Leaders Changing How They Act by Changing How They Think: Applying Principles of an Anti-Racist Principal Preparation Program

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Systemic racism and the impending inequities in schooling persist, making it apparent the concept of race still matters when it comes to educational leadership. In response, this chapter examines linkages between principal preparation programs, the orientations of the aspiring leaders enrolled within them, and the potential for program graduates to facilitate institutional change for racial equity. The concept of anti-racist leadership is explored to better understand how principal preparation programs can better prepare aspiring leaders to address how race, power, and individual, institutional, and cultural racism impact beliefs, structures, and outcomes for students of color. This preparation is accomplished by examining how a principal preparation program, adopting an anti-racist curriculum, further develops the racial consciousness of its predominantly White student cohort. The anti-racist curriculum made the impact of race more salient to students and had an impact on their leadership beliefs, decisions, and actions once they served in school leadership positions.

Theoharis (2007) describes social justice leaders as those who "make issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions in the United States central to their advocacy, leadership practice, and vision" (p. 223). Given the overwhelming evidence regarding the significance of race in schooling (see Gooden, Davis, & Micheaux, 2015), it is crucial that considerations of race be chief among the concerns of social justice leaders. Building upon Rost's (1991, p. 102) definition of leadership as "an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes," we offer that anti-racist school leaders are those who not only advocate for children of color but also empower others to acknowledge, interrupt, and dismantle racism. We argue that leadership preparation programs must assume responsibility for influencing the general or lasting direction of thought, inclination, or interest of aspiring school leaders (henceforth *orientations*). That said, little research has been done to understand how leadership preparation programs can influence orientations, and in turn, support the development of anti-racist leaders. Given that preparedness is a natural conduit to change (Dinham, Aubusson, & Brady, 2008; Gold, 2003), and in accordance with the yearbook theme of facilitating institutional change for racial equity, we explore the impact of an anti-racist leadership preparation program on the orientations of its graduates and their experiences with facilitating institutional change for equity.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: 1) to describe the features of a particular leadership preparation program designed with an explicit focus on the principles of anti-racist leadership and social justice, and 2) to explore how such a program might influence the social justice and anti-racist leadership orientations of its students, and in turn, how these orientations might impact the institutional settings within which the students are employed. We begin this chapter with a brief review of the relevant literature on race, racism, and anti-racist leadership. We describe the logic model and programmatic features of the leadership preparation program at the heart of the study. Following that, we provide details on the qualitative method applied to execute the study. After a review of findings, we then conclude the chapter with a discussion addressing the role of preparation programs in facilitating educational change.

Before moving on, it is worth noting that for a period of time, all authors were simultaneously and directly affiliated with the preparation program examined in this chapter. These affiliations included roles as program faculty, graduate assistants, and full-time researchers. Despite the variation in our current institutional affiliations and responsibilities, we sometimes employ first-person plural identifiers such as "we" and "our" when describing aspects of the preparation program in this chapter. In addition to its usefulness in

avoiding excessive use of passive voice, we do this to a) acknowledge our shared history in the administration of the program, and b) acknowledge our engagement in a form of collective self-study. The present chapter is an early product of an ongoing effort to examine and chronicle the work of the program; it represents an initial exploration of the program's influence on candidates' orientations and actions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

RACISM

Because racial distinctions are not genetically discrete, reliably measured, or scientifically meaningful (Smedley & Smedley, 2005), we regard race as a sociopolitical construction, albeit a powerful one. The American Anthropological Association (1998) in its statement on race states: "physical variations in the human species have no meaning except the social ones that humans put on them" (p. 1). The most pernicious result of these social meanings provides the basis for racist ideologies. Those beliefs, often subconsciously, influence the orientations of members of society, including school leaders.

However, the widely held belief that racism exists only at the individual or interpersonal level is highly problematic when it comes to comprehending the salience of race in education and its tangible impact on beliefs that extend to outcomes. The 2016 presidential election and subsequent race-based events caused many to be critical of President Trump who, using an interpersonal approach, sympathized with White supremacists and Nazis as "some good people." He then noted that there were bad people "on many sides." Though he was heavily criticized, such overt acts of racial prejudice are less commonly accepted in modern society, particularly in schools. In fact, the absence of such acts is an essential aspect of institutionalized and systemic racism, which can obscure the ways in which racism manifests in schools and causes real harm, often at the hands of leaders.

Building upon the work of Wellman (1993), Tatum (2003) defines racism as a system of privilege and advantages based on race including "cultural messages and institutional policies and practices as well as the beliefs and actions of individuals" (p. 7). Hence, racism is multilayered, not just interpersonally considered and acted upon. It is also faceless at times within structures, but paradoxically, experienced and perpetuated by individuals within organizations and institutions. Broadly, in America, these privileges and advantages primarily benefit White people but are often invisible to them. Because the overwhelming majority of educators

in America are White, the acknowledgment and extinguishing of systemic racism necessarily requires their action. In other words, racism is not just the problem of people of color.

Critical race theorists concur with a systemic view of racism and hold that it is an ingrained, pervasive element of our society (Bell, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 2013). Under this belief, it would then follow that racism is as ingrained in our schools: a notion supported by several works in education (e.g., Gooden, 2012; Ishimaru, 2013; Pollock, 2008; Smith, 2016). Therefore, school leaders committed to ensuring their campuses are just and equitable environments must be critically conscious of the ways in which racism can manifest in schooling.

ANTI-RACISM

In the leadership preparation program under study in the present chapter, all of the affiliated personnel, through their teaching and research, advocate for the aforementioned elements of social justice. The program is different from many others due to its specific focus on race as both a starting point and an enveloping framework for social justice leadership. We call on Singleton and Linton (2006) for their description of anti-racism:

> Conscious and deliberate efforts to challenge the impact and perpetuation of institutional White racial power, presence, and privilege … anti-racism means working toward a realization of the ideals that the United States professes are true for all citizens. Specifically, anti-racism means that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are guaranteed to people of color as well as White people. (pp. 45–46)

We draw special attention to Singleton and Linton's mention of conscious and deliberate effort (a notion in line with our concept of orientations). To be anti-racist requires action, not mere thought. For thought without action only contributes to the perpetuation of racism (Tatum, 1992; Wellman, 1993).

Young and Laible (2000) discuss the role of anti-racism in education. They cite three core elements: 1) a focus on the system of White racial dominance, 2) an understanding of systems of dominance and how individuals and institutions perpetuate this dominance, and 3) a commitment to preparing individuals to take action against White racism. In order to do this kind of work, Young and Laible concur with Derman-Sparks and Phillips (1997) in their suggestion that educators wishing to become anti-racists should adopt a new identity. Developing

an anti-racist identity requires reflecting deeply upon one's own racial identity, becoming a scholar of race and racism, seeking out partnerships and connections with members of oppressed groups, and being actively anti-racist in one's personal and professional life (Young & Laible, 2000, p. 391). With regards to being active, Singleton and Linton (2006) remind us that there is no gray area in anti-racist work. In other words, there is no such thing as non-racism. As the prefix embedded in the term suggests, anti-racism is about opposition to racism. One either contributes, passively or actively, to systems of racism and privilege, or one takes action to reveal these systems and disrupt them. Derman-Sparks and Phillips (1997) put it this way:

> Since all individuals who live in a racist system are enmeshed in its relationships, this means that all are responsible for its perpetuation or transformation. There are no bystanders and neutral observers: Each person is either part of the problem or part of the solution. (p. 24)

Drawing further from Derman-Sparks and Phillips (1997), we hold that anti-racist consciousness and behavior requires self-awareness, knowledge, and skills undergirded by developed confidence, patience, and persistence carefully cultivated and deployed to challenge, interrupt, modify, erode, and eventually eliminate any and all manifestations of racism within one's sphere of influence (p. 3). The aim of the leadership preparation program under study is to instill in its students the requisite orientations to pursue anti-racist leadership. In the next section, we describe the logic model that guides the program, as well as some of the key features that we believe act as mechanisms for imbuing anti-racist orientations.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREPARATION PROGRAM UNDER STUDY

Within this section we: a) describe the preparation program with specific attention to what distinguishes it as anti-racist, and b) explore the sequence of influence of the program's anti-racist theory of action approximated by the program's logic model. To start, we outline the key stages of the initial courses in the program, and subsequently highlight properties of the program that demonstrate its commitment anti-racist leadership. We then describe the program's overall mission and design, detailing the specific components and linkages of the logic model and describe how it has informed the design of our study.

THEORY OF *ANTI-RACIST* ACTION AND PROGRAM MISSION

Derman-Sparks and Phillips (1997) discuss the chronological progression of an anti-racism education course as having four stages—conflict, disequilibrium, transformation, and activism (p. 33). Two summer courses are required at the start of the program and represent the beginning of students' journey into anti-racist leadership. Progression through these courses approximates Derman-Sparks and Phillips' four stages, though not necessarily in a linear order. The logic model of the preparation program, represented in Figure 1, interprets these four stages as 1) gaining (and integrating) knowledge, 2) examining self, 3) (re)envisioning the world, and finally, 4) taking anti-racist action. While the logic model represents these areas as discrete, their boundaries are in fact permeable.
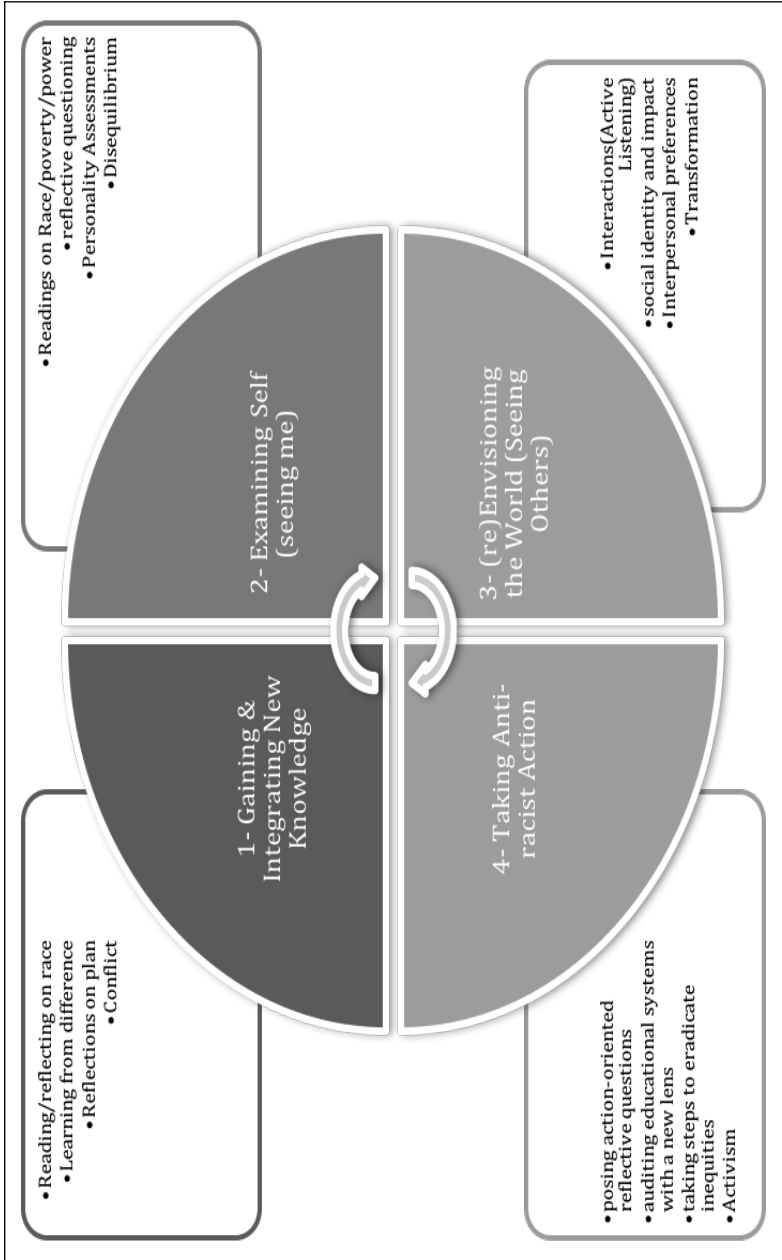
The mission of the 2-year principal preparation program is to develop collaborative, data-savvy, and reflective instructional leaders who are focused on increasing student achievement for all children, especially those who have been marginalized because of race, culture, class, language, gender, sexual orientation, religion and/or ability. The program aims to prepare teacher leaders to become transformative building leaders who will embrace principles of anti-racist leadership as a starting point for developing a social justice lens for the purpose of taking transformative action. This mission, just as it is worded here, is shared with prospective students prior to their application for program entry, and is continually reinforced through the program's curriculum and delivery.

PROGRAM DESIGN

The general design of the preparation program was informed by the literature on what Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, and Cohen (2007), Orr (2011), and Orr and Orphanos (2011) define as exemplary leadership preparation programs. These features include a rigorous recruitment and selection process, the use of cohorts, meaningful fieldwork, quality curriculum, substantial internship experiences, mentoring, and district partnerships.

Through word of mouth, tapping (Myung, Loeb, & Horng, 2011), email blasts, and targeted postal mailings, potential students for the program are recruited primarily from the school districts surrounding the university. The selection process features a performance-based "assessment center" in which applicants are interviewed, role-play a teacher observation feedback session in the role of supervisor, and conduct a data analysis presentation. All students enter the program in small, lockstep (all classes taken together and in same sequence) cohorts of 15 to 20 pupils. The

Figure 1. Program logic model

- Readings on Race/poverty/power
  - reflective questioning
  - Personality Assessments
  - Disequilibrium

- Interactions(Active Listening)
  - social identity and impact
  - Interpersonal preferences
  - Transformation

2- Examining Self (seeing me)

3- (re)Envisioning the World (Seeing Others)

1- Gaining & Integrating New Knowledge

4- Taking Anti-racist Action

- Reading/reflecting on race
  - Learning from difference
  - Reflections on plan
  - Conflict

- posing action-oriented reflective questions
  - auditing educational systems with a new lens
  - taking steps to eradicate inequities
  - Activism

2-year program begins with an intense, full-time summer course load that requires students to spend 8 weeks with one another right from the start (roughly 9 hours a day, 4 days a week). During this first summer, students conduct research with a community, which contains a school that has been selected for a school study. During a walk through the community, students conduct informal interviews with community members about the school (Khalifa, 2012).

Gaining and Integrating New Knowledge

As a result of the goals of our recruitment and selection process, we tend to admit students who have *some* impression of a social justice orientation. However, entering students mostly bring or adopt a race-neutral view in hopes of treating everyone equally with no regard to race or culture. In other words, our students often enter with a colorblind approach to their work as educators and have been taught to politely avoid conversations on race and equity (Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015). Hence, the first step in this educational journey is to expose the students to the creation of agreements that help maintain positive decorum when engaging in difficult conversations about race. Development of the agreements supports building strong relationships within the cohort. Students are then exposed to a range of readings on race and culture, including racial identity development theories. For instance, they read McIntosh's *Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* (2003), Tillman's "(Un)Intended Consequences? The Impact of the *Brown v. Board of Education* Decision on the Employment Status of Black Educators" (2004), and Singleton and Linton's *Courageous Conversations about Race* (2006). Additionally, students view films or film snippets from movies such as *The Color of Fear* (Wah, 1994), "A Class Divided" (Peters, 1985), and *White Man's Burden* (Nakano, 1995). During this entire process, students are required to complete racial reflections on the content that they are reading, viewing, or discussing. The goal of the first stage is to expose the students to the knowledge base on race. Students learn about the history of race and how it has been studied and its impact on society and their practice as educators. Importantly, they continue to gain and incorporate new knowledge throughout the program as they are exposed to the power of integrating anti-racist principles into their practice during their first summer.

Examining Self and (Re)envisioning the World (Seeing Others)

In the next stage, examining self, the students begin to develop deeper understandings of who they are as leaders, individually and collectively as a cohort. That process includes an in-depth introspective gaze at who they

are as racial beings. Students continue the readings on leadership and race and they become better at asking reflective questions and considering how race impacts their work in less than obvious ways. Most important in this stage is a conversation about their role in possibly perpetuating institutional racism as dysconscious educators (King, 1990). In this stage, students complete a range of personality assessments including the MBTI-Type II, the FIRO-B, and the TKI. These assessments help them better understand how they will likely perform as leaders when working with a variety of individuals on a range of tasks, including difficult racial conversations. The assessments also start to help the students examine their preferences and identify possible personal stretch goals for them in their development as leaders on such topic areas as conflict engagement, organizing, establishing goals, and communication.

In this stage about examining self, each professor, tasked with teaching the cohort, completes a racial autobiography and presents those essays to the students as examples of what the students must complete. Engaging in this process creates a facilitative approach to teaching, and it flattens the power and privilege hierarchy in teaching. Professors also are made more vulnerable in light of the sensitive content in a racial autobiography. Students tend to feel a bit more confident after reading the autobiographies of the professors. Indeed, students report being so nervous to the point of feeling ill (Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015). The students are not required to share their autobiographies with classmates, though some do so. The essays are essentially corrected for clarity, flow, organization, and grammatical errors, but only a pass (submitted) or fail (did not submit) grade is given for the assignment. Students are encouraged to be critical in their analysis of race in the essay. This reflects the thought that completing a racial autobiography is such a huge undertaking to complete, that it is reflective of experiences around race for each individual student.

(Re)Envisioning the World

The point of the next stage is to help students learn more about how they can transform how they see others, especially those populations of students who have been marginalized by the way society and schools are structured. During the course, students constantly interact as they explore problems of practice. Hence, they are charged with learning more about research and the various theoretical perspectives adopted in research. By conducting an equity audit (Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly, 2004), students get an opportunity to use data indicators to develop a data-based portrait of what is happening at the selected school. They also come to understand what it means to evaluate school data using different lenses.

Grappling with the tensions rooted in individual and collective perspectives, they eventually develop a "cohort" lens and start to better assess how race and culture impact practice. Students are asked to examine school-level data and consider how their previous colormute lenses failed to ask questions about disproportionality in, for example, suspension rates, or how some schools have more educated teachers than others. Also as part of this process, students conduct a community walk, as well as interview the leadership team and a sample of teachers. After collecting and analyzing these data as a cohort, the students write up results in a school study, which is later presented to the principal and the faculty at the school.

Taking Anti-Racist Action

The final stage is taking anti-racist action. While there is no clear demarcation between this stage and the previous, there are some distinctive approaches that we hope students will employ for the purpose of dismantling racism in schools. For example, the posing of action-oriented reflective questions started as a skill development exercise before this stage, but at this point, students should be courageous enough to articulate steps they might adopt to address equity issues in schools. For example, one student remarked that she would now confront teachers who have made inappropriate race-based comments about students in her school. It is here that we identify the link between orientations and action toward equity.

Beyond interpersonal engagement, students have audited educational systems at this stage. The hope is that they will use this new skill and lens as starting points for interrogating and challenging raced-based disparities within their schools. For example, these aspiring leaders might examine their school's data to determine the racial makeup of students in advanced or college preparatory courses. That same leader can decide to further examine this issue as part of their Leadership in Action project, a culminating activity, which comes during their second year of the program and as part of their problem-based internship.

The Leadership in Action process is built around Furman's (2012) conceptualization of praxis in educational leadership: a cyclical process of constant reflection and taking action. Moreover, when it comes to race, this reflection must include critical consciousness (Gooden, 2012) and the skillful use of race language as first steps to addressing racial disparities in school. While we call this a final stage, recall that our logic model is organized in a cyclical structure, meaning that aspiring leaders who have taken on anti-racist principles will often cycle through the stages. Another aim of the principalship program is to integrate race language in all of the courses in the program until the students have embraced race, culture, and inequities as

central to any type of problem framing. In other words, it is reflection about these issues and then taking action to change the status quo. All of this precedes taking steps to address and eradicate inequities in schools.

METHOD

SAMPLE SELECTION

In order to determine the preparation program's impact on students' orientations, and in turn, the students' influence on the institutional settings in which they were employed, we sought a purposive, convenience sample composed of 10 students from a cohort of 15, all in their final year of studies in the principalship program. We invited these 10 participants because they had already transitioned out of the classroom and into a campus leadership position (e.g., the assistant principalship) or a district-level leadership position (e.g., administrative supervisor, curriculum specialist, etc.). Of the 10 students invited, 8 agreed to participate. The distribution of gender, race or ethnicity,[1] and school characteristics for the final set of participants is summarized in Table 1 below. Note that all names used in this paper are pseudonyms.

DATA COLLECTION

In the spring semester of 2013, we asked participants to respond to an Internet-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire facilitated collection of information about participants' work history in education, their present work setting, and basic demographic information. Six of the participants were employed as assistant principals, while the remaining two were employed as district-level leaders. Of the six students serving as assistant principals, four were at elementary schools, one at a middle school, and one at a high school. Generally, the six assistant principals worked in schools serving predominantly lower-income communities of color with substantial enrollments of English language learners, yet staffed by a majority-White, female faculty. Greater specificity of the participants' work settings can be found in Table 1.

Over the course of the spring semester and the summer following their graduation, participants were also asked to engage in a semistructured interview. These interviews lasted roughly 60 to 75 minutes. To ensure comparable data were collected across all principals, the research team used the same interview protocol, which we developed during a separate pilot study. The interviews were composed of questions relating to the participants' preparation and work experiences, covering four general topics: values and beliefs, coworkers and context, social justice awareness and orientation, and advocacy and action.

Table 1. Participants Descriptors and Work Contexts

Pseudonym	Campus/District Admin	Level	Individual Profile Position Title	Race/Ethnicity	Gender	Student Information % of Color	% Eco Dis	% LEP	Faculty Information % White	% Female
Samantha	Individual Campus	Middle	Assistant Principal	White	Female	>75%	50-75%	<10%	>75%	>75%
Glenda	District Admin.	*N/A*	Administrative Supervisor	Latina	Female	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
Audrey	Individual Campus	Elementary	Assistant Principal	Latina	Female	>75%	>75%	30-40%	50-75%	>75%
Brandon	District Admin.	*N/A*	Curriculum Specialist	White	Male	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*N/A*
Larry	Individual Campus	High School	Assistant Principal	White	Male	>75%	50-75%	10-20%	>75%	50-75%
Nate	Individual Campus	Elementary	Assistant Principal	White	Male	>75%	>75%	50-60%	25-50%	>75%
Jeremy	Individual Campus	Elementary	Assistant Principal	White	Male	>75%	>75%	60-70%	50-75%	>75%
Orlando	Individual Campus	Elementary	Assistant Principal	Latino	Male	>75%	>75%	50-60%	25-50%	>75%

ANALYSIS

All interviews were transcribed and then coded using the Dedoose software program. The *a priori* coding scheme employed for this study was based upon the preparation program's logic model, and thus, the literature on exemplary principal preparation programs.

Our utilization of the logic model to develop the coding scheme was informed by a related preparation program impact study conducted by Donmoyer, Yennie-Donmoyer, and Galloway (2012), in which components of their program logic model corresponded with codes used to analyze their interview data. Similarly, we used codes based upon the mission, features, and structure of the program (e.g., ability to discern inequity, evidence of orientation, using disaggregated data, and the influence of the cohort) to determine its association with student orientations and work experiences. Next, two research associates coded the seven interviews using the starter-coding scheme. Limiting the coding and analysis to just these two members of the research team, and thus excluding the teaching faculty, was a step taken to investigate any interviewer-associated differences in the data (for which no evidence was uncovered) and to lessen the potential for biased findings.

To ensure interrater reliability, the two researchers employed Dedoose's coding reliability tests which involved each researcher coding the same excerpts and then Dedoose calculating a Cohen's kappa statistic (Cohen, 1960). The two researchers then discussed discrepancies, and the consistency and precision of their codes were enhanced based on these discussions (the final kappa for the coding was 0.74). In the final stage of analysis, we collectively read the coded excerpts and discussed themes that emerged (e.g., balancing accountability pressures with social justice actions, exhibiting anti-racist beliefs, supporting teachers, and the power of the cohort outside of formalized program). These emergent themes became the basis of our findings. This deductive process (Creswell, 2013; Johnson & Christensen, 2008) allowed us to utilize our findings to assess the program's logic model and its component connections.

FINDINGS

We have divided our findings into two broad categories: those relating to participants' orientations and those relating to their experiences within their respective institutional settings. At the beginning of each section, we outline subfindings.

PARTICIPANT ORIENTATIONS

The participants' responses suggest that the program substantially influenced their leadership orientations and that the cohort structure provided a support system for developing these orientations. The broad themes in this area that emerged were: 1) a sense of preparedness to address issues of race and social justice in their new leadership positions, 2) program influence on values and beliefs, and 3) the development of leadership strategies.

Sense of Preparedness

When asked whether or not they felt prepared for their current leadership position, the participants responded in the affirmative, with many directly attributing their preparedness to various elements of the program. The elements mentioned included individual professors and assignments, prevailing themes of the coursework and curriculum, and proclivities to employ social justice language. Regarding the use of social justice language, responses suggested that familiarity with new concepts facilitated their own thinking and also guided conversations with others. This was consistent with the first stage of gaining and integrating new knowledge as depicted on the logic model. For instance, Nate, a White elementary school assistant principal, explained that building a social justice vocabulary and having conversations with his cohort members prepared him to have difficult conversations about social justice issues he knew to be at the root of some of the difficulties on his campus that was over 75% poor children of color. He stated:

> I keep going back to the common language and how the conversations that we had with each other prepared me for the conversations that we were going to have with our staff, because [the cohort] is a safe space … a place where we all trusted each other.

Note that the cohort model becomes a structure of the program that facilitates the practice, and later, use of social justice language. Other respondents shared feedback similar to Nate's and felt that knowing what kinds of interactions with adults and students would be in store for them was a big part of their preparation. Jeremy, also a White male elementary school assistant principal, spoke about his own sense of preparedness along with his impression of his fellow cohort members, stating:

> I set up an entry plan, I knew exactly what I wanted before I came into that role, and social justice was in the middle of that … I think a lot of people in this cohort could have stepped onto a school as a principal … This program doesn't prepare you to be an AP. It prepares you to be a principal.

While it is our hope that graduates of the program aspire to be head principals, there is certainly a focus within the program on the unique nuances and responsibilities of the assistant principalship, particularly as they tend to manifest in our partner districts. That being said, an explicit expression of confidence to successfully lead a campus, similar to that of Jeremy's, was a feature in several other interviews as well.

Values and Beliefs

Participants reported that studying anti-racist leadership had a significant impact on their values and beliefs, which in turn led to ongoing change in their perception of social justice issues, particularly those around race. They reported an increased awareness and sense of responsibility for advocating for marginalized populations. Participants unanimously agreed that where they stand now is further advanced along a social justice and anti-racist continuum than where they were prior to enrolling in the program. An illustrative comment from Jeremy reflected this change:

> I came in with a mindset that if you just kind of gave everyone a chance … then we'll all get to where we need to get to. That's totally not true. Some kids need more help than others. There's an achievement gap and there's an opportunity gap for kids.

This quote demonstrates the personal growth that Jeremy experienced over his time in the program. It also demonstrates Jeremy's awareness and expanded understanding of the achievement gap and its relationship to opportunity gaps in education: both of which are central concepts in the program's approach to developing anti-racist leaders.

This increased awareness has allowed the participants to identify inequities in their schools/districts, particularly those around race. All participants provided multiple examples of such inequities, many around discipline, special education, and tracking. Larry, a White high school assistant principal, like many students, indicated a shift in thinking from traditional notions of management and administration toward a more transformative conceptualization:

> It has made me think much more critically about my own biases and my own, you know, thoughts about my own culture and how I perceive other groups, and my own privileges, and how that has a huge impact on my work … So, you're interacting with a lot of people who were raised with values and beliefs different than your own, all day every day. So, for me, that's been huge.

Larry's comments not only suggest that he has a heightened consciousness of his own values and beliefs as a result of the program, but also those of other stakeholders at his school. His approach speaks directly to the stages of examining self and (re)envisioning the world (seeing others). He also must use what he learned in the gaining and integrating knowledge stage of the logic model.

Responses from the participants implied that a vehicle for change in their values and beliefs was, as Larry discussed above, an increased awareness of their own, individual biases. For example, Audrey, a Latina elementary school assistant principal, reported that the program helped her realize her own biases, even about those who share her ethnicity. White participants reported an increased understanding and awareness of their own privilege and how that privilege has affected their lives and remains at play in their work. For example, Samantha, who is a White middle school principal, captured in this quote the program's influence on students' values and beliefs:

> We [the students in the principal preparation program] were talking about other program models, and in a lot of principal prep programs—they have one class on race or one class [on] gender issues, but since our program has been framed through that, that's how we see our day. There's not a day that I don't think about race. There's not a day that I don't think about gender.

Here, Samantha describes how the program is distinctive in that topics relating to race and gender are integrated throughout the curriculum rather than covered only in a single course. Hence, all stages of the circular logic model are visited multiple times throughout the first summer and the program. Moreover, she credits integration with successfully developing students' abilities to see, frame, and examine these issues using an anti-racist or social justice lens—on a daily basis, in her case. This, of course, is represented in the (re)envisioning stage of the logic model.

Strategies for Change

Several participants cited relationship building and the presentation of data as important strategic approaches to change that they learned from the program. These participants cited leading by example as an important step for relationship building and advancing their anti-racist work. Larry described this strategy when he stated: "I know people see it in my actions and the way I approach things." He then expanded upon another common element in the interviews:

> I don't think teachers are out to not be equitable. I don't think a lot of times they realize that things they are doing are creating more gaps. It's about taking opportunities to have conversations with those teachers. It's in how I approach a certain program or idea.

Larry's comment here is reflective of many other respondents' feelings about the other educators on their campus: that they are well-intentioned folks who may not be critically conscious of the ways they reinforce deficit perspectives or inadvertently contribute to student marginalization. Therefore, a key element, indeed a first step, to helping these educators become more just and equitable is raising their critical consciousness about issues of equity through respectful conversations. Having conversations using reflective questioning is a sought-after goal of the program. Doing so is taking anti-racist actions (stage 4) that can plant the seed for real change in schools.

Participants overwhelmingly agreed that purposeful, directed conversations with teachers were crucial to relationship building and an oft relied upon tool for raising teachers' awareness, and thereby advancing their anti-racist and social justice agendas. Relatedly, Audrey spoke at length about the importance of conversation in advancing social justice interests when dealing with parents and how doing so had gone a long way in establishing trust in school-home relationships. She also discussed the role that data-based conversations with teachers had in reducing discipline referrals in her school:

> I show them reports, it's all tracked … this is how many referrals we've had since school started. This is how many of them are African American students, this is how many of them are Hispanic students, you know, this is how many of them are boys, and they see that … Having those conversations with the teachers and showing them the data and what that looks like and having them like think twice before [writing a referral]. I think that reduced the number of referrals I was getting in the office after that.

In the above quote, Audrey articulated her specific method for using evidence to highlight to her teachers the race and gender disparities in their school's discipline referrals. Importantly, when coupled with targeted conversations, Audrey, an assistant principal, claims she is able to prompt some teachers to rethink their previous predilection to write office referrals.

Further, Glenda, a Latina district administrator, discussed her strategic use of conversation to challenge and hopefully advance the thinking of others. She explained:

> Whenever I hear people having those negative attitudes about others, I try to help them. And I don't do it in a rude way or anything, but I just try to help them see the other side. So, I think that's where the program has helped me. It's helped me to not be afraid to speak up when I hear people saying those negative things about other people.

Glenda's comments here speak to her relative courage and some degree of comfort with interjecting on matters relating to her social justice priorities. Further, it suggests her interjection was done in a thoughtful manner so as not to push the teacher away but rather develop a nurturing dialogue. In sum, these examples speak to leaders who are applying what is learned in the (re)envisioning a new world (seeing others) stage and respectfully taking anti-racist actions.

Orlando described his reliance upon purposeful conversation with teachers as an effective tool for "chipping away" at deficit perspectives and putting the focus back upon matters over which the school has direct control. Whenever teachers exhibited deficit perspectives, Audrey chose to view such commentary as teachable moments. She stated, "I look at it as an opportunity for me to have a conversation with them. [The program] has helped me to look at things where it's a way to start a conversation, a discussion with someone." Fueled by a desire to establish a strong sense of advocacy in his department, Brandon, a White male central office leader, was hopeful that the sustained conversations he held with his district-level coworkers were facilitating cognitive shifts.

EXPERIENCES OF THE INDIVIDUAL

We also sought to understand how the students' shift in leadership orientations shape their experiences as school leaders and the conditions of their work settings. We uncovered four broad themes. The participants tended to 1) encounter a variety of values and beliefs among the adults they work with, 2) take action guided by reflection, 3) encounter resistance and pushback to their anti-racist and social justice work, and 4) be contemplative and strategic in their responses to this resistance.

Diversity in Values

Participants reported that being courageous and standing by beliefs can be difficult. They felt that engaging with other adults with incongruent or less-defined values, and who were at times unwilling to have discussions about race, was difficult. They felt these interactions were challenging because revealing their social justice orientations without damaging

relationships with teachers was a tricky space to navigate. Larry described conversations with resistant teachers thus:

> It's very political. I feel like I'm always thinking strategically. Like, what can I say here that will have some influence but will still maintain my relationship with this person because I need this relationship in order to make that student successful? It's almost like Survivor (the reality television program) when you're thinking about all of the relationships and the puzzle pieces.

Larry's quote highlights the delicate balancing act of social justice change agents. On the one hand, Larry must confront individuals who are resistant to improving their racial and cultural competencies if he is to push them to be more equitable. On the other hand, he must do so delicately and strategically so that he can maintain his position of influence with those individuals. Such actions place Larry in the stage of taking anti-racist action but also engages him in the third stage of seeing others and their perspectives.

The participants also reported difficulty with not being the prime mover of their campus or district's vision. In all cases, participants were ultimately responsible for having to enact the vision of a supervisor. Jeremy remarked:

> Being the [assistant principal] means you're following someone else's vision. You don't want to step on the toes of your principal. They are the leader; you have to respect that. That's a challenge that any AP is going to go through.

As Jeremy's comments suggest, early-career leaders face other relationship and positional obstacles that may impede them from promoting their vision of an equitable school. To the extent that a superior has a different vision or priorities, an assistant principal must again make some strategic choices. Does one follow the chain of command and relinquish at least temporarily one's vision for school equity? Or does one push back in the name of equity but risk losing one's position and opportunity to influence? Presumably there is an appropriate balance between the two, but finding and maintaining it represents the difficult work of the anti-racist leader.

Action Guided by Reflection

The personal actions taken by the participants were many. Most participants described reflection as crucial to guiding their actions. Some even expressed their explicit intentions to build reflective capacity in others around them. Glenda explained:

> I support teachers a lot—moving from just giving the teacher all the answers to really helping them to think for themselves and to reflect and be more reflective educators. I have become more reflective because of the program and I carry that over to help others become more reflective.

Glenda's commentary speaks to powerful connections between program elements, her own orientation toward reflection, and her actions to instill reflection in others. This response is no surprise as it is a first stage component of the logical model that starts in gaining and integrating knowledge and moves to examining self. Additionally, specific actions cited by participants included conversations with individuals and small groups about race, new approaches to discipline, working closely with families and the community, and the prospect of administering cultural competency professional development for fellow staff members.

Resistance and Pushback

As might be expected, several participants experienced substantial resistance to their anti-racist and social justice orientations and actions. Comments from these participants suggested that the majority of resistance was from teachers,[2] while their fellow administrators were more amenable to anti-racist and social justice work. None of the participants felt they were working with teachers with bad intentions but rather teachers with limited cultural competence, limited self-awareness, and limited knowledge of others. In fact, many respondents felt they were leading from a privileged intellectual space by having completed the program and having been afforded the opportunity to question their own values and beliefs and to experience that personal and professional growth.

For example, in response to efforts to open up pre-advanced placement (pre-AP) courses to more students of color, Larry, a high school assistant principal, was told by a teacher: "these aren't AP [advanced placement] kids." This sentiment seemed to have support among other teachers on the staff. Other teachers' responses to the social justice work of the participants included the question "why does it always have to be about race?" There was also support for the status quo, where a group of teachers expressed "that's the way it's always been" regarding racial achievement disparities. These quotes represent broad examples of uninterrogated and unchallenged statements that truly are equity conversation stoppers. The hope is that students in this preparation program, even when encountering deflating resistance, will continue to push through this resistance to do what is best for children. Indeed, taking anti-racist action in such contentious spaces can be emotionally and physically draining.

Strategic and Purposeful Response and Planning

While many participants expressed frustration with experiencing push-back on their campuses, they also reported strategic, purposeful responses to this pushback. Before reacting negatively, many participants reported thinking through their responses with intentionality. They felt that maintaining good relationships with their teachers was crucial for student success, so pushing for change had to be carefully balanced against protecting those relationships. On one hand, passively allowing teachers to continue with the status quo would not bring about the changes our respondents felt were necessary for their schools. On the other hand, aggressively pushing for change would alienate teachers and create division between teachers and administration. Above all others, the strategic, purposeful planning was the most commonly employed action of the participants.

All campus leaders in the sample believed having discussions with teachers regarding expectations for student success was foundational to making changes on their campus. Jeremy talked about encountering pushback on his campus when he stated: "I don't let it deter me from what I think should be happening on the campus … it lets me know that there needs to be a platform for those discussions as a campus so that we can move forward with that goal." This speaks to that delicate balancing act of nurturing relationships while simultaneously moving the campus to a more socially just learning environment. Larry shared a similar line of thinking when recounting his interactions with a resistant teacher:

> I let her know where I was coming from and why I thought it was important … I wasn't going to destroy a relationship because I knew I needed it for student achievement… Increasing student achievement, in many ways, is dependent upon a strong relationship with her.

Here, Larry illustrated long-term thinking in acknowledging that a sustained, constructive relationship with this particular teacher was one of many necessary building blocks to the school's success. He not only reinforced his expectations but he also shared the rationale behind those expectations while respecting and appreciating this teacher's significance in the larger scheme of campus performance.

DISCUSSION

Findings from our interviews suggest that the program positively influenced the participants' orientations toward anti-racist leadership and social justice. Specifically, the students reported a sense of preparedness, that the program affected their values and beliefs, and that the program equipped them with strategies to advance their leadership agendas. We also found that in acting on their social justice and anti-racist orientations, participants encountered resistance and pushback from colleagues, and that they were contemplative and strategic in their responses to this pushback, realizing that maintaining relationships was integral to the work. In sum, we found that the participants' positions and responsibilities as early-career educational leaders oriented toward anti-racism and social justice placed them in contexts where it was critical for them to employ knowledge and strategies drawn from the preparation program and its related resources in order to advance their work and be successful.

As Marshall and Ward (2004) remind us, "ceremonial declarations … do not change inequitable practices" (p. 535). We do not claim responsibility for the success and placement of our students as principals. We instead applaud the students for their determination and scholarship, and recognize that the development of successful early-career, anti-racist leadership is a true collaborative effort between institutions and individuals that is ultimately reliant upon small but intentional courageous steps that eventually amount to bigger outcomes. For the participants in this research project, this sentiment was a personal charge. These leaders went into their employing institutions, knowing that racial inequity existed, and that these inequities needed to be revealed for all to see. Further, they knew that action had to be taken to remedy these inequities, that success in doing so would not arrive overnight, that pushback would be encountered, and that careful planning and effective interpersonal transactions would be crucial to advancing their anti-racist initiatives. In essence, the steps of doing anti-racist work mirror the steps of conflict, disequilibrium, transformation, and activism, as outlined by our theory of anti-racist action. In sum, we see a clear role that preparation programs can play in supporting the development of anti-racist orientations that can ultimately facilitate institutional change for racial equity in the educational pipeline.

NOTES

1. Although related, we recognize these constructs are not one and the same. The categories reported by the respondents in the study represented race (e.g., White) and ethnicity (e.g., Latina/o).

2. We suggest a few possible explanations for this perceived difference in origins of resistance: 1) the present study is a preliminary report working from a small sample size, and therefore currently reported findings may not be representative of the rest of our students; 2) principals, as is required by licensure standards in Texas, are more educated, and therefore may have had more exposure to social justice training; and finally 3) there are more teachers than administrators in a school system, and therefore the majority of pushback would be expected to reside in the larger group of adults.

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