**Leadership practices in service of improving educational opportunities and outcomes for minoritized communities, especially in instructional settings**

*An Annotated Literature Review*

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The educational leadership field has focused on instructional leadership for several decades, often with an implicit equity-focused theory of action: if teachers are supported (and held accountable for) high-quality instruction, each and every student will be given those opportunities regardless of race, SES, sexual orientation, housing status, immigration status, dis/ability, language, and other minoritized identities. However, while there is evidence of some instructional improvements across White and Asian students, there have not been corollaries for Black and Latinx students, students living in poverty, and students from many other minoritized statuses. In other words, the implicit theory of action is most often not playing out.

In the last two decades, scholars have taken up this problem by theorizing about what kind of leadership will best ameliorate inequities and conducting empirical studies to illuminate particular leadership practices. Through the following research questions, this annotated literature review seeks to describe and draw themes across the literature so as to support CEL’s revisioning of the Leadership Development Framework, the CEL 4D.

**Research Questions**

1. What is the development and shape of the various sets of literature on school leadership that is focused on dismantling current racist power structures (Social Justice Leadership, Culturally Responsive School Leadership, and Equitable Leadership)?
* What are the key tenets across this landscape?
1. What are the ways in which instructional leadership is considered within this landscape?
* How are these similar or different from other ways of defining and talking about instructional leadership?
1. What are the ways in which SEL is considered within this landscape?
* If not explicitly connecting to SEL, are there connections to the whole child, empathy, and other elements that signal an attention to SEL?

We found three main approaches to this work: social justice leadership, culturally responsive school leadership, and equitable leadership. These approaches often overlap, as seen by several papers that came up in more than one search (e.g., Cooper, 2009; Theoharis, 2009; Santamaria, 2014), papers that explicitly address more than one approach (e.g., Gooden, 2010; Ishimaru & Galloway, 2014; Khalifa, 2013; Santamaria, 2014), and papers that cite authors who focus on a different approach (Shields, 2010). In their foundational literature review on Culturally Responsive School Leadership (CRSL), Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis (2016) describe CRSL as integrating components of antiracist leadership, transformative leadership, and social justice leadership, but moving beyond challenging systems that marginalize students of color to also affirm cultural values and beliefs of students’ communities. Social justice leaders must use culturally relevant schooling practices to create an inclusive atmosphere for marginalized students (Khalifa 2013). Are the terms synonymous, then? We argue that they are not, although the terms are often used interchangeably both in practice and in research.

Not surprisingly, the three approaches have a lot in common. However, there are also important differences. Below we provide a crosswalk between the three approaches in an effort to highlight the similarities and differences in a way that CEL will hopefully find helpful in reimagining the CEL 4D. Then, we synthesize the focus on instructional leadership and SEL across the three (spoiler alert: there’s not much).

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Construct** | **Social Justice Leadership** | **CRSL** | **Equitable Leadership** |
| **Area of Focus** | Broadly attends to **multiple** **systems of oppression**: race, class, sexuality, documentation, gender, dis/ability, language | **Centers race and ethnicity**, has a lineage of **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy** and **Critical Race Theory** | Focus on **minoritzed communities** |
| **Approach** | **Process focused**: * Critical examination of self & praxis
* Democratic representation and decision-making key to process
* In contrast to outcomes-focused
 | Location of the work is centered in **schools and communities** served by schools. Heavy focus on **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy** and **critical examination of self.** | Addresses process, but **framed around gaps.** More focus on **outcomes** & disparities/equity of those |
| **Role of Community** | **Community** voice and engagement are key | Affirmation of and partnerships with minoritized **communities** are key | Inclusion of **community voice** and participation are key |

**Table 1:** Crosswalk of Social Justice Leadership, Culturally Responsive School Leadership, and Equitable Leadership by construct.

**Area of Focus**

All three approaches consider minoritized communities, although CRSL centers race and ethnicity. As its lineage is from Critical Race Theory (CRT), this is not surprising. Because of the lack of an explicit or sole focus on race in both Social Justice and Equity literatures broadly, many authors specify that they seek “racial justice” or “racial equity.”

The definition most often relied on in the SJL literature comes from Theoharis, 2007: "I define social justice leadership to mean that these principals 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. This definition centers on addressing and eliminating marginalization in schools. Thus, inclusive schooling practices for students with disabilities, English language learners (ELLs), and other students traditionally segregated in schools are also necessitated by this definition" (p. 223).

Equity leadership shares this focus on mitigating oppressive practices and structures within the schools system. This group of articles often focuses on the actions of educators to shift historically marginalized and marginalized students’ educational experiences and opportunities.

**Approach**

The approaches of the three sets of literature are where the greatest differences lie, although there are still many similarities. The SJL approach relies heavily on process, the CRSL focuses on the school, and EL focuses on outcomes.

*Social Justice Leadership*: Leaders are expected to engage in building their own critical consciousness and focus on how that intersects with their practice, or *praxis*. Rather than focusing solely on an outcome, the process itself must be just. It is "continuous and recursive." (Bogotch, 2002, p. 146). Describing Social Justice Instructional Leadership, Rigby (2014) explained, “It was not the achievement in and of itself that generated justice, it was both the process through and the environment in which student achievement happened that moved toward a more socially just society” (p. 633). While there are specific outcomes or aims of the work, the aims themselves are reexamined and recreated.

Each element of leadership is embedded with a focus on praxis. Furman (2012) defines it in this way: "Praxis involves the continual, dynamic interaction among knowledge acquisition, deep reflection, and action at two levels—the intrapersonal and the extrapersonal—with the purpose of transformation and liberation. At the intrapersonal level, praxis involves self-knowledge, critical self-reflection, and acting to transform oneself as a leader for social justice. At the extrapersonal level, praxis involves knowing and understanding systemic social justice issues, reflecting on these issues, and taking action to address them" (p. 203).

*Culturally Responsive School Leadership*: Similar to SJL, Culturally Responsive School Leaders focus on their own critical consciousness through an ongoing and reflexive practice. Distinct to CRSL, the locus of change is at the level of the school. Khalifa (2018) explains, “CRSL is a dynamic, fluid set of [anti-oppressive] behaviors that regularly (re)develop the individual and the organization based on a steady stream of data from the school and the community” (p. 60). Culturally Responsive School Leadership transforms schools by seeking to understand the values, norms, and beliefs of the communities, families, and students served by the school (McCray & Beachum, 2014).

As CRSL has its locus at the school level, pedagogy plays a stronger role in this leadership conception than the others. Horsford, Grosland, and Gunn (2011) focus on reflective practice and pedagogy, and Johnson (2014) includes Django Paris’s culturally sustaining pedagogy as a way to understand the job of instruction in CRSL, more than relate to a students’ culture, it should support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence.

*Equitable Leadership*: EL foregrounds outcomes. Much of the post-NCLB studies examined the achievement gap from an equity perspective, highlighting the persistent gap between students of color and white students (Brown, Benkovitz, Muttillo, & Urban, 2011; Palmer & Louis, 2017; Ross & Berger, 2009; Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly, 2004). When process is highlighted, it’s often from a structural approach, such as changing grading practices (Palmer & Louis, 2017), instituting equity audits (Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly, 2004), or implementing new assessment and evaluation strategies (Ross & Berger, 2009).

A significant exception in this literature are a series of papers written by Ishimaru and Galloway about equitable school leadership (Ishimaru & Galloway, 2014, Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015, 2017; Ishimaru, Galloway & Larson, 2015). Their framework (developed through a modified Delphi process that included the ideas from an expert panel merged with a literature review on social justice, culturally responsive, and organizational leadership to identify “high leverage” equitable leadership practices) identified 10 leadership practices (the aims or outcomes) along with a set of drivers on a continuum (the process). They argue that the process through which leaders engage with the practices (the drivers) are key.

**Role of Community**

Across all three sets of leadership approaches, scholars are clear that communities must be authentically involved in the process of schooling. Gerwitz & Cribb (2002) explain that Social Justice Leaders must include full participation of marginalized groups in decisions that impact their lives. Green (2017, 2018) designed an equity framework that attends specifically to how leaders engage with community, Community Equity Literacy. Fraise & Brooks (2015) wrote a theoretical piece describing Culturally Relevant Leadership for School-Community Culture. It’s clear that this element should be foregrounded in the CEL 4D.

**Instructional Leadership**

The articles in this review address instructional practice minimally, but there are small glimpses of leadership focused on instruction. Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy (2005) put forward a vision of leadership in which social justice and instruction are tightly linked. They write, “The present ferment over this new conception of leadership provides an opportunity to reconsider within a social justice discourse what it means to lead in schools where student learning, rather than the management of daily operations, is the heart of the work. Thus far we have only tinkered around the edges of this dilemma by attempting to incorporate elements of instructional leadership into the traditional principal role" (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005, p. 209).

Within this collection, a number of studies include examples of principal support for culturally responsive or socially just teaching (e.g., Furman, 2012; Ishimaru & Galloway 2014; Palmer & Louis; Scanlan & Lopez, 2012). These scholars highlight instructional strategies such as differentiation, cooperative learning, use of technology, wait time, and drawing on community funds of knowledge. A few studies document principals shifting schools structures, including abolishing academic interventions that punish students, implementing flexible grouping, eliminating pull-out programs for ELL students, implementing grading systems based on mastery rather than completion of procedures, and eliminating tracking (DeMatthews, 2016; DeMatthews & Izquierdo, 2018; Palmer & Louis, 2017; Rigby, 2014; Theoharis 2007, 2010; Theoharis & O’Toole, 2011). Lastly, these scholars suggest that leaders might work for equity and social justice through instructional feedback to teachers (Brown, Benkowitz, Muttillo, & Urban, 2011; Ishimaru & Galloway, 2014).

**Social-Emotional Learning**

Many of the articles within this review consider attention to students’ social and emotional experience as a vital leadership component. However, this aspect of a leaders’ work is rarely the primary focus of a given study. Most commonly, scholars attend to social emotional learning by advocating for leaders to create safe and inclusive school environments that affirm students’ racial or cultural identities and value their participation (e.g., Grenn, 2017; Juettner, 2003; Khalifa, 2013, 2018; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012; Ross and Berger, 2009). Other scholars, such as Darling-Hammond and Friedlaender (2008), Madhlangobe and Gordon (2012) and Theoharis (2007), highlight the efforts of educators to cultivate strong relationships with families as key. A few studies, including Khalifa (2013) and Mansfield (2014) describe leaders’ roles in amplifying students’ voices and developing student self-advocacy.

Unlike most studies that mention students’ social and emotional experiences in passing, Kennedy’s (2019) article directly addresses the intersection between equity and support for social-emotional learning. Kennedy (2019) proposes a framework of practices to guide school leaders when implementing a social-emotional learning (SEL) program, centering equity and caring within leadership practices and interactions.

**Key Takeaways for the Redesign of the CEL 4D**

* **Include a focus on justice in each dimension *and* include a separate dimension.** As witnessed in the redesign of the ISLLC Standards and is evident in many of the papers reviewed for this project, it’s important to embed social justice and racial equity throughout all elements of leadership. Many of the papers in this review highlight the need for leaders to consistently engage with their own critical consciousness, and to help other members of their communities to do the same. If the element is put on its own, history shows us that it will likely at best be an add-on, and more likely ignored completely.
* **Center anti-racism and decenter whiteness.** The term “equity” has become sufficiently flattened in practitioner use--everything “counts” as equity. For a tool like the CEL 4D that is meant to address leaders’ work broadly, it makes sense to define this type of work as including other minoritized groups, too. I think this can be done by combining terms and explicitly defining them (i.e., “social justice and racial equity”).
* **Focus on a just process as well as outcomes.** The Ishimaru & Galloway framework provides language and ideas about how to do this around data use, the Green framework on Community Equity Literacy does so for authentic community engagement, and the Khalifa book describes some of these practices in terms of instruction (my 2014 paper does this a bit, too). The main elements to include are to ensure praxis through inclusive, democratic, and representative decision-making processes and structures; to include specifics about asset-based framing of students and families (during data conversations, curricular planning, etc.); and to highlight the need for reflection and reflexivity in order to build critical consciousness.
* **Foreground authentic affirmation and partnering with communities.** This is widely addressed in many of the theoretical and empirical papers and modeled in several (cited throughout the synthesis). Leadership actions include designing community walks and mapping activities, home visits, as well as partnering with community, parents, and students in authentic roles in decision-making.

**Social Justice Leadership**

Social justice leadership includes racial inequities, and also marginalization related to gender, sexuality, class, disability, language, ethnicity, etc. All social justice leadership literature agrees that social justice leadership has a fluid, broad definition and cannot be focused narrowly on a concrete set of predetermined practices. Earlier works focus on theorizing social justice in education as a goal of schooling overall, while later works focus on the behavior and practices of social justice leaders. Gewirtz (1998) explicitly defines social justice in three components: distributional, cultural, and associational. That is, social justice concerns economic distribution, cultural recognition, and shared means of achieving social justice where all groups are involved in decision-making. These different facets of social justice broaden the “agenda of evaluation” and highlight tensions in social justice theory and the need for research on practical applications of complex ideas (Gewirtz & Cribb, 2002, p. 499). DeMatthews and Izquierdo (2018), DeMatthews (2016), and Furman (2012) take up this multifaceted definition, and its origins in Fraser’s (1997) work. Theoharis, while citing Gewirtz in his seminal 2007 piece, does not specifically mention this tiered definition and collapses these three facets into one, broad definition.

The literature illuminates several key qualities of social justice leadership. It has a strong moral component (Bogotch, 2002; Murtadha & Watts, 2005; Rivera-McCutchen, 2014; Theoharis, 2007). Additionally, praxis is a core element of social justice leadership (Bogotch, 2002; Gewirtz & Cribb, 2002; Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009; Furman, 2012). Later research frequently cites this connection to praxis as the rationale for case study research on the daily practices of school and district leaders. Critical reflection, a component of praxis is a key practice of social justice leaders (Bogotch, 2002; Dantley & Tillman, 2009; Maxwell, et. al.; DeMatthews, 2016). Social justice leadership is also fluid, iterative, and proactive (Bogotch, 2002; Brooks & Miles, 2008; Dantley & Tillman, 2009; Mansfield, 2014; Rigby, 2014; DeMatthews, 2016; DeMatthews & Izquierdo, 2018). Social justice practices constantly shift as they are reexamined by leaders and contexts change, and go beyond just awareness of social inequities. Context influences inequities (distribution of resources, particular sites of resistance) and therefore influences social justice leadership (Bogotch, 2002; Gewirtz & Cribb, 2002; Maxwell, Locke, & Scheurich, 2014; Rivera-McCutchen, 2014; DeMatthews, 2016). There is a salient link between historical struggles for social justice and present-day ones, as leaders, especially those of color, have a wealth of knowledge pertaining to resisting inequities (Murtadha & Watts, 2005; Robinson & Baber, 2013). Indeed, resistance is a key aspect of social justice leadership--both resistance to social justice efforts by outside forces and resistance on the part of social justice leaders to institutionalized inequities (Khalifa, 2013; Theoharis, 2007; Theoharis & O’Toole, 2011). The annotated sources below elaborate on findings from case studies of social justice leadership.

 Community engagement is mentioned as a critical part of social justice leadership, despite the fact that this remains contested and vague. Murtadha & Watts (2005) point to the collective and coalitional nature of historical efforts necessary to achieve social justice. Mansfield (2014) links the practice of social justice leadership with listening to student voice. Most research on social justice leadership focuses on single principals or superintendents, with some notable exceptions (Ishimaru & Galloway, 2014).

**Theory Building**

**Bertrand, M. & Rodela, K. (2017). A Framework for rethinking educational leadership in the margins: Implications for social justice leadership preparation. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education, 13(1),* 10-37*.***

* Literature review and conceptual framework
* Schools should cede power in relationships with families and communities.
* Social justice leadership often seeks equity ends without using equitable means. Parent and community engagement is more than just a component of social justice leadership--parents and community members should be leaders themselves.
* Parents are typically characterized as problems by schools, and community engagement is often seen as parents supporting school goals, rather than incorporating parents’ experiential knowledge.
* "A course on instructional leadership could consider how an expanded understanding of leadership could potentially enrich curriculum, connecting it to existing Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005), specifically in communities of color and undervalued communities" (p. 18).

**Bogotch, I. E. (2002). Educational Leadership and Social Justice: Practice into Theory. *Journal of School Leadership, 12*(2), 138-156.**

* Case study with philosophical underpinnings (Deweyian conceptions of theory and practice)
* Practicing social justice is "continuous and recursive." (p. 146) Social justice leadership is a process, rather than implementing a laid-out goal.
* Social justice leadership cannot be defined separately from practice or action; to understand what social justice leadership is, it must be examined in context.
* Because of constant reflection and changing contexts, the work of social justice leaders is never complete.

**DeMatthews, D. & Izquierdo, E. (2018). The importance of principals supporting dual language education: A social justice leadership framework. *Journal of Latinos and Education. 17*(1), 53-70.**

* Literature review and conceptual framework about dual language instruction and social justice leadership
* Principals engage stakeholders, analyze data, develop new systems and teaching practices, and "maintain continuous reflection, evaluation, and improvement" when leading for social justice (p. 66).
* Because of the complex facets of social justice, it is difficult to achieve. For instance, one decision can be distributed in nature, but not achieve cultural justice.
* Principals share decision-making processes with teachers.
* Instruction: Program evaluations should focus on the "quality of instruction as it relates to strategies of teaching in English and Spanish, the role of families in the classroom, the use of varied student grouping strategies, and student-centered and inclusive activities" (p. 65).
* Principals analyze disaggregated achievement data and use data to engage parents and teachers in discussion and build trust.

**Furman, G. (2012). Social justice leadership as praxis: Developing capacities through preparation programs. *Educational Administration Quarterly. 48*(2), 191-229.**

* Literature review and conceptual framework
* Provides a [summary table](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vDla2GGRt2mhBgwVdUtU5UlYI7lNMI30/view) of case studies in social justice leadership
* She specifically addresses the vagueness of praxis, and defines it as: “the continual, dynamic interaction among knowledge acquisition, deep reflection, and action at two levels—the intrapersonal and the extrapersonal—with the purpose of transformation and liberation. At the intrapersonal level, praxis involves self-knowledge, critical self-reflection, and acting to transform oneself as a leader for social justice. At the extrapersonal level, praxis involves knowing and understanding systemic social justice issues, reflecting on these issues, and taking action to address them" (p. 203).
* Based on her literature review, social justice leadership is “action-oriented and transformative, committed and persistent, inclusive and democratic, relational and caring, reflective, oriented toward a socially just pedagogy" (p.194-197).
* Using a more “holistic framework” in research can better highlight the many facets of social justice leadership and how they are influenced by context and individual leaders (p. 213).

**Theoharis, G. (2007). Social Justice Educational Leaders and Resistance: Toward a Theory of Social Justice Leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly. 43*(2). 221-258**

* Qualitative case study with principals as the unit of analysis
* Theoharis’ definition of social justice leadership is heavily cited in current research. He defines it as principals making “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).
* "The experiences these principals described can be understood as a three pronged framework of resistance: 1. the resistance principals enact against historic marginalization of particular students, 2. the resistance principals face as a result of their social justice agenda, and 3. the resistance principals develop to sustain their social justice agenda in the face of resistance" (p. 248).
* Instruction: Principals focused primarily on student achievement for all students in pursuit of social justice.

**Empirical Studies**

**DeMatthews, D. (2016). Competing priorities and challenges: Principal leadership for social justice along the U.S.-Mexico border. *Teachers College Record,* *118*(11), 1-26.**

* Qualitative case study of single principal
* Context and personal experience influence the enactment of social justice leadership. Finite resources exist for principals, so they must prioritize certain social justice goals over others.
* His use of Gewirtz (1998) definition complicates a general or universal idea of social justice, while his case study demonstrates the real “social justice dilemmas” faced by principals; certain actions must be prioritized over other due to finite resources and time according to principals’ experience, worldview, and personal conception of social justice (see more about this in Furman, 2012).
* Principal's worldview and previous experiences shaped leadership decisions (in this study, it was "high-quality instruction, inclusive environments, culturally relevant pedagogy, meaningful parent engagement" (p. 25). Culturally relevant practices are embedded in social justice leadership.
* Instructional practices used by principal:
	+ Developed data analysis tools to change instructional practices, including individual student performance data--an IEP for each student--and a class analysis focused on state standards; there was a data-driven culture at the school.
	+ Highly focused on improving reading and math
	+ Teacher survey data showed the principal to be an effective instructional leader and "highly visible" (p. 18)

**Khalifa, M. (2013). Promoting our students: Examining the role of school leadership in the self-advocacy of at-risk students. *Journal of School Leadership, 23*(5), 751-788.**

* Two-year ethnographic study of alternative school for at-risk youth
* Self-advocacy in students is a crucial part of social justice leadership, which is often overlooked by other scholars. This expands on Theoharis’ (2007) definition to include leaders’ collaboration with students and families toward self-advocacy.
* Schools must cede power in order to gain trust and increase student achievement.
* Culturally relevant practices are integral to social justice leadership.
* The principal organizes school structures for students/families to use for self-advocacy, has strong relationships with students/families.
* Students’ identities are accepted in school culture and their input is valued.

**Rivera-McCutchen, R. (2014). The Moral Imperative of Social Justice Leadership: A Critical Component of Effective Practice. *Urban Review, 46*(4), 747-763.**

* Qualitative case study of principals responding to hypothetical situations of injustice
* Principals' definitions of social justice "centered on equity and fighting injustice" (p. 753). They viewed social justice leadership as a moral obligation that proactively influenced all processes and structures of their schools.
* Principals did not talk about their principal training program or rhetoric in defining their social justice orientation. Instead, they linked this with "morality" and the idea of "walking the walk."
* Instruction: Principals described the following actions as crucial to their social justice leadership: "1) communicate openly with staff; 2) setting and maintaining the values of the school; 3) teaching and developing staff toward a social justice orientation” (p. 753).
	+ Included social justice values in the curriculum
	+ Fostered high expectations of students
	+ Organized PD around equity and modeled behavior oriented towards social justice

**Theoharis, G. (2010). Disrupting injustice: Principals narrate the strategies they use to improve their schools and advance social justice. *Teachers College Record. 112*(1), 331-373.**

* Qualitative study
* Principals as social justice leaders center student achievement of all students. They employ teacher development, community engagement, and restructuring, among other strategies, to do so.
* Kinds of school injustices remedied: school structures that marginalize, deprofessionalized teaching staff, unwelcoming school climate, disparate student achievement levels
* Principals credit their myriad strategies for raising student achievement.
* This article offers an extensive list of practices. Key practices include: eliminating pullout programs, increasing rigor and learning time, increasing accountability systems, providing staff development on equity, and intentional community engagement.
* Instruction: Principals restricted instruction to eliminate marginalization (pullout programs, tracking), collected and analyzed data on every student and used this data to inform instruction, and provided staff with training to improve curriculum and instruction for all students.

**Culturally Responsive School Leadership**

The opportunity gap in public education continues to be a major concern and an enigma for many educators and school leaders. At the classroom level, Ladson-Billings (1994) and Gay (2002) have urged educators to take a multicultural approach when teaching students of color, focusing on maintaining high expectations and connecting students' background knowledge, culture, and ethnicity to curriculum and instruction. At a school level, culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) is an approach to address oppressive school structures (Horsford, Grosland, & Gunn, 2011; Johnson, 2014; Khalifa, 2018; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012; Magno & Schiff, 2010; McCray & Beachum, 2014). CRSL actions include fostering an inclusive school culture and establishing a shared equity-driven vision to address the opportunity gap (Horsford, Grosland, & Gunn, 2011; Juettner, 2003; Khalifa, 2013; Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016).

 Khalifa (2018) describes culturally responsive school leadership as a “dynamic, fluid set of [anti-oppressive]behaviors that regularly (re)develop the individual and the organization based on a steady stream of data from the school and the community” (p. 60). The success of this work is rooted in partnering and collaborating with families and the community (Fraise & Brooks, 2015; Horsford, Grosland, & Gunn, 2011; Juettner, 2003; Johnson, 2014; Khalifa, 2018). Culturally responsive school leaders must advocate for community needs, affirm cultural values and beliefs, and seek community input (Fraise & Brooks, 2015; Johnson, 2014; Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016). Through community engagement leaders establish goals that support the community’s epistemologies, seek equitable school policies, and make informed decisions that support the community they serve (Khalifa, 2018). Additionally, leaders must continuously engage in critical self-reflection to identify biases and beliefs, administer equity audits, and address oppressive school structures (Khalifa, 2018; McCray & Beachum, 2014).

Culturally responsive school leaders value students’ cultural identity and create a safe space or an inclusive school environment where students of color thrive (Khalifa, 2018). To achieve this, leaders must promote *identity confluence*, which affirms that students of color can achieve academic success while also maintaining their cultural identity (Khalifa, 2018). Furthermore, culturally responsive school leadership requires building teacher capacity by developing culturally responsive instruction and curricula (Khalifa, 2018). Students’ language and values are integrated into classroom instruction and assessment, Hip-Hop language is accepted, community-based professional learning communities are fostered, and culturally responsive pedagogy training is provided (Juettner, 2003; Khalifa, 2013, 2018).

Lastly, Khalifa (2013, 2018) and Madhlangobe & Gordon (2012) highlight the social-emotional benefits of practicing culturally responsive school leadership. By providing students of color an inclusive school environment and positive relationships, students feel a sense of emotional safety, are valued, accepted and receive cultural affirmation, thus leading to higher academic engagement, student success, and declining suspension rates (Juettner, 2003; Khalifa, 2013, 2018; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012).

**Theory Building**

**Fraise, N. J., & Brooks, J. S. (2015). Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Leadership for School-Community Culture. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 17(1), 6–21.**

*Culturally relevant* leaders must focus on truly understanding and valuing each individual culture that makes up the school. Schools and communities should be viewed as a whole, so as to be understood and respected for what they can teach and learn rather than something that should be changed. Leaders must use their agency to promote unity between the school and community and hire a diverse workforce. Culturally relevant leaders also celebrate culture and build schools around the community culture, and adopt culturally relevant pedagogy to counteract deculturalization.

Culturally Relevant Leadership:

* *Reflect*: Identify biases and assumptions
* *Learn*: Collective inquiry and research
* *Deconstruct*: Identify inequities and non-culturally relevant processes/curricula
* *Reconstruct*: Community creates new norms, processes, and procedures
* *Lead*

**Horsford, S. D., Grosland, T., & Gunn, K. M. (2011). Pedagogy of the Personal and Professional: Toward a Framework for Culturally Relevant Leadership. *Journal of School Leadership*, *21*(4), 582.**

Due to changing demographics, it is incumbent on educational leaders to become *culturally relevant* leaders and navigate the political, pedagogical, personal, and professional waters by:

* Cultivating a sense of ownership and empowerment around a shared vision and collaboration to address the achievement gap
* Ensuring that students are equipped with educators that embrace culturally relevant and antiracist pedagogy and create a space for students to have “cultural expression so that their voices and experiences can be incorporated into teaching and learning processes on a regular basis."
* Reflecting and identifying own personal beliefs; recognize other cultural values, beliefs, and backgrounds along with assumptions of students of color; respect and value cultural diversity; challenge organizations and policies to eliminate educational barriers
* Advocate for equity, engagement, and excellence and model effective communication and collaboration

**Khalifa, M. A. (2018). *Culturally responsive school leadership*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.**

According to Khalifa, *culturally responsive school leadership* is described as “a dynamic, fluid set of [anti-oppressive] behaviors that regularly (re)develop the individual and the organization based on a steady stream of data from the school and the community” (p. 60). Culturally responsive school leaders administer equity audits, incorporate and celebrate aspects of the community in schools, recognize oppressive structures in minoritized communities, and cultivate *identity confluence*, which values indigenous identities while also promoting academic identities. Khalifa notes that it is imperative for leaders to establish social capital for families (i.e. parent breakfasts, report card delivery, open-school door policy for parents, and introductory interviews), embrace cultural capital (i.e. inclusivity, supporting teachers in learning student identity and cultural capital), foster self-advocacy among minoritized students, and create safe spaces for minoritized students to ensure a sense of belonging. Culturally responsive school leadership and instruction involves community-based PLCs, data from equity audit, equity-based frameworks for teacher evaluation, equity teams, mentor teachers, teacher modeling, and culturally responsive training.

CRSL behaviors:

* Critically self-reflective
* Develop and sustain CR teachers and curricula
* Promote inclusivity & anti-oppressive structures
* Community Engagement (shift school-based power to the community: seek community voice & listen)

**McCray, C. R., & Beachum, F. D. (2014). Countering Plutocracies: Increasing Autonomy and Accountability through Culturally Relevant Leadership. *School Leadership & Management, 34*(4), 392–413.**

McCray and Beachum describe *culturally relevant leadership* as a framework that can help school leaders reduce school suspensions and expulsions for African-American students.

Culturally relevant leadership requires the leader to first engage in ‘autobiographical exploration, reflection, and critical self-analysis’ (Villegas and Lucas, 2002). Next, the leader identifies misconceptions and stereotypes and affirms diverse cultural identities. Lastly, the leader seeks ways to optimize equity and student success.

*Culturally relevant leaders:*

(1) Challenge current thinking by observing alternatives and gaining additional information (liberatory consciousness);

(2) Examine true feelings and attitude about the topic at hand and its impact on all students (pluralistic insight);

(3) Take action and engage in practices that are equitable, morally informed and reflective in nature (reflexive practice).

*Culturally relevant leadership framework:*

* Liberatory consciousness (Self-awareness/Identifying biases)
* Pluralistic insight (Affirming Cultural identities and perspectives)
* Reflexive practice (Reflective, Self-improvement, community engagement, modeling culturally responsive pedagogy, detracking)

**Empirical Studies**

**Johnson, L. (2014). Culturally Responsive Leadership for Community Empowerment. *Multicultural Education Review, 6*(2), 145–170.**

*Culturally responsive* school leaders focus on inclusivity, gaining input from community members, and aim to strengthen cultural identity through cultural-based curriculum, pedagogy, and equitable assessment practices that encourage collaboration across race and ethnicity.

Culturally responsive leaders are

* Public intellectuals (e.g. Increase the proportion of African-American administrators and teachers, advocate for the racial equity)
* Boundary spanners (e.g. build partnerships between the school and community)
* Advocacy leaders (e.g. work is rooted in culture and politics to best advocate for culturally relevant curriculum and community-based schools)

**Juettner, V. (2003). Culturally Responsive Schools: Leadership, Language, and Literacy Development. *Talking Points, 14*(2), 11–16.**

Creating *culturally responsive* schools requires leaders who promote community collaboration, establish a clear vision for change, and build trust and respect among teachers and community members. Leaders support teachers in instructional planning and assessments to ensure that language and literacy are reflective of the community.

Culturally Responsive School Leaders must:

* Create a personal understanding of culturally responsive action (understanding of languages, values, and cultures in the community, professional literature, personal interviews)
* Assess school policies, procedures, and beliefs
* Empower staff with decision making and professional development in instructional planning and assessment
* Schoolwide planning (e.g. cultural assemblies, multiage classrooms, dual-certification classrooms, inclusive SPED)

**Khalifa, M. (2013). Creating Spaces for Urban Youth: The Emergence of Culturally Responsive (Hip-Hop) School Leadership and Pedagogy. *Multicultural Learning and Teaching, 8*(2), 63–93.**

School leaders must create safe spaces for urban marginalized students by promoting inclusivity and valuing diverse social and cultural identities, thus leading to a decline in expulsion and suspensionrates and an increase in student achievement. Leaders must cultivate an inclusive school culture that seeks to maintain student identity related to Hip-Hop culture and build a strong partnership with the community that focuses on seeking input and valuing diversity. *Culturally responsive* school leaders advocate for social justice, seek tolerance of indigenous urban students, affirm Hip-Hop identities, and Hip-Hop values are integrated into classroom instruction. When culturally responsive leadership is present, Hip-Hop students feel valued, heard, and appreciated leading to greater student success and the ability to maintain their Hip-Hop cultural identity while also seeking academic achievement.

Findings include:

* Students can achieve academic success while also holding Hip-Hop or urban identities.
* School success can be obtained when culturally responsive leaders cultivate safe spaces in which marginalized urban students are valued and understood.
* The principal is the greatest agent of change in promoting an inclusive school culture and abandoning exclusionary practices

**Madhlangobe, L., & Gordon, S. P. (2012). Culturally Responsive Leadership in a Diverse School: A Case Study of a High School Leader. *NASSP Bulletin, 96*(3), 177–202.**

Due to the disproportionate numbers of white educators and culturally diverse students in schools, leaders need to make changes in how African-American, Asian, Latinx, and Native American students are taught in the U.S. *Culturally responsive leadership* transforms schools by seeking to understand the values, norms, and beliefs of the communities, families, and students served by the school. Ladson-Billings (2002) suggests that culturally responsive school leaders help their teachers and students develop intellectually, socially, and emotionally by “using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.” Therefore, leaders must lead teachers, students, and parents by creating consistent communication, fostering relationships within the school and community to ensure a welcoming school environment for diverse students and to ensure that minoritized groups receive instruction according to their learning needs. Leaders build teacher capacity around equity pedagogy to create awareness of biases and integrate students' cultures in the curriculum. This approach to leadership makes student learning more relevant, increases student engagement, reduces discipline concerns, and increases student achievement. Leaders must focus on building positive relationships with students and providing students with "emotional acceptance" which translates to increased student academic success.

**Magno, C., & Schiff, M. (2010). Culturally Responsive Leadership: Best Practice in Integrating Immigrant Students. *Intercultural Education, 21*(1), 87–91.**

Suburban areas are increasingly becoming more diverse with about 1 in 5 students who have parents who are immigrants and/or are immigrants themselves. Due to increasing numbers of children who are immigrants, school leaders must capitalize on students' diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds to make the school culture, curriculum, and instruction richer while simultaneously meeting the needs of learners who are immigrants.

Magno & Schiff found that a *culturally responsive leader* “favored institutional adaptation in combination with student adaptation” (p.87). Whereas, other administrators favored student assimilation. Culturally responsive leaders use cultural diversity of immigrant students to:

* Adapt and make school improvements to support immigrant students [e.g. inclusive environment, immigrants are able to take electives, new students assigned a 'buddy', tutoring availability, space to share knowledge about diverse cultures, diversity leadership conference]; and
* Strengthen the curriculum by supporting teachers in integrating culturally diverse student experiences into lessons (leaders build teacher capacity to use a multicultural lens in classrooms)

**Literature Review**

**Khalifa, M. A., Gooden, M. A., & Davis, J. E. (2016). Culturally responsive school leadership: A synthesis of the literature. *Review of Educational Research, 86*(4), 1272-1311.**

School leadership is critical for school reform and educational justice, therefore, *culturally responsive school leadership* is imperative when addressing the cultural needs of minoritized students, communities, and seeking to close the opportunity gap. Culturally responsive school leaders serve as an instructional leader and a transformational leader that focus on building positive relationships with students and families by establishing a shared vision and community-based goals and keeping inclusivity at the core of the school culture. CRSL are also "warm demanders,” set high student expectations for students, and advocate from student and community needs.

Culturally Responsive School Leader Behaviors:

* Critically self-reflects on personal biases & educational inequities and develops critical self-awareness on values and beliefs and serving students of color
* Teachers Development, Curriculum, & Instruction: CRSL must establish a clear vision and ensure all teachers maintain culturally responsive pedagogy and engage in courageous conversations (Singleton, 2012)
* School Environment: Provide students with an inclusive school environment, leverage resources to affirm student identity/culture
* Community Advocacy: Partner with students and families; seek input and engagement that is reflective of the community

**Equity Leadership**

In this group of studies, scholars address the common goal of leading in pursuit of educational equity. While the definition of equity varies across these studies, scholars generally agree that equity leadership involves *supporting changes in educational structures and practices to mitigate inequitable outcomes*, which are sometimes framed as disparities or “gaps” between marginalized students and their more privileged counterparts.

Within this collection of studies, some authors considered broad leadership approaches that advance the theory of educational equity (eg. Brown, Benkovitz, Muttillo, and Urban, 2011; Santamaría, 2014; Shields, 2010). These typically take the form of frameworks that categorize particular leadership practices. Ross and Berger (2009), for example, put forward 16 strategies school leaders can use to equalize outcomes, nested within categories of curriculum interpretation, instructional practices, assessment and evaluation, and community involvement. Shields (2010) highlights leadership practices such as balancing critique and promise, acknowledging power and privilege, and demonstrating moral courage and activism, among others. The practices named in these articles tend to overlap with those mentioned in other leadership approaches (such as social justice leadership) and are not specific to a particular context or type of work.

Other articles provide more precise descriptions of specific equity leadership practices by narrowing their focus to actions that take place within particular leadership tasks or routines. In these articles, leaders perform their everyday work with an equity focus or orientation. For example, Park (2018) names equity-focused conversational moves used by leaders during data discussions to counter deficit statements about students and redirect toward equity goals. Similarly, Palmer and Louis (2017) identify four leadership actions that school leaders do to support teachers’ understanding of racial equity in the context of participating in equity trainings. McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) discuss specific leadership actions for avoiding “equity traps”, including organizing neighborhood walks and home visits, leading a book study to help teachers interrogate their implicit biases, and creating peer observation routines to de-privatize teacher practice. These articles focus on leadership actions but are not explicit about how leaders’ background or knowledge enables them to successfully use these practices.

In contrast, a subset of articles focuses on leaders who draw knowledge and strength from marginalized communities or their own experiences with marginalization as resources for equity-focused work. For example, Green’s (2018) Community Equity Literacy framework describes leaders who take an asset-based approach and center authentic collaboration with families and communities to advocate for policies that oppose structural inequity. Rodela and Rodriguez-Mojica (2019) illustrate how Latinx school leaders use their Community Cultural Wealth to inform their equity leadership. Similarly, Santamaría (2014) depicts leaders of color who practice “applied critical leadership,” using their own experiences of fighting oppression as a model of praxis that results in educational equity.

**Theory Building**

**Green, T. L. (2018). Enriching Educational Leadership Through Community Equity Literacy: A Conceptual Foundation. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 17(4), 487-515.** [**https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2017.1326148**](https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2017.1326148)

The purpose of this article is to describe work to develop a conceptual framework around community equity literacy to build educational leaders’ capacity, provide a future research agenda on the topic, and serve as the theoretical foundation for an assessment instrument under development to measure community equity literacy. The community equity literacy instrument and framework focuses on leaders and their teams, school and community conditions, and explicitly centers equity. Green draws on Gutiérrez (2009), Gorski (2013), and Galloway and Ishimaru (2015) to conceptualize equity. Most of the leadership practices Green touches on are rooted in Ishimaru and Galloway’s (2014) conception of organizational leadership for equity. He states leaders ought to authentically collaborate with families and communities and be socially and politically active by advocating for policies that oppose inequity. He further states leaders should collaborate with and develop alliances with coalitions, groups, and use formal leadership authority to ally with school and community groups to ensure a high-quality education for every student.

 **Ishimaru, A. M., & Galloway, M. K. (2014). Beyond individual effectiveness: Conceptualizing organizational leadership for equity. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 13*(1), 93-146. DOI:** [**10.1080/15700763.2014.890733**](https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2014.890733)

The authors developed 10 leadership practices and 3 drivers through a modified Delphi process that included the ideas from an expert panel merged with a literature review on social justice, culturally responsive, and organizational leadership. The collectively developed leadership practices are: 1) Constructing and Enacting an Equity Vision, 2) Supervising for Improvement of Equitable Instruction, 3) Developing Organizational Leadership for Equity, 4) Fostering an Equitable School Culture, 5) Allocating Resources, 6) Hiring and Placing Personnel, 7) Collaborating With Families and Communities, 8) Engaging in Self-Reflection and Growth for Equity, 9) Modeling, and 10) Influencing the Sociopolitical Context. Ishimaru and Galloway argue that while leading towards these practices is essential, it is equally important how you go about leading (the process). To guide and measure the process, they developed three leading drivers: 1) Framing Disparities and Action, 2) Construction and Enactment of Leadership, and 3) the Inquiry Culure. The process through which these drivers are enacted exists on a continuum, from “little to no equity” to “exemplary.” This framework is complex and potentially not easy for practitioners to use. However, it provides foundational “whats” and “hows” to accomplish equity-driven leadership and has the potential to guide the CEL 4D revision.

**Kennedy, K. (2019). Centering Equity and Caring in Leadership for Social-Emotional Learning: Toward a Conceptual Framework for Diverse Learners. *Journal of School Leadership*, *29*(6), 473-492.** [**https://doi.org/10.1177/1052684619867469**](https://doi.org/10.1177/1052684619867469)

Kennedy discusses the implementation of what she describes as *affective* change strategies in K-12 settings. Affective strategies are nonacademic reforms such as social-emotional learning (SEL). She conducts a literature review to examine how current literature informs school leaders’ role in implementing SEL. Additionally, she investigates how school leaders conceptualize the implementation of SEL reforms from a caring and equity-focused lens. She relies on Khalifa, Gooden, and Davis’ (2016) culturally responsive school leadership framework to situate her conception of equity. Centering equity in education is concerned with not taking a color-blind or a deficit perspective. She provides 14 leadership practices and 11 leadership interactions school leaders can take to center equity and caring in SEL. This article is about leadership and ensuring students from a myriad of backgrounds are affirmed and that their social and emotional needs are attended to.

Leadership Practices:

1. Attend to self-efficacy and collective efficacy of students and teachers
2. Provide implicit bias training
3. Choose SEL programming that fits with the culture and use an intersectional lens to consider needs
4. Plan programming for LGBTQ youth as developmentally appropriate, beginning in elementary school
5. Include LGBTQ youth in any SEL programming
6. Understand the research on racial, gender, and sexual orientation inequities in lived experiences and SEL outcomes
7. Take a dialogical approach with staff and students to set SEL goals
8. Post values statements affirming SEL as color-conscious and caring in nature
9. Allow for blocks of time for teacher collaboration
10. Create professional development choice and differentiation for teachers including teachers in planning
11. Identify strengths in students and teachers, such as familial or navigational capital; consider updating SEL measures to reflect assets
12. Audit discipline referrals for racial disparities, looking for microaggressions
13. Activate an asset-based approach to SEL curriculum and discipline
14. Use a transformational approach with artifacts to infuse SEL into schooling (e.g., memos, e-mails)

**Rodela, K. C., & Rodriguez-Mojica, C. (2019). Equity Leadership Informed by Community Cultural Wealth: Counterstories of Latinx School Administrators. *Educational Administration Quarterly*,** [**https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X19847513**](https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X19847513)

The authors study how Latinx school leaders define and operationalize equitable leadership. They used LatCrit theory of counterstorytelling to see how these leaders drew on their community cultural wealth to inform equitable leadership practices. The study found that these administrators used their lived experiences as people of color to inform how they led for equity and sought to dismantle systems of oppression. Findings from this article revealed that many of the leaders viewed equity as something that is specific and addresses systemic forms of racism, xenophobia, or deficit ideologies about families and communities. This is different from more general equity statements about “success for all.” These principals defined equity as responsive to people's culture, language, and identities. One of the participants noted that leading for equity meant being clear and specific about what equity means and looks like. Participants in the study noted the challenges they faced when trying to lead for equity, mainly between the leaders’ visions of equity and their local White contexts. *“They [princials] all described how ideas of equity swirled in their districts, but often appeared to focus on broader ideas of ‘all students’ (Kruse et al., 2018) and were not focused on systemic injustices, deficit ideologies about low-income students and families of color, or core practices of instructional leadership or relationship building”* (p. 26).

**Santamaría, L. J. (2014). Critical Change for the Greater Good. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *50*(3), 347–391.** [**https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X13505287**](https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X13505287)

Santamaría asserts the importance of learning from leaders of color about how their lived experiences of fighting oppression shape their work as educators and leaders. The author holds up this form of leadership practice as a model of praxis that results in educational equity. The author draws on CRT in education, multicultural education and critical multiculturalism, culturally relevant leadership, community leadership, and theories of identity within educational leadership to develop her concept of “applied critical leadership” (ACL).  Santamaría names the characteristics of ACL:

1. Critical conversations

2. CRT lens

3. Group consensus for decision-making

4. Working to counter stereotype threat

5. Participate in academic discourse to add to the story about underserved populations

6. Honor constituents

7. Leading by example

8. Trust with mainstream

9. Servant leadership

The author illustrates each characteristic with examples from case studies of leaders of color of her own acquaintance.

**Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(4), 558–589.** [**https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X10375609**](https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X10375609)

In this article, Shields traces the development of “transformative leadership” through a historical review of the literature and differentiates this approach from transactional and transformational leadership (Burns, 1978). The author defines the concept, writing, “Transformative leadership begins with questions of justice and democracy; it critiques inequitable practices and offers the promise not only of greater individual achievement but of a better life lived in common with others” (559). Shields critiques the lack of empirical knowledge about this leadership style and pulls data from a larger longitudinal study to present case studies of two principals who demonstrate transformative leadership. The author identifies the following key transformative leadership practices:

1. Balancing critique & promise
2. Effecting deep & equitable change
3. Deconstruction & reconstruction of social/cultural knowledge frameworks that generate inequity
4. Acknowledging power and privilege
5. Emphasizing both private and public good
6. Focusing on liberation, emancipation, democracy, equity, justice
7. Demonstrating moral courage and activism

In a brief mention of instruction, the authors note that careful examination of student data paired with reflection about deficit models of thinking about students led teachers to get rid of "student-punishing" interventions and implement flexible grouping strategies.

 **Empirical Studies**

**McKenzie, K. B., & Scheurich, J. J. (2004). Equity traps: A useful construct for preparing principals to lead schools that are successful with racially diverse students. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *40*(5), 601–632.** [**https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X04268839**](https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X04268839)

This article proposes the concept of “equity traps,” which the authors define as patterns of thinking and working that stop us from moving towards equity, individually or as a system. McKenzie and Scheurich propose that principals can recognize equity traps and work with teachers to interrupt them. The concept of equity traps came from a participatory action research project involving discussions with 8 experienced White educators about their work with students of color. The authors identified the following equity traps and suggested some practices to combat them:

1. *Deficit View* – Leaders emphasize funds of knowledge, reframe discussions to emphasize assets, help educators "see" students and families. They can do these through neighborhood walks, community oral histories, and three-way conferencing.
2. *Racial Erasure* - Leaders can combat colorblind ideologies by leading teachers in learning more about racist constructs through book study or by conducting equity audits together.
3. *Avoidance and Employing "the gaze"* - The gaze refers to Foucault's idea of surveillance for the purpose of controlling behavior. The authors describe how teachers avoid “the gaze” by leaving schools with affluent, White student populations where they might experience greater oversight from parents. Conversely, teachers utilize “the gaze” to keep other teachers in line and to enforce conformity among staff members. Leaders can mitigate detrimental effects of these practices through strategic hiring, by establishing group norms that build in a democratic process to make space for student advocates, and by building collaboration structures that de-privatize practice.
4. *Paralogical Beliefs and Behaviors* - This refers to blaming students for adult behaviors (e.g., “The students’ bad behavior forced me to take away their recess.”). Leaders can work to counter this by setting up visits to other schools so that teachers can see other teachers use successful strategies, using coaches, and developing advocates for equity among teachers.

The authors discuss student experiences in terms of the negative influence of teachers' deficit views and low expectations, which harm to students’ identities as learners. The authors urge educators to forge close relationships with families.

**Palmer, E. L., & Louis, K. S. (2017). Talking about Race: Overcoming Fear in the Process of Change. *Journal of School Leadership*, *27*(4), 581–610.** [**https://doi.org/10.1177/105268461702700405**](https://doi.org/10.1177/105268461702700405)

Palmer and Louis situate their work within the common practice of schools hiring external consultants to run equity and anti-bias training for teachers. They ask, what kinds of changes in practice do we see after teachers and administrators go through trainings where they are supported to intentionally talk about race and racism? The authors draw on Critical Race Theory (CRT) and organizational change theory, taking a grounded theory approach, and report on interview and observational data from a qualitative study involving six schools in three districts that used the same consultant. The authors found, predictably, that fear of being called racist kept White teachers from engaging in discussions about race. Further, they found that the training prompted positive changes in levels of staff trust and collaboration, changes in curriculum and instructional practices meant to support students of color, and changes to school-wide structures.

The authors also report on the unanticipated finding that principals were key in determining the success of these equity training, concluding, “﻿Where the principal went, so went the work” (596). They suggest that principals can act as the bridge between teachers’ desire to teach equitably and their ability to overcome fears and develop more equitable practices. According to their findings, principals use the following practices to support teachers to shift their understandings and practices vis-à-vis race: (1) model vulnerability, (2) create safe spaces, (3) empower shared leadership, and (4) persist over many years.

The authors found that one consequence of strong leadership support for learning about racism and racial equity was that teachers implemented instructional practices to increase accessibility and participation for students of color. These responses included wait time, grading systems based on mastery and learning rather than completion of procedures, using visuals and manipulatives, differentiation, scaffolding, group work, multiple perspectives & reflection, attending to relevance, use of movement, and technology.

**Literature Review**

**Ross, J. A., & Berger, M. J. (2009). Equity and leadership: Research-based strategies for school leaders. *School Leadership and Management*, *29*(5), 463-476.** [**https://doi.org/10.1080/13632430903152310**](https://doi.org/10.1080/13632430903152310)

This literature review investigates equity research on five minoritized groups: special needs students, religious, cultural and racial minorities, groups disadvantaged by socio-economic status, and gender groups (LGBTQIA+). The authors develop sixteen research-based strategies that school leaders can use to increase equity in their schools. The strategies are situated in four domains: curriculum interpretation, instruction, assessment, and community involvement. Ross & Berger found that most principals lead for equity by focusing on compliance with equity policies while others go further than compliance by expressing equity in terms of a moral commitment.

Ross & Berger view educational equity as a pursuit in which educational leaders seek to close achievement gaps. Merely focusing on gaps does not take into account the ways in which structural racism and prejudice have reified and exacerbated inequities.  With that said, they do note that principals need to recognize that schools are situated in a society that is systemically biased in which powerful forces support the existing hierarchy of social groups. This shows some recognition of how bias and racism are systemic and pervasive. The authors discuss how leaders can cultivate environments that contribute to students feeling a sense of safety and belonging (Strategy 4). A strategy they discuss is creating networks of support for minoritized students to make them feel affirmed and validated in their identity. They also outline four strategies (Domain 2) leaders can use to pursue equity. One of them is recognizing bias in special education identification.

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