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FOREWORD: SILVER LINING IN THE MIDST OF THE PERFECT STORM

Mahmoud Suleiman
Editorial Director

As we conclude this summer in the midst of a health crisis, much has been happening globally. Notably, the COVID-19 is on everyone's mind and is at the forefront of social, political, and certainly educational institutions' agendas. Emotions run high, of course, since these are largely unprecedented times and uncharted territories which have led to a lot of floundering about the best approach to face these challenges.

In the midst of the ferocious Coronavirus sweeping so many lives daily, society seems to have been awakened by the other endemic virus of bigotry and racism that has, unfortunately, always been well and alive all around us. Despite benignly and often intentionally being ignored by many, this deeply rooted virus in society's DNA seems to have caught the attention of some by sporadic racial flares and cultural wars here and there. Thus, so many find themselves inevitably increasing their rhetoric in the name of social justice, cultural proficiency, and equity. On the other hand, there are those who chose silence as a convenient way to appease the status quo and those who are in power. Regardless, the racial tensions over the past few months, in the wake of the high-profile killings of people of color, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, a perfect storm has been formed in society's educational, social, economic, and political establishments.

Nonetheless, there seems to be a silver lining for all of this. The inequities that have plagued society for a long time have become more evident to even those who have long been in denial. Whether in healthcare or education, disparities of all sorts have been explicitly revealed by the symptoms of a larger and more detrimental cause that has never been effectively treated at its roots in the first place. Accordingly, social and educational institutions seem to have become numb and asymptomatic to the virus of institutional racism for a long time so much so that it has taken two viruses colliding to make society engage in soul searching.

There is still hope despite the foreboding that marks the next unknown phases of the storm. Among other promising phenomena, the societal discourse seems shifting, and educational and social institutions appear to be ready for an overhaul and restructuring. While there is no shortage of rhetoric and fiery talk, questions remain. In the meantime, as we continue to question and challenge the unquestionable, are the conversations intended to sooth or heal the wounds of racial injustice and repair the damage inflicted by racism and bigotry? Are we serious about implementing the initiatives and calls for change or these are intended to put a bandage on a gaping wound? Are we being reactive to the crisis or attempting to act in the face of the challenges? Are the conversations about would have been taboo topics on race or culture intended to console us or disrupt racism and inequities as they disrupt our lives?

Notwithstanding, actions are more needed than ever before if we truly need to move from rhetoric to reality (Suleiman, 2014a). Thus, we should move beyond our own comfort zone to take and make risks necessary for reforming schools (Suleiman, 2001, 2013). It begins with individuals confronting their unconscious biases and implicit underlying beliefs that shape their perspectives, behaviors and actions. When mindsets and attitudes change, actions may follow.

In schools, curriculum reform should involve de-construction and reconstruction in order to reflective inclusive affirmation of all of its consumers. It should be for, by, and about ***all*** participants regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, status, language, culture, heritage, religion, nationality or any other factors. No ethnic or racial group should be highlighted at the expense of another even if it reveals that the liberators of today are the oppressors of the past or vice versa. As such, educational initiatives in curriculum should truly affirm the cultural, social, and historical being of those being denied voice and place in schools and society at large.

Meanwhile, we continue to tackle the root causes that plague our institutions and bring to

light the promise for desired change. The vision and mission of the Center for Leadership, Equity and Research (CLEAR) revolve around initiating courageous conversations, seeking equity and social justice, promoting cultural proficiency and competence, combating racism and bigotry, reducing cultural gaps and their negative side effects that include acknowledgement, ethnic, cultural, racial, gender, economic, academic, educational... opportunity gaps and other disparities that continue to plague institutions such as schools. With the *Journal for Leadership, Equity, and Research (JLER)*, we will continue to share voices loudly and clearly about the contemporary state of schools and their realities while providing implications and blueprints for social action to empower the marginalized groups and affirm their physical and intellectual being by cultivating their cultural assets, social capital, global perspectives, and civic roles.

In this regular edition of the *Journal for Leadership, Equity, and Research (JLER)*, readers will find a variety of articles that involve timely issues and topics that have a considerable place on education reform and empowering diverse student populations. One of the areas that continues to face educators involves working with special populations, English language learners and other diverse students. Despite the pronouncements in state and national standards, these student populations continue to fall between the cracks given the deficit models that fail to cultivate diverse students' assets by neglecting their rich cultural schemata, life experiences, and universal intelligence in pedagogical practices including curriculum, instruction and assessment.

Cho and Kraemer's article provides insight into the need for implementing responsive assessments when working with ELs and special populations. Their research underscores the need to examine biases in assessing the linguistically and culturally diverse. They rightly maintain that "evaluators, school psychologists, special education teachers, and psychometricians must strive" to conduct supportive assessment mechanisms that promote students' education and proper access in schools. In fact, assessment and evaluation ideally, "function best when they provide an account of the whole learner based on his or her abilities, talents, realities, needs, language, cultural, and personal experiences, assets, needs, funds of knowledge, and socioeconomic and social conditions" (Suleiman & Kunnath, 2020, p. 31).

Similarly, Feliz provides a nice account of how opportunity gaps in literacy can be reduced. She compiled a synthesis reviewing some of the literature suggesting "that traditional approaches to academic literacy instruction are inadequate for developing academic literacy in culturally and linguistically diverse students," while highlighting the cultural divide that negatively impacts achievement of minority students in schools. A model for equity in literacy practices is provided which has direct implications for providing culturally responsive practices that can enhance literacy development in all learners. For a long time, there has been a need for a paradigm shift towards asset-based and funds of knowledge approaches (see e.g. González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) that are comprehensive and equitable and based on democratic principles. As pointed out elsewhere, Suleiman (2014b) and in Suleiman & Kunnath (2020) pointed out that such practices should transcend the goals of literacy skill building in students, but rather embrace promoting of skillful performance especially when working with linguistically and culturally diverse populations.

Louque and Sullivan's research uniquely contributes to our understanding of disparities facing African American students. Focusing on Black girls' experiences in schools, Louque and Sullivan aptly tackle the systemic inequities and racism in schools that shape the discipline practices and victimizes students of color in general. They maintain that "inequitable, exclusionary discipline practices occur because there are many forms of institutionalized racism, including the invisibility, intersectionality, and stereotyping of Black girls." As such, unfair and exclusionary discipline practices continue to victimize Black girls on racial grounds in a system that excludes rather than embraces them. This article has important implications for understanding how reactive zero tolerance policies are at odds with diverse students' social, emotional, and academic needs. The authors' findings echo the bulk of research evidence about inequitable discipline practices against Black male students and affirm the reactive nature of discipline approaches that are in essence considered *zero-patience* policies against students of color especially Black students.

Using a couple of scenarios to illustrate the issues at hand, Louque and Sullivan draw helpful implications for educators and administrators who seriously seek to achieve justice and equity in schools.

For education leaders to bring about desired change in schools, they should serve as social justice advocates and activists. This is the focus of McIntosh's article that illustrates how activism can be embraced by leaders as they seek to combat injustice and racism in schools. Deeply rooted in various theoretical frameworks about social justice and social movement theories, the purpose of McIntosh's article is "to bring to the forefront how social justice education leadership and social activism must be coupled as essential tools within the blueprint to end injustice." This underscores the need for active leadership in schools that are action-oriented and empowering. The paradigm shift towards Social Justice Activism is timely and necessary given the enormous efforts needed to change schools.

Since literacy transcends language and academic skill development, it includes a wide range of possibilities and outcomes. Needless to say, there are countless forms and definitions of literacy such cultural, ethnic, civic, geographical, mathematic, scientific, emotional, political, economic, digital, financial… and physical literacy among others. Bernstein and Lysniak's capitalize on the role of physical literacy in schools and argue "attaining physical skill can create social capital, ultimately a form of social justice, as individuals may use this foundation to be physically active throughout their lives." They cautioned against limiting students' physical activity as a form of injustice and urge educators to use "skill identity" as a lens to examine their practice and reduce inequities.

Readers of this edition will find a variety of contributions by authors sharing their expertise in certain domains based on the realities around us. Since "the pluralistic democratic society is to value the diversity that exists in all aspects of life in terms of equity and social justice, it is imperative that all participants are actively engaged towards a common goal," (Suleiman, 2014a, p. 2). Thus, like the previous and future editions of the JLER, the current collection of articles in this volume not only contributes to the existing body of literature in the field of equity, social justice and their related domains, but also enhances our engagement for the common vision and mission we are drafted to undertake.

Finally, on behalf of the JLER team, we are grateful to the contributors, reviewers, and everyone who assisted in the production of the edition.

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ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH LEARNING SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN WITH SUSPECTED LEARNING DISABILITIES

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ABSTRACT

The investigators sought to determine whether education evaluators, mainly school psychologists, complied with federal, state, and professional practice guidelines when assessing English learning (EL) school-aged children suspected of a learning disability in three northern California school districts. In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (U.S. Congress, 2004), all intellectual and academic assessments must be selected and administered by properly trained assessors so as not to be racially, culturally, and linguistically inappropriate. The investigators reviewed the academic assessment reports of 88 EL children who, at the time of the study, had been receiving both special education as well as English as a Second Language instruction. We investigated the cumulative files to identify if evaluators consider the student's primary language by using culturally appropriate tests and interpreters, communicating with families, and consideration other important factors such as their attendance, grades, sex, and other factors. The investigators discovered that out of the 88 children, 76 were assessed in English only although all spoke English as their second language. In addition, none of the school psychologists employed the use of an interpreter during any portion of the assessment process. Findings present a compelling case for greater university program and local in-service training on appropriate assessment procedures for school psychologists when assessing EL children for LD.

Keywords: English learning children, English language learner, special education, assessment

Introduction

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2013), between 1980 and 2009, the number of English learning (EL) school-aged children rose from 4.7 to 11.2 million. This increase is substantial considering that the total public and private school enrollment rates changed by only 2% for 5- and 6-year-olds. In addition, one in five children in public schools live in homes where English is not the primary language. The U.S. Department of Education predicts that by 2030, nearly 40% of the school-aged population will speak a language other than English at home. The composition of this ever increasing number of EL school-aged children is one of diversity in culture and variability in their prior language experience (Zong & Batalova, 2015). Meeting the instructional and assessment needs of a broad spectrum in the numerous languages spoken by this

population can be challenging; especially concerning the employment of appropriate sets of assessment tools for EL children (Olvera, 2010). Therefore, the challenge for those who assess EL children for a suspected learning disability (LD) is to identify how best to adapt their current assessment practices to meet the linguistic needs of these children. As such, the appropriate and valid determination of the presence of an LD is vital to ensuring that appropriate services are provided to children who truly possess an LD. Federal and state regulations provide information pertinent to the appropriate assessment requirements of EL children. For this study, the following policies include The Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) and California Department of Education, CA Code of Regulation 3023. These polices recommend that educators must be cautious when documenting and labeling EL children as learning disabled. Although, specific guidelines in terms of the types of assessments is not presented there is agreement that the individual assessing an EL child must consider the child's first language status. For example, the Individuals with Disabilities

Education Improvement Act [IDEIA (U.S. Congress, 2004)] includes the following text:

> Each local agency shall ensure that assessments and other evaluation materials used to assess a child under this section (i) are selected and administered so as not to be discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis; (ii) are provided and administered in the language and form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is not feasible to so provide or administer; (iii) are used for purposes for which the assessment or measures are valid and reliable; (iv) are administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel; and (v) are administered in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of such assessment.

Also pursuant to Section 1412(a 6) (B) of Title 20 of the United States Code, the assessment materials and procedures shall be provided in the pupil's native language or mode of communication, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so. Therefore, tests and other assessment materials should meet all of the previously stated requirements so that we assess what the pupil knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is not feasible to so provide or administered required by 1414(b) (3) (A) (ii) of Title 20 of United States Code.

> In terms of CA Code of Regulation 3023, this statute states:
> (a) In addition to provisions of Education Code Sections 56320, assessments shall be administered by qualified personnel who are competent in both the oral or sign language skills and written skills of the individual's primary language or mode of communication and have a knowledge and understanding of the cultural and ethnic background of the pupil. If it clearly is not feasible to do so, an interpreter must be used, and the assessment report shall document this condition and note that the validity of the assessment may have been affected.

Thus, according to IDEIA and California Department of Education, a nondiscriminatory assessment involves evaluating how a child uses his or her two languages to perform targeted academic and cognitive tasks. That is, assessments must compare performances on tasks across two languages if the evaluator is unable to identify whether or not a child's primary language is a

non-factor in the assessment process (this is usually determined with the use of linguistically and culturally competent interpreters who validate that the child's home language is virtually non-existent). An individual who assesses an EL child suspected of having an LD exclusively with English tests will more than likely acquire invalid test scores.

Determining the presence of an LD in monolingual English-speaking children is often accomplished with the administration of English-language standardized achievement and intelligence tests. The employment of such tests for English only children is appropriate as the tests have been developed and normed on monolingual English speakers. Problems arise when these tests are administered to EL students. When used to determine an LD in EL children, results will be misleading and possibly lead to inappropriate program placement (Artiles, Rueda, Salzar, & Higareda, 2005; Artiles, Rueda, Salzar, & Higareda, 2002; Artiles, Trent, & Kuan, 1997). As such, without carefully-developed bilingual versions of these tests at their disposal, evaluators must rely on available tests, regardless of psychometric validity.

Two commonly used achievement tests used for school-aged children are the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement III (WJ ACH III) (Woodcock, McGrew, & Mather (2007) and the *Batería III Woodcock-Muñoz* (WM III) (Woodcock, Muñoz-Sandoval, McGrew, & Mather, 2007). Although the WJ ACH III has been recently updated to the WJ IV (Schrank, McGrew, & Mather; 2014) the WJ III remains in circulation. Regardless of the version of the WJ, they are designed to allow educational evaluators to assess a child's level of achievement in reading, writing, and math by assessing reading fluency, reading comprehension, written language, spelling, and math skills. The WJ ACH III and WJ IV are intended for English-only speaking children and should not be used for EL children.

The WM III is the Spanish translation of both the WJ ACH III and the Woodcock-Johnson Test of Cognitive Abilities III (WJ COG III) (Woodcock, McGrew, & Mather (2007) and is recommended for use for Spanish speaking children. The WM III measures general intellectual ability, specific cognitive abilities, scholastic aptitude, oral language, and achievement. Using the above achievement tests as main tools can cause complications on the diagnosis of dyslexia, as the most common disability among various learning disabilities, for English language learners (Proctor, C., Mather, N., & Stephens, T. 2015) since dyslexia affects EL children' primary language characteristics on their speaking and reading (Mather & Wendling, 2012, p. 223) as well. The nature of the writing system or orthography affects their reading process. Therefore, the characteristics of dyslexia in languages may exhibit differently (Proctor, C., Mather, N., & Stephens, T. 2015) and many EL children are consistently misidentified as students with learning disabilities (Barrio, 2017).

Commonly used tests of intelligence include the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children, second edition (KAB-C) (Kaufman & Kaufman, 2001) and the Wechsler Intelligence Scales for Children, fourth edition (WISC IV) (Wechsler, 2004). Even though these tests are available in Spanish, Ortiz (2004) states that "psychometrically sound" tests of intelligence do not exist in languages other than English. When used with children immersed in a predominantly English culture and educational system (even those in EL programs), Spanish versions of tests demonstrate unacceptably high false positives or, as Figueroa (1989) states, error rates. That is, identifying a child as having an LD when indeed he or she does not. Subsequently, scores from different Spanish tests used with any EL child may lead to such widely differing diagnoses leading to a lack of diagnostic validity (Figueroa, 1989). As such, the failure to consider an EL child's first language during intellectual and/or academic assessment can increase the misdiagnosis of a LD by as much as 9% (Klingner & Artiles, 2003, p. 67).

Rather than rely on data from verbal intelligence tests educational evaluators may employ nonverbal intelligence tests. Commonly used tests include the Comprehensive Test of Nonverbal Intelligence (CTONI) (Hammill, Pearson, & Wiederholt, 1996), the Universal Nonverbal Intelligence Test (UNIT) (Bracken, & McCallum, 2000), and the Raven's Progressive Matrices (Raven & Raven, 2003). These tests developers report that these tests are culturally fair, the fact is that an EL child's performance on these tests may reflect cultural differences in exposure to the types of problem-solving assessed by these tests rather than his or her nonverbal intellect (Geva & Wiener, 2015).

Assessing EL children suspected of an LD is a complex and challenging task due to the limitations of the aforementioned standardized tests. Educational evaluators who rely on scores derived from these tests may be misidentifying these children as LD. Such practices may result in dire consequences for the child and his or her family. The expectations for a child designated as LD may undershoot parent and teacher expectations reserved for typical learners. As such, a mislabeled child may not have the educational experience he or she deserves or expects. As such, we sought to determine whether educational evaluators working in an urban area of northern California adhered to IDEIA and California Department of Education guidelines when assessing EL children for LD.

Purpose and Specific Aims

The purpose of this study was to document the assessment practices of educational evaluators (school psychologists, special education teachers, resource specialists, psychometricians, etc.) assessing EL children for LD. We sought to determine whether educational evaluators, mainly school psychologists in this study, working in three urban northern California school districts adhered to IDEIA and California Department of Education guidelines when assessing EL children. Our specific aims consisted of:

Specific Aim 1: Determine whether educational evaluators adhered to federal and state guidelines when assessing EL children for LD. In order to systematically address this aim, we reviewed psycho-educational assessment reports for the following data: (1) special education determination was due to use of a discrepancy criteria, (2) types of assessment (standardized or non-standard measures such as RtI data, classroom observations, etc., (3) modifications to standardized tests, (4) use of interpreters for any portion of the assessment, and (5) whether California English Language Development Test (CELDT) scores were considered in the assessment process. In order to organize our data collection and analysis in an organized fashion, we adapted items used by Figueroa and Newsome (2006).

Specific Aim 2: To document the names of standardized tests and the frequency in which they were used along with any non-standardized measures employed during a child's initial psycho-educational assessment.

Method

In order to examine the assessment practices of educational evaluators, we conducted a systematic review of psycho-educational reports of EL children enrolled in three urban northern California school districts. The review began the fall of 2014 and completed in 2015. The collected data and the initial analysis were shared with the relevant districts as requested and the LDFA (Learning Disabilities Foundation of America) since the organization funded the study the following years.

Each district reported to the investigators that they have been identified by the California Department of Education as having an over-representation of EL children, especially among Latinx. At the time of the study the student population for grades PK-12 was approximately 10,000. In 2013, Latinx comprised 52% of the student population (www.kidsdata.org). English learners have been a significant portion of California public school children. To be considered as ELs in California, the parents of children fill in the Home Language Survey (HLS, accessible at: https://bit.ly/2v7LufA) when parents register children at a school for the first time by California *Education Code*, Section 52164.1 and children meet the state's EL definition. The survey contains legal requirements which direct schools to determine the language(s) spoken in the home of each student (CDE EL Forms, 2019). Based on the definition by CA Department of Education (CDE), these are children whom there is a report of a primary language other than English on the state-approved Home Language Survey (2019) **and** who, on the basis of the state approved oral language (grades kindergarten through grade twelve) assessment procedures and literacy (grades three through twelve only), have been determined to lack the clearly defined English language skills of listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing necessary to succeed in the school's regular instructional programs (2019). (R30-LC) Statewide policy determines which children are initially classified as ELs, but the determination of current versus former ELs (as well as the type of EL instruction) varies across school districts. ELs usually start schooling as Kindergarteners, but not all ELs begin as kindergartners because some of them enter California schools as they move from abroad. The majority of California's ELs are native-born—but, not surprisingly, a large share of older EL children are foreign-born (Hill, 2012). In the 2018–19 school year, there were approximately 1.196 million English learners (19.3 percent) enrolled in California public schools (Facts about English Learners in California – CalEdFacts, 2019).

EL children who attend a California school, the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) (2019), transitioned from the California English Language Development Test) is required by the California Department of Education (CDE) as a test for English language proficiency (ELP). ELPAC must be administered annually to all eligible EL children from kindergarten through grade twelve children whose primary language is a language other than English. This test encompasses two separate ELP assessment purposes: (1) the initial identification of children as English learning , and (2) for the purpose of an annual summative assessment to verify and measure each EL child's progress in learning English in order to identify the child's level of ELP (CDE, ELPAC, 2019).

In order to review the academic reports, the investigators obtained a list of all EL children from the Director of Special Education for each school district. In order to be included in this study the child must, at the time of the study: (1) speak Spanish as his or her first language as indicated by parents/caregivers on the school's home language survey, (2) attended kindergarten through 12th grade at the time of his or her initial academic assessment, and (3) was receiving special education services for a documented LD. Rather than review all qualified psycho-educational reports (approximately 600), the investigators randomly selected 90 reports (30 from each district). Two reports were excluded due to having incomplete data, thus leaving 88 reports for review. Gender and Grade level of EL children in the reports are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Grade Level at time of assessment		Gender at time of initial assessment	
		Female	Male
Pre-K	3	2	1
Kindergarten	6	1	5
1st Grade	12	3	9
2nd Grade	15	2	13
3rd Grade	17	2	15
4th Grade	14	4	10
5th Grade	8	2	6
6th Grade	8	3	5
7th Grade	2	0	2
8th Grade	3	0	3
Total	88	19	69

Data Analysis

To address specific aim 1, we reviewed each assessment report for: (1) standardized and non-standard assessment measures, (2) presence of RtI data, classroom observations, etc., (3) mention of modification to standardized tests, (4) mention of how interpreters were used during the assessment process, and (5) whether California English Language Development Test (CELDT) scores were considered in the assessment process. The following items were used to frame the data analysis of each report. The following 12 items were adapted from Figueroa and Newsome (2006):

1. Is there a determination that the "discrepancy is due to a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes and is not the result of the environmental, cultural, or economic advantage?"
2. Are California English Language Development Test scores cited? Or scores from another English language development test that measures a range of language features?
    a. And are these scores used in the diagnosis?
    b. And used in determining which language to test?
3. Is there consideration of the child's language background? Or is there any discussion in the report about the child's language dominance and English language proficiency?
4. Is standardized testing the only form of assessment?
5. Is there any discussion in the report about RtI before referring the child to assessments for possible LD?
6. Are the diagnostic assessments conducted in the child's most proficient language?
7. Is there any discussion of the child's language dominance and English proficiency?
8. Is there discussion of time spent in the United States/time of exposure to English language?

9. Is there mention of the parental or caregiver information of language spoken at home?
10. Is there mention of the use of an interpreter in the report?
    a. If yes, was the interpreter familiar with the cultural and linguistic variations of the language?
11. Did the assessment involve any analysis of the child's schoolwork?
12. Did the assessment include a "disclaimer" regarding the use of monolingual assessment tools?

To address specific aim 2, we documented the names of standardized assessments and the frequency in which they were used. For ease of analysis all data were entered into an Excel file.

Results

Several interesting findings must be considered: (1) the discrepancy criterion was used to determine the presence of an LD in each EL child (N=88), (2) standardized tests were the only means of determining an LD in these children, (3) only 10 out of the 88 assessments were conducted using Spanish language tests, and (4) informal measures (discussed in detail the Discussion section) were not documented in any of the 88 reports reviewed. Table 2 presents the results of 12 assessment items. To simplify presentation of the data, the three districts are combined.

Table 2 – Results of the 12 Assessment Items.

Item	Yes	No
1. Is there a determination that the "discrepancy is due to a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes and is not the result of the environmental, cultural, or economic advantage?"	88	0
2. Are California English Language Development Test (CELDT) scores cited? Or scores from another English language development test that measures a range of language features?	73	15
2a. and are these CELDT scores used in the diagnosis?	0	88
2b. and used in determining which language to test?	0	88
3. Is there consideration of the student's language background? Or is there any discussion in the report about the pupil's language dominance and English language proficiency?	0	88
4. Is standardized testing the only form of assessment?	88	0
5. Is there any discussion in the report about RtI before referring the student to assessments for possible LD?	0	88
6. Are the diagnostic assessments conducted in the student's first language?	10	78
7. Is there any discussion of the student's language dominance and English proficiency?	0	88

8. Is there discussion of time spent in the United States/time of exposure to English language?	0	88
9. Is there mention of the parental or caregiver information/ primary language spoken at home?	0	88
10. Is there documentation stating an interpreter was used during the assessment?	0	88
10a. If yes, was the interpreter familiar with the cultural and linguistic variations of the language?	0	0
11. Did the assessment involve any analysis of the child's schoolwork?	0	88
12. Did the assessment include a "disclaimer" regarding the use of monolingual assessment tools?	0	88

In addressing specific aim 2, we present the names and frequency of the assessments employed by educational evaluators in Table 3. For ease of presentation all districts are combined in the table.

Table 3 – Tests Used by Educational Evaluators in District 1, 2, and 3. Ordered alphabetically.

Test	Frequency		
	District 1	District 2	District 3
Adaptive Behavioral Assessment system II	5	4	4
Behavioral Assessment System for Children II	16	0	5
Batería III Woodcock-Muñoz	0	1	7
Brigance Test	0	4	0
Brief Visuospatial Memory Test II	11	6	18
Children's Test of Nonverbal Intelligence	9	2	6
Children's Test of Phonological Processes	21	5	5
Kaufman ABC II	28	3	12
Naglieri Nonveral Ability Test	7	7	1
Test of Auditory Processing III English	8	7	14
Test of Auditory Processing III Spanish	3	3	1
Test of Visual Perceptual Skills III	0	0	1
Universal Nonverbal Intelligence Test	0	2	6
Weschler Intelligence Scales - Children IV	6	9	11
Weschler Intelligence Scales - Children IV (Spanish)	0	0	1
Wechsler Individual Achievement Test	0	20	0
Wide Range Assessment of Memory and Learning II	1	0	1
Woodcock Johnson III	30	0	24
Total different tests employed	12	13	16

These data suggest that educational evaluators relied on various standardized tests to determine the presence of an LD in EL children. Interestingly, Spanish versions of available achievement and intelligence test were seldom used. In addition, although there is some overlap among the districts as to which tests were administered, the overwhelming popular tests were the Kaufman ABC, the Woodcock Johnson II, and the Wide Range Assessment of Memory and Learning; all English-only tests.

Discussion

Since the ultimate goal of this study was to ensure non- or even less-discriminatory assessment practices for EL children and all norm referenced standardized tools should be ‘‘undertaken with the intentions of improving children’s development and helping persons make wise and informed decisions’’ (Oakland, 1976, p. 3), its conceptual theoretical framework was impacted directly our understanding on second language acquisition theories and best practices of nondiscriminatory assessment (Ortiz, S. 2002). The second language acquisition theory infers that language is taught by through formal instruction, focusing on grammar lessons, but subconsciously obtained by the children while interacting with people through conversation in the language enriched and natural environment also. One of Krashen’s five fundamental second language acquisition theories (1982) is natural order hypothesis. The theory proposed that children pick up components of language, specifically grammar, in a predictable order as language learners while acquiring their second language. Clear understanding of the different stages and the general progression of a child who is undergoing second language acquisition will result in more accurate understanding of students’ levels of language proficiency that will consequently bring proper assessment result analysis for the possibility of a learning disability (Baseggio, 2018). Ortiz (2002) claimed that we need to administer tests in manner necessary to ensure full comprehension including use of any modifications and alterations necessary to reduce barriers to performance, while documenting approach to tasks, errors in responding, and behavior during testing, and analyze scores both quantitatively and qualitatively to confirm and validate areas as true weaknesses as the best practices of nondiscriminatory assessment.

After initial work with these school districts, the investigators suspected that the majority of EL, Latinx assessed for LD may not have been appropriately assessed. The doubts pushed them to research on EL assessment practices at these three school districts. Then the findings suggest that evaluators failed to fully comply with federal, state, and professional practice guidelines during their assessment practices. The fact that a vast majority of achievement and intelligence tests administered were English-only versions, standard scores may have been based on said child’s English proficiency rather than academic and/or intellectual ability. While it may be true that older school-aged children may have been exposed to academic English and, thus, present adequate English skills, the fact remains these children are designated as EL learners and must be assessed as such. To ignore this fact is simply poor practice that may lead to misdiagnosis and inappropriate program placement (Graham-Rivas, 2011).

In light of these assessment issues there are many concerns regarding the reports reviewed. The fact that none of the reports included parent interview information, the use interpreters during any part of the assessment process, no mention of the amount of time the children resided in the United States, and classroom observation data. The only assumption that can be made is that 78 of the 88 EL children were assessed as if they were mono-lingual English speakers. Test scores derived from the administration of formal assessment measures may not be a valid representation

of an EL child's true intellectual or academic abilities. Such scores are likely to be a closer reflection of a child's English language proficiency rather than reading, written language, math calculation, skills. Conversely, if the scores gathered from formal assessments are combined with informal or "non-standardized" measures, a 'more ecological and comprehensive' assessment may result. The following section discusses several commonly used informal measures educational evaluators can employ to supplement their current practices.

Recommended Practices

In-depth Parent/Caregiver Interviews. Results from a thorough parent/caregiver interview will provide educational evaluators and other educators with valuable insight into the child's language history. If unable to speak fluently in the tested language, evaluators should arrange for an interpreter to assist with the interview process. Interpreters can assist in acquiring the following information: (1) developmental milestones such as age of first steps, first word, first sentence production, (2) current language and problem solving abilities, such as the caregiver's knowledge of his or her child's expressive language and daily activities compared to siblings and /or playmates in both languages, (3) caregiver's knowledge of his or her child's native language production, (4) language spoken by family members (e.g., mother, father, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, and childcare personnel), (5) age when the student was first exposed to English, (6) literacy behaviors such as whether or not the child has been exposed to books (and the language of books exposed to), is interested in books and is reading, (7) any emotional information suggesting that the child gets frustrated when communicating, and (8) family history in terms of level of education and profession. As a whole, this information will assist in painting a clearer picture of a child's language status and developmental history.

Classroom Observations. Classroom observations often consist of an evaluator's informal note-taking while observing a child's behavior in the context of receiving instruction. Educational evaluators should document on- and off-task behaviors as well as whether the student advocates on his or her own behalf. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is a standardized behavior tool that is recommended for assisting in the observation process. Details on the CLASS can be found in the work of Pianta, LaParo, and Hamre (2008).

Student Portfolio Data. In addition to classroom observations, a review of an EL child's portfolio is strongly recommended since standardized tests in English do not usually reflect the child's true content knowledge or abilities. Yet, informal assessments may provide an ecological representation of an EL child's skills, abilities, and ongoing progress. Not only can the EL child's classwork be compared to his or her own curricular goals and objectives that are in progress, but the same work can also be compared to that of a peer with a similar cultural and linguistic background. In addition, Every Student Succeeds Act (formerly No Child Left Behind legislation, 2015) requires that scrupulous records be maintained on the progress of EL children. Having these records available for review will be helpful when educational evaluators and teachers make decisions for possible program placement and educational services.

Response to Intervention (RtI). This intervention approach is favorable as compared to reliance on standardized assessments to identify EL children with LD. Rather than rely on an evaluator's interpretation of standardized assessment data (which typically lacks the consideration of an EL child's linguistic status, and perhaps, most importantly, his or her cultural background), RtI monitors both the effectiveness of individual and small group intervention of a particular children (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2010). However, RtI can be prone to systematic errors in identifying children with LD, especially EL learners, since they are overrepresented

within the population of underachieving children and children who are at risk and in need of specialized supports and instruction may be inappropriately identified as having a learning disability from other reasons, such as lack of motivation and emotional stress (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD) Report (2005).

By assessing an EL child's academic skill via RtI rather than standardized assessments a child's current level of performance can be targeted in each academic area (Brown & Sanford, 2011; Richards & Leafstedt, 2010). Selecting the non-biased tools for EL children in the RtI process is critical. For example, if a student has linguistic and educational experiences in both Spanish and English, one would screen the child's early literature skills by using Indicadores Dinámicos del Éxito en la Lectura (IDEL) as well as Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). Both measures have been demonstrated to be reliable predictors of EL children' reading outcomes (Baker, Cummings, 2007). As such, identifying EL child's needs and then monitoring their progress in both academic performance and English language development require this multi-tiered evidence-based approach.

Changes to how children who may have LDs were instituted with the release of IDEIA (2004). The Response to Intervention (RtI) approach within the reauthorization of the IDEA brought a major change in LD identification procedures and decreased numbers of children with LDs in special education. RtI has been offering data in academics to identify and solve problems proactively by providing interventions and analyzing issues in learning and teaching.

Conclusion

The appropriate assessment of EL children continues to be a major issue in the education community. As seen in this study and those of Figueroa and Newsome (2006), Klingler and Harry (2006), and Wilkerson, Ortiz, Robertson, and Kushner (2006) many educational evaluators continue to rely on English-only standardized tests. While quick and somewhat easy to administer these tests are unfair and must not be used as the only measure when diagnosing an LD in the EL population, especially dyslexia (as a main LD) diagnosis due to a large number of risk genes (Plomin et al, 2016) in families with diverse cultural backgrounds (California Dyslexia Guidelines, CDE, 2017). Again, this specific population may not be assessed in the same way that western cultures assess because valuable factors may be driven by extreme environmental factors (e.g., wars or displacements) and may not be disclosed for cultural reasons (Paradis, Emmerzael & Duncan 2010).

Educational evaluators, school psychologists, special education teachers, and psychometricians must strive for conducting psychoeducational assessments that ensure all EL children receive the educational experiences that supports them in becoming content and well-educated members of society. This can be best achieved by ensuring each child has access to appropriate general and/or special education. As the number of school-aged, EL children continues to increase so must the number of educational evaluators knowledgeable of how to assess them appropriately. Efforts in researching current assessment practices must coincide with the development and training of evidence-based assessment practices. As such the onus is on both researchers and district administrators to work together to provide trainings at both the district and university levels. Future research efforts must address the development and utility of evidence-based, non-biased, ecologically valid psychoeducational assessment measures best suited for all EL children. The value of using the measures of high ecological validity for EL children is on helping assessors generalize the findings of research study to real-life settings because ecological validity is a measure of how test performance predicts behaviors in real-world settings. For EL

children, the use of ecologically valid formative assessment is to find out what they actually can do and what they know.

The investigators documented the initial test scores, grade, and gender of 88 EL children with the diagnosis of an LD. These children were currently receiving services but, in retrospect, current assessment data would have been beneficial to collect to determine whether academic gains had been realized. As such, t future studies should not only rely on initial assessment test data but also most recent assessment data -whether it be derived from formal testing or progress monitoring. Another area future investigators should consider is to consider extrinsic factors (California Practitioners Guide for Educating ELs with Disabilities, 2019, p. 109) that may affect an EL child's academic progress in special education, including interrupted schooling, limited education in the past, medical problems, homelessness, mobility, and other factors that might impact learning to their extended study.

These findings include specific courses in teacher preparation institutes where the investigators work and courses can be Assessment and Evaluation for Students with Disabilities and Teaching and Assessing ELs with Disabilities in a Inclusive Environment. They will also be included in local in-service school district trainings on appropriate assessment procedures for education evaluators, emphasizing school psychologists, when assessing EL children for LD.

Study Limitations

There are several limitations with this study. Although findings of this study resemble those documented by Figueroa and Newsome (2006) the small sample of files reviewed cannot infer similar findings will be realized in other districts. In addition, due to the exploratory nature of this study descriptive statistics was used as the only method of analysis. Future studies should include a survey component to supplement the file review. Surveying educational evaluators may reveal factors influencing their test selection and assessment practices.

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BLACK GIRLS AND SCHOOL DISCIPLINE: SHIFTING FROM THE NARROW ZONE OF ZERO TOLERANCE TO A WIDE REGION OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES AND CULTURALLY PROFICIENT PARTNERSHIPS

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ABSTRACT

Nationally, Black girls experience disproportionate discipline consequences more than any other group of students, starting in preschool with Black girls making up 20% of girls enrolled, but 54% of girls suspended from preschool (Camera, 2017). Inequitable, exclusionary discipline practices occur because there are many forms of institutionalized racism, including the invisibility, intersectionality, and stereotyping of Black girls. Implicit biases held by some school officials transform into practices, (supported by policies such as Zero Tolerance), which translate into suspensions and expulsions, and further contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline. Two scenarios of Black female high school students are examined to compare the implications of Zero Tolerance policies versus Restorative Practices and creating equity through Culturally Proficient Partnerships. The recommendations to reduce the number of suspensions is to not only use Restorative Practices, but also continue to educate and equip teachers and administrators in Culturally Proficient strategies that promote family and community partnerships, which insist on equity and fairness.

Keywords: Black girls, school-to-prison pipeline, restorative practices, cultural proficiency, inequitable discipline, exclusionary discipline practice, intersectionality

Introduction

Disproportionality based on race in the discipline of students has long been identified as a possible indicator of practices that cause inequity in schools (Balfanz, Byrnes, and Fox, 2015). It is not a new revelation that Black students face greater risks of suspension and expulsion than non-Black students. According to recent data, Black girls experience disproportionate discipline more than any other group of students. Sometimes this information is overshadowed by mainstream discourse (Blake, Butler, Lewis, & Darensbourg, 2010), but the evidence is staggering and cannot be ignored. Black females' stories of their experiences are being brought to the forefront because

of the unsettling incidents and alarming statistics regarding their plights and schooling experiences.

In the Department of Education's findings on suspension data for the 2011-2012 school year (U. S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR), 2014), Black girls were suspended six (6) times more than their White counterparts (Figure 1), with the latest trends indicating that Black girls now have the fastest growing number of suspension rates. Kimberlé Crenshaw, the lead author of the renowned report, *Black Girls Matter: Pushed Out, Overpoliced and Underprotected* (2015) emphasizes that, "the suspension and expulsion rates for Black girls far outpace the rates for other girls—and in some places, they outpace the rates of most boys" (p. 14). That same report clearly indicated that of all girls expelled from school in New York from 2011-2012, approximately 90% were Black. At the same time, "no White girls were expelled during that time" (p. 60). The study additionally indicates that only 2% of White females were subjected to exclusionary suspensions in comparison to 12% of Black girls. Ashley Morris, the Founder of the National Black Women's Justice Institute, (Anderson, 2016) asserts that "Black girls are 16 percent of girls in schools, but 42 percent of girls receiving corporal punishment, 42 percent of girls expelled with or without educational services, 45 percent of girls with at least one out-of-school suspension, 31 percent of girls referred to law enforcement, and 34 percent of girls arrested on campus" (n.p). With these disturbing latest trends effecting the disciplinary aspect of schools, the need to study Black girls and school discipline has become even more essential to provide a safe learning environment for them, give better insight to school and community officials who create and enforce disciplinary policies, and to partner with families and communities in addressing these issues (Clark-Louque, et al., 2019; Losen & Skiba, 2010).

Figure 1. Department of Education Suspension Data for Girls and Boys.

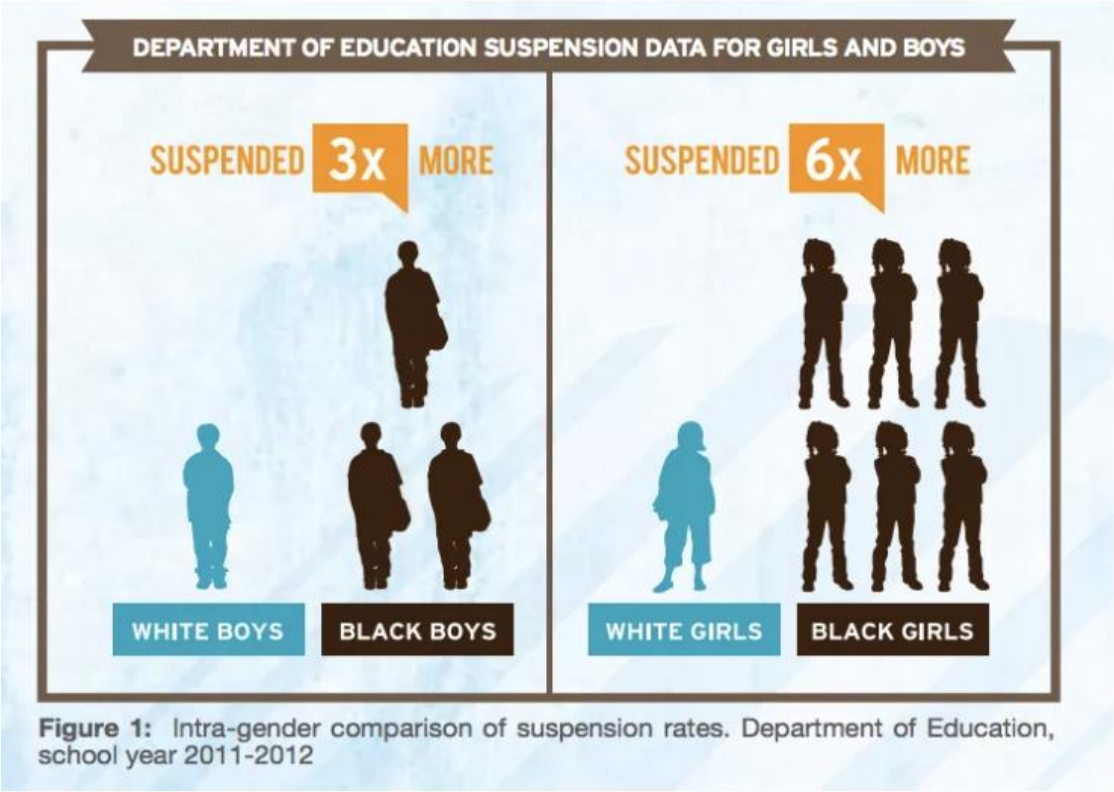


Figure 1: Intra-gender comparison of suspension rates. Department of Education, school year 2011-2012

Source: Department of Education Office of Civil Rights: (2014).

To further expose the disturbing incidents that occur to Black girls, the *Black Girls Matter: Pushed out, Overpoliced and Underprotected* report (Crenshaw, Ocen, & Nanda, 2015), lists explicit accounts of Black girls ranging from early elementary school to high school seniors being suspended and expelled for offenses that should be handled in less punitive methods. Consider these incidents and compare the infractions with the disciplinary actions proposed or taken:

➢ *2007*

- *6-year-old girl was arrested in a Florida classroom for having a tantrum.*
- *16-year-old girl was arrested in a California school for dropping cake on the floor and failing to pick it up to a school officer's satisfaction.*

➢ *2013*

- *8-year-old girl in Illinois was arrested for acting out.*
- *16-year-old girl in Alabama who suffers from diabetes, asthma, and sleep apnea was hit with a book by her teacher after she fell asleep in class. The student was later arrested and hospitalized due to injuries she sustained in her interaction with the police.*
- *16-year-old girl in Florida was arrested when an experiment she tried on school grounds caused a small explosion.*
- *12-year-old girl was threatened with expulsion from an Orlando private school unless she changed the look of her natural hair.*

➢ *2014*

- *12-year-old girl faced expulsion and criminal charges after writing "hi" on a locker room wall of her Georgia middle school.*
- *Detroit honors student was suspended for her entire senior year for accidentally bringing a pocket knife to a football game.*

Rohr (2019), in her article, *Pushed out and punished: One woman's story how systems are failing Black girls* adds the following recent incidents to the list:

➢ *2017*

- *Black female students at a charter high school in Malden (outside of Boston) were put in detention and threatened with suspension for wearing braids.*
- *Four 12-year-old middle school students in Binghamton, New York were strip searched because they seemed giddy during lunch hour.*

All of the aforementioned incidents are examples of how Black girls are disciplined in schools across our nation. These examples of disciplinary actions may seem unfair and extreme, but nevertheless, Black girls have been on the receiving end of these actions by school officials.

School discipline continues to be an active part of administrators' and school officials' responsibilities. As a part of school discipline, administrators make decisions based on perceptions, practices, and policies. Oftentimes, not all of the decisions regarding school discipline are implemented equitably (Clark-Louque & Latunde, 2019). Sometimes, punitive

school discipline practices demonstrate patterns of racialized inequities. Recent statistics indicate that school officials evaluate Black girls more critically than other females (Annamma et al., 2016). According to Morris & Perry (2017), school officials are more likely to cite Black girls for less serious but more ambiguous behavior than White girls who are disciplined for more serious offenses. In their research, Annamma et al., found that Black girls were disciplined more for dress code, defiance, and using inappropriate language. "Black girls experience many forms of institutionalized racism, including a disproportionate likelihood of being punished in school, being funneled into the criminal justice system, having contact with the foster care system, and experiencing physical and sexual abuse" (Scholars Strategy Network, (SSN) 2020, n.p.). This should be no surprise considering that schools contribute to the inequities and challenges Black girls face in their early schooling experiences (SSN).

Why are Black girls systemically treated this way in schools across the nation? Researchers studying this concern weigh in by analyzing several facets of this problem. Inequities occur because there are many forms of institutionalized racism, including the invisibility, intersectionality, and stereotyping of Black girls that occur from school officials (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989). Their attitudes, beliefs, and implicit bias are transformed into behaviors and practices, undergirded by policies such as Zero Tolerance, which transcend into suspensions and expulsions, thereby feeding into the school-to-prison pipeline. The glaring statistics further illuminate this debilitating cycle when it comes to disciplinary outcomes for Black girls (Annamma, et al., 2016; Caton, 2012).

Therefore, this paper's purpose is two-fold. First, its focus is to heighten the awareness of Black girls and the inequitable disciplinary outcomes that occur in schools. Second, in order to assist school administrators, policymakers, and educators as a whole, this article looks to examine options such as Restorative Practices and Cultural Proficiency Partnerships by creating equity partnerships with families in lieu of punitive disciplinary actions. Training in these areas is crucial to address implicit and explicit biases, as well as building equity capacity to restore family and community relationships. In order to address the issues, this article is organized into four sections. The first section discusses the perceptions and assumptions about Black girls. Invisibility, intersectionality, and stereotyping of Black girls play a significant role in how they are perceived by school administrators. The second section provides an account of the exclusionary processes. To examine the literature in these areas provides a foundation that demonstrates how school administrators, based on Zero Tolerance policies, use suspensions and expulsions to create and contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline. The third section introduces two scenarios. One is to demonstrate a situation with Black female high school students where Zero Tolerance is applied, and the second one is a comparative scenario modeling Restorative Practices from an equity-focused, Culturally Proficient Partnership manner. Lastly, the paper concludes with a discussion of the challenges and benefits of using these practices and strategies to combat the increasing number of suspensions and expulsions through systemic educational and community changes.

Invisibility, Intersectionality, and Stereotypes

For decades, data and studies on racial inequality focused primarily on Blacks in general, and more specifically on Black boys, and studies on gender inequity seem to highlight girls in general, and White girls specifically. These overt and covert examples of highlighting the needs of Black males and White girls, yet ignoring Black girls' needs is a recurring reality of invisibility (Collins, 2000; Mowatt, French, & Malebranche, 2013). In a 2015 blog, Crenshaw stated "As

public concern mounts for the needs of men and boys of color through initiatives like the White House's *My Brother's Keeper*, we must challenge the assumption that the lives of girls and women—who are often left out of the national conversation—are not also at risk"(n.p.). In essence, studies and initiatives regarding Black girls were not as prevalent as those regarding Black boys or girls in general. Black girls' school experiences seemed invisible and overlooked, not generating public concern. Noting that Black females encompass both gender and race, Professor Crenshaw's work asserts that disproportionate discipline is not simply a compound of race and gender, but rather the intersection of race and gender. The simple fact of being Black and female seems to be considered a double-edged sword at times because of the intersection of the two constructs. Crenshaw, in her 1989 paper, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," wrote about and coined the term "intersectionality" – the intersection of being Black and female. Later, in 1994, she explained that her objective was to "illustrate that many of the experiences Black women face are not subsumed within the traditional boundaries of race or gender discrimination as these boundaries are currently understood, and that the intersection of racism and sexism factors into Black women's lives in ways that cannot be captured wholly by looking at the women race or gender dimensions of those experiences separately" (p.94). The intersectionality of being Black and female, Professor Crenshaw surmises, can result in double discrimination: sometimes the discrimination is shared with females, and sometimes with Blacks. It's the combined effect of discrimination that causes the double discourse. Thus, Black females receive the brunt of overlapping systems of oppression through disciplinary actions in schools.

The National Women's Law Center (2014) emphasize that the main reason that Black girls are disciplined disproportionately is because of "racist and sexist stereotypes that educators and school officials sometimes harbour about Black girls" (Camera, 2017, n.p). The study reports that Black girls, more than any other group, receive multiple suspensions, usually based on implicit and explicit bias based on stereotypes. These stereotypes can implicitly form school officials' views of Black girls in negative ways. Implicit bias and other culturally biased factors may play a role as school officials' perceptions are formed, which influence actions taken. Ashley Morris, author of *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools* and executive producer of *School Matters*, suggests that Black girls who were disproportionately targeted experienced race and gender bias-based oppression which included sexual victimization, violence, poor student-teacher relationships, and other biases that impede how discipline policies are enforced (Morris, 2016). She asserts that Black feminine expression is often interpreted through the context of "stereotypes about black women and girls as hypersexual, sassy, conniving, or loud" (n.p.).

In their article, *Too Many Black Girls in Preschool Disciplined and Pushed Out,* Patrick and Schulman (2018) suggest that society has a false perception of Black girls. These false concepts readily play into the implicit biases that permeate the educational system. This is not to insinuate that disciplinary actions aren't warranted for some of the alleged infractions, but the data does not support that disciplinary actions are given equitably to Whites, males, and other girls (Balfanz, Byrnes, & Fox, 2015; Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010).

The Zone of Zero Tolerance

In an effort to make schools safer and to support discipline policies, Zero Tolerance was introduced in public schools. This was in response to drug control legislation and a series of tragic school shootings in the 1980s and 1990s. Zero Tolerance was specifically federally mandated for

gun possession; however, schools and districts included offenses as a result of drug possession and use, tobacco and alcohol use, disrespect, disruption and truancy (Jones, 2013).

Zero Tolerance operates under two core assumptions: 1) harsh sanctions will deter student misconduct, and 2) removal of the most serious offenders from the school will improve the school (Skiba et al., 2006). Principals who operate under the Zero Tolerance policy are likely to operate under these same core assumptions. This is problematic because principals' attitudes are subjective, thus, they may judge infractions based on their values and opinions, which may differ from values and opinions of students who do not look like them (Lindsey, et al., 2019).

Several studies (Brown Center Report on American Education: Race and School Suspensions, 2017; Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010) strongly suggest that the Zero Tolerance policies adopted by districts over the past two decades have contributed tremendously to the disproportionately high percentage of discipline for marginalized student groups, such as Blacks, Latinx, and Native American students (Fergus, 2015). Recently, Zero Tolerance policies have expanded to include behaviors such as dress code, disrespect and willful defiance, which are behaviors that can and should be addressed using strategies that can help students reflect, while restoring relationships (Jones, 2013). Likewise, according to the results of the Advancement Project (2010), Black students are significantly more likely to be suspended for disruptive offenses, which is subjective and White students more likely to be suspended for alcohol- and drug-related offenses (Jones, 2013). Interestingly enough, Mendez and Knoff, (2003) reported that out of the 15 most common infractions in which students were suspended, Black girls were more likely to be referred for defiance, disruptive behavior, disrespect, profanity, and fighting. Coincidence?

Black Girls' Suspension Rates and Disproportionality

Suspensions continue to be one of the most common forms of discipline used in schools with more than 3.3 million students being suspended from school each year. Lacoe and Steinberg (2018) suggest that suspensions are often misused as tools to manage classroom behavior by K-12 teachers and administrators. They conclude that, while most agree that suspensions are necessary for serious infractions such as violent behavior, many districts still use suspensions for smaller less serious offenses involving defiance.

Obviously, suspensions add to the disproportionate discipline that Black girls experience. Data from the article, *Breakthrough on Discipline* (Fergus, 2015), support claims of disproportionality in the suspensions of Black preschool students in 2011-12, as well as the disproportionality of suspensions of Black students in K-12 grades. A few years later, a more recent report by the Office of Civil Rights (2014), noted an overall decrease in the number of disciplinary actions, yet Black students were still suspended and expelled at a rate of three times more than their White counterparts.

For Black students, the literature has focused on an overrepresentation of referrals, and a disproportionate number of suspensions and expulsions (Clark Louque & Latunde, 2019). The 2015 U.S. Department of Education's OCR reported that Black female students were 3 times more likely to be referred to law enforcement and 2 times more likely to be physically restrained compared to their White counterparts. Likewise, Black female students represented 8% of the enrollment and accounted for 14% of students who received an out-of-school suspension, while 24% of White female students were enrolled with an 8% suspension rate, and a 13% enrollment for Latina girls with a 6% suspension rate. The disproportionate percentage of Black girls being suspended compared to their White and Latina counterparts account for Black girls being excluded from school and exposed to the school-to-prison pipeline.

Fueling the School-to-Prison Pipeline

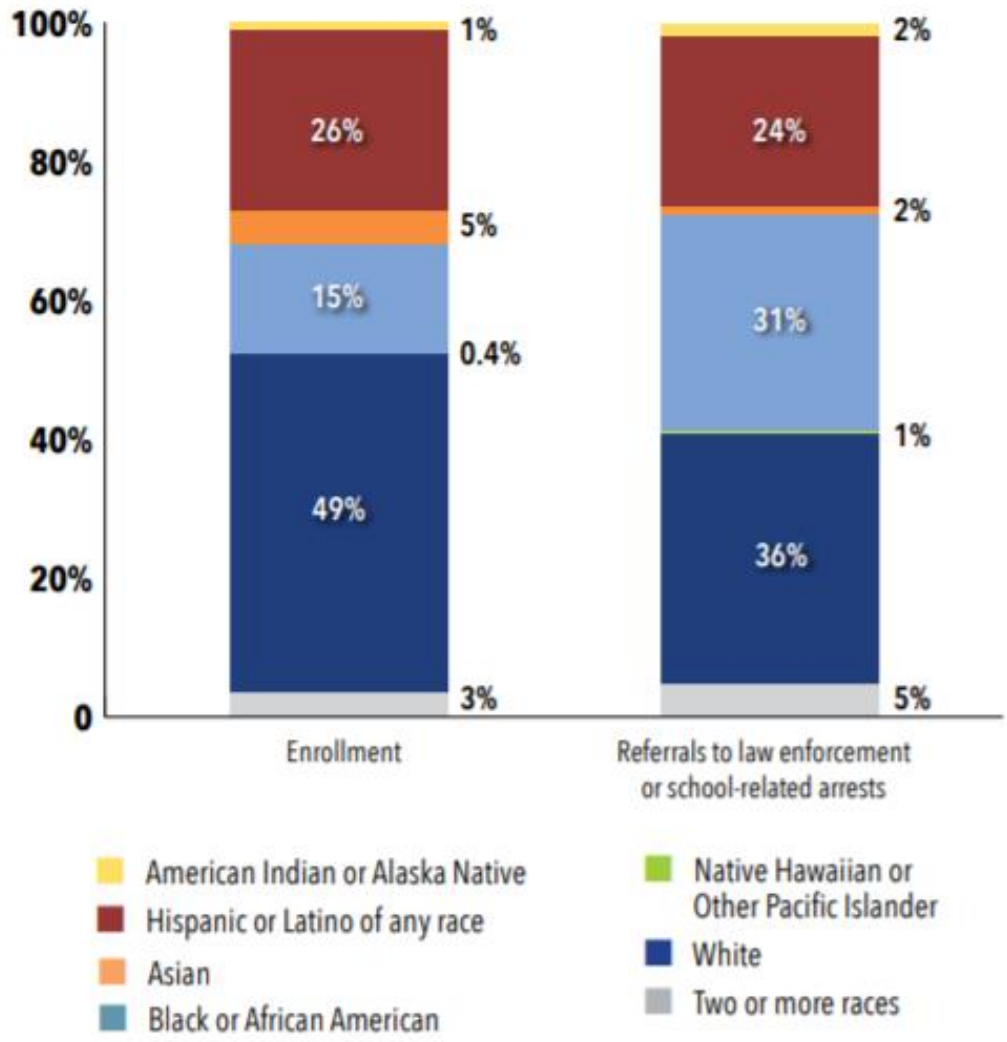
In the article, *Zero Tolerance Policies and the School to Prison Pipeline*, Farnel Maxime (2018) describes in detail the link between discipline and the likelihood of students being incarcerated. This pathway is now commonly referred to as the school-to-prison pipeline. He posits that students who endure punitive forms of discipline are more likely to be included in the school-to-prison pipeline. Additionally, the 2014 National Women's Law Center found that Black girls make up 31% of girls referred to law enforcement by school officials and 43% of girls in general who are arrested on school campuses, but are only 17% of the overall student population. These numbers continue to unveil the underlying perceptions that permeate our schools' discipline systems.

Starting even in preschool, discipline practices throughout the nation lead to a pattern of racial disparities for Black girls, resulting in high suspension rates. Patrick and Schulman (2018) posit that Black girls, even as young as toddlers, are seen as being less innocent than their White peers of the same age. According to the 2013-14 data from the U.S. Department of Education's OCR (2014), Black preschool children are 3.6 times more likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions as White preschool children. Black girls make up approximately 20% of the nation's preschool students, however, 54% of Black female preschool students receive more than one out-of-school suspension (Patrick & Schulman). Districts and schools that use suspensions for small infractions fail to realize the impact this form of discipline has on Black girls beginning as early as preschool.

Several other reports (Davis & Pfeifer, 2015; Henry, 2015; Miller et al., 2011; Nelson, Leung, & Cobb, 2016; Nittle, 2016) have drawn attention to even more dangerous implications related to excessive reliance on punitive forms of discipline. Besides missing out on instruction, and not having adult supervision, "exclusionary discipline is associated with lower student achievement, drop-out, and involvement in the juvenile justice system" (Anderson, 2019, p. 435). Furthermore, according to Fergus (2015), "suspensions link directly to grade-level retention, dropping out of high school, and youth encounters with the criminal justice system" (p. 16). In essence, these early experiences of racial disparities contribute to the early criminalization of Black students (Owens & McLanahan, 2019).

In 1986, Taylor and Foster's research found that Black girls received higher suspension rates than their White counterparts in K-12 grades. Approximately 20 years later, Mendez and Knoff (2003) completed a similar study, which suggested that, as previously cited, Black girls continued to receive suspensions at higher rates in comparison to their White and Hispanic counterparts in K-12 grades.

FIGURE 2: Percentage distribution of students referred to law enforcement or subjected to school-related arrests, by race



NOTE: Data may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2015–16.

Now, over 30 years later, similarly, the U.S. Department of Education's OCR (2015) indicates that Black students made up only 15% of the K-12 student population, yet they accounted for 31% of students referred to law enforcement or subjected to school-related arrests that year (Figure 2). The statistical data consistently deem that the number of Black students suspended or expelled is not in proportion with the total enrollment of the group. This is a systemic problem, which results in keeping Black students out of classrooms. The excessive discipline Black children

experience from minor infractions such as behavior and tantrums, makes them 10 times more likely to be exposed to discipline, retention, or incarceration (Patrick & Schulman, 2018).

It is vital that we understand the negative effects of disproportionality in school discipline for students of color (Brown & Tillio, 2013; Rausch & Skiba, 2004; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). What's often not acknowledged enough are the far-reaching negative impacts these practices and policies have on Black girls and their social-emotional wellbeing, as well as their academic futures. School suspension and expulsion experiences bring "long-term consequences for educational attainment and other indicators of wellbeing" (Morris & Perry, 2017; Owens & McLanahan, 2019, p.1548). Black girls who receive exclusionary discipline are at significant risk for teenage pregnancy and juvenile delinquency and may become disconnected from school, which is directly related to poor academic outcomes (Clark et al., 2003; Noltmeyer, Ward & Mcloughlin, 2015). It is clear that the consequences of exclusionary discipline last far past the number of days of a suspension.

Scenarios

The two scenarios include Black female students who were suspected of being under the influence of marijuana. In one scenario, the administration used a Zero Tolerance approach to provide consequences to students, and in the second scenario, the administration used a restorative and equity partnering approach to provide consequences to students. The scenarios represent examples of instances that impact Black girls in education.

The first scenario serves as an example of using Zero Tolerance policy and practice as a guide to disciplinary action taken by school administrators. One of the authors is a Professor of Educational Leadership and the scenario is based upon a former high school classmate's experience with her granddaughter. It also has aspects of real-life experiences of current administrators from her classes. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the school, school officials, and students. The scenario presents two Black female high school students who leave campus and return later with the smell of marijuana in their clothing. In order to examine the actions, the trends, and the consequences, we present the scenario implementing a Zero Tolerance approach.

Scenario 1 *Stonewall High School*

In the state of Tennessee, the Shelby County Schools (formerly Memphis City Schools) holds the number one spot for the highest percentage of Black students suspended (21.9%) and expulsions overall (0.8%) in the state. In a report by the Center for Civil Rights Remedies of the US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2014), which compares districts' student suspension rates nationally, Shelby County Schools was listed as one with an "egregious record", with over 40% of Black secondary students being suspended at least once during 2011-2012.

According to an article by Grace Tatter and the Memphis Daily News report (Tatter, 2016) on suspensions in Memphis, Tennessee, Black students are five times as likely as White students to be suspended, which is more than the national average. As with the national suspension rate, Memphis' suspension rate has somewhat declined, but even with the decline, the high rate for Black students is still disturbing, because that means students are losing instruction time and not learning in classes. According to Tennessee's state data (Tennessee Department of Education, 2015), *Black students accounted for 45.2% of the suspensions and 100% of the expulsions. Kebede (2018) states, "And while Tennessee law and district policies mandate expulsions for some*

offenses, 83 percent of the expulsions came at school leaders' discretion. A third were for violations of relatively minor rules" (n.p.).

Stonewall High School, a school in Memphis, consists of a student population of 89% Black, 9% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% two + races, and 90% who qualify for free and reduced lunch. One hundred percent (100%) of the teachers are considered inexperienced teachers and 58% of them are considered to be chronically absent. There are 24.2 students for every teacher. Of the out-of-school suspensions and expulsions, 94% and 95% respectively, are Black students. A comparison between Black students and White student suspension is not available for this site. Stonewall High School has been known for its disciplinary practices and the principal at Stonewall High School, Dr. AnneMarie Martin (White female), is proud of the way her administration team has handled potentially volatile situations with the enforcement of Zero Tolerance policies.

In February, two Black female students, KiAnn, an 11th grade student in advanced placement and Chelsea, an 11th grade student in general education courses, were dropped off at school at approximately 7:45am., five minutes before school officially began. The two girls left the campus before the bell rang. A White teacher who identified the students, saw them walk by her classroom, and called the principal's office to report the students' departure from the campus. She called the office and described the students as "loud, out of control, dark skinned girls with braids." Several minutes later, the students walked back to the school buildings.

The assistant principal, Dr. Henry Thornton (White), called both girls' parents to let them know that their daughters were unaccounted for at school. When KiAnn and Chelsea walked into the school office, Dr. Thornton informed KiAnn that he had called her grandmother (who was her legal guardian), but did not reach her. He had also tried to make contact with Chelsea's father and mother with no success. KiAnn was considered to be "more aggressive" and more talkative than Chelsea. Last year, KiAnn had been sent to the office three times for "behavior" challenges. She had been labeled as "disrespectful and defiant" at times. In the past year, KiAnn had been suspended from school four times. She had also received several on campus suspensions, where teachers sent her to a room where they housed "troublemakers."

KiAnn, now in the school office, called her grandmother, Ms. Tonika Stillman, and after a few minutes of conversation, Dr. Thornton asked to speak with Ms. Stillman, although he had a conversation with her prior to the girls returning to campus. KiAnn reached out to give Dr. Thornton her cellular phone. When Dr. Thornton reached for the phone from KiAnn, he sensed the distinct odor of marijuana. He spoke to Ms. Stillman and then returned the phone to KiAnn. He then walked the students to the Student Resource Officer's (SRO) Office. While they were all in the office, Dr. Thornton smelled both students' hands. He insisted that he got a strong "whiff" of marijuana from both of the students' hands; KiAnn's left and Chelsea's right. Also, Dr. Thornton insisted that both students' eyes appeared to be bloodshot. He further suggested that the black jacket that KiAnn wore smelled of marijuana. During the SRO's simple and routine investigation of asking the young ladies to empty their pockets, no paraphernalia was found on the girls. When questioned, the girls admitted to leaving the campus, but did not admit to arriving back to campus under the influence. The students were immediately suspended by Dr. Thornton for being under the influence for 45 days and were informed that they could appeal the process by calling the district and asking for a hearing. Chelsea's parents came to pick her up and KiAnn was left waiting for her grandmother.

While waiting for her grandmother, KiAnn began to get restless. She mumbled under her breath and Dr. Thornton asked her to keep her comments to herself. KiAnn used a few curse words

and Dr. Thornton informed her that she would be adding time to her suspension if she continued to use that tone and language. KiAnn called her grandmother again and said, "This stupid guy keeps testing me!" KiAnn walked out of the office to calm down and Dr. Thornton followed her out and told her to calm down. KiAnn said, "Man, stop following me!" Dr. Thornton informed KiAnn that she was going to receive more time on her suspension. KiAnn informed Dr. Thornton that she did not care. He contacted her grandmother again and informed her that KiAnn was unruly and used profanity towards him and that her behavior and being under the influence would cause her to receive a longer suspension.

Two weeks later, a hearing had been scheduled for both girls at separate times. Chelsea and her parents attended her meeting and her suspension was upheld, but the time was reduced to fewer days. KiAnn and her grandmother attended her hearing and the decision was upheld because of her extensive discipline record. KiAnn was referred to attend another school out of the area and would not be placed in Advanced Placement courses at the school referral. She would not be allowed to return to the home school.

Zero Tolerance policies like in the case of KiAnn and Chelsea are not equitably applied across different student groups. Research indicates that suspension and expulsion are not effective strategies for disciplining students or for correcting behaviors, but schools like Stonewall High continue to use these practices, and as a result, students of color who are more likely to be suspended or expelled miss out on a quality education (Skiba, 2014). The added offenses to Zero Tolerance of disrespect and willful defiance are typically subjective in nature. The subjectivity of these behaviors and even suspected drug use like the case presented above can be racially underlined, causing students of color, and Black girls specifically, to be more frequently targeted and suspended or expelled. Thus, Zero Tolerance has led to the disproportionate punishment for marginalized groups. This is likely the case because students of color are often suspended for disruptive behavior (Advancement Project, 2010; Fergus, 2015; Jones, 2013).

The second scenario, Mountain Range High School, is a compilation of scenarios experienced by several high school administrators with diverse student populations. The scenario features four high school students who were caught off campus during school hours. There were three female students, two White and one Black; and one Black male student. The students were all brought back to campus by a school police officer. The school police officer indicated that she smelled a distinct odor, which was suspected to be marijuana. In order to examine the actions, the trends, and the consequences, we present the scenario using Restorative Practices and Culturally Proficient equity partnerships including conferencing and questions.

Scenario 2 ***Mountain Range High School***

Mountain Range High School is a school in a small town in Ohio, consisting of a student population of 49% Black, 23% Hispanic 15% White, 8% two + races, 2% Asian, 3% other and 10% who qualify for free and reduced lunch. One hundred percent (100%) of the teachers are considered as highly qualified, there are 20 students for every teacher, and 63% of teachers have been teaching at Mountain Range for 10 or more years. Of the 49% of Black student population, 28% are female and 21% are male. Fifteen percent of the Black student population report having been suspended at least once for drug possession and 10% have been suspended two or more times for the same offense. White students make up 15% of the students. 8% of the White students are female and 7% are male. Ten percent of the White students report being suspended at least once for drug possession. None of the White students reported being suspended more than once;

however, some admitted to being in possession more than once. Mountain Range High School has been known for its Restorative Practices. Ms. Lacy, a White assistant principal at Mountain Range High School brags about the discipline office because of their attention to detail with suspensions as it relates to drug possession and repeat offenders. Although the school personnel have all been trained in Restorative Practices, it has been a while since they have had a follow-up training.

In the fall, four students, three females: Jennifer (White), Ashley, (White), and Savannah, (Black) and one male, Nick (Black), were seen by a Latinx school police officer off campus during school hours and suspected of being in possession of marijuana. Ms. Lacy was immediately notified and the students were brought back to campus by school police approximately one hour after school began. The school police notified the dean that when bringing the students back to campus there was a faint smell of marijuana. Mrs. Sanderson (White), the Dean of Students, emailed all parents to let them know that their students were brought to school approximately an hour after school was already in session. Mrs. Sanderson informed parents that the students would be searched, and an investigation would be done. Mrs. Sanderson asked each student individually if they were in possession of anything that should not be on a school campus. The students admitted to being off campus but stated that they were just running late and were not in possession. The school police searched all students. Savannah had a black lighter in her backpack, which she indicated had been there from the weekend. None of the other students were found to be in possession of anything. Savannah and Ashley had both been involved in altercations at school on a few different occasions. Their student records indicated the type of infraction and the consequence received by the students. Mrs. Sanderson grabbed four cards out of her top drawer. She gave each student a card and asked them to prepare to have a dialogue using the Restorative questions on the card. The questions were:

- *What happened?*
- *What were you thinking of at the time?*
- *What have you thought about since?*
- *Who has been affected by what you have done?*
- *In what way have they been affected?*
- *What do you think you need to do to make things right?*

All students received cards but when Ashley and Savannah reviewed the cards they threw them across the table. Mrs. Sanderson asked both girls to step outside in the hallway; both girls refused and continued to sit with their arms folded. Savannah informed Mrs. Sanderson that she knew her rights and that she felt like her rights were being violated. Mrs. Sanderson asked the two students who were being compliant to step into the next office with Ms. Lacy and prepare to have a dialogue after reviewing the Restorative questions. Jennifer and Nick left the room with Ms. Lacy. Mrs. Sanderson asked Ashley if she wanted to remain in the room to dialogue with her and Savannah or if she wanted to review the questions with the other students in the next room. Ashley agreed to review the questions in the next room. Mrs. Sanderson asked Savannah why she believed her rights were being violated. Savannah explained that she was brought over in a police car and she had done nothing wrong. She told Mrs. Sanderson that she did not have anything in her possession, and she felt like she should just be allowed to go to class. Mrs. Sanderson informed Savannah that she appreciated her calm demeanor as she responded and told her that as a part of Restorative Practices, they will always allow for students to express themselves. She also reminded her that as a part of her responsibility as the dean of students, she has to be sure that all

students are safe and understand that there are consequences for not adhering to being on campus when the bell rings. She and Savannah had a one-on-one dialogue where Savannah acknowledged that she understood and that she would review the questions. Mrs. Sanderson gave Savannah the choice to finish reviewing the cards one on one with her or to be reconnected with the other students. All students continued to claim that they were neither under the influence nor in possession of marijuana. Mrs. Sanderson continued dialogue with students and monitored students' behavior for the remainder of the hour. She invited students to sign up for counseling once a week for four weeks to discuss the potential problem of being off campus during school hours as a consequence. All students were given a warning by the school administration and sent to class.

Both high school scenarios involved students who were suspected of being under the influence. Administration, school police, and parents/guardians were all involved. In the case of KiAnn, at Stonewall High School, she experienced being expelled based on previous infractions that could be considered as subjective. Her discipline record showed that she had several out-of-school suspensions as well as some classroom suspensions for having behavior challenges. Ultimately, KiAnn was expelled, which excluded her from completing her advanced placement course work for the remainder of her junior year. This is an example of how Zero Tolerance policies can impede the success of Black students and other students who experience exclusionary discipline. Although Chelsea did not receive the entire 45-day suspension, she did receive a consequence that caused her to miss instruction.

In the Mountain Range High School scenario, the four students who were suspected of marijuana use were given consequences as well. The assistant principal began the process by ensuring that the parents were notified and informed that a search would take place. All students were not assumed to be in possession. The school police searched all students and Mrs. Sanderson prepared to work with students on responding to restorative questions. Although a few of the students had previous discipline records and were not compliant to begin with, Mrs. Sanderson continued to connect with students and provided only consequences that matched their behavior. Although students were suspected of being under the influence, the school staff did not provide punitive consequences. They monitored students for safety reasons, provided them with an opportunity to meet with the school counselor, and allowed students to go back to class within the hour. An updated notification was sent to the families of the students informing them of what had transpired, including details of the incident and the proposed consequences. Information was also shared with the families regarding safety concerns, counseling opportunities, and future possible engagement strategies to build stronger relationships with the families.

Restorative Justice and Culturally Proficient Partnerships

The Wide Region of Restorative Practices

The International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) defines Restorative Practices as a social science that studies how to build social capital, and achieve social discipline through participatory learning and decision-making. The concept of using Restorative Justice began in the 1970s as an intervention between offenders and victims (IIRP, n.d.). Restorative Justice and Restorative Practices are ways that schools can begin to shift their practice from punitive discipline, where the blame is placed on individuals, to restorative discipline, which focuses less on individuals and aims to restore relationships. Restorative discipline entails establishing a

collaborative effort to solve problems after a conflict, or preventing problems before they arise. In the article, *A Restorative Approach to School Discipline*, author Jon Eyler (2014) suggests exploring shifts in how we respond to student behavior in order to effectively change school climates. "To effectively change school climates and behavioral outcomes, some fundamental shifts are needed in the way we've traditionally responded to student behavior" (p. 12). According to Eyler, contrary to some popular perceptions, Zero Tolerance strategies do not produce safer schools. They do, however, result in higher suspensions and increased dropout rates.

When examining other ways to discipline students, restorative approaches have risen to the top as practical and effective practices. According to Zehr (1990), Restorative Practices derive from Restorative Justice. Restorative Practice is an inclusive, non-punitive alternative to discipline, and it is considered as one response to the disparities in schools (Stewart Kline, 2016). Morrison and Ahmed (2006) suggest that Restorative Justice aims to empower participants through fostering accountability and responsibility between those affected by the behavior. They also conclude that it seeks resolution that contributes to healing, resolution, and reparation and reintegration, which prevents further harm. Restorative Justice focuses more accountability on the harm caused by the offender rather than the act (Fronius et al., 2016). "Restorative Justice in the school setting views misconduct not as a school-rule-breaking, and therefore as a violation of the institution, but as a violation against people and relationships in the school and the wider community" (Cameron, Thorsborne, & Justice, 2001, p. 83).

Restorative Practices can and should be used in lieu of Zero Tolerance practices to ensure equitable opportunities for students who exhibit behaviors that educators view as disruptive, defiant or inappropriate. Restorative Practices contribute to restoring relationships and promote efforts for students who have exhibited behaviors that would typically be punished to remain in school after disciplinary action that has caused harm to others. The strategies used in Restorative Practices aim to build, restore, and create opportunities for students to reflect rather than to remove them from class or school. Therefore, in the case of KiAnn and Chelsea, the following recommended steps using a restorative approach would be to:

1. Meet and conference with KiAnn and Chelsea to inquire about their decision to leave campus. Holding a conference will initiate the restoration of the relationship between KiAnn, Chelsea and the administrator.
2. Allow KiAnn and Chelsea the opportunity to respond to questions about their decision to leave campus. Giving them the opportunity to respond shows students they are valued as a member of the school community.
3. Ask KiAnn and Chelsea if they were aware of the expectations for remaining on campus once they had been dropped off and give them the opportunity to ask clarifying questions.
4. Refer back to school and district policy as KiAnn and Chelsea are included on the possible consequence of leaving campus. Their agreement with the consequence suggests buy in and may likely result in adhering to the consequence.
5. Choose a consequence that matches the behavior of leaving campus (e.g., a written document on the safety concerns of leaving campus without permission and knowledge by an adult). Consequences should be an opportunity to teach, not to punish, therefore, choosing consequences that match the behavior will help with correcting student behavior.

6. Contact the parent/guardian/family to discuss the situation and the consequence that was agreed upon between students and the school administration. Offer to follow up with the parent/guardian/family to encourage further interaction with them.
7. In the event KiAnn or Chelsea were found to have been under the influence, it would be appropriate to contact the parent/guardian/family and give them the option of whether to come to campus and sign the students out to ensure their safety or to have them remain on campus until they were sober and capable of conferencing and eventually return back to class.
8. It is important for the school site administrator, the resource officer, and the parents/guardians/families to engage in dialogue to allow students to collaborate on the consequences so that everyone is a part of the decision in regards to next steps. This community gathering would serve as an opportunity for students to reflect, and for the community to support restoration.

Research has proven that Restorative Practices positively impact schools. Studies also indicate there are challenges associated with the implementation of Restorative Practices. In the Research Brief from the Center for Urban Success at the University Rochester in the School of Education, Marsh (2017) spells out four main challenges of implementing Restorative Practices. They are:

- Time for implementation
- Resistant teachers and administrators
- Difficulty in changing school culture
- Sustaining restorative practices

Historically, teachers have been the givers of knowledge and the "sage on the stage" in their classrooms; thus, asking some to relinquish their authority may pose a challenge. Some teachers believe that adopting Restorative Practices takes too much time (Gregory, et al., 2016). Teachers who have a fixed mindset or deficit thinking, and low expectations for students, prefer to remove challenging students. This kind of thinking creates barriers to implementation (Guckenberg, et al., 2015). Another challenge found in the implementation of using Restorative Practices is sustainability. Schools often introduce an initiative once during professional learning and may not revisit that topic. In order to sustain Restorative Practices, schools should provide ongoing training and support to teachers and staff over multiple days and throughout the year (Gregory, et al.).

Schools must maintain ongoing support to staff, usually in the form of training. As with teachers and administrators, instead of a one-stop workshop approach, planned workshops given over a period of time are usually preferred and recommended for a sustained and meaningful outcome (Gregory, et al, 2016; Guckenberg, et al, 2015). Overcoming challenges of implementing any school-wide initiative can prove to be cumbersome; however, many schools have been successful (Marsh, 2017). McCluskey, et al. (2008) suggest that Restorative Practices have a focus on educational approaches that are preventative. In addition to the preventative approach, Stewart Kline (2016) suggests that Restorative Practices can be used to respond to conflict and repair damaged relationships. This type of collaboration is in sync with the concepts of culturally proficient engagement with students, families, and communities (Clark-Louque, et al., 2019).

Culturally Proficient Partnerships

Partnering with families can benefit schools as they communicate with families about policies, expectations, consequences, and disciplinary programs. Not only should support be offered to administrators, teachers, counselors, and staff, but families and members of the community should also have an opportunity to engage and partner with schools on minimizing these numbers and addressing these issues together as a community. Sharing information with families can assist all involved in learning about and knowing the rules and the consequences of infractions, so that everyone is informed and can expect disciplinary actions to be executed equitably. Training in multiracial/multiethnic/multicultural competency building is key to communities working collaboratively to resolve issues (White & Henderson, 2008). Simultaneously, families can share their funds of knowledge and cultural capital with the schools, educating and collaborating with them in this case, about Black culture and experiences. The 7 Cs model in *Equity Partnerships: A culturally proficient guide to family, school, and community engagement,* focuses on building relationships (Clark-Louque, et al., 2019; Louque & Latunde, 2014). This model is intended to function as support concepts for framing and cultivating strong family-school-community partnerships to co-create policies, procedures, and practices. The 7 Cs - *collaboration, communication, culture, care/compassion, community, connectedness,* and *collective responsibility* are seven evidenced-based family and community engagement skills and concepts to enhance capacity building toward equitable relationships. Additionally, training should focus on three areas: 1) the policies and practices of the school to assess the appropriateness and whether or not they are effective and implemented equitably; 2) leaders' personal beliefs and values, particularly about Blacks; c) the culture of the Black community, as well as the community and culture of the school/district. This inside-out approach is used to provide common points of content for equity-focused administrators and school leaders, as well as for families of Black youth. It furthermore allows for care and respect of each other demonstrating a collective responsibility to tackle inequitable disciplinary practices. Furthermore, training

The challenges of Culturally Proficient Partnerships are grounded in the historically "strained relationship" Black families have had with schools. Disparities in educational outcomes and inequitable treatment have foundationally been the culprits of mistrust between Black families and schools (Delpit, 2012; Louque & Latunde, 2014). Systems of oppression, the presumption of entitlement and the resistance to change are all barriers that Cultural Proficiency Partnership would encounter in order to adjust to the effects of racism and oppression. Making the commitment to engage families and communities will help to create a "robust collection of policy-and-practice interventions that address the underlying conditions to this phenomenon" (Morris, 2016, n.p.).

Conclusions

While the research on the infractions that cause Black girls to experience exclusionary discipline is scarce, the evidence that is available indicates that implicit bias, stereotypes and other cultural factors impede decisions in regard to discipline (Crenshaw, Ocen, & Nanda, 2015). The *Black Girls Matter* report (2015) gave an explicit account of Black girls' school discipline experiences over the course of 10 years and in different states across the U.S. where exclusionary practices were used resulting in suspension or expulsion for a variety of reasons. In order to reduce the negative consequences and effects of Zero Tolerance for Black girls, and enhance the climate for positive relationships, schools like Stonewall High School are urged to seek training in Culturally Proficient and Equity Partnerships, and Restorative Practices for the students to benefit from the strategies that are used to build and repair relationships when harm has been done.

In addition, unlike Zero Tolerance, studies on discipline and suspension and equity support the use of Restorative Practices in schools and classrooms. Black girls are often at risk for dropping out, referred to alternative education schools and are also more likely to be at risk for the school-to-prison pipeline (Fergus, 2015). Implementing Restorative Practices has improved school climate in many large urban school districts, specifically, in areas where students battle with connectivity to their schools, relationships, bullying and violence (Lleras, 2008). Therefore, the recommendations for how to reduce the number of suspensions for Black girls is to not only use Restorative Practices, but to continue to educate and equip teachers and administrators in Culturally Proficient Partnership strategies that promote and insist on equity and fairness.

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FROM ALLY TO ACTIVIST: EMBRACING ACTIVISM AS AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP TO COMBAT INJUSTICE IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS

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"Don't be a witness. Be an activist". – DaShanne Stokes

ABSTRACT

Educational leaders must embrace activism as central to their efforts to combat racism and other unjust policies in schools. Social justice activism is an intentional action with the goal of bringing about positive social change. It requires leaders to accept their responsibility to actively resist exclusion, prejudice and injustice in our educational system, despite internal or external pressure from others who may thwart their efforts to promote social justice. The aim of this article is to bring to the forefront how social justice education leadership and social activism must be coupled as essential tools within the blueprint to end injustice. This article begins with defining the terms: ally (alliance), advocate (advocacy) or activist (activism) as they relate to social justice leadership in education and places them upon a newly constructed continuum (Social Justice Action Continuum) to battle overt racism and the "New Racism". The continuum recognizes that educational leaders need an objective measure of their level of commitment to lead social change to fully understand the benefits and consequences. The article proposes a paradigm shift in educational leader preparation, which focuses on social justice activism.

Keywords: Activism, social justice, educational leadership, racism, social justice action continuum

Introduction

The recent explosion of unrest and civil disobedience has again amplified calls for social, legal and economic justice in all of our American institutions; especially in our educational system. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote "Education without social action is a one-sided value because it has no true power potential". True and substantive reform requires a cadre of social justice educational leaders who recognize that action or activism is a requirement for substantive change in our unjust educational system. Educational leaders must embrace activism as central to their efforts to combat racism and other unjust policies in schools. Social justice activism is an intentional action with the goal of bringing about positive social change. It requires educators to accept their responsibility to actively resist exclusion, prejudice and injustice in our educational system, despite internal or external pressure from others who may thwart their efforts to promote social justice (Sliwinski, 2016). This article begins with defining the terms: ally (alliance), advocate (advocacy) or activist (activism) as they relate to social justice leadership in education and places them upon a newly constructed continuum to battle

overt racism and the "New Racism". The Social Justice Action Continuum, which is adapted from the Action Continuum developed by Adams, Bell, & Griffin, (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997) includes the range of actions that intensify from the role of ally to advocate and then to activist. The continuum recognizes that educational leaders need an objective measure of their level of commitment to lead social change to fully understand the benefits and consequences. It is a clarion call to action for principals and other educational leaders to address issues of equity by embracing the full spectrum of action including activism. This Social Justice Action Continuum can be utilized in Leadership preparation programs so that each can undergo a paradigm shift from preparing leaders to not only deal with overt acts of injustice but also confront the "New Racism" which are the institutionalized and structural systems that marginalize students and permeate our laws and school policies.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this article and the development of the Social Justice Action Continuum is strongly influenced by Moyer (2001) eight stages of social movements and the four roles of activists. Moyer developed a classification of social movement participants: citizen, rebel, change agent and reformer (Moyer, 2001). The instrument also draws heavily from research on New Social Movement Theory conjoined with Social Movement Impact Theory. The New Social Movement (NSM) theory emphasizes how the focus shifts from specific changes in public policy to areas of social changes in identity, lifestyle and culture indicating that the social aspect is seen by the NSM as more important than the economic or political aspects. (Pichardo, 1997). While this theory does offer insight into how more contemporary social movements may have shifted from Marxist views of purely class-based economic social movements; it fails to understand that public policy and laws are inextricably linked to social identities like race, gender identity; and race. New Social Movements like the Right to Choose movement, the Ecology movement, LGBTQIA+ rights movement and Anti-Racist movements are perfect examples. The Social Movement Impact (SMI) theory accentuates the necessity for individuals and social movement organizations to promote four distinct types of change: Individual Change; Institutional Change; Cultural Change; and Political Change. Each of these types of change are essential to transformational reform (Soule, S. A., and Olzak, S., 2004). Activists can cause individual change in both the participants in the movement and those they are seeking to influence. Activists connect with others affiliated with their cause, causing new networks to form and shared values to be accentuated (Diani, 1997). They also undergo a process of empowerment, in which they become more apt for further activism (Hasso, 2001). Institutional Change often requires more targeted and direct engagement and are often the most resistant to relinquishing historical control. Institutional change tends to be slow and stately, but sometimes when confronted with the illumination of its inequities; they find it necessary to break decisively with the past or to respond rapidly to quickly changing circumstances. Institutional Change drives Political Change as our laws and policies are a direct reflection on of the cultural values promulgated by the social and economically elite ruling class. Political Change is best described as the "formal change" within society as it is accompanied by the weight of the legal system. History has numerous examples of how political change (laws passed) have not been accompanied by cultural and institutional change. The 13th, 14th and 15th amendments to the United States Constitution are blatant examples. American history is also replete with social movements that only gained traction when individuals recognized the importance and utility of activism as an essential tool leading to social change. Social Justice

Educational Leadership can embrace activism in its various forms and iterations to address inequity in American Schools. This is a critical step in creating a more just society.

Defining Social Justice Educational Leadership

A social justice leader is defined as someone who is fighting for positive change in society, so by extension, a social justice educational leader should embrace the tenets of social action which always upsets the status quo. Social justice educational leaders recognize the role race, ethnicity, family income, ability, gender, and sexual orientation play in predicting student success in school. They commit to creating schools that address societal inequalities by striving to help all students reach academic proficiency (Glickman, James et al, 2003).

Social Justice Activism

Social Justice Activism is an instrument for social movements. It is the vehicle and strategies that people can utilize to organize themselves and informs how they can participate in varied types of civil disobedience and/or protests. The degree of involvement in social justice activism is based upon decisions that reveal the degree of their participation in democratic efforts to create a more just society. Oliver and Marwell (1992) define social activists as "people who care enough about some issue that they are prepared to incur significant costs and act to achieve their goals".

Essential to this effort is an analysis of the roots of discrimination followed by the development of a strategic plan to carry out participatory activism in which stakeholders collaboratively work as allies for equity and justice. An important initial step in this process is understanding that activism is an attempt to understand the range of actions that social justice educational leaders need to implement to ensure substantive change in American schools. It is not sufficient to produce leaders who are allies or even advocates – but rather a cadre of leaders who understand the value and importance of activism - a doctrine or practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action especially in support of or opposition to a controversial issue or policy; especially those that negatively impact or marginalize target groups of students and their communities.

Social Justice Ally

The term "Ally" can mean different things to different people but for this work, the term falls on at the beginning of the Social Justice Action Continuum. After an extensive research of the literature; an ally was identified as an individual from a dominant social group willing to forego some degree of their privileged status to support the activism of a marginalized group with the intent of dissolving oppressive systems in a society (Mizock & Page, 2016; Munin, 2010). The Ally Model identified in the research provided an approach to social justice built on social identity, which maintains that everyone can have a role to play in promoting social justice, regardless of their social identities in oppressed and oppressor groups (Anderson & Middleton, 2011; Bishop, 2002; Foster, 2011; Wijeyesinghe, Griffin, & Love, 1997; Reason, Millar, & Scales 2005; Spencer, 2008). The 1960's civil rights era introduced the popularized role of that ally with white allies in anti-racist activism, male allies in the struggle for women's rights, and straight allies in LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) rights advocacy (Brooks & Edwards, 2009). Since that time period, allies have been identified to support the civil liberties of additional groups including people with physical disabilities, serious mental illnesses, elderly, youth, transgender individuals, and other groups facing injustice. These movements have often been led by members of

disadvantaged groups, with allies from advantaged groups typically positioned to offer support and resources (Iyer & Leach, 2010).

Because this article focuses on the role of an educator within the social justice framework, it is possible for teachers, administrators and other educators to become allies, although that transition might look different depending on identity, experience and familiarity with issues of power and privilege. Because allies are often members of the privileged class, there are some risks but not as great as minority personnel who seek the same space. According to Ali Michael of the University of Pennsylvania's Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education. "A teacher ally is someone who has a strong sense of their own identity, as well as the ways in which their own identities are either privileged or oppressed," she says. Rather than being an ally to an individual the Ally for Social Justice is an ally to issues - such as classism, racism, or religious oppression (Kendall, 2012). An ally for social justice also sees the interconnectedness of forms of oppression supporting each other and recognizes the need to address intersecting forms of oppression (Bell & Griffin, 1997).

(Mizock & Page, 2016) identified a number of limitations to the ally role finding that the ally position may not be the optimal position to achieve social change and may lead to conflicts with social justice values. They believe that many of the aforementioned benefits of the ally role fall short of being implemented successfully due to inherent constrictions. Allies are very often guilty of romanticizing how they will come to the aid of oppressed folks. These are the ally "saviors" who see victims as tokens instead of people. This often results in the development of a "teacher or principal as savior" complex. These educators incorrectly create a self-indulging cinematic fantasy of what it will be like to work with marginalized students. Their beliefs are informed more by the dominant media and a cultural lens shaped by their own lives and experiences. This results in strategies for serving these students being truncated by the limits of the allies' own experiences.

The educator ally sees the pro-social value of working with these students but imagines him or herself in a messianic role: "saving" the "problem student" by providing love, attention, connection or self-esteem in the belief that this will facilitate academic success. However, despite the very best of intentions, this "story" fails to name the structures of racism at work, instead locating the mechanisms of marginalization in the students and seeking to subsequently "save" them from themselves. The messianic script locates the "problem" in students, their families and their communities, when in reality blame should be laid at another door entirely. (Galman, 2007).

Social Justice Advocate

Not all advocacy is social justice advocacy. In fact, a great deal of advocacy happens without consideration of disadvantaged groups' needs or perspectives. The Advocacy Institute (2018) defined it as a range of strategies and tactics designed to move people to action - for example, to get a school district to adopt a particular reform strategy, to create a national movement for immigration reform, or to make sure economic development of a particular neighborhood does not eliminate access to affordable housing for current residents. Being an advocate is relatively more impactful when they acknowledge and utilize their privilege to engage in controversial situations on behalf of marginalized people and groups who can't afford to do so in order to make social and political change.

Advocates are often called "accomplices". For social justice advocates who use the term accomplice, they often see the site of focus as the main difference between the work of an ally and that of an advocate. An ally will mostly engage by standing with an individual or group in a

marginalized community. An advocate or accomplice will focus more on dismantling the structures that oppress that individual or group—and such work will be directed by the stakeholders in the marginalized group. Simply, ally work focuses on individuals, and advocates/accomplice work focuses on the structures of decision-making agency (Clemons, 2017).

The primary goal of educator advocates is to engage in authentic social justice strategies and avoid "performance advocacy". Performance advocacy occurs when those with privileged identities view the action as more of a choreographed cinematic role – than true spiritual and impactful intervention. It is a story and the performance advocate wants to play a role but only if they can control the plot twists and the ending. Authentic social justice advocacy by those with privileged identities is necessary for truly transformative systemic change (Clemons, 2017). Authentic social justice advocacy means an educator must examine your own biases, power, and privilege—critical self-reflection—then engage in conversations with colleagues around inequities, educational or otherwise (Slesaransky-Poe & Garcia, 2014). The role of a social justice advocate is to call out inequitable and oppressive practices and make them perceivable to those perpetuating and complicit in those systems (Clemons, 2017).

When authentic social justice advocacy is modeled by educators, students pay attention and learn what true advocacy is all about (Mthethwa-Sommers, 2014). By bringing to light the inequities of the status quo and demystifying issues that are usually not talked about in our polite society; social justice advocates engage in the authentic work of transformational change towards a more just school and community environment (Clemons, 2017).

Social Justice Activist

Activism is action on behalf of a cause; action that goes beyond what is conventional or routine. The work of dismantling structural racism in education demands bold, strategic, and sometimes revolutionary acts that, by their nature, conflict with mainstream, lauded approaches to educational leadership (Murtadha & Watts, 2005; Perlstein, 2005; Richards & Lemelle, 2005). Educational activists are leaders who contribute to and protect democratic education through their use of grassroots strategies both inside and outside of school systems and by their professional savvy within. Their varied strategies challenge structural racism in schools and advocate for children in their communities. Activists are more strategically engaged to combat racism and build effective school-to-community relationships that improve education for marginalized students.

Teacher as an Activist.

Teaching for social justice at the PK–12 level is not easy, however, and is rife with challenges (Bell, 2002; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Kumashiro, 2015). Cochran-Smith (1997) asserts that teachers who work for social justice also work for the transformation of society's "fundamental inequities.' When a teacher becomes an activist they understand fully that the activity of teaching is an inescapably political process (Bartolome & Trueba, 2000; Cochran-Smith, 1997; Darder, 1998; Freire, 1998a; Shor, 2000; & Zeichner, 1993). The teacher's participation in communities of practice which support social justice inevitably leads to the development of skills and dispositions associated with activism and becoming a critical educator (Lave & Wenger, 1991). A critical educator who defines social justice as a call to social action is a teacher activist. It is for this reason that the term "teacher activist'' is used as opposed to "critical educator'' or "social justice teacher'' (Bell, 2002). A teacher activist criticizes those who are social justice teachers in thought only. These teachers are allies or advocates, who believe in the

central tenets of critical pedagogy but who do not enact them in their own teaching and who are not active in social justice movements. A teacher activist argues that "believing in the importance of social and political change is one thing. Doing it is another" (Derman-Sparks & Phillips, 1997, p. 126).

Teacher activists are full participants in a transformative social movement in which they work on issues related to education, health care, labor, the struggle for affordable housing, and other issues of political and social relevance. Their activism causes them to understand that social issues not only reside in the schools but also the school community. Teacher activists promote a culturally and socially relevant curriculum but also seeks to transform an unequal and unjust society beyond the immediate school community. A teacher activist who engages in a social movement enacts a social justice philosophy by choosing a curriculum and activities that invite students to challenge educational and social inequities in their schools and in their communities. The research on the critical pedagogy affirms the expectation that teacher activists feel compelled to take up transformative politics and to struggle alongside their students against oppressive conditions, both inside their classrooms and beyond the confines of the school in which they teach. Social justice activism has an impact on learning in the classroom. Social justice activism does not sacrifice content knowledge or competence; rather it enhances this knowledge and makes it real.

Principal as an Activist

Cambron-McCabe and McCarthy (2005) asserted that the principal as a social justice educational leaders is required to "question the assumptions that drive school policies and practices to create more equitable schooling" (p. 204). These educational leaders for social justice interrogate systems and structures that shape the school and contribute to the achievement and opportunity gap (Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Furman, 2012; Moule, 2012; Reihl, 2000). School-based leaders must be willing to examine existing institutional structures and the deficit paradigm of schools that contribute to the achievement gap by creating "expectation gaps" (Delpit, 2012, p. 25). Theoharis (2008) called this the work of "addressing and eliminating marginalization in schools" (p. 5). These social justice leaders must use their position and influence to take on a more activist-oriented leadership role for social justice to meet the needs of students (Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Theoharis, 2009). Marshall and Ward (2006) stated that social justice leadership builds upon instructional leadership and takes on an "activist, interventionist stance" (p. 7). Shields (2010) argued for the link between education and the "wider social context" (p. 559) and contended in 2004 that educational leaders are expected to be "transformative, to attend to social justice as well as academic achievement" (p. 110).

The core principle of Social Justice Educational Leadership is to create and promote equitable schooling and education by examining and understanding the issues of race, diversity, marginalization, gender, spirituality, age, ability, sexual orientation and identity. A significant amount of educational reform in the United States has consistently failed to improve the educational outcomes of marginalized students because they have been strategies that are largely based upon a reorganization of the same interventions. Despite so much reform, however, there is still too much failure. As Payne (2008) explained, "There is a mammoth disconnect between what we know about the complex, self-reinforcing character of failure in bottom-tier schools and the ultimately simplistic thinking behind many of the most popular reform proposals" (p. 46). Moreover, there appears to be an assertive and pervasive unwillingness from our society to engage fully with the fact that sociocultural factors such as race, ethnicity, and poverty can and do matter greatly in schools which serve high-needs students.

The post-Brown decision era has bred a "new racism" (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Fiske, 1993) that has supplemented while not totally replacing the overt and blatant discriminatory policies and practices of the past with covert and more subtle beliefs and behaviors, reflecting the persistent and pervasive nature of racism that R. L. Carter (1968) described. Educational leaders must embrace Social Justice Activism to combat the "New Racism" in American Schools.

New Racism Defined

This article is not dismissing the fact that overt and blatant discriminatory acts of racism still exist in society and within our educational system because our national history has taught us that American racism transcends time. It is an attempt to shed light on the transmogrification of racism into legally accepted norms, practices which are producing equally horrific results. "It's what one Duke University sociologist calls "racism without racists." Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, who's written a book by that title, says it's a new way of maintaining white domination in places like Ferguson. "The main problem nowadays is not the folks with the hoods, but the folks dressed in suits," says Bonilla-Silva (2016). "The more we assume that the problem of racism is limited to the Klan, the birthers, the tea party or to the Republican Party, the less we understand that racial domination is a collective process and we are all in this game." (Bonilla-Silva, 2016).

Researchers have documented the ways our public schools deal with contemporary racism that disrupts the educational opportunities of students of color. Rita Kohli, Marcos Pizarro, Arturo Nevárez in their work: "*The "New Racism" of K–12 Schools: Centering Critical Research on Racism"* found there were three main patterns to how researchers identified racism in schools:
(1) Evaded racism; where equity-explicit discourse is divorced from institutional analyses or concrete discourse on race and racism (this type of racism is often used to avoid, silence, or invisibilize racism); (2) "Antiracist" racism, where racially inequitable policies and practice are actually masked as the solution to racism; and (3) Everyday racism where the racism manifests on a micro or interpersonal level, and thus is often unrecognized or viewed as insignificant.
An analysis of the research collectively points to the "new racism" of K–12 schools, a system of institutionalized power and domination that works best when invisible. This new racism or racism for non-racists has resulted in a number of policies that have done irreparable harm to marginalized students. These include: 1) Hyper-segregation of English Language Learners 2) Restrictive Environments for Students with Disabilities & 3) Zero Tolerance policies that feed the School to Prison Pipeline.

ESL Ghettoes and Hyper-segregation

Latino immigrant students who are English learners are now the most segregated of all minority students in U.S. schools (Frankenberg, Lee, and Orfield, 2003; Gifford & Valdés, 2006; Arias, 2005). Faltis and Arias (2007) assert that schools react to the dramatic increase in their Latino student population by the "hyper-segregating" of these students into classes where the curriculum consists primarily of English as a second language (ESL) and sheltered content classes for most of their day. This nearly wholesale separation from the general population results in marginalization based upon ethnicity and language; essentially condemning them to what Valdés (1998) refers to as an ESL ghetto. Valdes argued that this segregation is largely a matter of language proficiency and racism, particularly the perception that because these students are brown-skinned, speak Spanish or worse, "Spanglish". He advocates for strategies in which these students are not left to languish socially and linguistically in the ESL ghetto, but instead are invited into the whole school environment in ways that increase their chances for learning English and achieving academic

success. Beatriz Arias, Vice President of the Center for Applied Linguistics, concluded that many "Latino ELL students are on a dead-end street" because "they attend schools which are predominately Latino and [then] get 'tracked' into ESL ghettos, where their exposure to native English speaking peers is further compromised… Consequently, many students are limited in their access to the very medium they require to succeed." Research has shown that standardized models of public education do not effectively address the needs of many students, particularly those who face forms of social marginalization. Studies relay a host of complex inter-related personal-familial, school-related and societal variables contributing to the lack of fit between students and schools (Spruck & Powrie, 2005; Stringfield, & Land, 2002). This reality requires that school leaders develop strategies to create a more inclusive educational environment that not only promotes successful language and content learning, but also positive intergroup relationships among Latinos and native born students.

Restrictive Environments for Students with Disabilities

According to the American Civil Liberties Union (2016), 70% of US public school students who are physically restrained or secluded have disabilities. Our schools systematically separate students with disabilities from their peers, even though there has been landmark legal decisions and legislation that was designed to ensure a least restrictive environment for them to learn. Clearly, both the landmark 1954 Brown decision and the historic Individuals with Disabilities Acts (IDEA) were dedicated to ensuring the successful integration of groups historically excluded from mainstream educational opportunities (Crockett, 1999). It is important to note that the intersectionality of race and disability has led to another calculated attempt to re-segregate schools but under the guise of improving services for minority children with learning disabilities. IDEA, despite its aspirational equality premise, has been interpreted and implemented in a manner that marginalizes disabled students from minority and economically disadvantaged groups (O'Malley, 2016). Black children ages 6 to 21 are 40 percent more likely to be identified with disabilities than their peers.

There is a wide and expansive list of physical and mental disabilities that education utilizes to sort and often exclude these students from the mainstream of social and educational life. Over - representation of students of color special education programs is one of many factors that has produced a resurgence of segregated schools and an even greater incidence of segregated classrooms within schools. (O'Malley, 2016)

Zero Tolerance feeds the School to Prison Pipeline

The intersection of race and socioeconomic status has also produced "Zero-Tolerance" school policies that criminalize minor infractions of school rules, increased policing and surveillance in schools that create prison-like environments in schools, and overreliance on exclusionary disciplinary referrals to law enforcement and juvenile centers. The School to Prison Pipeline represents an institutionalized effort to accelerate the disproportionate tendency of minors and young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds to become incarcerated, because of increasingly harsh school and municipal policies. The American Civil Liberties Union (2013) correctly asserted that this pipeline reflects the prioritization of incarceration over education. The catalyst for this pipeline is sadly the disproportionate number of black and brown students who are removed from the educational setting through disciplinary suspensions and expulsions. The National Education Association (2016) states that: "the pipeline is the result of an array of policies and practices, fed by institutional racism, that disproportionately affect students of color, including

those who identify as LGBTQ, have disabilities, and/or are English Language Learners. A recent event in Michigan illustrates the confluence of institutional racism, school polices and the courts conspiring to knowingly perpetuate the school to pipeline. Jodi Cohen of ProPublica reported in June 2020; that a 15-year-old student was on probation for fighting with her mother and stealing. The student who has attention deficit disorder, was easily distracted when studying at home and fell behind during remote learning. A Michigan circuit court judge sent Grace to juvenile detention in May, citing the schoolwork as a probation violation (Cohen 2020). Grace is Black in a predominantly white community and in a county where a disproportionate percentage of Black youth are involved with the juvenile justice system. This a glaring example of systemic racial bias in the American educational system.

Social Justice Action Continuum

This Social Justice Action Continuum represents a paradigm shift from dealing with just the overt acts of racism but also confronting the institutionalized and structural systems that often permeate our laws and school policies. It is adapted from the Action Continuum developed by Adams, Bell, & Griffin, in 1997. It was developed to illustrate the range of action that educational teachers and leaders need to implement to ensure substantive change in our schools. It removes the part of the Action Continuum which lists behaviors that will not positively affect reform. In short; the Social Action Continuum is based upon actions leading to social change: changes in human interactions and relationships that transform cultural and social institutions.

The Social Justice Action Continuum is seeking a degree of professional agreement on what constitutes substantive action which will lead to positive social change both in our schools and our society. It is also an attempt to agree upon what constitutes inaction or a level of action that in itself will not move the needle toward creating a more just educational environment for all students. This continuum proposes a model that illustrates the structure of limited action (alliance) to moderate action (advocacy) to effective action (activism); offers constructed definitions, and a comparative evaluation of the range from limited action to effective action within a social justice leadership context. These action ratings of behaviors seek to illustrate that a more definitive social agreement is necessary not only in how we prepare aspiring teachers and leaders, but also how we construct their evaluations and performance assessments when they enter the practice. This article is an attempt to develop socially shared construal of the definitions of effective teaching and leading in our schools. Traditionally, district and state performance appraisals have discounted or not even addressed social emotional learning and has often totally dismissed the proposition of linking these annual evaluation to how well teachers and leaders dealt with the factors of race, gender, socio-economic status, disability and others. Correlation of these rated behaviors with student achievement is essential to empirical gains but is also important in our quest to create more just school environments. This continuum allows for self-assessment as well as the ability to inform our leadership preparation programs that have been so resistant to addressing social justice. The curriculum for our leadership preparation programs must shift from the traditional principal as manager to principal as change agent. The social justice leadership discourse means that administrative preparation programs must encourage future school leaders to think very differently about organizational structures and leadership roles. Instead of continuing with incremental reforms that simply add more layers to existing structures, it is imperative to reconstruct roles and relationships at the school level around a vibrant core purpose focused on social justice and directed at improving student learning (Cambron-McCabe, McCarthy, 2005).

For educational leadership preparation programs to promote a social justice orientation, they must develop in their students what McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) have called practiced reflexivity, where individuals consciously take responsibility for their actions—recognizing that all actions have an impact on the community. McKenzie and Scheurich further have noted that the school leader's job requires a constant, vigilant critical perspective that always asks the questions. Education reforms have frequently been explicitly presented as urgent moral imperatives by policy actors at the highest levels (Gillborn, 2001; Hernández, 2016; Mulderrig, 2003; Stovall, 2013; Windle & Stratton, 2013). But most reforms, both nationally and locally, have not enabled strides toward social justice and educational equity. To the contrary, they have perpetuated, and in most instances intensified, racial inequality in schools (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Buras, 2011; Connell, 2013; Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Gillborn, 2008, 2017; Hursh, 2005, 2007). It is imperative that teachers and leaders embrace social justice activism as a major and integral component of educational reform. Rapp (2002, p. 233) argues that preparation programs have an obligation to instill in teachers and leaders a need to resist injustice and must "provide opportunities for university students preparing to enter the educational profession to leave the comforts and confines of professional codes and state mandates for the riskier waters of "high moral callings".

Preparing School Leaders to Combat Student Marginalization

Educational leaders must be equipped to meet the needs of marginalized students (Theoharis, 2007). Social justice leadership explicitly works to reduce marginalization in schools. A growing concern among educators is whether emerging school leaders are prepared to face these pressures and create schools that advocate for education that advances the rights and education for all children (Spring, 2001). Furthermore, studies suggest that leadership preparation programs need to better prepare school leaders to promote a broader and deeper understanding of social justice, democracy, and equity (Marshall & Oliva, 2006). Educational Leadership Preparation programs should be based upon the core principles of social justice and understand how activism plays an essential role in school leadership

Understanding of the concepts of social justice and social injustice activism

All Educational Leadership personnel should be able to clearly and explicitly articulate their distinctive understanding of social justice and social justice activism in addition to operationalizing these important concepts in particular facets of their program. Capper, Theoharis, and Sebastian (2006) provide a framework for educational leadership programs to that "leadership development for social justice can only take place if professors intentionally create an atmosphere of emotional safety for social justice risk taking in their programs and in courses and other learning experiences in those programs" (Capper, Theoharis, & Sebastian, 2006, p. 220).

Kottkamp (2002) has cautioned that "the largest problem in changing our programs, making them more effective, lies in changing ourselves" (p. 3). Faculty cannot teach about creating and leading socially just schools with credibility if they are not modeling these principles in their own departments, which includes working with practitioners on the front lines to reform schools. Perhaps it is most important for professors to undertake an advocacy role in influencing educational policy to achieve social justice (Cambron-McCabe, McCarthy, 2005). School leaders and those preparing them will need to be creative and proactive to address current challenges, drawing on the past as well as multiple disciplines for new perspectives to shift their thinking. If graduates of educational administration programs are expected to take on new roles, faculty must

be active participants in the political arena when state policies affect social justice issues; mentoring from a distance does not prepare educational leaders for this difficult work (Cambron-McCabe, McCarthy, 2005 p.217).

Educational Leadership Curriculum based upon Social Justice Leadership discourse

The curriculum for leadership preparation programs should shift from the traditional principal as manager to principal as change agent. The social justice leadership discourse means that administrative preparation programs will encourage future school leaders to think very differently about organizational structures and leadership roles. Instead of continuing with incremental reforms that simply add more layers to existing structures, it is imperative to reconstruct roles and relationships at the school level around a vibrant core purpose focused on social justice and directed at improving student learning (Cambron-McCabe, McCarthy, 2005).

For educational leadership preparation programs to promote a social justice orientation, they should develop in their students what McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) have called practiced reflexivity, where individuals consciously take responsibility for their actions—recognizing that all actions have an impact on the community. McKenzie and Scheurich further have noted that the school leader's job requires a constant, vigilant critical perspective that always asks the questions. Rapp (2002, p. 233) argues that preparation programs have an obligation to instill in leaders a need to resist injustice and must "provide opportunities for administration students to leave the comforts and confines of professional codes and state mandates for the riskier waters of high moral callings".

Conclusion

At the heart of this discussion is whether leadership preparation programs actually understand how to operationalize the concept of Social Justice Activism as a central and driving force within their curriculum. Another central discussion is that current and past efforts to reform educational leadership programs without these basic tenets as guiding beacons are/have also been doomed to fail. Simply redesigning coursework based on updated core professional standards will not lead to substantive reform – but rather a "reordering of the deck chairs on the Titanic".

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EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES THAT DECREASE OPPORTUNITY GAPS IN LITERACY

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ABSTRACT

Historically, research in regards to the instruction of culturally and linguistically diverse students focuses predominantly on a comparison to mainstream culture as well as the use of primary language separate from the second language. The traditional approach focuses on a deficit lens, or perceived deficiencies of culturally and linguistically diverse students in comparison to a mainstream monolingual culture. This research perspective establishes one language and as a result, one culture, as dominant. Despite a large body of research on the need for high quality rigorous instruction to support linguistically and culturally diverse students, minimal research focuses on instructional approaches to support diverse student literacy. This paper discusses a review of the current research literature specific to evidence based practices to support academic literacy development in students of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Overall, the research findings suggest that traditional approaches to academic literacy instruction are inadequate for developing academic literacy in culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Keywords: Achievement gap, culturally diverse students, ELs, literacy, opportunity gaps

Opportunity Gaps as a Perpetuation of Systemic Educational Inequity

The national and state trends for underserved student populations point to a problem that at its root calls for additional inspection of the educational system's policies and practices in respect to the education of culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse students. The current policies in place for the instruction of diverse student populations demonstrate systemic injustice and inequities in educational practices. The traditional educational approaches upheld for decades may have the consequence of excluding particular groups of students from literacy as

a basic form of education. Limited representation in literacy and curriculum, the positioning of English as the language of academics, and limits on the personal student strategies validated for learning are some of the traditional approaches implemented with students of diverse backgrounds. The longstanding underperformance trend in academic outcomes raises questions about the ways in which the American school system addresses the needs of marginalized students.

A Cultural Divide

The underperformance of culturally and linguistically diverse student populations is often explained as an issue of a student achievement gap. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is an assessment of what American students should know across contents and how they demonstrate what they can do in these content areas. In the area of reading, Black, Latinx, and low socioeconomic students continue to underperform in comparison to white students (NAEP, 2019). Similarly, Black, Latinx, and low socioeconomic students continue to underperform in the area of English Language Arts administration of the California Assessment for Performance and Progress (CAASPP) while English language learners are the lowest performing group in the state of California (CDE, 2020). In light of this assessment data, it is important to note that English language learners, Blacks, Latinx, and students of poverty are likely to be taught in settings that are segregated by language, income, and ethnicity (Gándara, 2013).

English language learners are one of the fastest growing diverse student populations in the United States. According to data from the National Center for Education Statistics (2019), the number of English language learners in US schools grew from 3.8 million in 2000 to 4.9 million in 2016. California has the largest Emergent Bilingual population in the country constituting approximately 1.2 million students (NCES, 2019). Approximately 2.6 million students in California public schools speak a language other than English (CDE, 2020). Despite this fact, English language learners also have the most significant academic underperformance of any other student group in the United States (NCES, 2019). In mainstream culture, English language learner low academic performance is often attributed to language as a barrier to academic achievement, educational attainment, and English language acquisition (Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Cummins, 2005; Milner, 2012). Despite being categorized by their language, English language learners are students with a broad range of backgrounds most who are also children of poverty and Latinx (Gándara, 2013). Comparably, discipline data trends demonstrate that students of color, in particular Black and Latinx students, are formally disciplined at a higher rate than their white classmates in ways that exclude them from classroom instruction (Hammond, 2014).

Research studies within the last decade characterize diverse student underperformance as an issue of inputs rather than outputs. Welner and Carter (2013) define an *opportunity gap* as the differences in educational experiences between linguistically and culturally diverse students and white middle class students. The opportunity gap perspective calls for educators to examine how their decisions and choices within instructional settings affect student achievement (Welner & Carter, 2013). Even within diverse school settings, English language learners may be tracked into specific classes or courses with peers of similar language characteristics (Tyson, 2013). The perspective of opportunity gaps shifts the responsibility of underperformance away from students (Welner & Carter, 2013). Opportunity gaps point to issues of inequities in educational experiences, practices, and opportunities as the inputs that ultimately result in diverse student underperformance. Some researchers suggest factors such as poor teacher preparation, monolingual and monocultural environments, lack of access to grade level curriculum, and lack of focus on strategies to increase English learner achievement contribute to the persistent

underachievement of English language learners (Gándara, 2013; Milner, 2012; Welner & Carter, 2013). Consequently, many diverse students fail to achieve educational attainment and are underprepared to attend college, or compete in the job market. Geneva Gay (2010) calls for the consideration of achievement scores as "symptoms, not causes" of the problem (pp.17-21).

Some researchers consider systemic issues as the basis for academic underperformance of diverse students. In a 1988 article for the *Harvard Educational Review*, Delpit argues there is a culture of power in all aspects of society that extends to schools and their classrooms. Power issues play out in classrooms with the assumption of specific rules that are reflective of the culture of those who are in positions of power (Delpit, 1988). Consequently, Delpit (1988) states that knowing or learning the rules of the culture of power may help with acquiring power. Delpit (1988) posits that members of the culture of power typically do not know about it or ignore it. She also states that people who do not have access to power structures are more aware of them and typically draw comparisons to their own experiences from a position of less power. Delpit (1988) explains that in some instances even when power is earned, those who are born into power constantly seek ways to devalue new members. Delpit (1988) gives examples of situations where non-white educators with equal positions to white educators have attempted to engage in dialogue about best approaches to teaching diverse students, but the white educators have dismissed these experiences because they do not fall within the notion of what the culture of power perceives as fact. Based on this information, an assumption is that in instances where culturally and linguistically diverse people enter into the culture of power through education or position, culturally and linguistically diverse perspectives remain devalued. Identity traits such as language and cultural practices linger as cultural markers that do not fit into the mainstream culture of power.

Restrictions on use of personal learning strategies limit access to learning for diverse students. As it pertains to academic text comprehension, Delpit (1988) states "to deny students their own expert knowledge is to disempower them" (p. 288). She calls to "agitate for change—pushing gatekeepers to open their doors to a variety of rules and codes" (Delpit, 1988, p.292). Students need to receive direction on the expected outcome of academic assignments even if they achieve that product through alternative approaches (Delpit, 1988). This suggests that formalized academic outcomes may coexist with multiple approaches to learning because in the end, students are learning to succeed in the academic setting. As early as 1988, educational leaders are called to act for change as Delpit states "…we must agitate from the top down" (p. 293). If we maintain the status quo in teaching underserved student populations, then we are denying the basic right of literacy. It is therefore the ethical duty of educational leaders in their various positions at the state, county, district, school, and classroom level to implement evidence based practices for supporting the academic literacy of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

The Deficit Mindset

There is a complex relationship between language and identity (Au & Raphael, 2000). Despite the connection between language and identity, traditional practices aforementioned have positioned English as the dominant language (Au, 1998; De Los Rios, 2017; Delpit, 1988; Perry, in press) and mainstream literacy as the norm (De Los Rios, 2017; Perry, in press). Consequently, language proficiency classifications such as that of Long Term English Learner or LTEL may produce perceptions of lowered ability among teachers (De Los Rios, 2017). In 2009, August, Shanahan, and Escamilla (2009) contested many of the 2000 National Literacy Panel (NLP) findings on the reading achievement of English language learners because her review of the report found that it positions monolingualism as the norm. August, Shanahan, and Escamilla (2009)

found there are no references to the benefits of bilingualism or biliteracy. The panel report minimizes the existence of evidence to support sociocultural factors in literacy development (Gutierrez et al., 2002; August, Shanahan, & Escamilla, 2009). Additionally, the 2000 NLP findings did not provide bilingual frameworks (August et al., 2009). The 2000 National Literacy Panel report was more about what is not known about working with linguistically diverse students (August et al., 2009) than an attempt to define approaches to support them.

A similar review by Gutierrez et al. (2002) found the 2000 National Reading Panel report omitted reference to the large diversity across the spectrum of English language learners, and their socio-economic traits. Gutierrez et al. (2002) found other subsequent reports did the same. Instead, the focus on English language learner instruction turned to more testing, a limited literacy curriculum, and the quality of their teachers (Gutierrez, et. al, 2002). Most of the focus of these reports and studies centers on the idea of reforming or restructuring schools where English language learners attend, and on the issues that prevent them from learning (Gutierrez et al., 2002) in a deficit model perspective. Gutierrez et al. (2002) also found the 2000 NLP report found a lack of content instruction in Structured Immersion classrooms. Standardized assessments do not align with the backgrounds of culturally and linguistically diverse students causing a further increase in poor performance among this group of students (Gutierrez et al., 2002). Despite this finding, Gutierrez et al. (2002) found these testing systems and their corresponding ranking systems largely influenced decisions and services provided by districts and the communities they served. For example, the focus on assessment outcomes increased the use of scripted texts and devaluation of culturally and linguistically diverse student populations in states like California and Texas (Gutierrez et al., 2002), who have some of the largest populations of diverse students in the country (NCES, 2019).

A *deficit mindset* approach characterizes typical instruction of linguistically and culturally diverse student populations (Milner, 2010; Tyson, 2013) within mainstream instructional approaches. Milner (2010) and Tyson (2013) define a deficit mindset as the idea that culturally, economically, linguistically, and racially diverse students inherently lack the ability and intellect to succeed in school. When students are viewed through a lens of less ability or lowered intellect, they are often not presented with, the same opportunities that other students receive (Milner, 2010; Tyson, 2013). According to Milner (2010) and Tyson (2013) the materials diverse students receive for instruction are modified or at a lesser grade level therefore placing a limit on the access to grade level content. These traditional practices are oppositional to the need to create independent learners. Instead, underserved student populations remain dependent on teachers, staff, other students, and scaffolds to survive within academic settings. This dependency is one factor contributing to under-preparation for the rigor of content literacy, state assessments, and success with college entrance exams such as the SAT.

Comparably, Au and Raphael (2000) cite insistence upon the use of traditional forms of literacy ignores the potential for more powerful forms of literacy found within families and the community. Achievement tests only measure school literacy and ignore highly literate and accomplished literacies found outside of school settings (Au & Raphael, 2000). Cultural literacies such as "Doin' Steps" are often ignored in school settings because of their source of origin outside of school culture (Au & Raphael, 2000, p. 173). Similarly, the skills learned through cultural practices often do not have a place within conventional settings because they are viewed as less valuable (Au & Raphael, 2000). Oftentimes, diverse students are placed in special education or remedial classes and are generally held to lower expectations than students that are from non-diverse backgrounds (Au & Raphael, 2000; Hammond, 2014). The argument is that students are

not receiving opportunities to engage with mainstream literacy through the more complex non-mainstream models of learning (Au & Raphael, 2000; De Los Rios, 2017; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019; Perry, in press). Au and Raphael (2000) write:

> "The differences in perspective that underlie these controversies remind us that literacies are associated with different degrees of power, and the value of mainstream literacy may best be appreciated by those without ready access to it " (p. 174).

In a deficit mindset academic environment, much instructional focus and time is spent solely on the purpose of getting students to learn English and less rigorous skills based tasks. Metacognitive skills (Baker, 2005) are among the skills that characterize independent learners and these skills are underdeveloped in diverse student populations due to lack of opportunity to experience rigorous lessons to develop these skills. Exclusionary practices create a sense of otherness among diverse students for not fitting in to what the mainstream considers normal.

Constraints of Mainstream Literacy

Since the introduction of the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act and its subsequent yearly assessments for literacy progress, English language learners have struggled to meet standards. Au & Raphael (2000) contend there needs to be a revision of the definition of literacy and literacy curriculum to meet the needs of students from diverse backgrounds. There is a correlation between motivation, engagement, and self-direction within literacy and proficiency with literacy (Au & Raphael, 2000). Their research suggests that offering more opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds to engage with literacy in non-traditional ways may lead to higher proficiency outcomes with literacy in academic settings. The forms, genres, skills, strategies not commonly used in literacy instruction within schools may serve to empower diverse students because they allow them to communicate, understand, and create through the mechanisms they already possess (Au & Raphael, 2000).

In her work with home language in Hawaiian schools, Au (1988) found that linguistically diverse students generally receive fewer opportunities to use their primary language skills for reading or writing to convey their understanding of English language texts. Au's (1988) work includes observations of a classroom where the teacher directly compared the home language to the language of school and explicitly guided the student to draw connections to the value of both within specific contexts. In traditional school settings, most students of diverse backgrounds are unable to engage with academic content present in English texts using their home languages or alternative modes of meaning making (Au, 1998; Au & Raphael, 2000; De Los Rios, 2017; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019; Perry, in press). As a result, many linguistically and culturally diverse students are overrepresented in remedial or modified instruction settings because they are labeled as deficient according to mainstream norms (Au, 1998; Hammond, 2014). School structures, systems, policies, and practices are reflective of societal structures of power (Au, 1998). Mainstream conventional forms of literacy are exclusionary (Au, 1998). Similarly, Garcia & Kleifgen (2019) argue that traditional literacy approaches bind students to predetermined meaning-making skills and strategies with unrepresentative text that "…ignore more than half of their linguistic and semiotic repertoire, which is then rendered invisible" (p.8). Additionally, Garcia & Kleifgen (2019) found that English language learners have often not received extensive opportunities for practice with academic language and literacy using their primary language.

A 2003 study by Gersten & Geva implements authentic language instruction through reading instruction and vocabulary development within the context of reading. The study is a variation from past studies that treat language and literacy skills as autonomous. Despite this attempt to consider language development in authentic contexts, Gersten & Geva (2003) point to explicit teaching of specific literacy skills as a basis for teaching reading to English language learners. Strategies such as explicit teaching, English language learning, phonemic awareness, decoding, vocabulary development, interactive teaching, and instruction geared toward low performers, were offered as successful in teaching reading to English language learners in the first grade (Gersten & Geva, 2003). The claim that skills taught in this study lead to successful reading in first graders may not apply to other grade levels as text content difficulty increases. The strategy that suggests teaching to the lowest performers is problematic because it makes a general assumption that low rigor is required for English language learners and it does not consider what Garcia and Kleifgen (2010, 2019) describe as the complexities of the social and linguistic constructs that accompany knowledge of a first language. More importantly, discussion of primary language knowledge or literacy is ignored in this study.

Despite growing research challenging the separation of the primary and secondary languages, and focus on the complex language processes of English language learners, some current research continues to maintain a focus on the status quo. For example, Day (2020) offers specific reading skills that English language learners need to learn to become successful readers. Day (2020) provides a detailed explanation of each skill with an emphasis on what he calls extensive reading. He suggests that reading many grade level books across the content areas will support English language learners in becoming proficient readers (Day, 2020). In regards to English language learner materials, Day (2020) recommends *graded readers*—books at each grade level with specific vocabulary and grammar for the particular grade level which he calls "LLL—language learner literature"(p.17). Day (2020) states that the grammar and vocabulary contained within the graded readers are the most frequent words written at a basic level. Day also makes the point that reading comprehension needs to be taught while teaching to read. He argues that comprehension cannot be taught separately from the practice of reading (Day, 2020). Day (2020) points out there are six types of reading comprehension and each type of comprehension supports student interaction with reading. Day (2020) also notes that readers must practice reading to become readers. This linear approach to teaching English language learners to read ignores the diversity of English language learners and reaffirms the position of a mainstream perspective and literacy. Day (2020) also does not offer any approaches English language learners may use as they work with language learner literature.

Furthermore, Goldenberg (2011) argues the research on English language learners has historically focused on the debate over bilingual education or oral language proficiency in English. Research on literacy development for English language learners has largely been ignored beyond stating that the same literacy skills teaching that works for English only students works for linguistically diverse students (Goldenberg, 2011). Goldenberg (2011) cautions that existing bilingual education data reflects a multicultural and multilingual setting outside of the U.S. and may not directly apply to American schools because of the monolingual mainstream culture of US schools. The research suggests that we need to consider what may constitute a meaningful context for monolingual students may not have the same meaning for a multilingual or multicultural student. Goldenberg (2011) states that most studies do not go into detail to describe effective instruction for English language learners. Either most research on instructional supports for teaching reading to English language learners is focused on skills based primary language or

English language supports (Goldenberg, 2011). Teaching oral language fluency separate from academic content instruction minimizes the complexity of academic language acquisition. Goldenberg (2011) makes the point that teaching reading to English language learners using the English language may be supported through an instructional approach that considers their diverse experiences. Traditionally, mainstream approaches demonstrate a highly politicized systemic approach to restricting diverse students' use of their language, identities, and cultures as part of their basis for academic success in academic settings (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019; Goldenberg, 2011). The research findings highlighted in the next section explain a variety of studies utilizing culturally and linguistically diverse student approaches to attaining academic literacy.

Literacy Instruction For English Language Learners

In the years following the 2000 National Reading Panel report and subsequent continuous underperformance by diverse students on standardized assessments, it became evident to some scholars that alternatives to mainstream literacy should be considered. A study by Ernst-Slavit and Mulhern (2003) found support for the use of the first language when learning to read. Writing in a second language assists the transfer of skills from one language to another particularly when the written systems for both languages are similar (Ernst-Slavit & Mulhern, 2003). Even when the written languages are different the reading strategies transfer because students who learn how to read understand that print conveys meaning, know the formal structures of language, and understand its rules (Ernst-Slavit & Mulhern, 2003). Ernst-Slavit and Mulhern (2003) found that developing biliteracy in students of diverse linguistic backgrounds is important in supporting their achievement in school. The research points to the importance of allowing for reading and writing in the primary language as strategies for learning within academic settings.

In the absence of primary language instructional programs in states such as California, a practical outcome of the research is to incorporate bilingual books into literacy instruction (Goldenberg, 2011). Similarly, Ernst-Slavit and Mulhern (2003) point to the availability of bilingual books in school settings as a message that a second language is valued. Additionally, Ernst-Slavit and Mulhern (2003) found student access to bilingual books in schools serves to provide the basis for motivation as well as provides opportunities for successful reading in the familiar language. Since the 1980s, most bilingual books tailor to the Latinx population however there are now some books available in other languages (Ernst-Slavit & Mulhern, 2003). Ernst-Slavit and Mulhern (2003) recommend caution when selecting books to ensure the language, its translations, and cultural content are accurate. English language learners benefit from reading books depicting their own life experiences or culture in their own language (Ernst-Slavit & Mulhern, 2003). Learning to read in the first language does not imply a need to relearn reading in a second language since most literacy strategies transfer particularly when the writing of both languages is similar (Ernst-Slavit & Mulhern, 2003). Goldenberg (2011) makes the point that instructional approaches that consider the experiences of diverse students may support teaching reading to English language learners. Other studies discussed later in this paper support this notion.

Literature Review

Beyond Culturally Responsive Teaching

Early research cites *Culturally Responsive Teaching*, the inclusion in classroom instruction of a student's home culture as it relates to their emotional, linguistic, and social perspectives (Gay, 2010; Hammond, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 1995), as an important approach for instruction of

diverse students. The practices of Culturally Responsive Teaching support a movement away from a monolinguistic and monocultural school environment to one that is pluralistic and more accurately representative of the world (Gay, 2010; Hammond, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 1995). A move to the use of non-traditional approaches emphasizes the personal agency of diverse students. Recent research on best practices for teaching academic literacy to linguistically and culturally diverse students moves into deeper analysis of aspects of language and culture to support learning in schools.

Home And Community Literacies

Au (1998) contends social constructivist theories of literacy learning seek to empower learners with benefits that serve both the learner and society as a whole. She notes the academic literacy outcomes of culturally and linguistically diverse students will improve when they are provided opportunities to construct their own meaning based on their existing literacies through their own perspectives in authentic ways that lead to success in formal settings (Au, 1998). As home language use is allowed and academic text is increasingly reflective of diverse perspectives, literacy outcomes for linguistically diverse students will increase (Au, 1998). Success with the academic literacy prevalent in classrooms will increase for culturally and linguistically diverse students as the instruction and interaction becomes more culturally relevant (Au, 1998). Additionally, consultation of parents and community members to increase cultural relevance within the school setting is important to increase success with academic literacy (Au, 1998). Finally, alternative methods of assessment will increase diverse student success when these formats allow for varied non-traditional expressions of literacy (Au, 1998).

Au and Raphael (2000) found the terms we use to describe culturally, linguistically, and socially diverse students is reflective of the change in student demographics from one characterized as monocultural and monolinguistic to one that is increasingly multilingual and multicultural. Students of diverse backgrounds are those who differ from the mainstream culture represented within schools (Au & Raphael, 2000). Students who view the use of cultural literacies as exclusive to settings outside school may pose some resistance to use of this approach (Au & Raphael, 2000). This is often the case because cultural literacies are often closely linked to cultural identity and perceived as exclusive to members of that culture (Au & Raphael, 2000). At times, when a teacher attempts to utilize these non-traditional methods within the classroom, they appear suspicious to parents and students alike (Au & Raphael, 2000). Some parents may view these alternative approaches to instruction based in home or community cultures as attempts to limit access to education (Au & Raphael, 2000). However, recent studies (Au 1998; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2019; Perry, in press) suggest allowing students to approach academic tasks using literacies familiar to students outside the school setting may increase academic learning.

In his work with Jewish communities, Ben-Yosef (2003) found similar local literacies representative of social groups and cultural topics. He also noted that literacy is social and personal knowledge about the information contained in texts as well as about the world (Ben-Yosef, 2003). Literacy comes in many forms and addresses many topics within many settings (Ben-Yosef, 2003). His findings suggest that educators can create the mindset and conditions to welcome local literacies as a foundational basis for teaching school literacy.

Transnational Literacies

In De Los Rios 2017 study, *transnational literacies* are examined as a form of literacy that is often ignored within US secondary classrooms (p.456). De Los Rios' (2017) study takes into

account the personal narrative of a southern California high school student who actively engages in the communities of Tijuana and his southern California neighborhood. The student De Los Rios (2017) calls Joaquin describes his process and inspiration for writing *corridos* and she credits this process with giving voice to culturally and linguistically diverse students (pp.456-457). Equally important, the account provides a lens on the complexity of the knowledge linguistically diverse students bring to the classroom in the form of unrecognized and undervalued forms of literacy (De Los Rios, 2017). Corridos are a nine stanza ballad, a form of "border rhetoric" (Noe, 2009 as quoted in De Los Rios, 2017, p.457) that bring attention to sociopolitical issues in Mexico (De Los Rios, 2017). According to De Los Rios (2017), there is a need to study the language and literacy practices of transnational and immigrant youth as a means to empower them against the current intensified negative climate against cultural and linguistic diversity (p.457). Similarly, De Los Rios (2017) presents a "corrido consciousness" as a form of empowerment for Latinx, bilingual, transnational, and immigrant students in American schools (pp. 461-462). The social and political considerations of a corrido consciousness model draw to light the complexities of the language and literacies use of students of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds (De Los Rios, 2017). The literacies possessed by these youth are not recognized within mainstream classrooms (De Los Rios, 2017). De Los Rios (2017) notes few studies identify particular skills sets and literacies that culturally and linguistically diverse students bring with them to the school setting.

De Los Rios (2017) argues the racial, ethnic, and social hierarchies that currently exist within American social systems and structures date back to colonization. The idea of "border thinking" emerged from the joining of colonial and modern constructs where historical and current community practices converge (De Los Rios, 2017, p. 459). De Los Rios (2017) describes border thinking as a conceptual process for making sense of life in two settings; the United States and Mexico for students who have interactions within both settings. De Los Rios (2017) notes that Joaquin's highly literate interactions with composing, singing, and performing corridos are historically unrecognized as forms of literacy within the classroom. The exception is his Chicanx studies class where his teacher provides opportunities for students to explore and express their understanding of the social and political aspects of their world using any style or language that is comfortable (De Los Rios, 2017).

The data in De Los Rios' (2017) study pointed to substantial and sophisticated literacy practices commonly utilized by Joaquin when he engaged with corridos. De Los Rios (2017) notes Joaquin's literacy practices were socially acquired through his family's interactions with the corridos. In his practice of memorizing, performing, and composing corridos, Joaquin developed a corridista consciousness that led to his development of a critical literacy skills set (De Los Rios, 2017). Joaquin also used corridos as a form of literacy that allowed him to share his expressions about family and life situations (De Los Rios, 2017). De Los Rios (2017) concludes that these alternative literacies are "rarely valued for the acute analysis of metaphor, allegory, and figurative language inherent in such cultural practices" (p. 465). She calls for taking a translanguaging (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019) stance that considers the complexities of language practices in its classroom practices and structures (De Los Rios, 2017). The use of translanguaging (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019) requires a transfer of classroom control to students within traditionally monolingual and monocultural classrooms to give voice to multilingual student perspectives (De Los Rios, 2017).

The findings suggest that the idea of a corridista consciousness may be more broadly applied to other non-traditional forms of literacy genres where cultural, social, and political topics are important considerations (De Los Rios, 2017). The corridista consciousness (De Los Rios,

2017) brings to light authentic expressions of literacy in real life contexts. Joaquin's literacy practices affirm a less common form of reading, writing, and performance influenced by social power structures (De Los Rios, 2017). It is not enough to acknowledge and embed multicultural literacies while teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. Incorporating non-traditional forms of literacy in the classroom requires a deep understanding as well as a socially responsible and culturally empowering engagement within the classroom (De Los Rios, 2017). De Los Rios (2017) acknowledges there is still much research to do on the complex cognitive abilities of multilingual, multicultural students.

Pluriversality

In her work with communities in Uganda, Perry (in press) discusses the concept of *pluriversal literacies* as a challenge to the dominant perspective in literature (p.4). Pluriversal literacies stem from the idea of *Pluriversality* as a way of viewing the world and individual interactions within it from multiple experiences and perspectives (Perry, in press, p.4). Pluriversal literacies seek to engage learners beyond immediate more familiar influences to a broader perspective of interactions with the world and their place within it (Perry, in press). In this approach, Perry (in press) engages a consideration of personal perspective in its context and the role of the individual within the greater universe. Pluriversal literacy requires human interaction with local, global as well as the structural and human entities within the world (Perry, in press). In her study, Perry (in press) observes that people interact in social and practical ways within social structures, and the environment. She explains that literacies exist beyond the written text in daily tasks, language, music, and non-conventional symbolic forms.

Translanguaging

Changing student demographics suggest a need to approach literacy instruction in ways that differ from the historical practice of language based approaches (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2019). Research dating back to the introduced support for multilingual perspectives in literacy however, subsequent research, and pedagogy did not reflect support for multilingual literacy (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2019). Garcia & Kleifgen (2019) found the focus on literacy instruction of linguistically diverse students has always remained on primary and secondary language as separate non-intersecting languages in literacy development. The research has also generally held the idea that bilingual/multilinguals process languages separately (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2019).

In their study of alternative methods of literacy instruction, Garcia & Kleifgen (2010, 2019) note the complex conceptual processing of information by bilingual and multilingual students known as *translanguaging* has a basis in sociocultural literacy and sociolinguistics to the degree in which linguistically diverse students make sense of the world using a variety of approaches to learning (p.2). Hornberger (as cited in Garcia & Kleifgen, 2019) introduced the continua of biliteracy that includes use of dialects and mainstream formalized language on opposite ends (p.3). The continua illustrate the role of common language structures in support of formalized language acquisition (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2019). Martin-Jones and Jones (as cited in Garcia & Kleifgen, 2019) provide a social perspective on language and learning in multilingual settings reflective of the communication of language and literacy systems rather than application of each language independent of the other (p.3). Garcia & Kleifgen (2019) posit the dynamic of language and literacies as one of unbalanced power between diverse groups. According to Garcia and Kleifgen (2019), Welsh educators established the term translanguaging to extend beyond a bilingual

pedagogy rooted in monolingualism (p.2). Garcia and Kleifgen (2019) also credit the work of Chilean biologists, Maturana and Varela as contributors to the idea of translanguaging through their concept of *lenguajear* or the process of making sense of the world through the cognitive and communicative processes in which humans engage (p.4). In Garcia and Kleifgen's (2019) own words

"Instead, language is used by people to interact as an extension of their own humanity, not always according to the rules and definitions of language by political and social institutions. Translanguaging privileges the unbounded and agentive dynamic and fluid use of bilinguals' entire linguistic repertoire" (p. 5).

In this explanation, the researchers suggest that bilinguals use language in ways that are most familiar and comfortable. This approach to language use does not conform to the structures established within schools or other systemically socialized settings.

Garcia and Kleifgen (2019) state that translanguaging is the actions bilingual or multilingual students take while using all the physical, mental, social, and linguistic resources they possess to create an understanding of the world around them. This type of action does not only involve the cognitive processes the student undertakes but includes the physical, social, and linguistic actions of a student to build meaning (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2019). Translanguaging is characterized by the fluid, adaptive actions that cross perceived language boundaries to create plural literacies (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2019, p.2) or pluriversal literacies (Perry, in press). The proponents of the concept of translanguaging view existing approaches to literacy instruction for linguistically diverse students as unjust and restricting (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2019). Garcia & Kleifgen (2019) argue that traditional literacy approaches bind students to predetermined meaning-making skills and strategies with unrepresentative text that "…ignore more than half of their linguistic and semiotic repertoire, which is then rendered invisible" (p.8).

Emergent bilinguals have often not received extensive opportunities for practice with academic language and literacy (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2019). In their work, Garcia & Kleifgen (2019) suggest translanguaging as a scaffold in a minimal sense of its application to an expression of literacies and language resulting from socio-political interactions in its fullest application. As a result of their research with English learners, Garcia and Kleifgen (2019) offer strategies for establishing translanguaging spaces in monolingual settings. The strategies they offer are oral discussions, annotation in any mode or language, internet searches for primary language text or video versions of their school texts, use of bilingual mentor texts that connect students to their culture and experiences exemplify translanguaging, and the use of multilingual/multimodal strategies to develop comprehension of texts within university/college settings (pp.9-10). The teacher's role is to demonstrate the value of the students' language and afford opportunities for translanguaging within the classroom setting (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2019). Bilingual students maintain their awareness of classroom writing or academic writing norms while practicing translanguaging in either of their languages (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2019). More importantly, Garcia and Kleifgen (2019) found the practice of translanguaging affords students self-efficacy and empowerment free from comparisons to monolingual peers. Students should be encouraged to use multimodal forms of language such as verbal, visual, and body to collaborate with peers within classroom settings (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2019). Additional findings by Garcia and Kleifgen (2019) suggest that Emergent bilinguals are often excluded from enrichment opportunities so their literary experiences are restricted to limited genres and contexts. The use of translanguaging in literacy

learning increases student awareness of their bilingual practices at a level that increases their metalinguistic engagement and awareness with text (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2019). Additionally, Garcia and Kleifgen (2019) posit the findings suggest that translanguaging helps students become aware of how the multilingual strategies and skills they possess are not accounted for in standardized tests.

Preparing Teachers to Work with Diverse Students

Although the student population has changed to reflect a more heterogeneous world, the population of educators and researchers remains for the most part largely unchanged (Au & Raphael, 2000). While Au & Raphael (2000) found that teachers of all backgrounds may learn to teach students of diverse backgrounds, they also found there are some teachers who view themselves as not having culture or define culture as separate from personal identity or life experiences (Au & Raphael, 2000). Au & Raphael (2000) describe a teacher demographic with less than one in every eight teachers being of a diverse background. In addition, Au & Raphael (2000) cite the numbers of researchers from diverse backgrounds is far less than the numbers of teachers from diverse backgrounds. They also discuss a need to improve teacher recruitment, preparation, and retention from diverse backgrounds (Au & Raphael, 2000). Their research suggests that some of these issues may stem from the concerns with the foundational literacy education of students from diverse backgrounds that make them less prepared for success in college and career (Au & Raphael, 2000).

One of the most essential and rare resources for English Language Learner success is teachers and leaders skilled to work with them (Akiba, LeTendre, & Scribner, 2007; Flores, 2007; Kang & Hong, 2008; Peske & Haycock, 2006; Rouse & Barrow, 2006; Samson & Lesaux, 2015; Weglinsky, 2004). Teacher preparation programs need to include instruction about language, language development, the resources students use to develop language and the concepts and ideas about the world around them (Gutierrez et al., 2002). Reading instruction needs to highlight the social, cultural, and linguistic factors involved in teaching reading (Au, 1998; De Los Rios, 2017; Perry, in press). Teachers of English language learners require more professional development to strengthen their knowledge and skills to teach English language learners (Gutierrez et al., 2002). All programs need to evaluate how they approach English language learner teacher preparation including programs that promote social justice issues as its premise (Gutierrez et al., 2002). Bilingual teachers receive the same certification as mainstream instruction teachers with an added knowledge base on how to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students—some would argue these teachers are better prepared (Gutierrez et al., 2002).

The hiring process and subsequent teacher assignment is very important to the academic success of marginalized students. Teacher quality, defined by years of experience, full certification, and high educational levels, has a direct impact on student achievement (Akiba, LeTendre, & Scribner, 2007; Flores, 2007; Peske & Haycock, 2006; Rouse & Barrow, 2006; Samson & Lesaux, 2015; Weglinsky, 2003). Historically, most high quality teachers are assigned to monolingual, monocultural, higher affluence students in disproportionate numbers (Peske & Haycock, 2006). Ensuring that quality teachers are working with underserved students is essential to improving academic outcomes in traditionally underperforming student groups. Teachers with limited or no training in teaching underserved student populations are more likely to hold lower expectations for them, perceive them as less able to conform to preconceived social norms, or behavior expectations (Carter, 2013). Consequently, Carter (2013) argues that limited opportunities, and experiences are offered within those classrooms.

Discussion

Practices for Equity in Literacy

A need for practices for equity in literacy is evident. Based on the review of research (Au, 1998; De Los Rios, 2017; Delpit, 1988; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019; Perry, in press), there is a vast difference in the academic success of culturally and linguistically diverse students and their affluent white classmates. The difference in academic outcome trends spans decades following the implementation of the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act and its mandates (August et al., 2009; Goldenberg, 2011). Garcia and Kleifgen (2010, 2019) promote the term Emergent Bilinguals to describe the student population that speaks a language other than English to highlight the asset of speaking a primary language that is not the mainstream language—in this case English. An assets based mindset is a shift in focus away from the notion that what defines Emergent Bilinguals (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019) is their lack of English language proficiency and it is the antithesis of a deficit mindset (Milner, 2010; Tyson, 2013). One of the primary approaches educational leaders must adopt to improve outcomes for culturally and linguistically diverse students is a culture centered on an assets based mindset. The idea that cultural and linguistic differences are positive personal student characteristics that can support learning in school is central to creating an assets-based mindset.

Another consideration for equity in literacy is valuing the home language and promoting the educator's role in support of the use of the first language (L1) in developing the second language (L2) or English. Allowing for use of L1 as a support in spoken and written forms can help scaffold academic progress in English (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019; Goldenberg, 2011). Promoting and encouraging translanguaging so that Emergent Bilinguals can draw on their knowledge of two languages utilizing complex cognitive processes to understand the world around them and learn in academic settings (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010) is equally important. Site and district leaders should promote teaching practices that support fluid use of the first and second languages through the practice of translanguaging (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019). Additionally, they should create the conditions (Ben-Yosef, 2003) to support varied learning styles, and literacies (De Los Rios, 2017; Perry, in press) to support successful learning in mainstream classrooms. Part of this process requires a loss of control from classroom teachers, and site administrators to students as they allow use of the first language even when it is not a language the adults know (De Los Rios, 2017). Additionally, the loss of control extends to allow for the use of different literacies to arrive at an understanding of the topics, vocabulary, and meaning of academic literacy (De Los Rios, 2017; Perry, in press).

The messaging of an assets-based culture is positively focused on valuing the traits and learning approaches of students within the school environment. Student traits such as language, home literacies, social norms, and cultural norms common to the home environment or community are valued as strengths (Au, 1998; Au & Raphael, 2000; Ben-Yossef, 2003; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019; De Los Rios, 2017; Perry, in press) used for academic learning. An assets-based culture promotes the value of focusing on student strengths and utilizing these strengths as a means for bridging instruction. The concept of an assets-based school culture is centered on intentionally seeking ways to connect student home and community culture to the school culture. As the traits of culturally and linguistically diverse students are increasingly recognized as valid approaches to learning in the school setting, diverse students become less marginalized. Figure 1 proposes a conceptual framework for practices for equity in literacy. The figure takes into account the research discussed in the literature review as practical approaches to teaching literacy to culturally and linguistically diverse students. An explanation of the concepts follows the graphic.

Figure 1
Practices for Equity in Literacy

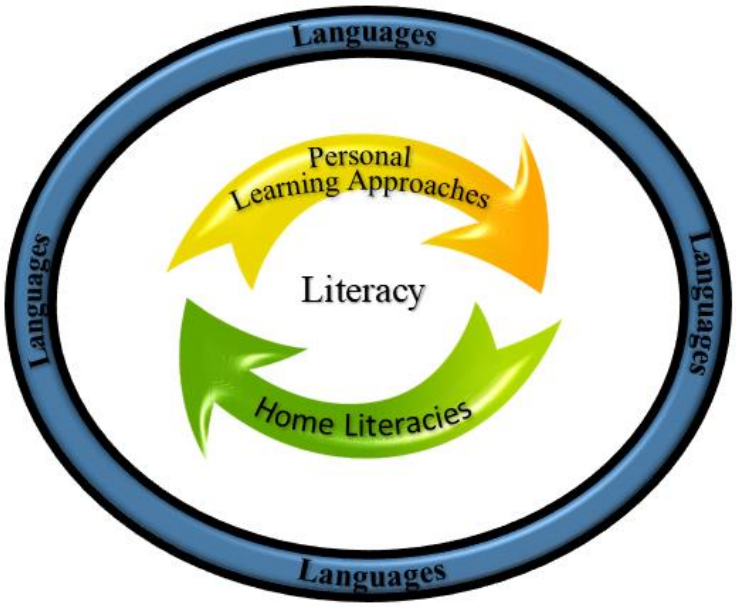

Figure 1 is a proposed framework to reduce opportunity gaps and increase equity in literacy. The figure outlines three specific systemic practices that stood out from the research in support of increasing equitable literacy opportunities for linguistically and culturally diverse students. Based on the findings of several researchers (Au & Raphael, 2000; Ben-Yosef, 2003; De Los Rios, 2017; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019; Perry, in press), traditional approaches to the instruction of students from diverse backgrounds are insufficient to support attainment of academic literacy. Current research specifically focuses on non-traditional methods for improving English learner outcomes (Au & Raphael, 2000; Ben-Yosef, 2003; De Los Rios, 2017; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019; Perry, in press). The literacy of schools is best attained through the basis of home literacies or the literacies practiced among the family, community, or religions, etc. (Au, 1998; Ben-Yosef, 2003; De Los Rios, 2017; Perry, in press). Home literacies may not necessarily consist of print and may take many forms as well as address many topics or experiences (Au, 1998; Ben-Yosef, 2003; De Los Rios, 2017; Perry, in press). Students from diverse backgrounds may use multiple approaches (De Los Rios, 2017; Perry, in press) and process their understanding of topics using their language processes (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019) to express their academic literacies. These personal approaches to learning can take on any form or method personally known to the student. Students' languages vary from the spoken languages of Emergent Bilinguals (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019), and signs, symbols, gestures, drawings representative of personal interactions with the world (Perry, in press). The figure represents a complimentary interaction among the different skills, strategies, and approaches a diverse student may possess and use in their process toward gaining academic literacy. Developing academic literacy or the literacy of school is a process that takes time and relevant instructional approaches. The figure does not suggest replacing English as the language of the classroom however, it does suggest allowing the use of other languages in text, written, or spoken forms, and non-traditional literacies to support literacy in the English language within academic settings.

Evidence based practices and policies specifically proven to reduce opportunity gaps and increase academic literacy for diverse students should be at the center of the decisions educators make and provide within a school setting. The reading data trend for English language learners, Blacks, Latinx, and students of low socioeconomic backgrounds calls for action for change from the status quo. As an overwhelming majority of Emergent Bilinguals (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019) and students from other underserved student groups continue to experience marginalization in mainstream culture centered classrooms (Au, 1998; De Los Rios, 2017; Delpit, 1988; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019; Perry, in press), it is especially important to prioritize literacy instruction as one of the most powerful mediums to increase academic achievement. The steps that all educators can take to support the process of developing equity in literacy for underserved student populations are explained in the next section.

Focus Areas to Increase Equity in Literacy

Table 1 illustrates four key areas to support work towards elimination of opportunity gaps and to increase equity in literacy for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Table 1
Focus Areas to Increase Equity in Literacy

Focus Areas to Increase Equity in Literacy	
Build an Assets Based School Culture	Understand and communicate cultural and language differences as assets that support learning (Au, 1998; Au & Raphael, 2000; Ben-Yosef, 2003; De Los Rios, 2017; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019; Goldenberg, 2011; Perry, in press).
Support the Use of Home Literacies & Languages	Provide a school culture where home languages (Au, 1998; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019; Goldenberg, 2011), personal literacies (Ben-Yosef, 2003; De Los Rios, 2017; Perry, in press), and life experiences (De Los Rios, 2017; Perry, in press) are valued and integrated into instruction.
Encourage Multiple Approaches to Learning	Allow and encourage the use of non-traditional approaches to make meaning of academic texts and contexts (De Los Rios, 2017; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2017; Goldenberg, 2011; Perry, in press).
Engage & Integrate Parent and Community Perspectives	Actively seek the input of parents and community members to determine the best approaches to facilitate academic literacy for diverse students (Au, 1998).

Table Summary

Build an Assets Based School Culture

Educators need to demonstrate they understand and communicate cultural and language differences as assets that support learning in academic settings. They may do this by creating an inclusive environment that welcomes diversity in language, literacies, and personal learning approaches (Au, 1998; Ben-Yosef, 2003; De Los Rios, 2017; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019; Perry, in press). Educators should seek ways to feature and celebrate the many cultures represented in the school setting as a means of reciprocal teaching and learning and respectful collaboration.

Support the Use of Home Languages and Literacies

Administrators at all levels as well as teachers and support staff should model a school culture where languages, literacies, and experiences practiced in the home or community are valued and integrated into instruction. Several studies demonstrate that non-traditional approaches to literacy instruction are successful in supporting culturally and linguistically diverse students with learning in academic settings (Au, 1998; De Los Rios, 2017; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019; Perry, in press). As literacy curriculum and instruction for diverse students is considered, social and linguistic practices as contexts for learning (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019; Perry, 2020) should also be embedded in instructional settings. These considerations extend to ensuring representation of diverse perspectives, and experiences in reading materials used for instruction. A plan for frequent professional development opportunities should reflect support for teacher development of skills with teaching reading instruction to culturally and linguistically diverse students (Goldenberg, 2011). Literacy instruction pedagogy should strive to create independent readers that engage in reading with metacognitive skills (Baker, 2005) that transfer in application to new unfamiliar texts of varying genres, and for differing purposes.

Encourage Multiple Approaches to Learning

Educational policies and practices should allow and encourage the use of non-traditional approaches to make meaning of academic texts and contexts (Au, 1998; De Los Rios, 2017; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019; Perry, in press). Classroom lessons should also include strategic student interaction with their learning environment, each other, and the content (Perry, in press). Site administrators should develop school-wide systems for strategic practice of the language of textbooks and academia for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Support for teachers should include developing their capacity to discern and utilize rigorous student to student and student to teacher discussion centered on academic content using academic language.

Engage and Integrate Parent and Community Perspectives

Actively seek the input of parents and community members to determine the best approaches to facilitate academic literacy for diverse students (Au, 1998). Educators in positions at state, local, district, and classroom settings should actively seek the collaboration of parents and community members to develop systems that will provide relevant support for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Encouraging continuous participation of parents in planning for practices and policies will support a mutual understanding of support for diverse student populations.

Implications for Literacy Research and Practical Application

Future research

Future research should focus on continuing studies in the practical application of translanguaging (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019) in academic settings in US states with large numbers of English language learners. The research should focus on the use of translanguaging (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019) within districts, schools, and classrooms over several years with the intent of collecting data quantifying impact of its use on academic outcomes in English classroom settings.

Additional research with use of Pluriversality (Perry, in press) within classroom settings is necessary to determine its impact with culturally and linguistically diverse students. Adaptation

to K-12 settings may yield different findings pertaining to the development of self-awareness, and agency for students in relation to the larger concept of global, and social perspectives.

Similarly, the use of multiple forms of literacies (Au, 1998; Ben Yosef, 2003; De Los Rios, 2017; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019; Perry, in press) should be studied in a more generalized sense within the context of mainstream classrooms in schools with large numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Specific attention should be given to the types of literacies students engage with outside the school setting and how those literacies can be bridged to support learning in the classroom.

Recommendations for Practical Application

A recommendation for practical application that may begin to address many of the concerns presented in the research is to develop a teacher preparation pathway for high school students in schools with students from predominantly diverse backgrounds. This pathway may provide culturally and linguistically diverse students a way to earn their high school diploma simultaneously with an Associate of Arts (AA) degree in Early Childhood Education. Students who earn the degree would then be able to work as instructional support staff in schools with high enrollment of students from diverse backgrounds and eventually attain a teaching credential to work in similar schools. Providing an opportunity to earn an AA degree while still in high school may begin to support the development of a teacher workforce that is more diverse and empathetic to the issues of students with similar life experiences and languages. Teaching high school students foundational courses in early childhood education pedagogy would allow teacher credentialing programs to include extensive culturally and linguistically diverse pedagogy for all teaching credential candidates.

Teacher credentialing programs should include several core classes on multiple literacies (Ben-Yosef, 2003; De Los Rios, 2017; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019; Perry, in press), multiple perspectives (Ay, 1998; Au & Raphael, 2000; De Los Rios, 2017; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019; Perry, in press), and integration of primary language (Au, 1998; De Los Rios, 2017; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010, 2019; Goldenberg, 2011) into daily learning approaches. State credentialing requirements should restructure pedagogy to include recognition of varied languages, literacies, and personal approaches as valid forms of learning in mainstream classrooms. Credentialing requirements should include teacher assessments to determine teacher preparation to serve culturally and linguistically diverse students. It is equally important to provide similar training to administrators and teachers in the form of continuous professional development requirements during the course of each school year. In order to support equity in learning, it is critical to develop educator knowledge and understanding about the assets of the unique traits culturally and linguistically diverse students bring to the school setting. Allowing students to use their full collection of skills, approaches, and behaviors that may not necessarily conform to traditional approaches to learning is essential to allow multiple opportunities for success within academic settings. This focused coursework and training may help educators understand different approaches to bridge learning for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Conclusion

Ongoing issues of academic underachievement in culturally and linguistically diverse students are reflective of systemic issues of inequity. Limits on the skills, approaches, perspectives, and literacies that culturally and linguistically diverse students are allowed to use in the classroom setting render them powerless to use their personal agency to succeed with academic tasks. Education policies, and programs at federal, state, and local levels should reflect changes to support a changing student population. Policy changes should include a validation of non-

traditional learning approaches, reflect increased relevance, and expand representation of diverse students in the classroom. All stakeholders should work towards reducing school wide practices that create opportunity gaps that lead to inequities in learning. The role of school administrators at every level is to identify and remove the systemic practices, policies, and programs that limit learning opportunities for underserved students.

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SKILL IDENTITY: CREATING SOCIAL CAPITAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

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ABSTRACT

Many experiences in physical education class focus around competitive activities. Middle school is an important time for students, as they shape their physical identity. Creating a foundation of skill during these activities, may promote a lifetime of future physical behaviors. Therefore, attaining physical skill can create social capital, ultimately a form of social justice, as individuals may use this foundation to be physically active throughout their lives. During middle school, however, physical activity declines. This decrease in physical activity, perhaps, limits physical possibilities later in life. To examine this injustice, the term "skill identity" has been created. Skill identity acts as a new lens for educators to reflect on their practice. The following will be discussed: a) competitive activities and physical education class (skill, identity, and social justice and injustice), and b) identity, social capital, and justice (creating strong or weak skill identities, the teacher, and gender and race).

Keywords: skill identity, instruction, social capital, competence, social justice

Competitive Activities and Physical Education Class

Physical education class, K-12, may be the first time that students are exposed to physical activities (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & Center for Disease Control, 2013), and if they are introduced in a positive manner, these activities may promote a lifetime of participation (Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDCP], 2012; Chen & Hancock, 2006). In physical education class, the majority of activities that the students are exposed to may be competitive (Curtner-Smith & Sofo, 2004; Lund & Tannenhill, 2015). In these classes, the ultimate goal may be to gain a basic appreciation and understanding of these competitive activities (Siedentop et al., 2020). Competitive activities are widely used, and during their time in the gymnasium, pre-service and in-service teachers will instruct these activities. This instruction is guided by National Standards that allow for students to become physically literate, attaining both the knowledge and the skills to enjoy a lifetime of physical activity. State Standards in physical education are guided by these National Standards, however, within States, these Standards might vary according to the needs of the State (Society of Health and Physical Educators [SHAPE], 2013).

Within these physical education classes, the popular competitive activities that might be taught in the schools, but not exclusively, are basketball, baseball, soccer, softball, or volleyball. Competitive activities have a winner or loser and are played individually, or in teams. These competitive activities in physical education class can be structured through various curricular models (Dyson et al., 2004; Wallhead & O'Sullivan, 2005). These curricular models can promote sport in various ways and for various grade levels. Within these curricular models, competitive activities are often purported as a basis for sportsmanship, working with others, creating leadership skills, and preparing students for a competitive society (Brown & Grinski, 1992).

These models can vary. Traditional competitive activities focus on short periods of skill development, followed by full-fledged game play. This format is now changing, however, as newer curricular models can differ in objectives. Some models can range from highlighting personal responsibility (Hellison, 2011), to understanding all aspects of competitive sport through modified gameplay (Siedentop et al., 2020; Werner et al., 1996) or creating game experiences that allow for sport to be incorporated into other areas of life (Mandigo et al., 2009). These activities can be practiced outside of the gymnasium, and some of the fundamental skills learned can promote the health and wellness activities of an individual.

The sports that students learn in physical education class are an integral part of society (Coakley, 2015). Whether watching games on television, discussing those games with neighbors and friends, or playing various sports outside of physical education class as social activities, competitive activities are prevalent across nations (Jacobs & Wright, 2018). Understanding how to play a sport, and discussing sports, can open up worlds of social acceptance and future physical activity behaviors (Sallis et al., 2000).

Sport is prevalent in physical education class, and playing those sports depends on building a foundation of skill for all students. While competitive activities are commonplace in physical education class, physical activity declines after middle school (Scrabis-Fletcher & Silverman, 2017). This might be due to the fact that physical education does not have personal relevance in students' lives, and they may not have the skills to participate in certain activities (Beni et al., 2017). This is concerning as middle school is a time when students should be defining their future physical interests (National Middle School Association, 2003). Perhaps, how students are developing their skill foundation during competitive activities in middle school should be examined in a new way, so that students will be motivated to augment their skills. Therefore, a new term has been created, "skill identity." Skill identity can provide a lens to define the explicit, and sometimes hidden, ways in which students and teachers perceive and create identity in this formative time.

To identify injustice, and promote social justice, this paper will examine how skill identity might be formed by discussing the following: a) skill, identity, and social justice and injustice, b) creating strong or weak skill identities, c) the teacher, and d) skill, gender, and race.

Skill Defined

To participate in competitive activities, students should have a foundation of skill (SHAPE, 2013). The honing of skill is a key factor in creating a physically literate person (National Association for Sport and Physical Education [NASPE], 2013). Part of creating physical literacy is demonstrating and understanding ability. Each student might have a specific ability in an aspect of fitness, i.e. physical strength, endurance, and/or flexibility (Henry, 1968). In physical education class, ability allows a student to participate and succeed in an activity. If, however, those abilities are not coupled with a certain motor skill, these specific abilities might not be used or even

realized, nor connected for broader use in competitive sport or physical activities of everyday life. For example, if a student has strength or endurance, but is never taught to throw or kick correctly, the connection might never be made that the ability they have in strength or endurance can be used in a broader physical activity or sport context, such as throwing a baseball or being able to run for an entire soccer game without tiring. The connection to a motor skill may have a direct impact on later physical activities, as students become adults and choose to lift weights or run marathons (Lima et al., 2017).

Motor skills impact physical movements as well as psychological aspects, including self-confidence and perceived competence (Hulteen et al., 2018). Skill can be linked to forming beliefs about a competitive activity that might affect participation (Loprinzi et al., 2018; Martins et al., 2015; Silverman, 2017). During competitive activities, students are competing against others, and, therefore, skill can be considered a social construct, allowing people to join in certain competitive activities (Evans, 2004). Thus, having skill, and using various abilities in a group activity, can allow a student to create both a place and an identity within that group. Inclusion or the ability to be able to complete a physical activity is a form of self-efficacy (Farrington & Farrington, 2005), as the student is able to enhance motor skills as they participate in the activity (Bailey, 2008).

Inclusion and having opportunities to develop motor skills erases the injustice that low motor skilled students may experience by not being able to fully partake in sport, nor by being successful (Lysniak, 2020). These motor skills can be used in adulthood and transferred to various physical activities. The ability to participate creates equal opportunities for each and every student and allows for a just environment in the gymnasium. Creating participation is a form of social justice. Denying these opportunities can create a form of injustice, as students may not have the foundation in adulthood to participate in future activities.

Identity Defined

How identity is shaped is difficult to define. Sociologists have suggested that identity may be context specific (Goffman, 1978), and as students assimilate into a group, identities are shaped. Identity is linked with culture, with the day-to-day interactions with school and students in the social setting, and with students' character, which is shaped by their experiences (Noonan, 2019). Identity can shape a feeling of belonging in certain groups, can be tied to a student's place in that group, reflects how the group perceives them, and creates a foundation for their identity in the group. This created identity may not fit within a specific group, and therefore, the student does not consider themselves a part of the group (Evans et al., 2019). At times, however, students' identity and group connection cannot be formed, and when these differences cannot be resolved, there may be emotional consequences (Heerdink et al., 2019) that may negatively shape their skill identity in the future.

Social Justice and Injustice

By teaching each motor skill so that students experience success in physical movement, allows them to form a strong physical identity for an active adulthood. This physical foundation is ultimately a form of social justice. Social justice allows a fair distribution of educational opportunity, or in this case, physical opportunity (Sen, 2008). Recognizing and eradicating all forms of unequal treatment and creating an identity that incorporates skill denotes social justice.

The health concerns that can occur due to physical inactivity have been discussed as social injustice (Lee, & Cubbin, 2009). Not creating a foundation of skill that students can use in everyday life might be a form of injustice. Injustice can, also, be caused by unfair treatment.

According to Mikula (1986), lack of recognition in everyday performance or effort might create this injustice, or when promises and agreements are not met. In the latter, injustice occurs when promises of creating a basic foundational level of skill for activities are not fulfilled. Thus, when disparity in skill can be addressed, social justice can be attained (Braveman, et al., 2005).

Social justice is met when teachers help their students form a strong skill identity that can be carried throughout their lives. The injustice of broken promises to develop skill, leads to a lack of recognizing students' performance in competitive activities and may result in a lack of skill improvement (Mikula et al., 1990).

Identity, Social Capital, and Justice

Creating a sense of identity within a group, and belonging as a member of a group, can be seen as a form of social capital, an entry into a world of future social connections. In addition, social capital is a relationship among people in the group that allow the group to function effectively (Bourdieu, 1996). In competitive activities, skill can become a type of capital and can create passage to social circles, in this case, entry into game play, or a place on a team. Being accepted into a group, however, is complex and convoluted. Groups, or teams, can be shaped by the unconscious decisions that shape behavior (Bourdieu, 1998).

If students are accepted within the group, these unconscious decisions might solidify a position within the group (Engström, 2008). As students and teachers make these unconscious decisions, identity is slowly formed, and social identity within the group is gained, taken away, or modified. Identity within the group, such as having skill, is a type of capital. Having capital might influence how students view their place and fit into that world (Dumais, 2002) of competitive sport. Successful and unsuccessful experiences can serve to shape perceptions and actions socially in the group, how they are perceived by the group, and how the group acts towards students (Crossley, 2001; Wacquant, 2005). This shaping of identity within a group is powerful when discussing competitive activities, as skill can shape identity, and identity can shape skill.

Competitive activities can be powerful conduits to shaping both skill and identity. If students do not have a cognitive or physical understanding of these sports, they might not be able to either discuss these sports, or participate in these sports in the future. As the goal of physical education is to allow a lifetime of physical activities (SHAPE, 2013), and sport is prominently used, recognizing and strengthening skill identities is one-step closer to achieving this goal of inclusion in the group, full participation in the activity, and social justice.

Creating Strong and Weak Skill Identities

Middle school is an important time to create both motor skill and identity. This basic understanding of motor skills can be transferred to other sports and activities (Mitchell et al., 2013). Skill, and the ability to perform that skill, is an integral part of any physical modality (Dumais, 2002; Evans, 2004). Children start to accurately analyze their own ability when they reach the age of twelve (Roberts, 2001). Being able to analyze their own ability and physical competence, and then improve skill, can be the key to unlocking the gate to social acceptance and a desired commodity for those that attain skill (Craft et al., 2003). For example, if a skill needs agility or endurance, understanding how to develop those abilities would be important. Conversely, students that have not recognized their abilities, and have not attained the required skill, might not be able to unlock this social acceptance within the group.

If one were to observe a physical education class taking place, there is a shared identity in the class. It could seem that students are excited and having fun. Yet, while it may seem that

students are engaged and might take part in different types of activities in physical education, not all students are experiencing those activities in the same way. The unconscious decisions that students make can have deep ramifications on the creation of skill identity. For example, the split decision of who is passed to and who is not during gameplay (Bernstein et al., 2011), and who is seen, and who is invisible (Bernstein, et al., 2014), can have profound effects on a student. If a student does not have skill, the team players, unconsciously, might not want to throw the ball to that student. Conversely, if a student has more importance in the group, the student has more opportunities to play. As capital is built, so too identity is formed. Therefore, understanding how to play, being able to play, and being able to build social connections after play creates both skill and identity. Without skill, students cannot join the activity and might not find their place in the activity. Having skill, or not having skill, can shape lifestyles and values, and one's identity.

Students who participate in competitive activities in physical education class have different skill levels. The way a teacher structures how students practice in a physical education class may shape a basic level of perception for the student (Bourdieu, 1998). This difference can create students' skill identities within an activity that is offered. Students with different skill identities have different experiences in physical education class (Bernstein et al., 2015).

The activity that is presented is meant to create an experience, where students participate together in the class. However, this can also highlight differences in students' performances within that activity (Scrabis-Fletcher & Silverman, 2017). Therefore, the activity that can bring students together might also create disparity (Evans et al., 2019). A class soccer game is an experience that the students do together, as the game is the focus for the students. Students are all having different experiences (Leisterer & Jekauc, 2019), however, because of their different skill identities; this 'shared' experience becomes delineated, as students only 'see' their skill or lack of skill. Thus, a student starts to define their skill identity as one that "can do" or one that "cannot do." The former indicates a sense of justice, by supplying an educational opportunity; the latter, a sense of injustice, by denying the promise of obtaining a foundation of skill, and incurring the future consequences, such as negative self-perception and the inability to join in activities (Ada et al., 2019).

A strong skill identity in physical education class is a form of capital, a bargaining chip that students can use to enter into play. When they enter into play, this shapes their experience and forms the foundation for their identity. This identity is created by the skill-building context that the students are placed in as they develop skill. Sometimes students might not have the skill, to participate in an activity that is presented (Hunter, 2004). A student, who has lower skill, often is creating that skill identity as they do not receive adequate, appropriate practice trials during a competitive activity (Verner-Filion et al., 2017). If a student is placed in a game-like situation without having created a strong skill identity, that student may be unable to participate (Lyngstad et al., 2016), thus, weakening their skill identity even further.

Once these skills are mastered, however, it is important that they are practiced in modified game-like situations (Hastie et al., 2017). These modified game situations can build the students' skill identity, and as skill increases, full-fledged game play can be an option. Therefore, the examination of students that have, or do not have, skill to participate in activities becomes a key component of shaping future skill identities that might lead to prospective behaviors, as well as affective consequences.

Skill identity may be tied to students' perception of their place in the class, and how they can participate. The student might blame herself, or himself, for being unsuccessful (Bernstein et al., 2011). A student lacking the competence to engage in an activity can become a barrier to enjoyment (Garn & Cothran, 2006). When a student perceives that she or he is not competent or

successful in an activity, that student is unlikely to want to engage in that activity. If they feel that they cannot take part in an activity, they often hide or feel embarrassed, withdrawing from the task all together (Dyson et al., 2004). A lack of competence in a sports-based program can lead to embarrassment and negative experiences.

When a student is able to play a sport, they are viewed by other students, perhaps unconsciously, as having competence, meaning having the skill to complete a task successfully in game play. These students may also have more opportunities to play within that competitive activity (Metzler, 2017). Solmon et al. (2003) found that middle school students, who had positive feelings about their competence, were more engaged in the activity, had positive feelings regarding the activity, and exhibited higher levels of motivation. When a student is able to perform a task with competence, as reinforced by the unconscious play decisions of the group in physical education class, that student often is willing to persist at the task. When a student successfully masters a task, this encourages the student to continue with this activity and even pursue mastering more tasks. Therefore, perceived competence (Deci & Ryan, 2002) plays an important role in creating a strong skill identity. When students experience success, they increase their skill identity and begin to enjoy physical education.

Skill and the Teacher

Skill identity can be attained through various instructional variables that create successful learning opportunities for students, such as time, appropriate practice, modified game play (Hastie et al., 2017), as well as skill progression and accountability (Ward et al., 2015). It is necessary that instructors look at these variables, which focus on creating skill identity in activities. Teachers, often highly skilled players themselves, might be perpetuating the situation of full-fledged and highly complex game play (Harvey & O'Donovan, 2011). These teachers are highly familiar with the competitive activities that they are instructing, as they themselves experienced various sports at a young age. Their skill identity took place during childhood and shaped their behaviors and instructional practices (Dumais, 2002). These teachers, having had very strong experiences and skill identity with competitive activities, might reproduce activities according to their own experiences (Rovegno, 1994). They might often want to share their successful sports experience with their students by placing them into game play, because they assume that will enable them to develop skill (Bernstein & Herman, 2014), as they themselves did. While this is done with good intentions, the students might not have the skill identity that the teachers had; some of the students might not enjoy the activity, nor develop skill while placed in these full-fledged game situations.

Teachers are aware of students' skill level in physical education class (Mahedero et al, 2015); however, they might be unaware of how they shape skill identity. It could be argued that the skill identity of the teacher, at times, might differ from that of their less skilled students, whom they instruct. Teachers need to be aware of the impact of shaping skill identity can have on their students. Being aware of this difference might be the first step in creating a more socially just learning environment. The replication and regulation of these competitive activities can be controlled by the physical education teacher (Fernández-Balboa & Muros, 2006) and creates the perception of how subjects should be taught (Bourdieu, 1996). Thus, the way that physical education is replicated by the teacher (Cronin & Armour, 2015), in turn, shapes not only students' experiences in a subject, but their skill identity within that subject as well.

During game play, teachers might be drawn to give their attention, at times, only to the highly skilled students, thus resulting in a form of unintentional blindness (Mack & Rock, 1998) to low skilled students. The perception of skill, or lack of skill, may shape teachers' interaction

with and preconception of students in competitive activities (Hay & Hunter, 2006). The very activities that are meant to create a skill identity, might actually accentuate differences in what, or what not, the students are able to do in the full-fledged and complex world of game play. The activities that might have created structure in the teachers' lives (Bernstein & Herman, 2014) might, or might not, be having the same effect on all the students in the class.

Skilled players have the tools to join physical activities, since they have the capital to be able to play (Crossley, 2001). This capital can be used in many future physical activities in the students' lives and can be carried over in a type of cultural participation, which shapes skill identity (Dumais, 2002). While all teachers want students to succeed, it might be easier to focus on the skilled students, rather than those who are low skilled, especially during the complexity of full-fledged game play (Bernstein & Herman, 2014). To counter this tendency, teachers should have systematic accountability measures in place to assess skill (Baumgartner et al., 2007; Lund & Tannehill, 2015). These accountability measures, for example, could include rubrics and task cards to ensure student participation.

At times, teachers may not use assessment; however, National and State Standards can guide instruction. Physical education teachers, thus, can review their instruction to improve its effectiveness to meet the needs of all their students. This could augment the possibility of student success in sport. Most importantly, teachers need to realize that students' skill identity is being shaped and be acutely aware of their own actions in the gymnasium. This awareness will be the first step in shaping students' strong skill identity. These steps are important for reforming injustices that may be occurring in these activities.

Skill, Gender, and Race

Society and groups can construct identity, and this definition can be fluid in nature (Butler, 2002). There has been discussion regarding this fluidity in identity and gender (Hughes, 2010). A student's athletic contributions are a direct result of competence and skill in activities. This competence and skill is shown in women's sports achievements after Title IX, as well as, girls' participation in sports (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002). There is an inherent contradiction, however, between the increase of female accomplishments and the decline of participation in physical education after middle school. Examining this decline in physical activity has shown that females, especially black and Hispanic students (CDCP, 2006), follow this trend.

It has been argued that the physical education curriculum is based historically on a model focused on middle class, elitist, male values (Bailey et al., 2009). In a recent study, students' reported how ethnic and cultural differences cause tensions during students' interaction in activities, such as sport. In these tensions, power relations, such as skill identity, can become apparent (Thorjussen & Sisjord, 2018). There is still a substantial lack of research regarding the beliefs that minority girls have about sport, and how those beliefs can translate into participation (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005; Gao et al., 2008).

Certain physical activities can also carry gender boundaries, and students do not want to be stereotyped in what is perceived as gender specific activities (Solmon et al., 2003). Although the foundation of physical education activities might be built on this male value model (Bourdieu, 1996), this might be changing, as there are shifts in societal advancement that are reflected in physical exercise. Skill level, and thus skill identity, rather than gender, is linked to the way a student might feel about activities in physical education (Subramaniam & Silverman, 2007). In fact, skill alone may be what indicates whether males or females participate in competitive physical activities in the future (Goudas et al., 2001).

Girls that focus on the skill components of a sport may tend to have a higher level of skill identity. Thus, girls who practice skills in physical education class might have more opportunities to play in authentic game-like situations (McKenzie et al., 2004). Increasing enjoyment and participation in physical education class, due to the increase of skill, can strengthen skill identity. Teachers create this delicate world of building skill, and build social capital, and ultimately social justice for their students. Therefore, it necessary that teachers are aware of task presentation, and how it relates to both relevance and student enjoyment during physical education class (McCaughtry et al., 2008) of both the activity and acquisition of skill identity.

The way teachers' structure task presentation, and how explicit the teachers are with instruction, can be related to student achievement (Silverman, 2017). Wright (1997) states, however, that the attention students receive during instruction can be directly related not only to students' specific skill, but also to their gender. In other words, girls might be overlooked due to gender in certain activities, and be doubly overlooked, if they are girls without skill. If girls do not have the skill to compete in certain sports, it could have negative effects in terms of their participating in physical activity later in life (Allender et al., 2006). These skills can be used in any physical activity or sport, or as a form of capital used to gain entry into a world where that form of capital is admired (Bourdieu, 1998; Hunter, 2004).

Conclusion

Middle school is an important time for students to define themselves and their place in the world. Part of this takes place during physical education class, as students take part in competitive activities. Skill identity is a key to unlocking doors of entry, not only in physical activities during physical education, but also to activities later in life. While skill is often looked at in an isolated manner, this paper discussed how it can also shape identity. How can we challenge both students and teachers to move forward to make those important connections that will be a key component in shaping both physical activity and shaping a strong skill identity for all students? In creating a strong skill identity, this will ultimately lead to a more socially just learning environment for all students.

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BOOK REVIEW

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Mistakes We Have Made: Implications for Social Justice Educators
Bre Evans-Santiago
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August 27, 2008. My first day as a classroom teacher. Planning to arrive early to make sure everything was just right, I instead pulled up to a set of locked gates. I waited a few minutes, desperately trying to ignore the gnawing pang in my stomach, before circling around the neighborhood just west of downtown Los Angeles. Coming back 15 minutes later to find the entrance open, I inched my way into what would become a lifelong career in education. Armed with a cherubic face, a well-worn tie, and emergency teacher instructions, I believed my impact would be limitless. The students arrived, and I wracked my brain for the tips and instructions I learned over the summer. "Be strict on the first day, especially in the 'inner city'." "Show rigor by giving a graded assignment day one." "No student surveys until the third day." Tough love was my motto, and I devised a complicated behavior system that called for students to be praised for compliant behavior and publicly penalized for dissenting conduct. Yet, a few weeks into my first year something was amiss. I wasn't getting the "results" I expected. I could barely keep track of my own behavior system, the kids were unhappy, and student work started to slide. What was I doing wrong? Despite my best intentions to be a social justice educator, to help make radical change in the life of my students, I found myself an unsuccessful actor. Why wasn't I the shining star at the center of so many (White) savior teacher films (Mawhinney, 2019)? Although I gradually learned a different approach, one demonstrated by models of *cariño*[1] and *educación*[2] (Villenas, 2002), the funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) and the

[1] Literally translated as "care," it is a term to describe deep, intimate, and personal affection. See Valenzuela (1999) and Sosa-Provencio (2019) as examples of linking conceptualizations of cariño to critical, and life-giving, education.
[2] Villenas (2002) writes of Latinx parents' desires to give *una buena educación*, one of *respeto* (respect) and *buen comportamiento* (good behavior), to their bicultural children. Villenas (2002) writes, "to be *al pendiente* (vigilant), to give *consejos* (teachings), and to enforce discipline in varying ways became crucial for providing *una buena educación* in a culturally alienated community" (p. 28).

epistemological brilliance of the community itself (Gonzales, 2015), I start this review just like the title, spirit, and format of the text, in the *Mistakes We Have Made*.

As such, Dr. Bre Evans-Santiago's (2020) edited volume takes as its starting point the narration of, and reflection on, self-identified missteps, mishaps, and missed moments that university education professors and teacher educators endured as classroom teachers. From the comically real, Evan-Santiago's wardrobe malfunction amidst broken air-conditioning (Chapter 13), to the decidedly honest, Percell's reunion with a dissatisfied student (Chapter 2), to the unintentionally disparaging, Schwerdtfeger's breach of gendered cultural norms (Chapter 4), to the rather heartbreaking, Beck's response to a custodian's violent killing of classroom baby mice (Chapter 8), the book highlights the instructive potential of vulnerability, the possibility in sharing experiences that demonstrate teaching for social justice is difficult, complex, and sometimes unsuccessful work. Nobody starts the job as an expert, but learning from the stumbles and slipups of those who have made educational justice their life's work communicates the humility necessary for learning and improvement. Thus, as a whole, the book successfully accomplishes Evans-Santiago's aim, to create a "space to allow other teachers to contribute their stories… [so that] social justice educators know that, first, it is okay to make mistakes, and second, do not make the same mistakes we have made" (p. xii). It is precisely the notion of creating space for meaningful conversation, reflection, growth, and the exchange of ideas from and with practitioners and faculty, veterans and beginners, and theory and practice where the text holds most promise. The book is not prescriptive, but a way to start dialogue, a path towards interrogating the assumptions we hold about teaching for social justice. To this end, the book functions as a wonderful text for a methods and/or multicultural education course in teacher education, as each chapter provides a jumping off point for classes to discuss, question, and reimagine the practices, ideologies, knowledges, structures, and in some cases previous instructions that precipitated the mistakes, and the interventions and recalibrations that followed. Such a use of the text would provide examples of specific concepts such as community engagement (Sawyer & Sawyer, Chapter 1), multicultural literature (Suleiman, Chapter 9), colleague collaboration (Hamann, Chapter 14), and language diversity (Sandles, Chapter 5) that could be expanded with supplemental readings, material, and resources to facilitate in-depth study. Thinking back to my opening vignette, such a text and approach would have forced me to confront my own savior mentality and more quickly see the community cultural wealth of the families (Yosso, 2005) I worked alongside.

Mistakes We Have Made consists of fourteen individual and distinct chapters organized into three broad themes, 1) inclusive classrooms, 2) curriculum implementation, and 3) professionalism. Each theme counts between three and five chapters. As stated previously, each chapter begins with a vignette from an author's time as a classroom teacher, followed by both how the described experience resonates with the author today and how it offers an opportunity for social justice teachers to think and do differently. The narratives are grounded in varying degrees of academic literature and most chapters include lists of resources for classroom teachers. Across the chapters, the tone favors readability, reflection, and dialogue rather than dense language and verbosity. The close of each chapter includes two-four reflection questions and activities to further make space for conversation, discussion, and application.

Of the fourteen chapters there are some exceptional contributions that should be noted. Adam Sawyer and Mirna Troncoso Sawyer open the book acknowledging the necessity to shed their "unexamined dominant scripts and practices to see [their] work and community with new eyes" (p. 17). The chapter authors admit their initial rigidity on things like parent conferences and meetings and their rather narrow definition of cultural practices stymied their ability to build

authentic relationships with Latinx families and prevented a more expansive asset-based approach. Most striking about the chapter is how they model the critical reflexivity that teachers must constantly (re)engage to interrogate their praxis. In Chapter Five, David Sandles shares his early attempts to "standardize" the language of his Black students, detailing how even he, as a Black teacher, represented a "linguistically imperialist" mindset (p. 64). Even though such attempts make him "shudder" today, his personal reflections, grounded in an exemplary discussion of African American Language (see also Boutte, 2008, 2016), demonstrate how all educators can inadvertently reproduce, but can also intentionally disrupt, the (language) spaces/systems that buttress Whiteness in schools. Sandles' chapter also adds personal narrative to recent research that outlines how an emphasis on preparing socially-just white teachers for "diverse" classrooms often neglects the need for future teachers of color to examine their own bias and deficit perspectives (Cherry-McDaniel, 2019; House-Niamke & Sato, 2019; Monreal, 2020; Smith-Kondo & Bracho, 2019). Finally, Shelton & Alacrón (Chapter 11) outline a lesson in which a Black student turns away from and responds negatively to what the teacher thought was a socially-just lesson about the three branches of government and the violence brought upon The Civil Rights Movement. They write, "I (Shelton) had grappled with including images depicting racialized violence…but my Whiteness had prevented me from anticipating the way a young African American male student would react to seeing violence perpetrated on another Black male" (pp. 167-168). The chapter authors go on to discuss how they made their mistake right by validating the student's feelings, proactively communicating with the child's mother (see also Suleiman, Chapter 12 on communication), reevaluating social justice curriculum as more than representation, and focusing the need to build a safe and welcoming, yet critical, classroom environment. Hence, Shelton & Alacrón point to the messiness in implementing a critical praxis and remind future teachers that socially just teaching is much more than the intention to do so.

Mistakes We Have Made represents a novel and practical contribution to the larger body of literature on social justice and teacher education/preparation by opening a space of reflection and dialogue centering the vulnerability and growth of teacher educators themselves. In acknowledging, and then collecting a series of introspective appraisals about, the missteps of experienced educators Evans-Santiago "provides a platform to reexamine and revise one's own thinking" (p. xii). Although the text's focus on readability and narrative largely leaves aside deeper attention to the theoretical underpinnings of social justice education (see Monreal, 2018) and the larger structural causes of inequality and marginalization (Anyon, 2014; Au, Bigelow, & Karp, 2007), it provides a unique entry point to start such conversations and can be complemented by additional readings of the kind if used as a class driving text. In sum, this book represents an opportunity to have authentic conversations about the complexity of social justice teaching and the need to constantly reflect on, and be honest about, how our praxis might work better for the students and communities we work with. No doubt, my young teaching self would have benefited from not only reading this book, but also authentic discussion with other teachers who share the knowledge learned from their own mistakes.

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