Getting Explicit About Social Justice in Educational Doctoral Programs in the U.S.: Operationalizing an Elusive Construct in Neoliberal Times

The Journal of Educational Foundations
Vol. 32, No. 1, 2, 3, & 4
2019, pp. 104-123

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Abstract

Through a case study of two doctoral programs situated in the United States, this essay highlights how doctoral programs designed to prepare leaders in K-16 institutions and other contexts can be "framed around questions of equity, ethics, and social justice to bring about solutions to complex problems of practice" (CPED, 2016; Buss, Zambo, Zambo, Perry, & Williams, 2017; Zambo, Buss & Zambo; 2015). More specifically, we argue that programs should be able to clearly and explicitly articulate their distinctive understanding of "social justice" and trace the ways that this understanding is operationalized in particular facets of their program. In

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the following sections, we first offer a brief overview of our educational contexts, our programmatic definitions of social justice, and the ways we put that definition to work in our courses. Importantly, we offer the following as work-in-progress examples to serve as entry points into a larger conversation about operationalizing specific understandings of social justice in education doctorate programs, rather than as exemplars or models.

Introduction

Today's educational context is characterized by an increasingly neoliberal, "corporate" educational reform movement emphasizing accountability and privatization (Porfilio & Ford, 2015), a clamor for "new knowledges" prompted by shifts from a manufacturing to a primarily knowledge economy (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2014), and massive demographic shifts that have changed the makeup of the U.S. student population (Valdés & Castellón, 2011). These factors are responsible, in large, for creating conditions that are expanding the historic, systemic inequalities, which have been continually reproduced by systems of schooling (Bourdieu, 1973). At today's socio-historical moment in the US, there are more children than ever living in poverty, public schools are underfunded, and urban communities are fighting to keep their schools open. Therefore, it is more critical than ever to prepare teachers and leaders to work for social justice in educational settings.

In this conceptual essay, we argue that to more powerfully contribute to the preparation of socially just educators and leaders, educational doctorate programs—both Ed.D. and Ph.D.—must be specific about the ways their programs are "framed around questions of equity, ethics, and social justice to bring about solutions to complex problems of practice" (CPED, 2016; Buss, Zambo, Zambo, Perry, & Williams, 2017; Zambo, Buss & Zambo; 2015). More specifically, we argue that given the socio-political and economic conditions of higher education, programs should be able to clearly and explicitly articulate their distinctive understanding of "social justice" and trace the ways that this understanding is operationalized in particular facets of their program. To contextualize such an endeavor, we provide a case study of own programs, two critical doctoral programs located in the U.S. We believed a qualitative case study approach is best suited to explain how social justice is articulated in two diverse graduate level educational settings. The approach allowed us to detail distinct elements our programs, including course assignments, program supports, and programmatic definition of social justice, along with capturing unique contextual dynamics of associate with each doctoral program, in order to provide an in-depth understanding of social justice in doctoral programs.

In the following sections, we first offer a brief overview of our educational contexts, our programmatic definitions of social justice, and the ways we put that definition to work in our courses. Importantly, we offer the following as work-in-progress examples to serve as entry points into a larger conversation about operationalizing specific understandings of social justice in professional education doctorate programs, rather than as exemplars or models.

Social Justice: Defining and Enacting an Elusive Construct

School leaders are on the front lines of the battle for equitable access for historically marginalized students as well as for ameliorating oppressive practices responsible for unbalanced power relationships in educational institutions (Buss, Zambo, Perry, & Williams, 2017; Ellils, 2016; Hernandez & McKenzie, 2010; Strom & Porfilio, 2017). Accordingly, many scholars have called for increasing attention to be given to the ways educational leaders are prepared to tackle issues of social justice (Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009). However, the term "social justice" is both a term that is used to connote many different meanings as well as a phrase with political consequences (Jean-Marie, Brooks, & Normore, 2009). Indeed, merely using the phrase "social justice" institutionally is a political act. Researchers suggest the term is also fairly new to fields like educational leadership (Shields, 2015; Ellis, 2016). Likewise, its use and operationalization in educational doctorate programs is in a nascent stage.

While studies regarding Ed.D. and Ph.D. programs that include an explicit discussion of a specific social justice stance are difficult to find, inferences may be drawn from research that includes descriptions of programs and their goals. For example, Kutztown University's teacher preparation-focused Ed.D. program, for instance, borrows from Giroux's (1988) notion of 'transformative intellectuals' to construct their social justice orientation. Specifically, they aim for "the empowerment of teachers to facilitate change in their classrooms…[who] seek creative solutions for tackling stifling school and/or district structures and to combat oppressive management pedagogies" (Coates & Sirakkos, 2016, p. 87). The University of Missouri Statewide Collaborative Ed.D. program for educational leaders, describing their recent programmatic restructuring, frames their courses through the lens of critical pedagogy (e.g., Freire, 1993/98) to "promot[e] advocacy, professional reflection, transformative leadership, and ultimately, emancipatory leadership." (Cleaver Simmons & Fellabaum, 2016, p. 119). Without citing specific literature, Northeastern describes its social justice agenda as one that begins with interrogating the self and one's implicit biases and assumptions, and over the course of

the program, moving outward to explore how these manifest in institutions and larger systems to perpetuate inequalities (Lohman & Ewell, 2016). As another example, Fielding University describes developing "scholar activists" who can "gain the knowledge and skills for understanding, evaluating, and changing conditions in the world that are responsible for social/ecological injustices" (Distefano & Tiner-Sewell, 2016, p. 103).

In preparing leaders, a major tension arises between coping with current neoliberal trends, such as the pressures of accountability systems and systematic defunding of public schools, on the one hand, and working to address systemic inequalities on the other. Many programs focus on solving the challenges presented by the former rather than focusing on the latter. As Wakiaga (2016) suggests, educational leadership programs must be able to structure their programs in ways that include an explicit focus on issues of social justice and on preparing leaders with the right knowledge and skills to address these issues in their specific contexts. She notes, "Education that has a social justice component needs to move beyond functionalist and vocationalist perspectives and into a transformative perspective in which learners are prepared for active participation as global citizens" (p. 39).

To do so, we take the position that it is imperative that programs claiming a social justice orientation also examine the ways they are actually enacting that orientation within facets of their programs. Perhaps the most visible connection may be through program curriculum. However, programs that collectively espouse such an orientation do not always ensure that corresponding topics become an explicit part of coursework. For example, in a qualitative study of an Ed.D. program with a social justice focus, Hay & Reedy (2016) found that faculty did not specifically plan their courses around social justice topics, but instead, took an overall constructivist pedagogical approach and expected that student-generated conversation would organically arise. Unfortunately, the approach did not achieve the faculty's desired outcome. Students did not perceive that they gained specific knowledge and skills for tackling inequities in their leadership settings. In contrast, faculty at the University of Missouri collaborated to create and align courses deliberately framed by their programmatic critical pedagogy focus (Cleaver, Simmons & Fellabaum, 2016). From their qualitative evaluation of students' experiences in one of the courses, course participants reported that the course was transformative as well as practical. Another important finding was the benefit of ensuring that the course instructor's pedagogy itself mirrored the critical pedagogy content. The authors contend:

> Traditionally, core classes are isolated from the antiracist or oppressive curriculum in such a manner that students are provided options to judge the relevance and significance of such non-traditional curriculum.

> However, in the case of directly aligning the instructional themes to connect with such themes found in the instruction for organizational analysis, the students were provided a platform to gain more respect for the relevance of the oppressive curriculum. (p. 132)

Other dimensions of programs may not be quite as visible as curriculum, but are nonetheless important to ensure coherence with a social justice orientation. For example, students of color tend to have a more complex doctoral trajectory than their white peers (Felder, Stevenson, & Gasman, 2014; Gildersleeve, Croom, & Vasquez, 2011), and these students are more likely to feel isolated or excluded in their classes (Gildersleeve, et al., 2011). As a result, they often take longer to complete their studies and/or drop out (Gardner & Holley, 2011). Thus, social-justice focused programs should ensure that non-traditional doctoral students have additional supports, such as mentoring (Hall & Burns, 2009). Mentoring not only supports students' academic success, but also socializes them into the culture of doctoral studies, which encompasses "coded systems of behavior [such as]…building relationships with faculty, establishing a research agenda …and development of one's academic voice" (Felder et al. 2014, p. 36).

Defining Social Justice Programmatically

California State University East Bay's Ed.D. Educational Leadership doctoral program takes an explicitly critical understanding of social justice, maintaining that education for social justice means interrupting systems and structures that perpetuate and expand oppressions in our society, particularly for historically marginalized populations of students. The program was established in 2008. It is situated in a public regional university on the pacific coast of the United States. The university itself, which is classified as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and an Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI), is one of the most diverse in the nation (California State University East Bay, 2015).

The Ed.D. program prepares students to take leadership positions in K-16 education institutions as well as institutions that focus on improving the quality of life of students. For instance, recent graduates of the program include superintendents, schoolteachers, social workers, university administrators, and higher education faculty. The program reflects the diversity of the rest of the campus. Students in the last several cohorts identify as Latino, Black, Asian, and Middle Eastern, while about 1/3 of students identify at White. Since most of the students have dealt with institutional forms of oppression in schools and other social contexts, they are generally open to learn how scholars and leaders

conceptualize social justice, how scholars engage in research with a social-justice orientation and how leaders promulgate social justice inside and outside of educational institutions.

The programmatic understanding of social justice is informed by several intellectual fields dedicated to understanding what is responsible for oppression, power differentials, and inequalities in schools and society. Some of the sub-disciplines informing the program include transformative leadership (Shields, 2015), critical social theor(ies) (Calhoun, 1995) and critical pedagog(ies) (Freire, 1993/8; Giroux, 1988; hooks, 1994).

Critical pedagogy originated from the intellectual work generated by Frankfurt School critical social theorists in Germany during the early 1920s (Darder, Baltadano, & Torres, 2009). These theorists, including Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Jürgen Habermas, collectively unpacked the role that institutions, culture, knowledge, language and desire played in giving rise to authoritarian politics, global conflicts, oppression, and inequality in nascent industrialized societies and the territories colonized by Western imperial powers (Giroux, 2009). They also offered insights regarding how to develop alternative social arrangements where freedom, joy and love may flourish. In the 1960s, Paulo Freire's cultural and intellectual work built upon the ideas of the Frankfurt School. His work (e.g., Freire 1970, 1985, 1998) provided needed guideposts for educators to guide students and citizens to understand the factors and conditions responsible for oppression in schools and society as well as to recognize the possibilities for building anti-oppressive schools and social systems. Among his noted accomplishments, Freire created literacy campaigns across Latin America in the 1960s with poor, illiterate peasants dealing with unjust social conditions in their community, working collaboratively to create critical consciousness (Gibson, 2007).

Over the past several decades, numerous critical scholars and educators across the globe have embraced Freire's work because of its overt stance towards social justice and transformation. However, many critical pedagogues disagree about what they consider to be the sources of unbalanced power relationships and oppression in schools and other social contexts. (Malott & Porfilio, 2011). Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009). Consequently, critical pedagogy now consists of insights from several intellectual fields, including feminist studies, environmental studies, critical race theory, cultural studies, and Indigenous studies (Porfilio & Ford, 2015; Darder, Baltodanto, Torres, 2009; McLaren & Kincheloe, 2007). Although there are some commonalities, each of these traditions provides a different perspective regarding what gives rise to social maladies, such as racism, sexism, environmental degradation, classism, homophobia, and ableism, and offers its view of the steps necessary to

"remake schools on the ideal of justice, equity, and democracy" (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009, p.3).

Over the past two decades, several scholars, such as Kathleen M. Brown, Michael Dantley, Kathryn Bell McKenzie, and Carolyn Shields, have laid the groundwork for reconceptualizing the nature of leadership in the preparation of educational leaders. Rather than viewing leadership merely by the roles associated with those who hold specific leadership positions or the traits or qualities needed to succeed in these positions, the aforementioned scholars have made it clear that educational leadership must be viewed as a transformative cultural practice. Leadership must be predicated on improving the social world as well as the academic achievement of students, especially for students who encounter oppression inside and outside of classrooms (Brown, 2006; Dantley & Green, 2015; McKenzie, Skrla, Scheurich, 2006; Shields, 2015). To ensure school leaders generate the knowledge, skills, courage, and dispositions necessary to challenge unjust policies, practices, and arrangements in schools and other contexts, scholars who embrace a transformative approach to leadership have argued a social justice orientation must be woven into the fabric of educational leadership curriculum, pedagogy, programs and policies (Brown, 2006, p. 78).

Washington State University's Ph.D. in Cultural Studies and Social Thought in Education (CSSTE) focuses dually on issues of social justice and sustainability, and its understanding of social and environmental justice is informed by diverse array of theoretical traditions. The programs commitment to critical perspectives in education are cleared stated in their handbook (2019) where the missions reads:

> The Cultural Studies and Social Thought in Education Ph.D. program addresses issues of culture and power as they play out in contemporary and historical contexts of education and schooling. We seek to develop scholars and practitioners who will stimulate positive change in educational institutions and the communities that they serve. (p. 5)

Within the program there are critical faculty that draw from the field of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1993,1998; hooks, 1994; McLaren, 2006; Darder, 2016) and ecocritical pedagogical frameworks (Bowers, 1993, 2001; Gruenewald, 2003; Kahn, 2010; Martusewicz, Edmundson, & Lupinacci 2015; Lupinacci & Happel-Parkins, 2015; 2016). Additionally, diverse facu;lty in the college draw from an array of critical theoretical frameworks to design and offer courses that provide students with the experiential graduate studies at the intersections of theory and practice. The CSSTE orogram has unique student learning objectives that ensure criticality in the classroom and community and are clearly outlined in the programs handbook (CSSTE Program Faculty, 2019) which states:

"After completing the CSSTE Doctoral Degree Program students will demonstrate an understanding and valuing of diversity and social justice through his/her/their scholarly work" (p. 5). The CSSTE program on average has on in recent years approximately 30 active doctoral students and/or candidates comprised of a majority of underrepresented scholars in higher education. The program is deeply committed to valuing diversity and practicing such commitments in its admission, teaching, advising, and mentoring through into careers. This kind of critical work is often called into question in recent political times and the College's conceptual framework has been crucial as a document with strong influence on administrative decisions.

The College of Education's conceptual framework expresses as one of its core values a commitment to diversity and importance of interrupting the status quo systems of privilege and power. A critical contingency of faculty in the program strives to recognize that 21st century challenges of social justice and sustainability require a strong commitment to understanding and interrupting the complex relationships that constitute, and are constituted by, dominant discourses and discursive practices of Modernity in schools and society. Furthermore, it is essential that such interruptions be intricately and intimately intertwined with our own work in relationship to the tasks we ask of our students and future students. The program has an ecocritical approach committed to the role of educational leaders being scholar-activists and researchers committed to social justice and sustainability in education. Furthermore, specific ecocritical courses require students to address how schools, and the associated teaching and learning, are shaped by systems of exploitation, violence, and a refusal to understand and embrace mutuality and interdependence (Lupinacci & Happel-Parkins, 2015). To respond to the unjust suffering reproduced and experienced our current social, economic, and environmental contexts, ecocritical educators, and educational leaders, have the responsibility to examine and address how relationships in schools create, support, and sustain unjust social suffering and environmental degradation (Lupinacci, 2017). When faced with such a challenge, ecocritical educators, and leaders, ask: How is it that exploitation, and the associated unjust social suffering and environmental degradation, is rationalized, justified, and/or ignored? Furthermore, what role can, and do, our schools play toward alleviating and eliminating such conditions? In an attempt to address these questions, this growing critical contingency associated with program 2 takes the position that we, as scholar–activist educators, must put to work an ecocritical approach to inequities for all in education.

The CSSTE Ph.D. program is designed for diverse students from around the world and region to attend year-round courses delivered through a variety of means that primarily consist of in person on-campus

meetings, and the occasional use of video conferencing to connect groups of students to course offered by faculty on other campuses and for students whose research and activism places them in remote locations. Moreover, each group of students—which are comprised of an intentional selection of students with diverse and critical perspectives, hopes, dreams, and desires to see education radically re-envisioned and bring to the program leadership from diverse backgrounds and professional positions.

Over the course of the four-year program, students take required courses in Social Foundations, Research, and then electives to support their individual research interests. Students then fill out their programs with specialized electives and continue on to preliminary exams and the dissertation. A typical program of study for students consists of 15 credits in Foundations courses, which consist of the five of the following three credit courses: Cultural Studies in Education; Social Theory in Education; Gender Power, and Education; and Race, Identity, and Representation. They take five of the following three credit courses for Research: Epistemology and Inquiry in Educational Research, Principles of Doctoral Research; Qualitative Methods; and Quantitative Methods. Students are also required to take 9 credits of course electives (Philosophy of Education; Social Foundations of Education; Environment, Culture, and Education; Place-based Education; Youth Cultures in Education; Curriculum Theory; Globalization and Identity in Education; and Multicultural Education in a Global Society) as well as from advanced research methods courses (Discourse Analysis, Critical Ethnography, Arts-based Research, and Single Subject Design). These courses are all regularly offered and generally full because of how much they draw an interest from other education graduate programs like human development, sociology, English, rhetoric and composition, and communications students.

Operationalizing Social Justice

Articulating a clear definition of social justice in education is only a beginning to help students promulgate a vision of social justice in their work as leaders in and beyond educational institutions. The important work lies in putting that definition to work through different program facets. For example, in relationship to its understanding of social justice, Washington State University's Ph.D. program engages a combination of coursework and field experience in connection with inquiry practices of a variety of research methods that often culminate to action research. Expressing the goal of the program in the handbook, the program committee states: "The ultimate goal is to prepare educational leaders who work together toward the goals of educational and institutional improvement and social justice" (Educational Leadership Program

Committee, 2015 p. 9). Further, in the breakdown of outcomes two of the five outcomes explicitly express a commitment to social justice. These include:

> (a) Identifying and analyzing the theories, research, and policies, related to the study of K-12 educational/teacher leadership: ethics and social justice; inquiry; policy; and leadership development; and (b) Articulating core values and modeling the guiding principles of the profession including: commitment to social justice; understanding of ethical responsibilities of leadership; effective and respectful interaction with others of similar and diverse cultures, values, and perspectives; commitment to school improvement and a positive impact on student learning (Educational Leadership Program Committee, p. 9)

Additionally, the College of Education associated with the Ph.D. program at Washington State University (2009) states:

> The College of Education contributes to the theory and practice of the broad field of education, and dedicates itself to understanding and respecting learners in diverse cultural contexts. We facilitate engaged learning and ethical leadership in schools and clinical settings. We seek collaboration with diverse constituencies, recognizing our local and global responsibilities to communities, environments, and future generations. (p. 4)

Visually represented on the walls of the classrooms and in every syllabi and program handbook is a shortened graphic illustration of the statement—"Collaboration with diverse communities of learners in cultural context, engaged learning with meaning and purpose, and ethical leadership toward a sustainable and just future." This statement organizes the three concepts of learners, learning, and leadership in a Venn diagram (see Figure 1), and also serves as a powerful tool for connecting students and teachers with the college's commitment to developing scholarly practitioners through signature pedagogy, inquiry as practice, and problems of practice.

These guiding frameworks play a large role in holding us, as ethical leaders in education, accountable to social justice and sustainability. Seeing social justice and sustainability as complex, but interconnected challenges for both current and future generations, we engage through coursework and the designing and conducting collaborative research in a self-reflexive ecocritical pedagogical process. This process is framed primarily by engaging in the process of recognizing the relationship between language, culture, knowledge, and power specifically in relationship to any set of diverse problems of practice. In our conceptualization of this particular graduate program at the institution associated with the doctoral program at Washington State University, we differentiate it from more traditional approaches to educational doctoral

coursework that tends to separate teachers from administrators. The CSSTE Ph.D. envisions the classrooms as collaborative spaces where local, national, and international problems of practice are not only identified and examined, but also proposed solutions are discussed across traditional professional barriers. This program fosters a space to develop a very different kind of scholar activist and educational leader—leaders that take social justice and sustainability very seriously and that are focused on all levels of public education supporting such initiatives.

Despite the college's larger commitment to social justice and sustainability, keeping a strong emphasis on social justice and sustainability waivers from course to course. Responding to the difficulty of getting explicit about these goals in all program courses; a group of faculty commit to teaching in the program's summer institute where they are able to work together closely and intensely with students toward addressing how scholar-practitioner research can and ought to be in support of social justice and sustainability. In theory, the college's conceptual framework and CPED's definition of the educational doctorate are considered as influential to all of the courses and if not in each course then at a multitude of points through a student's program.

One illustration of this emphasis can be found in a course elective on Adult Learning and Professional Development. Following a critical and ethical autoethnography assignment where students reflect on their roles in their workplace and their own professional learning as adult learners,

Figure 1
WSU College's Conceptual Framework. (WSU College of Education Faculty; 2009, p. 3)

the students are required to do a critical needs assessment of their schools or community organization. As part of learning to generate professional development strategies and plans for addressing current problems of practice in educational or other organizational settings, the students work collaboratively with one another, members of their community, and with their instructors to identify needs and critically examine the root causes of those needs. Additionally, while students are engaged in identifying critical needs in their community they are concurrently learning about leadership mindsets (Kaser & Halbert; 2009) and how to support communities of adult learners and the complexities of changing mindsets (Kegan & Lahey, 2001). The final project is a professional development plan that meets the needs of a diverse array of adult learners and directly addresses a need connected to social justice and sustainability and emerges from working closely to include listening to and partnering with their broader school and surrounding community.

Following two years of course work in which students take courses as previously described, Adult Learning students meet in a special summer course themed around social justice and sustainability with connected course work linked to a shared reading of and responding to an annual report on the state of educational policy in the U.S. and addressing closing the opportunity gaps in public schools, ending the school-to-prison pipeline, recognizing and valuing diverse cultures, abilities, and identities in schools and communities, and taking informed action with regard to climate change. From such experiences we are seeing practitioner research on addressing aspects of school discipline programs, inclusive education for LGBTQ and students with disabilities, culturally relevant pedagogy, critically examining STEM curriculum, place-based education, land-based education, and decolonizing and indigenizing education. All of which students must propose and defend their research projects by including how their work not only meets scholarly criteria for strong research and addresses a gap in educational research, but also every student must draw from previous coursework and ethically addresses how their research responds—often critically—to federal, state, and local policy and contributes toward leadership for social justice.

The program faculty in the committee's current configuration, and program leadership, is at the moment working to curriculum map the courses with a specific emphasis on the role each course not only play in the scope and sequence of the program but also toward the development of scholar-activist practitioners committed to social justice and sustainability. The hope is that through this process emerging from a self and group examination of understanding of the program's objectives in relationship to CPED and the college's conceptual framework, there will be a clearer understanding of a signature pedagogy and inquiry

process anchored in addressing problems of practice toward supporting social justice and sustainability. At the current moment, this work is in process and leaning toward more Arts-based Action Research models that involve community engagement and methods drawing heavily from Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) influencing both the pedagogy in the courses taught and the connected inquiry projects and research dissertations.

Within the Educational Leadership for Social Justice program at CSU East Bay, critical understandings of social justice also run throughout the coursework. For example, early in the doctoral program, students enroll in Purposes of Leadership, where they learn various theories related to leadership and are required to outline specifically how aspects of transformative leadership can inform their practices in schools. They also take Leadership for Equity I, where they learn why difference in schools and society is linked to oppression and inequalities, and build their understanding of characteristics of socially just schools and societies. Building on this knowledge, they continue to Leadership for Equity II, where students have the opportunity to examine insights from various critical theories, including feminist theory, queer theory, critical race theory, and Marxist theory in order to better understand pressing problems facing schools, youth, and society (Case, 1990; Leonardo, 2013; Mouffe, 2014; Pinar, 2012)

In these courses, we offer active opportunities to engage with and enact critically-oriented ideas of social justice. For example, in Leadership for Equity I, a key idea is that to become leaders who are equipped to eliminate oppression and social justice in schools and society, individuals must first begin to locate themselves as social beings—they must know where they come from, know why they believe what they believe, and be able to draw lines to the past that explain their present day views. To do so, we assign students to develop critical stories of themselves, or critical autoethnographies, in which they reflect on how their race, class, gender, sexuality, class status, political identity, and so on have affected them as students, educators and community members. As a final product, students create a digital story that communicates specific conversations, experiences, and memories, instances, events and interactions that have shaped their identities and worldviews. They then engage with each other's digital stories. This assignment provides the opportunity to analyze how systems of power have impacted their lives and their cohort members, as well as raises their awareness of ways power imbalances, injustice, inequalities and oppression dominate social life in schools and in the wider society.

We also argue that understandings of social justice must be aligned with the research methodologies that are taught in doctoral programs. In

the Educational Leadership Social Justice Ed.D. program, the majority of our students are people of color; thus, we take as a starting point the understanding that, as practitioners of color, our students' voices have been doubly marginalized in the educational research literature. Accordingly, we emphasize the personal as political, encouraging students to explore methodologies such as self- study and autoethnography, and encouraging writing from a first-person perspective. In research classes, we problematize 'traditional' methods for seeking of a single truth at the expense of others, and the way the "distant researcher" myth of objectivity has allowed the (usually white male) researcher to interpret the story of the "other" without claiming responsibility for that interpretation. We also highlight participatory approaches and critical, feminist, queer, and indigenous methodological perspectives.

Finally, we propose that a doctoral program's understanding of social justice must also be carried through to the supports that are offered its "non-traditional" doctoral students—such as students of color, first generation college graduates, high-poverty students, and English language learners (categories that, of course, overlap). One prominent example concerns that of writing supports. Across doctoral programs, the issue of academic writing tends to surface—yet academic writing is not normally included as an explicit part of the doctoral curriculum. Students are expected to arrive with advanced academic literacy skills, and those that have not had prior access to learning this privileged, elite form of language are at a major disadvantage. As such, writing at the doctoral level becomes a social justice issue. At CSU East Bay, we adopt a sociocultural view of student development (Vygotsky, 1978; Lave & Wenger, 1991) rather than expecting them to come in with particular skills, we assume they need to be apprenticed into academic writing at the doctoral level. We then embed direct teaching and practice of academic language in coursework, taking a systemic functional linguistics (SFL) view of teaching writing (Halliday, 1993) that focuses on academic writing as genre (Derewianka, 2012), and explicitly teaching patterns of language commonly used in the genre (while still problematizing the language of power in academia).

For example, one of the most common skills students struggle with in academic writing is their use of direct quotations from other authors. Using an SFL approach, Katie designed a workshop that scaffolds student understanding of the purposes of using quotes in doctoral-level writing and the patterns of language students can use to appropriately discuss the quotes. In the workshop, Katie first facilitates a conversation about the notion of whose voice should be heard in doctoral level writing, helping students to talk through some of the anxieties associated with presenting one's own ideas and drawing on the literature to support

them (rather than over-relying on the words of other scholars to carry the paper). They then delve into the multiple purposes of direct quotes, examining examples from articles with which they are familiar. As a next step, the class works in pairs to analyze the linguistic choices the authors of these examples made to use the quote to demonstrate their point, commenting on the way the quote was introduced and explained by the author, and connected to the point s/he was making. After co-constructing understanding through these multiple examples, students then are invited to find a quote they have used in a recent paper and conduct a metalinguistic analysis of the way they used the quote, reflecting on the following questions: what is the purpose of the quote? How is the quote introduced? How is the significance of the quote indicated to the reader? How is the quote connected to the larger point of the paragraph/section?

Discussion

Although in the preceding pages we have captured why there is the immediate need for education leadership programs to operationalize social justice for its students, for the academic community, and for stakeholders impacted by leaders who graduate from leadership programs as well as provided insight for embedding a social-justice orientation in two educational leadership programs, we are cognizant that multiple tensions surface when faculty members and directors of educational leadership programs articulate their social justice mission and enact it all facets of their programs (Strom, Porfilio, Lupinacci, 2017; Hernandez & McKenzie, 2010). For instance, despite laying bare the theoretical foundation of how we operationalize social justice in our doctoral program at CSU East Bay, some individual doctoral faculty members hold a spectrum of beliefs on what the term "social justice" means and how it should be enacted in faculty practice. For example, while CSU East Bay takes an explicitly critical stance that recognizes the urgent need for equity work for historically marginalized populations, a few faculty members tend to take a more equality-oriented stance, or the view that "All students deserve a quality education." Moreover, since some of our full-time and part-time faculty were never exposed to connecting leadership, research, teaching, and learning to eliminating power balances, discrimination and injustices in schools and society, we have begun to engage in conversations as to why educators and leaders need to engage inquiry to understand and dismantle oppression as well as to attend to social justice and academic achievement in educational settings (Shields, 2015). We have also encouraged the same faculty to attend educational conferences so as to join us in the larger conversation about operationalizing specific

understandings of social justice in professional education doctorate programs.

The CSSTE Ph.D. at Washington State University is currently faced with similar challenges as CSU East Bay's Ed.D. program. At Washington State University, we have found that by working intentionally to build community and consistency in the faculty affiliated with the program's teaching and advising needs the necessary teaming is in place for stronger collaboration toward a more cohesive program. While the program committee has begun to engage in structured curriculum mapping sessions that involved faculty discussing common scenarios that offer students the opportunity to collaboratively learn through addressing some common problems of practice in the State of Washington's education system, the process is slow and spread out over the course of an entire academic school year into meetings scheduled that inevitably cannot accommodate all the faculty schedules. However, it is important to note that the sessions have brought faculty together to discuss how they address challenges of social justice and sustainability in their courses. Simultaneously, the efforts to curriculum map and request that instructors align their coursework and assignments to problems of practice that directly address and contribute to the development of ethical leaders working to support social justice and sustainability, have brought up tensions around some of the faculty feeling as though their "academic freedom" is being infringed upon.

Finally, for equity-focused educational doctorate programs, developing an explicit definition of social justice and tracing the ways that understanding materializes in coursework and other program facets is not the end goal, but is a continual process that must be combined with an initiative to think differently about teaching, learning, and leading. As the world becomes more complex, we also need to evolve our thinking about ideas like education, social justice, and leadership to be equal to the task of problem-solving within those complexities. Unfortunately, many of the thinking patterns characterizing current thinking in educational leadership, even those advocating for social justice, are often characterized by the same linear, dualistic, rational, individualistic, and anthropocentric logic patterns that have dominated western thought for the past 400 years (Lupinacci, 2017; Strom & Porfilio, 2017). This type of thought is the same that we have critiqued earlier in this paper, the type of thinking that, while coming from a particular geo-political location (that of the White, European, Christian, hetero male; Braidotti, 2013), pretends to be from everywhere and nowhere (Barad, 2007; Haraway, 1988), so that those who do not espouse this thought are "othered" and constructed as less than or inhuman. This thought is not only inadequate for dealing with a multiplistic, mobile, materially and discursively constructed reality, but

also contributes to the perpetuation of White supremacy (Strom & Porfilio, 2017). Instead, we need to experiment with thinking and practices that break from these entrenched patterns, to develop forms of thought that are grounded and accountable to situated knowledge and ways of knowing; that expose the always already political nature of our local realities; that value difference as positive and productive; and that cast the world not as populated by individual, agentic actors, but as assemblages of a range of heterogenous human and non-human elements that collectively create the universe (Braidotti, 2013).

In closing, we acknowledge that using the term "social justice" in explicit ways and articulating its operationalization programmatically is a political act that could result in reprisal at the faculty or institutional level. Recently, we spoke with directors at two different institutions who were dealing with the tension of creating a social justice-focused program while not being allowed to use the actual terminology. Yet, we would point out that we are always already political. The political precedes us. Whether or not we choose to take action construed as political, we are contributing to a particular educational agenda—if we choose to believe that we are neutral or to merely use "social justice" as a buzzword, we are participating in the perpetuation of the status quo, which in turn maintains and expands massive inequalities, especially for groups of students historically marginalized in the U.S. and elsewhere. Instead, we argue that educational doctoral programs must gather the courage to actually use the term, explicitly define it, connect it to program facets, and continually evolve connected thinking and practice. Indeed, it is imperative if we are to lead fundamental change in policy, practice, and research to create schools and societies free from oppression, hate, and inequality.

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