased dialogue and discussion. After each interview, I listened to the recording and reflected on our time together. In addition to the interviews and reflective questions, I collected information about each school from the school website, school report card, and other school publications. This information provided me with multiple data sources as I analyzed my data and completed my research.

As I went through my interview, I utilized King's (1997) transformative learning model that measures the steps of Mezirow's transformative process. During the interview, I presented subjects with ten statements about their adult learning. They had to agree or disagree with these statements. By analyzing their responses, I was able to determine the level of transformative learning. Moreover, if they agreed with the statement, I encouraged the subjects to provide an example of this adult learning process.

Through this process, the subjects were able to share their experiences and stories in more detail.

Ethical Considerations

Due to the participants' positions of power and the nature of the stories shared by the participants, it is important that each participant is identified using a pseudonym. Moreover, in order to further protect the identity of the participants, I will not connect any of the participants to a particular school setting or description of school demographics. By protecting the identity of each participant, I am able to insure the safety of each principal as they share their stories and experiences with me.

Trustworthiness / Authenticity

In order to increase the trustworthiness and authenticity of the research, several measures were taken with consistency throughout the process. For starters, member checks and debriefing took place to allow participants to review the data (Glesne, 1999). The member checks followed appropriate protocol and allowed participants to review the data. Also, each interview was accompanied by a recording and a field log. Finally, school report cards and test data were collected to assist me in maintaining trustworthy information through the research design process.

Limitations

This research has some limiting factors. As I continued to explore the narratives of these participants, it was imperative to realize the lack of trustworthiness that exists in human beings. As these narratives are presented, I was aware of the possibility of human

dishonesty, forgetfulness, and personal bias to different situations. Nevertheless, this is a

fact as we investigate personal narratives. The following quote captures part of this idea:

> When talking about their lives, people lie sometimes, forget a lot, exaggerate,
> become confused, and get things wrong. Yet they *are* revealing truths. These
> truths don't reveal the past "as it actually was," aspiring to a standard of
> objectivity. They give us instead the truths of our experience…Unlike the truth of
> the scientific ideal, the truths of personal narratives are neither open to proof or
> self-evident. We come to understand them only through interpretation, paying
> careful attention to the context that shapes their creation and to the world-views
> that inform them (The Personal Narratives Group, p. 141 cited in McCann, 2012)

As this research is presented, it is also important to realize that this study is

unique to South Carolina involving leaders that were educated at the University of South

Carolina in Columbia, South Carolina. The participants were identified through a

purposeful, snowball sample, but the participants agreed to participate in the study and

data collection. Since these leaders are selected to participate and have all taken many of

the same courses, their stories may contain little variation or difference. However, since I

explored many different aspects of each personal narrative, it was my hope to see

differences in each participant's adult learning. In this study, I was able to present the

stories and voices of these leaders, but the voices of the all stakeholders are not heard.

Parents, teachers, students, and other community members could provide a much

different perspective about schools and school leadership practices.

Data Analysis

For this study, I analyzed the transcription of each interview. For each

participant, I analyzed and investigated the stories as they related to past experiences,

present leadership challenges, professional growth, and adult learning. By examining

each interview transcript, I was able to look at my responses, the responses of the

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participants, and determine any significant omissions from the responses. I was able to find meaning in the stories, begin making connections with the adult learning processes, and develop a more meaningful understanding of the influence of higher education on leadership beliefs and practices.

I utilized coding as I analyzed the interview recordings and transcripts. According to Maxwell (2013), this type of analysis starts by identifying the data that "seems important and meaningful in some way" (p.107). As I utilized this starting point, I began observing recurrent themes from my participants, and I was able to make comparisons and connections about the adult learning experiences.

This coding process began by exploring the themes that seemed more meaningful to me. I looked specifically at the big issues and performed a preliminary reading of my transcripts. After my initial examination, I began to code my data with a more meticulous approach. As I continued to review my notes and transcripts, I looked for key words, phrases, and themes. These key words, phrases, and themes allowed me to make notes and further categorize the responses of my participants.

After completing these two steps in my coding process, I reviewed my coding strategies to determine my next steps for analyzing my data. As I examined my codes, I utilized Glesne's (2013) questions on the coding process. I looked to divide my codes into categories and sub-categories. Then, I determined if my codes needed to be more specific or renamed to help me establish patterns and develop "a framework of relational categories" for my data (Glesne, 2013, p. 195).

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After going through this coding process, I identified emergent themes from the data. These themes provided me with insights and perspectives into adult learning, the educational experiences of my participants, and assisted me in reviewing my adult learning. I will present this information in the next chapter. I was able to make comparisons, and I was able to analyze my research questions for this study.

CHAPTER IV

Results of the Study

In this chapter, I will present the results of my study as I explore the responses of the six subjects in this research. For the purpose of protecting the identity of my subjects, I have given each leader a pseudonym. For each subject, I will provide a more in-depth brief description of their background, a description of their leadership position and work experience, a description of their workplace, and present key topics covered during our interviews. Moreover, I have provided quotes from the interviews to allow the subjects' stories to be heard in this research.

After presenting the information about each subject, I will present the emergent themes present in this research. These themes emerged from the interview process. Although I utilized the same set of interview questions for each subject, I followed a semi-structured interview protocol that allowed me to encourage my subjects to share their stories and experiences as an adult learner. As my subjects shared their stories, I was able to learn more about them, their backgrounds, and their transformative adult learning experiences. As the researcher, my thoughts, perspectives, and bias are present throughout the research process. By allowing the subjects to tell their stories and not be bound to a script of questions, I was able to take some of my perspective and bias away from the research process.

In my interviews with these leaders, I explored the following two research questions:

1) In what ways have school leaders who have completed post-graduate coursework at a graduate school of education, experienced transformative learning as it relates to issues of race and social justice in schools?
2) In what ways has this mindful transformative learning shaped leadership behavior to lead others to a transformed perspective?

After presenting the emergent themes from my research, I will provide a summary of chapter four.

Mrs. Gibson

This white principal leads her middle school by looking at data, focusing on relationships, and exploring ways to improve her school. As principal, she has taken various steps to grow professionally by networking with other principals at the local and state levels, continuing her education at the University of South Carolina in the doctoral program, and being an active member of the state middle school association. As principal, she feels like her most important role and contribution as a leader is to "grow her staff" and develop the leadership potential of each individual staff member.

Her school has a majority white population with about 80 percent of the students being of the white race and the remaining students being mostly African American. The school serves a few students with Asian and Hispanic backgrounds. There is a relatively large population of students with disabilities with about twenty percent of the students receiving some type of support through the exceptional education services. Overall, the school excels on state testing and has shown great marks on the accountability measures from the state report card. In 2014, the school received an overall "excellent" rating on the South Carolina State Report Card and earned a "B" on the federal accountability

system. As a school, over forty percent of the students scored "exemplary" on the state testing instrument in English Language Arts, Writing, Science, and Social Studies. In math, about 40% of the students scored exemplary on the state test.

During the interview process, I found a connection between the experiences of this principal and my own experiences on a personal and professional level. She grew up in rural North Carolina and spent many days working on a tobacco farm in the area. During that time, she attended the public schools in her county and went to integrated schools throughout her education. As a young person working and living in rural North Carolina, she interacted with people from many different backgrounds. Moreover, she remembers her time on the farm as a time where she learned both the importance of hard work and the need to be able to work with "all types of people". She remembers both black and white children playing basketball in her yard after a hard day in the fields.

As she entered college and the workforce, she started a family and a career as a science teacher. After years of teaching, she had the opportunity to go back to school to work on her masters' degree in Educational Administration at the Winthrop University. For the first time, she began to question her identity as a person and school leader. In one of the classes at Winthrop, she read *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria: And Other Conversations About Race* by Beverly Daniel Tatum. She stated that this book gave her a "punch in her stomach" as she was first introduced to the ideas of social reproduction, white privilege, and conversations about race in schools. She began to question her daily actions and ways of thinking. When she was growing up, she never considered herself "privileged" and thought hard work was the answer to success in both schools and life.

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After completion of her degree from Winthrop University, she began a new journey at the University of South Carolina. This new journey continued her self-reflection about race, white privilege, and the ability to relate to people from different social classes. This self-reflection often collided with her faith as it related to homosexuality. However, this self-reflection and her desire to create a more inclusive environment for her school allowed her to gain powerful insights into her daily practice and attempt to become a more effective school leader.

As the interview continued, Mrs. Gibson focused on several key topics throughout our conversation as she discussed her adult learning and her role as a school leader. Mrs. Gibson focused on the resistance of her staff with matters of race, the importance of self-reflection in the professional growth process, and the need to establish a relationship of trust with all stakeholders. For each one of these topics, I will provide my observations and insights as well as quotes to illustrate each idea presented during our time together.

Resistance. As I talked more to Mrs. Gibson about her experiences as a school leader, she identified a great deal of resistance on matters of social justice. When she attempted to implement practices to promote social justice or have conversations about race, she found her staff to be in a different state of mind. In many cases, they were not ready for the conversations or the practices that she wanted to implement at her school. This resistance revealed itself in the actions of both staff members and parents. For example, after analyzing the test data, Mrs. Gibson chose to target the African American subgroup for character education and visits to college campuses.

After presenting her plan to her guidance department, she met some resistance from both guidance counselors to include a more diverse group for the character education and college visits. In this case, the guidance counselors, who are both African American, were resistant to Mrs. Gibson's approach to addressing the needs of the African American students only. In other cases, a white parent was dissatisfied with the discussion of race and the riots in Baltimore, Maryland in an eighth grade English Language arts class because she felt the subject of race should be "taught at home". As I listened to these stories of resistance, Mrs. Gibson has grown in her approach to race and matters of social justice. She talked about these stories with confidence, and her different experiences have taught her valuable lessons as she moves forward with her leadership. However, she has much more to do to make advances in this realm of her daily practice. The following quotes provide her perspective and experience with resistance.

> "Our at-risk students, our data shows are our African American students. We don't have a large population of African Americans maybe 20-25% in my student body here. My two guidance counselors are both African American females. So I went to them and said I want us to start a character education program. We already had a character education class that they would teach kind of as a fill in for related arts or an elective class. So I think this was 2 years ago. I said I want us to choose all African Americans based on the data and put in that class. We talked a little bit about that and a couple days later the Chair came to me and said you know we don't feel comfortable putting all African Americans in that class. We feel like it is going to create a stigma. So I said let's talk about it. So, we talked through that and we ended up doing a mixture because, I could tell that they weren't quite ready to take that step yet. But, we're gonna. The data shows that that's where were weak and we need to hit that head on."

Self-reflection. From her coursework and adult learning experiences at Winthrop University and the University of South Carolina, Mrs. Gibson has experienced a great deal of growth and development in many different areas. Throughout the interview, she

talked about the importance of self-reflection in this growth process. This type of self-reflection was emphasized in the courses through the assignments such as response papers and through the classroom discussions. From her coursework and discussions, she beganto ask herself a number of questions to initiate this process. Who am I? Why do I do the things that I do? Initially, the answers to these questions caused her some discomfort; however, they helped her to move towards a new level of adult learning. She started questioning her habits of mind and points of view. As she searched for answers and evidence, she started creating new points of view as it related to self-identification, the roles of schools in changing society, and matters of race. She began to know more about herself and who she really is. Also, she began to capture the concept of the social responsibility of schools to address the issues of social justice. She appreciated the openness of the conversations about race at the University of South Carolina as it provided her with insights and the courage to have similar conversations with her staff.

> "So I didn't see myself that way but as I really kinda started, you know reflecting and thinking about who I was as a person and thought about my life. I realized there might be some truth to that and I think that goes both ways from the stand point of race. You know umm certainly. Well, it I just think that can go both ways when we start looking at skin color. So that kinda was the first punch in the stomach if you will. That made me start thinking about that process.

> Felt really challenged to know and to determine what my assumptions were. My assumptions, my beliefs, my opinions and as we had the conversations. The readings were one thing but when you have professors that are brave enough to approach these topics that cause you to really reflect and think about why you think the way that you do. Without judgment, you know it's I can't help I can't help how I am but I'm not perfect. And just the pushing to do that self-reflection. Figure out why you feel the way you feel and try to open that lens so to speak and look at things from a different perspective."

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Trust. Mrs. Gibson identified the need for trust in building the capacity of teachers with matters of social justice. As a white, female principal, she identified the need to have trust in the relationship before meaningful growth, conversations, and change could occur. Without trust, stakeholders will not have confidence in your intentions or approaches to these sensitive matters. Without trust, a minor incident or slip of the tongue can cause a major problem or setback for initiatives involving social justice.

> "I'm a big believer in the team approach. I put a lot of value on my leadership team. I feel like and our culture here is extremely positive and I feel like you could ask the teachers here, the students here, and they would say that. And you know, we have some issues that we try to address and identify but um I think it's important that if I want to change or find an area where I feel like we need to change something that where I get that buy in you know from the staff and when you start talking about social issues, they are uncomfortable, taboo. If we're going to change something, we really just have to be honest and open about it. And that goes back to that trust. We read a book in my leadership team. We read *The Five Dyfunctions of a Team,* and the first dysfunction is lack of trust. That's an issue and you can't build trust overnight. It takes a while."

Mr. Washington

Mr. Washington is an African American superintendent serving a district with about 3,000 students in South Carolina. His school district has ten schools including a career and technology center and an adult education campus. Overall, the school district has a majority African American student population. Mr. Washington credits his family for instilling the importance of education in him and creating a desire for learning. Both of his parents were first generation college graduates, and they both understood the importance of an education. Moreover, during his childhood, he spent a great deal of time with his grandmother. Although she could not read or write, she reinforced the importance of education and provided her grandson with important lifelong lessons.

Also, she described her struggles to have access to an education and her desire for her children to be educated. These lessons had a lasting impression on Mr. Washington, and they have shaped many of his beliefs about education today.

As an educator, he has worked as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent. During his career, he has worked in four different school districts across the state of South Carolina. His career has taken him many different places, and he has enjoyed success at each stop. Recently, one of his schools was recognized as Palmetto's Finest, and several other schools were recognized by the South Carolina Department of Education for outstanding performance and improvement. Over the course of his career, schools and organizations have shown positive results under his leadership.

As a result of his coursework at the University of South Carolina, Mr. Washington experienced an epiphany that changed how he viewed the world. After taking a course on race in schools, he realized the course was "the most impactful course" that he had ever taken in his academic career. This course had forced him to reflect on his beliefs and better understand the different perspectives of others. He enjoyed the discussions and "spirited debates" during the class, and he was able to learn about history from different contexts. Because of this course, he was inspired to do his dissertation on the African American male and the struggle to find academic success.

As the interview continued, Mr. Washington focused on three topics throughout our conversation as he discussed his adult learning and his role as a superintendent. Mr. Washington focused on his optimal conditions for adult learning, his approach to

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addressing the needs of his students, and his practices as a result of his learning. For each one of these topics, I will provide my observations and insights as well as quotes to illustrate each idea presented during our time together.

Framework for adult learning. For Mr. Washington, many of the courses at the University of South Carolina did not "stretch" him or his beliefs. However, two professors provided a framework that he identified as effective for adult learning and his learning style. For starters, the instructors had a strong handle on the content of the course, and they were able to design the class activities, discussions, and assignments to promote an environment that was conducive to learning. Next, the material of the courses was presented from multiple perspectives that allowed the learner to see things in a different way. This allowed the adult learner to grow in a number of ways through analyses of the material and self-reflection. Finally, Mr. Washington stated that the biggest factor for his growth and enjoyment of the course was the diversity of the students in the class. By having a diverse group of students from diverse backgrounds, the class discussions were richer, more emotional, and more meaningful for Mr. Washington.

> "And sometimes it was you know somewhat emotional, but I think as a result of those spirited debates, for lack of a better word, I think we were all the better for it. Um had there been a class of people who had the same backgrounds, the same experiences, and the same perspectives, the class would not have been as rewarding. I think the fact we had so many different experiences and different backgrounds and so many different perspectives made the class. As I said, one of the best classes I've ever had the opportunity to take.
>
> Well, this is probably going to be overlooked. A large part of education and experience for me was the make-up of the course and part the make-up of the class. And so people don't often understand the value of diversity. You know some people think that diversity for diversity sake is what it's about. This is a

prime example of how diversity can have a positive impact. I mean had it not been for the diverse backgrounds of people who made up that class that experience would not have been what it was. And so to you know to maximize an educational experience such as the one we had requires not only a good professor, a good curriculum, a good design, but it also required a safe space with diverse individuals with different backgrounds and different perspectives and different thoughts and willing to share and allow others to learn from their experiences. And so you know, I will tell you as an adult learner I mean that's probably the one thing I came along with thinking. Had this been a different class with different people, I don't know if the experience would have been the same."

Comprehensive mentoring. As this interview continued, Mr. Washington provided me with his philosophy and approach to changing the culture and mindset of our lowest performing students. During this portion of the interview, his passion and commitment to education was exemplified. Moreover, his beliefs about education were spelled out for me as I listened to his vision for a better school system and world. As he talked about the program, his approach is simple, yet powerful. Attack the child from the inside out. In other words, it is imperative that we change the way students think about themselves, others, and their education that are going to make the change in a student's actions and behaviors in schools. As Mr. Washington stated, "If you can shape how someone thinks, you can shape how someone acts." From this portion of the interview, I was able to see his commitment and drive to make a difference for his students and his community. At the present time, his comprehensive mentoring program serves over 75 male students in grades seven through twelve with two meetings each month at both the middle school and high school in his district. The program is based on the biography of Benjamin E. Mays and provides students with multiple opportunities to grow into manhood.

"I'll tell you particularly as it relates to African American males. I mean there are a great deal of issues we have to address. There's a lot about it, but I would probably say the most important issue is to change their prospective on the importance of maximizing the academic potential and so. You know I don't know how many of those young African American males in your prospective building. In a building like mine, when I was a principal felt the need to invest the amount of energy necessary for them to do their best academically you know so their priorities may have been on athletics, just girls or whatever the case may be, not that school had no importance, but it didn't have premium importance and it wasn't the most important thing. And so you didn't necessarily invest the kind of time necessary to be your very best. I'll tell you even as you saw in my dissertation the most and impactful thing you can do I think is comprehensive mentoring because that's probably the only thing that really changes the mindset. So often we strive to do this in education there are often everything we do involves the outside of the child. Ok and so you can always attack a problem from the outside in but it is very difficult to accomplish it that way. But if you can attack it from the inside out you change the way a kid thinks. So if you can change the way a kid thinks, he can survive in virtually any environment. You know there's a young man I used to mentor when I was an assistant principal. I met this fellow he was in tenth grade his name was Justin. Justin had you know out of 7 classes, Justin had 6 F's. The first time I met him was because he cursed out a teacher so I had to suspend him. So I sent him off for a few days, and I said when you come back I want you to come see me. And I started working with Justin from that point. I could tell within I don't know how much time that his thinking began to change. To make a long story short, he went from 6 F's to end up graduating with virtually all A's and B's, going to college and now has a master's degree from the University of South Carolina. He will tell you there was there was really nothing you could have done within the school in terms of curriculum, in terms of instruction that would have changed his trajectory until you changed his thinking. Once you could change his thinking, then he could thrive. Well, people think if I put the right teacher in front of Justin, if I just develop the right program, if I develop the right curriculum. None of that would matter at all. And he would tell you because his thinking was different now. Once his thinking had changed, then he could find his way."

Cultural capital and awareness. As a result of his coursework at the University of South Carolina, Mr. Washington stated that his overall practices did not change. However, he identified his degree of cultural sensitivity to be a important area of change in professional practice. By practicing a higher degree of cultural sensitivity, he felt like

his leadership had a much stronger foundation. From his experiences in the course with a diverse group of adult learners, he realized that everyone has different perspectives, points of views, and backgrounds. Furthermore, by attempting to understand the perspective of others, you can be a more effective leader and be able to find common ground for the goals of the organization. As a superintendent, Mr. Washington stated that he is in "a constant state of reflection". With this in mind, his ability to take into account the diversity of people and their perspectives provided him with a strong foundation to face each day and make the best decisions for his stakeholders.

> "You know probably the biggest thing is and this is kind of ironic, probably the class made me more culturally sensitive if you will. I had a greater appreciation for the diverse backgrounds from which our students come from. It really made me think about all these little concept of cultural capital, for example. That's something we really dug deep into probably in one of the classes. But why is it that some kids come to school with that with the perspective and a philosophy and a set of behaviors that may be different than mine and maybe different than the ones that I have instilled in my own children and so it probably made me more understanding of those differences even though I may share a lot of things in common with some of those individuals. You know I'm the offspring of parents that got divorced, I'm an African American, I grew up in a small town but even all those commonalities there were so many cultural differences that I guess I never really considered before really getting deep into a lot of these real intricate social type of issues."

Preacher Man

Preacher Man is the youngest of eight children whose parents never graduated from high school. His parents understood the value of hard work and remembered the Great Depression. He describes himself as a "life-long" learner who has worked in various capacities to include pastor, church planter, leadership developer, and missionary. Preacher Man took one class at the University of South Carolina as he explored his

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options for possibly entering the Ph.D. program at the school. During the class, he was one of only two members without any affiliation with the education field. Because of this, I wanted to interview him to gain a perspective from a non-educator on adult learning, transformative learning, and his views on social justice. As a 52 year old Caucasian male with travels throughout the world, he provided me with a different worldview that enriches my perspective on many of the issues faced by educators today.

Preacher Man struggled in school at an early age as he "cheated his way" through the eighth grade to compensate for his inability to read. Then, in the eighth grade, he had a special teacher that offered to tutor him during the summer to help him catch up on his studies and increase his reading level. During that summer, his reading level increased three grade levels as the tutor encouraged him to read for pleasure. By taking an interest in Preacher Man and focusing on his strengths, Preacher Man gained new confidence and realized his academic potential. Moreover, the tutor provided him with strategies for memorizing, techniques for effective studying habits, and boosted his self-esteem. This time in Preacher Man's life would be pivotal as he moved forward with his academic endeavors.

During our interview time, Preacher Man provided multiple examples of how he was influenced by the class experience at the University of South Carolina. For example, he uses one of the videos shown in the class as an exercise for his leadership development program. The video has helped him to demonstrate the importance of seeing things through multiple perspectives and understanding the danger of the "single story". Moreover, the class experience increased his awareness of the role race plays in our culture and how he was very oblivious to many of the things that could be viewed as

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racist by others. This awareness has helped him to reflect on his actions and his words as he deals with people from different backgrounds. Furthermore, Preacher Man remembers the video on ebonics and how it assisted him in understanding the need to "code-switch" in different settings with different people. As a missionary that travels to both Africa and South America, the segment on code-switching has helped him to deal with people from different cultures and relate to them in an appropriate manner.

As the interview continued, Preacher Man focused on several topics throughout our conversation as he discussed his adult learning and the influence of the class on his cultural awareness. Preacher Man focused on the importance of relationships in adult learning, the influence of the assignments on his adult learning, and the need for trust in building bridges between people from different races and cultures. For each one of these topics, I will provide my observations and insights as well as quotes to illustrate each idea presented during our time together.

Relationships and adult learning. As the interview continued, we delved into the idea of adult and transformative learning. Preacher Man identified the importance of relationships in providing a motivation for learning to take place. He discussed several examples of how relationships can prove to be the real key to any significant adult learning and how our education system should consider the importance of relationships at all levels of schooling. In many cases, he felt our current education system focuses too much on the content of the courses and does not focus on the learner. However, in this class, the professor took an interest in Preacher Man, explored his areas of interest, helped him determine his next step in the education process, reviewed his options and plans to reach the next step, and motivated him to take the next step. As the professor

built that relationship, Preacher Man became more confident and was channeled into a positive direction. Furthermore, Preacher Man used his wife as another example of the power of relationships and mentoring help foster both adult learning and transformative learning. When she entered the workforce after working as the caregiver for her children, Preacher Man's wife found the nursing profession had dramatically changed over the course of about twenty years. She was intimidated by the new technology and new responsibilities of the nursing profession. With the help of some dynamic mentors, she was able to navigate through these changes, gain much needed confidence, and focus on the important parts of her job. Again, the mentors provided her with the support, advice, and skills needed to perform.

> "It's not just content. You've got to look at a person's motivation, you've got to look at their strategies, you've got to look at their actions. And when you can have alignment between those things, where your able to tap into an adult learners' areas of interest, life experiences, what's motivating them, what strategies do they have for a preferred future. When you can being alignment between those things, and it's not simply in learning something where they are having to jump through a hoop because it's a requirement for a class and part of that is just education. They've got to do some of that, but the closer alignment you can bring with someone's reality, helping focus them where they can take their past their present and combine those for a preferred future. People will be highly motivated to learn when it's in the area of competency and interest and potential and so I think finding ways to tap into that is a key for them succeeding in the second half of their life and moving forward. I don't know your exact target, but I look at my wife is a stay at home mom for 21-22 years. She kept her nursing license current which was excellent. In that 22 years of history, the world had changed.   Nursing was no longer with a notebook keeping track of everything. It was all computer-based. And so there was a very low level of confidence on my wife's part on entering into a nursing world that was computerized. She felt intimidated. She felt inadequate. She didn't believe she was capable. Even though she had kept her license, the current work environment had really shifted to an electronic world, and it scared her. Fortunately, she had some great mentors in the educational field.   Because she

is a school nurse who said why don't you come along side us and they mentored her into where she's over a school now and has done that for the last several years now and loves it. She is in the zone. So, I think with adult learners there is often a lack of confidence because they have not they have tremendous life experience and skills, but they don't see how it can translate educationally. They can't make that leap if they don't have a mentor that believes in them you are going to see a very high attrition rate. But, if you're able to find some folks who can really speak into their life and help them make the transition to the educational world."

Class assignments. During our interview, I could sense that the class assignments made a lasting impression on Preacher Man and his views on a variety of topics. He cited several assignments as influential and meaningful to his learning. Moreover, he remembered important details about the assignments that I had forgotten over time. As he researched the history of African Americans in the South and their pursuit of educational equality, he had the opportunity to interview Harvey Gantt, the first African American student at Clemson University. Preacher Man's interview had a lasting impression on him, and the interview has led to an on-going relationship with Mr. Gantt. During his interview with Mr. Gantt, Preacher Man was most impressed with his focus on the "real" issue and his lack of attention on race. Harvey Gantt wanted to be an architect; therefore, he wanted to attend a university with an esteemed architect program. At that time, Clemson University was his choice for him to reach his goal at becoming an architect.

Other assignments were meaningful to Preacher Man as he has borrowed many of the videos, readings, and discussions in his pastoral work and leadership development endeavors. He seeks to empower others to see our world in a different perspective, become better leaders, and broaden their awareness of the issues raised in this class.

"The class itself really provided a platform for discussion. The professors provided tracks to run on and one of the assignments was to interview three African Americans and discuss with them their educational experience in the south and how prejudice had influenced them personally. One of those interviews, a classmate and I drove to Charlotte and interviewed Harvey Gantt, the first African American student at Clemson and so without the class I would not have done those interviews, I would not have had the opportunity to meet Harvey Gantt, I would not have had the opportunity to have a deeper level discussion on race with my classmates. We would have kept it on a different level. We had much deeper in our conversations because of the class.

The focus of the video, *The Danger of a Single Story*, is if you start the story and secondly, for instance, if you start the story of the Americans or the Europeans coming to America as the beginning of America rather than the Native Americans you begin with the end secondly. In other words, we're starting the story at the wrong place and that the Native Americans would have a totally different angle on America than the British would. And that that just really spoke to me personally of how many stories do I start and secondly that I think my vantage point my view point is the point. Um, and looking at things from a plethora of angles. Um, as ah you mentioned missionary and pastor it actually gave me a deeper appreciation of the Gospel for this reason. You've got four gospels that are given. There is a unity between them Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John but it's not a single story, you've got people from four different angles telling the same story and their synergy in it. And there's a harmony within it and I think it strengthens the story if there was only one gospel rather than four it would fall into the danger of a single story. But the fact that you have people, a Gentile, a tax collector, you know John and then Mark who's writing to a Greek audience you have four completely different world view angles on the life of Jesus and that video was about at all but it really began to cause me to look and say where is the danger of a single story and what separates Christianity from all other religions. Well, one of them is you've got four different angles. You have being presented and there's a unity in it. I use it to challenge leaders. You have a view point on this. What other angles are there? Let's look at this from a different perspective. So the class really helped me to do that."

Trust. Preacher Man felt that the discussions in the classroom were not effective in dealing with issues of social justice, race relations, and racial conflict. He felt that most of the participants' views were consistent with other members of the class from the same race. He viewed most of the comments as divided solely along racial lines. He perceived that most of the discussions and comments were "guarded". However, he stated that the discussions were valuable and led to more meaningful dialogue with an

African American classmate. This classmate commuted to class with Preacher Man, and these travels to and from class provided time and opportunity to confront racial issues in a safe, trust-filled environment. As they traveled along the interstate highways of South Carolina, Preacher Man was able to see a different perspective as it related to race, racial conflicts, and cultural differences. Preacher Man identified this relationship and their bond as the catalyst for a transformative learning experience and making him more aware of his racial identity. This newfound awareness caused him to see race in a different light and consider his choice of words as he relates to people from different races.

> "Yeah I thought there were times where we fell into our scripts. The class was pretty evenly divided racially between blacks and whites. I felt like there were times where we got stuck in the ruts of our preconceived ideas of what it meant to be black and what it meant to be white on both sides of that equation and we never really broke thorough as a class. I didn't think. To how do we build bridges? How do we extend grace? How do we move toward forgiveness? How do we move toward our preferred future? How do we break the stereotypes? I felt that my carpooling buddy and I were able to do all of those things. I felt like as a class we were able to do very little if any of that. It just tended to stay socially acceptable and on the surface for the most part. I didn't feel like there was a real breakthrough in understanding appreciation. So in that regard I was a little disappointed.
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> To me, I think trust and transparency are key. My carpool buddy and I can talk at a level that neither of us can say in certain environments because it would be seen by others as meaning one thing. When you have a level of trust and transparency with friends, I think that you are able to communicate at a heart level not just a measured level which is part of code switching, too."

Mr. Jones

Mr. Jones is a white male with twenty years experience as an educator in South Carolina. He grew up in rural Virginia, and he has attended the University of South Carolina as an undergraduate and graduate student. His father was a principal in Virginia, and Mr. Jones has served as the principal of a middle school for the past eight years in a rural district. Mr. Jones is a father, and he has enjoyed his time as an educator.

He has worked as a teacher, assistant principal, and principal in the same district for his entire working career. He took his first job in the district as a part of the South Carolina's Teacher Loan Forgiveness program. During his career, he has pondered the idea of moving to a more affluent district; however, he feels like working in a high-poverty district is more meaningful and rewarding. Currently, Mr. Jones is enrolled in the doctoral program at the University of South Carolina, and he has taken courses on diversity in curriculum, social justice issues, and school leadership. He is a member of the South Carolina Association of Middle Level Educators (SCAMLE).

His school serves over five hundred students in grades seven and eight with over 80 percent of the students receive free or reduced meals. The school has earned an average rating on the State School Report Card for the past five years. The school is about 75% white and 25% African American. The school district serves about 3,500 students with one primary school, two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The school district employs about 200 teachers and utilizes the majority of its federal monies to fund early childhood initiatives. Due to the fact that each school in the district serves one grade span, the district's demographics reflect the demographics present in Mr. Jones' middle school.

As Mr. Jones reflected on his adult learning experiences at the University of South Carolina, he demonstrated a great deal of knowledge and awareness about diversity. His professional journey combined with his education has provided a number of opportunities to reflect on the issue of diversity and meeting the needs of all students under his care and supervision. He believes in the power of teachers and their influence on learning outcomes. He believes that schools and teachers make a difference each day

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and can improve the lives of students. Furthermore, he acknowledges his faith as a motivating factor in both his personal and professional endeavors. He believes that "all are created equal", and he wants "to invest in the students".

As the interview continued, Mr. Jones focused on two main topics throughout our conversation as he discussed his adult learning and the influence of the class on his daily practice. Mr. Jones focused on the importance of meeting the needs of all students and the need to understand the influence of poverty and relationships on student learning. For each one of these topics, I will provide my observations and insights as well as quotes to illustrate each idea presented during our time together.

Serving and meeting the needs of all students. Mr. Jones has a passion for the students in his building, and he made it clear that his role is to "embrace students where they are". He believes that many educators are not prepared to meet the needs of all students because of their beliefs, middle class values, and backgrounds. These three things place a barrier between many teachers and their ability to teach all students in their classrooms. As we continued our conversation, Mr. Jones was adamant about the unique abilities and talents of his students despite their socio-economic circumstances and lack of world experiences. In his mind, students have the skills necessary to succeed in our modern world; however, it is the responsibility of the school to bring those skills out of the students. One of his core values of teaching can be summed up in the following quote: "We refuse to allow of demographics control our students' destiny."

As a part of meeting the needs of all students, Mr. Jones has implemented several things that he was exposed to as a part of this coursework at the University of South

Carolina to provide professional development opportunities for his staff. For example, he has done the "Privilege Walk" to demonstrate the fact that everyone does not start out at the same place based on the social capital present in our society. This activity provides a visual for participants as they "walk" based on their experiences throughout life. The leader reads a statement, and participants either walk forward or backwards depending on their response to the statement. As participants move through this process, it allows them to see the positive and negative influences on privilege on different individuals. Also, he has had multiple discussions with his staff about diversity to include exploring bias in the curriculum. From this discussion, his curriculum team reviewed the school's writing prompts and provided new prompts to remove gender bias for the students. Moreover, Mr. Jones has utilized articles and excerpts from books that were assigned at the University of South Carolina to spark conversations, reflections, and professional growth for his staff on issues of race, diversity, and the social responsibility of schools. As a school leader, Mr. Jones felt that he had a moral and professional responsibility to make teachers aware of these issues and to help prepare them to meet the needs of their students. Finally, Mr. Jones stated that the school leader must be "active" to stimulate teacher growth in these critical areas.

> "Whereas I thought from my perspective and others, it's really in our ball park. We are the variable that needs to adapt to meet the needs of our students because we I know right in talking all members of the class did not have all of that. All those different resources and people and things and yet were still expected to make a difference in students.
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> Our quote that we use here and it's not my quote and I don't know whose it is but we have used it here in this school since 2007 when I took over. "We refuse to allow our demographics to determine our students' destiny". And that's what we're going to do. I mean, so that is one of our core values here. We have four of them, but one of them is good faith attitude. Our definition of that is that we maintain focus on what's within our control and we have a quality attitude about

that and we don't deal with all of those things we can't control. So we can't control where a student comes from, the home life, just like they can't control their teacher having a bad attitude that morning trying to take care of their children at home, but when we're here we've got to have a good faith attitude."

Poverty and relationships. During our interview, Mr. Jones had more of a focus on poverty than issues that dealt with race as compared to the other subjects in this study. His responses focused on teachers and their ability to reach students with engaging lessons that assist students in learning the skills needed to be successful. When we discussed resistance, he found some teachers viewed his approach to teaching and learning as too accommodating and not holding students accountable for their learning. One of his teachers' favorite expressions is "when they hit the real world…" which stresses their belief of the lack of accommodations for students in society. However, Mr. Jones believes he can mold the middle school mind and develop his students into productive citizens by teaching skills. He believes the school can make a difference with middle school students that can pay dividends as they reach adulthood.

Mr. Jones saw the formulation of relationships as one of the keys to unlocking the potential of students from low socio-economic backgrounds. This approach must be intentional and must be genuine. As Mr. Jones explained his role in this process, he provided an example of interventions that he used with two, overweight, socially-inept, seventh grade males. These two students were facing expulsion and were not connected with any staff member at the school. Moreover, they were not making any academic progress and causing disruptions throughout the school.

Mr. Jones took a direct approach with his staff and was intentional in attempting to build relationships with these two students. First, he gave the teachers assignments

each week to foster the relationship such as saying something positive about the student or having a conversation with the student about something not school-related. Next, he became an advocate for the students by utilizing a progress monitoring system to assess each child's academic progress. Finally, he provided the two students with opportunities to interact with other students in a non-threatening and positive manner like playing board games in the school's media center or cafeteria. From these positive interactions and these relationship-building exercises, the students made improvements in all areas of student life and were promoted to the eighth grade.

"I think that I have always thought that the teacher is the variable. I have always thought through teaching in our environment and my district is interesting because race has flipped from what people usually think. When I tell people that I work in a high poverty district, they automatically think that it's high minority. But we're 80/20 Caucasian to African American. So you know the interesting thing is that I have seen is poverty permeates across the board. When I first started with little administrative support and change of administrators in my first 5 years of teaching, I had 4 different principals. You kind of knew that it was up to you when you closed that door. So the relationships, the ability to meet each student where they were had always been there. I think also in my religious and my faith and my understanding that truly all are created equal. We are all children of God, and that I am not different from anyone else. That's one of the reasons that I didn't move to a different district when I got to a certain point in paying off my loans because I saw that I was making a difference. I felt like I was making a difference, and I wanted to invest in that so I think that came into play to. So with those things when I run into these different courses and you know most of the courses I have taken that have dealt with this concept or topic I have been electives. I haven't had to take them to get my degree. You know I come from a different perspective because it isn't I don't set there and go you know I don't agree with these things or whatever. As far as leadership, it is very interesting when I take an excerpt from Ain't No Making It and take it into my faculty meeting and have them read about how the students describe their teachers so that we can then look through the eyes of the students. You know we're there for the students. The students are the customer. So when we look at it that way that was an interesting scenario. Then some of my teachers shared my same vision and passion in that, but they knew where we were gonna stand. That we would do whatever it takes to make students successful. So I think of my teachers would say we probably go beyond where we need to for students in some of their opinion but that's what we are gonna do while we are here at my school."

Ms. Fleming

Ms. Fleming is an African American female with twenty-two years of experience as an educator in South Carolina. During her time as an educator, she has served as a middle school math teacher for eleven years and as a middle school assistant principal for eleven years. She attended public schools in South Carolina, and she excelled in elementary and high schools. She was motivated by her parents to do well in school, and she enjoyed her time as a student. Her parents were both educators in South Carolina, and they pushed her to work hard in school. Also, they instilled in her the importance of having a strong work ethic and the belief that hard work is the key to success. She attended the University of South Carolina as an undergraduate and is currently enrolled there as a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policies.

Ms. Fleming is an assistant principal at a middle school near the capital of the state serving 1,000 students in grades six through eight. The school's poverty index is about 60%, and the school employs 70 teachers. In addition to the instructional staff, the school has three assistant principals, curriculum coordinators, lead teachers, and other support staff to assist the different programs at the school. During Ms. Fleming's tenure at the school, she has worked for six different principals and experienced a large amount of transition during that time. The school has a majority African American student population. The school district has a choice policy that allows students to attend schools not in their attendance zone if they can provide transportation. Due to the magnet program, the classes at the school have a wide range of differences in demographics. In the magnet program, the majority of the students are white while the general curriculum is predominantly African American. The school earned an average absolute rating on the

South Carolina State Report Card for the past two years. However, according to Ms. Fleming, the school's scores are comparable to the other middle schools in the district.

As we discussed social justice and the promotion of equality in schools, Ms. Fleming was very comfortable discussing her beliefs and background. As she grew up in rural South Carolina with her parents, she was "determined not to use race as an excuse". As she went through her formal education in the public schools of South Carolina, she was not aware of any issues of race or did not feel like she experienced any different treatment as an African American female. As we discussed her background further, she revealed the fact that she did not understand the historical perspectives of racism until she took graduate course at the University of South Carolina. These experiences were "eye-opening" to her, and she gained a historical perspective of racism in schools that had never been presented to her during her previous educational experiences. As she stated, "when you are in the middle of something, you don't see it." From this experience, she began to understand her past and the struggles of many African Americans to have an equal education in South Carolina.

As the interview continued, Ms. Fleming focused on three topics throughout our conversation as she discussed her adult learning and the influence of her coursework at the University of South Carolina on her daily practice. Ms. Fleming talked about her adult learning preferences, the influence of the coursework on her interaction with teachers, and her philosophy on education for all students. For each one of these topics, I will provide my observations and insights as well as quotes to illustrate each idea presented during our time together.

Significant adult learning. During her graduate work at the University of South Carolina, she experienced significant adult learning. This learning was facilitated by courageous and organized professors that were not afraid to touch on topics often avoided by other instructors. These professors were deliberate in their approach, and they displayed mutual respect for the students in the classes. As Ms. Fleming was able to hear about different historical perspectives and see the other "side of the story", she had a better handle on the historical perspective of racism in schools and the struggle for educational equality for African Americans in the South. Moreover, through her conversations with one professor, she began to better understand and explore the marginalization of women in our society. Furthermore, the adult learning was enriched by the readings, assignments, and discussions in the classroom. These activities were student-centered, and participants were encouraged to share their thoughts and experiences with the group. Through this sharing, different perspectives were revealed and could be considered.

These discussions and dialogue allowed Ms. Fleming to see things from a different perspective. For example, Ms. Fleming and another student were discussing how an image of a noose can be offensive to an African American in the South due to violence demonstrated by members of the Ku Klux Klan in the history of our country. However, one adult learner did not share the same sentiments and explained to the group that the image of a noose reminded her of the Salem Witch Trials in the seventeenth century. As an adult learner and school leader, this example demonstrated to her the need to look at different perspectives and consider the different backgrounds of others.

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Teacher development. Through self-reflection, Ms. Fleming has developed two key methods for dealing with teachers and supporting their professional growth. Her main approach is to engage in meaningful dialogue with teachers about issues of discipline, curriculum, instructional strategies, and formulating meaningful relationships with students. In many cases, she provides a scenario for the teachers and engages them in a discussion to explore their backgrounds and possible reactions to different issues that may arise at a middle school. From this dialogue, she is able to influence their practice and provide them with a different perspective. This different perspective can be powerful as both administrators and teachers are able to learn from each other in a safe, collaborative exchange of ideas. Moreover, Ms. Fleming has initiated book studies to facilitate professional growth with teachers and to help them to understand student differences. These discussions force teachers to reflect on their own practice and look at the teaching and learning in their classrooms. As Ms. Fleming states, "If there is no reflection, there is no change."

Philosophy of education. Ms. Fleming's philosophy on education has shifted over the years. As a young educator, she saw teachers as content experts who passed their expertise and love for the content on to their students. However, as she reflected on this belief, she realized a change in her thinking. Teachers must be experts on learning, and they must be able to address the needs of all students. By preparing engaging lessons that address multiple learning styles, teachers must be able to teach and motivate all students. As a former math teacher, she has a desire for the one "right" answer and moving forward with a scientific approach to problems. However, in today's world, students must be taught to think about things from many different points of view. In this

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way, there may not be just one "right" answer. It is the responsibility of teachers to provide multiple perspectives and ideas to students so they can be armed with enough information to make educated decisions about problems.

Mr. Williams

Mr. Williams is an African American educator with fourteen years of experience in the same school district in South Carolina. During that time, he has served as a middle school math teacher, high school math teacher, and assistant principal. Currently, he serves a middle school with about 700 students in grades six through eight. He has been an administrator for the past nine years. Mr. Williams grew up in the same community where he works. His parents believed in hard work and pushed him to succeed in school. Although his parents only had a high school diploma, they wanted more for their children. Mr. Williams' father often worked multiple jobs to provide for his family and to make sure his children had additional educational opportunities. Mr. Williams' grandparents had little formal education with his grandmother completing the sixth grade. As a college student, Mr. Williams was a computer science major at the University of South Carolina. However, after September 11, 2001, he decided to change his career path and pursue a career in education as a math teacher. Upon completion of his teaching certification, he has continued to work with students and has enjoyed the rewards of the education profession.

Mr. Williams' school has earned an excellent rating on the South Carolina School Report Card for four out of the past five years. Moreover, this school has received numerous state and national recognitions for student achievement and success. The

school's student population is about 50% white and 50% African American. The school's poverty index is about 40% which represents an increase of about ten percent over the past three years. The school has an honors program which is predominantly white, and the demographics of the students enrolled in this program are not in line with the overall school demographics. The school has two other assistant principals.

As the interview continued, Mr. Williams focused on three topics throughout our conversation as he discussed his adult learning and the influence of his coursework at the University of South Carolina on his daily practice. Mr. Williams discussed role expectations, his motivation to become an administrator, and his current influence on changing school and district culture. For each one of these topics, I will provide my observations and insights as well as quotes to illustrate each idea presented during our time together.

Role expectations. Upon entering the field of education, Mr. Williams has dealt with several issues and comments that have confronted traditional role expectations for African American males. He provided several examples of white teachers mistaking him for a custodian when he was first hired by the district. Also, he has experienced stereotypical comments about eating "fresh watermelon" at a faculty party and being accused of not having a father present in his life due to his background. Although Mr. Williams does not have hard feelings about these past events, he provided these examples to illustrate how far we still need to progress as a society. When he was hired by the district, he was the only certified African American male in his building.

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Due to other stereotypical factors, Mr. Williams feels strongly about his role as an instructional leader. He has seen many other African American administrators be forced into the "Joe Clark" mentality of administration where they only deal with maintaining order and discipline. Mr. Williams views teaching and learning as his strength and wants to expand on that role whenever possible. Before I arrived for the interview, Mr. Williams was working on the curriculum and the master schedule for the eighth grade math classes. This demonstrates his commitment to be involved in all areas of student life and his focus on teaching and learning. Also, Mr. Williams is constantly looking for opportunities to grow as an administrator. For example, he is now working as athletic director for the school. He took this role to expand his knowledge of the athletic process and to continue his positive relationships with students.

> "I love the movie *Lean on Me*. But I think, sometimes people think that because you are an African American male all you do is books, buses, and butts, and so I've tried to even my professional development things or volunteer for things I try to volunteer from things that are outside of those norms. Things that would be considered the norm. But, I try to adjust my role and so at even being more of an instructional leader so that you can help affect change through how we use the curriculum even what curriculum that we choose. What text book is diverse and things of that nature and that's why I try to shift my role that way."

Motivation to be an administrator. As he continued to share stories about his past, he provided his motivation for being a school administrator. As an elementary school student, Mr. Williams was a honors student in the gifted and talented program. However, the school did not offer the program. Therefore, the students had to get on a bus and ride to another school to be served as a gifted and talented student. During this time at the school, Mr. Williams had many negative experiences with one gifted and talented teacher in the fifth grade. When he became too talkative, she would immediately send him to the principal's office. Furthermore, she made comments about "those kids"

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and how they needed to stay at their neighborhood school. These comments and actions motivated Mr. Williams to have a desire to be the "boss of the teachers" from a young age.

From his time in the principal's office, he began to appreciate the influence of administrators and principals on learning. When he went to the principal's office, there was a desk available to him. During his time in the office, the principal would teach him English Language Arts and keep him up to speed on his lessons for the class. From this experience, he was motivated to become an advocate for young people and become a caring school administrator. As he told this story, it was evident that Mr. Williams was motivated by his experiences, and he had a wide range of emotions from that experience. I was fortunate that he was willing and able to share the story with me as it provided much insight into his personal and professional journey.

> "One thing I remember from my childhood that made me want to come back and be an administrator because I wanted to be a boss of my teacher. Because in elementary school, we did not have honors, I was identified as gifted, and the school district did not have a gifted program in all the schools, in all the neighborhoods. So, they bused us across town to another elementary school, I remember one time overhearing the teachers talking in the class room. I happen to walk in, and they were talking about "those" kids who were being bused here and how much trouble they are and things of that nature. That kind of had an effect on me during that time especially since all my brothers and sisters went to another elementary school. I had to come out and be bused to my elementary school, and then bused to another one. That was one of the things I had to say I kind of wanted to come back and be a boss. I remember my principal at the time, he was a tall white guy and he would every day when Mr. English Teacher would send me out of the classroom every day, it wasn't everyday, it was every other day; he actually put a desk a little desk in his office and he taught me English in his office. That was the teacher that I overheard saying those kids on the bus so that back then in 5th grade I could remember the effect that an administrator had on my life."

Influencing change. As an instructional leader, Mr. Williams wants teachers to have a deeper understanding of who they are and reflect on themselves. In his mind, you can only understand others when you can understand yourself. He provided an example of military families and how children from military backgrounds must adapt when entering a new school. At his middle school, about 13% of the students have a military connection; therefore, it is important for teachers to understand their backgrounds and the culture of the military. When teachers are not self-reflecting, it represents a lack of professional growth and a great deal of resistance. Mr. Williams has also implemented a character education model for students to encourage similar behaviors for students to be more tolerant and accepting of differences. This curriculum provides students with a foundation for being productive citizens and positive role models at the school.

In addition to his role at the school, Mr. Williams serves on the school district's Diversity Committee. Several years ago, the district began to look at the demographics of the community and noticed a shift in the demographics. The school district explored this shift and noticed a wide range of cultures and ethnicities. In addition to these changes, other factors had to be considered, such as sexual orientation and issues that dealt with gender identification. As the committee met, they began to really discover their community and have a better understanding of their students. After this initial exploration, the committee began updating district policies to make sure that they are lawful and represent the values of the district. Mr. Williams has been a member of this committee for two year now, and he sees this work as influential in bringing educational equality to all students in the district.

"I try to most of the time when I give professional development, I try to always. Well not always, try to help people get a deeper understanding of themselves and reflection of themselves. In the world of others so I try to tie that in. so when I talk about teaching strategies I try to give teachers ways to reflect. Ok, do you know your students? Ok, who's in your classroom? Not just the surface thing, but really knowing? Celebrating each other, even military, we have a military grant and how the military is a whole other institution that brings a whole different culture so that someone who is not in kids that whose parents were not in the military may never have to experience. A lot of our kids meet someone in first grade, and they go all the way to twelfth grade together. But a military kid, you have to learn skills to meet friends quickly and understand they maybe your friend. So I try to use that understanding of yourself and each other to help people grow. I think that is how the leadership influences social change.

 It's helping the kids understand. We use our character education lessons. It is how we build character and things of that nature. To help kids understand the differences in our culture in our world. Even disabilities, some disabilities are out in the open.   Some are silent that you never know by looking at someone. But even with that, we have to have conversations. Even had a conversation with the gentleman about how to respond from other people's ignorance and things of that nature. How to help and what we could do to help.

I think I have grown a lot since being at USC. I think it has given me a passion for learning more. I read more nonfiction because of it. Even in professional development of new things, I am finding myself sometimes even looking at it through the lens of even the dissertation process. Do I have the information that I need? What is everyone saying about it? In review of what people are talking about, I mean not just taking things for face value. But digging deeper, like how does this affect this group or how does it affect that group?   Even if I were to do that and the effect of the group, how can I support this group? So I think it has helped. This program has helped me to be a change agent, even social change agent, even looking at policies and procedures. The diversity committee I don't think they just chose me because I am a minority. I think they choose me because of some of the conversations that I have had with people and I am able to be open. I can set down and have conversations and some of the research things that I have done, and the expectations, and that was through USC."

Emergent Themes

As I analyzed these six interviews, I observed five common themes. These themes assisted my understanding of the adult learning process and helped me to further explore the transformative learning process in much greater detail. Furthermore, these five common themes provided me a greater understanding of social justice awareness and

how adults can be influenced to act as change agents in our society. The five emerging themes from this study were as follows:

1. The professor was a significant variable and a powerful influence in the transformative learning process.
2. Diversity does not divide, but it provides different perspectives to enhance adult learning.
3. Critical self-reflection is a necessary component of transformative learning.
4. Differences and similarities between black and white participants were evident.
5. The presence of transformative learning is evident.

1. The influence of the professor. All of the participants cited the importance of the professor in the transformative adult learning process. This influence was noted in the assignments, readings, class structure, and the skill level of the professor to facilitate discussions and dialogue among the students. The professors provided different points of view to help the students see multiple perspectives. They worked with their students to challenge their beliefs and role expectations. Moreover, the professors provided a different class structure, a challenging curriculum, and a greater variety of instructional strategies as compared to other graduate courses taken by the adults in this study.

Professors, with the greatest influence on the adult learning process, provided structured platforms for meaningful discussions that allowed for multiple points of view to be heard and respected. They had the courage to discuss controversial topics that are often avoided by other professors. They provided assignments that enhanced adult learning as students viewed history, social injustices, and privileges through a much different lens. Through this different perspective, the professors facilitated their students to reflect critically on their own beliefs and roles.

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Professors, with the greatest influence on adult learning, provided support and guidance to their students. They were intentional about building relationships with their students. Through these relationships, a climate of trust was established. This type of class climate encouraged students to share their feelings, stories, and experiences with other students. Without trust, the students would not have opened up and felt the freedom to share these stories with others. This trust combined with the strategic platforms for discussions made a difference in the learning process for the adults in this study.

During the interviews, the participants provided many examples of how the professors challenged their way of thinking and presented different points of view. This presentation of new material was evident in the coursework, the class readings, the assignments, and the class discussions. The professors were able to skillfully and intentionally create "a disorienting dilemma" to challenge the participants' belief systems to facilitate adult learning.

This intentional creation was done in a manner that promoted mutual respect and meaningful discourse among the members of the class. Through this respectful and positive classroom environment, adult learning had a fertile ground to take hold and prosper. Although the classroom discussions produced a certain degree of discomfort, it was productive in enhancing the adult learning. Furthermore, the professors were intentional in being supportive, non-judgmental, and caring. These attributes created a safe atmosphere for adult learning.

> I think he is a very insightful professor. I think you know even though he acknowledges that his background was not very diverse. He had worked to

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develop a very rich understanding from multiple perspectives and so he brings a whole lot to the table. And so just any professor couldn't structure the course. (Mr. Washington)

I think it was different professors that triggered my learning. These classes seem to run together. He had us reading about Anderson's book about Charleston and that entire thing. It helped light a match and then of course, some of the curriculum courses I took that talk about diversity and about diversity in curriculum, professional development and multicultural education. Those kinds of things helped spark the thing for social change. Then start reading some of the literature out there it kind of helped and even other classes that was pretty good at giving us a divers reading from gender race and social economics. (Mr. Williams)

It was a combination, but I think most of it was the professor and the fact that he was courageous enough to come into a setting that is so limited in thinking and to be able to bring up those topics, because it wasn't specific to that topic but I felt like he was courageous enough to come in and challenge the status quo. One of the things he said to me. We were talking one day and he was trying to give me dissertation ideas and he talked about like woman in education and woman superintendents and how woman are marginalized in certain fields. And I said I wouldn't be the person to write that because there not going to listen to me and just the fact that he and he sparked the thinking in like I never considered that. I have never even considered that women were marginalized like when you look at the University setting and when you look at the small number of women or the small number of black women in the University setting and I never even considered that. (Ms. Fleming)

2. The benefits of diversity. In this study, the participants identified diversity as a major factor in enhancing adult learning at the University of South Carolina in these courses. This diversity was noted in the curriculum, the demographic composition of the students in the classes, and in the delivery of instruction. Diversity was identified as an important factor in understanding multiple perspectives and forcing the students to consider other social roles and expectations.

Without the presence of diversity, many of the discussions, assignments, and readings would not have had the same meaning or challenged the students to view the world through the eyes of others. Many of the participants had never considered the stories of others and viewed history from different points of view. Having students from

different backgrounds, different races, and different ages, the classes offered a wide spectrum of stories and experiences to consider.

In these courses, the value of diversity cannot be understated. Mr. Washington was emphatic in his declaration of the influence of diversity on the adult learning during these courses. Due to the curriculum and content, different perspectives were needed to enhance meaningful discourse and allow everyone to better understand differences. Without the presence of diversity, these courses may not have had the same influence on the adult learning process. Furthermore, without these differences in perspectives and points of view, the adult learners would not have been challenged on their own beliefs. The presence of diversity, both in curriculum and the backgrounds of the participants, provided a better opportunity for personal growth, self-reflection, and transformative learning.

The diversity of assignments helped to broaden the students' perspectives and challenge the students to transform their way of questioning, acting, and reflecting. Adult learners were challenged to discuss, read, reflect, work in cooperative groups, and have dialogue with others about a wide range of topics to include, but not limited to, race, social capital, white privilege, and social reproduction. At times, these topics created tension, controversy, and a hint of divisiveness. However, when presented in a diverse setting with clear guidelines and expectations for sharing, meaningful and productive dialogue was possible and able to take place during class.

> It made me think about a class that I took and I can't even remember what that class was but we were talking about race issues and how it's hard I think because as a black person you don't always want to be perceived as like I am pulling the race card. So I have to try to be so careful and I think this isn't about something

that and analogy that I guess I can make. I don't know if you remember a couple of years ago when they had that thing in Louisiana about the noose. I was having a conversation with someone, and she said to me cause I couldn't understand why someone would not understand why a noose would be offensive to me or why a Confederate Flag would be offensive to me and the lady said when I see a noose I think about the Salem Witch trials. I thought that was so interesting because sometimes you are so focused on your perspective and what your experience is that you don't realize or you expect other people to feel as strongly as you feel about something. And that was interesting to me because I think what that class also did was opened up dialogue. Because you know that these are the conversations that you need to have because you need to talk about these things to solve whatever the issues are but it's hard to. It is hard for people to open up because when you say what you really feel if that offends me and then I respond to you in a certain way. So that was my fear sometimes people said things that I didn't necessarily agree with but I was reluctant to respond because I felt like if I responded that would stop their dialog or that would make them more hesitant or less likely to say what they really felt. So sometimes, I think you just have to stop, listen, and not say anything so that people will feel free to talk. (Ms. Fleming)

Yeah the class itself really provided a platform for discussion. It provided tracks to run on and one of the assignments was to interview three African Americans and discuss with them their educational experience in the South and how prejudice had influenced them personally. One of those interviews, I drove to Charlotte and interviewed Harvey Gantt, first African American student at Clemson. Without the class, I would not have those interviews. I would not have had the opportunity to meet Harvey Gantt. I would not have had the opportunity to have a deeper level discussion on race with others. We would have kept it on a different level. We had much more deeper in our conversations because of the class assignments and because of the professor. (Preacher Man)

I think the classes were different because they were more conversational. And in our conversation using resources to back up our stance or whatever it is. I think that was a difference I like more of the class where we read and reflected a lot. We would talk about it and discuss and maybe write a paper. But I did learn and grow from those and hearing everybody's point of view. Because like I said I went to from that little I think two years in elementary school most of my schooling was in African American setting and then I went to USC which was more diverse but was never open. Well it wasn't more diverse it was. We were the minority. But being able to actually set down and have these conversations in the class setting was powerful for me. (Mr. Williams)

Sometimes it was somewhat emotional, but I think as a result of those spirited debates, for lack of a better word, I think we were all the better for it. Had there been a class of people who had the same backgrounds, the same experiences, and the same perspectives, the class would not have been as rewarding. I think the fact we had so many different experiences and different backgrounds and so many

different perspectives made the class as I said one of the best classes I've ever had the opportunity to take. (Mr. Washington)

    3. Self-reflection is necessary. Diversity and the professors provided the platform for ideas, points of view, and beliefs to be challenged by the participants. This is a necessary process for adult learning and can be done in a class or group setting. However, critical self-reflection is necessary, and it is worked out at the personal level. It is a powerful process to move adult learners into the transformative learning process. As adults engage in this process, they are able to transform their point of view. This process can only be done through self-reflection as adult learners become aware of their own thinking and personal bias (Mezirow, 1997).

    As I thought about my own experience as an adult learner, I am thankful for the critical self-reflection that took place. After hearing the different stories and perspectives of the others in the classes and being exposed to a variety of readings and assignments, I went on a self-reflection journey. This journey was not easy, but I feel it was necessary for personal and professional growth. I had to deal with new perspectives, new ideas, and new thought processes. I started asking more questions, desiring to have more dialogue, and desiring to have more information for my consideration.

    The participants stated that these courses were "different", and they acknowledged their real value as preparation for leadership. These differences came from several factors. However, at the end of these courses, the real difference came from within the adult learner as they wrestled with these ideas through critical self-reflection. From the data collected, this critical self-reflection is the difference-maker in the transformative learning process.

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Self-reflection was a necessary component of the adult learning process as cited by all six participants during our interview time. When exposed to different perspectives and discussing these perspectives with a diverse group of students, the participants were engaged in a state of reflection. This reflection was necessary as the students grew from the experience. By reflecting on the stories, experiences, and words of others, the participants acknowledged they questioned their own beliefs and role expectations.

This self-reflection was evident in all participants and especially evident in interviews with the five educators in this study. This self-reflection produced a desire to know more about the topics presented in class and engage others in conversations about the same topics. Moreover, from the reflections, participants were more aware of their actions towards others in matters of social justice. Self-reflection is a catalyst for the transformative learning process.

> I felt really challenged to know and to determine what my assumptions where. My assumptions, my beliefs, my opinions were challenged as we had the conversations. The readings were one thing, but when you have professors that are brave enough to address these topics that cause you to really reflect and think about why you think the way that you do without judgment. You know it's I can't help how I am, but I'm not perfect. And just the the pushing to do that self-reflection. Figure out why you feel the way you feel and try to open that lens so to speak and look at things from a different perspective. (Mrs. Gibson)

> Well, I think just in terms of just in understanding the history in education and the nation ah and more particularly in South Carolina really helped to shape my prospective as an educator. I really had not spent a lot of time really investigating the history of education in this country, much less in South Carolina. So that really helped me out. Really beginning to deal with some of these concepts like you know cultural capital and stratification and social capital and social reproduction theory and oppositional cultural theory and all these various concepts that really help to explain why things in society tend to recreate themselves over and over again. I think really expanded my prospective as an educator. (Mr. Washington)

> I try to most of the time when I give professional development, I try to always. Well not always, try to help people get a deeper understanding of themselves and

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reflection of themselves. So I try to tie that in. When I talk about teaching strategies, I try to give teachers reflection of knowing their students. Do you know your who? Who's in your class room? Not just the surface thing, but really knowing? Celebrating each other, even military, we have a military grant and how the military is a whole another institution that brings a whole different culture so that someone who is not in kids that whose parents were not in the military may never have to experience. A lot of our kids are they met someone in first grade and they go all the way to 12th grade. But a military kid you have to learn skills to meet friends quickly and understand they may be your friend. So I try to use that understanding of yourself and each other to help people grow. I think that is how the leadership can enhance social change. (Mr. Williams)

I thought of statements that are jokes or just world views that shape society. I became more careful in my speech of what is this communicating or showing. Here is one example. As we were talking on the way home, I said that the African American who had spoken in the video it may have been a video was extremely articulate. My classmate said that sounds racist. And I said ah help me I don't know why you say that sounded racist. His comment was would you say if it were a white person would you say are they articulate or would you simply refer to what they had said. I said I don't know. To me, it was a complement. He said I am telling you how the African American community hears it when you say an African American sounds articulate. It's as though you are saying "I am surprised" that they were. It is interpreted as your belittling and speaking majority that you are African American and you are articulate. I never would have thought of that being a racist statement. I never would have prior to the class wasn't aware of how am I sounding when I am referring to someone. It also caused me and this has happened slightly before it has caused me to realize that and realize how I defined a conversation. For instance, if you and I were at lunch, I ordered and someone says hey I saw you at a restaurant and I would say oh I was with a friend. Did you notice it and it wouldn't have been anything. If I was with another friend, and prior to the class, I probably would have said my friend who's African American, but I would never have said my friend Jason who Caucasian. So I found myself that I define things and part of that I think is descriptive and doesn't have anything to do with race and part of it I think is just I have become more conscious in just talking about my friend without defining his race and the same with people who are from India and other place and then there are times when I code switch and feel like identification of their ethnicity or of their profession or its helpful and I don't really have a grid that I measure that through I've just become more cautious of when I do it. (Preacher Man)

4. **Differences and similarities between black and white participants was**

evident. In this study, there were differences between the black and white participants.

These differences could be seen in the responses recorded in our interviews and the

participants' stories presented during our time together. When I talked to Ms. Fleming

and Mr. Williams, they were almost apologetic about providing a number of examples and stories involving race. In many cases, they answered my questions and provided multiple stories involving their experiences as black people in both the past and present day. However, as they discussed these experiences with me, they seem to be very reserved at first. They did begin to open up as the interviews continued and started to share in more detail. In my interviews with white participants, I did not receive any indication that they had any reservations about discussing race with me. In fact, Preacher Man, Mrs. Gibson, and Mr. Jones were very open about race during their interviews.

White participants shared stories about race, but they minimized its influence on social justice issues. In this study, the white participants focused more on poverty, relationships, and resistance from others in their stories about the promotion of social justice. Also, white participants shared more stories about matters involving gender, sexual orientation, and biases in the curriculum.

The class experiences and stories shared by the black and white participants had many similarities. All of the participants acknowledged a great awareness of social justice issues and expressed appreciation for the different history perspectives presented in the courses. Furthermore, they stated that they were engaged by the conversations, discussions, readings, and class activities. These different activities and discussions assisted them in viewing social justice issues with a higher degree of importance and started the process of exploring ways to promote social justice reform. Moreover, both blacks and whites had a high regard for the work of the professors in enhancing the curriculum and content of the courses at the University of South Carolina.

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The adult learning experience was different for the black and white participants in this study. While some of the topics introduced to the black participants in class were new, they had a much different point of view. For the black participants, their feelings and perceptions were, in some ways, validated as members of a historically oppressed group of people. For the white participants, there were more issues to confront and consider as members of a privileged group in society. As a member of this privileged group and a student in these courses, I can remember my feelings of guilt as I attempted to better understand the history of our country. These feelings came from my realization of the real presence of white privilege, the oppression of minorities in our education system, and the effects of institutional racism in our society.

The adult learning of blacks and whites had some similarities. Both groups benefitted from the diversity present in the classes, and both groups experienced critical self-reflection. However, due to the content and curriculum presented in these courses, the white students were faced with more confrontational issues to consider and evaluate as adult learners.

5. The presence of transformative learning is evident. As I interviewed each participant, there was a great deal of evidence that transformative learning had taken place as a result of life experiences and the experiences from taking courses at the University of South Carolina. My questions about self-reflection, changes in behavior, the questions of one's beliefs, and the consideration of new social roles required the participants to reveal their feelings on adult learning and mind-ful transformative learning.

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From the interviews, it is clear that there is evidence to suggest transformative learning took place with the participants in this study. As I considered these results, the diversity of students combined with the professors' instructional strategies, assignments, and class activities help to enhance the students' learning experience and facilitate transformative learning. Each participant described their learning experiences in great detail and provided multiple examples to support the answers to the questions.

As I reflected further on this research and qualitative data, I considered the depth of the transformative learning and the application of the new knowledge and social justice issues presented in the courses. All participants identified "new" experiences as they considered social justice, social norms, social reproduction, and the perspectives of individuals from different backgrounds. They freely shared their stories of how they benefitted from hearing from different groups of people and appreciated the wide variety of activities and readings to challenge their way of thinking and encourage them to view things from a different point of view.

For one section of my interview, I utilized King's (1997) transformative learning model that measured the ten steps of Mezirow's Transformative Learning Model. These ten steps can be found in the appendix of this dissertation. These ten steps are (a) a disorienting dilemma; (b) self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame; (c) recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change; (d) exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions; (e) a critical assessment of assumptions; (f) provisional trying of new roles; (g) planning a course of action; (h) acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans; (i) building of competence and self-confidence in new roles

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and relationships; and (j) a reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated

by one's new perspective (Mezirow, 1978). By utilizing King's (1997) model, I provided

my subjects with statements that coincide with these ten stages of transformative

learning. From these statements, subjects had to agree or disagree with each one

presented to them during the interview. If they agreed, they were encouraged to provide

an example for each statement to describe their feelings on the statement.

From the statements, I have recorded the results of this section in the table that

follows. From these results, I have organized the data to help decipher and evaluate the

degree of transformative learning present among my six participants.

Table 4.1: Percent of participants' responses to King's (1997) statements on transformative learning

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Percent Agreement
A – Disorienting dilemma	6	0	100%
B – Self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame	6	0	100%
C – A critical assessment of assumptions (a change resulted from the assessment)	3	3	50%
D -- A critical assessment of assumptions (no change)	3	3	50%
E – Realization that others have negotiated change	6	0	100%
F – Provisional trying of new roles & planning course of action	5	1	83.3%
G – More in-depth assessment of	3	3	50%

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assumptions			
H – Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plan	6	0	100%
I – Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships	6	0	100%
J – Reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective	5	1	83.3%

From table 4.1, I have created a different perspective on the transformative

learning present among my participants. Of the ten statements presented in the interview,

five of the statements had 100 percent agreement. Also, seven of the ten statements had

at least 83.3 percent agreement among the six participants. Overall, out of the 60

responses to the ten statements, the participants agreed 49 times or 81.7 percent. From

the data presented in this table and the interviews, I have established that the participants

experienced a great deal of transformative learning throughout their experiences in life

and from their course work at the University of South Carolina. The three statements that

dealt with a critical assessment of assumptions had different response data due to the

nature of the statements. From statements C and D, the participants agree that they had

critically assessed their assumptions; however, they had the option to change their

assumptions or continue with their assumptions. Statement E is really a follow-up

statement for the participants that had changed their assumptions to continue along the

transformative continuum to continue to assess their new assumptions.

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From this data, it provides another piece of the puzzle to consider as I discuss the degree or depth of transformative learning. Although I did not recognize a large degree of application of this "new" learning from the stories and experiences of my participants, it is evident from their responses to the statements in the last part of the interview that a transformation was present. This information further supports the need to critically assess this research and explore other methods to measure or quantify transformative learning. Transformative learning is evident in the individuals and their way of thinking.

When I began this journey, I wanted to compare my own experiences with others enrolled in these courses. I wanted to know if others had been influenced in a significant manner. I wanted to talk to others to explore their experiences and adult learning. Moreover, I wanted to believe that these type of courses could be a catalyst for a social justice movement in education as empowered educators created new policies and practices. They would be agents of change as they used their leadership capacities and their powerful influence to shape others into a new reality. In some ways, I was disappointed in the interviews. I did not hear stories of these educators making great splashes as the change agents of social justice. I did not hear stories of these educators demanding social change and immediate action. I became somewhat disillusioned by my own research. Also, I struggled with my own lack of dramatic response to my new learning.

After this period of disappointment, I began to search my notes and reanalyze my coding. I started looking over these stories and transcripts with renewed confidence and attention. I started to notice the conversations that these leaders were having with others. I found evidence of staff development activities designed to heightened cultural

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awareness. I discovered evidence of mentoring programs and book studies. I realized

that both white and black participants had entrusted me with their stories and had

discussed sensitive topics with candor. I developed more appreciation for the influence

of these courses and professors on the adult learning process. I had more appreciation for

these participants as they exhibited courage in their careers to be social justice leaders.

These stories inspired me to have more courage and reminded me of my responsibilities

as a leader.

Summary

As I examined the interviews and analyzed my notes, I can clearly see a

connection between my experiences and the experiences of the participants in this study.

It is evident that each participant experienced some degree of transformative learning,

and each participant had engaged in deep, reflective thought as a result of their

experiences at the University of South Carolina. Furthermore, through their stories, I

identified five emerging themes that may assist institutions of higher learning to consider

as they plan, evaluate, and improve educational leadership programs to promote social

justice reform.

The participants held the notion that a high percentage of their learning was

"new" learning, and the content of the courses was presented in a different fashion as

compared to other courses. They had a high regard for their professors to craft lessons

that exposed them to a wide variety of social justice topics that heightened their

awareness. As I listened to their stories, I could sense how important these courses were

to the professional and personal growth of the participants. The courses provided a

valuable experience through the dialogue, discussions, assignments, and readings. These

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different activities were diverse in content and were presented to a diverse group of students.

As I continued to examine the transcription of each interview, there were other items that should be emphasized in this summary. The history presented in these courses was not "new" history. The social justice issues raised were not "new" issues. To the contrary, they have existed for hundreds of years. The content of the courses was not "new" at all. However, the professors had the courage, creativity, and knowledge to devise a curriculum and course that made everyone see the world in a "new" manner. Although there is still some question about the level of transformative learning present in the adult learning of these participants, it is clear that transformative learning took place for these six individuals. Furthermore, as I consider the true purpose of education and learning, it is important to create independent students with an open mind and assist students in viewing the world from multiple perspectives to function in a diverse society. If that is the standard, these courses were successful in assisting students to do just that with an emphasis on the promotion of social justice.

CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

As this research was being completed, I became more aware of the significance of my research and the need for more social justice awareness in our society. During the time this study was being conducted, there were multiple instances of race-related issues that divided our country and made national headlines. Some of these incidents include the shooting of Trayvon Martin in Florida, multiple incidents involving white police officers shooting black men, Los Angeles Clippers' owner Donald Sterling's racist remarks, and, most recently, the tragic death of nine church members in Charleston, South Carolina at the hand of Ryan Loof. As these incidents were covered by the media, it became clear that there are still issues involving race that have not been rectified in our society.

This study is an attempt to shed light on the need to address issues of social justice in schools and explore ways, strategies, and methods that can help prepare school leaders for the task of educating all students, creating more inclusive environments, removing inequities, and providing a better education for all students under our care. As I tackled this issue, I focused on my own experiences at the University of South Carolina. As I took courses at the school, I had experiences that facilitated adult learning and navigated my path towards a greater understanding and awareness of social justice issues

in schools. Upon further evaluation and reflection, I began to ponder the adult learning of others in my classes. I had a desire to compare my experiences to others and determine if their everyday practice was influenced by their learning.

As I talked to these leaders and interviewed them, they shared their stories and their feelings about adult learning. They shared important details and stories that provided their perspectives about adult learning, the promotion of social justice, how their mind may have been changed or views had been modified, and how they promote social justice in their particular setting. As I talked to these leaders, I was encouraged by their honesty, their willingness to share, and their courage to be social justice leaders. As a group, they displayed a great deal of courage, honesty, wisdom, and perseverance that inspired me to reflect on my own beliefs and practices. As an educator, I am indebted to the leaders for their willingness to participate in this study as we provide a body of research that can assist educators and universities in equipping school leaders with the tools necessary to lead for social justice.

Discussion Of Findings

As I approach the discussion of this research, I am humbled by this experience. As I began this journey, I sought to compare my own experiences with the experiences of the participants in this study. This study forced me to reflect further on my own personal journey and examine the experiences of others in a new way. I am very grateful to my participants and their willingness to share in this research.

My participants were helpful in exploring my research questions, and they affirmed many of my own views on the courses in the Educational Leadership

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Department at the University of South Carolina. As I listened to their responses and reviewed my notes and transcriptions, the coursework had facilitated adult learning to take place in my participants. In this study, the learning was new to some and totally refreshing to others. As they talked about their experiences and their stories, the courses, the activities, and the class discussions, there was a sense of urgency about the need to continue with this meaningful dialogue and further examine social justice issues in a much deeper way. During the interviews, there was a great amount of excitement about the adult learning and the issues presented in the classrooms at the University of South Carolina.

As I reflect further on this experience, my participants provided answers to my research questions. However, they provided even more relevant information about the future of social justice promotion in institutions of higher learning. In this final chapter, I will provide discussion of the findings of this research, recommendations for future research, and recommendations for leadership preparation programs. As I finish this endeavor, it is my intent to spark and facilitate further discussion and research on adult learning, the promotion of social justice, and improve scholarship on leadership preparation.

My research questions were:

1) In what ways have school leaders who have completed post-graduate coursework at a graduate school of education, experienced transformative learning as it relates to issues of race and social justice in schools?
2) In what ways has this mindful transformative learning shaped leadership behavior to lead others to a transformed perspective?

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Question One

My first research question provided multiple perspectives to consider from the six participants. These participants are different; however, these perspectives are helpful in providing necessary evidence to answer the research questions. For starters, all six participants provided evidence of transformative learning as indicated in their interview responses and stories. These participants provided multiple ways that this learning took place over the time frame of taking courses at the University of South Carolina. More specifically, the question requires attention to issues of race and social justice.

The participants identified several ways they experienced transformative adult learning. From the emerging themes of the interview responses, the participants experienced transformative learning through the influence of the professors, the presence of diversity, and the promotion and development of a critical self-reflection process. These were not the only ways presented in the interviews, but these were the most prevalent and influential ways for the participants in this study. Through their experiences in these courses, the participants were able to transform their points of view and transform their habits of mind. This was facilitated by the assignments, self-reflection, and classroom discussions as the participants were able to see the world through the eyes of others and explore their own feelings on a variety of topics.

Professor's influence and capacity to enhance adult learning. Professors must have the ability to examine their practices to facilitate a higher probability for transformative learning in their classrooms. These practices include, but are not limited to, facilitating activities that encompass cooperative learning, collaborative learning, and transformative group learning (Moore, 2005). As indicated in this research, some

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successful examples of these practices include group discussions, interviews, and the presentation of different perspectives through a variety of media and assignments.   In this study, the participants indicated the important influence of the activities and classroom discussions that enhanced the ability to experience transformative learning. In order to have these types of learning experiences, professors must be skilled in both their approach to the subject matter and their approach to the learning process. In most traditional university settings, the professor delivers a lecture with material that must be mastered by the learner (Moore, 2005). However, as students are led toward their own adult learning, different approaches to pedagogy must be considered.

As students are moved towards the transformative process, it is clear that there are multiple avenues and approaches to the process. In a discussion of enhancing the teaching methods for promoting transformation, Cranton (2003) suggested "there is no one way" (p.6). Furthermore, the author outlines seven steps from Mezirow's research to help promote an environment that will allow adult transformative learning to take place. These steps are creating an activating event, articulating assumptions, critical self-reflection, openness to alternatives, discourse, revision of assumptions and perspectives, and acting on revisions (Cranton, 2003). Cranton (2003) provides further analysis of the promotion of transformative learning with the following quote:

> "There is no special methods that guarantee transformation, although transformation is always our goal. In every strategy, we need to provide an ever-changing balance of challenge, support, and learner empowerment" (p.5).

From this quote, there is a need for educators to possess command of their content and command of the pedagogy to present the content. Furthermore, professors must create a safe environment where learners are supported in their adult learning. This environment

is especially necessary when discussion emotional issues dealing with race, religion, diversity, social reproduction, and other issues of social justice.

As professors move students toward transformation, they must have a genuine care and concern for their students, a command of the content, and a large repertoire of strategies to promote transformative learning. These strategies include the promotion of discourse through active listening and response. Also, professors can provide assignments that promote reflection as students consider their own positionality. Moreover, professors must have the courage to discuss topics that may cause a certain degree of discomfort and controversy. This pushes learners to explore their own feelings and perceptions and consider others with different points of view. As indicated in this study, transformative learning took place when you combine these elements. The participants identified several instances when the professors took a personal interest into the students and their personal and professional journeys. Also, the professors were comprehensive in presenting their content to allow students to have a full view of the topics and consider multiple perspectives on issues. Furthermore, the participants identified multiple classroom activities and discussions that acted as catalysts to the transformative process.

Influence of diversity. There have been a number of studies on the effects of diversity on student learning. These studies have varied in their approach to diversity as it relates to educational outcomes (Terenzini et. al, 2001). In a review of social science research, Hallinan (1998) examined thousands of studies to analyze the effects of diversity on student outcomes. In these studies on college and university students, Hallinan (1998) discovered "ethnic diversity in problem-solving tasks leads to solutions

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that are more feasible and more effective that in all-Anglo groups" (p.747). Moreover, Hallinan (1998) cites several studies that indicate the positive influence of a diverse curriculum, multicultural education, intergroup dialogue, and race conscious programs. These positive effects include increased racial awareness, reduced interracial prejudice, increased socialibility, and improved relationships between persons who differ by race. According to Halinan (1998), "these results suggest experiencing racial and ethnic diversity in college and learning to live in a pluralistic environment provide educational and occupational advantages to minority and white students" (p. 754).

This research supports the experiences of the participants in this study. The interviews indicate the positive influence of diversity on the learning in the classroom. Classrooms with diversity provided multiple perspectives to consider as students shared in the classroom activities and discussions. These different perspectives provided the adult learners with a different frame of reference and challenged their assumptions. Again, as I consider Mezirow's framework for adult learning and transformative learning, this is an integral component to making sense of the world. Moreover, as we attempt to promote social justice in society, it must be modeled in our institutions of higher learning.

Diversity must be promoted in the classroom and in the larger organization. When this occurs, positive effects can take place. In a study of culturally diverse work groups, Ely and Thomas (2001) found that work groups that embraced diversity and the need for different perspectives to accomplish goals were more productive, better at problem-solving, and reported a higher degree of overall satisfaction with their work. Jehn et. al (1999) found evidence of workgroups that value diversity and their perspectives of others to be more productive and possess higher worker morale.

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From these interviews, I was able to understand how important diversity was to the overall classroom environment. When students were able to have discussions and hear from students with different backgrounds, perspectives, and life experiences, learning was greatly enhanced. This diversity promoted an environment where the issues of social justice, race, social reproduction, and diversity could be tackled and dealt with as a class. The results of these discussions and activities would have been much different in a less diverse setting.

Self-reflection. As I listened to the stories and responses of the participants, self-reflection had a major influence on the learning in their time at the University of South Carolina. The participants were forced to reflect on their own values and beliefs and consider the viewpoints of others. This self-reflection process provided the participants with meaningful, adult learning and led them to a transformative experience.

As the courses were presented, it was important for the professors to present the material in a safe manner that created an environment of sharing and listening to others' perspectives. It is important to remember the negative influences of very threatening experiences. These types of experiences can create a defense mechanism to block any adult learning (Mezirow, 1990). Therefore, as stated in previous discussion, it is necessary for the professors to create an environment for meaningful and safe dialogue. When adults participate in rational and reflective dialogue, it creates an environment with more objectivity to the issues (Mezirow, 1990).

Through the discourse and self-reflection, transformative learning can take place for adult learners. This transformative learning is needed for social justice to take place.

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It is important for adults to change the way of thinking and see things from a different perspective. As Procee (2006) writes, "reflection in education is a field full of promises: promises for improving professional proficiency, for fostering personal growth, and for increasing social justice" (p. 252). When educators are able to view the world through a different lens, they are able to identify the injustices present in our society and look for practical solutions to end those injustices.

Question Two

As I begin my discussion of this question, I am realistic in my expectations of these participants. This adult learning process and transformative learning are not overnight events. It takes time to reflect, change the way you think, consider other perspectives, and have discourse with others. My participants have just started the process, and they were exposed to this type of class activities and critical reflection in only one or two courses at the University of South Carolina. The participants that took courses in curriculum development may have had more experiences and opportunities to discuss diversity, social justice, and gender equality. However, for the majority of the participants in this study, these courses were not indicative of all courses at the university. From my interviews, the participants were appreciative of their opportunities for growth in the areas of social justice reform, diversity, and social reproduction. In many instances, the participants cited a great amount of professional and personal growth. They had a desire for more courses with the same approach and focus.

As I attempt to answer this research question, I must consider some of the potential limiting factors. These limiting factors can be seen differently on an individual

basis. For example, in order for a person in a leadership capacity to influence others, they must have time and opportunity. Next, they must have experienced transformative learning to a level that provides them with a certain comfort level to present their feelings and new perspectives to others. Finally, this new perspective or new learning must be a strong enough influence to alter perspectives, but it must alter actions.

As I explore the ways that this transformed learning produces change and a call to action, I am excited about the future and the seeds planted from these courses. In most cases, this new learning has started small changes in leadership behavior and led to many courageous approaches to enacting change. These small changes can lead to much larger changes that can lead to significant social justice reform. In this study, this transformed adult learning led to a number of changes in leadership behavior. These behaviors include the implementation of book studies with social justice content, neighborhood walks, dialogue about privilege, and deliberate considerations and discussions about diversity. These behaviors allowed these leaders to have meaningful dialogue with others about their new perspectives and present it to their employees in a non-threatening fashion.

These leaders have displayed other leadership practices to include networking with other leaders to meaningful dialogue about social justice, having discussions with employees about the achievement gap, formation of a comprehensive mentoring program for marginalized students, changing policies and practices that perpetuate social injustices, and having dialogue about race. These leaders utilized materials from the courses to spark their discussions and increase the likelihood of self-reflection among

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their employees. Their new awareness to these issues trickled down to their employees and facilitates others to consider different perspectives.

The participants stated they were more confident and felt more comfortable breaching these subjects as they talked to their employees about issues of social justice, race, social reproduction, and diversity. Moreover, they stated that they were not only more confident, but they were more likely to have discourse with others due to their experiences at the University of South Carolina. These experiences led to transformative learning and have caused these leaders to influence others to consider these new perspectives about important issues.

Conclusion

As an educator, this study became important to me in several ways. First, this study pointed me to the importance of colleges of education and the study of learning. Teaching is both an art and a science, and effective teachers are capable of demonstrating mastery of content and command of pedagogy. The professors with the greatest influence demonstrate these two things in their classrooms with confidence and calculation. Moreover, when institutions of higher learning understand adult learning theory and transformative learning, meaningful learning will take place.

Next, this study emphasized to me that teaching demands the care, concern, and courage of educators. In this research, the professors displayed their care and concern in two major ways. They demonstrated genuine concern for their students and made them feel supported in their learning endeavors. Also, they showed concern for facilitating their students towards the development of more critical consciousness to tackle issues of

social justice. It would have been easier and less demanding to design a different classroom environment with a much different focus in the classroom activities, assignments, and discussions. However, these professors were more concerned about the issues facing our society, and they were courageous enough to tackle those issues.

Finally, I began this study with a single focus. This focus was to compare my own experiences with the experiences of others taking the same courses at the University of South Carolina. Through this research and listening to the stories of my participants, I discovered that many of the students involved experienced similar learning and transformative learning. They were challenged and their own personal ideas were confronted, but they were supported throughout the process. Furthermore, through this combination of support, challenge, and self-reflection, they gained valuable confidence to have dialogue about social justice issues, race, and many of the same topics presented in these courses. It is my hope that this dialogue continues, and it will have a ripple effect through the new perspectives of the leaders in this study. Their influence will make a lasting difference in creating the change needed to reduce and eliminate the injustices that exist in our society.

Recommendations For Practitioners

From the interviews and stories of these participants, several recommendations can be made for school and university leaders. Leadership preparation programs can enhance adult learning by providing classrooms with qualified professors and a diverse group of students. Leadership preparation programs should evaluate their curriculums and pedagogical approaches to promote higher level thinking and self-reflection. Also, leadership preparation programs should provide professional development opportunities

for professors to build their capacity for teaching and presenting relevant content. As universities evaluate their programs and improve their approaches to adult learning, students will be able to have access to multiple points of view and be able to have a more meaningful learning experience.

In the area of social justice, leadership preparation programs can be enhance the promotion of social justice by offering and requiring more courses with social justice themes. These courses will increase the awareness of students of the inequities that exist in our society and provide a safe environment to have dialogue with others about these issues. As people begin to discuss these problems with each other, leaders will have more tools in their leadership "toolbox" to address these issues at the school level. This will allow school leaders to be advocates for all students and help find ways to eliminate the inequities that exist in schools. Leadership preparation programs should have curriculums that require both the study of theory and practice. By having a balance between these two, practitioners will have a better handle on the nature of social justice work and will be able to more efficiently deal with resistance to promote social justice in their schools.

School leaders should continue to network with each other. As a general rule, school leaders and educators are painfully isolated in our society. Due to this fact, school leaders must be intentional in networking with each other to promote self-reflection, a needed component of adult learning. School leaders should seek and develop safe, encouraging, diverse groups to interact with and discuss the issues faced by schools. By engaging in a meaningful networking experience, school leaders will be able to better assess their problems and reach viable solutions for their students.

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Recommendations For Future Research

As I consider the limitations of this study, I will make several recommendations for future research. For starters, this study could be done with younger or undergraduate students. In this study, my participants were all college graduates with ages that ranged from 32 to 47. By studying a younger age group or undergraduate students, a comparison could be made in regards to adult learning. Another approach that could enhance this research would be to examine and analyze the perspectives of the professors that delivered the content, curriculum, and instruction to the students. How did they approach the task of promoting social justice? What preparations did they make to facilitate adult learning? How did they feel about the classroom discussions? These are just a few of the questions that could be asked of the professors to examine and understand their perspectives as it relates to adult learning and social justice. These perspectives would be insightful since all of the participants viewed the professors as a significant influence in promoting adult learning as it relates to social justice.

The sample size was small for this study with only six participants. Future research could be done with a larger sample size and could be quantitative in nature with the use of surveys to measure and understand adult learning. Moreover, future research could focus on the application and practice of social justice leadership in schools. This could be done through a case study approach or by observing the practice of "exemplary" social justice leaders in schools. This approach could be beneficial to practitioners as they implement and promote social justice initiatives and reforms in their schools. Furthermore, by observing these leaders in action, data can be gathered to better

understand their perspectives and the influence of this type of leadership on student

achievement.

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Instructor's statement on race

The shift from race to culture helps us to understand how we moved from discrimination based on supposed racial differences into a situation where the cultural preferences and norms of the dominant group can help to maintain racial inequality. Unfortunately, while race is a fiction, racial inequalities remain a terrible reality. Rejecting biologically based theories of racial difference has not been sufficient to erase racial inequalities. What is going on?

When we think of race as biological and racism as discrimination based on biological race, then we believe our work is done as soon as we reject the idea that people are superior or inferior based on their skin color. Although rejecting such racism is a critical step, the problems emerged when we see what came next. The logic for many whites who rejected biological racism, racism based on skin color, worked like this: "I'm fine with black people, so long as they speak and behave exactly like white people." We can see that this is racial acceptance coupled with cultural intolerance.

These cultural preferences were not racially neutral, but systematically benefitted whites while harming African-Americans. We need to help everyone understand the dominant culture in order to function effectively in it, but we don't want to devalue other cultures, or suggest other cultures are inferior.

If we agree that race is a fiction that has had real consequences, then we're in a very different boat. Treating race as real created different life experiences for people who were sorted into racial categories. These different life experiences contributed to the formation of different perspectives, understandings, opportunities, worldviews, traditions, and so forth. While explicit racism may not be as significant as it was decades ago, these legacies of racism remain.

We need to understand the different experiences and different worldviews that have resulted from treating race as real. When we embrace this cultural approach to the legacies of race, then we realize that rejecting racism based on skin color is just the first step on a journey towards understanding. We can acknowledge that learning to talk about it, building trust with each other, and working towards understanding will take real effort. We realize that we may have to take on more than one frame of reference to get where people are coming from.

When white people wish to indicate a rejection of biological racism, we often speak of "being colorblind" or "not seeing race", though of course, race is fundamentally premised on visible (if superficial) differences. From the cultural perspective, we are not clear whether this suggests that we are aware of, accepting of, and sensitive to the cultural differences that visible differences tell us *may* be present.

The distinction between "biologically determined" and "culturally influenced" is very helpful. Traditional racism was rooted in a (now discredited) theory about biology that suggested a person's intellectual capability and moral capacity were biologically determined by their race, and that this was a universal law that applied to everyone in a category (i.e., a stereotype): "blacks are inferior due to genetics." A cultural perspective

shifts from universal laws to common patterns and trends and from biology to culture. When we consider the impact of race as a cultural matter, we note that the perspectives and experiences of different groups are culturally influenced (not biologically determined), and further, that members of every group vary widely (hence the emphasis on internal variation rather than the "average", as if the mean represents the whole). As Ivy Compton-Burnett observed, "There is more difference within the sexes than between them." We don't say, 'you're white and therefore you must like country music', for example. Rather, I am aware that this person has experienced life as a person who is considered white, and there is a cultural tendency among many whites not to understand racial privilege; I will not assume that this individual is ignorant of that privilege, but my awareness of this trend may help me understand her more accurately'.

This formulation is not perfect, because it could be read to suggest that all cultural differences between whites and blacks were produced by racism. That is not true. Much African-American heritage stems from African cultures, and is all the richer for it. Similarly, even the cultures among whites in Charleston and Greenville are so different in part because of the different regions of Europe that settled these areas. However, a recent study documented that African-American and Euro-American working class people spoke more similarly in the 1930s than they do today. Part of that surprising divergence may have stemmed from the dynamic of cultural responses to racial inequalities.

APPENDIX B

Questions for Interview

1) Tell me about your background. Please describe your upbringing and socio-economic status. Allow your description to involve aspects of your past experiences and your professional journey.

2) As you reflect on your educational experiences at the University of South Carolina, did you experience a change or question your thinking about social roles or your role as a school leader?

3) What do you think triggered that change in or question your social role in the classroom setting at the University of South Carolina? Was it a person, assignment, or classroom activity?

4) Were there times when you felt particularly different or uncomfortable during the class? If so, describe one such incident. Did this incident challenge your thinking in some way?

5) As you continue to reflect, what aspects of the class caused you to rethink your beliefs, values, or position on a particular subject?

6) Were the classes similar to others that you have taken at the University of South Carolina? In what ways were they similar? In what ways were they different?

7) As you reflect further on this journey, did the classes and coursework have an influence on changing your behavior, leadership practice, or beliefs as it relates to school leadership? Please describe.

8) What is the most meaningful learning that took place for you during your time at the University of South Carolina? What aspects of the course promoted this learning?

9) Discuss a leadership practice or activity that you have implemented in your school that was directly influenced by the experiences from your coursework at the University of South Carolina?

10) What staff development activities or opportunities have you made available to your staff as it relates to the promotion of social justice?

11) Have you had discussions with other administrators about matters of social justice, race in schools, or the achievement gap?

12) If you have implemented practices, policies, and activities that promote social justice, what types of resistance have you experienced, if any?

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13) Change is a broad term. Therefore, I want to help you narrow down your feelings and experiences from the classes and coursework at the University of South Carolina. Please identify which statement or statements apply to your experiences. If one of these statements applies to you, please provide an example, if possible.

Statement A – I had an experience that caused me to question the way I normally act.

Statement B – I had an experience that caused me to question my ideas about social roles.

Statement C – As I questioned my ideas, I realized I no longer agreed with my previous beliefs or role expectations.

Statement D – Or instead, as I questioned my ideas, I realized I still agreed with my beliefs or role expectations.

Statement E – I realized other people questioned their beliefs.

Statement F – I thought about acting in a different way from my usual beliefs and roles.

Statement G – I felt uncomfortable with traditional social expectations.

Statement H – I tried out new roles so that I would become more comfortable or confident in them.

Statement I – I tried to figure out a way to adopt these new ways of acting.

Statement J – I began to think about the reactions and feedback from my new behavior.

14) When did you realize that your perspective or way of thinking had changed?
15) Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview?

Thank you for your time and willingness to share your experiences as an adult learner.