Education for Social Justice

The Meaning of Justice and Current Research

NICHOLAS M. MICHELLI, TINA J. JACOBOWITZ, STACEY CAMPO, AND DIANA JAHNSEN

with Lori Bush, Kenita Williams, Kortne Ednogun-Ticey, Ni Zhang, Sharon Hardy, Blanca Moon, and Laura Flores Shaw

In these politically contentious and fractious times, *Education and Social Justice* is a must-read text for anyone with an interest in social justice. Readers will be inspired to reflect on their actions to foster social justice and democratic ideals in their own practice.

Ana Maria Villegas, *Professor Emerita of Education, Montclair State University*

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EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Education for Social Justice is a statement of the role of education in promoting social justice. Drawing on research, this book explains what social justice is, presents the argument that democracy requires a commitment to social justice, and shows what action steps need to be taken to ensure social justice is achieved within education and society more broadly.

The text presents research and concrete examples to examine the social justice issues facing society today. Some of the social justice topics explored include access to higher education, informal education (such as museums and art galleries) and adequate civic education, and racial and gender discrimination within education, as well as access to healthcare and the vote, which impact students' learning. It explores specific research and action for each of these elements and, at the end of the book, provides potential paths forward to improve social justice outcomes.

This timely book encourages readers to consider what we can do to enhance social justice in education and society. It is important reading for pre-service teachers, particularly those studying teaching for social justice, social studies education, and educational policy and politics, as well as for in-service teachers who want to make a difference.

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FOREWORD

This book could not be timelier.

The COVID-19 pandemic led Americans to wonder aloud about reimaging US education. As a Montessori educator, I was hopeful that this wondering would lead to serious discussions about changing the very structure of school. I envisioned subjects being taught in an interdisciplinary fashion rather than in isolation. Instead of segregating students by grade, I imagined mixed-age learning communities where older students could support the younger ones, allowing all students to learn that the teacher, or adults in general, are not the keepers of "right" answers. Such a learning community would also mean a significant change in the teacher's role: rather being the expert at the head of a closed classroom charged with evaluating students on lessons and assigning them grades, teachers could act as learning guides or facilitators for the students. With a very different school structure, everyone within it would behave differently. Students could practice directing their own learning, thinking systemically and critically, and being democratic citizens. Conventional schools, after all, are not structured the way the world is, so there is little time for such practice.

My hopes for reimaging school, however, were quickly dashed. The wondering was turned into a nightmare. Instead of considering a structure in which students can learn the skills necessary to keep democracy alive, parent groups and school boards across the United States have launched anti–critical race theory campaigns, making teachers afraid to teach anything related to race, equity, diversity, and inclusion. A state governor has seized control of a public college in Florida, appointing six new far-right conservative trustees and ousting the college's president in order to turn this small, diverse, and

inclusive public school into a replica of a conservative Christian college in Michigan. All of this, mind you, is being done in the name of "freedom"—freedom from "woke nihilism". Through the darkness of these current events, however, the book you hold in your hand shines a ray of light that brings hope once again.

This book is about social justice in education and beyond. The authors in this book are scholar-practitioners—trained researchers working in the thick of education practice and policy on the daily. When these authors began their training as researchers, they had—as I did when I became a doctoral student at Johns Hopkins—ideas about how to ameliorate problems they had observed in education. And, like me, they had to slow down their desire to problem-solve. They had to realize that their own perceptions of those problems were clouded by biases, assumptions, and a narrow view and understanding of the system in which the problem was situated. Moving from focusing on solutions to realizing we don't know what we don't know and slowing down to identify and consider what we don't know can feel somewhat painful. It also runs counter to our fast-paced, solution-focused culture, but it is necessary if we want effective, sustainable change that benefits all involved.

During their doctoral training, these authors learned to see the system and identify and examine factors within that system that may be contributing to the problem they had observed in practice. They learned to think about the problem and the system critically. They learned to recognize their own positionality and potential biases that may come with that position as well as their own life experiences. Most importantly, they learned how crucial it is to listen to the lived experience of others within the system so as not impose solutions that in actuality lead to others' oppression. For too long, education has taken a top-down approach where experts, without any knowledge of the students' experiences, impose interventions or solutions that have unexamined consequences for students, society, and even democracy. That top-down approach is education devoid of social justice. These authors, however, are not only examining elements of social justice in education, but they are also modeling how to examine educational problems of practice—how to check our mental models, which include our own biases, of those problems against the reality. Every educator, researcher, policymaker, and advocate can benefit from this modeling.

Education is a fundamental human right that is essential for building a just, equitable, and democratic society. This book contributes to our understanding of the systemic barriers that prevent equitable access to education so we may find more effective solutions to address these barriers. The authors examine segregation, lack of civic education, low college attendance

of Black and Latino students, gender equity issues, and lack of medical care for students with disabilities. Their chapters will challenge your assumptions and inspire you to continue striving towards a more socially just and equitable society. I am grateful for the inspiration and hope they bring during this tumultuous time. I had the honor of working with some of the authors as students, and now I have the even greater honor of working with them as colleagues to create a more socially just education system.

Dr. Laura Flores Shaw
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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

While we took the initiative in proposing and assembling this book, obviously many others played key roles. Not the least of these are Stacey Campo and Diana Jahnsen, who took leadership as key authors with us as we went through the process. Authors of the research sections of the chapters are doctoral graduates from the School of Education, Johns Hopkins University. Two others who assisted in chapters, Stacey Campo and Sharon Hardy, are PhD graduates from the CUNY graduate center. Nick was fortunate to have all of them as his advisees, and all finished their doctorates successfully. We had no idea how they would respond to doing more writing, but all were very willing.

Each of the chapters focuses on social justice. The first are introductions and the last a summary. The others focus on specific elements of social justice. To write a book on social justice required that we have a shared vision of the meaning of social justice—which is what Ellis called an "essentially contested concept". The meaning of social justice varies among groups of individuals. So, it was necessary for us to reach a shared vision of social justice for this book. That vision and meaning can be easily stated. Social justice is present when there is no discrimination and no repression. By implication individuals living in a condition where social justice is present are in a position to pursue their lives without being discriminated against or repressed. Each of the dissertations at Johns Hopkins used here has a theme of social justice, although not necessarily by design, and not all our students have such a theme. In our last chapter we draw conclusions and offer advice for all who seek to move forward to enhance social justice.

How did it happen that there existed a group of strong students whose work clearly related to social justice or its absence? That is indeed a question

we have pondered. We believe there are a number of factors in play. First, we consider the context of the times. As we wrote this, there was war in Ukraine; Donald Trump fought to keep his position of president; Mike Pence was asked to change the electoral votes; and when Biden reached his third year, he lost the majority in the House. There is potential for significant differences and resistance on the part of the majority party, which led by one vote. That created an atmosphere of concern and doubt for many. Could compromise and agreement be reached on the issues we face, especially as they relate to democracy and social justice? At the same time there was a serious rise in inflation and a loss of jobs. And the Congress, or at least the party in control of the House where financial bills originate, were saying they were against raising the debt limit, which meant possible default on the government loans, including bonds. Social agencies designed to guarantee what was needed by the elderly, in particular, were under attack, with threats to eliminate Social Security and Medicare. At the same time there was a high level of gun violence: with little control over who could own a gun, this resulted in mass shootings in supermarkets, dance clubs, and schools. Then there were shootings by police which raised concerns and led to charges against police officers and their removal from work. Some in Congress refused to consider stronger gun control, seeing it as a violation of the right to bear arms guaranteed by the Constitution.

What a time to decide to write a book about education and social justice! One of our students suggested that *Education and Social Injustice* might be a better title. We think it was the context of the times that led to the topics of research that related to social justice. Of course, all these concerns made it a perfect time to look at the issues we did and draw on the expertise of our doctoral graduates. Education and educators cannot stand aside when problems arise, and they need to be aware of these problems. By the way, we extend this responsibility to all with leadership roles, whether in schools or other contexts. We sincerely hope you find this work of use and find a way to face social justice problems as you encounter students or others with whom you work.

Finally, we want to acknowledge the support of Dr. Laura Flores Shaw, who is Professor and Director of the Doctor of Education Program at Johns Hopkins and wrote the Foreword for this book. Thank you, Laura, for taking the time to support our effort, including, of course, the effort of the wonderful Johns Hopkins students. We acknowledge the kind encouragement provided by Dean Christopher Morphew, Dean of the School of Education at Johns Hopkins University. And we thank Professor Emeritus Ana Maria Villegas for her long history of support as one of the leading scholars in the area of social justice.

Nicholas M. Michelli and Tina J. Jacobowitz

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EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Nicholas M. Michelli, Tina J. Jacobowitz, Stacey Campo, and Diana Jahnsen

"Essentially contested concepts" (ECCs), which we identify in this chapter to include democracy, social justice, and others, are a key basis used for analysis in this book. The basic idea was first identified by the philosopher Gallie, and the idea is under continued study.

These ECCs, if they are to be discussed in a productive manner, require a shared vision of what they mean.

A shared vision is not necessarily full agreement on meaning, which is always difficult with ECCs. There must be enough agreement to allow discussion for further understanding and use of the concept.

These ideas can be examined from a linguistic perspective, as suggested by George Lakoff.

From an educational perspective, seeking a shared vision is a valuable learning opportunity for any group working together. The process requires the use of critical thinking as we have defined it—the process of making a "good" judgment about complicated issues with the use of appropriate criteria for supporting positions, which is the definition of critical thinking we use.

The discussion is an opportunity to practice using empathy in examining the positions of others, engaging in careful listening, giving reasons for positions, and referring back to those discussions of the issue under consideration.

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Democracy and Social Justice as Contested Concepts

This opening chapter sets the stage for understanding the various meanings of social justice and democracy as well as the interrelationship of the two concepts, both essentially contested concepts. Dealing with ideas with contested concepts is difficult, but not uncommon. Think about how our political parties differ in their views of the right to vote, non-discrimination, the right to choose, and funding of education and infrastructure and allowing abortion. When dealing with concepts that are themselves difficult to define, the pressure to reach a common sense of meaning increases. Having a common meaning in mind allows for more useful discussion—a group must discuss the same issue or agree on a meaning of the issue. Reaching a common meaning does not mean a definition that is shared in every respect. There will always be some variation of meaning for difficult concepts.

The British philosopher W. B. Gallie (1956) suggested the idea of "contested concepts". For Gallie, such concepts are inherently subject to multiple interpretations depending on your values, concerns, experiences, goals, and beliefs. Among these concepts are democracy and social justice, as well as freedom, education, and others. The concepts are listed later in this chapter in the section labeled "Creating a Shared Vision of Democracy and Social Justice". If one were asking a random group what their definition is of concepts like democracy and social justice, or any of the others, there will be significant differences. This gives the educator or anyone working with a group on a contested concept the responsbility to work towards a shared vision.

Linguistics provides another vehicle for understanding differences. In particular, George Lakoff (2002), an eminent linguist, studied political metaphors. He has examined how conservatives and liberals view the world differently. Often, especially in politics, the tendency is to see things as right or wrong in part because that is how they are presented by political parties. Increasingly critical ideas are held as absolute—for example, the position on abortion. When critical ideas are consistent with our own views, they are seen as right, and they are seen as wrong if we disagree with them. Lakoff helps us understand that there is sometimes legitimacy in the alternative views of these difficult, contested concepts: that is there is no one definition. Working towards a shared vision of contested concepts requires the need to look at the different perspectives and *not* impose a single meaning from the outset. The goal should be a consensus within the group, a classroom group, a group at a workplace, or some other context, if the group is to work towards change. Knowing and acknowledging that consensus cannot be reached is important as well.

An important goal in education is to show how every teacher can extend the ability of students to listen, show empathy, argue for positions, give

valid reasons for their positions, and be open to compromise. This means that everyone can act as a member of a democratic society regardless of their citizenship status, and it means all should learn how to work with contested concepts. It is worth quoting directly from Dewey:

> A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living of conjoint communicated experience. The extension in space of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer his own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own, is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race and national territory which kept men from perceiving the full import of their activity.
>
> *(1966, p. 87)*

Removing barriers of race, class, and national origins is explicit in how Dewey defines democracy. Working assiduously to address discrimination and repression requires learning about the sources of bias across a broad spectrum—racism, xenophobia, sexism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, homophobia, climate denial, ableism, ageism, and more. Educators must be equipped to respond to bias when they see it and become upstanders rather than bystanders. Educators tend to find it inspiring and attractive to engage in efforts to combat all forms of discrimination.

For the contested issues, we need to keep in touch with our own values, but we must also be open to change. Lakoff (2002) leads us to understand various "worldviews" and the fact that the world is seen differently among people. This is not easy work. For example, imagine trying to find consensus among conservatives and liberals given their positions on various issues, such as education, abortion, and welfare. In the 21st century, climate change should be added to the list of contested concepts. People must not assume that those with whom they disagree are "stupid" and those with whom they agree are "smart". The process of examining different positions is essential to building rationales for positions as part of critical thinking, which we have examined in depth in another book (Greenblatt & Michelli, 2020). Simply stated, critical thinking is a process of making a judgment about an issue using appropriate criteria. It is open to discussion with others, with a goal of reaching a "good judgment". A good judgment means it is carefully considered and tested to the best of our ability against explicit criteria, but that does not guarantee a good outcome. Among the best work on critical thinking is the research undertaken by Matthew Lipman and the work he did as part of the Institute for Philosophy for Children and our own work in the Institute for Critical Thinking (Michelli et al.). This is an essential for all education and of course for civic education to encourage voters to develop good judgments that they can explain and that grow from criteria they know.

Like other contested concepts, democracy is a concept that is ever changing and evolving. Those committed to educating for a socially just democracy must realize it "must be continually debated and transformed to shape and respond to changing social and environmental conditions" (Stitzlein, 2017, p. 447). In *The Public and Its Problems*, Dewey (1946) went so far as to claim that democracy is always in the making and therefore can never be settled.

Ways That Democracy Is Conceptualized

Democracy can be conceptualized in a variety of ways. The most common definition of democracy is that it is a system of government where the citizens of a state exercise power to rule the state, either directly (pure democracy) or through electing representatives (representative democracy). Dewey saw it as much more than a system of government. He also viewed it as one of interpersonal relations, which is often referred to as social democracy. Social democracy focuses on the well-being of its citizens. The United States is both a representative and a social democracy. While some confuse social democracy with socialism, they are two very different concepts. A social democracy is a "political ideology that supports economic and social interventions to promote social justice *within a capitalist economy* [emphasis added]" ("Social Democracy", 2019). Socialism, on the other hand, is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as a "political and economic theory of social organization which advocates that the means of production, distribution, and exchange should be owned or regulated *by the community as a whole* [emphasis added]" (Lexico Dictionaries, 2019).

It should be noted that in the United States, not all states require civic education as a course or require a test. Democracy is often taught in social studies outside the context of civic education, and it is usually taught as a "form of political governance involving the consent of the governed and equality of opportunity" (Apple & Bean, 2007). What happens when teachers are asked how their classrooms are democratic? They are likely to say that they allow their students to elect the class officers. In effect, most people define democracy in its political sense, seeing democracy as the right to vote, with the "winner" determined by the majority. This conception of democracy is limited and should be expanded to include explicit teaching of the conditions on which a democracy depends, that is, "the democratic way of life" (Beane, 1990). In *Democratic Schools*, Apple and Bean (2007) argue for the following conditions as "the central concerns of democratic schools":

- The open flow of ideas, regardless of their popularity, that enables people to be as fully informed as possible.

- Faith in the individual and collective capacity of people to create possibilities for resolving problems.
- The use of critical reflection and analysis to evaluate ideas, problems, and policies.
- Concern for the welfare of others and "the common good".
- Concern for the dignity and rights of individuals and minorities.
- An understanding that democracy is not so much an "ideal" to be pursued as an "idealized set of values that must be lived and that must guide our life as a people".
- The organization of social institutions to promote and extend the democratic way of life.

At the present time, several of these conditions are, in the view of many, clearly being violated in the United States. Examples include consistently referring to news as "fake news" when it does not report our point of view. At our southern border, immigrant children whose families are legitimately seeking asylum are being separated from their parents, many of whom may never be reunited. And, again, we add climate change as a contentious area.

As can be seen from these examples, our democracy is under threat. It is imperative that along with setting the conditions for democracy (as well as teaching students the cognitive and social skills discussed later in this chapter and in other chapters), students must study the benefits of democracy and their rights within it. It is only through this understanding the benefits of, and conditions for, democracy that students will be more open to fighting to protect it. In *On Democracy*, Robert Dahl (1998) delineates a compelling list of reasons this fight is worthwhile:

- Democracy helps prevent government by cruel and vicious autocrats.
- Democracy guarantees its citizens a number of fundamental rights that nondemocratic systems do not, and cannot, grant.
- Democracy ensures its citizens a broader range of personal freedom than any feasible alternative to it.
- Democracy helps people understand their own fundamental freedom.

Crafting a Shared Vision of Democracy and Social Justice

Through cultivation of a shared vision, an organization will be guided by a set of shared principles, ones that lead its members to reimagining what is possible for educational renewal. Educators must engage in a careful consideration of what democracy and social justice can mean for our society in general, as well as the role of education in achieving a fully democratic and socially just society. As explored more fully in later chapters, both are

essentially contentious concepts. There are additional related contested concepts such as "education", "freedom, critical thinking", "knowledge", and "citizenship". These questions will help us to consider their meanings as they are addressed throughout the book (Michelli, 2012):

Democracy: Is it a system of government? Or is it the nature of personal interactions among members of a society? Is democracy about civics—participation in the governmental process? Is democracy about civility; treating others with respect; and civil, nonviolent behavior?

Freedom: Is personal freedom unlimited? If not, what are the limits and who decides them? What happens if individuals overstep the perceived limits of freedom? Does freedom extend to speech, the press, and religion?

Social justice: Is it primarily about the distribution of wealth? Is it seeking equity between the rich and the poor, the majority and the minority? Where do the issues of discrimination and repression come in? Are there other ways to conceive of it?

Knowledge: What does access to knowledge mean? Is it too limited a concept? What counts as knowledge? Whose knowledge counts? Is knowledge equally distributed in our society? Who creates knowledge?

Critical thinking: Is teaching for critical thinking a matter of teaching skills? What do judgments have to do with critical thinking? Does critical thinking lead to good outcomes? Can critical thinking be taught? Where is it most important in a democracy—personal life or political decision making?

Education: Do the other questions have to be answered before education can be defined?

Citizenship: Is citizenship a particular legal status or more? Is the behavior of citizens the same as expected of any societal participant? Is any civically committed individual a citizen? Is limiting citizenship a matter of social justice?

It could be argued that democracy is a mix of all these complex ideas. Therefore, if we are to work within a group, be it an activist organization, a non-profit organization, the faculty of a school, or a community group, it is essential that a "shared vision" of what complex ideas mean be reached within a group working on contested concepts. Peter M. Senge (2006) gives strong and appropriate power to a shared vision:

> At its simplest level, a shared vision is the answer to the question, "What do we want to create?" Just as personal visions are pictures or images people carry in their heads and hearts, so too are shared visions pictures that people throughout an organization carry. They create a sense of

> commonality that permeates the organization and gives coherence to diverse activities.
>
> *(p. 246)*

Clearly, working with one of these concepts requires an understanding of our meaning and understanding what others mean. One of the authors, while working in China, asked someone why there were not hundreds or thousands of Chinese in Tiananmen Square on the anniversary of the conflict. The Chinese colleague responded, "Because we won". When pressed, he added, "Now we have homes, jobs, money, the ability to own a business, so we have democracy". Of course, he was talking more about capitalism than democracy. Another Chinese colleague said, "A democracy is where the majority gets what it wants, and the others get nothing". He anticipated the idea of the "tyranny of the majority" (Lani Guinier) One of the earliest individuals to describe democracy was Alexis de Tocqueville (1972), who is largely credited with first introducing the idea of the omnipotence of the majority. In *Democracy in America*, his major work, he wrote, "The people rule the American political world as God rules the universe. They are the cause and the end of all things; everything arises from them, and everything is absorbed by them" (pt. 1, Ch. 4).

James Madison, one of the writers of the Constitution, wrote about the idea as well in *The Federalist 10: The Union as Safeguard against Domestic Faction and Insurrection* (first published in the *Independent Journal*). In Madison's case, he was writing more about controlling the minority than extending its rights. This is because he writes about "domestic factions" rather than minorities as they might be defined (Madison, 1787). The connection between Madison and de Tocqueville's ideas have been reviewed by historians (Engels, 2010). There were significant differences of interpretation among the "founding fathers" that emerged, including differences about the appropriate strength of the federal government and the nature of political parties. Thomas Jefferson was the author of the Declaration of Independence, but some of his original writing was changed before and during the debate on its approval. One change, for example, came from Benjamin Franklin, who objected to the original phrasing of what is probably the most-quoted phrase, and this is how it appears in the copy held by the National Archives: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" (Declaration of Independence, original language and punctuation). Perhaps most notable to those of us examining social justice is the fact that Jefferson clearly meant all *men*—in fact, he meant all White men. Not women, not Blacks, just White men, and perhaps just White male property owners. Also,

in the original, Jefferson wrote, “We hold these truths to be sacred and undeniable”. Franklin slashed thorough the “sacred and undeniable” phrase and proposed “certain unalienable rights”, which is in the Declaration as most widely known. The change may appear to be a religious objection (the word “sacred”), but historians think it is more a change in Jefferson’s commitment to John Locke’s philosophy. (Isaacson, 2003). Ellis’s work on Jefferson shows us that he was a slaveholder—with some 300 slaves—and that he had children with one of his slaves, Sally Jennings (Ellis, 1998). In an earlier version of his work, *The American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson*, Ellis expressed doubt that Jefferson was the father of Jennings’s children. In 1998, an article in *Nature* confirmed that a comparison of the DNA chromosome of Jefferson with one of Jennings’s children was a match. One would have to do further analyses of the other children, but Ellis concludes that is likely that Jefferson fathered them all. And Jefferson did not free Hemmings or his children by her. So, there is this contradiction between “men” being created equal and the reality of Jefferson’s life. It is the case that efforts to assign citizenship and the right to vote to former slaves in the Bill of Rights has been challenged in recent years by efforts of many states to restrict voting and, at least as of March 2022, the failure of Congress to enact a new national voting rights act that would settle the issue. This clearly is an issue of our sense of democracy and social justice. Also, in early 2022, there was strong opposition in some states to the use of the idea of critical race theory (CRT). This theory suggests that there is deep ingrained racial prejudice in this society, both in legal institutions and among the public. Currently, some states prohibit schools from using the concept, although few have been. CRT was and is primarily being addressed in graduate-level courses. At the same time, censorship and the removal of books from school libraries was also seen as a violation of both democracy and social justice. For example, books on the rights of the LGBTQ population were removed, denying understanding of the nature of sexual orientation to those who might read them. These ideas are considered further in subsequent chapters.

Others, including Lani Guinier, a civil rights activist and professor, have written specifically about the idea in *The Tyranny of the Majority: Fundamental Fairness and Representative Democracy* (Guinier & Carter, 1994). It raises the important question of the standing of the minority in a democracy, a still-unresolved issue. A website, Fairvote.org, promotes her ideas, which focus on fair representation voting through ranked-choice voting. In ranked-choice voting, voters rank the candidates for office—as many as they support. Where there are several candidates, such as for a city council, this provides a fairer representation of the voters. In fact, a bill supporting such an approach has been introduced in Congress as recently as 2017 but

did not pass. Some states are considering the idea of ranked-choice voting in their elections.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals can be an important guide for what knowledge might be included in a curriculum as well as a source of criteria for what critical thinking is. They run counter to many current practices, show what quality of life might look like, and can be used to frame curriculum. They include working toward eliminating poverty and hunger and working toward good health, peace, and justice (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). Rizvi (2017) posits that the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals lead to a new kind of globalization that can be used to work toward the common good. The goals, listed in the following, were adopted by every United Nations member country in 2015, with a target of achievement by 2030.

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
4. Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning.
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
6. Ensure access to water and sanitation for all.
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.
8. Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment, and decent work for all.
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation.
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.
11. Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources.
15. Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss.
16. Promote just, peaceful, and inclusive societies.
17. Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

(United Nations, 2019)

This book takes a position in supporting these goals as the essence of curriculum or even as a statement of why we should educate in a democracy. No doubt this will be a controversial position. And even though all UN

members adopted them in 2015, you can imagine that there is not a unified view of what they mean. Another way to say this is to argue that there is not a shared vision of the meaning of the goals, and it is suggested that every school that adopts them work toward a shared vision of meaning.

What About Social Justice?

Thus far, much more has been written about democracy than social justice, although clearly there is overlap. For example, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals have more elements of social justice than democracy. Look through them again and see if you agree.

Any group considering this critical contested concept needs to work towards a shared vision. Ours is reflected in this book. Notice that when considering suggested meanings for the critical and contentious concepts, the following emerged for social justice:

> Is it primarily about the distribution of wealth? Is it seeking equity between the rich and the poor, the majority, and the minority? Where do the issues of discrimination, repression come in? Are there other ways to conceive of it?

Write your conception of what social justice is and what it means. If you said it could mean any of these ideas, you are probably right, and that is the problem before us. Let's examine each.

The distribution of wealth is something that often comes to mind, and many wealthy individuals worry that this is what it means. A concrete example is that the board of trustees of a large university were considering whether to refer to social justice and decided not to. When asked if faculty could refer to equity, to seeking access to life's chances for all, and eliminating discrimination, they said, "Of course you can". The faculty then asked, why can't social justice be used? The response was, "It means taking other people's money and redistributing it—taking money from the wealthy and giving it to the poor". It appears that it was their money that they were concerned about.

Is seeking equity between the rich and poor the same thing? It does not have to be. Certainly, distributing wealth would be very difficult. However, thinking of equity in terms of access to "life's chances" is a different matter, and it is an important idea. The concept of life's chances can be traced to the German sociologist Max Weber, although it is used differently than he did in one important way. Weber saw the concept as a basis for examining the likelihood of turning out in a certain way given certain factors, with socioeconomic status as the most important for his thinking (1920). Weber

seems less than optimistic that change in outcome is likely. What do we mean by "life's chances", and why is it important? Having access to life's chances available to all is a way of conceiving of social justice. For example, these include access to quality education, access to higher education, access to careers one decides to pursue, opportunities to learn about possible careers, and other "chances" so pursuit is possible. Look once again at the United Nations list and see how many of these are there. Discussion of how education can achieve these would be a useful exercise. One example that would be a good start is being certain that students in urban and rural settings visit college campuses to get a sense of what college might mean in their lives. In our last book, *Reimagining American Education to Serve All Our Children: Why Should we Educate in a Democracy?* (Greenblatt & Michelli, 2020), there was a careful examination the idea of developing imagination, and the exposition was based on ideas put forth by the Lincoln Center Institute and Maxine Greene—a well-known philosopher who focused on this area. One of the things Greene said carries considerable weight for us. She said, "we cannot become what we cannot imagine" (Personal communication, 1994). Students must be able to imagine themselves in college and becoming professionals. If students cannot imagine themselves in college or becoming teachers, lawyers, or doctors, for example, primarily because they don't know anyone personally who pursued that particular "life's chance", it is unlikely that they will pursue a profession. So, part of what education must do to enhance access to life's chances is to engage students in imagining all of the possibilities they might pursue.

The Lincoln Center Institute is a leader in this field. In particular, the former director of the Institute, Scott Noppe Brandon, is an innovator in the field who has written on imagination (Brandon & Liu, 2009). It is not surprising that imagination came out of a center which began with aesthetic ideas—art, music, dance, and the like depend directly on imagination. But the authors extend the need for imagination to fields such as science, medicine, and invention. His work led to "imagination conversations" in states across the nation. Work on imagination is described in (Michelli et al., 2011) *Learning to Imagine*, published by the Lincoln Center Institute and available on their website. So, fostering imagination in all, especially students in urban and rural schools where this is not often emphasized or even addressed, is an important step in the right direction. It is seldom the case that imagination comes to the forefront when social justice is considered; however, it is a necessary component of it. See further discussion of imagination in Chapter 4.

One important conception of social justice comes in the work of Amy Gutmann (1999). In her discussion of democracy, Gutman suggests an idea that is also central to social justice, and that is *working towards nonrepression*

and nondiscrimination of others in our lives. Sometimes it isn't clear when discrimination or repression are present—they are hidden unless you know what to look for. Often, those who are the objects of discrimination are unaware of its presence, and in that sense, it is hidden discrimination. One goal should be to make all students aware of discrimination. Many examples of hidden discrimination and repression will become clear as the elements of social justice are considered in the chapters that follow and the research that has been undertaken on each by graduates of Johns Hopkins University, our co-authors. Each chapter begins with an overview of the element by Michelli and Jacobowitz with Campo and Jahnsen. This is followed by a review of current research on the element extracted from the dissertations the authors completed. Following are short descriptions of these elements.

Chapter 2. Civic education. How should those living in a society be prepared to play a positive role? Lori Bush

Chapter 3. In examining segregation, superintendents were not prepared to deal with segregation to overcome its negative effects. Kenita Williams

Chapter 4. In examining why Black and Latino students have a lower rate of attending college than their White and Asian counterparts, research has discovered that many did not have access to advanced placement classes, which is one of the most widely used means of promoting college-going. Kortne Edogun

Chapter 5. In considering gender equity, we found that it was seldom the case that teachers learned how to differentiate instruction for boys and girls or the possible outcomes of doing so. Gender change and homophobia are also considered. Blanca Moon and Sharon Hardy

Chapter 6. Integrated student support systems are essential when working with diverse populations. Diana Jahnsen and Stacey Campo are the authors of the overview of the element and the research.

Chapter 7. The role of parents in promoting learning is often underestimated. And we know that learning can occur in formal settings such as schools but also in informal setting such as museums, art galleries, and others. Cases emerged where there was no faith in informal learning by parents and others, and children were not encouraged to participate in it, so they were deprived of access to science and the arts in museums. Deprivation of access to museums and other forms of informal learning are examples of a lack of social justice. Ni Zhang

Chapter 8. Summary and conclusions.

Again, it is argued that the one of the most important concepts we can bring to bear in education is learning to recognize discrimination and repression and learning to live a life of nondiscrimination and nonrepression. Along

with this, learning to think critically as described is essential to lead a strong public life in a democracy. The ideas, of course, have political aspects and would be rejected in some settings, but they are examined carefully, and it is argued that they lead to good judgments.

Chapter 1 Summary

1. This book deals with "essentially contested concepts" (ECCs), which we identify in this chapter to include democracy, social justice, and others. The basic idea was first identified by the philosopher Gallie, and the idea is under continued study.
2. These ECCs, if they are to be discussed in a productive manner, require a shared vision of what they mean.
3. A shared vision is not necessarily full agreement on meaning, which is always difficult with ECCs. There must be enough agreement to allow discussion for further understanding and use of the concept.
4. These ideas can be examined from a linguistic perspective, as suggested by George Lakoff.
5. From an educational perspective, seeking a shared vision is a valuable learning opportunity for any group working together. The process requires the use of critical thinking as we have defined it—the process of making a "good" judgement about complicated issues with the use of appropriate criteria for supporting positions.
6. The discussion is an opportunity to practice using empathy in examining the positions of others, engaging in careful listening, giving reasons for positions, and referring back to those discussions of the issue under consideration.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. How would you define "contested concepts"? How does this make discussion about them difficult? How should the discussion of contested concepts be handled?
2. What is a "shared vision"? Why is it important for discussing contested concepts? Does a "shared vision" mean agreement on the meaning of a contested concept?
3. How is Dewey's view of democracy different from other views? He refers to it as more than a form of government and *primarily a mode of associated living of conjoint communicated experience*. Primarily? He goes on to define by arguing that everyone must refer their own action to that of others and consider the action of others to give point and direction to their own. What do you think that means? Try to write down some examples and discuss them with a friend.

4. How should the discussion of contested concepts be handled?
5. Lakoff draws distinctions between different "worldviews". What does that mean? He goes on to argue that having differences does not make one person stupid and the other smart—do you agree?
6. Do you understand the elements involved in critical thinking as defined? In effect, it is an essentially contested concept, and meaning is found using the work of the philosopher Matthew Lipman.
7. It is also argued that democracy is ever changing and evolving. Is this true of other contested concepts? Dewey says democracy is always in the making and therefore can never be settled. Is that what makes them contested?
8. Are most classrooms "democratic"? Why do you think that?
9. What are the key conditions that a democracy requires? Can these be adapted to make schools "democratic schools"? How do the ideas in the following questions relate to democratic classrooms and schools?
10. Can people work collectively and individually to create possibilities of solving problems? Are the possibilities considered in schools? Why or why not?
11. What does the idea of fake news mean? Do you think blaming the news is overdone?
12. Democracy helps prevent government by cruel and vicious autocrats. Is this true? Are there any counter-examples? Democracy ensures its citizens a broader range of personal freedom than any feasible alternative. Do you agree? Churchill once said, "Democracy is not a perfect government, but it is better than the alternatives". Why isn't it perfect?
13. Critical thinking is another often-used pedagogy. What does it mean to you? Further consideration can be found in the chapter on civic education.

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2

CIVIC EDUCATION

Nicholas M. Michelli, Stacey Campo, Tina J. Jacobowitz, and Diana Jahnsen

RESEARCH SUMMARY BY LORI BUSH

Civic education is essential for the survival of a democracy—particular kinds of civic education that are explored further in this chapter. As with other additions to curriculum, the hard question is where in the already crowded school curriculum should we expect students to learn about their necessary roles as participants in a democratic society, as well as to consider the place of social justice and equity within that democracy? It is essential that students receive civic education. Educators will have to decide where to place it.

Certainly, one obvious answer is in social studies classes, which would be a logical place for it, but not the only place. In addition to social studies classes or civics classes, we argue that social justice and equity issues and behaviors should be incorporated in all classrooms, and teachers should demonstrate social justice and equity in their actions. Furthermore, we must adjust for those who did not have civic education in schools and find a way to reach them. We will explore this further in this chapter. You will see in our research section that Dr. Lori Bush has proposed a specific curriculum, which is being adopted in some districts.

Another question is whether it is known if civic participation, let alone promoting social justice, is in fact being taught, and, if it is, is the instruction effective? These are a few of the questions to be examined in this chapter.

So, if civic education is being taught and if it is effective. In the journal of the American Federation of Teachers, in an article published in

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2019, the authors open with a stunning and scary conclusion for our democracy:

Civic knowledge and public engagement are at an all-time low. As shown by a survey by the Annenberg Public Policy Center
Only 26% of Americans can name the three branches of government, which was a decline from previous years.
Not surprisingly trust in government is only 18% and voter participation has reached its lowest point since 1966.
Without an understanding of the structure of government, our rights and responsibilities, and the different methods of public engagement, civic literacy and voter apathy will continue to plague American Democracy . . . only 23% of eighth graders performed at or above the proficient level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and have virtually stagnated since 1998. [The article notes that the data is excerpted from Shapiro and Brown, *The State of Civics Education*, published by the Center for American Progress.]

To be clear, NAEP does not address civic behaviors directly, but the intellectual abilities measured by NAEP are important for understanding civic behaviors and decisions.

Educators understand the problem that introducing or expanding civics instruction in an already crowded curriculum. What would such instruction replace? This is always a problem with innovations, as will be seen again in the context of critical thinking. What have schools done to be certain that they fulfill their responsibility to prepare all to live in a democratic society, whether or not they are citizens? Seventeen states moved to require that high school students pass the US citizenship test before graduation. This met with objection to requiring another test, which might delay graduation. Other states have adopted civics as a requirement for graduation. Teachers in these schools have detailed curricula along with the availability of advanced placement for college standing.

What Should Civic Education Be?

To examine what civic education is and could be, we will turn again to several experts in the field, including, as noted, Dr. Lori Bush in our research section for this chapter. One expert on civic education is John Dewey, although he did not refer it to it as such. If you look at his definition of democracy in our first chapter, you will see his commitment to what democracy should be. Clearly it is about more than government. All the qualities of participants in

democracy that Dewey proposes are difficult to ensure, and it is no surprise that he saw the role of education as the means to develop them. In fact, as reported to us by his colleague and our former colleague, the late John Goodlad, Dewey said to him "democracy has to be reborn with every generation, and education is its midwife" (J. Goodlad, Personal communication, August 1997). That is a very significant statement from the philosopher and educator who has played a key role in the academic consideration of democracy and what it means. Clearly democracy is complicated, and it cannot fall to family or friends to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for students to actively participate in a socially just democratic society.

Dr. James Banks, whose 2017 article in *Educational Researcher, the Journal of The American Educational Research Association* (AERA) examined the failure of citizenship and what he calls transformative civic education (Banks, 2017). Several factors have complicated the matter in an already complex nation such as the United States. The United States is a nation of immigrants, and with each wave of new immigrants, those from southern Europe (Italians), from eastern Europe (Poles, Hungarians, Ukrainians, among many), acceptance of these immigrants is important. The increase in migration in the United States has enhanced the problem, as it has in European nations as citizens try to flee from oppressive economic, political, and social circumstances. Some nations have been more willing than others to open their doors. When they have, they face a growing population whose language is not the official language of the nation. Over time, if these immigrants are to be successful, they learn the language, and some nations establish means for this to happen. The presence of xenophobia, fear of foreigners, escalates the problem. The United States is not free from this problem. But the efforts to limit the immigration of Mexicans across the southern border of the United States, leading to walls, detention areas, and even the separation of children from their parents, is an important example. Given the discussion of social justice up to now, what do you think of these circumstances? Of course, the treatment of foreigners that is not welcoming anywhere is a form of discrimination and repression—a violation of social justice by our definition and probably most definitions of that contentious concept. One of our Asian colleagues from China has children who want to attend school in the United States, but they have read of the treatment of Asians. There have been changes at times to mediate the problems, especially the separation of children from parents, but these efforts have not been fully satisfactory. Much of the action has characterized the presidency of Donald J. Trump. Have practices changed in subsequent administrations?

Citizenship in the United States is not automatic. One is a citizen if they or their parents were born here or if they complete a legal process called naturalization. Naturalization includes instruction that resembles civic

education, followed by a test to determine if adequate knowledge is present. The absence of citizenship means one cannot vote or hold office. One can hold a job and make a living, so the motivation to seek naturalization is focused on citizenship. So, another question is: How does our government conceptualize the process of becoming a citizen? Immigrant students can enter school and experience civic education if it is offered.

What Should Be Included in a Civic Education Program?

Again, returning to Dewey and his conception of democracy, he made it clear that it is about more than government, although that is clearly important. Once again, he said,

> A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living of conjoint communicated experience. The extension in space of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer his own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own, is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race and national territory which kept men from perceiving the full import of their activity.
>
> *(1966, p. 87)*

There is no doubt that it should be the case that in a democracy, one must consider their actions in terms of how they affect others, and the actions of others should give "point and direction" to their own. So civic education must prepare students for their interaction with others, including their classmates, teachers, parents, and other members of society. This must, we believe, be a central purpose of civic education, and the implications will be clearer later.

One of the best sources for understanding civic education is the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy and its treatment of civic education. Here is one example of an important point that does not appear in other discussions of civic education:

> As far back as evidence can be found—and virtually without exception—young adults seem to have been less attached to civic life than their parents and grandparents.[2] That is not evidence of decline—although it is often read as such—but rather indicates that becoming a citizen is a developmental process. It must be taught and learned. Most if not all societies recognize a need to educate youth to be "civic-minded"; that is, to think and care about the welfare of the community (the commonweal or *civitas*) and not simply about their own individual well-being. Sometimes, civic education is also intended to make all citizens, or at

> least prospective leaders, *effective* as citizens or to reduce disparities in political power by giving everyone the knowledge, confidence, and skills they need to participate.
>
> *(citation)*

So, it is not surprising that "young adults are less attached to civic life than their parents and grandparents. As an element of education, it takes time—but it must be developed, learned, and planned for. Not all societies recognize the need to prepare youth to be civic minded and care about the welfare of the community, as Dewey said should be the case. Also, note that civic education is sometimes intended to make all citizens effective in reducing the disparity in political power by "giving everyone the knowledge, confidence and skills they need to participate". Of course, that cannot always be said of the United States. In your view and experience, is it intended to reduce disparity in political power as you read this? Disparity, in fact, can be within the same nation. One important and interesting examination of this is Robert Putnam's *Civic Tradition in Modern Italy* (1993). What he found was that in northern Italy, there was a reliance on newspapers to prepare citizens to influence government. In contrast, in southern Italy, it was the perception of whom you knew to influence government. This idea of differences probably exists in most countries.

As noted, our colleague, Dr. Lori Bush, has laid out a curriculum for civic education in some detail. We will review our thoughts from our study over the years and review each element of what we think should be there. You can think about these recommendations and hers. To be clear, we are not suggesting that ours are right and hers are not! That kind of thinking is a frequent problem in politics, as George Lakoff has noted.

The areas recommended to be a part of civic education, and will explain why, are these:

1. What are the meanings of democracy and social justice?
2. How do we define citizenship, and how can it be attained? What is the status of non-citizens?
3. What are the elements of government, and how do they work, including the Constitution, the legislature, the executive branch, and the role of the Tenth Amendment?
4. What are the major issues related to in our government today, including the filibuster, judicial appointments, overcoming stalemate, and succession?
5. How do we prepare to make good judgements? Good judgement is obviously important in voting. As you will see, we use critical thinking as the means to reach a good judgement. You will understand what a good judgement is and find that it is possible to have more than one good judgement.

6. What is the role of essentially contested concepts in the judgement process? The reverse is equally important: what is the role of good judgement in reaching a shared vision of an essentially contested concept?
7. How do we extend the sense of self-worth in influencing society in citizens and other participants?

What Are the Meanings of Democracy and Social Justice?

Of course, you should look back at Chapter 1 for the discussion of the meaning of these two elements, which are intertwined. You cannot have democracy as we define it without social justice. For the meaning of democracy, is easy to side with John Dewey. Dewey believed that democracy is more than a system of government. It is as much a way of interacting with others in our society. There are a number of others whose ideas are relevant and help us understand the meaning of democracy, including Benjamin Barber, George Putnam, George Lakoff, Michael Apple, Lanie Guinier, and our founders in *The Federalist Papers*. Students should understand that there are different conceptions of both democracy and social justice and what the idea of an essentially contested concept is. In a civic education class, one goal should be to reach a shared vision of the meaning of both democracy and social justice, a process that will no doubt run throughout the time engaged in civic education. Coming back to it periodically is important to see changes in and progress toward some agreement on meaning.

How Is Citizenship to Be Defined, and How Can It Be Attained? What Do Citizens Need to Know? What Is the Process of Voting? What Is the Status of Non-Citizens?

Citizenship is a legal status for a person who is entitled to vote in elections. It can be attained through birth in the United States or by having parents who are citizens. In addition, citizenship can be attained through the naturalization process by which a person studies the government of the United States and obligations and takes and passes an examination on the major issues.

To exercise the right to vote, a citizen must register through a process established by a local (county or state level) board of elections. It usually requires going to a place designated for registration and providing evidence of your citizenship (a birth certificate or naturalization document). The dates for registration are fixed by law. After a certain date for a given election, one cannot register for that election. There is an optional choice of registering for a particular political party. Doing so allows one to vote in the primary election, which determines who will be the candidates in a given election

and usually occurs months before the actual election. The date of an election is set by the state legislature, except in the case of the election of a president. Elections occur in a designated place called a polling place. Also, there are sometimes opportunities for early voting, not always in the usual place for an election. This information is online and can be found by searching for election dates, polling places, and registration for a particular county.

It is possible to vote "absentee", with the rules differing by state or district. Absentee voting allows a person to submit a ballot by mail rather than going to a poll. Absentee voting is possible for individuals too ill to go to a polling place or individuals who will be away from their usual home during an election. Typically, one must apply for an absentee ballot and submit it by a certain date. Again, information is available online.

In many elections, in addition to voting for candidates for office, voters are asked to vote for propositions put forth by the legislature. Prior to every election, a sample ballot showing all the candidates and questions is provided and should be secured and studied by any voter.

In addition to voting in elections for political office and questions put forth, citizens are often called to vote on a budget for a city or for an institution within a city, such as a library, as well as for education. This is another important obligation.

There are ongoing efforts to change the rules for voting, often to limit voting of some people depending on their likelihood of voting for a particular party. This is another complicated and contentious issue, and citizens should, in the pursuit of social justice, be wary of any effort to change voting rules. In addition, parties sometimes seek to change the boundaries of districts in their own interests. Through the process of gerrymandering, district lines can be drawn to benefit one party over another. In the primary election of 2022, for example, two long-standing Democratic representatives in separate districts found themselves is the same district and had to seek nomination. As you can imagine, it was quite emotional.

Non-citizens are entitled to all the protections guaranteed by the Bill of Rights regarding freedom of speech, religion, assembly, and so on. Some cities with large immigrant populations, including New York, have moved to allow non-citizen resident aliens to vote in some elections. It is not clear how far this will go.

What Are the Elements of Government and How Do They Work, Including the Constitution, the Legislature, the Executive Branch, and the Role of the Tenth Amendment?

Certainly, you have studied the government of the United States, the working document of the democracy, the Constitution, which should focus a

part of civic education. The process of government is complicated, and our government has changed over time. The Constitution was developed as a successor to the Articles of Confederation, which were seen as weak, with inadequate definition of power and responsibility. A Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia was the place where the Constitution was written from May to September 1787, with 12 of the colonies represented. One great conflict in the development of the Constitution was the role of the federal government and how strong it should be, as well as the roles of the states. There was, to be sure, worry that something akin to royalty would emerge after moving away from England through the Revolutionary War.

Several alternative plans emerged during the writing—the Virginia Plan, which was called the "federalist plan", advocated proportional representation among the states based on population. Another plan proposed the Anti-Federalists was known as the New Jersey Plan which was purely federal giving each state equal representation. A third plan, the Connecticut Compromise, had both plans working together. Of course, there were other issues, including slavery and a statement of rights, but these serious issues had less to do with the structure of government than the others.

The states were asked to ratify the constitution, and in this context the Federalist Papers—written by Hamilton, Madison, and Jefferson and appearing in major newspapers—reviewed the major issues faced. The Congress of the Confederation certified that ratification had occurred by 11 states and elections were to be held. In 1789, meeting in New York City, the government established by the Articles of Confederation was dissolved.

The Constitution was to be changed through amendments, and as of 2022 there were 27 amendments—not many considering how long the Constitution had been in place. The first ten of these, the Bill of Rights, established the rights of citizens in the new government. Students, and all of us, should read the first ten amendments as part of civic education and discuss their meanings, which are not entirely clear. So far as individual rights are concerned, the most important come in the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth. Within these are found freedom of religion, speech, the press, and the right to assemble and petition the government for a redress of grievances. A well-regulated militia will be established, and the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed. There shall be no unreasonable searches except with warrants. There is the right to a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury of the state and district where the crime was committed. Although the numbering has changed, we call attention to what is now the Tenth Amendment, which we discuss in Chapter 2 dealing with Supreme Court decisions related to education. This amendment says, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the States respectively or to the people".

In the third chapter, it is noted that the government has found ways to intervene in cases not delegated to the United States, including abolishing *de jure* segregation. In this case it was found that certain other amendments were violated by the action of segregation. One Supreme Court decision that was reversed is *Roe v. Wade*, which allowed for abortion, with part of the case being that abortion decisions are state decisions because there is no mention in the constitution, and it is not prohibited to the states. So, in some very controversial cases, the court has in fact acted in ways that some think are prohibited by the Constitution in making a decision (*Roe v. Wade*) or deciding to reverse a decision (again *Roe v. Wade*).

There are other amendments to the Constitution with clear social justice and democratic implications, such as the thirteenth, which abolished slavery; the fourteenth, which prohibited deprivation of life liberty or property without due process of law for any person; the fifteenth, which guaranteed the right to vote despite race, color, or previous condition of servitude; and the nineteenth, which guaranteed no denial or abridgement of the right to vote for citizens on account of sex.

The legislature is established by Article 1 of the Constitution. The Senate, with 100 members, has the sole power to conduct impeachments. The vice president of the United States is president of the Senate, with no vote except in cases of a tie. Senators serve for terms of six years. The House of Representatives has members divided among the states by population. All bills that raise revenue must originate in the House, but the Senate may propose amendments to these bills. Member of the House are elected for terms of two years. The legislature together may establish judicial entitles inferior to the supreme court. The Congress is empowered to raise an army, establish copyright protections, establish post offices, and make other laws necessary to carry out government.

The executive branch is established by Article 2 of the Constitution. The executive power is vested in a president. He or she holds office for four years and, by a subsequent amendment, can serve no more than two terms. The president must be a natural born citizen, except at the time of adoption of the Constitution, because, obviously, no one old enough to be president had been born in the new government. Subsequently, a natural born person must have been a resident of the United States for 14 years and reached the age of 35 years. Presidents are elected through the electoral college system, which came into public view especially during the end of the Trump administration and the certification of the election. This is one element of the Constitution that is often up for debate because it does not allow for direct election of a president or vice-president. In effect, voters cast ballots for "electors" put forth by the state who are committed to a particular candidate. This process came to the fore when the January 6, 2021, event

occurred when the vice president was certifying the votes. What do you think about the process?

The president is commander in chief of the armed forces and has the power to grant reprieves and pardons for offenses except in cases of impeachment. With the advice and consent of the Senate, the president makes treaties and appoints ambassadors, judges of the supreme courts, and other officers of government. The Constitution requires that the president give information on the state of the union, which has become an annual event involving a joint session of Congress.

Aside from removal of the president by impeachment, in which he or she is found guilty of treason, bribery, or other high crimes of misdemeanors, the Constitution has been amended to allow for the removal of the president when the Cabinet decides that the president can no longer carry out the duties of the office. This has never been invoked up to the time of the writing of this book.

What Are the Major Issues Facing the Government?

At this time, there remain several issues that are often raised and represent areas of concern. One is the filibuster in the Senate, appointments to and composition of the Supreme Court, overcoming stalemate, and succession of the president.

Of these the seemingly most complex one is the filibuster, and many citizens do not understand what it means and what its effect is. It should be an important part of civic education at some point. Actually, the idea is quite simple. Senate rules allow for it as a means, in effect, of blocking a vote on a particular piece of legislation or confirmation. Once a bill is proposed and approved by a Senate committee, it moves to the floor of the Senate for debate. Once on the Senate floor, a simple majority of 51 is required for passage. However, here is the complication. The Senate established a rule for what it takes to end debate, and originally it required 75 votes, and it now stands at 60 votes. So, in effect, what is called a "supermajority" is required to pass a Senate bill if one side continues debating. It takes 60 votes to end debate and 51 to pass the legislation.

The filibuster began in response to proposed civil rights legislation, and former President Barack Obama called it a "Jim Crow relic", referring to the period of reconstruction after the Civil War where efforts to sustain discrimination in law were undertaken in the south. In 1917 the Senate passed rule XXII, or the cloture rule, requiring a two-thirds majority to end debate, later reduced to 60 votes. In this modern form, the decision to formalize the rule was intended to block President Wilson from fighting against German ships and thus entering World War I. The rule did block the president's intentions.

The next major use of the filibuster occurred after the assassination of President Kennedy and the intent of President Lyndon Johnson to act on Kennedy's civil rights bill, which had been held back by filibuster when he was assassinated. Johnson picked up the cause, and this dramatic description gives a sense of how intense the filibuster can be. As reported by the National Constitution Center in 2016:

> In 1964, the Senate was involved in an epic fight over the Civil Right Act, after a group of Southern senators started a record-setting filibuster in March.
>
> The Act was signed by President Lyndon Baines Johnson on July 2, 1964, but not before a lengthy, protracted fight in Washington. In fact, no full-featured Civil Rights Act proposal had ever survived a filibuster attempt on the Senate floor. Under the old Senate rules, two-thirds of the Senate would need to vote for cloture or limiting debate time on the floor. [Today, the cloture barrier stands at 60 votes.]
>
> The Act had been approved by the House of Representatives in February 1964, and Senate majority leader Mike Mansfield made the unusual move of bypassing the Judiciary Committee [which was chaired by an anti-bill senator] and placing the Act directly on the Senate's main calendar.
>
> But when Mansfield made the first motion about the bill in the Senate, the well-organized filibuster attempt started. And had it been successful, the Civil Rights Act would have been finished for that Senate session.
>
> A year earlier, President John F. Kennedy told a nationwide audience that the Act was a necessity. A prior bill, the Civil Rights Act of 1957, was important but it had a limited impact, and it was difficult to enforce. It also had survived a 24-hour filibuster from Senator Strom Thurmond.
>
> As Senate Majority Leader, Lyndon Johnson has been involved heavily in the fight for the Civil Rights Act of 1957, and as President, he was committed to honoring his own values and Kennedy's legacy in the fight for the much-more comprehensive 1964 act.
>
> Committed to the filibuster effort were the powerful Senators Richard Russell, Thurmond, Robert Byrd, William Fulbright and Sam Ervin. Russell started the filibuster in late March 1964, and it would last for 60 working days in the Senate.
>
> Behind the scenes, two opposing leaders were working to find a way to get 67 votes: the Democratic Senate whip, Hubert Humphrey and the Senate Minority Leader, Everett Dirksen of Illinois.
>
> At first, Dirksen opposed the House version of the bill because of certain passages, even though he was a long-time civil rights supporter. Humphrey, a Democrat, worked together with his Republican colleague

to make the bill more acceptable to Republicans, while not weakening its powers.

On June 10, 1964, Dirksen made a powerful speech that served to bring more Republicans onto his side in the fight.

Dirksen made his case and then quoted the author Victor Hugo: "Stronger than all the armies is an idea whose time has come". The Senator then reminded his colleagues that the Republican Party stood for equality since its founding in the years before the Civil War.

That same day, the Humphrey-Dirksen group got 71 votes to end the filibuster, four more than needed, as 27 Republicans had decided to support the Act.

Terminally ill Senator Engle was wheelchair. Unable to speak because of a brain tumor, Engle pointed to his eye to signify his Yes vote.

President Johnson signed the bill on July 2 in a nationally televised ceremony.

The new law prohibited discrimination in public places. It also provided for the integration of schools and other public facilities, and it made employment discrimination illegal.

The filibuster is still present and affects important legislation. For example, after school shootings, the filibuster was used to present requiring age limits and checks for those purchasing weapons.

The Supreme Court, has come under scrutiny early in the 21st century. Almost every nomination President Obama made was blocked by the Senate. President Trump was successful in putting what seems to be a majority of conservatives on the court. Supreme Court justices are in office for life, although no term is mentioned in the Constitution. In effect they can chose to retire or be impeached. There is also no set number of justices, so another way to balance the court would be to add members. This had not been successful in previous efforts, in particular as undertaken by President Franklin Roosevelt.

How Do We Prepare to Make Good Judgements?

Good judgement is obviously important in voting and of course in life. As you will see, one way to conceptualize critical thinking is as the means to reach a good judgement. You will understand what a good judgement is and find that it is possible to have more than one good judgement for a given issue. We must note again that critical thinking, like democracy, social justice, knowledge, and other important ideas, is an "essentially contested concept", ideas that are complex and have different meanings to different individuals. Again, it is important to work toward a shared vision of

the essentially contested concept we are considering. A shared vision does not mean everyone had exactly the same definition of a contested concept. More on this later in this chapter.

Two rely on two important sources inform the understanding of critical thinking in this book, John Dewey and Matthew Lipman. Let's begin with Dewey, whose book *How We Think* is a classic (1910) written for elementary school teachers. If you have a chance to look at it, you will probably wonder if our elementary school teachers could understand it today. Dewey was, of course, a philosopher and wrote about complicated ideas. He examines different kinds of thinking in the book, including, for example, stream of consciousness thinking, believing (truth), and reflective thinking, which is his term for critical thinking. Stream of consciousness is essentially unconscious thinking that might be compared to daydreaming. By introducing believing, he contrasts the overall nature of knowledge with truth. Knowledge is not the same as truth. It was once believed that the Earth was flat—it was knowledge of the times, and it was presumed to be true. Of course, it was discovered that it was wrong. There are few pieces of knowledge dealt with in schools that can count as "truth". Essentially, for the most part, things believed in or believed to be true can change with new information. Of course, science is one system designed to take on a belief and examine it to determine if it "works". Galileo was acting as a scientist when he suggested that the Earth circles the Sun—when it was believed that everything in the sky circled the Earth. He ran up against religious opposition to his contention, of course. In fact, an exception is made for religion, where beliefs considered true are what religion is usually about. At least, they are *true* for members of that religion. Think about it, but it won't be pursued further here at risk of challenging religious beliefs. Other examples of statements of truth are "I believe democracy is the best form of government" or "I believe our government is better than Canada's".

For Dewey, his conception of critical thinking is what he calls reflective thinking, which is "Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or form of knowledge in the light of grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends". Dewey goes further in his definition by saying that when one engages in reflective, or what now is called critical, thinking, it involves "a state of doubt, hesitation, perplexity, mental difficulties in which thinking occurs, and an act of searching, hunting, inquiring to find material that will resolve the doubt, settle, and dispose of the perplexity" (Ibid.). This is a very important point. Thinking starts with doubt, an incongruity among beliefs, and what is called "cognitive dissonance" by cognitive scientists. Dewey gives examples in his *How We Think*. One involves a man walking who notices that it is getting cooler and that there are clouds in the sky. He concludes that it might rain based on the evidence he

has. Another has a man walking in an unfamiliar area trying to get to a particular place who encounters a fork in the road. Here the man can inquire into other facts from memory, observation, or both: he could climb a tree to look, or he could walk on, looking for a signpost. (We cannot help but point out what Yogi Berra once said, "If you come to a fork in the road, take it!") Dewey sees thinking as occurring when a problem is encountered that needs to be solved. It is possible for teachers to take advantage of this by "problematizing" content. Here is an example. A teacher reminds students that fossil fuels are formed from buried carbon-based materials, including trees, grass, animal carcasses, and the like. Having established this fact—at least in current scientific thinking—they might ask, given this, how can it be explained that a good deal of oil had been found under Arctic Circle ice? What conclusions might a student draw with that information?

Before procceeding any further, it is important to think that teaching critical thinking to all students is a matter of social justice. It is an important life skill, and its use in carrying out our role as citizens gives us a means to look at proposals and candidates through a lens of social justice. It is not intended to suggest that it be used for all thought, such as deciding on what to eat for dinner, although there are circumstances where that would be useful.

Some of the authors have had direct experience with a more recent approached to critical thinking developed by Matthew Lipman and his colleagues at the Center for Teaching Philosophy for Children at Montclair State University in New Jersey. "Philosophy for children" catches the eye of most who first encounter the phrase. Lipman developed a series of novels for children in elementary grades that included examples of philosophical principles. In the course of this, a very complete sense of critical thinking emerged. For Lipman and his associates, *critical thinking is skillful, responsible thinking that facilitates good judgment because it*:

1. Relies upon appropriate criteria,
2. Is self-correcting, and
3. Is sensitive to context.

When teaching students to think critically by Lipman's conception or by Dewey's, they must understand these three elements. Let's talk about the product. The student is facing a conflict in possible meanings to resolve, such as how can there be oil under the ice in the Artic Circle? The product is what Lipman calls a judgment. It is a proposed explanation to resolve the conflict. In other terms, it is similar to a hypothesis. It is, in a sense, an explanation. It seems easy to state a judgment—America has the best government, democracy is safe in America, all of our presidents have been

productive, I am not learning what I want to learn in school, I am going to vote for candidate X. The issue is, are these *good* judgments? That can only be answered by looking at how they were arrived at. What criteria were used to reach them? Were they the correct criteria? Have they been open to discussion and to correction? Are they appropriate for and sensitive to the context they affect?

Here is an important point that is often confusing. A good judgment does not guarantee a good outcome. Outcomes cannot be guaranteed. Too many factors intervene after making a judgment, and we don't usually have control over how it plays out. Suppose the process transpires in making a judgment about a political candidate. Our criteria might be their position on a series of issues important to us, such as immigration, abortion, gun control, taxation, and so on. Suppose that by examining their stated positions, it is clear why each issue is. The candidate's positions seem to be close to our conceptions, and they are elected. Think about all that can be in the way of the outcome we wish. Suppose, in the federal government, the party of the president loses the majority in one or both of the houses of Congress, as was the case in 2023 and other times in history. Suppose a bill on gun control is put forward, and the opposition begins a filibuster, but the president's party cannot manage the 60 votes needed to end the filibuster. Despite our good judgment, the outcome is not a good one. In this case, at least our candidate tries to pursue the outcome we wanted. Life is complicated, and there are many forces that can intervene in the outcome of a judgment made. These political conditions constitute the "context" for some of the judgments of a citizen. Examples such as this make sense in the process of civic education. When students are asked, "Why do you think the person you would vote for would make a good president?" In the absence of critical thinking, the student might say something like "because" or "my father thinks he is a good candidate", and the like. In critical thinking, the answer would be a discussion of the criteria used to come to that judgment, which can be examined closely and discussed with others who are making the same judgment. Suppose in the discussion, students disagree strongly. Is there a "right" answer? George Lakoff has written about disagreement based on how we see the world—world views—and why conservatives and liberals often think the other is wrong, or even stupid! You should examine Lakoff's positions as part of your preparation for civic education. His most comprehensive book on this issue is *Moral Politics* (which some see as an oxymoron) (2002).

Participants in civic education should understand that the idea of critical thinking and good judgments is not limited to political decisions. For example, deciding to marry, deciding whether to use recreational drugs, or deciding to buy a car are judgments that require critical thinking, and what

is a good judgement can turn out to be wrong in practice. Probably most marriages that end in divorce seemed to be good judgments at the time of marriage.

One area where critical thinking is important and appropriate is our interpretation of the press. Freedom of the press is expected, but what if we disagree? A stunning example, we think, was evident in the morning news program *Morning Joe* on MSNBC broadcast on December 8, 2022. The commentators were talking about a major conference on women scheduled for Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates. One of us worked there for a while and was appalled that the discussants said things like: it is appropriate that the conference on women take place there; Abu Dhabi has a large international population; it is one of the most respected nations, so much so that the recent exchange of prisoners between the United States and Russia took place at Abu Dhabi's airport, as a few examples. What do you think of this list? In fact, here is our interpretation:

- It is appropriate that the conference on women take place there—why? Women do not have the same rights as men, including permissible dress and access to jobs, and it is only recently that they can attend college in Abu Dhabi.
- Abu Dhabi has a large international population. In fact, the majority of the population consists of imported workers who do not have access to health care or education. They must pass a test for AIDS upon arrival. They may return home once a year and their passports are held by the government. Families cannot visit.
- It is one of the most respected nations, so much so that the recent exchange of prisoners between the United States and Russia took place at Abu Dhabi's airport. We must assume that the exchange took place there out of convenience. One could argue that because it is respected, there is a branch of the Louvre in Abu Dhabi and a major auto racetrack. Like many such things, this is because of the government's budget, not "respect".

A good deal more about these issues can be found in *Reimaging American Education to Serve All Our Children* (Routledge, 2020).

What is the role of essentially contested concepts in the judgement process? The reverse is equally important: what is the role of good judgement in reaching a shared vision of an essentially contested concept? '

The idea of essentially contested concepts is discussed in an earlier chapter and in an appendix to this book. You will remember our list of these concepts and possible meanings, including everything important to this book—democracy, social justice, knowledge, citizenship, knowledge, and

even education. In the simplest sense, an essentially contested concept is an important idea for which there is no one clear meaning. So, any group considering an essentially contested concept should examine the concept with the goal of reaching a shared vision of the meaning. Again, it is not expected that there would be full agreement with a single meaning, but a shared vision gives enough agreement for meaningful discussion. As discussed in this book, asking participants in a civic education program how they would define such contested concepts as democracy, social justice, and education is an important way for members of the group to understand these differences. From there they might reach a shared vision, making the discussion meaningful.

One other important aspect of teaching for critical thinking is its application to help students assess the news they receive by whatever mechanism and to know how to defend against disinformation. The claim about disinformation and "fake news" is a common part of politics in this country. Students need to know how to make their own assessment. According to a *New York Times* article, not preparing students for this could "unwittingly feed rumors and lead to polarization" (Tsu, 2020) (NYT 9/8/2022, p. 1 Sect B "Giving students the tools to spot misinformation"). Polarization is a serious political problem, with parties failing to agree on many important issues. Five states have changed education requirements, and Illinois specifically requires that students be taught to gain access to and analyze media messages (Ibid.) Another further concern is stated by Peter Adams, head of research for the New Literacy Project. He argues

> Some methods have become entrenched in schools that almost imply that students should question everything they see with an equal amount of skepticism. This can invite young people to conclude that all sources of information are equally suspect . . . and are out to manipulate them in some ways.
>
> *(Ibid.)*

Conclusion

Civic education is essential for democracy. Participants must understand their role in a democracy, how to secure the information they need to make a good judgment about a position they will hold, and how to engage in meaningful discussions with others about important issues.

CURRENT RESEARCH BY DR. LORI BUSH

I have spent roughly 25 years as an educator, most often teaching high school civics and AP US government and politics courses. The emphasis of

my doctoral dissertation research was on youth civic engagement and how to ensure that our youngest citizens are educated to become active, engaged citizens who are both prepared and motivated to accept the responsibilities of citizenship. What I found was that civic education is a much broader construct than civic knowledge and therefore requires a paradigm shift in how we educate developing citizens.

A New Conceptual Approach to Intervention

A paradigm shift is needed in citizen preparation for democratic participation. After addressing this paradigm shift, the conceptual framework will be discussed, followed by a concept map and detailed explanation. To appropriately address civic engagement in a school setting, the literature suggests that there are a few overarching and necessary changes to the fundamental paradigm of civic education. First, elementary and secondary schools must see children as capable of much more meaningful participation in the world around them (Coulter, 2018). Second, the model for civic education must encompass the entire scope of pre-K through 12th-grade teaching and learning to adequately address the developmental trajectory for civic engagement (Keeter et al., 2002). Finally, civic education must challenge the boundaries of established disciplinary knowledge to integrate the meaningful but fragmented prior research across disciplines (Callon, 2009).

Youth Empowerment

At the age of 18, American youth are reclassified as adults. There is no transition period that suddenly transforms them into capable, responsible members of the community. Adolescents must develop an ethic of growth that is both self-directed and focused on civic engagement throughout their formative years to develop into active, engaged adult citizens (Coulter, 2018). Adolescence (and beyond) is a time of endless self-actualization. Referencing the educational philosophy of John Dewey, Coulter (2018) suggests that there must be a new "framing of childhood" (p. 48) that respects the capacity of children to meaningfully participate in the world around them, participating in the construction of societal norms and values. Coulter (2018) builds on Dewey's core concerns of growth and experience as necessary elements of education that allow children to cultivate their own identity, suggesting that children must be provided space, support, and recognition to engage them as citizens in schools. While educators continue to nurture student growth, they must simultaneously increase youth capacity for agentic self-determination and contribution to the society at large (Coulter, 2018). Thompson (2014) references this shift as a new youth empowerment movement, not unlike

social movements working for the rights of groups of people whose opinions and abilities were discounted by society.

Holistic Integration of Civic Education

Second, civic engagement needs to assume its rightful place at the heart of American educational institutions. Musil (2003) notes that even on college and university campuses that are working to deepen opportunities for students to connect to community issues, civic engagement is "marked by a helter-skelter approach" (p. 3). This model, relying on happenstance and impulse instead of a cohesive educational strategy, places civic engagement outside of the essential priorities, relegating civic participation and identity development to after-hours and offstage (Musil, 2003). An integrative, generative environment for educating for democratic participation is necessary for students to become productive citizens with well-developed self-esteem and confidence (Coulter, 2018; Musil, 2003, MacNeil, 2006). A holistic, developmental model for citizenship preparation encourages schools to emphasize essential social and intellectual competencies in order to ensure a foundation for future civic involvement (MacNeil, 2006).

Interdisciplinary Citizenship Education

Aristotle proposed three intellectual virtues that were essential for human beings to achieve eudemonia, ultimate happiness (Walker & Walker, 2019). Ideally, it is the work of schools to integrate these intellectual virtues, episteme (the rational analysis of scientific knowledge), techne (measurable technical knowledge), and phronesis (practical knowledge), throughout disciplinary instruction (Walker & Walker, 2019; Coulter, 2018). Through interdisciplinary work, these different types of knowledge support human flourishing and enable citizens to "do good in the community, enabling growth toward democratic citizenship" (Coulter, 2018, p. 11). In order to develop capable, responsible citizens, it requires schools to develop civic and societal knowledge, analytical perspectives, understanding about diversity and inequality, democratic arts, thoughtful ethical and self-reflection, and the ability to apply knowledge to solve complex social problems (Musil, 2003). Peter Levine (2014) explains that "philosophy, political theory, and some other portions of humanities are rigidly separated from the disciplines that deal with purported facts" (p. 6). While political science departments teach the study of government, public policies, and political processes, no department teaches strategies for citizens (Levine, 2014).

In the 1920s and 1930s, Harold Rugg advocated for integrated social studies, one that crossed traditional disciplinary boundaries such as history,

economics, and geography (Boyle-Baise & Goodman, 2009). In 2007, political theorists created a transdisciplinary field, "civic studies", with an emphasis on agency and citizen actors and activism (Boyte & Finders, 2016). The Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University offers an interdisciplinary course titled "Exercising Leadership" that is taken by graduate students seeking roles in politics, military, law, and medicine across the public, nonprofit, and private sectors (Heifetz, 2003). The course material is adapted from economics, political science, political philosophy, and sociology (Heifetz, 2003). The research literature suggests that citizenship education needs to follow this exercise in leadership, transcending the confines of a typical single-semester political science course and instead integrating active, engaged citizenship competencies into the core curriculum and mission of the school (Levine, 2014).

Proposed Intervention

A whole-school model is suggested by the research literature; therefore, the proposed intervention will offer an interdisciplinary and wholistic approach to civic education. Education of citizens occurs across all disciplines through formal and informal curricula, though it is often only the explicit purpose of social studies curriculum (Obenchain et al., 2016). In the elementary years, where social studies curricula may occasionally offer civic education as an isolated unit, teachers must learn to integrate civic identity as an essential developmental construct throughout the scope and sequence of grade-level content. Obenchain et al. (2016) suggest that "an American civic identity that fosters democratic-oriented civic dispositions is developed through experiences and interactions in one's communities" (p. 254). As the foundational, developmental element of youth civic engagement, elementary educators must attain competence and facility with integrating these meaningful experiences into their grade-level curriculum. Similarly, while middle schools often offer service learning and community service opportunities, rarely are they intentionally focused on citizenship development, building on themes of civic identity development in order to establish deep connections to the geographic layers of community that are vital within our democratic structure. Finally, when explicit civic education is offered in the high school, it must expand well beyond civic knowledge in order to develop active, engaged citizens. In addition to the traditional civic education curriculum, high school students must engage in interdisciplinary civic leadership opportunities both inside and outside of the traditional classroom environment. They must build personal relationships with their local community and engage meaningfully in the issues they care most about. This proposed intervention, when administered through a dedicated center

for democratic participation, expects to produce the outcomes necessary for the maintained active participation that is vital for the American democracy.

Issues of Social Justice

Social justice lies at the heart of ethical decision-making and critical theory as methods to analyze and improve educational leadership. Modeling ethical leadership and utilizing critical theory to meaningfully facilitate community-wide dialogue regarding a system of oppression that is inherently present but often ignored within independent schools can positively impact youth civic engagement. Therefore, intentionally utilizing practices of ethical leadership and critical theory in addressing both the school community and the school's role in the greater community will establish a foundation for social justice.

Research suggests that a democratic school environment that models the capacity for youth to influence their educational and institutional settings positively correlates with increased youth civic engagement (Carpini, 2000). Civic identity development matures when adolescents actively participate in community decision making and reflection on democratic values (Atkins & Hart, 2003; Youniss & Yates, 1997). Youth who are considered active, engaged citizens show an increase in agency, empathy, and efficacy (Zaff et al., 2010). However, by refusing to engage in this critical dialogue, many schools suggest that the pervasive history of institutional racial and economic bias cannot change. This practice limits student efficacy, hinders motivation for civic engagement, and discourages risk-taking.

Dinh et al. (2014) categorize ethical decision making as a positive, humanistic leadership theory based on honesty, trust, and integrity. Thiel et al. (2012) suggest that leaders must move beyond recognition that an ethical problem exists and should apply sensemaking to understand the problem as situated in a complex environment. This includes an analysis of the interrelationships of potentially conflicting interests, including the intrinsic ethical issues inherent in a given situation.

Critical theory offers an approach to decision making that is democratic, collaborative, and emancipating for all stakeholders. According to Learmonth and Morrell (2017), critical leadership theory aims to critique power relations and identity constructions regarding leadership dynamics. Foucault, a critical theorist, urged analysis of the "repressive techniques of control and exertions of power that seek to constrain" decision-making (Skourdoumbis, 2016, p. 507). In this respect, it begs the question of how issues of "power, truth, and identity", which are critical in the context of American education, impact all stakeholders in the great independent school community. Regarding cultural and racial identity, Learmonth and

Morrell (2017) suggest that leadership cannot be blind. A school should not be an institution that emphasizes market factors over ethical concerns (Skourdoumbis, 2016). Instead, schools should be person-centered institutions that are concerned about the needs of all students. This requires acknowledgment of the impact of the school's location on the psyche of students of color and other marginalized communities.

According to Learmonth and Morrell (2017), leadership can challenge, resist, and potentially transform structures of domination. Foster (2004) asserts that educational leaders can create communal narratives that challenge traditional narratives that uphold the status quo.

Vroom (2003) rightly points out that an increase in participation will slow down the decision-making process. However, it will also increase human capital and team building and align goals among stakeholders (Vroom, 2003). Schools should recruit an intentionally diverse stakeholder team that represents all critical voices to facilitate dialogue on the creation of the school narrative. The facilitation process will ensure that all ideas are considered equally in the process (Vroom, 2003). To facilitate dialogue using critical theory, Skourdoumbis (2016) suggests asking to what extent the school can think differently, instead of legitimizing what is already known.

By utilizing Thiel et al.'s (2012) sensemaking strategies, school leadership can facilitate meaningful dialogue effectively. Emotion regulation can downgrade emotional reactions, helping the group focus to avoid anger and defensiveness (Thiel et al., 2012). Self-reflection will allow group members to process personal experience while allowing for vulnerability and the development of empathy. Information integration will allow for a holistic recognition of the complex history of race, class, and culture that is pervasive in issues of education, particularly in independent schools.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. Where should civic education be provided in schools? How should citizens who did not study civic education in schools be supported?
2. What is the relationship between democracy and social justice?
3. Do you know the difficulty in adding to the curriculum? Why is this so? If you are an educator, what experience have you had with making changes?
4. How can we tell if civic education is successful?
5. When the AFT examined it in 2019, the results were not encouraging. Are they better now?
6. We come back to John Dewey and repeat his statement of democracy being more than a form of government. Have you come to grips with

what he means when he writes "it is primarily a mode of conjoint communicated experience"? We offer our thoughts on the meaning. Do you agree?

7. Citizenship is a legal status in order to be able to vote. Of course, one can be a "citizen" in a sense of other entities if not of the United States, like a citizen of an organization one belongs to or a school or place of work. When referring to citizenship other than that of a country, should there be a different term? If so, why, and what do you suggest?
8. If you are a citizen, are you registered to vote? If yes, was it a difficult process? Some argue that we should actively recruit all high school students for registration, and some communities do that. Is it a good idea?
9. Some propose that we allow the use of absentee ballots by anyone and not ask for a reason. Do you have any objections to that idea?
10. There are sometimes efforts to change the boundaries of a voting district, often to enhance the position of a particular party, called redistricting. Have you experienced this? Are there good reasons to do this?
11. Do you think that non-citizens should be entitled to the protections of the Bill of Rights? Does that take away from the rights of citizens? Why do you think as you do?
12. In the case of a filibuster, can we conclude that the minority get their way and not the majority when it succeeds in killing a bill? Is that acceptable? Don't we believe in "majority rule"?
13. You want to be someone able to justify their position. Do you usually give good reasons for judgments? Do they include criteria and opening them for critique by others? Should they?
14. How can we teach students to appropriately evaluate information in the media and develop their own conclusions?
15. What is the relationship between democracy and social justice?
16. The terms "essentially contested concepts" and the idea of a shared vision are central to the arguments made here. Can you describe what this means and how it is important in this complicated work? If not, read more about it!
17. Have you voted in general elections? In primary elections? Think about your experience. Was it difficult? How can it be made as simple as possible? If you are not registered with a party, why not? What, if any, are your objections?
18. There are sometimes efforts to change the boundaries of a voting district, often to enhance the position of a particular party. Have you experienced this? Are there good reasons to do this?
19. Do you think that non-citizens should be entitled to the protections of the Bill of Rights? Does that take away from the rights of citizens? Why do you think as you do?

20. What does it mean to say that a good judgment does not guarantee a good outcome? How might you increase the chances of a good outcome? Why do some not turn out to be good outcomes?
21. How can we teach students to appropriately evaluate information in the media and develop their own conclusions?

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3

DISCRIMINATION AND REPRESSION

Slavery, Segregation, Racism, Antisemitism, and Their Relation to Democracy

Nicholas M. Michelli, Stacey Campo, Tina J. Jacobowitz, and Diana Jahnsen

RESEARCH SUMMARY BY KENTIA WILLIAMS

In this chapter, the focus is on denial of social justice historically to others as reflected in discrimination, repression, slavery, segregation, racism, and antisemitism and their relationship to democracy. If you haven't already done it, write down your thoughts about what social justice means and think about how your conception connects with ours and whether any changes have occurred in your thinking or if you would prefer that we change our thinking.

In this chapter, these issues are considered:

Slavery
The Courts and Segregation
Continued Segregation
Critical Race Theory and the Censoring of Books
The Courts and School Funding
Antisemitism and Other Forms of Discrimination
Possible Actions Through Education

Slavery

The United States has a long history of limiting social justice though discrimination and repression despite our claim of a commitment to democracy. The position in this book is that a society cannot have one without the other, that is, democracy and full social justice. In the months leading up to writing this book, democracy has been challenged in the United States, most

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evidently in the denial of access to the vote, primarily to minority groups, and the sanctity of elections. In Chapter 1 it was noted that when the Declaration of Independence was written and as it appears in the Archives of the United States, it said, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal . . . with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness". Of course, at that time, as noted, it really meant all *men*, and actually white men. In some states, it meant *some* white men—those who were property holders.

When the Declaration of Independence was adopted in 1776, the slave trade had been in place for 157 years. The racism and segregation that characterize this nation have deep roots in slavery. Segregation and racism are explored as they affected the United States, and we examine the official efforts to make changes in the Supreme Court (after the adoption of the Constitution), by war, and by the action of presidents and the impact of economics on the continuation of segregation. So, discrimination has played a large role in our history, and we aren't finished yet, as reflected in the Black Lives Matter movement. Of course, discrimination is not only focused on Blacks. It can be argued that the same views are experienced by Latinos, Asians, Native Americans, and other non-White members of the population,. If one extends it to discrimination based on socio-economic class, it potentially affects members of all groups.

One indication of the depth of racism as the end of slavery approached can be seen in the history of the Emancipation Proclamation, viewed by many as the end of slavery. One of the most important works on slavery is *The 1619 Project* (2021a), published by the *New York Times*, which was on the bestseller list for months. One little-known aspect developed in that book regarding the effort to send free slaves to colonies in Africa and it was the American Colonization Society that was often reported as leading in the process. Others who took the position were Jefferson, Madison, and Lincoln, who had another plan. In 1816, a group of politicians, many of them slave holders, founded the American Colonization Society (ACS) (1619 Project, p. 23), which held that freed Blacks should be expected to emigrate to Africa and even proposed federal funding to support the effort. Many who outright opposed slavery supported the ACS with the view that free Black people did not fit in this society and would never really enjoy freedom. In 1852, Lincoln expressed support for this colonization effort, perhaps as a political move so that those supporting slavery would not see him as focused on its removal. This may have been the case, but as president he actually asked his secretary of the interior to explore the plan. A new official appointed by Lincoln as commissioner of emigration, James Mitchell, met with many, including Black leaders, to discuss possibilities. At one such meeting, Lincoln informed the group that Congress had appropriated

$600,000 to support colonization—shipping Black people once freed to another country. In his remarks, Lincoln is reported to have said,

> Why should they leave this country? That is perhaps the first question for proper consideration. You and we are different races. . . . Your race suffers greatly many of them, while ours suffers from your presence. In a word, we suffer on each side.
>
> *(p. 23)*

Before moving to discussing the end of slavery and efforts to end segregation, there is one important critique of the position put forth in *The 1619 Project* regarding Lincoln and colonization. The position is presented by the American Institute for Economic Research (AIER.org), founded in 1933. It describes itself as "one of the oldest and most respected nonpartisan economic research and advocacy organizations" (AIER.org). It further describes itself as an organization that

> envisions a world in which society is organized according to the principles of pure freedom in which the role of government is sharply confined to the provision of public goods and individuals can flourish in a truly free market and a free society.
>
> *(Ibid.)*

Our perspective on this position is that it is a rather conservative conception of government and its role.

What does AIER think about the views expressed in *The 1619 Project*? In one of its newsletters, *Fact Checking the 1619 Project and Its Critics*, posted on its website in December of 2019—after the *New York Times Magazine* publication of the position but before the book was published in 2021a, the position of Lincoln is considered. After a careful review of the position on Lincoln and of American historians on his policy, the AIER concludes that the position taken on Lincoln and colonization in *The 1619 Project* is accurate historically. They conclude that Lincoln's position was more aligned with his fear of the treatment of Blacks after emancipation. It is consistent with the quotation of Lincoln before the group of Black leaders when he says, "Your race suffers greatly . . . by living among us" (p. 23).

It is important to note that the Emancipation Proclamation ended slavery only in states in rebellion against the United States—not all slaves. In fact, the effect of the proclamation was not fully in place in the Confederate states until Texas was won by the Union and the proclamation was announced by the general in charge, General Granger, on June 19, 1865. Celebrated now as a national holiday known as Juneteenth, it is viewed as the

second celebration of American independence by some. Slavery was finally abolished in all of the states with the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment on December 6, 1865. Lincoln thus, in his original position on colonization and in the limits of the proclamation, was, as has been suggested, likely driven by politics along with his own views. He wanted to keep the support of the northern states that practiced slavery, in part to ensure his re-election for his second term, which, of course, ended shortly after his inauguration with his assassination in April 1865. Further understanding of where he stood on slavery can be found in Meacham's *And There Was Light: Abraham Lincoln and the American Struggle* (2022). This may be the most thorough study of Lincoln's thinking at the end of the Civil War and the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment. Lincoln argued that passage of the amendment would probably end the war, especially with the support of the border states. Lincoln is reported to have said, "The passage of this amendment will clinch the whole subject. It will bring the war, I have no doubt, rapidly to a close" (Meacham, p. 314). The efforts to dissuade him from pursuing the amendment are detailed. Of course, the amendment passed, and the Civil War ended. One concern was the reports that Jefferson Davis had dispatched envoys to Washington to work for peace. The prospects were seen to be endangered by the amendment, and Lincoln was asked if it were true that a delegation from the Confederacy was in fact in Washington. Lincoln said, "there are no peace commissioners in the city, or likely to be in it". What Lincoln said was true. There were peace commissioners, but in Hampton Bays, Virginia, and not in Washington (Meacham, 315). Many of the Republicans who supported the amendment came to the view that they were not proposing equality of Negroes with whites but rather the equality of all under the law, which at the time did not extend the right to vote to Blacks.

The right to vote was extended to all male citizens by the Fifteenth Amendment, ratified on February 3, 1870. It specifically specified that the right to vote could not be denied based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude. The right to vote for women would follow in ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment on August 18, 1920.

So, it must be concluded that slavery was in place for much of our country's history, and many believe that racism and segregation grew out of its practice. The position of denying citizenship and the right to vote to Blacks was evidence of this. Before his death, Lincoln, in advocating for the Thirteenth Amendment, also actually proposed offering the right to vote to selected Blacks who were educated and those who had fought in the war.

On the issue of colonization, the Black leader and academic W.E.B. Dubois noted that Blacks did not embrace the idea of achieving freedom and leaving the country. He said, "few men ever worshiped Freedom with

half as much unquestioning faith as did the American Negro for two centuries" (Meacham, p. 393).

The Courts and Segregation

Segregation by race, especially in schools, is one of the important areas where the Supreme Court has taken significant action. But how did the Supreme Court establish its role in regulating elements of schooling? The Tenth Amendment in the Bill of Rights clearly states that, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution nor prohibited by it to the States are reserved to the States respectively or to the people". There is no mention in the Constitution of education, but historically the Supreme Court has undertaken an effort to regulate education in a number of instances, as has Congress. The focus here is on segregation, seen as discrimination in that it denies the right to attend predominately white schools to students of color. There are several cases that must be examined to understand the position of the government. The primary basis for action by the federal government through all three branches in areas like education, which seems to be prohibited by the Constitution, rests on the issue of preserving the constitutional rights of students and others. Judge J. Skelly Wright took this position in 1967:

> It would be far better for these great social and political problems could be resolved in the political arena by other branches of government, but these are social and political problems that seem at times to defy such resolution. In such situations, under our system, the judiciary must bear a hand and accept its responsibility to assist in the solution where constitutional rights hang in the balance.
>
> *(Driver, 2018, p. 19)*

One legal argument that stood in the way of efforts to integrate schools is known as the "separate but equal" doctrine, first introduced in the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896. *Plessy v. Ferguson* challenged Louisiana's Separate Car Act of 1890, which required railway companies in the state to provide "equal but separate accommodations for the white and colored races". In 1891, a group of New Orleans residents known as the Comate de Citoyens approached a mixed-race man named Homer Plessy and asked him to help them get the law repealed. A 30-year-old shoemaker, Plessy identified himself as seven-eighths white and one-eighth black. He devoted much of his time to public service and had previously joined a group dedicated to reforming public education in New Orleans. He was in a unique position to challenge the statute since many people assumed he was white, but by law, he was "black enough" to violate the Separate Car Act.

It was believed that by choosing Plessy, they could argue that consistent application of the law was impossible—as it did not define what "white" and "colored" actually meant. On June 7, 1892, Plessy purchased a first-class train ticket on the East Louisiana Railway and sat in the separate car reserved for white passengers. He informed the conductor that he was seven-eighths white, according to the Comate's plan. When he was asked to move, he refused. Plessy was arrested and convicted by a New Orleans court of violating Louisiana's Separate Car Act. (163 US 537, 1896)

Based on this outcome, it was concluded that so long as the claim was that separate facilities were equal facilities, there was no violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. The claim of "separate but equal" dominated the thinking regarding schools and segregation from that point until the next *major* decision with a full focus on schools and segregation, *Brown v. Board of Education* in Topeka in 1954.

Before discussing *Brown*, another case that brought some notice was narrow but significant because of the language in the Supreme Court decision. This was the 1899 case of *Cumming v. Richmond County Board of Education*. Augusta closed the only high school that was for Black students, and it was challenged. Ultimately the court refused to overturn the state decision, with Justice Harlan writing,

> The education of the people in schools is a matter belonging to the states and any interference on the part of Federal authorities with the management of such schools cannot be justified except in the case of clear and unmistakable rights secured by the supreme law of the land. We have here no such case to be determined.

This decision, of course, reinforced the relevance of the Tenth Amendment in segregation cases. Augusta would not establish a four-year high school for Blacks until 1945 (Driver, 2018, p. 33).

There was another relevant case in the intervening years that is often unnoticed. In 1924, a nine-year-old Chinese student, Martha Lum, born in the United States, who attended a white church and played with white children, entered a white school. The white population of the county did not object. However, the state of Mississippi ruled that the child could not attend a white school and must be assigned to a Negro school. The case made by the lawyers for Lum's parents was patently racist. They argued that Blacks had once been slaves and this endowed them with "racial peculiarities, physical as well as moral". Whites do not have the right to expose children to a school with the potential of Black presence. The state of Mississippi at the time did not allow marriage of Asians and Whites and argued that it would be more appropriate for her to attend a school where she might be with

those with whom more intimate terms were possible in future years. The court decided unanimously with Mississippi. The national sentiment at the time was reflected in the reaction of some newspapers. One, the *Los Angeles Times*, reported that

> race segregation in cities is desirable and necessary and has long been felt by thinking men of all races represented. Segregation plans are not predicated upon the assumption that are superior or inferior, but upon their irreconcilable differences, making them as impractical of mixture as oil and water.
>
> *(*Los Angeles Times*, November 23, 1927, A4)*

The landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education* came to the courts in 1954 and challenged segregation directly. In 1950, a challenge emanated from the effort of a father to enroll his daughter in a school much closer than the nearest Black school. The father, Oliver Brown, was a railroad welder who was told that his daughter could not be enrolled in a white school. By this time, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) existed and joined Brown in bringing the case. In its pursuit, a number of scholars brought evidence of the negative impact of segregation on children. In its unanimous decision, with the opinion written by Chief Justice Earl Warren, the court argued that "It is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms" (*Brown v. Board of Education*). In essence, the court formally rejected the "separate but equal doctrine" established with *Plessy*, saying "Separate is inherently unequal". As noted, many scholars wrote in support of the decision, with Kenneth Clark, then a faculty member at City College of New York, taking the lead. Clark was one of the most effective researchers on the presence of segregation and the impact segregation had on children. Famously, he was asked during an interview about his statement that racism was as profoundly American as the Declaration of Independence. He was asked in that interview, "What happened?" Clark responded:

> What happened? Well looking back over these years since 1954, it seems to me very clear . . . too clear, disturbingly clear that racism is more imbedded in the American psyche, the American social system, than we had believed. The fact that the American people, probably going all the way back to the beginning of slavery in the New World, and in spite of the abolitionists, in spite of the Judaic Christian theology, in spite of the Declaration of Independence there is still something . . . and it is not particular to Americans . . . there is something about human personality

> that apparently requites human beings to stigmatize others and apparently this is something that cannot be easily controlled.
>
> We cannot permit transgressions to earlier forms of bigotry and racism and cruelty in our society . . . we cannot under the guise of conservatism . . . taking government off of the backs of people in removing regulations. We cannot use those rationalizations, those code words to permit this insidious thing to manifest its more serous symptoms.
>
> *(Kenneth B. Clark and* Brown v. Board of Education*, 1982)*

While most newspapers supported the end of segregation, there were exceptions. The *New York Daily News* was perhaps the most negative for a large northern newspaper, saying "White and negro children in the same schools will lead to miscegenation. Miscegenation leads to mixed marriages and mixed marriages lead to mongrelization of the human race" (p. 148, p. 512).

Continued Segregation

One of the best sources for tracking segregation is the research done by the Civil Rights Project (CRP) at UCLA. The December 2020 report, *Black Segregation Matters: School Resegregation and Black Educational Opportunity* (The Civil Rights Project), using data from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), the CRP report finds that,

> New York is the most segregated state in the country for Black students. The average Black student in New York State attends a school with only 15% White students and 65% of Black students are in intensely segregated schools with 90–100% non-White students.
>
> *(p. 31)*

Other states with 50 or more schools that are 90–100% Black include Illinois, Maryland, California, and New Jersey. Not surprisingly, the most integrated states are those with the lowest number of Black students and include Iowa, Kentucky, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, and Delaware (CRP, p. 32). So, it must be argued that the United States remains a largely segregated nation based on *de facto* conditions.

Critical Race Theory and Removal of Books

One very controversial theory regarding racism is critical race theory. Dr. Kentia Williams, COO of the Southern Education Partnership, has done significant work allowing us to understand critical race theory and its

relationship to racism. She will discuss the research ongoing and in the past regarding the issues later in this chapter.

Quoted directly from her dissertation, she writes:

> Critical race literature focuses on the racial dynamics of societal inequities and the often-concealed racist dimensions of law, public policy, politics, and economics (Gillborn, 2013; Khalil & Kier, 2017; Taylor, 1998). Though the tenets of CRT originated in the discipline of law during the 1970s, education scholars applied the core concepts to the field of education to examine the salience and immovability of race and racism, as well as the role of race in creating and perpetuating stratified school systems (Bell, 1980a; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). First introduced to the field in 1994 by Ladson-Billings and Tate, CRT helped to challenge the fallacy of education being a meritocracy and notions of equality of opportunity. CRT theorists assert that racism is cemented in American institutions, it unduly impacts people of color, and current federal, state, and local education policy do little to eliminate systemic racial inequities despite their intended purposes (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Milner, 2007; Rodriguez & Greer, 2017). Ladson-Billings and Tate maintain that the racialized nature of education is undertheorized. This line of thinking diminishes the part that years of white supremacy and government sanctioned racial discrimination played in creating an education system that inherently advantages one race over the other (Tieken, 2017).
>
> Critical Race Theory has five fundamental suppositions. First, critical race theorists assert that racism is both systematically and institutionally embedded in American society, pervading all values, beliefs, and social constructs (Khalil & Kier, 2017; Zion & Blanchett, 2011). Secondly, ascribing to be a colorblind or race neutral society is futile, as "the notion that race ought not be spoken of, is neither a laudable goal nor a useful tool for creating racial equality" (Rodriguez & Greer, 2017, p. 109). The third supposition speaks to the term interest-convergence, which states that self-interest, in many instances, determines if and when Whites support the causes of people of color, typically only advancing the interests of groups like African Americans when the interests of the two races strongly converge. This self-interest provides very little incentive to eradicate racist systems that advantage Whites over people of color, (Bell, 1980a; Gillborn, 2013; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Next, critical race theorists suggest that there is differential racialization, and the dominant culture racializes (or discriminates against) different populations at different points in times based on the perceived benefit (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Rodriguez & Greer, 2017). Lastly,

> intersectionality exacerbates the experiences of people of color, as racism is often intertwined with other forms of oppression, such as classism and sexism (Bell, 1980a; Bryant et al., 2015; Rodriguez & Greer, 2017). As a theoretical blueprint, critical race theory helps to deconstruct and further understand the ubiquity of race, how the racialized nature of education allows disparities to persist, and, why many reforms to date have not been successful in eliminating racial gaps.
>
> *(Williams, 2021)*

Reading over this excellent summary, one can see the issues that have caught the attention of many, especially conservatives, and led to their opposition to any inclusion of CRT in the school curriculum. In particular, note these characteristics:

> CRT helped to challenge the fallacy of education being a meritocracy and notions of equality of opportunity. CRT theorists assert that racism is cemented in American institutions, it unduly impacts people of color, and current federal, state, and local education policy do little to eliminate systemic racial inequities despite their intended purposes.

The claim by many conservatives has been made that critical race theory is a significant part of school curricula and leads to labeling white Americans as racists. She also says, importantly, that "current federal, state, and local education policy do little to eliminate systematic racial inequities despite their intended purposes". This has led a number of states to exclude any discussion of race or discrimination in the schools. There are apparently no instances where CRT is an official part of the school curriculum, although some claim it is.

At the time of this writing, 20 states have either introduced or passed legislation signed by the governor limiting a discussion of race in classrooms, usually under the guise of limiting discussion of critical race theory. Scholarly groups have acted to condemn laws limiting teaching on race (*NYT*, November 8, 2021). More than six dozen such groups decry the spread of legislation limiting discussion of race, racism, and other so-called "divisive concepts". In the view of these groups, including the American Historical Association, the American Association of University Professors, the American Federation of Teachers, and the Association of American Colleges and Universities:

> The clear goal of these efforts is to suppress teaching and learning about the role of racism in the history of the United States. The ideal of informed citizenship necessitates an educated public. Educators must

provide an accurate view of the past in order to better prepare students for community participation and robust civic engagement.

*(*NYT, *November 8, 2022)*

In some cases there is a specific prohibition against using *The 1619 Project* in schools, as discussed earlier in this chapter. The censoring and removal of books is one of the most observable outcomes in 2022 and beyond (*NYT*, November 8, 2022). See Chapter 8 of this book for a discussion of book banning with specific examples and actions, especially by the American Civil Liberties Union.

The controversy about teaching about race has been tied to an executive order signed by then-president Donald Trump that banned contractors from conducting diversity training that drew on critical race theory or "race-based ideologies". These, he argued, held that "the United States is an inherently racist or evil country or that any race or ethnicity is racist or evil". The executive order was rescinded by the Biden administration, but legislatures were already engaged in their efforts to ban race-based teaching (Williams).

How do you think education should confront racism? Is it possible that many who are subject to racism are not aware of it. If so, how do teachers and others help them understand what is happening? Should teaching about race and racism be permitted in schools? Should books be removed from libraries? If yes, under what circumstances?

In February 2023, one of the most direct actions affecting curricula of African American studies was caused by a state's efforts to limit the use of an Advanced Placement African American studies course. As a result, the College Board, which develops and maintains Advanced Placement, radically changed the curriculum, leading to significant opposition. A discussion of the events can be found in this article in the *New York Times* (February 2, 2023): www.nytimes.com/2023/02/01/us/ap-african-american-studies-course.html.

School Funding and Discrimination

A new focus on the courts' efforts to eliminate discrimination started in the 1970s based on the fact that there is a gap in funding of some schools versus others. Schools with minority children were receiving less funding per child. One of the first of these was the 1973 case in New Jersey of *Robinson v. Cahill*, which found that New Jersey's school funding was unconstitutional because it violated the "thorough and efficient education" requirement of the state constitution. Subsequent to that, in a series of decisions known as the *Abbott v. Burke* decisions, the court ordered "parity funding", bringing

state aid in what became known as the "Abbott districts", primarily urban districts with a majority of minority students, up to on a par with the state's 110 successful suburban districts. Over time the fulfillment of this goal became questionable. The plaintiffs charged that funding of the Abbott districts achieved funding closer to the state average but not to the level of the wealthiest districts, as the Supreme Court ordered. On May 28, 2009, in its 20th decision in the two-decade-old *Abbott v. Burke* litigation, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled unanimously that the state's new education funding system met the constitutional requirement to provide all students a "thorough and efficient education". The court's order permitted the funding system to go into effect statewide, including in the 31 poor urban school districts previously covered by the Abbott orders.

For a period of time after the ruling, the 31 poor urban districts, the Abbott districts, received funding beyond their historical funding but never at the level expected. There has been no new action on enhanced funding since 2020.

The first effort to challenge funding in New York State was *CFE v. State of New York*. The Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) has promoted equity through funding of schools as its primary mission. In *CFE v. State of New York*, with the opinion written by Judge Leland DeGrasse, Justice, New York Court of Appeals, included this statement, the courts found funding inadequate for children of poverty in New York City schools. DeGrasse said in his opinion, which we believe is among the most eloquent arguments, that:

> poverty, race, ethnicity, and immigration status are not in themselves determinative of student achievement. Demography is not destiny. The amount of melanin in a student's skin, the home country of her antecedents, the amount of money in the family bank account, are not the inexorable determinants of academic success. However, the life experiences summarized above that are correlated with poverty, race, ethnicity, and immigration status, do tend to depress academic achievement.
>
> The evidence introduced at trial demonstrates that these negative life experiences can be overcome by public schools with sufficient resources well deployed. It is the clear policy of the State, as formulated by the Regents and SED, that all children can attain the substantive knowledge and master the skills expected of high school graduates. The court finds that the City's at-risk children are capable of seizing the opportunity for a sound basic education if they are given sufficient resources.
>
> *(*CFE v. State of New York*, NY Court of Appeals)*

In a *Wall Street Journal* article (December 27, 2011), Michael A. Rebell, the executive director of the Campaign for Educational Equity, Teachers

College, Columbia University, describes the research currently being completed at the Campaign to determine whether, given current resource levels, schools in New York City and New York state are providing students the sound basic education guaranteed to them by the New York State Constitution. Mr. Rebell was formerly co-counsel for the plaintiffs in *CFE v. State of New York*, which was the litigation that established the constitutional right to equitable funding. Although the state substantially increased state funding for education throughout New York state during the first two years of what was scheduled to be a four-year phase in of a total $7-billion program, state funding for education has been substantially cut over the past two years. In addition to studying the impact of resource shortages in 12 schools in New York City and additional schools in seven districts upstate, the Campaign's project is analyzing the extent to which recent state actions have violated the state constitution, exploring cost-efficiency issues, and researching new cost analysis methodologies.

On January 17, 2012, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo issued his budget proposals for the next school year. The governor's budget would restore about $800,000 of the cuts that have been implemented in recent years but would distribute $250 million through competitive grants. Cuomo's approach was to make school districts that have not implemented a new teacher evaluation system by September 1, 2012, ineligible to compete in the grant competition and deny all of the state aid increases for 2012–13 to districts that fail to implement a new teacher evaluation system by January 17, 2013. State teachers' unions objected, and Mr. Rebell argued that holding resources that students vitally need hostage to the outcome of negotiations between school districts, unions, and the state violates students' constitutional rights: "This is a penalty that constitutionally students should not pay" (Rebell).

Antisemitism and Other Forms of Discrimination

Antisemitism, discrimination against Jews, is a form of discrimination that many non-Jews are less aware of than they probably are about racial discrimination. If one is sensitive to discrimination against Jews, it is apparent in language and behavior. Its height probably was in Germany and Nazi-controlled states in World War II as the Holocaust reached its peak when Jews were sent to concentration camps and many of them killed. It may be hard to imagine in the current world, and some even deny the existence of the Holocaust, let alone antisemitism. All educators must attend to antisemitism as surely as educators must attend to racism and other forms of discrimination. They have no place in a democratic society.

Here are a few examples of how antisemitism presents itself in our history and now.

- During World War II, Jews tried to escape from Europe because of the Holocaust and the danger it represented.
- For a good deal of the time, the United States refused to admit Jews fleeing the Holocaust. President Roosevelt specifically denied access. Many Jewish families were split when some were admitted and others not. The authors have a family in which the sisters of one of our mothers were sent to Australia rather than being admitted to the United States when they fled the Holocaust. The family was never fully reunited and seldom managed to see each other—if ever.
- At first the United States refused to specifically attack concentration camps in Europe. Later in the war, many prisoners in Nazi concentration camps were liberated by American troops.
- There is a belief that Jews control many of the important societal institutions, leading to mistrust and even hatred. This is specifically reported to be the case for government, media, the economy, and other institutions. Of course, this is a myth.
- One continuing myth is that the Jews killed Jesus. History is clear that it was not the Jews but rather the Romans occupying what became Israel.
- There have been attacks on Jewish institutions, including the 2018 Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh.
- It is reported by the FBI that Jews, who make up about 2% of all Americans, suffer nearly 60% of all hate crimes based on religion.
- Antisemitism is on the rise in many areas, including in Germany, even though the German government has recognized the horrors of the Nazi regime in their treatment of Jews and has established monuments to Jews across the country.

There are other forms of discrimination, including gender discrimination and discrimination against Muslims (Islamophobia), Asians, and gays (homophobia), which are considered in subsequent chapters. In addition, we must note discrimination against Native Americans. They are the only group whose land was usurped by the government and sent to live on reservations. Most Americans don't know that discrimination continues today. One example among many is the Shinnecock Nation in Southampton, one of the wealthiest communities in a wealthy state. The Shinnecocks live on a reservation where mail is not delivered. They must pick up mail at the post office. Almost all the lands in Southampton and other Long Island communities were Shinnecock land. Until very recently, building on such land sometimes uncovered graves, and the practice of discarding bones was

practiced. This did not end definitively on Long Island until 2023. The Southampton Town Council, with the intervention of the County Administrator, Jay Schneiderman, and one of the authors of this book, worked to establish a law that applied only to Southampton and required that when the building was undertaken on known burial grounds, ground penetrating radar had to be used to examine the site, and if it appeared that bones were present, a forensic specialist had to be called to determine if the building could continue. Disregarding burial sites continued until 2023, and in a few other states, it continued after that.

What Can Schools Do About It?

Schools should take action to combat discrimination. Among these are educating students about discrimination, including antisemitism, so they recognize it when it presents itself. This is something that must be done for students who suffer and experience racism. They must learn to recognize it. Educators should encourage our students to tell their stories and be proud of their history and traditions. If you hear discriminatory language or see evidence of discrimination, act!

There are many more actions students and their teachers can learn to take. Schools should make available the literature of the major anti-discrimination organizations, including the Civil Rights Center at USC and the Center for Combating Antisemitism (StandUptoHatred.com).

CURRENT RESEARCH REPORT OF DR. KENITA WILLIAMS

The Role of District Leadership in Equity and Anti-Discrimination

Despite decades-long efforts at education reform, American public schools continue to generate substandard outcomes for Black and Brown students when compared to their White counterparts. Exploration into the drivers that perpetuate these racial disparities, as well as into the pivotal levers for transformation, consistently points to the role of district leadership. Superintendents wield tremendous influence and power to eradicate inherently racially biased and discriminatory education policies and practices in their districts. Yet, even when a superintendent demonstrates a willingness and commitment to using their role authority to effect change, they still often encounter several impediments to this work. When asked what they perceived to be their greatest challenges, district leaders consistently illuminated a central problem: an inability to address the knowledge gaps within key stakeholder groups about the nature, magnitude, and drivers of inequities in their districts. This challenge limits their ability to secure the buy-in necessary to advance a racial equity agenda.

This challenge, as well as would-be solutions, became the focus on my dissertation research and intervention study conducted in the spring of 2021. The research aimed to examine racial disparities in student access, opportunity, and academic attainment in K–12 public education. Specifically, the research sought to understand the factors that contributed to the nation's inability to close performance gaps between students of color and their White peers, with a focus on public K–12 school districts in the South. A review of extant literature on racial disparities in education led to identifying three key drivers: a superintendent's racial equity posture, organizational culture, and district equity disposition, with the role of the superintendent emerging as the most pivotal lever (Bird et al., 2013). A needs assessment during the fall of 2018 to investigate the following questions to focus on the superintendent leadership:

RQ1: How do district leaders rate their leadership for equity progress among the 10 Leadership for Equity Assessment & Development (LEAD) tool indicators?
RQ2: How do leaders rate their own current racial equity posture?
RQ3: What do leaders report as their challenges or barriers to leading for equity?

The participants discussed and raised the following concerns: a lack of awareness, understanding, or acknowledgment of racial disparities exacerbated by the inability to have open and honest conversations, resulting in barriers to the work, particularly in three ways. First, leaders pointed to a general lack of understanding about the existence and degree of disparities. Second, they suggested that there was an absence of readiness to broach the subject of inequity, particularly regarding race. Third, several district leaders interviewed held that stakeholders in their system did not believe in a need for discussion around equity and access, even going as far as avoiding the topic.

Exploration of Prospective Interventions

The challenges expressed by the district leaders are not unique to elementary and secondary education but pervade all grades (Godinez, 2018). Therefore, the review of intervention literature included discussions of postsecondary education based on the limited body of K–12 research on the topic. After considering several strategies, equity scorecards emerged as a potential solution to the challenges highlighted by district leaders. Both a tool and a process, equity scorecards show opportunity gaps by systematically analyzing data on key indicators of student outcomes (Dowd & Bensimon, 2015). Therefore, the researcher proposed to design and implement an intervention that built the

capacity of district leaders to utilize the equity scorecard method. The goal of the intervention was to increase the knowledge of district leaders about how and why to engage various stakeholders in a process of collectively uncovering reasons behind disparities, assessing the nature and magnitude of these racialized opportunity gaps, and using what they learned to take actionable steps to improve learning opportunities for students of color.

Intervention Study

The proposed intervention invited 13 superintendents to participate in a professional learning series over the course of seven weeks to build their capacities for creating and effectively utilizing the findings of equity scorecards. District leaders took part in three virtual training sessions to scaffold their learning and skill-building around scrutinizing student performance data; investigating district policies, practices, and structures through an equity lens; spotting when disparities were a sign of institutional dysfunction; and communicating these learnings to build a case for transformation (see Bensimon, 2012; Felix et al., 2015). In addition to the scorecard curriculum, participants read and discussed case studies to provide concrete examples of how and why education institution leaders had successfully implemented some iteration of a scorecard strategy. Last, participants had the opportunity to join three full-group coaching sessions to ask for additional clarity or support on anything covered during the training.

Research Design and Research Questions

The researcher conducted both process and outcome evaluation studies to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the intervention. The researcher employed a mixed-methods, explanatory sequential pre/posttest design guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: How do participants rate the relevancy and usefulness of the curricular materials, such as K–12 case studies and/or sample equity scorecards? What components of the Professional Learning Series do participants indicate contributed the most to their learning?

RQ2: To what extent do participating superintendents complete corresponding assignments and tasks?

RQ3: What bearing does having a dedicated research and data team have on each district leader's ability to fully engage in the intervention?

RQ4: To what extent does the district leader's knowledge about the purpose and utility of equity scorecards change as a result of the professional learning series?

RQ5: To what extent does the district leader's self-efficacy around using data to drive change increase as a result of the professional learning series, and what do district leaders attribute this increase (or lack thereof) to?

Findings

The findings showed that the participants experienced a notable increase in their awareness and understandings of the value and utility of equity scorecards. Furthermore, once their knowledge about the scorecard method increased, superintendents viewed it as a potentially potent tool to leverage in their districts. Regarding data-driven decision making self-efficacy, the results were less clear. Each participant professed having high confidence about interpreting data and using their learnings to make informed choices about how to best serve their students. However, most expressed feeling less confident or efficacious about sharing data due to the final scorecard training on communication strategies. The *Scorecard 301* training illuminated common errors that people made when presenting data. Each leader admitted to giving presentations riddled with mistakes highlighted by presenters and that they could benefit from additional training.

The participants found the training informative and useful as a powerful tool to identify, define, analyze, address, and take collective responsibility for racial disparities of students in the system. Additionally, the participants received concrete tools and strategies for more effectively communicating the state on equity in their systems. The researcher believes the study represents an opportunity to raise awareness about equity scorecards and motivate more leaders of K–12 systems to utilize the method to create conditions for a more equitable public education system.

Implications for Practice and Future Research

Should the study be replicated or extended in the future, the researcher recommends that several considerations be taken into account. First, to increase the generalizability of the findings, future researchers may consider exploring different sampling techniques and broadening the sample size. This finding enhances the study in a few different ways. It facilitates a participant pool more representative of the larger district leader population. It allows for a more sophisticated and robust statistical analysis of the data gleaned (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). It may also facilitate using a different study design that includes a treatment and control group, which in turn reduces threats to validity (Shadish et al., 2002).

Additionally, future studies may consider conducting the professional learning series as an in-person training over several consecutive days. Due

to restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this current researcher adopted a virtual format. The researcher believes that conducting discrete, disconnected webinars over several weeks created conditions that spurred participant attrition. Furthermore, experience with leading professional development programming has demonstrated the value in removing leaders from their professional contexts and placing them in a setting where they have dedicated time and space to focus on learning away from competing for work priorities. The researcher also recommends incentivizing participation, perhaps through the use of gift cards. Finally, based on a recommendation from participants, the in-person training should be done with small teams from systems instead of individual leaders.

The findings of the research have several implications for promoting racial equity in K–12 education at large. As educators and policymakers alike continue to work to advance racial equity, using data to shine a light on imbalances in systems bolsters their ability to galvanize stakeholders behind a vision for equity. Research consistently demonstrates a positive relationship between DDDM being utilized in a school and the school's ability to effectively reduce learning and opportunity gaps between student groups (Dunn et al., 2013). Despite this positive correlation, however, it is still not a widely used strategy in classrooms or systems across the country. There is a dearth of data literacy and the ability of teachers and administrators to move beyond just giving statistics to "making actionable the data by transforming them into usable knowledge" (Mandinach, 2012, p. 73).

Moreover, personal accounts from district leaders also underscore the challenges of using data to drive change, as evidenced by the empirical needs assessment conducted during fall 2018. Anecdotally, systems leaders shared that in their experience, a major barrier to advancing equity work is a general unawareness, willful ignorance, or outright refusal to acknowledge the disparities in opportunity and access for specific student groups (personal communication, October 12, 2018). Furthermore, the leaders reported a perceived lack of the necessary data to paint a compelling picture about the nature of inequities in the district to solicit the necessary buy-in for change. For example, a respondent shared that stakeholders in their district "just simply do not know how bad it is for Black children" (C. Goss [pseudonym], personal communication, October 13, 2018).

The equity scorecard, with its goal of clearly and visually illuminating disparate outcomes for students in various racial/ethnic groups, offers a possible solution to these problems. It charges districts with systematically scrutinizing student data, identifying the systemic factors that contribute to racialize gaps, calling attention to those institutional and structural policies and practices that perpetuate and sustain racial imbalances, testing strategies to address inequity, and communicating the learnings to all stakeholders

(Dowd & Bensimon, 2015; McNair et al., 2020). However, there is little awareness in the K–12 space about scorecards and the value to school districts.

One implication of the research for practice entails leveraging the findings from this study and the overall professional learning series and curricular materials to build greater awareness about the scorecard method and corresponding tools among K–12 educators. The intervention researcher created and now offers an easily adaptable prototype designed to raise awareness about the scorecard method. By adopting the three-part professional learning series, systems leaders possess a strategy to introduce the idea of equity scorecards to district stakeholders, explain how they are created, and demonstrate how the tool can be leveraged to improve the learning outcomes of traditionally underserved student populations (Dowd & Bensimon, 2015).

Additional Considerations: The Sociopolitical Context

Consideration must be given to the socio-political backdrop of the study to grasp this research's implications fully. The intervention occurred during what could be best described as unprecedented times for the United States. First, the COVID-19 global pandemic upended millions' physical, social, and economic lives in the United States. Though no one population was immune to the devastation brought on by the virus and the subsequent nationwide cessation of work and school, historically underserved communities felt an undue impact (Welch, 2020). The novel coronavirus exposed general deficiencies in the nation's disaster preparedness, but it further illuminated the endemic inequities in American society and thus in American education. Second, the nation experienced a reckoning with race and racism incited by violence against Black and Brown people that played out on the national stage, followed by a would-be standard electoral cycle that morphed into embattled displays of partisan politics and racial divisions and unfounded contestations to widely accepted democratic processes. Together, these circumstances exposed and amplified the racial inequities in the fundamental architecture of American public schools.

The fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the nation's unavoidable reckoning with racism, heightened the demand on elected officials to consider issues of race, equity, power, and privilege in their policy choices. Yet the 2021 legislative season illustrated that decision-makers across the nation intended to stifle discussions about race in education instead. From state legislatures to local school board meetings, CRT rose to the center of debates about teaching race and racism in classrooms. Consequently, several laws and resolutions banning the teaching of CRT surfaced and, in many instances, passed.

The sociopolitical context of 2020 and 2021 created conditions that warranted an acute focus on the systems, policies, and practices that continued to advantage some racial groups while keeping others situated further from resources and opportunity (McNair et al., 2020). This is especially relevant given the research on what has been called the devolution of racial equity and social justice in public policy (Felix & Trinidad, 2019). In their study of race-conscious California education policies, Felix and Trinidad found that despite the pivotal role that legislative mandates play in tackling inequity, "policymakers continuously diluted the role of race and opportunities to address racial disparities" (2019, p. 1). This phenomenon is occurring in more and more states at a time when the nation needs policymakers to be making strides toward increasing policies that specifically include racial discourse and make it an explicit goal to improve equity for underserved students.

Moreover, the reception of the intervention and the growing body of literature on racial equity in education showed a need and desire for resources and tools to address and close racial gaps in schools. However, systems leaders now potentially face an even bigger impediment to promoting racial equity: government-mandated silence on the history and interface of race and education. Therefore, the intervention emerged at a time when systems leaders may need more than ever the data, tools, resources, and language to justify and substantiate their efforts to "identify, understand, and overcome the systemic racism that exists and persists" (Pierce, 2021) in the districts that they lead.

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Additional Levers for Change: Cultivating Equity Leadership

As the central decision-maker in a school district, the superintendent can exemplify an equity orientation; influence policy and practice; and debunk perceptions and narratives about race, behavior, and academic achievement (DeMatthews et al., 2017). The ability to be this influential figure largely depends on a superintendent's racial equity posture, defined as one's image, attitude, or policy on racial equity perceived by those within a system (Williams, 2021). Racial equity posture falls into two categories: commitment and competency. Commitment refers to the degree to which a leader feels responsibility and willingness to exert influence to facilitate equitable educational access, opportunities, and outcomes for students regardless of race (Larson et al., 2013). Competency denotes the specific skills, knowledge, and dispositions needed to do the work.

Commitment to leading for equity requires a distinct set of beliefs and personal characteristics. Skrla et al. (2009) proposed a research-based equity-oriented change agent (EOCA) framework, showing leaders' traits

when committed to initiating and sustaining social justice and racial equity system changes (Maxwell et al., 2013). The EOCA framework lists the following nine characteristics:

1. Demonstrates an equity attitude
2. Avoids demonization
3. Willingly initiates courageous conversations around race
4. Forgives her/his own failed attempts
5. Remains persistent in efforts to converse courageously
6. Demonstrates persistence
7. Remains committed but patient
8. Maintains an asset attitude
9. Maintains a coherent focus

Skrla et al. (2009) believed that district leaders must exhibit some, if not all, of these attitudes and behaviors to confront the social, institutional, and community forces that work together to cause and sustain inequity and discrimination (Maxwell et al., 2013). Leaders should have an equity attitude and avoid demonizing others. Thus, such leaders engage in regular self-reflection to examine and challenge their identities, values, assumptions, and biases regarding access, power, and privilege (Larson & Barton, 2013; Larson et al., 2013). They encourage tough conversations about race, access, and opportunity (Maxwell et al., 2013). Despite the potential risks to their careers, they challenge racial stereotypes, confront colleagues who use racist language, and persevere through discomfort to ensure that meaningful conversations about race happen so that these discussions may lead to changes in behaviors (Maxwell et al., 2013).

Additional Levers for Change: Tackling Organizational Culture

Organizational culture emerged as another pivotal factor that can perpetuate disparities and discriminatory policies and practice. For the purposes of this discussion, organizational culture refers to widely held and accepted beliefs about the impact of students' races on their academic abilities (Larson & Barton, 2013). Organizational culture also refers to widespread acceptance or denial of the systemic nature of discrimination and race-based educational disparities (Larson & Barton, 2013).

In an ideal circumstance, districts operate under a culture of "equity-mindedness" (Dowd & Bensimon, 2015, p. 21). Equity-mindedness refers to a mode of thinking where those within a school system feel personal responsibility and accountability for racial gaps in student opportunity and outcomes. Such people remain race conscious and call attention to patterns

of thought and institutional practices that contribute to inequity. Individuals in equity-minded systems reflect critically on their attitudes and beliefs. People of equity-minded systems also welcome conversations about race, bias, privilege, and exclusion (Dowd & Bensimon, 2015). However, many districts may exhibit behaviors that contradict an equity-minded culture. The following subsections discuss the district's oppositional thoughts and attitudes.

Problem Definition and Deficit Discourse

How a problem is perceived or conceptualized determines the approach to solving the problem. Therefore, correctly defining the problem of education equity holds implications for the solutions that a system seeks (Mehta, 2013). A clear definition shows the specific circumstance that needs to be treated, why, and for whom, informing inputs, resources, and processes behind a solution, as well as resulting policies and practices (Leviton & Lipsey, 2007; Mehta, 2013). However, research has shown that many school districts embrace an organizational culture that defines their race problems in a way that absolves them of accountability and the responsibility to fix them. This issue undermines or negates attempts to achieve greater parity.

Normalcy of Racism

A district will not effectively tackle racial inequity if the overarching culture or mindset does not indicate the existence of an equity issue (Dowd & Bensimon, 2015). First, race and racism become so normalized that those in the system are oblivious to it. In a discussion of the tenets of CRT, Milner (2007) emphasized the ingrained nature of race and racism in society and, by extension, in education. Milner (2007) posited that racism was so endemic and "embedded in our systems of knowing and experiencing life" (p. 390), some became oblivious to the adverse effects of racism on certain populations. Second, some stakeholders do not acknowledge the undue impacts of race on educational opportunities for students of color unless there are overt and interpersonal acts of racism (Dowd & Bensimon, 2015). Such people are oblivious to the structural and institutional racism and the effects of seemingly benign policies. Therefore, they see no need to disrupt or eliminate what they do not recognize.

The normalization of Whiteness impedes progress toward equity. Pedersen (2000) maintained that the biggest barrier to multicultural education was the "exclusive reliance on the 'self-reference criterion' by which we measure the goodness or badness of others exclusively according to ourselves and our own 'natural' perspective" (p. 23). Instead of recognizing

that excellence can and does come in varied forms, many school leaders expect students of color "to 'catch up' or 'live up' to a norm for which the model is their White classmates" (Milner, 2007, p. 389). The normalcy of race, racism, and Whiteness offers, for some, no impetus to change things for others because it blocks their view of the effects of discriminatory policies and other systemic impediments and injustices.

Evading the Race Question

Finally, some school systems have cultures that make it challenging to raise questions about race and inequity. Dowd and Bensimon (2015) outlined three main causes for why some districts avoid the necessary conversations about race, power, privilege, and disparity. In certain instances, discussions of race evoke defensiveness within some in the system. Feelings of discomfort or fear pose another hurdle to addressing issues related to race, access, and opportunity. Finally, topics about racial inequity can be co-opted or overshadowed by insertions of class issues into the conversation (Dowd & Bensimon, 2015). Some believe that inequity is much more a function of socioeconomics than race. In sum, a system cannot solve a problem if conversations do not occur.

Researchers have discussed the dynamic nature of organizational culture, highlighting an example of a basic strategy to modify it and mitigate the influence of racial bias (McMaster, 2013, 2015). Before modifications begin, however, systems need a solid understanding of what ways, if any, prejudice, bias, and racism (both explicit and unspoken) occur within the district (Dull, 2010). Organizations use formal and informal methods, such as surveys, focus groups, and observations, to gauge the cultural beliefs of their staff. This cultural audit should show thoughts about race and whether the current day-to-day operations align with advancing a racial equity agenda. School systems steadfast in their commitment to equity should continually monitor the cultures of their districts to thwart threats to their visions of change (Dull, 2010; Kottke & Pelletier, 2013; Kuppler, 2013).

Summary of chapter:

1. Slavery has a long history in the United States, preceding independence and the Declaration of Independence by 157 years.
2. This may be the most dramatic example of discrimination and the denial of social justice in our history, but it is not the only one. Native Americans were removed from their land and held on reservations.

Other examples of discrimination include antisemitism, homophobia, Islamophobia, and others considered in subsequent chapters.

3. Slavery in the minds of many Americans ended with the Emancipation Proclamation. That act by President Lincoln was not as clear cut as it seemed. In fact, it freed slaves only in states in rebellion against the Union.
4. As early as 1816 a group was formed, the American Colonization Society, to support the colonization of freed Blacks to other countries with the view that they could never fit in this society. In 1853, before his presidency, Lincoln expressed support for colonization, and Congress allocated funds to support it.
5. In part, colonization was less contentious than freedom, because the slaves would be removed from the country and not compete for jobs.
6. When Texas rejoined the union in 1865, emancipation for all former slaves in the confederacy was announced on June 19, celebrated as the end of slavery, Juneteenth.
7. Lincoln's position on emancipation evolved over the years, and he supported the Thirteenth Amendment, which passed after his assassination. Lincoln believed that the amendment would end the war. He advocated the right to vote for selected Blacks who were educated and who fought in the war.
8. It was not until 1870 that the right to vote was extended to all male citizens in the Fifteenth Amendment. The right to vote for women would not follow until 1920 with the Nineteenth Amendment.
9. Segregation in schools continued after the Civil War and was dealt with by action of the Supreme Court. The actions were seemingly in contradiction to the Tenth Amendment in that education was in the hands of the states as a right not ascribed to the federal government nor denied to the states. Action by the federal government was justified by the Fourteenth Amendment.
10. Integration was stalled by the idea that "separate but equal" rights and facilities were acceptable and was established by *Plessy v. Ferguson*.
11. Until *Brown v. Board of Education*, separate but equal was in place. When *Brown* ended segregation in 1954, there was support and strong opposition. In one case, the *New York Daily News* argued that that that having White and Negro children in the same schools would lead to miscegenation and mongrelization of the human race.
12. Segregation did not end in all states and continues, as evident in the research of the Civil Rights Project at UCLA. Of course, most segregation after *Brown* came from de facto segregation rather than de jure segregation; that is, it was because of segregated neighborhoods based

on income and living conditions rather than legally imposed. Many see the effect as the same.

13. States began in the 21st century to intervene in books allowed in schools and were opposed to teaching critical race theory. The banning of books and other continuing actions are discussed further in the final chapter. The lead in challenging banning books was taken by the American Civil Liberties Union.
14. Discriminatory school funding by states was challenged by the Campaign for Fiscal Equity and brought relief in some states, but not all, and in some cases it did not last.
15. This chapter includes a review of other forms of discrimination, including antisemitism. These are a focus of Chapter 6.
16. Civic education should extend to helping students recognize discrimination against themselves and encourage others to stand up to combat it.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. How do you define social justice now that you have read this chapter?
2. Did you understand how limiting the Declaration of Independence was with respect to its statement about equality? Did Jefferson and the others realize their inconsistency?
3. The slave trade preceded the Declaration of Independence. At the time, what is now the United States was a colony of England. Do you know if slavery existed there? Find out. Did the British have a position on slavery?
4. What were your thoughts about the existence of segregation and discrimination in this society before you read this chapter? How did your thoughts change? What influenced any changes in your thinking most?
5. What do you know about the Black Lives Matter movement? How do you feel about it? Have you participated in it? If so, how? If not, why not? Would you if you had the opportunity?
6. While the focus is on discrimination against Blacks and Jews, but consideration of others experiencing discrimination, including Latinos, Asians, Native Americans, people with disabilities and others is considered. Have you had any experiences with discrimination among any of these groups? What do you know about them?
7. Were you aware of the colonization proposals? If not, why do you think you did not know of them?
8. Why did many favor the idea of colonization? What does it say about their attitude towards Blacks? What is said in the chapter about the position of W. E. B. Dubois on colonization?

9. What was the impact of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth amendments? Have they been effective? What evidence do you have to support your view?
10. Would Judge Wright's 1967 position be enough? "It would be far better if these great social and political problems could be resolved in the political arena by other branches of government, but these are social and political problems that seem at times to defy such resolution". He went on to say that under such circumstances where constitutional rights hang in the balance, the judicial branch should act.
11. What do you think of the principle that "separate but equal" can justify segregation?
12. Who were the major scholars who argued in support of the case? What did they present as evidence?
13. Find and read the report of the Civil Rights Group, *Black Segregation Matters: School Resegregation and Black Educational Opportunity*. What does school resegregation mean? Does it mean that *Brown* failed?
14. Were you surprised that a northern state was the most segregated state in the nation at the time of the *Black Segregation Matters* report? How would you define the level of segregation reported for that state? Did you or anyone you know attend a school with that level of segregation? What do you know about the effect? If someone you know did attend such a school, ask them about their experiences.
15. Were you aware of critical race theory before reading this book? What are your thoughts about it now? Should schools prohibit the discussion of race issues in classrooms? What did you learn from Dr. Williams' comments in the chapter and her review of research at the end?
16. Were you aware that there is a gap in funding of students between wealthy and less wealthy schools? What did you know about it before you read the book, and what do you know and think now? Look at the district you live in and see if a discrepancy exists.
17. Discuss the cases that took on school funding. Were they effective in eliminating any discrimination based on finding? If not, why not? If they were, of if some were, what was most effective? Do you agree with our claim that Judge DeGrasse's decision in *CFE v. State of New York* was eloquent? Why or why not? If you agree, what makes it eloquent?
18. Has the gap in funding been eliminated? What evidence do you have for your conclusion?
19. Why do you think there is a section on antisemitism as an example of discrimination? Were you aware of antisemitic actions? Have you or anyone you know experienced antisemitism?
20. What more can and should be done in schools about eliminating discrimination and repression?

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4

COLLEGE GOING AND THE EFFECT OF RACE AND OTHER FACTORS

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Continued Segregation

Lyndon Johnson, who as president did much to advance civil rights, including succeeding in passing the first comprehensive civil rights bill, which President Kennedy tried to do and failed. Johnson said this in his commencement address at Howard University on June 4, 1965.

> Men and women of all races are born with the same range of abilities. But ability is not just the product of birth. Ability is stretched or stunted by the family that you live with, and the neighborhood you live in—by the school you go to and the poverty and richness of your surroundings. It is the product of a hundred unseen forces playing upon the little infant, the child and finally the man.
>
> *(Center for Housing Studies, 2017)*

His statement suggests how complicated preparation for school and academic achievement is, even if there is not full agreement with him. For example, the role of the family continues to be debated, and his conclusion with the word "man" is a product of the times. But it does, again, show the complexity of the process.

Segregation and discrimination are discussed in Chapter 2. Important in this are the Supreme Court cases that played a role, with *Brown v. Board of Education* being the most important. This decision, as you will remember, eliminated segregation by law (de jure), but not segregation in fact

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(de facto) because of the distribution of people by socio-economic class and race. Some experts, including Kenneth Clark, blamed low school performance on segregation. Why do schools with majority minority students perform at a lower level than truly integrated schools? Clark, a professor at City College of New York, was well known as an active civil rights advocate, and his "doll test" became well known and wildly used, cited in *Brown*, which he conducted with his wife, Mamie Clark.

The Clarks asked: What do minority children think of themselves and others? Clark's goal was to examine the psychological effects of segregation on African American students. In the test provided students with four dolls that were identical except for color. The children, all African American children between the ages of three to seven, were asked to identify the race of the doll and the color doll they preferred. A majority of the children preferred the white doll and believed there were positive characteristics of the white doll. The Clarks concluded that prejudice, discrimination, and segregation created a feeling of inferiority among African American children and damaged their self-esteem. The testimony in *Brown* included this and much more about his comprehensive analysis of cutting-edge psychological scholarship. The study, done fourteen years before *Brown*, was noticed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and as a result, they asked Clark to participate in *Brown*. In another disturbing study, Clark conducted experiments in rural Arkansas and asked a black child which was most like him. The child responded and pointing to the brown doll, said "That's a (N-word). I'm a (N-word)". When children in Massachusetts were asked the same question, they refused to answer or would run out of the room.

Even in the 21st century, segregation continues, and most early efforts to eliminate it, such as bussing, have largely disappeared. In addition to segregation by race, segregation by income is considered as well, which increases for families with children. Segregation by race and income isolates groups and limits social interaction at an especially critical time for children. Segregation seems to be too prevalent to be an "accident", and it seems to underlie a policy of separation. You will remember the fear of "mongrelization" expressed when segregation decisions came down. The effect on children is not surprising. They know that they are isolated as a group, limiting social interaction at the time when racial attitudes are being formed. Bussing to end segregation failed. A particularly telling story is of a Black student in a wealthy Boston suburb who was bussed into the inner city after school because of the mistaken assumption that he must be a desegregation participant rather than a resident of a suburb (Tenth, 2003).

The continued presence of segregation and the effect on the learning of minority students are threats to our nation. Children of color currently

make up half the population. By 2050, it is projected to be 60%, with strong growth of the Latino/Hispanic child population. The 2022 data from the Center for Educational Statistics were:

Total 44.9	White 22.6	50%
	Hispanic 13.8	28%
	Black 7.4	14.9%
	Asian 2.7%	5.47%

Between 2000 and 2023, the white population dropped from 26% to 22%, and the 'black population dropped from 16 to 14.9%

The Harvard Center for Housing Studies (2017) found that policies, including taxes and entitlements, fair housing, and school choice, could exacerbate the problem, but progress in these areas seems to have slowed. Children represent our future, of course, and if half of the population of children does poorly in education, in part because of segregation, it is a terrible problem for our nation. It is very important that it be faced directly, understood deeply, and fixed. One researcher has found that

> rising residential income segregation for families with children is largely related to increases in income inequality and the structure of school options, as characterized by school district boundaries and fragmentation. Upper income families with children benefiting from rising incomes have been able to buy into more exclusive neighborhoods further, separating themselves from lower-income households.
>
> *(Owens, 2016)*

Several studies, beginning with Acevedo-Garcia (2008), used poverty rates in neighborhoods as a proxy for neighborhood quality. Large numbers of Black and Latino/Hispanic children live in higher-poverty neighborhoods than the worst-off white children. The situation is even worse in large metropolitan centers.

Some might question the connection between neighborhood socioeconomic status and outcomes for children and adolescents, including juvenile delinquency, health, academic achievement, public safety, and access to affordable healthy food. Sharkey (2012) was among the first to find this. Now there are research studies that make the case convincingly. Several studies (Diez Roux, 2003; Santiago et al., 2014) found that verbal abilities of Black students residing in severely disadvantaged neighborhoods were reduced by the equivalent of a year or more of schooling on average.

Ultimately one of the most important things to be done is minimizing differences in access rests within part with the elimination of segregation of all types as descried.

Related to segregation is the role of the real estate industry, which has not been examined as closely as it could be. A revealing piece of research is described in a publication by the Brookings Institution, *The Great Real Estate Reset* (2022).

The study sought to examine why very few Americans live in neighborhoods that are affordable, close to jobs, and racially and economically integrated. Did the real estate industry play a role in racial and economic segregation? The conclusion is that it did, along with the government. Both the Federal Housing Administration and the Department of Veterans Affairs opened up the possibility of homeownership and wealth-building to millions of Americans. The study concluded that "these loan programs were explicitly structured to exclude Black people and to favor particular places: the newly minted suburbs" (Ibid, p. 3). By 1950, nearly half of the population lived in the largest US metropolitan areas. The racial distribution matched the nation as a whole, with 90% of residents white. The suburbs were already even whiter, at 94%. With the rise of efforts to advance integration, white flight intensified. Black and immigrant populations began to move to the suburbs but found exclusionary and segregationist zoning policies. Now the vast majority of white people live in suburbs, while poor whites and people of color do not live in the same suburbs. Segregation by income is illustrated by the fact that more than 80% of Black people and 75% of Latino/Hispanic people live in communities that the federal government defines as "low-income". Under half of low-income white people live in such neighborhoods.

This process is exacerbated by real estate finance practices, which are said to target Black and brown neighborhoods, such as excluding Black neighborhoods from eligibility for homeownership or loans. This practice is known as "redlining". Subsequently, minority neighborhoods were characterized by high-rate loans, which led to foreclosures that were 3.5 higher in Black neighborhoods than white. One study found that after controlling for differences in housing quality and neighborhood characteristics, homes in majority-Black neighborhoods were valued at 23% lower than homes in neighborhoods with fewer Black residents (Ibid, p. 6). Of course, this affects wealth building, which is another characteristic difference between whites and Blacks. By 2016, the median net worth among white families was 10 times more than that of Black families and 8 times more than that for Hispanic people. In keeping with our theme in this chapter, Chicago's Metropolitan Planning Council and the Urban Institute (2017) found that segregation and lower income are associated with lower educational attainment for whites and Blacks, lower levels of public safety, and the loss of $156 billion that would be circulating in local economies. Furthermore, McKinsey and Company estimates that continued racial and economic segregation

would cost the United States 4% to 6% of its gross domestic product by 2028 because it lowers consumption and investment.

And, particularly relevant to this chapter, a recent study reported in the *New York Times* (2022) showed that major universities remain segregated. The report by Educational Reform Now found that at the University of Virginia, just 13% of undergraduates identify as Black or Hispanic, 60% lower than the states with populations of those races in the state. William and Mary and Christopher Newport University, located with 50 miles of cities with more than 40% Black populations, have student bodies that are 7% Black. Despite affirmative action, there is little improvement, and there has been growing controversy about affirmative action from those who are not targeted. Also, when President Biden forgave student debt in 2022, there were objections from those not eligible for debt forgiveness because of their economic status. This will continue to have an impact on the education of minority students. In addition, college completion rates continue to be higher for Asian and White students than for Black and Hispanic students (Thinkimpact, 2021).

So, it must be concluded that no one benefits from segregation in the largest sense, and minorities and low-income residents suffer most, but they are not alone (Ibid., p. 8).

Imagination

One of the most overlooked critical skills is imagination, and schools should systematically encourage imagination in students. The work of the Lincoln Center Arts Program is useful in this regard. But there is more. One of our mentors and colleagues, the late Maxine Greene, who taught philosophy at Columbia University and Teachers College, often said to us that "we cannot become what we cannot imagine" (conversation with Maxine Greene, 1995). That is a very important point. Do children in urban settings imagine themselves in college or in prestigious, high-income professions? They most likely do not unless we intervene.

Students in segregated schools have probably never been to a college campus and don't know what is required to attend college or why it might be important for them. Helping them think about attending college begins with having them imagine themselves doing so. It is possible that they do not know anyone who graduated from college well enough to talk to them.

That is the same issue with seeking competency for a high-paying professional position. Students at a majority minority university are not in a position to have a personal conversation with an MD, a dentist, a lawyer, an accountant, or even a teacher.

Students' consideration of higher education will likely be enhanced by sponsoring visits to local colleges. This is likely to be easier if they are in a metropolitan area or some other area with colleges. Certainly personal conversations to discuss a career can be set up with teachers. It may be more difficult for other professionals, but not impossible. If they meet with teachers, talking about what it is like to be a teacher makes sense, assuming they have a positive perspective.

Imagination has been in some depth in an earlier work (Michelli, 2020). One set of ideas to consider is in the work of Noppe-Brandon and Liu (2009). Earlier, in the work of Lev Vygotsky, there was an emphasis on imagination. He argued that it should be a part of all education and that it develops the ability to engage in artistic, scientific, and technological innovation (Vygotsky, 2004)

Noppe-Brandon and Liu provide a deep dive into the meaning of imagination and have sponsored imagination workshops at all levels across the country. Their book, *Imagination First, Unlocking the Power of Possibility* (2009), is important. Michelli, Holzer, and Bevin have written about imagination in *Learning to Imagine* (2011), available on the Lincoln Center Institute website (www.lcinstitute.org, 2011) or by contacting the Institute at Lincoln Center.

Another important source for developing imagination is through the informal education agencies found in large cities and elsewhere, that is, historical, scientific, and art museums. Many students in urban areas do not have access to these institutions, even though they may be nearby. They don't have the resources to get there or pay admission, and, as Dr. Ni Zhang has found, often parents discourage participating in them. In New York City, students living in boroughs other than Manhattan, where most of these resources are, seldom come to Manhattan and don't have funds they need. A funded project providing access through transportation and free admission to students in New York City saw positive results. Of course, access in rural settings is often impossible because such institutions are not accessible easily.

Parental Support of Learning and Interaction With Children

The idea of parental support for the learning of children is considereed in our chapter on access to informal education, written with Dr. Ni Zhang who founded the Children's Museums in China. Dr. Zhang studied Chinese parents' beliefs about informal education and found that they did not see it as providing adequate knowledge, and they often avoided working with their children in such settings, believing that learning occurs in formal settings like schools. Dr. Zhang describes her research on changing the attitudes of Chinese parents, which has implications for all of us.

In addition to imagination, is it is important to plan for students to consider their future, imagine the possibilities, and engage in discussions about their conclusions.

Presence of Content Such as Critical Thinking and Achievement Motivation

Schools have the opportunity to have students understand the nature of knowledge and their ability to evaluate it, use it, and create it. The nature of knowledge using Dewey's and Lipman's perspectives is considered earlier, including a discussion of critical thinking in Chapter 3. Helping students and adults understand the positions they take and having them be influenced by opinions is part of critical thinking. In our form of government, it is important that citizens be able to explain their positions by using appropriate criteria to reach their judgments. Children and adults must learn to be willing to present their conclusions in discussion with others and be willing to change ideas based upon further conditions and criteria. In essence, the goal is promoting good judgments. This is an essential part of critical thinking as Lipman conceived of it.

Achievement motivation is a theory developed over time by a number of social psychologists, including Maslow (Cite), McClelland (McClelland, 1958) it involves exploring appropriate risk taking in children to enhance achievement.

Alscheuler (cite). In McClelland's findings, the characteristics of achievement motivation were these:

Those with a high need to achieve:

1. Have a strong desire to assume personal responsibility for performing a task or finding a solution to a problem.
2. Tend to set moderately difficult goals and take calculated risks.
3. Have a strong desire for performance feedback.

The College Board, in the 1970s, developed and marketed techniques to advance achievement motivation. One of these is the ring toss game, which illustrates some of the characteristics. In playing this game, participants decide how far away from the goal to toss the ring. Most participants realize that there is a zone where success is likely, another where it is practically assured, and a third where it is unlikely. This can be used to illustrate all three of the characteristics cited previously. Within the rules of the game, participants learn that the way to score points is to stand a moderate distance from the goal, although not too close, to ensure success. It is a clear example of the

idea that those with high achievement motivation learn to set moderately difficult goals and take calculated risks. Discussion of the experience develops an understanding of this, and examples of application are discussed, including seeking a job, applying to a college, and even identifying a marriage partner. Research on achievement motivation has been inconclusive, although the logic of the idea as applied to the kinds of circumstances described and used in combination with critical thinking makes logical sense to most.

Some research on achievement motivation suggests that there is a gender difference in the level of achievement motivation, with males more likely to exhibit it (citation). There is controversy about this conclusion as well, and we examine it more in our chapter that includes gender-responsive teaching.

Access to Computers and the Internet and the COVID Pandemic

No one would question the importance of access to computers for college students, and this was especially true during the COVID pandemic.

In a June 2020 study, Brookings found:

1. One in 20 of the poorest children in the United States has little or no access to technology.
2. Of respondents from households earning less than $25,000 per year, 12.2% reported children never have access to a computer.
3. For the same income bracket in the five poorest states, children have an even greater disadvantage. It is 6.3% in those states, while in the five richest states, it is 1.6%.
4. And, in a poor state like Mississippi, where the median income is half that of Washington DC, fewer tax dollars are available to even out inequities in digital infrastructure.

In addition to income, there is a correlation between the education level of the household and the availability of adequate food to a lack of access, clearly also related to income.

> Brookings concludes that whether measured by income, location, parental education or race, the relationship between privilege and access to the basic tools for distance learning is strong according to these data. Policymakers must take decisive steps to prevent the learning gap widening and damaging further the lives of children who are already at a significant disadvantage compared with their peers (Brookings, 2020)—unequally disconnected: Access to online learning in the US.
>
> *(Ibid., p. 4)*

Many educators have wondered what the impact of the COVID pandemic would be on students. Early on in the home-schooling era, then-Governor Andrew Cuomo of New York remarked that "the process seems to be working well. Think about how much money we could save if we continue the practice beyond the pandemic. School buildings and their maintenance is an expensive proposition". It may well have been an offhanded comment, and he did not act on the idea, nor did his successor, but discussion of the point appeared across the country. But it was not working well educationally, and something specific was learned about the effect of the pandemic on learning through the work of the National Center for Educational Statistics. The *New York Times* published an article on September 1, 2022, with the title *The Pandemic Erased Two Decades of Progress in Math and Reading*. The full article and the discussion can be accessed at https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/01/us/national-test-scores-math-reading-pandemic.html. In essence, it reported that among nine-year-olds, test scores fell by the largest margin in more than 30 years, about when the data started being gathered. Declines spanned all races and income levels but were markedly worse for the lowest-performing students. The director of the NCES reported that in math, Black students lost 13 points, with a loss of 5 points among white students. The director of the Annenberg Institute at Brown University said, "Student test scores, even starting in first second and third grade, are really quite predictive of their success later in school, and their educational trajectories overall". Evidence shows that it takes three weeks of instruction to gain a point on the test, so while white students can be brought back to their point in the rankings before the pandemic in 15 weeks, it would take 39 weeks, almost ten months, to do so with Black students. The biggest reason to be concerned is the achievement of lower-achieving students and the probability that being so far behind could lead to disengagement in school, making it less likely that they will graduate from high school or attend college" (Ibid.). There have been many critiques of standardized tests. It should be noted that the National Assessment of Educational Progress is considered the gold standard in testing because it is standardized across the nation (Ibid.).

While solutions seem rather basic, if difficult to carry out, as Dr. Andrew Ho, a professor at Harvard and member of the National Assessment Governing Board, has said, low-performing students need to spend more time learning, whether in the form of tutoring, extended school days, or summer school. Recognizing the difficulty, the federal government has budgeted $122 billion to help students recover—the largest single investment in American schools. At least 20% of that money must be spent on academic catch-up. Schools have difficulty hiring teachers and tutors, and some may need to spend more than 20% of their money to close big gaps (Ibid.). So

the pandemic and the absence of access to online learning at home clearly have played a role in diminishing the chances that affected children will attend college. It is important to keep track of this to see if successful corrective measures are taken.

Failure to Provide Tools to Assist Access, Such as Advanced Placement Courses

As you will see in her report on research on access to advanced placement courses and efforts to effect change, Dr. Kortne Edogun-Ticey provides important insights. Interestingly, too, Black teachers seem less likely to become advanced placement teachers. This seems to be an area where action is possible and might yield significant results.

The advanced placement curricula are fixed and developed by experts. In January 2023, an unusual event occurred. In response to political criticism, the College Board edited the advanced placement course on African American studies, leading to many critiques. The issue is unresolved. This *New York Times* article reports on the event and is recommended.

Report of Dr. Kortne Edogun-Ticey

Research Summary

The examination of known educational gaps across racial and socioeconomic lines, such as the enrollment gap in Advanced Placement (AP), is critical to investigating and resolving gaps in life outcomes. From high school graduation rates to college completion, data continue to indicate that Black, Latinx, and poor students fall behind middle- to high-income White and Asian students. Inequities in the AP student population, at the school and national level, are often a microcosm and starting place to examine broader inequities. Most immediately, course access disparities can indicate resource disparities and educator perception of student ability. Long-term inaccessibility to advanced coursework and substantive academic experiences generates and preserves class and racial inequalities (Iatarola et al., 2011; Spade et al., 1997; Theokas & Saaris, 2013).

This chapter, through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's EST, considers direct and indirect influences on Black AP student enrollment through factors of (a) societal beliefs, (b) policies and resource disparities, (c) schools, (d) teachers, (e) parental advocacy, and (f) student self-selection.

The chapter examines several contributing factors to consider in the underenrollment of Black students in AP. First, researchers have chronicled the indoctrination of Black and Brown people as inferior and the intentional

stagnation of intellectual progress. In particular, the research presents compelling evidence that centuries-long power structures contribute to the perpetuation of biases, deficit thinking, and delayed academic development of Black students in current society (Anderson, 1988; Brosnan, 2016; Brown, 2010). Second, limited course offerings (Corcoran et al., 2004; Darity et al., 2001), underqualified or poorly qualified teachers (Sass et al., 2012), and inequities in funding (Roza, 2009) are all characteristics of schools that serve a high majority of minority students. As an extension, schools serving high proportions of low-income or minority students have significant disparities in AP access and resources (Klopfenstein, 2004; Klugman, 2013; Zarate & Pachon, 2006). Some Black students' access to AP, however, may be diminished long before high school because of practices like tracking (Taliaferro & DeCuir-Gunby, 2008) and biased selection practices for gifted and talented programs in early grades (Campbell, 2012; Whiting & Ford, 2010). Finally, the chapter highlights microsystem factors of educator perception of student ability (Walker, 2003), fewer teacher referrals and recommendations (Whiting & Ford, 2009), disproportionate parent advocacy (Taliaferro & DeCuir-Gunby, 2008), and student resistance to enrollment (Jeffries & Silvernail, 2017).

While the contributing factors are confirmed through several compelling bodies of research, what is most nuanced is the identification of this problem of practice as a social justice issue. For some, the pervasiveness and relevance of inequities in AP goes unnoticed, even among social justice proponents and scholars well versed in educational inequities. For others, the conversation is stale because the disparities mimic decades-long discourse about the deliberate withholding of educational opportunities for Brown and Black people, without the sincere intention of facilitating sustainable corrective action. Moreover, in the current post-pandemic context where admissions criteria were adjusted in absence of the ability to rely upon traditional standardized assessment, some practitioners wonder if there is still utility in using AP programming in the college selection process. Finally, the nuance can be extended to a provocative point of view that renounces equitable AP access as social justice. They, instead, might assert that enrolling students into courses where Brown and Black students are potentially further minoritized and their points of view remain largely absent in the curriculum is synonymous with forcing already marginalized students into hostile learning environments, likening it to a new-age Ruby Bridges.

Above all, I redirect each of us to the question: Why do disparities persist? Any study on this topic is not exclusively about disparities in AP but rather the broader application to other opportunity gaps that persist throughout the educational sphere. I return to the supposition that inequitable course access is a signal for other inequities. Observable at the surface is a

metaphorical blaze of enrollment disparities across race and socioeconomic status. What smolders beneath are the perpetual kindling of flawed teacher perception of student ability, deliberate exclusion, and Black and Brown student apprehension about belonging in rigorous environments. The broader application is that inequitable AP access is often a Trojan horse or entry point for examining practices that create barriers for students who are often furthest from educational opportunities. Inaccessibility to advanced coursework and substantive academic experiences preserves class and racial inequalities and stymies progress in using education for social justice. Education cannot be the *great equalizer* if the institution of education itself is unequal (Lareau, 2001; Lee & Bowen, 2006).

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. Do you agree that education is a matter of social justice? In what sense is it?
2. President Johnson said, "Ability is not just a product of birth. Ability is stretched or stunted by the family you live with, and the neighborhood you live in—by the school you go to and the poverty and richness you live in". Do you think all these forces affect ability? If you do, can they be overcome?
3. Why is Kenneth Clark's "doll experiment" useful in explaining the impact of segregation? Do you think his conclusion from the experiment with children is accurate? Why or why not? If you think it is, do you have any suggestions for overcoming the self-esteem deficit he identifies? How do you react to the responses of the children in Arkansas and Massachusetts? Are you surprised?
4. Some connect neighborhood low socioeconomic status with juvenile delinquency, health, academic achievement, and access to affordable healthy food. Is it possible to have a low socioeconomic neighborhood that is a "good" neighborhood? Explain your judgment to others.
5. One researcher found that verbal abilities of Blacks in disadvantaged neighborhoods were reduced by the equivalent of a year or more schooling on average. What are the implications for our society if this is an accurate judgment?
6. The practice of redlining was common. In one sense it meant Blacks were only offered high-interest loans, leading to foreclosures that were 3.5 higher than whites. Were you aware of this? If you are not minority, it is surprising or not that you weren't aware of it? Does the practice still go on?
7. It was found that the median net worth among white families was ten times more than that of Black families and eight times more than that

for Hispanic families. What are the implications/effects of that for "wealth building"? What are the implications of building wealth for a family? Does it affect school-age children?

8. Major colleges in Virginia were found to be segregated with in one case 13% of undergraduates were Black or Hispanic at the University of Virginia in a state where the state's population of those races were 60%. Are you surprised?
9. Affirmative action has become controversial in recent years, with whites claiming discrimination in some cases. In fact, the courts have determined that race cannot be a factor in admission to college. What are your views on affirmative action?
10. How do you interpret Maxine Greene's idea that "we can't become what we cannot imagine"? How important is that idea to our work on social justice? Are there solutions? When you were growing up, did you have access to medical doctors, dentists, lawyers, or teachers with whom you could have had a conversation about what it took to be a member of that profession? If not, do you know anyone who did? How old were you when you first visited a college campus? Do you remember your reaction to the experience?
11. Vygotsky and Noppe-Brandon, as well as the authors of this book, believe that imagination should be a central part of the education of children. Do you agree? How and where would you pursue it?
12. Informal education and informal learning can be found in natural history, art, and history museums. Not all students have access to them because of location and cost. In New York, for example, most of the museums are in Manhattan, and children in the other boroughs seldom, if ever, travel to Manhattan. Of course, it is even more difficult for rural students. Can you thin of any ways to broaden access to informal education?
13. Do you think critical thinking is an important goal in schools? How does it manifest itself? How do you define it?
14. Achievement motivation is discussed in this chapter. The basic idea is learning how to take appropriate risks to be successful. Those with high achievement motivation want to develop personal responsibility for finding successful achievement of a task and want performance feedback. Have you experienced any formal efforts to enhance achievement motivation? How do you describe your own risk-taking practices? Do you take big risks, small risks, or risks with a chance of success but that require skill? Did you have any learning experiences about achievement motivation?
15. Research on the specific effects of teaching for achievement motivation has been inconclusive. It can be argued that it is a common-sense idea that should be pursued by teachers. What do you think?

16. Do you think there is a gender difference in engaging in high-achieving practices? How did you make the judgment about that?
17. Access to technology to support online learning varies, and of course wealth plays a role in access. Needless to say, children in poor families are less likely to have access than those in wealthier families. How do you react to the data provided on access? If access is required for education, as was the case during COVID, what is the responsibility of the school? Make suggestions to solve the problem.
18. The Brookings Institution made a strong statement on the issue of access to technology. The data are dramatic, and they conclude that "Policymakers must take decisive steps to prevent the learning gap widening and damaging further the lives of children who are already at a significant disadvantage compared to their peers". Do you see it as a serious problem? How would you act to solve it?
19. The effect of the COVID pandemic on home schooling is now known. Some assumed that home schooling with technology was working well, including then-Governor Andrew Cuomo of New York. What do you think of his proposal?
20. Have you had experience with advanced placement courses? These are designed to give advanced college placement to students who have successfully completed them, often with college credit. Dr. Kortne Edogun-Ticey has studied this area and done research on it. What do you think of her conclusions? Among them is the conclusion that fewer Black teachers opt to become advanced placement teachers. What do you think of her insights into the issue and possible solutions?

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5

RESPONSIVE TEACHING FOR ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE

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RESEARCH SECTION BY BLANCA MOON AND SHARON HARDY

There is no doubt that access to knowledge is a critical social justice issue, especially in educational and business settings. What are the differences that might extend access to knowledge? One certainly is understanding the perspective of the audience. In this chapter, we will examine three types of interaction. Note that we use the phrase “interaction” here, but most of the research on these areas focuses on teaching. By considering the culture and gender of our audience, we are more likely to be successful in working with them. Note that LGBT is best conceptualized in the context of perception of gender by the individual. So, we consider these:

1. Culturally responsive teaching
2. Gender-responsive teaching
3. LGBT-responsive teaching

Culturally responsive teaching is now a widely accepted concept. The basic premise is taking into account the culture of the student in planning and carrying out instruction. The idea has been introduced by a number of scholars, with Gloria Ladsen Billings writing in 1992, James Banks writing about multicultural education (2004), and Ana Maria Villegas and Tamara Lucas writing *Educating Culturally Responsive Teachers: A Coherent Approach* (SUNY, 2002). So, what is culturally responsive teaching and what are the implications for helping provide access to knowledge for all students? The basic premise is teaching in a way that validates and affirms the

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diverse heritage of students. It is seen as liberating and empowering (Lipman, 1994). What do we know about its effectiveness? There is an increasing number of research studies that, on balance, show that it is effective. Byrd (2016), for example, reports that elements of culturally relevant teaching were associated with enhanced learning in everyday classrooms (ERIC, EJ1198295). Other studies have found similar outcomes.

What are the elements of culturally responsive teaching that are expected in practice? There are several lists. One, from Kasnoff (2016) and Trumbell and Pacheco (2005), includes:

- Acknowledging the contributions of all students—Students from cultures who might be used to having their questions or input dismissed may build deeper understanding for them.
- Connecting the classroom to the real world—Efforts should be made to include elements of the students' daily lives in their lessons.
- Using consistent body language for all students—Studies show that teachers will use more favorable body language towards students that remind them of themselves. For students from other cultures, positive body language providing nonverbal communication can have an important effect on engagement.
- Providing opportunities for students to work in diverse groups—This practice can promote equality among the students and encourage them to participate and face opportunities to learn.
- Welcoming student feedback throughout the year—Even if teachers believe they are accomplishing their goals, asking students reinforces their importance and may provide useful feedback to teachers.

We know that even in schools with majority students of color, the teachers are likely to be white. Trying to address this is obviously a long-term goal, but it has been accomplished and should be on the agenda.

Villegas and Lucas also suggest active efforts to learn about the community of the population in question, be it students, co-workers, or co-members of an organization. It is obvious that one cannot engage in culturally responsive teaching without knowing enough about the culture, or cultures, of the population one is working with as reflected in their daily lives. They include questions to guide the efforts of teachers to learn what they can about the community and the lives of people in the community. In many instances students are pleased to talk about their lives.

- Who constitutes the daily family? Are there others the age of the person you are asking?
- Did the family immigrate to the United States? From where? How long ago?

- What languages are spoken at home? Are members of the family fluent in English?
- What is the educational level of members of the family?
- If the group is young, what aspirations do family members have for the person you are asking?
- How does the person spend leisure time?
- What are the favorite activities? Are they competitive, cooperative, or a mix?
- What are concerns about their lives?
- Do they enjoy music or drama? For example?
- Whom in the community do they look up to?

Certainly one learns a good deal when seeking a shared vison of essentially contested concepts, including:

- How do they define social justice? Are they experiencing social justice? Are there exceptions in their lives? Do they experience racism or xenophobia? How does it present itself? How do they deal with it?
- Learning about the cohort you work with should be a continuing process and involve all members.
- After you have some knowledge, you should think about how you use it and whether it changes your interactions.

Asking these questions of a group you have worked with is useful. How did your discussion change your perspective on the group and your interaction with them?

Many colleagues have had experiences with culturally responsive teaching and the effect, even though they may not have called it that. A music teacher at one of the campuses of the City University in New York City exposed her students to music and instruments from other countries. One set of instruments in particular were those used by Native Americans. She had an opportunity to visit a large reservation in the western United States, along with some students. She began discussing music and instruments and demonstrated many of them from a variety of cultures. They were instruments used in the United States, and she explained their origins. The audience was very quiet. There were no smiles, no laughter, no evidence of a response. Then she had an idea, and after a quick conversation with the students she had brought, she began using instruments common in that tribe. The tenor of the audience changed immediately. There were looks of interest, smiles, engagement with the music—clearly the result of culturally responsive teaching. She went on from there to examine how widely used instruments in the United States were related to some of the local instruments. A

subsequent discussion with students in the audience revealed how important that cultural connection had been.

We recognize that it is difficult to gain the knowledge one needs when working with a large group of mixed cultures. It is worth the effort, and when using it with an individual colleague, it is easier and builds a tighter working relationship.

Gender-Responsive Teaching

Responsive teaching that considers gender is also an important vehicle to enhance learning. Later in this chapter, you will see Dr. Blanca Moon and Dr. Sharon Hardy's research on gender-responsive teaching. It, like culturally responsive teaching, is difficult in a mixed class. Dr. Moon's research took place in an orthodox Jewish school where genders are separate. Her class included only females, so she was able to examine possibilities and consider implications for professional development.

Research on gender-responsive teaching is interesting because much of the published work is done by UNESCO and reports on programs in African countries. One explanation is that children in some of these countries were denied access to education and this is an effort to catch up, but that is not established in the literature.

Among the reported research on the need for gender-responsive teaching is the conclusion that in some, but not all, cases, boys outperform girls. This is not the case universally or in all subjects, but where it is present, these are some suggestions about what the barriers are to equal achievement:

- Social norms: where traditional power structures dictate that girls and women have less power than boys and men and children have less power than parents.
- Low capacity of schools to provide learning support services for girls and boys falling behind academically.
- Teachers who are not equipped with the awareness, knowledge, and skills required to teach in a gender-responsive manner and who may not even be aware of their own gender bias.
- Lack of understanding of the gender barriers to boys' retention in school, since most of the work on gender and education focuses on girls.
- Inadequate engagement with boys and men to promote positive masculinities in and out of school (*From access to empowerment: UNESCO strategy for gender equality in and education* 2019–2025).

It is an interesting list that seems to have wide applicability. One issue is that we must consider our own biases, whether gender or culture or race. And it is

also sometimes the case that those to whom the bias is applied do not realize its presence. Helping them understand the bias may help them deal with it.

Some examples of specific actions that might be taken to examine the setting for gender bias are these:

- Are the illustrations culturally appropriate and/or gender responsive?
- Do the illustrations portray both girls and boys positively/negatively?
- How do male and female characters appear in open, as well as closed, spaces?
- Include illustrations depicting female and male characters in comparable roles.
- What kinds of resources (such as games, playground, learning tools, etc.) are available, and which ones are used by boys and by girls?
- Are learners represented equally in all typical activities such as sports, recreational activities, caring, fetching water, cleaning, gardening, and so on?
- Are infrastructure and other facilities user friendly for all learners (boys, girls, learners with disabilities)?

Regarding gender-neutral language,

- Gender-neutral language eliminates assumptions about someone's gender identity based upon their appearance.
- It avoids reinforcing gender binaries, and it respects diverse identities.
- The use of gender-specific language tends to be biased towards masculine words, contributing to gender power imbalances.
- The words children hear affect their perceptions of the gender appropriateness of certain careers, interests, and activities.

Some suggestions to promote gender equity and challenge stereotypes:

- Never divide the class by gender or make statements just addressing one gender.
- Avoid using gender-specific words like chairman, fireman, and others when discussing careers or occupations. Instead use the corresponding gender-neutral term, such as chairperson (or chair), firefighter, and so on.
- Instead of using the term you guys, use gender-neutral terms like everyone or people to refer to all students in your class.
- Avoid assigning classroom or school tasks based on historical roles of gender. For example, asking boys only to move chairs or desks and girls to do cleaning.
- Include as many resources as possible within your classroom and curriculum that depict women and men in non-traditional ways.

- When you do see/hear examples of gender stereotypes, use them as an opportunity for "teachable moments" and ask students to discuss what they mean and why they use them.
- Avoid statements that generalize, like "girls tend to . . . " or "boys are more . . . ".
- Actively encourage students to engage in activities that might sit outside their gender's comfort zones (e.g. sports, dance, drama, etc.).
- Take note of how often you call on either males or females to answer different types of questions and make an effort to rectify any inequity.
- Praise, encourage, and respond to contributions of females and males equally.
- Call on females as often as males to answer both factual and complex questions.
- Create a classroom atmosphere where females are not interrupted by others more often than males.
- Include illustrations depicting female and male characters in comparable roles.

What kinds of classroom interactions are common?

- Collaborative learning
- Discussions and debates
- Interactive sessions
- Reading aloud and story-telling
- Conversation with learners
- Role plays

Overall Questions About Institutional Context That Can Affect Gender Equity

- What subjects are girls/boys likely to study at school?
- What kind of punishment should female/male students be given?
- How would the girls/boys react to the punishments?
- How do girls and boys respond to questions in class?
- Who should be the class representative in a mixed class?
- What are the existing school rules and regulations, policies, or guidelines developed to address sexual harassment?
- Are these rules enforced regularly when sexual harassment cases occur?
- What specific steps can teachers take to control themselves from sexually harassing their learners?
- What could be the existing social-cultural practices that perpetuate sexual harassment in the school environment?

- What policy supports gender-equitable budgeting?
- Are allocations in line with policies?
- What specific activities in the budget require consideration of gender concerns?
- Examine the school's budget; does it have allocations specific for women or men?
- What needs to change in the budget?
- Is staff distribution of responsibilities involving school security, child care, classroom setting, coordination of gender mainstreaming, gender clubs, gender training workshops, and so on equitable?
- Are there remuneration or monetary allowances associated with these responsibilities?
- Are men and women in the staff equally benefitting from the earnings associated with these responsibilities?

LGBQTIA-Responsive Teaching

We found a number of important newer sources to understand the community, some at universities and at least one at a federal agency. First, drawing on research at the University of Texas (campus), we find an explanation of LGBQTIA. It stands for lesbian, gay, bi, queer, transgender, intersex, and asexual. The Center for the Study of LGBQTIA at the University of California Riverside provides an even longer list (reference). Here are a few not on the usual list.

- Gender dysphoria—discomfort caused by the assigned sex.
- Gender identity—A person's sense of self as masculine, feminine, both, or neither regardless of external genitalia.
- Packing—Wearing a phallic device on the groin and under clothing for several purposes, including the absence of a biological penis or to enhance and confirm masculinity.
- Pansexual—A person who has the potential to be attracted to all or many gender identities and expressions.
- Questioning—Someone who is not sure of their gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

There are many others, some common, such as "straight". In addition to UC Riverside, others studying the issue who have contributed to the list include MIT, UC Berkeley, George Washington University, UC San Marcos, UC San Diego, and Bowling Green State University. There are a growing number of universities interested in studying the issues.

The Department of Justice agency that focuses on the issue is US DOJ Transgender Community Training, which is charged with preventing and

responding to hate crimes against LGBTQ communities through dialogue, consultation, and mediation. The agency conducts ongoing meetings and discussions between LGBQTIA communities, law enforcement officials, school leaders, students, parents, and other stakeholders. Each year, according to the Bureau, an annual average of 250,000 hate crimes occur, defined as crimes motivated by prejudice based on race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and more. While the DOJ statistics show that 35% were targeted because of ethnicity, some 22% were motivated by gender or gender identity (Washington, DOJ Bureau of Justice Statistics, June 2020). The journal *Learning for Justice* is available by signing up, Learningforjustice.org.

Interestingly, the DOJ group examines policies internationally. One such example is a study of policy in Kenya, one of the more progressive African countries with regard to policy toward LBGTQ persons. You can examine it by going to the website and downloading the particular study (www.justice.gov/eoir/page/file/1269491). (It is a public document.) From what you know, how would you consider Kenya's policies in reference to those in the United States? If you have doubts, see what you can find in the literature.

Another example worth exploring is the website of the American Medical Association (AMA), which is a public website explaining a variety of current policies on responsible treatment to avoid discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and more. You can find it at www.ama-assn.org. Search for policies on LGBQTIA patients. One piece is particularly good:

Even as a queer-identifying woman who has been out since 18, Dr. Duffy noted that she also was not immune to making false assumptions about patients she sees. As a federally qualified health center, the LGBT Center is often assigned patients enrolled in Medi-Cal, the California Medicaid program, even though they have no relation to the LGBTQ+ community and sometimes feel awkward receiving care there.

This included a divorced, "very masculine-presenting" patient with a complex medical history. Despite spending considerable time with this patient, Dr. Duffy acknowledged that she never asked the patient about gender or sexual identity out of fear of giving offense. Only later did Dr. Duffy learn that the patient had made an appointment to start hormone therapy.

"I still get emotional because of the courage it took that patient to come and present how they were presenting and to interact with me and having this hope that I would be different than at other places", Dr. Duffy said.

They have been forced into the clinic, and I don't want to make them uncomfortable by asking the questions I usually would ask", Dr. Duffy added. "So I didn't. I put them in a box and shame on me".

The experience has given Dr. Duffy empathy for other physicians who struggle to be more welcoming to LGBTQ+ patients.

"I understand the challenges that the general primary care physician or specialist feels when they don't know the percentage of the people in front of them who might be grappling with these issues", she said.

Related Coverage

Dr. Duffy recommended creating scripted questions and practicing them until they "roll off the tongue", and then asking them of every patient. She begins by telling the patient her name and the pronouns she uses, and then asking patients their preferred pronouns.

"It can be jarring for people", Dr. Duffy said.

She also prepares patients for further, intimate questions by saying she will ask some questions that are very personal in nature—but they are ones that everyone is asked, so they shouldn't be offended or think that assumptions are being made based on appearance.

Practice Your Pronouns

Creating an affirming and welcoming practice, however, starts well before patients enter the exam room. Waiting-room signs proclaiming, "This is an affirming place for people of all genders and sexualities" help set the tone, as do patient education materials that show this diversity.

"Unfortunately, a lot of places stop with the signs", Dr. Duffy said. "If a place has a sign, but the front desk person proceeds to misgender someone, that sign hasn't done anything". Intake forms can also go beyond asking whether patients are male or female and should be "inclusive of multitudes of genders and sexualities".

Regarding pronouns, Dr. Duffy said this requires practice and patience.

Because it's not how we were trained grammatically", she said. When that happens, Dr. Duffy recommended apologizing, moving on and promising to do better next time.

We see these ideas relevant to anyone dealing with LGBTQ individuals in their work.

Specific Laws and Policies in the United States

We find policies in New York state to be both advanced and informative, including a discussion of federal policies. The following should be examined: https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/youth/LGBTQ/policies.php.

Federal law regarding treatment of LGBQTIA individuals has changed dramatically. We note these:

Administration for Children and Families (ACF): Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Youth in Foster Care

Every child and youth who is unable to live with his or her parents is entitled to a safe, loving and affirming foster care placement, irrespective of the young person's sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression

Matthew Shepard & James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009

Provides funding and technical assistance to state, local, and tribal jurisdictions to help them to more effectively investigate and prosecute hate crimes.

United States v. Windsor

The US Supreme Court struck down the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in June 2013. Same-sex couples legally married in New York State and elsewhere deserve the same rights and benefits under federal law as all other married couples. The court found that the Defense of Marriage Act, by denying the right of marriage to same sex persons, violated the Fifth Amendment Due Process Clause.

It should be noted that as we write this, there is some pressure to remove the essence of *US v. Windsor* allowing same-sex marriage to occur and to once again ban same-sex marriage. This bears watching.

Several important misconceptions, or we might say "myths", regarding LGBQTIA individuals that might well affect our interactions with them are these:

B. LGBQTIA individuals can be described as making choices about their sexuality.

The research evidence strongly suggests that being on the LGBQTIA spectrum is not a choice. It is not an "orientation". It is something one is born with. There are choices to be made regarding openness and action on one's sexuality, but the underlying sexuality is real. Remember the condition identified as "gender dysphoria", which is uneasiness about one's gender. This can lead to problems that include anxiety, anti-social behavior, and general unhappiness. The

rejection of alternative gender sexuality by society makes this more common and serious, and in some ways that rejection is easing. Or so it appears.

2. The sexuality of individuals can be changed by "treatments".

   The research also suggests that there is no way to change sexuality, although some groups believe that it is possible to do so through "treatments". These are ideas that are rejected by those who have done research on sexuality. Some persist, and some consider them "cults".

Those who deal with individuals who are on the LGBQTIA spectrum have an obligation to be sensitive to their conditions and the trials they face and also to be sympathetic to the "truths" that are belied by the myths we have discussed.

We know that this continues to be a controversial area within a number of sectors, including religions. We respect religious beliefs but know that there are alternative perspectives to "truth" that we must be aware of as we deal with individuals.

Education and Recidivism

There has been recent work done on the effects of education on the recidivism of prisoners. We debated whether to discuss it in this chapter because we know that responsiveness affects the success of students and perhaps especially those who might encounter prison in their lives. The other alternative was to discuss it in our chapter on full-service schools. But we chose to discuss it earlier rather than later. A good number of educators have had experiences working with prisoners to enhance their education and ability to learn. Dr. Jacobowitz had a direct experience at a women's prison in New York state where a woman was imprisoned for allegedly being involved in drug trafficking and sales. Also, she gave birth to a daughter just before her imprisonment, obviously a sad situation. After several years of teaching, the student earned her BA from an accredited college and based on that was released from prison by a governor who had never commuted a sentence before. She has gone on to a successful career in an important position in a large corporation.

A great deal is now understood about the effects of learning, reading in particular, on helping released prisoners avoid being imprisoned again. An article appeared in the September 10, 2022, issue of *The Economist* titled "Reading Between the Bars" (no author was indicated). Here are some of the stunning conclusions:

Reading Between the Bars
The Economist, 9/10/22, p. 29

1. More than 70% of inmates in the United States have fourth-grade literacy skills.
2. Using tablets is helping. One major gang leader whispered to the warden, “I can read!”
3. In the United States, 75% of prisoners are re-arrested within five years of release.
4. The practice is costly, and every dollar spent on education saves $4–5 in taxpayer savings in the three years after release.
5. A RAND study shows that prisoners who get an associate degree from a community college have a recidivism rate of 14%. A BA reduces it to 5.6%.
6. Computers and computer tablets, barred for years because of security concerns, allow for inmates to learn at their own rate. Canvas is used to control access to vetted sites.
7. Using computers allows more flexibility and quicker access to materials through online sites and USB devices.
8. In Maine prisoners get a laptop and an email address they can use for Zoom meetings, and they must copy prison officials on exchanges using their email address.
9. There is opposition to this work. Some worry that access will facilitate new forms of crime.
10. Advocacy groups for victims fear that prisoners will harass them. Some politicians do not want to improve the quality of prison life.

For now, the benefits of remote tech-enhanced learning have perhaps been nowhere clearer than among the incarcerated.

We see this as an amazing set of data that is very motivating. A recidivism rate of 75% was reduced to 14% or less than 6% depending on the education. We know that the majority of prisoners are of color, so undertaking this kind of intervention not only allows for continued release from prison but also overcomes the inequities in education experienced by students of color in the United States.

Conclusion

All of the responsive approaches in this chapter are important for those who work with groups as educators or mentors, whether the groups consist of young people or adults. Learning and thinking about them is indeed important and, as we have said, is sometimes controversial but clearly enhances access to social justice for them.

Discussion of Current Research—Dr. Blanca Moon and Dr. Sharon Hardy

Questions for understanding and discussion include:

1. How would you define the idea of responsive teaching?
2. Do you use responsive interaction in your work?
3. Can you define succinctly the differences between cultural, gender, and LGBQTIA responsiveness? Which do you think is the most difficult to accomplish?
4. How would you prepare someone for responsive interaction?
5. How do Villegas and Lucas suggest learning about the community you are working with?
6. Were you surprised by the experience of the music professor we discussed? How common do you think that "tuning out" is when we are not attentive to culture?
7. Do you think the identification of gender discrimination is comprehensive enough? Is anything missing?
8. Have you ever felt repressed or discriminated by the way you were treated within gender, cultural, or LGBQTIA classifications? Describe your experience. What could the leader have done to remove the discrimination?
9. Is it difficult to engage in gender-responsive teaching with a mixed-gender group?
10. Is it more difficult in the case of gender differences than cultural differences? Why do you say so?
11. Are you surprised by the dramatic effect of learning to read on recidivism?
12. Why do you think the reading ability of prisoners is so low to begin with?
13. Why have we not taken up this effort more widely?

Blanca Moon and Sharon Hardy on Research

Gender-Responsive Pedagogy: A Social Justice Imperative

Public education is promoted as a social justice platform for equity through education. However, numerous research studies and papers demonstrate public education is failing in its goal to advance social equality. Gender gaps manifest in academic statistics such as high school enrollment and dropout rates, standardized test scores, and scholastic degree attainment, as well as in workforce statistics such as wage and occupation types.

In the workforce, the wage gap persists, with men earning more than women. Accordingly, the US Census Bureau (Wisniewski, 2022) reveals the national median earnings have a difference of approximately $10,000, or 10%, between men and women. A similar trend persists globally, where the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, or OECD, reports a 12% gender wage gap on average of median earnings (OECD, 2022). In a like manner, female students continue to be underrepresented in STEM courses (Alam, 2020) and professions (Martinez & Christnacht, 2021), which may originate with gender gaps in standardized assessment scores, namely the SAT. On the SAT, males continue to outperform females (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). The most recent SAT scores from 2022 show that of the more than 1.7 million test takers, 51% were female compared to 48% male; however, the total mean score for males was 1056 and 1043 for females (College Board, 2022). In math, the mean score for males was 530 versus 512 for females (College Board, 2022). For graduate school, the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) and the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) scores show similar gender disparities, with males scoring higher than females on the GRE Verbal, Quantitative, and Analytic tests, as well as the GMAT (Coley, 2001). Whereas females are the vulnerable minority as it pertains to wages, STEM degree attainment, STEM occupations, and standardized test scores, boys are the vulnerable minority in school disciplinary measures and graduation rates.

Boys are disproportionately disciplined in public K–12 schools. Boys account for 51% of public elementary and secondary school students (Bauman & Cranney, 2020) yet are suspended or expelled at more than twice the rate of girls (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). In 2013–2014, the most recent data available, in public elementary and secondary schools in the United States, 7.25% of boys compared to 3.20% of girls received out-of-school suspensions (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018), and 0.32% of males were expelled compared to 0.12% of females (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). This can be academically and socially detrimental, as suspension rates negatively impact short- and long-term learning outcomes, grade promotion, and on-time graduation rates and are associated with an increase in dropout rates (Leung-Gagné et al., 2022; National Institute of Justice, 2021). To illustrate, an analysis of state education data from 2018 shows that 88% of girls graduate high school on time (Reeves et al., 2021). On the other hand, 82% of boys graduate high school on time (Reeves et al., 2021). Internationally, the OECD (2023), reveals 33 of 35 countries report more women graduating from high school than men, with the lowest graduation rates for men at 55.8% and 65.1% for women. Comparatively, the OECD average secondary school

graduation rates are 79.3% and 85.9%, respectively, for men and women. Taken together, the resulting discipline, academic, and workforce gender gaps become a social justice imperative, as female and male students are not accessing education equitably.

To address this gender disparity in education, a solution that builds from a social justice framework ensures equal access, opportunity, participation, and treatment for all students. This definition combines several perspectives. First, Pedersen's (2000) definition of social justice emphasizes a multicultural perspective and is the practice of including everyone of all racial, ethnic, and social class groups. Public schools show evidence of embracing this multicultural perspective through the adoption of *culturally responsive teaching* practices and programs. Some examples that could be incorporated into a *symbolic curriculum* (Gay, 2002) include the implementation of free and reduced breakfast and lunch programs, in-school tutoring, and revised curricula that add supportive literature from different cultures and pictures featuring more diverse faces, as well as teaching and celebrating culture specific holidays, such as Hispanic Heritage month, Black History month, Rosh Hoshanah, and Kwanzaa. Next, building upon Pedersen's social justice definition, Slee (2001) adds the inclusion of people with physical or learning disabilities. Since the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975, and subsequently the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1990 (US Department of Education, 2023), schools have embedded seamless processes to ensure inclusion, offering push-in or pull-out support as well as small, contained classes to accommodate a spectrum of learning and physical support needs (US Department of Education, n.d.). Finally, Greenblatt and Michelli (2019) emphasize a sensitivity to prejudicial or repressive behaviors, as well as social justice involving a self-correcting component to combat these factors. Research shows teachers hold implicit biases towards males and females (Copur-Gencturk et al., 2022; Moss-Racusin, 2012) and lack gender sensitivity training (Dorji, 2020; Kahamba et al., 2017). Teachers, therefore, may not consider gender when planning their instructional lessons (Yuden et al., 2020), resulting in male and/or female students being unjustly repressed from excelling academically. To summarize, this three-pronged definition of social justice is all encompassing and provides a holistic approach to a strategic vision of what can be achieved with a gender-responsive pedagogy.

The persistent problem of gender gaps in academic outcomes and workforce statistics is a social justice issue given that a top-down instructional approach (e.g., lecture style) proscribes what and how students learn in the classroom instead of utilizing evidence-based, active instructional models that are student driven. Despite the research evidence that lectures are less effective teaching

methods (Freeman et al., 2014; Good et al., 2019; Theobald et al., 2020), a large observational study of undergraduate STEM classes within 25 US and Canadian institutions found that lecturing remains the predominant teaching style occurring in more than 50% of classrooms (Stains et al., 2018). From a social justice perspective, this reliance on a traditional didactic approach to instruction limits access for male and female students and restricts opportunities for personalized learning and academic success (Good et al., 2019; Theobald et al., 2020). The resulting discipline, academic, and workforce gender gaps become a social justice imperative that may be remedied through the early adoption and use of gender-responsive instructional methodologies.

To counter these negative outcomes, an active, problem-based learning method (e.g., interactive engagement methodologies) improves student motivation and engagement within the classroom and positively impacts future career aspirations. Research demonstrates that short-term outcomes of interactive engagement pedagogy include increasing student engagement in the classroom (Ahlfeldt et al., 2005), improving students' formal assessment results (Freeman et al., 2014; Patrick et al., 2016), and an increase in the number of students passing a course (Lehtovuori et al., 2013).

Gender-Responsive Methodology

Gender-responsive instructional methods intentionally prioritize engaging male and female students separately and equitably, typically by monitoring and quantifying academic outcomes by gender (European Institute for Gender Equality, n.d.; Lualhati, 2019; Rahmi & Safitri, 2020). A gender-responsive pedagogy utilizes instructional methodologies that improve learning experiences and results for both females and males (Chapin & Warne, 2020; Mlama et al., 2005; US Agency for International Development, 2008). A gender-responsive perspective balances what is taught with the teaching process (how it is taught) to ensure active participation by female and male students (US Agency for International Development, 2008). Consequently, gender-responsive methodologies may not necessarily close gender gaps academically, as both females and males equally benefit from the teaching and learning processes (Karim et al., 2018); however, enhanced engagement opportunities may impact short-term degree decisions and long-term career choices for females and males. This can be particularly impactful when seeking opportunities to increase representation of women in STEM fields and increasing retention rates for male students.

Interactive Engagement Instruction

One example of a gender-responsive instructional methodology is interactive engagement, or active engagement instructional methods. Interactive

engagement methodologies are characterized by peer-learning groups, collaborative in-class activities, and individual follow-up homework (Arthurs & Templeton, 2009). Extensive research in interactive engagement teaching methods has shown improvements in academic outcomes for both males and females. Historically, interactive engagement was trialed successfully in higher education physics classes. Hake (1998), considered the pioneer researcher of interactive engagement methods within higher education physics courses, showed the effectiveness of interactive engagement strategies after comparing pre- and post-test data for more than 6,000 students taught using interactive engagement strategies versus those taught in a traditional lecture-style classroom. Specifically, Hake's (1998) research suggested that interactive engagement strategies enhanced students' problem-solving skills. Furthermore, research that considers the intersection of interactive engagement strategies and gender demonstrated enhanced learning by both male and female students when compared to traditional lecture-style instruction (Ajai & Imoko, 2015; Cahill et al., 2014; Herman & Azad, 2020; Lorenzo et al., 2006; Olaoye & Adu, 2015; Zhang et al., 2017).

Teacher Perspective on Interactive Engagement. Teachers benefit from a highly engaged classroom, as it makes the learning process more efficient, with fewer disruptions to manage disciplinary issues, and consequently minimizes gaps in learning. Although most research in the use of interactive engagement methodologies historically occurs in higher education science (e.g., physics) classrooms, preliminary research with elementary school teachers shows similarly positive outcomes. Elementary school teachers trialing interactive engagement methods show interest in learning interactive engagement methods as well as in utilizing interactive engagement methods in the short term (Moon, 2021). In a mixed-methods study, a cohort of kindergarten through sixth-grade teachers participated in interactive engagement training sessions after which they were observed to both successfully incorporate and utilize the strategies in their classroom lessons. Teacher feedback and classroom observations indicate an increase in knowledge and use of interactive engagement methods with students in single-gender classes for first through sixth graders and mixed-gender classes for kindergarteners (Moon, 2021).

Similar research supports and extends these research observations, namely that teachers perceive the benefits of active learning methods as useful and effective in both improving long-term retention of information and exam scores (Patrick et al., 2016). As an example, Fagen et al. (2002) surveyed more than 350 instructors inclusive of high school, community college, and two- and four-year colleges to gauge their perception of peer instruction. Their survey found the majority, more than 80%, of instructors considered their use of peer instruction successful, with about a third of the instructors providing quantitative data showing students' mastery of course material.

Student Perspective on Interactive Engagement

From a student's perspective, gender-responsive classes are defined by the use of teaching strategies that improve outcomes for either males, females, or both genders. Accordingly, evidenced-based gender-responsive class settings are characterized as learner centered and active, with peer-to-peer and peer-to-teacher dialogue (Freeman et al., 2014; Hake, 1998). Learning strategies include peer instruction, inquiry-based learning, cooperative learning, and collaborative learning (Wood et al., 2016). This class environment encourages students to construct knowledge from investigation as well as self- and group-discoveries through the use of problem- and project-based activities (Ahlfeldt et al., 2005). For example, students arrive to class having completed their assignment and use class time to discuss content, clarify misconceptions, and build higher-order thinking skills (Gilboy et al., 2015). Class time may also be used to collaboratively complete problem sets or projects within small groups (Keiner & Gilman, 2015).

The academic experiences of females differ from their male peers (Espinosa et al., 2019; Good et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2017), yet both benefit from interactive engagement methods (Ajai & Imoko, 2015; Backer et al., 2018; Cahill et al., 2014; Good et al., 2019; Herman & Azad, 2020; Keiner & Gilman, 2015; Lorenzo et al., 2006; Olaoye & Adu, 2015; Schuller et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2017). For example, a study conducted by Good et al. (2019), where they surveyed eight large university physics classes, showed higher scores for females in their attitude and approach to problem solving. However, both males and females taught using active engagement strategies scored higher than those taught in lecture-style classes (Good et al., 2019). Similarly, Espinosa et al. (2019) suggest an improvement in female students' self-efficacy when taught in classes using active teaching strategies.

Keiner and Gilman (2015) demonstrate how the use of interactive engagement strategies increased student satisfaction in a physical oceanography course. Student satisfaction as a measure of the effectiveness of interactive engagement methods is important, as satisfaction levels support class attendance, motivation, student retention, and academic achievement (Van Rooij et al., 2018). Accordingly, higher levels of satisfaction relate to higher levels of academic success. Schuller et al. (2015) illustrate these academic benefits to students in their study of interactive engagement strategies used within surgical residency core curriculum courses. Results showed more correct responses, increased participation, and increased retention (Schuller et al., 2015). Similarly, in their survey of more than 250 undergraduate students and 70 faculty members, Patrick et al. (2016) found the benefits of active teaching and learning to include an increase in motivation to learn and a more enjoyable learning experience. Furthermore, faculty and students self-reported an interest in seeing active teaching techniques used

more in the classroom (Patrick et al., 2016). The benefits of an interactive engagement pedagogy culminate in a positive, efficient, and effective classroom environment.

Future Considerations

> "It's almost unethical to be lecturing if you have this data", says Eric Mazur, a physicist at Harvard University who has campaigned against stale lecturing techniques for 27 years and was not involved in the work. "It's good to see such a cohesive picture emerge from their meta-analysis—an abundance of proof that lecturing is outmoded, outdated, and inefficient.
> (Bajak, 2014, para. 4)

Active teaching methods, such as interactive engagement, problem-based learning, and peer instruction, are more effective methods for learning and instruction (Ahlfeldt et al., 2005; Cahill et al., 2014; Espinosa et al., 2019; Freeman et al., 2014; Good et al., 2019; Keiner & Gilman, 2015; Lorenzo et al., 2006; Michel et al., 2009; Olaoye & Adu, 2015; Schuller et al., 2015; Theobald et al., 2020; Walker et al., 2008; Zhang et al., 2017). Active teaching methods are also effective gender-responsive instructional methods (Backer et al., 2018; Cahill et al., 2014; Espinosa et al., 2019; Good et al., 2019; Herman & Azad, 2020; Keiner & Gilman, 2015; Lorenzo et al., 2006; Olaoye & Adu, 2015; Schuller et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2017), in that they benefit male and/or female students' academic outcomes. Instructors now have a variety of methods and models to choose from to make courses interactive, collaborative, and engaging. Instead of defaulting to ineffective lecture-style teaching methods, that is, the sage-on-the-stage, the role of teachers should reside squarely as the guide-on-the side. The educational landscape should efficiently progress from whether to use active versus lecture instructions and instead focus on decisions related to *which* active teaching method will best help students meet course learning objectives.

Given what the research shows regarding the benefits gained from active instructional methodologies, all instructional methods should be tested against a gender-responsive metric. When adopting a new way of teaching, a social justice imperative dictates that it be used while measuring the impact on both male and female students' learning outcomes. To forego the extra step of monitoring the results of teaching methods by gender should be *unethical*. However, current research continues to uncover stagnant teaching styles that may include some aspects of active learning but continue to fall short of the goal of fully embracing superior teaching methods (Akiha et al., 2018; Goffe & Kauper, 2014; Yik et al.,

2022). Akiha et al. (2018) demonstrate a decrease in the progressive use of active instructional methods in their large study of classroom observation data for more than 450 middle school, high school, and university classes. Specifically, as students progress from middle school to college, active teaching techniques are used less and passive or lecture techniques are used more (Akiha et al., 2018). This inevitably leads to a consideration of barriers to implementing active teaching methodologies. Does a large theater-style seating arrangement common to many introductory college classes inhibit active teaching strategies? Does the placement of the whiteboard, and subsequent row seating, in K–12 classrooms impact active learning? Yik et al. (2022) offer some insight to address these questions through their large, multi-institution survey-based study that showed a positive association between class size and lecture time. The larger classes showed an increase in use of lecture-based teaching, and smaller classes used less lecture time. In a survey of 340 economics instructors, Goffe and Kauper (2014) reveal that although the majority admit that students do not learn best from lecture, two thirds of respondents provide reasons for deference to lecture-style instruction (e.g., cost and perceived learning outcomes).

Ultimately, research outcomes do not appear sufficient enough to orchestrate educational reform on a grand scale. Teachers, particularly in higher education, remain slow to fully adopt active instructional methods. A multi-pronged approach that considers teacher, student, and school or institutional factors is likely necessary to simultaneously dispel the myths of lectures and the pervasive perception of students as passive receivers of knowledge. Professional development that teaches instructors how to use active teaching strategies and the benefits of this methodology shows promise in reducing teachers' reliance on lecture (Yik et al., 2022). Similarly, professional learning communities among teachers may also contribute to educational reform, although they rely on individual schools and teacher cohorts to collaborate and self-promote evidenced-based best practices (Aubusson et al., 2007). Taken together, improving teacher knowledge of active instructional strategies may be effective as a long-term, gradual approach to systemic change (Auerbach, 2018). Student-led initiatives for changes in how courses are taught may also be worthwhile. Like teachers, students can benefit from self-advocating for the use of active learning methods. Future research should consider identifying student-led opportunities that embrace gender-responsive, active learning methods. The education landscape as a whole would benefit from increased transparency through outcomes-based monitoring and dissemination of findings relative to active, gender-responsive methodologies as a way to proactively address persistent gender disparities and successfully engage both female and male students.

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6

SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH IN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Stacey Campo and Diana Jahnsen

> School practices systematically create institutional advantages for some groups and disadvantages for others by differentially responding to and rewarding parents' and students' social and cultural resources. These practices that create advantages and disadvantages are not explicit, nor are they generally intended to produce discrepant outcomes. They are the product of the hourly hour and moment by moment decisions and actions of typically well-meaning professionals who are trying to handle the situation immediately in front of them as best they can.
>
> —Lewis & Diamond, 2015

Perhaps no more than in the last several years has society been attuned to health. The world has undergone a health crisis of epic proportions with the coronavirus pandemic, and as is common with catastrophic events, society tries to navigate the fallout and make sense of what has occurred. These recent events have brought health equity to the forefront for educators, policymakers, and health practitioners. While the global pandemic response was, in many ways, remarkable, with the expedited creation and global distribution of vaccines, it also highlighted the significant disparities between the populations who enjoy status with our society and those who do not. In a letter responding to a study looking at the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, authors noted the exclusion of examining populations living in remote areas or on reservations, remarking that this omission neglected to take into account the interplay of structural factors that contribute to health care disparities (Shaligram et al., 2021). Throughout the most recent pandemic and historically, the world has seen vulnerable populations struggle to

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access health care and experience dire consequences as a result of structural barriers, such as language, fear around not being taken seriously, and racism.

Situated under the umbrella of health care lies mental health care, which has experienced similar challenges regarding parity. The Canadian Psychiatrists Association recently released a position statement expressing concerns regarding

> members of the dominant group receiving daily benefits while others—people of colour, racialized minorities, people with diverse gender or sexual orientations, languages or religions—are disqualified, silenced and attacked or else rendered invisible in the name of an illusory equality.
>
> *(Kirmayer et al., 2021, p. 590)*

Due to the impressive advances made within the field of neuroscience over the last several decades, there has been a marked shift in emphasizing the biological factors contributing to mental health wellness (Arbuckle et al., 2017; Shim & Vinson, 2021). However, this shift has resulted in the diminishing of other factors that play a critical role in the development of an individual's mental health. It is these factors that contribute to social stratification and lead to differential consequences for mental health challenges in diverse populations (Wilson et al., 2021). It is clear that to move the needle on mental health equity, we must move beyond the examination of the neuroscience of mental health disorders to the social determinants that can contribute to mental health challenges, along with failures within the overall system (Shim & Vinson, 2021). To do this work, we must move beyond a neuroscience frame towards systems of care models that consider culture, context, and structural barriers.

Ambiguity exists within the health care literature when it comes to defining the meaning of social justice (Josewski, 2017). While social determinants such as employment, working conditions, and access to health services are important considerations when conceptualizing mental health equity, they do not tell the whole story. Models and frameworks that take into account the intersecting dynamics that exist between aspects of social difference and identity within the broader context of structural oppression can help professionals begin to view mental health through a social justice lens (Josewski, 2017; Morrow, 2017). In this chapter, we will examine several frameworks that can be used as a blueprint for systems designed to promote mental health outcomes considering issues related to social justice, Specifically, we will introduce two systems that have embedded these frameworks into community–school partnerships to provide wraparound services for students that promote positive mental health outcomes, build a sense of collective efficacy, and not only honor students' and families' cultural backgrounds

but incorporate important cultural tenets and traditions as solutions. We will also delve into the translation of these frameworks into everyday practice. One of the ways that this translation has occurred has been through community–school partnerships.

Frameworks

A comprehensive framework that encapsulates all components necessary to create an equitable model of mental health support is the systems of care framework, as presented by Stroul et al. (2010). These authors define as a system of care as:

> A spectrum of effective, community-based services and supports for children and youth with or at risk for mental health or other challenges and their families, that is organized into a coordinated network, builds meaningful partnerships with families and youth, and addresses their cultural and linguistic needs, in order to help them to function better at home, in school, in the community and throughout life.
>
> *(Stroul et al., 2010, p. 6)*

Stroul, Blau, and Friedman updated this definition from the original presented by Stroul and Blau in 1986 to include a greater emphasis on the core values of cultural and linguistic competence (Stroul et al., 2010). With the understanding that students and their families are bound by their culture, their culture must serve as the basis for interpreting their behavior, understanding their needs, and setting goals, with systems of care acting as the mechanism for achieving these goals (Briggs, Briggs, & Leary, 2005; Cartledge et al., 2002). This model is not meant to be prescriptive in nature; rather, it provides more inherent flexibility to implement the concepts and philosophy in a way that fits a particular community (Stroul et al., 2010). Adaptability is a core tenet of the system of care philosophy. Communities must be able to adapt their system of care based on their contexts within their community as well as responsiveness to the varied requirements of diverse populations (Cook & Kilmer, 2010; Hodges et al., 2010; Stroul et al., 2010). This notion of adaptability extends within the network itself and is illustrated by the action and reaction of multiple interconnected components of these systems over time (Hodges et al., 2010). This idea can be linked to the concept of open systems as outlined in general systems theory, whereby progressive differentiation is a hallmark of growth (Amerikaner, 1981). Stroul et al. (2010) highlight the importance of the conceptual and philosophical guidance for systems of care and their component services, as it provides the specificity required to guide measurement outcomes as well as implementation at multiple levels.

The idea of a "coordinated network", as mentioned in the previous definition, has been translated into practice through wraparound care models. Wraparound care is a term that has been used in research and practice to a describe a team approach to connecting students and their families with needed supports and interventions. Wraparound care has been shown to improve outcomes for students experiencing significant mental health and/ or behavioral challenges (Cosgrove et al., 2020; Grimes et al., 2017; Snyder et al., 2017) and has been used worldwide as a method of delivering comprehensive mental health services to children and their families. Wraparound care addresses not only the child but the systems present in the student's environment (West-Olatunji et al., 2011). It is a comprehensive, complex model that works with students within their contexts, partnering with families for greater connectivity between home and school (West-Olatunji et al., 2011). Examining wraparound care through a system of care framework allows for a more thorough examination of risk and protective factors and may provide deeper insight as to how to incorporate more systemic influences such as community support systems (West-Olatunji et al., 2001). The system of care concept and philosophy are designed to provide a foundation for both systems-level as well as practice-level implementation (Bruns & Walker, 2010).

In addition to a more thorough examination of risk and protective factors within a family's support network, applying the system of care philosophy to wraparound care allows for a deeper examination of both proximal and distal influences to a family system. A greater emphasis has been placed on the examination of the formal service delivery system when examining systems of care (Cook & Kilmer, 2010). Although informal sources of support, including peer support networks, faith communities, and extended family, are also considered important in current models, in actual practice they appear to be viewed as resources that the formal system can access. Instead, they should be viewed as proximal influences of the system and important elements of the system in their own right (Cook & Kilmer, 2010; Epstein et al., 2005). In addition, more distal influences such as workplace environment of service providers (Glisson et al., 2008) and school climate (Cook & Kilmer, 2010; Eber & Nelson, 1997) are rarely discussed or considered as relevant elements within the system. These omissions can have a potentially negative effect on the ability of a family to make effective connections within their school or community (Cook & Kilmer, 2010). However, the system of care philosophy would suggest that these play an important part in wraparound success and ultimately the individual's personal growth.

While the system of care framework can be used to conceptualize supports through a social justice lens, other frameworks have also been used as a blueprint for implementation of wraparound care taking into account

culturally sustainable practice. One commonly used in wraparound care research has been the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR) The CFIR is a framework that seeks to characterize important implementation attributes. It is divided into 39 constructs that are housed within five domains: Intervention Characteristics, Inner Setting, Outer Setting, Individual Characteristics, and Process of Implementation. These categorizations allow practitioners to pinpoint and modify actionable components of the implementation to improve uptake of the intervention (Damschroder et al., 2009). Two domains encapsulate the setting in which the intervention occurs: the outer setting, the broader environment in which the intervention occurs (e.g., community, system), and the inner setting, the more specific context in which the intervention is implemented (e.g., unit, classroom, team) (CIFR guide, constructs website). Within these settings, there are a number of constructs that lend themselves to thoughtful reflection regarding cultural sustainable practices. Within the outer setting domain, the Local Attitudes (sociocultural values and beliefs), Local Conditions (economic, environmental conditions), and Partnerships and Connections (community and outside agency connections) constructs encourage teams intending to implement interventions to consider the cultural contexts in which the intervention will be implemented. By doing so, more specific reflections can occur. Within the inner setting domain, whereby the constructs of Relational Connections (quality formal and informal relationships), Communications (information sharing practices), Human Equality-Centeredness (shared beliefs, values, and norms promoting the value and worth of all humans), Recipient and Deliverer Centeredness (caring, supporting, and addressing the needs of recipients and deliverers of the intervention), and Learning Centeredness (shared beliefs and values regarding the use of data to inform practice) to ensure that teams supporting mental health challenges are implementing interventions that will be effective and sustainable within the populations they support. The quote at the beginning of this chapter highlights the challenges of these teams who may have the best intentions but may miss these important components of intervention implementation. The use of the CFIR may help teams mitigate these potential omissions by drawing attention to these components and encouraging teams to improve and focus their efforts in the design and implementation of supports (Bruns et al., 2019; Olson et al., 2021).

These frameworks can support teams in considering social justice issues in the construction and implementation of mental health supports. "A social justice lens can reframe the frame" (Morrow & Malcoe, p. 327). A critical point of consideration when implementing systems of care models is, as the quote at the beginning of the chapter illustrates, how to coordinate all components within a system of care to provide systematic, coordinated

supports that minimize professionals' propensities to uplift certain groups' experiences and disregard others. System of care models offer a preventative approach that allows interested parties to create a coordinated, sustainable care plan for individuals needing mental health support while giving the affected individual sense of agency and voice in their care plan.

Current Research in Wraparound Care

Most wraparound research has reported a positive effect of wraparound care on youths' internalizing and externalizing disorders across a variety of settings (Bruns et al., 1995; Klayman & Crawford, 2007; Mancoske & Edgerson, 2015; Painter, 2012; Smith et al., 2019). Studies have shown that youth involved in wraparound care for at least 18 months experienced a significant decrease in maladaptive behaviors (Klayman & Crawford, 2007; Painter, 2012). In addition to a decrease in maladaptive behaviors, other studies have found other positive outcomes resulting from wraparound care, such as a significant decrease in the property crimes and juvenile justice involvement (Mancoske & Edgerson, 2015; Pullman et al., 2006; Schurer Coldiron et al., 2019), a reduction in school suspensions and school absenteeism (Carney & Buttell, 2003), and the possibility of receiving support through community services rather than having to attend residential treatment facilities (Bruns et al., 1995; Cosgrove et al., 2020; Rauso et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2019). A recent meta-analysis examining 17 studies found that students participating in wraparound demonstrated better improvement on several outcomes (e.g., need for residential treatment, social-emotional functioning) versus clinical treatment (Olson et al., 2021). Wraparound care has the potential to increase accessibility to services and result in sustainable positive outcomes for the most vulnerable students who are affected by fragmented supports and services (Lyon et al., 2018). To ensure that organizations work together effectively, collaborators need to demonstrate core values, shared vision, and a collective commitment to work towards a common goal (Jacobsen et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2013; Lyon et al., 2018; Senge et al., 2012).

Often, the assumption is made that students fail school because of their own deficiencies or because their families do not value education (Hammond, 2014; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Racial and cultural differences between professionals and adolescent patients can lead to a reduction in information giving on the part of the professional and less patient participation in the process (Leverett et al., 2020). Individuals are shaped by their racial, cultural, and ethnic heritage, and difference does not imply a deficit or deficiency (Milner, 2007; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). This gap between school professionals' beliefs and research findings suggests the need for a

process that allows the possibility to recognize the different ways things are done in different cultures. It is also important to recognize the legacy of trauma, poverty, disenfranchisement, and discrimination compounded by cultural differences compared to Western culture (West et al., 2012). Addressing historical trauma and internalized oppression requires the creation and implementation of interventions designed to compensate for these events, such as education, training, and opportunities for dialogue (West et al., 2012). In designing any interventions, it is important to recognize that wraparound treatment is grounded in Western notions of psychiatric illness, wellness, and recovery (Goodwill & Giannone, 2017; Ibrahim, 2017). For Indigenous youth, services need to include Elders and other natural supports within their community along with traditional healing methods (Clark et al., 2017). For African families, Western psychiatry played an active role in colonization and thus has traumatic implications for these families (Ibrahim, 2017).

Over the last two decades, there has been an increase in the use of wraparound care in schools when addressing significant mental health challenges in children and adolescents. This makes sense, as they reduce barriers to treatment that trouble traditional outpatient settings such as transportation or having to rely on parents to initiate supports (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2018; Bruns et al., 2016). In Canada, one province that has begun the work of implementing the tenets of wraparound care within its education system has been British Columbia.

The Ministry of Education and Child Care of British Columbia, in supporting students designated as requiring significant mental health supports and/or behavioral interventions, requires that students be supported by an agency or community support outside of the school. This may include Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH), Ministry of Child and Families (MCFD), ongoing support by a medical professional, or support through a community agency such as Sources BC or Divercity. Students requiring wraparound care often present with complex challenges that are outside the scope of school professionals, and connections with the family and community are essential if the hope is for a successful intervention. To offer wraparound care in its true sense, schools must partner with outside agencies and community supports to provide the individualized plan of care that coordinates the various agencies' interactions with the students and family (Walker & Matarese, 2011).

Within British Columbia, students who have been designated as requiring intensive mental health and/or behavioral interventions must meet certain criteria to ensure continued funding within this category. These criteria include the implementation of direct interventions to support social skills development or the acquisition of behavioral and learning strategies with an

individualized education plan in place outlining these supports, as well as documentation that the needs of the student go beyond what can be provided within the typical special education and learning support framework within the school. In addition, the school must provide:

> evidence of a co-ordinated, cross-agency community planning such as integrated case management or 'wrap-around' planning" and "evidence of a planned inter-agency or service provider review process, in a stated time frame, recognizing that many behavioural problems will be ameliorated if the interventions are appropriate.
>
> *(BC Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 60)*

Although school districts within British Columbia have many resources in place to support students with a diverse range of needs, the coordination of these services poses a significant challenge. Often, services and supports appear to be delivered in a reactive manner, when the circumstances become dire, with little consideration for the sustainability or the true effectiveness of the supports provided. The reactive responses that trigger services and supports also lead to less communication and collaboration with involved participants, resulting in fragmented supports. This is particularly the case with wraparound care, in which students and families accessing these supports are in complex situations, and many are in outright crisis. The majority of school professionals' time is spent dealing with intensive problems that have escalated to the point of becoming unmanageable. Nevertheless, the schools often continue to seek quick fixes and provide reactive solutions to these big problems.

In 2020, one of the authors conducted a mixed methods study that sought to examine school professionals' understanding of wraparound care and integrated case management when working with adolescents requiring intensive behavioral and/or mental health supports (Jahnsen, 2021). This study investigated barriers to effective wraparound care with a group of school professionals in ten secondary schools. The 32 participants in the study engaged in a series of professional learning sessions designed using the principles of situated collaborative inquiry and were presented with evidence-informed strategies that have been shown to address barriers to effective wraparound practice. Participants completed surveys and engaged in school team interviews examining their fidelity to the wraparound process, their beliefs regarding the role of culturally responsive practices within wraparound care, and their experience with situated collaborative inquiry. The first two research questions addressed the use of situated collaborative inquiry as a viable method for delivering content related to improving wraparound practice. Results indicated that situated collaborative inquiry

holds promise as a means of improving the wraparound process. The third question examined the extent to which the professional learning sessions changed wraparound fidelity in secondary schools.

Four salient themes emerged from a wraparound fidelity measure coupled with qualitative data: (1) the establishment of a framework for wraparound meetings themselves, in addition to a framework for the wraparound process, that includes preplanning and reflection; (2) the facilitation of parent engagement and support; (3) the importance of communication and collaboration among all contributors and viewing communication and collaboration as an active process in itself; and (4) the placement of the student at the center of the wraparound process. Quantitatively, effect sizes were within the moderate range for the total wraparound fidelity score; qualitatively, an inter-respondent participant by theme matrix investigating the contributions of participants to each theme (Onwuegbuzie, 2003) revealed the importance of a wraparound meeting framework to be the most endorsed theme. The fourth question addressed the extent to which the professional learning sessions changed school professionals' knowledge regarding culturally responsive practice. Results did not indicate a significant difference in culturally responsive practice pre- and post-intervention, suggesting that participants viewed themselves as knowing and employing culturally responsive practices within their wraparound meetings. The final question addressed the frequency of use of the strategies presented at the sessions. Prior to the intervention, most strategies were unfamiliar to the participants. The strategy reported to be most used through the course of the inquiry was communities of practice, while the strategies least used by participants were the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework and screening assessment measures.

Despite being a small study, this examination of wraparound practice within secondary schools has led to some valuable insight regarding future practice. Secondary schools need to continue to examine the wraparound process, both the principles of wraparound care as well as the ecology of the wraparound meeting itself, with gaps in effective practice identified and time allocated to work through solutions. At the end of the inquiry, a prototype for the wraparound meeting was designed, outlining specific details of preplanning and reflection before and beyond the meeting. An early warning system was included as well as a method of ensuring continued reflection and monitoring of the wraparound process. By offering case managers of wraparound care the opportunity to thoughtfully examine their practices and integrate new perspectives, ideas, and strategies into their context, wraparound practice within schools can be improved, benefiting students and their families.

In a comprehensive meta-analysis examining wraparound research over the last several decades, researchers found four noticeable gaps within the

research base: (1) the role and impact of peer support partners, (2) the breadth and quality of individual services, (3) the quality and evidence base for services received, and (4) the type of implementation supports that should be deployed (Coldiron et al., 2014). This study attempts to address the fourth gap by examining the current state of wraparound care in secondary schools and identifying possible areas of improvement within the implementation of wraparound practice. Integrated services, while having the potential to improve services and support for adolescents and their families, are challenging to implement and require focused, deliberate examination to be successful (Lyon et al., 2018). This study examined barriers to wraparound practice through situated collaborative inquiry, offering participants the opportunity to thoughtfully examine their own practices and integrate new ideas, strategies, and methods into their contexts. This follows the four pillars of continued improvement: grounding improvement in local problems, empowering practitioners to take an active role in research improvement, engaging in iteration, and striving to make changes across schools and communities rather than individual classrooms, which were all realized within this inquiry (Yurkofsky et al., 2020). By doing so, the wraparound process has been fortified and its chances for producing sustainable change significantly increased.

Implementation strategies that address more than one level (outer setting, inner setting, individual, and intervention strategies) are more successful (Lyon & Bruns, 2019). This study addressed intervention strategies, the individuals involved in wraparound (attitudes, beliefs, self-efficacy) and the inner setting, or the immediate organizational context in which implementation occurs, levels rarely examined within wraparound research (Lyon & Bruns, 2019; Bruns, 2020). The wraparound care providers' connections with their colleagues were explored, as were the connections between school and family and school and community, reminiscent of the EST theoretical framework in that microsystems and mesosystems have been explored within this study. This research also overlaps well with key factors shown to have a positive impact on school improvement, two of which are the establishment of strong parent and community ties to school and a student-centered learning climate (Bryk, 2010). This suggests that addressing these barriers to wraparound care also may have positive implications for the entire school population.

Wraparound research can benefit greatly from more qualitative and mixed methods studies in this area to provide a richer picture of partner dynamics and implementation ecology occurring within wraparound practice (Bruns, 2020). Individuals dealing with mental health challenges often have complex needs; however, most evidence-based interventions designed to address these needs focus on individually administered interventions

designed to improve mental health outcomes (Lorenc et al., 2020). They do not address community-level interventions, something that is known to play an important part in improving these outcomes (Lorenc et al., 2020). This study has offered insight into these complexities of wraparound care through integrated case management in secondary schools. Through this investigation, greater knowledge can be gained of the networked factors that constitute an effective system of care (Stroul et al., 2010). According to systems theory, an open system is one that increases in complexity and adaptability (Amerikaner, 1981). This study contributes to this goal by adding informational pieces that illuminate some of these networked relationships and, in turn, leads to connecting these important relationships within systems to community initiatives (Hodges et al., 2010). If systems of care are expected to improve the mechanisms of service delivery, they should design and provide access to a network of seamlessly connected services and supports (Hernandez & Hodges, 2003).

The findings of this study can serve as an effective springboard to further research. As this study was limited to school professionals, examining implementation ecology through the lens of other partners would provide richer insight into wraparound practice improvement. A meta-analysis examining the rates of youth mental health service use found that across all settings, there is a need for better interconnections across sections but particularly in schools and outpatient settings (Duong et al., 2020). Culturally responsive practice, although highlighted at each learning session, was not examined in such a way to gain detailed insight into the culturally sustainable practices of educators; further research should examine the role this plays within effective wraparound implementation. In addition to self-reports, researcher observations of school professionals may triangulate findings to provide a more robust, comprehensive picture of culturally sustainable practices (Cruz et al., 2020; Siwatu, 2011; Stepp & Brown, 2021). While some preliminary indicators have shown that wraparound care may be especially effective for students of diverse backgrounds, more research is needed in this area (Olson et al., 2021). The wraparound process is a complex one, and it is difficult to ascertain effective changes to practice within such a short window of time. A longitudinal study examining changes within practice and sustainability of these changes would lend much insight into the mechanisms by which effective wraparound practice can be achieved.

Implications for Practice

The results of this study have highlighted the importance of providing a framework for wraparound meetings. While a framework for the wraparound process has been well established in other research (Bruns et al.,

2014; Sather & Bruns, 2016), a detailed framework of a wrapround meeting has not been created. This is likely due to the different contexts in which wraparound is used; nevertheless, a thorough framework outlining considerations for a successful meeting before, during, and after may contribute to improved outcomes for the wraparound process itself. Broader implications include a possibility for other partners (families, students, community supports, and members) to be a part of this collaborative work. Vulnerable populations struggle to seek out wraparound supports in fragmented settings; this contributes to economic and social inequities, resulting in higher rates of morbidity and mortality in marginalized populations (Daniels, 2022). Core features of a comprehensive school mental health system should include thorough and continuous needs assessments, resource mapping to inform decisions, and teaming up among collaborators to address the problems of practice that arise across roles and systems (Hoover & Bostic, 2021). The meeting framework should also include early warning indicators of potential trouble within practice for wraparound providers to reflect upon as they move through their meetings.

This inquiry provided a much-needed opportunity for school professionals involved in wraparound and integrated case management to discuss best practices, collaborate on new ideas, and inform each other on best practices related to wraparound care. Wraparound care falls under the category of an "ambiguous and wicked" problem in that it can be fraught with competing goals and value systems (Yurkofsky et al., 2020). To make effective, sustainable changes within wraparound care, professionals involved need to be given the opportunity to connect regularly to discuss these goals and value systems. Ongoing interagency collaboration continues to be rare (Yu et al., 2020). Collaboration among professionals relies on a set of procedures to guide planning and implementation as professionals work together to create a cohesive team care plan and an opportunity to exchange expertise, knowledge, and methods among professionals (van Donge et al., 2018). Unfortunately, this time is rarely given due to a multitude of barriers such as differing schedules and varying priorities from year to year; however, streamlining goals and cultivating common value systems need repeated opportunities for connection. Professionals within themselves must act as reflexive practitioners aware of their own position and role within an organization to serve as bridges between families and schools (Sanders et al., 2019).

A study found a five-step process to be useful in supporting the implementation of evidence-informed practices with system of care models: (1) identify needed information, (2) seek the empirical information that addresses those needs, (3) critically appraise that information, (4) combine the best evidence with professional expertise and the client's values to create a treatment plan, and (5) evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of this process

(Graaf et al., 2021). This research study can equip school wraparound teams to deal with the final step. Future work across wraparound settings should include continued examination of the wraparound process itself, both the tenets of wraparound care as well as the ecology of the wraparound meeting itself, with gaps in effective practice identified and time allocated to work through solutions. This iterative process increases the chances of sustainable improvement in wraparound practices.

From a broader perspective, action research can offer communities a framework for responding collectively to an issue that is systemic rather than individual (Sabris & Newmann, 2022). When addressing issues related to social justice and mental health, engaging in action research that is grounded in local contexts can offer communities a greater opportunity to create solutions that will have a positive and sustainable impact on the populations they support.

Wraparound Supports in Community Schools

This study identifies best practices to provide inclusive, culturally responsive wraparound services. Further considering health equity in the current educational landscape, we suggest that community schools may be an ideal broader school and community strategy to scaffold this student support approach. In response to increased focus and investment in the strategy in the United States (Tugend, 2022; Stoffer & Vender Veen, 2022) as part of "covid recovery", the Community School Forward (CSF) initiative was developed to create a cohesive national framework to align and sustain community schools across the United States (brookings citation). In the resources developed by CSF, they utilize the following definition;

> The community schools strategy transforms a school into a place where educators, local community members, families, and students work together to strengthen conditions for student learning and healthy development. As partners, they organize in- and out-of-school resources, supports, and opportunities so that young people thrive.
>
> *(Community Schools Forward, 2023)*

In support of a coordinated network and systems of care, a community school coordinator is the point person who coordinates each component of the framework; their role is to develop and manage partnerships and ensure community voices are heard and needs are met. Figure 6.1 shows the complex ecosystem of a community school.

While previous research (Maier et al., 2017) defined the strategy with four pillars, this new iteration has multiple interconnected layers, and the

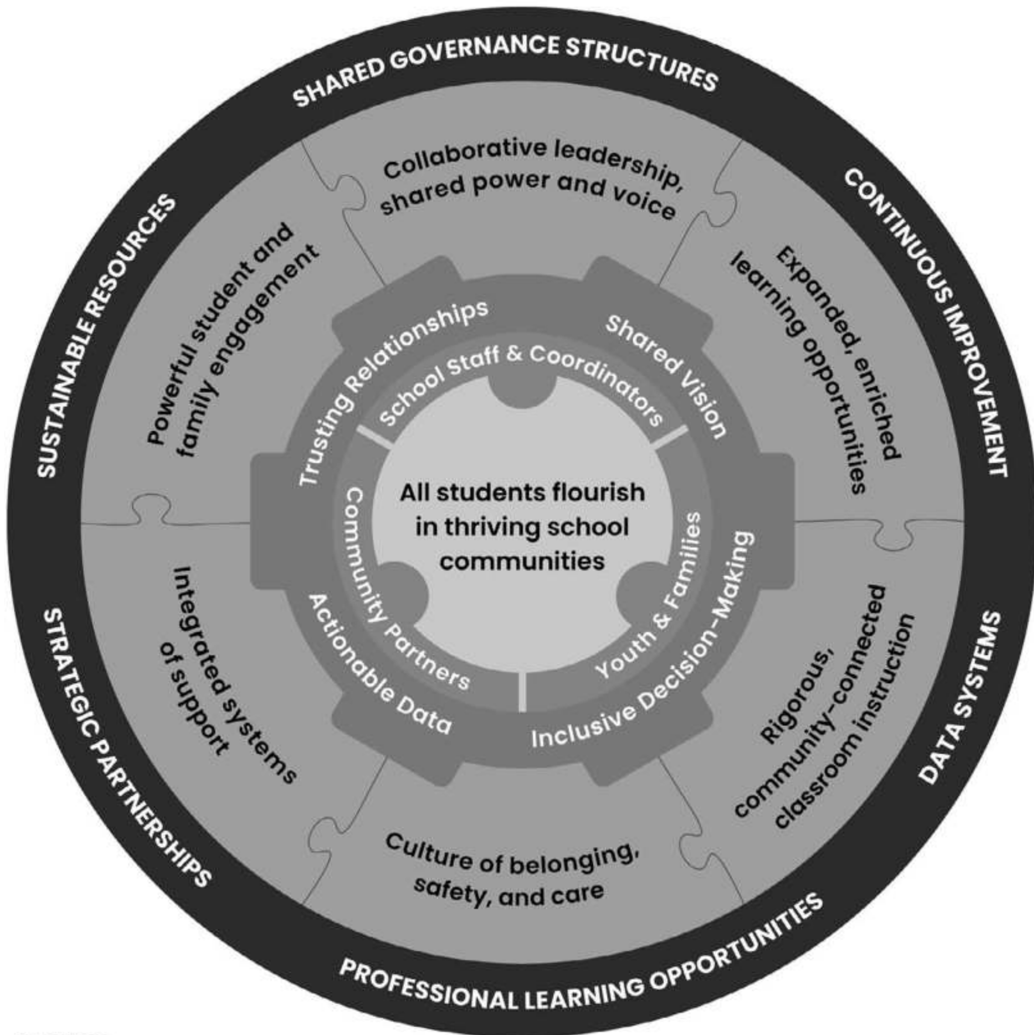

FIGURE 6.1 Community Schools Forward: Essentials for community school transformation

key practices build upon the pillars. They are expanded and enriched learning opportunities; collaborative leadership; shared power and voice; powerful family and student engagement; integrated systems of support; culture of belonging; safety and care; and rigorous, community-connected classroom

instruction. The CSF framework mirrors many of the strategies identified in this research, which are supported by a networked community with similar enabling conditions.

Integrated systems of support are a community school practice, which is considered synonymous with wraparound care. CSF describes integrated systems of support as:

> To promote healthy learning and development, a dedicated team composed primarily of school staff and community partners intentionally and systematically coordinates services, supports, and opportunities that foster individual and collective well-being, using an assets-based approach to nurture the strengths and address the needs of students and families.

Thus while wraparound is key to the strategy, when nested within the larger framework, additional supports for students and community are enabled. While there are many points of intersection, we highlight a few examples for symbiotic opportunities, such as increased family engagement, additional partners, access to local wisdom, and prioritizing equity. Often schools provide wraparound supports to students who are mandated to have an individualized education plan; however, increasingly, community schools are tiering all students and focusing on other indicators, such as attendance, family, or health concerns (Haywoode, 2022; Haywoode, 2017).

Family Engagement and Leadership

A community school strategy finds multiple ways to utilize a systems approach, developing a school that supports the whole child and not only engages families to provide support and opportunities but capitalizes on their wisdom as networked leaders. With the extended day and out of school opportunities, more family engagement can occur. Additionally, the extra time will allow for teachers and the school community to learn and share their cultural practices.

Additional Partnerships for Interventions

Community school leaders and constituents shape the development of the community school by conducting comprehensive assets and needs assessments. As part of the process, community partners and cultural resources are identified. This process expands the opportunity for interventions and support identified through the wraparound process. Many community schools identify a primary health partner (Ellis, 2019).

Hyper-Local Strategy

The CFIR framework speaks to the importance of understanding local attitudes, local conditions, and partnerships and connections. A community school is a hub for the community that provides connections among the key players who support student learning. This hub can help the community school coordinator whose primary role is to support teachers in gaining a deeper understanding of the community's attitudes and living conditions.

Centering Equity

The Coalition for Community Schools and Institute for Educational Leadership's community school standards' (2019) first guiding principle for community schools is to pursue equity. Collaborative leadership and shared power, particularly when guided by the enabling conditions of trusting relationships, shared vision, inclusive decision making and actionable data, will develop community schools built for justice (Community Schools Forward, 2023).

Increasingly, the effectiveness of community schools has been identified (Johnston et al., 2020; Maier et al., 2017); however, there has been less examination of the unique qualities of wraparound services in community schools, although we believe this is fertile ground for implementation, and research on the effectiveness of this aligned approach would be persuasive and assistive in supporting practice.

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7

INFORMAL LEARNING AND THE ROLE OF PARENTS

Nicholas M. Michelli, Stacey Campo, Tina J. Jacobowitz, and Diana Jahnsen

RESEARCH SECTION BY NI ZHANG

This chapter focuses on the social justice issues related to informal learning and the important role of parents in such learning. It also addresses how informal learning relates to social justice, that is, the absence of discrimination and repression. Informal learning is learning that occurs outside of formal settings, school being the primary formal setting. Over the course of one's life, most learning occurs in informal contexts. In general, people think of schools when they think about learning, but the important idea here is that even as a child, both before formal schooling begins and during formal schooling, informal learning occurs almost daily. While it is quite obvious what a formal learning situation is, other settings for learning are not always referred to as "informal learning settings". In a sense, informal learning is a contested concept. What constitutes "informal"? 'What constitutes "learning"? This seems to be a less complicated example of a contested concept in that the term informal has a common meaning. Learning, however, is viewed differently in this concept. It goes beyond the belief that formal learning is the primary legitimate source of learning. In her dissertation (Zhang, 2022), Dr. Ni Zhang found that Chinese parents did not see informal learning as important. For example, they did not see real and important learning occurring in settings and situations that were not deemed "formal", such as museums and playgrounds. In her study, she examined the absence of parental support in informal learning, and we will see the essence of her research at the end of this chapter.

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Another statement on informal learning worth examining is that of Leadbetter:

> The point of education should not be to inculcate a body of knowledge, but to develop capabilities: the basic ones of literacy and numeracy as well as the capability to act responsibly towards others, to take initiative and to work creatively and collaboratively. The most important capability, and the one which traditional education is worst at creating, is the ability and yearning to carry on learning. Too much schooling kills off a desire to learn. . . . Schools and universities should become more like hubs of learning, within the community, capable of extending into the community . . . More learning needs to be done at home, in offices and kitchens, in the contexts where knowledge is deployed to solve problems and add value to people's lives.
>
> *(Leadbeater, 2000 pp. 111–112)*

In a sense, this conception of learning reflects Dewey's conception of democracy. Dewey defined democracy as more than government. He claimed that in a democracy, people treat each other with trust and respect and are open to other points of view. We believe that learning these interpersonal skills and dispositions occurs primarily in informal settings (Dewey, 1933).

Another effort to define informal learning goes back to 1974 in a piece by Cooms and Ahmed:

> the lifelong process by which every individual acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment—at home, at work, at play: from the example and attitude of families and friends; from travel, reading newspapers and books; or by listening to the radio or viewing films or television. Generally informal education is unorganized, unsystematic, and even unintentional at times, yet accounts for the great bulk of any person's total lifetime learning—including that of a highly "schooled" person.
>
> *(1974, p. 8)*

Now, to complicate matters a bit, there are "more formal" informal learning situations. These are learning situations that go beyond school learning. In most societies, these include libraries and science museums. However, there are other areas where learning occurs that we don't usually consider as relevant. These informal learning situations include playgrounds, supermarkets, theaters, motion pictures, radio, and even television. We know that some forms of learning occur in these settings, and usually they provide entertainment as well. So how can this be an issue of social justice?

One dimension of social justice related to informal learning is that everyone does not have equal access to these "informal" learning opportunities. Some individuals have less or no access to informal learning, to museums or settings of all kinds where learning is likely to occur. In rural settings, it is less likely that individuals have easy access to informal learning settings. In fact, this can be the case even in urban settings in industrialized societies. For example, in New York City, where two of the authors have lived, most informal learning centers are in Manhattan, and many charge admission. Many children and adults cannot afford the price of admission or even the cost of getting to these settings. Many poor children live in what are called the outer boroughs (Bronx, Queens, Staten Island, and Brooklyn), and getting to Manhattan may be beyond their means. While many societies may have museums intended for children, this is not universally the case. In fact, the author of the research section of this chapter, Dr. Ni Zhang, was the founder of China's first museum for children and worked to expand museums across the country. Even in a society as rich as China, there were no or limited opportunities for such informal learning settings. As you can imagine, there are many poor societies where children are deprived of the opportunity to have access to museums and other places where informal learning can occur. This is a form of repression and therefore an issue of social justice.

Another dimension of social justice that relates to informal learning is the issue of power. Power is connected to meaning making, social relations, and the ways in which segments of society gain control of the formation of policy, allowing certain ways of learning to be valued and privileged over others (Burke & Jackson, 2007). It is suggested that informality in the context of education is currently undervalued in terms of its impact and role in education. It is not a policy priority and is seen as less important than formal learning. According to Golding et al. (2009), the very nature of informal learning, particularly its unstructured quality, diminishes its value as a meaningful educational pursuit in a system that values highly structured, formal approaches to learning. They conclude that policymakers need to reexamine and revise the value of informal learning to increase opportunities for all learners.

One more element of informal learning, perhaps the most common example found, is play. Children can and do learn during play. Not everything they learn is positive, but learning does occur. Dr. Zhang (2022) found that parents in China did not value informal learning. Their conception of learning was in a classroom with a teacher and a child. As you will see in the summary of her research, parents did not support play or informal learning. She suggests ways to change the attitudes of parents towards informal learning.

A relatively new, important, and research-based parent education program has been developed by the School of Nursing at Johns Hopkins University. They have produced learning materials, including videos. Their focus is on children in underprivileged homes in Chicago. There are five very important qualities that set this program apart from others.

1. The Chicago Parent Program was developed in collaboration with parents of young children to address those issues of greatest concern to parents.
2. The Chicago Parent Program is guided by a strong theory and supported by rigorous research.
3. The Chicago Parent Program uses over 160 video scenes of parents raising children in the real world, managing challenging situations at home and in public. We use these scenes to help guide parent group discussions and problem-solve different ways to handle common parenting problems.
4. There is no one correct way to raise children. The Chicago Parent Program is structured in a way that is respectful to parents' ideas and values.
5. Since 2002, the Chicago Parent Program has received outstanding evaluations from parents, educators, health care providers, and agency leaders. It is being used in agencies across the country including the Harlem Children's Zone in New York City, Baltimore City Public Schools, and Head Start.

(Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing, 2023)

This program may serve as a model for changing parents' negative views about informal learning while also taking into account their cultural beliefs.

One of the most important researchers on informal learning is Dr. James Banks. In addition to his work on informal learning, Banks is known for his work on multicultural learning and culturally responsive teaching (2004). He emphasizes the importance of cultural and linguistic capital in extending learning and makes this connection explicit:

> The wide gap in the academic achievement between most ethnic, racial, and language minority students and White mainstream students is a major problem within US schools and society writ large. Our hope is that the principles we identify and describe in this will enable teachers, other practicing educators, and future researchers to increase the academic achievement of all students by identifying, drawing upon, and creatively using the cultural and linguistic capital students bring to school from their homes and communities.
>
> *(p. 7)*

Banks's work on both informal and responsive learning is also apparent in the following list:

1. Learning is situated in broad socio-economic and historical contexts and is mediated by local cultural practices and perspectives.
2. Learning takes place not only in school but also in the multiple contexts and valued practices of everyday lives across the life span.
3. All learners need multiple sources of support from a variety of institutions to promote their personal and intellectual development.
4. Learning is facilitated when learners are encouraged to use their home and community language resources as a basis for expanding their linguistic repertoires.
5. Informal education is set against non-formal education—organized educational activity outside formal systems; and formal education—the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded 'education system'. The distinction made is largely administrative. Formal education is linked with schools and training institutions; non-formal with community groups and other organizations; and informal covers what is left, e.g. with friends, family and work colleagues.

(Banks, 2004)

Banks goes on to raise a concern related to societies' overemphasis on formal learning to the detriment of informal learning

> There is an important point for policy in this distinction between informal and formal education. If schools and colleges have only a limited place in the learning that occurs in a society, questions must be asked about the focus on such institutions. Would funding be better deployed elsewhere? Should researchers explore learning in everyday life in more depth? However, once this point is noted, there is little conceptual mileage in this particular division of learning.
>
> *(2004, p. 298)*

NI ZHANG RESEARCH SECTION ON INFORMAL LEARNING

> Informal learning should no longer be regarded as an inferior form of learning whose main purpose is to act as the precursor of formal learning; it needs to be seen as fundamental, necessary, and valuable in its own right, at times directly relevant to employment and at other times not relevant at all.
>
> *(Coffield, 2000, p. 8)*

As an informal learning environment dedicated to children and families, children's museums worldwide have been places to nurture life-long learners through play (Mayfield, 2005). Supporting family learning is also the mission of many children's museums (Cohen, 1989). Similar to other progressive education institutions, children's museums in the United States devote themselves to experiential learning and strive to achieve social justice goals by nurturing independent thinkers (Hein, 2013). Even though children's museums have been growing in numbers in the United States and worldwide for over a hundred years (Mayfield, 2005), only a few children's museums exist in China. As an advocate for children's museums in China for more than a decade, I have devoted myself to making children's museums accessible to more children, educating parents about the learning value of play, and training parents to support their children's learning through play. The learning value of play seems obvious to early childhood educators in Western countries (Fisher et al., 2008). However, the engrained cultural beliefs about learning in China (Li, 2001) may contradict early childhood educators' beliefs in learning through play. My dissertation research (Zhang, 2022) allowed me to explore the cultural difference between the United States and China, reflect on the meaning of social justice in different cultural contexts, and design the intervention with sensitivity to social-cultural influence. At the same time, the dissertation research guided the reflection on my previous practices, which contains valuable lessons for educators who fight for social justice across different social and cultural contexts. I hope sharing my research and reflections will contribute to the progress toward a democratic society without repression and discrimination in China and across the world.

Children spend most of their time learning in informal settings other than schools (Banks et al., 2007), and learning in those settings is mostly unconscious and tacit (Alexander et al., 2009). At the same time, early learning is essential to children's cognitive development and school readiness (Ramey & Ramey, 2004) and also benefits social welfare (Ball, 1994). The United Nations has integrated quality early learning into the second target of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDGs, 2015). According to the *21st Century Learning for Early Childhood Guide* (Scott, 2019), it is essential to incorporate higher-order and complex skillsets, including critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, technology literacy, and social-emotional development, in children's early learning through play. It is critical for parents to support their children's learning in their daily lives to build up the foundation for their children's life-long learning (Scott, 2019). One of the social justice issues concerning children's informal learning is children's accessibility to those informal settings and the support they have during learning through play. As discussed in the previous section, children

with limited access to informal learning institutions or who are not well supported for their informal learning may be repressed or discriminated against.

As we try to address the previously discussed social justice issue by teaching parents how to support their children's learning in informal settings, we may raise another social justice issue concerning jeopardizing parents' cultural competence. Children's museums, as representatives of progressive education philosophy (Hein, 2013) and "borrowed" (Bray, 2014, p. 1) from the United States, may not fit into the socio-cultural context in China. In sociocultural theory, learning is situated in socio-economic and historical contexts and influenced by local cultural perspectives and practices (Bandura, 1986; Banks et al., 2007; Lim & Renshaw, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978). Chinese parents' interaction with their children during play may be influenced by the socio-cultural context. Children's museum professionals around the world have been trying to engage parents in children's learning through play (Cohen, 1989). When I promoted children's museum education in China, I expected Chinese parents to support their children's learning in informal settings and tried to teach Chinese parents how to interact with their children during play. However, I might have enforced the expected parent–child interaction without understanding the parents' cultural beliefs in play and learning, as other museum educators would do (Carpenter, 2018). Without understanding Chinese parents' cultural beliefs, I may jeopardize their cultural competence.

The dissertation research process helped me understand the problem from multiple perspectives. I would like to share the discovery process and how I designed the intervention to address the social justice issues associated with unsupported informal learning.

Unsupported Informal Learning

Even though early childhood professionals recognize the learning value of play through research, parents may not understand the importance of play (Fisher et al., 2008). Additionally, parents' interaction with their children during play may be "hands-off and supervisory, instructional, or disciplinary in nature" (Downey et al., 2010, p. 26). Unlike children's broad understanding of play and learning (Glenn et al., 2012), adults with fixed agendas may interrupt children's learning during play (McInnes et al., 2011; Robson, 2016). In many cases, adults do not recognize or encourage the learning potential of children's play (Downey et al., 2010; Fasoli, 2014; Shine & Acosta, 2000).

Chinese parents, in particular, may put less educational value on play than Euro-American parents and focus on the academic advancement of

their children (Parmar et al., 2004). Influenced by traditional Chinese values, many Chinese parents may conceptualize learning as a process of developing efforts instead of developing minds (Li, 2001, 2003, 2005), and they may place basic skill drilling ahead of creative play in their daily child-rearing practices (Gardner, 1989). In recent years, the rapid social transformation in China (Guthrie, 2012) has changed Chinese parents' child-rearing beliefs (Xu et al., 2005; Zhang et al., 2017) and reconstructed their play and learning beliefs (Lin et al., 2018). However, the influence of grandparents' involvement in caregiving, parents' work schedules, environmental constraints, or the pressure for academic success may prevent Chinese parents from channelling their changing beliefs into a change in interaction with their children (Lin et al., 2018). The social stratification and unequal distribution of wealth and education associated with accelerated economic development may discourage some families with low socioeconomic status from having a supportive relationship with their children and investing in their children's development (Zhang, 2012). The invaluable learning opportunities offered in museums may be missing or unsupported for Chinese children, especially those from disadvantaged groups. In the dissertation research, I used a comprehensive theoretical framework to investigate the factors influencing Chinese parent–child interaction during play.

Unrecognized Socio-Cultural Impact

Guided by the networked ecological system theory (Neal & Neal, 2013), I reviewed existing literature to investigate the potential factors influencing Chinese parent–child interaction during play. The rapid social transformation in the chronosystem urged Chinese parents to adapt their child-rearing beliefs and practices (Song et al., 2014), which became diversified and individualized rather than adhering only to the traditional Chinese parenting approaches (Xu et al., 2005). Many Chinese parents oscillated between conflicting values and pursued contradictory goals in their child-rearing (Fong, 2007). The broad forces in the macrosystem, including creativity advocacy (Pang & Plucker, 2012) and progressive education reform in China (Qi & Melhuish, 2017; Zhu & Zhang, 2008), indirectly influenced Chinese parents' child-rearing practices. In the exosystem, Chinese parents' perceived risks in the community (Naftali, 2010) and their work-life experiences (Chen et al., 2010) may influence how they interact with their children every day. In addition, preschool teachers' expectations of the children (Lau et al., 2011) and grandparents' involvement in child-rearing (Xu & Xia, 2014) in the mesosystem required Chinese parents to balance the different child-rearing goals and values (Binah-Pollak, 2014; Xie & Li, 2018). Factors in the microsystem, including Chinese parents' child-rearing beliefs

(Kim et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2018; Muhtadie et al., 2013; Sung, 2010), play and learning beliefs (Jiang & Han, 2016; Lin & Li, 2018b), and family socioeconomic status (Zhang, 2012), played critical roles in influencing parent–child interaction. Finally, children may adapt their play behaviors according to adults' expectations during the interaction (McInnes et al., 2013), especially for Chinese children (Li, 2016); exploring Chinese parents' influence on children's learning during play with the sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1978) is critical.

The comprehensive literature review helped develop a conceptual framework for my needs assessment study. I used grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1994) to explore how Chinese parents' child-rearing, play, and learning beliefs may influence their interaction with children during play. At the same time, the study investigated the influence of family socioeconomic status, socio-cultural context, and grandparents' involvement on Chinese parents' child-rearing beliefs. The study took place in a children's museum in Beijing, and I recruited 20 participants with a theoretical sampling strategy (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Through observation, one-on-one interviews, and a survey, I collected in-depth qualitative data and generated an explanatory theory (Birks & Mills, 2015) about Chinese parents' interaction with their children during play and the factors influencing the interaction, as shown in the visual representation of the findings (Figure 7.1).

From my observation during the study, I found that the participants may take on different roles when interacting with children during play, including onlookers, supervisors, teachers, and co-players. Some participants were onlookers who were not part of their children's play. They may observe their children during the play or engage in their own activities. Many participants were supervisors during their children's play by providing guidance and help. Some participants prefer to teach their children by explaining, suggesting, or asking questions. Even though these parents had their learning agendas, their children seemed not to be cooperating as they expected. They either did not respond after hearing their parents' explanation about a concept or new knowledge, or they ran away to some other area, leaving their parents behind. The discordance in parent–child interaction during play was visible when parents acted as teachers. A few participants in my study interacted with their children as coplayers. For example, during the entirety of my observation, a dad built and launched paper rockets with his daughter, allowing his daughter to observe and help in the process. I was also amazed by the rich imaginary and creative conversation between a mom and her daughter during their pretend play.

One key finding in my study was that there was a disconnect between Chinese parents' play beliefs and their interaction with children during play. To my surprise, most participants I interviewed could describe what their

children learned during play. Many parents recognized that learning during play was more about process and experience, which may have a long-lasting impact on children, instead of immediate knowledge acquisition. This finding contradicted Fisher and colleagues' (2008) finding that parents may not understand the importance of play as experts do. My previous assumption that Chinese parents did not support children's learning during play because they did not understand the learning value of play was challenged by this finding as well. However, the participants' play beliefs may not influence how they interact with children during play. For example, the mom who amazed me by her co-play with her daughter during the pretend play did not recognize the learning value of play. During the interview, she said that her child likes to play pretend games, and she played with her child whenever she had time, but she could not tell what her child learned through play. Another example was a mom who shared a lot about the learning values of play. However, she was an onlooker during my entire observation. During the interview, she shared that she always played with her son, usually by taking her son to a place, explaining to him how to play, and letting him explore by himself. She preferred to be an observer during her son's play and was ready to answer any questions her son may have. These two contradictory cases opened the door for my further investigation. As parents' play beliefs may not relate to how they interact with their children during play, there should be some other influencing factors.

During the interview, I asked two questions: "What do you usually do when your kids are playing? Why?" and "What kind of play benefits your child's learning and life? In what way?" The parents' response to the questions helped me discover their cultural learning beliefs, which may influence their interaction with children during play. Some parents believe that children learn better by themselves, and adults' involvement may interrupt them. Other parents believed that children learn more by playing with other children instead of adults, who may not share the same language. In a new play space, parents may ease their children into the space. When their children felt safe or found other children to play with, they would switch to the role of supervisors providing necessary help or teachers answering any questions. If their children requested, they would play with them as co-players. When they felt tired or bored, they might want to be onlookers. Many participants did not think they could support children's learning by being co-players and preferred to take on a role as an onlooker, supervisor, or teacher during children's play. The participants' expectations for their children to learn from playing independently or with other children differed from children's museum professionals' expectations for parent–child interaction (Carpenter, 2018). At the same time, as many Chinese parents focused primarily on children's academic learning (Jankowiak et al., 2011;

Liu et al., 2018; Naftali, 2010) and believed in their role in improving children's academic achievement (Chen & Luster, 2002), supporting children's learning during play, may not be relevant to their cultural child-rearing beliefs. As playing in the children's museums seemed not to be associated with children's academic learning, Chinese parents may not find it necessary to play with their children.

My investigation into the participants' child-rearing beliefs provided a deeper understanding of the roots of their learning beliefs and the influence on their behaviors. One of the most important findings was the parents' primary expectations for their children, including (1) self-regulation and social adaptability, (2) independence and social skills, (3) perseverance and resilience, and (4) academic achievement and learning ability which are culturally specific. Some core 21st-century skills, such as creativity and critical thinking (Scott, 2019), were not on the parents' list of expectations for their children. Most parents thought self-regulation and social adaptability were the most important skills for their children. Many parents mentioned the importance of their children adapting to school rules and regulations and were afraid that their children could not sit still in the classroom. The culturally specific requirement in China for children to sit still and listen to teachers (Li et al., 2012) impacted many Chinese parents' expectations of their children. Many participants repeatedly mentioned the importance of independence and social skills during the interview. They did not want their children to depend on them, and at the same time, they encouraged their children to socialize with other children from early on. The participants' expectations for their children's independence and social skills aligned well with their learning beliefs that children learn by themselves and with peers, which may influence their interaction with children during play. For example, one parent said that she did not want to follow her son around during play because if she followed him everywhere, he would become a coward and not learn to be independent. To help children develop social skills, many parents provided ample opportunities for their children to socialize and communicate with other children. With this socialization expectation, the parents may choose to be onlookers during children's play. *Perseverance and resilience* were two other expectations for the children repeatedly mentioned by the participants. Some parents said that their children were not patient and expected their children to focus on tasks and not give up easily. Other parents expressed their understanding of the Chinese socio-cultural context, a competitive environment that required children to be perseverant and dedicated. Many parents shared that they wanted children to make efforts in learning, which aligned with the learning conceptualization in China discovered in previous research (Li, 2001, 2003, 2005). Even though many parents expressed that they did not

care much about their children's academic achievement, the requirement from the preschools/schools may influence parents' academic expectations of their children. As one parent expressed during the interview: "I heard that some kids did not go to prep school before going to school, and they had a hard time following teachers' lesson. It is better for my daughter to learn something before going to school". On the contrary, some parents did care about their children's academic achievement. They believed that academic excellence related to success in the future and parents played an important role in supporting children's academic learning. Many parents mentioned learning ability. However, influenced by the driving forces of school, their understanding of learning may be more associated with following the school curriculum and doing homework. The socio-cultural context, including the request for self-discipline in classrooms and the academic requirement from preschool/schoolteachers, may significantly influence the parents' child-rearing goals.

Another key finding of my study is the participants' complex feelings about child-rearing, including uncertainty, anxiety, and incompetence. Contradictory values, socio-cultural influence, and cross-generation conflict in child-rearing were the primary sources of participants' complicated emotions. Many participants had uncertain child-rearing beliefs that oscillated between respecting and disciplining their children. They believed in individuality but, at the same time, expected their children's compliance. Many parents expressed the feeling of incompetence when their children did not listen to them. They regretted it after spanking their children but could not stop it the next time. At the same time, many parents knew that spanking would not work for their children's compliance in the long run. For example, one mom shared her confusion when her son did not listen to her. She had a master's degree in education and had been studying abroad for one year. After reading numerous theories of child development, she understood that she should respect her son during child-rearing. However, she felt frustrated whenever her son did not listen to her. After trying different approaches, she found out that pinching her son's ear was the only effective way to make her son listen to her. She felt guilty about how she treated her son but was confused about what she should do. In addition to the feeling of uncertainty and incompetence from contradictory values, many parents felt anxious because of the stress originating from the socio-cultural context. The participants shared many stories about their children's preschool/school experiences, which reflected the child-discipline cultural norm in preschools/schools in China (Li et al., 2012). The parents complained about the strictness of schoolteachers and the massive amounts of homework in private preschools. At the same time, many parents felt anxious when preschool/schoolteachers expected their children to be self-disciplined in the

classroom and finish homework daily, but their children could not meet these expectations.

I hope the succinct discussion about my literature review and needs assessment findings revealed the unique cultural environment in China and its influence on many Chinese parents' beliefs and behaviors. Based on the discovery of my needs assessment study, I designed the conceptual framework for the intervention (Figure 7.2). The critical guideline was that prescribing a defined way of interacting with children (Carpenter, 2018) may not align with Chinese parents' cultural beliefs on learning and the Chinese social-cultural context. Supporting Chinese parents to achieve their child-rearing goals should be the focus of the intervention. Since imposing Western child-rearing beliefs and practices may harm Chinese parents' cultural competence, the intervention considered synthesizing different child-rearing beliefs and empowering Chinese parents during child-rearing.

To achieve the optimum power of the study (Faul et al., 2009), I recruited 40 parents with the lowest self-efficacy among all the applicants to participate in the program, and 30 participants completed the program and the evaluation study. Throughout the learning process, I facilitated the

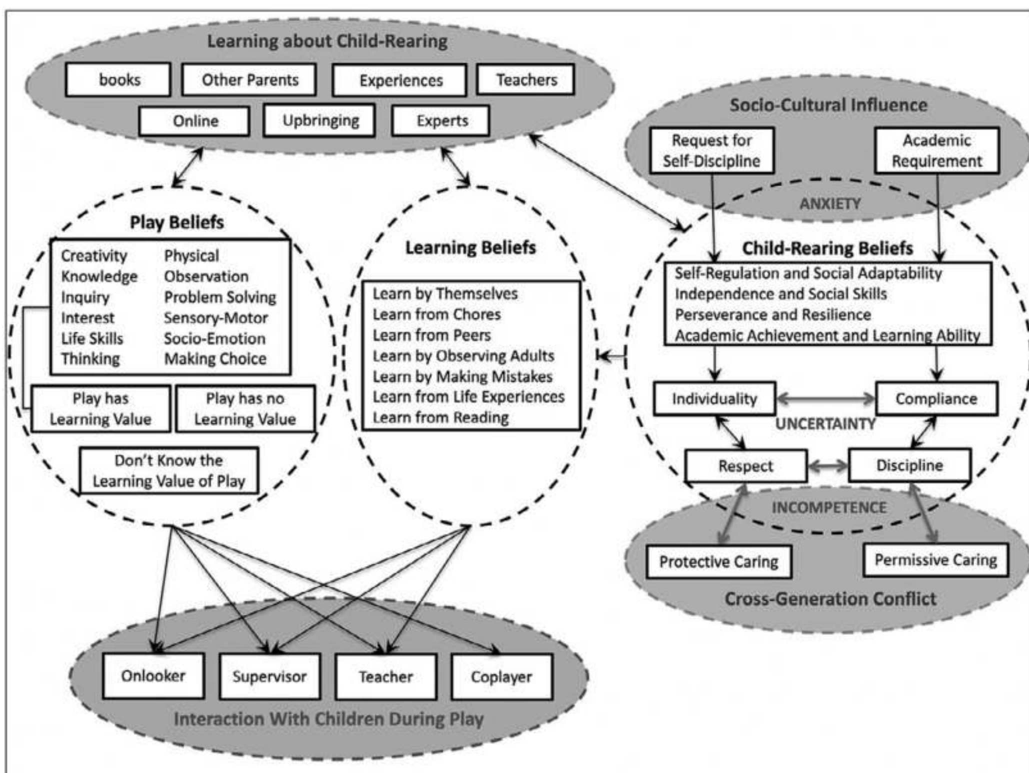

FIGURE 7.1 Visual representation of the needs assessment study findings

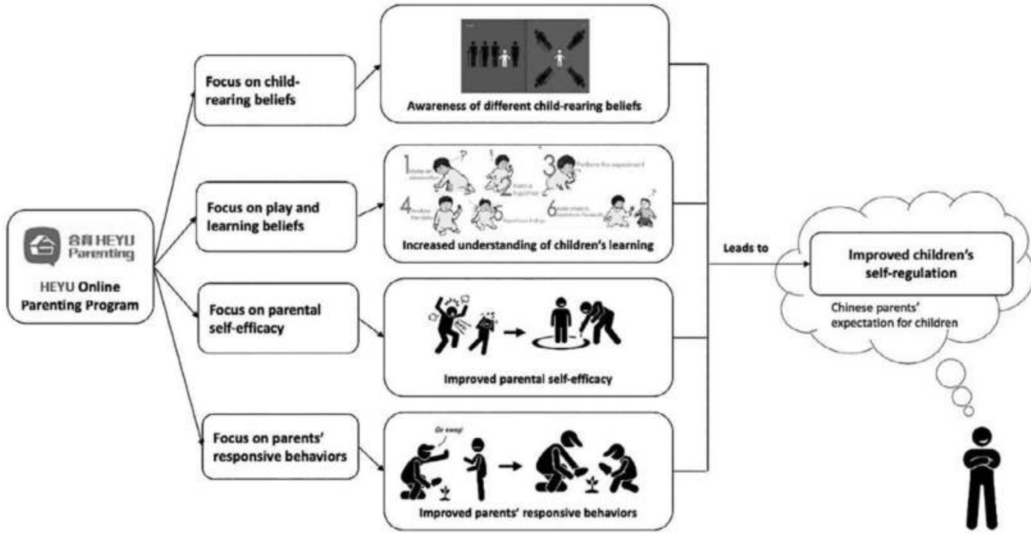

FIGURE 7.2 Conceptual framework for intervention design

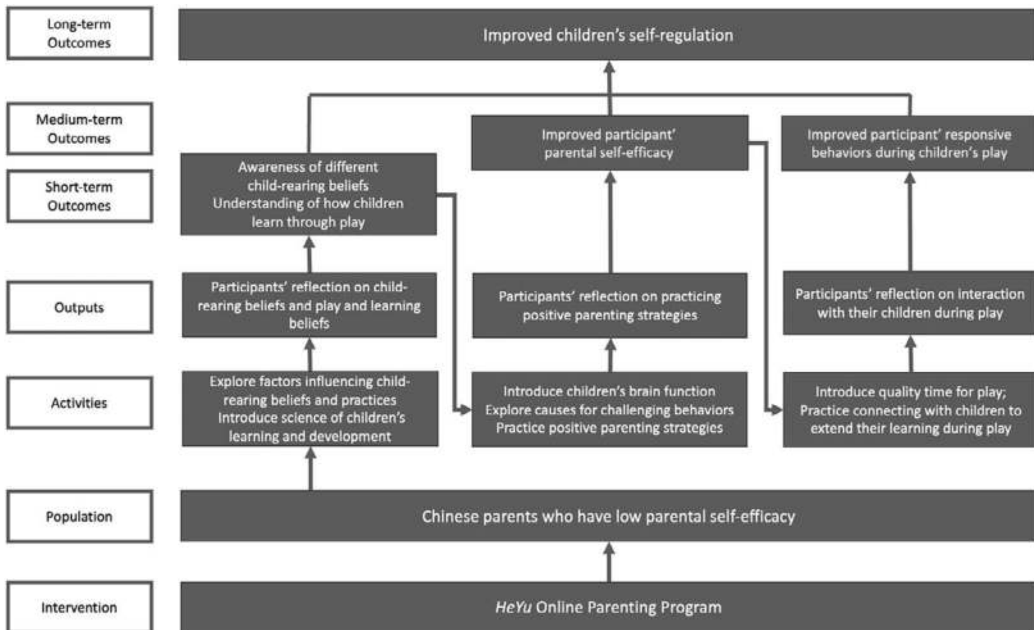

FIGURE 7.3 Theory of treatment for HeYu online parenting program

participants' learning by providing feedback on their assignments and encouraging online interaction among the participants. To avoid imposing specific child-rearing beliefs and practices on the participants, I kept the online dialogue as a cultural co-construction (Nastasi & Hitchcock, 2015) process for the program.

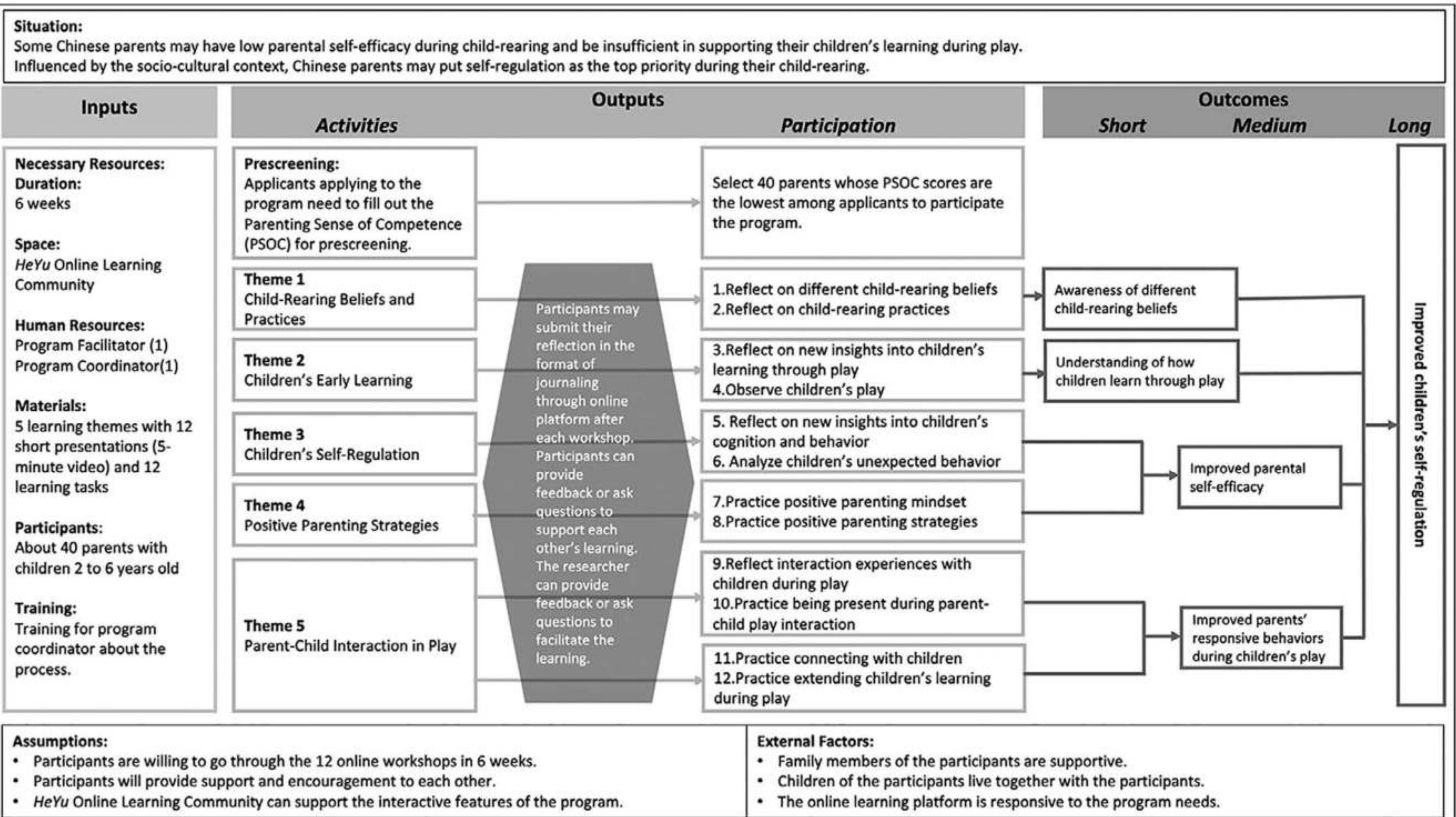

FIGURE 7.4 Logic model for HeYu online parenting program

The intervention's evaluation study focused on understanding the implementation process and exploring the program's effectiveness in achieving short-term and medium-term outcomes. The process evaluation comprised the dose received, participants' responsiveness, and context components. The outcome evaluation explored the program's impact on the participants' child-rearing beliefs, play and learning beliefs, parental self-efficacy, parents' responsive behaviors, and other unintended consequences. To generate a comprehensive understanding of the program's impact and serve the program improvement, I adopted a convergent mixed-method design (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2017) guided by dialectical pluralism in the evaluation (Mertens, 2018).

Given the limited length of the book, I would skip the detailed data analysis and share the major findings of the evaluation study. The process evaluation study findings showed the extent of the participants' learning engagement and online interaction as well as the family context's influence on their learning. The outcome evaluation study findings revealed the program's impact on the participants' child-rearing beliefs, play and learning beliefs, parental self-efficacy, parents' responsive behaviors, and unintended consequences.

Process Evaluation Findings

The process evaluation generated findings on the dose received, participants' responsiveness, and context components of the program implementation.

Dose Received

Most participants finished the program by submitting the weekly assignments, even though their learning pace differed from the program design. Most participants were engaged in online learning. Cartoon videos, assignments, easy to learn, easy to practice, thought-provoking, and logical flow were the program's engaging features. For some participants, barriers to their online learning included the challenge of understanding, practicing, finishing assignments, not enough effort, an unengaging start, and the program's fast pace. The findings aligned with Dittman and colleagues' (2014) discussion that extra support might be critical to engaging parents in online learning.

Participants' Responsiveness

Even though the participants' online interaction did not meet the program's expectations, most participants benefited from the interaction with other parents, including inspiration for problem-solving, not feeling alone, and enhanced learning. The participants' online interaction barriers were asynchronization, time constraints, lack of human connection, operating system barriers,

and concern. Peer support during the program implementation may be the exhortative source (Bandura, 1977) for the participants' parental self-efficacy improvement and facilitate their transformative learning (Taylor, 2017).

Context

Several factors in the participants' families influenced their learning. Grandparents' involvement in child-rearing created a complex child-rearing environment for many families, which may be concerted or discordant. The coping strategies for the discordance included effective communication, suppression, or confrontation. Influenced by the different child-rearing environments and coping strategies, communication about the program with their family members varied among the participants. Discordance in the child-rearing environment may have motivated the participants to learn about child-rearing. On the other hand, the concerted child-rearing environment may have amplified the program effects through shared learning with the family members.

Outcome Evaluation Findings

The outcome evaluation revealed the program's impact on the participants' child-rearing beliefs, play and learning beliefs, parental self-efficacy, parents' responsive behaviors, and unintended consequences.

Child-Rearing Beliefs

Before participating in the intervention, many parents learned how to raise their children through online resources or books and were confused by contradictory suggestions. At the same time, their family members often fought each other on how to raise their children. This finding reflected the ongoing child-rearing belief transformation in China and its impact on Chinese families discussed in other studies (Chuang et al., 2018; Xu & Xia, 2014). During the intervention, I introduced the Diversity Wheel as an instrument to help the parents see things from different perspectives. The transformative learning was evident in that the participants developed awareness of their cognitive distortion and limited perception in child-rearing, were able to understand different child-rearing beliefs, and even changed their perceptions. Some of the common words in their submitted assignments included "deeper understanding", "new insights", "changed my mind", "discovery", "recognized my mistake", "never thought about", "refreshed my child-rearing beliefs", and "do not think that way now". Since the intervention included information about children's brain development and early learning, many participants were able to understand their children's behaviors, which was a game-changer for many

participants as they encountered children's challenging behaviors every day. As a mom wrote in her assignment: "Now I understand why my child cries every morning when he wakes up. He cannot fully control his behaviors. Previously, I thought he did it on purpose. I told him millions of times to wake up happy. However, he never listened". Understanding children's behaviors changed the participants' understanding of effective parenting. Empathy, love, support, guidance, communication, learning environment, patience, continued learning, emotional regulation, and reflection were the participants' understanding of parenting, which were different from the traditional parenting approaches, such as shaming, scolding, and physical punishment, discussed in existing studies (Nelson et al., 2006; Sung, 2010). The transformation of child-rearing beliefs set the stage for the participants' child-rearing behavioral change.

Play and Learning Beliefs

During two of the sessions, I used three video clips of parent–child interaction in children's museums and invited the participants to observe and reflect on their understanding of quality time. I avoided judging these video clips, which opened the dialogue with the participants about quality time. Many participants recognized the learning value of play and developed a more profound understanding of quality time after watching these videos. As one mom reflected in her assignment:

> The two sessions with parent–child interaction videos impressed me a lot. A mom played with her son in a children's museum. The mom constantly took pictures of her son and even interrupted his play. I think I had a similar experience and was unaware that this was not right. After I watched the video, I recognized the problem and understood what quality time should look like, which is the biggest influence the program had on me.

For evaluation purposes, I asked the participants to submit a 10-minute video of their interaction with children during play before they started the program. Many participants reflected on how that request changed their perception. For example, one mom shared during the interview:

> It took me several times to record the videos. It gave our family a chance to reflect. My husband helped me record the videos, and he said that I could not submit them because the videos were not good. He said that I did not spend quality time with our child at all. I was there with our child but did not pay full attention. I exercised with him or played a bit but did not engage with him. We recognized this problem during the video

> taking. When we recorded the videos at home, we thought 10 minutes was very short. However, we found that it was hard when we tried to do it. When we looked at the videos by ourselves, we found that most of the time, I was sitting there, and our son was playing by himself, or we may have some conversations, but there was no engaging and happy play.

One of the successes of the program was that all the participants expressed their willingness to spend more quality time with their children, and they also understood the parents' role during children's play, including following children's lead, paying full attention, supporting children's learning, and co-playing with children. The deeper awareness of limited quality time and shifted perceptions of parents' role during children's play through the transformative learning process (Stuckey et al., 2013) set the foundation for their responsive behavior change.

Parental Self-Efficacy

Since I used prescreening to identify the applicants with the lowest parental self-efficacy scores to participate in the program, many participants shared their conflicts with the children and their feeling of confusion and incompetence during the program. I also identified their negative emotions during child-rearing, including anxiety, stress, irritability, and impatience. By introducing a positive parenting mindset and strategies during the program, I facilitated the participants in learning to investigate the reasons for their children's unexpected behaviors and solving their daily child-rearing challenges. The participants' parental self-efficacy improved significantly ($t = 11.78$, $p < .001$), with a huge effect size ($D = 2.151$), after participating in this program. The qualitative data analysis showed that the participants learned to empathize with their children, be patient, accept their children's behaviors, communicate effectively, and reflect during child-rearing. As one mom reflected during the interview:

> I am a very impatient person. Previously, when I found a problem with my child, I would point it out immediately. Now I understand that my child may have his own thoughts. I learned to choose a better time to communicate with him. I think it is a better approach to set up a boundary and give him the opportunity to grow.

The program also had a positive impact on the participants' emotions. Many participants improved their emotional regulation and felt calm, less anxious, and happy. Even though the participants' emotion was not a focus of the intervention, the emotional change documented by the participants provided

support to the participants' parental self-efficacy improvement, such as the reflection from a mom:

> I am less anxious than before because I know what to do. Previously, I felt like I did not know what to do. I thought I did not do well enough. However, I was unsure what was not right, so I felt anxious. Now I know what I should do. Even if I may not be able to do it, I know my goals, and I feel less anxious. When I am with my child, I have fewer negative emotions. I think this is the program's most significant influence.

The enactive and emotive sources (Bandura, 1977) generated through behavioral and emotional change may contribute to the participants' self-efficacy improvement.

Parents' Responsive Behaviors

I used a direct observational scale, Measurement of Empathy in Adult-Child Interaction (Stover et al., 1971), to analyze two videos submitted by each participant before and after the intervention and understand their responsive behavior change. The quantitative analysis showed that the program improved the participants' responsive behaviors significantly ($t = -6.937$, $p < .001$), with a huge effect size ($D = -1.266$). The qualitative analysis of the participants' assignments and interview data provided in-depth understanding of their behavior change. The participants' previous interaction with children exhibited the following attributes: not paying full attention, directing children's play, not co-playing with children, supervising children's play, no patience, and feeling bored, which aligned with my needs assessment study and other existing studies' findings (Jiang & Han, 2016; Lin & Li, 2018a, 2018b; Lin et al., 2018). During children's play, the participants' behavioral changes included co-playing with children, paying full attention, and following children's lead. As a mom said during the interview:

> I think the biggest change for me is paying full attention to my child during play. Previously, when she asked me to look at her during play, I would say yes, I saw it, no following up. She should know that I did not pay attention at all.

Some participants found that intentionally observing their children during the play allowed them to understand their children more and support them accordingly. As a dad shared:

> After attending the program, I start to observe my child or engage with her during play intentionally. I can understand what she wants to play

and her challenge by asking questions. Then I know how I can support her learning during play.

Even though the intervention improved the participants' responsive behaviors significantly, the participants expressed challenges for their behavior change, including wanting to direct children during play, feeling bored, and the impact of stress. Some of the excerpts from the participants' assignments reflected the challenges: "I played with my child today and found it was so hard not to be a teacher or supervisor"; "I can co-play with my child now, but sometimes, I wanted to help or direct him unconsciously"; "When I played with my child, I tried not to control him. However, when I saw him playing far from my expectation, I couldn't help giving suggestions or directing him". During the needs assessment study, I found that supervisors and teachers were two typical roles many Chinese parents played when interacting with their children during play. As many Chinese parents believe in their role in improving children's academic achievement (Chen & Luster, 2002), and they may focus primarily on children's academic learning during their child-rearing (Jankowiak et al., 2011; Liu et al., 2018; Naftali, 2010), following children's lead during play may not register in their cultural child-rearing beliefs. I avoided imposing a prescribed parent–child interaction on the participants during the intervention and tried to go through a cultural co-construction process (Nastasi & Hitchcock, 2015) with them. The participants' challenges reminded me to consider the cultural inferences of the program. Instead of telling the participants that directing their children during the play was wrong, I carefully reminded the participants to only practice responsive behaviors during the 30-minute playtime with their children. Respecting the participants' cultural beliefs and listening to their reality guided by dialectical pluralism (Johnson, 2017) helped me embrace multiple values during the intervention and evaluation.

Parents' Perspectives of the Program Influence

To understand the intervention's impact on the participants beyond the designed outcomes, I asked open-ended questions during the interview. As a result, I found that the program improved family relationships, changed children's behaviors, and also had negative emotional impact on some participants. The improved family relationships manifested in the participants' improved communication and collaboration with their family members during child-rearing. Many participants thought the program "influenced the family members' collaborative relationship during child-rearing", and it was helpful for them to "deal with conflicts". Previously, they "expect the family members to do things in a certain way". They learned to "communicate with family members" about their thoughts and what they learned.

Even though children's self-regulation was a long-term goal of the intervention, many participants found their children's immediate behavior changed. Their children became less explosive, shared more with them, invited them to play, managed their lives better, and studied better. For some participants, their children wanted to play with them more and felt safer and happier during the play. The immediate change in the children's behaviors reflected their adaptation according to adults' direction (Colliver & Fleer, 2016; Glenn et al., 2012; McInnes et al., 2013; Robson, 2016), especially for Chinese children (Li, 2016).

The open-ended discussion about the program with the participants during the interview revealed two negative emotional impacts some participants experienced during the learning, including stress and guilt. As a mom shared during the interview:

> The first two sessions did not impress me because they included foundational knowledge. But, at the same time, they made me feel that the program requested parents to do more. I already did a lot for my child, but I did not do well enough.

This mom also shared that the following weeks' session relieved her from that guilt, and she felt confident in child-rearing after the program. Even though she thought the following sessions inspired her and changed her life in a snap, the negative emotions at the beginning were undeniable. The program improvement needs to consider avoiding the sources of negative emotions, which may impair parental self-efficacy.

In conclusion, the intervention's impact on the participants' beliefs and behaviors was profound. The participants' transformative learning was evident in their deeper self-awareness, more open perspectives, and a profound shift in worldview (Stuckey et al., 2013). Many participants expressed their previous confusion in learning about different child-rearing practices. Through learning in this program, they developed an awareness of their limited perception, understood different child-rearing beliefs, and changed their perception. All the participants recognized the value of playing, the importance of quality time with their children, and that the quality time they spent with their children was limited. The participants' willingness to spend more quality time with their children became the foundation for their behavior change. The participants' significant improvement in parental self-efficacy and responsive behaviors showed the effects of transformative learning built into the program. The open-ended exploration of the program's influence revealed the program's impact on family relationships, children's behaviors, and participants' emotions. Some participants felt stressed and guilty at the beginning of the program, which was an unintended consequence of this program and needs to be addressed in the program improvement.

Social Justice Quest

As discussed in the previous sections, informal learning is important for children's early development. Access to informal learning resources and the support the children get during informal learning are critical for their cognitive and social-emotional development (Ramey & Ramey, 2004), which will ultimately benefit society (Ball, 1994). I think there are two social justice issues related to informal learning. One is children's accessibility to informal learning resources and the support they have during their learning. Another one concerns the negative impact on parents' cultural competence if we try to teach parents how to support their children's learning in informal settings.

The first social justice issue concerning access to informal learning resources has been widely addressed in the children's museum field. With progressive education as a foundation of children's museums, advocating for social justice is the core of children's museums (Hein, 2013). Many children's museums have designed outreach programs that aim to make children's museum resources accessible to more children and families. With the belief in children's agency, children's museum educators advocate for child-centered discovery learning. Parents' guides and parenting programs are an integral part of many children's museums, with the goal to educate parents on how to support their children's self-directed informal learning. As a children's museum educator, I have been doing similar programs in China. Previously, I found that children's learning through play was not well supported by Chinese parents in children's museums. Many Chinese parents may ignore or interrupt their children's play. I thought teaching Chinese parents how to support their children's learning during play would benefit their children enormously not only during their visits to museums but also when their children play at home. However, what I have done might just raise another social justice issue concerning Chinese parents' cultural competence.

Without understanding Chinese cultural beliefs and norms, the efforts of changing Chinese parents' behaviors during their children's play may compromise their cultural competence. In 2018, Carpenter discussed the prescribed way of parent–child interaction in children's museums in her article "The Rules in Children's Museums", which set an alarm for children's museum educators who have been teaching parents the "correct" way to play with their children. My dissertation research revealed the social-cultural influence on Chinese parents' behaviors and tested an intervention aimed at transforming Chinese parents' behaviors without jeopardizing their cultural competence. The key takeaways from my research are to understand Chinese parents' cultural beliefs, align program goals with their beliefs, use cultural co-construction throughout the intervention implementation process, and continue tweaking the intervention based on the open-ended exploration of the program's positive and negative impact on the participants.

As discussed earlier in this book, the concept of social justice is complex. It is critical that we be aware of what social justice issues we are trying to address and that we do not create social injustice while advocating for social justice. I hope the lesson I learned from my dissertation research can serve as a reminder and a roadmap to many educators across the world who work on social justice issues in different social and cultural contexts.

Identifying Ideas for What We Can Do as Educators and Individually to Minimize Social Injustice. What Can We Include That Is Uplifting and Helpful for Our Society?

As educators, we need to be aware of the social-cultural context we work in before we advocate for social justice. Understanding and embracing the diversity of culture is critical to avoid creating social injustice when we advocate for social justice.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. Did you know what informal education/learning was before reading this? Were you surprised about how important experts see it as being in the fund of knowledge we attain?
2. This chapter explores the degree to which informal learning and the means of informal learning vary. How would you describe the major categories that define this? Is it cultural, socio-economic, rural versus urban? Other?
3. Do parents in China seem different in their views of learning than those you know, including yourself? Remember the research focuses on cultural differences.
4. How should we deal with the variation in access to informal learning?
5. Do schools and other educational mechanisms have access to influencing parenting behavior? If not, should we seek it? How would you assess Zhang's efforts in this regard? What can we learn from this?
6. Do you consider it an important sign that informal learning is a tenet of the United Nation's sustainable goals? How much progress has been made in this area by the UN?
7. We have several questions directly related to Dr. Zhang's research, and we have included more on research in this chapter than others. Participants' complex feelings on child-rearing, including uncertainty, anxiety, and incompetence are all part of the child rearing process. and cause conflicts. Contradictory values, socio-cultural influence, and cross-generation conflict in child-rearing were the primary sources of participants' complicated emotions. How important is play in learning? Can we make it a more effective medium for learning?

What do you suggest—and what do you think of Zhang's conclusion that Chinese parents know more about play than she expected? What evidence does she have? Do you know of other cultures where this is true? Does it vary within the United States by socio-economic status or other categories? Is it your view that your parents, or you as a parent, understand the importance of play and support learning that can arise from it?

8. In her work with parents, Zhang asked two key questions: "What do you usually do when your kids are playing? Why?" and "What kind of play benefits your child's learning and life? In what way?" Ask yourself these questions and ask other parents to see what you find out to support your judgments. What would the appropriate critical thinking criteria be for making a judgment?
9. One of Zhang's important accomplishments is the founding of the first children's museums in China. Do children in your culture have access to children's museums uniformly? That is, is access equitable? What might we do if it is not?

Links

DfEE Research—Informal learning in the workplace—summary of Dale and Bell's (1999) study. John Ellis—Informal education: a Christian perspective

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8

SUMMARY, ESSENTIALLY CONTESTED CONCEPTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND FUTURE ACTIONS TO PROMOTE SOCIAL JUSTICE

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Writing a book about an idea that is an essentially contested concept requires clarity about what is meant by the idea. Essentially contested concepts are among the most important for deep understanding of what is needed in education and life in general to improve society and move towards social justice. Since Gallie first put forth the idea of essentially contested concepts (1956), there has been more work that for some may set limits on how they are understood and used. Before moving to an exploration of this newer work, it is important to clarify our original perspective on Galle's work. We discuss it in Chapter 1, which should be re-read at this point.

> The British philosopher W. B. Gallie (1956) suggested the idea of "contested concepts". For Gallie, such concepts are inherently subject to multiple interpretations depending on your values, concerns, experiences, goals, and beliefs. Among these concepts are democracy and social justice, as well as freedom, education, and others. The concepts are listed later in this chapter in the section labeled "Creating a Shared Vision of Democracy and Social Justice". If one were asking a random group what their definition is of concepts like democracy and social justice, or any of the others, there will be significant differences. This makes the task of an educator or anyone working in or with a group on a contested concept responsibility to come to a shared vision.

Gallie was working primarily with concepts in political science and politics. In an article in *The Journal of Political Ideologies* (Collier et al., V. 7, Issue 3, October 2006), the authors argue that conceptual confusion in the social

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sciences is a major source of difficulty in both theory and empirical analysis, with ideas applied inconsistently (Ibid.).

To give full credit to this important article on essentially contested concepts, and because the journal is available only online, the abstract is provided here:

> Conceptual confusion has long been a source of difficulty in the study of politics. W. B. Gallie's analysis of "essentially contested concepts", published in 1956, stands as a notable effort to address this problem. He explores the normative component of these concepts and offers seven criteria for evaluating their contentedness. In the present article, we examine Gallie's framework and develop two extended applications, focused on "democracy" and "rule of law". We underscore major contributions of Gallie's approach, as well as controversies it has generated. Some important critiques argue that three of his criteria are too narrow. We suggest that these critics fail to recognize that Gallie offers both a restrictive and broader definition of these criteria, and we seek to reconcile their views with his alternative definitions. Further, some accuse Gallie of naively promoting conceptual relativism by undermining standards for evaluating concepts, and others argue more sympathetically that he is too optimistic about prospects for resolving conceptual disputes. It is of course difficult to achieve Gallie's goal of promoting the reasoned discussion of these concepts, given the sharply contrasting normative and analytic perspectives that scholars bring to them. Yet his framework, augmented by the refinements explored in this article, opens promising avenues for addressing this challenge.
>
> *(Collier, 2006)*

Given the ongoing fighting among political parties in the 21st century, including areas such as civil rights, the right to vote, eliminating discrimination, access to abortion, and so on, part of the problem may be that we are dealing with contested concepts. We must attend to that possibility if we are to achieve agreement.

In Chapter 1, the work of George Lakoff, the linguist who studied political metaphors in *Moral Politics*, was discussed. Lakoff found differences in meaning, arguing that liberals and conservatives perceive the world differently. As a result, complicated ideas are often seen as either right or wrong because of how they are presented by political parties. These differences have become much more evident in the current political climate as we have moved into the 21st century. Citizens, and participants, in society need to come to grips with this and be certain that they reach a shared vision of the particular contested concept they are disagreeing about. In the article in *The*

Journal of Political Ideologies mentioned in Chapter 1, a very complicated analysis is undertaken by some of the writers that leaves the very idea of contested concepts deeply contested! That is not helpful. The first author of that article, Collier, while admitting some uncertainty Gallie himself had about conceptual relativism, said:

> We find it implausible, however, that the meaning of concepts in inherently fixed and stable, and the expectation that this might be the case focuses attention in the wrong direction. Rather we view Gallie's framework as a needed warning against excessively emphatic claims about what a concept really means. For complex concepts, such claims are unhelpful. Gallie's approach calls for a certain humility in declarations about conceptual meaning, a concerted effort to keep discussion of concepts within the framework of reasoned discourse; and serious consideration of what it means to establish such a framework.
>
> *(Collier)*

This seems to be a reasonable conclusion. Reasoned and serious consideration about each significant and contested concept is important and should be encouraged in classrooms and other learning situations within the framework of critical thinking. Everyone who works with concepts that may have more than one meaning must continue to work toward shared meaning of difficult, even if not "essentially contested", concepts to make progress.

In this book, some conclusions were drawn along the way regarding what possible meanings can be ascribed to the contested concepts of education, democracy, and social justice might be. Hopefully reading this book has led to a shared vision of what these relevant concepts mean.

Another important concept that has been expanding is conspiracy theory. A conspiracy is an effort by an individual or group to cause events to occur by actions they might take. How do conspiracies enter the picture of social justice? They are a way of thinking about negative aspects of the elements we have looked at.

Examining history through the idea that conspiracies is growing, as evidenced by the number of books on the subject, some more scholarly than others. For example, were there "conspiracies" that pushed for slavery to continue? Who would likely be part of such an effort? Which conspiracies had to be overcome for Lincoln to put out the Emancipation Proclamation? Why did it only free slaves in the states in rebellion against the Union? Even more basic than slavery, how about prejudice against Blacks? Can you identify any groups that would promote prejudiced behavior? (Walker, 2014).

It also can be said that conspiracies exist that promote antisemitism. Can you identify any? And it can be argued that conspiracies exist to promote homophobia. One very well-studied area is the assassination of John F. Kennedy, which some see as a conspiracy. There are numerous books on this topic (40 on Amazon alone) and even a documentary that is available on the internet. One other surprising example is the idea held by a number of historians that Franklin Roosevelt had knowledge of the impending Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor but took no action. If this is the case, it is presumed that he saw it as a vehicle to enter the war, and, of course, it was an expensive vehicle in terms of lives lost.

The use of conspiracy theory as a way to explain history is controversial. But it seems interest in it is growing, so all should be aware of it; however, it is not suggested that it displaces other methodologies.

How can social justice be enhanced? There are obviously as many ways that we can enhance social justice as there are social injustices. In each of the chapters, some ways of acting to enhance social justice or combating social injustice have been identified. None of the areas of social injustice are easy to combat. Some have been with us for decades, or centuries, as in the case of racial discrimination. There are some comprehensive efforts that should be reviewed and considered for wider adoption.

In the second chapter, on discrimination, it was noted that New York is among the most segregated states in the United States, so let's examine one New York–based effort.

Several New York political groups, including Progressive East End Reformers (PEER) and New York Progressive Action Network (NYPAN) are sponsoring this effort, known as Invest in Our New York (IONY). At meetings of PEER and other groups in early 2023, the elements of the plan were laid out and discussed with the hope of gathering supporters. The plan is well argued and addresses the fact that New York state also has the most segregated schools, as discussed in an earlier chapter. By examining US Department of Commerce and IRS data, the developers identified a concern regarding the distribution and taxation of income. For example, the income of the top 1% of earners in NY is 44 times the average income of the bottom 99%. Much of the funds are in unrealized capital gains, which cannot be taxed.

Is there a solution? The obvious one is to balance the amount of income through taxation of the richest residents by adjusting the progressive tax rate, which means that the rate goes up as income goes up.

Of course, there is resistance to this plan by the richest New Yorkers, and politicians do not want to upset them. Our experience is that many think social justice means redistributing wealth, which, of course, is anathema to those who would be affected.

Next, it is argued that "we must deliver for all New Yorkers". Interestingly, IONY argues that the budget is a "moral" document.

Some suggestions include enhancing the budget as follows.

With the additional funds collected, the IONY leaders argue that we should increase the funding of education, including enhancing childcare and eliminating tuition in public universities. Also suggested is funding new housing for low-income residents and making purchasing easier for current tenants. Hopefully these would be more energy-efficient homes.

Next is a plan for climate improvement and enhancing workers' wages, extending unemployment both in terms of time available and who has access to unemployment.

This is a $30-billion plan and influencing the governor and legislature will have to occur to achieve it. The newly elected governor has said, "We recently lowered taxes. We cannot now raise them". But the group developing the plan says this was a reduction in taxes for the middle class.

IONY is an unusually well-thought-out plan. It is suggested that all interested in enhancing social justice be aware of its progress and in touch with the leaders. It can be adapted to other states.

Another Source for Social Justice Issues and Intervention

One of the best-known organizations engaged in dealing with what we are calling social injustice—again defined as the presence of discrimination and/or repression—is the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). For conservatives, the issues considered by the ACLU are of concern. To have the broadest example of issues of social injustice and possible actions, we will summarize some positions taken publicly, many of them by the ACLU.

Separate and Unequal Education

In the spring 2023 issue of the *ACLU Magazine*, several cases are considered in some depth. One involves a school system in California in an article entitled "Separate and Unequal" (Lock, 2023, pp. 17–23). The system is Pittsburgh, California, and involves an elementary school in which a child of Latino origins, Mark, who is diagnosed as autistic and labeled an "English language learner". Mark was first assigned to a special education kindergarten class and seemed to be progressing wonderfully. He looked forward to school every day. His teacher took a medical leave, Mark suffered a back injury, and they lost contact with each other. No effort was made to pair Mark with another teacher he did well with.

Book Banning and Other Intrusions on Free Speech

Book bans are nothing new. Throughout history, certain books have come under fire for content deemed inappropriate or controversial—often that content is by and about people of color, the LGBTQ community, and other marginalized groups. As a spate of classroom censorship bills aim to erase discussions about race and gender in schools across the country, books about the same issues are being banned and challenged across public schools and libraries at an alarming rate. In 2021, the American Library Association recorded 729 book challenges, compared to 156 challenges received the previous year. In recent years, book banning has included books presumed to support the LGBQT community, Black people, and other groups and issues. In a list published by the ACLU in February 2023, the following books were noted as books that have been formally removed or challenged for removal from public schools or libraries. Some were subsequently removed from the banned list. As you will see, some are among the most highly acclaimed books in recent years. See which ones you recognize, or perhaps have read.

1. *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison. This was Morrison's first novel. She subsequently won the Nobel and Pulitzer Prize. In the book, its 11-year-old protagonist, Pecola Breedlove, copes with racism and sexual abuse as she comes of age in 1940s Ohio. Despite its status as a seminal work by one of the foremost authors in American history, the book has been a frequent target of bans for content described as "sexually explicit material", "disturbing language", and an "underlying socialist-communist agenda". When the ACLU of Missouri filed a lawsuit against Wentzville School District, the district reversed its decision to ban the book shortly after filing. Other cases involved Ridgeland, Mississippi, where the mayor sought to withhold $100,000 in public funds unless it purged this book and others. It was banned in Virginia Beach, Virginia, but returned to circulation in the face of a public outcry.
2. *Heather has Two Mommies* by Leslea Newman. In this children's book, the lead character has a family that does not look like those of her classmates. She is the daughter of LGBQT parents and realizes she stands out when she has to draw a picture of her family. The book, after 30 years in circulation, was removed by the superintendent of the Pentridge school district in Pennsylvania. The request included other books referencing "gender identity" and others addressing LGBTQ issues.
3. *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George Johnson describes growing up Black and queer. He describes being bullied in his childhood and adolescence in New Jersey and Virginia. It is targeted for removal in 14 states for its

LGBTQ themes. This book is part of the same ACLU actions as *The Bluest Eye* in Missouri and Mississippi. In Florida, the sheriff's office claimed that having the book in school libraries is a crime (Wikipedia).

4. *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe is by a nonbinary, asexual author who details her life not fitting into traditional norms of gender and sexuality. The book has been challenged in Texas by the Keller Independent School District, removing the book with no public review, claiming "inappropriate images"; in Florida Brevard Public Schools; and in Virginia, along with other books targeted by the Virginia Beach Public School board. In Downers Grove, a suburb of Chicago, the challenge came from a group of parents demanding that it be removed from libraries.
5. *Melissa*, previously published as *George*, by Alex Gino, is a book in which the protagonist is a fourth grader coming to terms with her identity as a trans girl in a world that knows her only as George. The author argued that it was written because of the lack of voices like the protagonist. The author said, "I wanted trans voices telling trans stories". It is, according to Scholastic, among the most-challenged books that conflict with traditional family structures. A recent challenge occurred in Polk County, Florida, where 16 other books highlighting race and LGBTQ issues were challenged.
6. *Stamped: Racism, Anti Racism, and You* by Ibram X. Kendi and Jayson Reynolds. This National Book Award–winning work on the history of racism in America is not a traditional history book. The authors report in the opening pages, "This is NOT a history book. This is a book about the here and now. A book to help us better understand why we are where we are with the difficult issue of race is badly needed. This is a book about race". In addition to telling history that melds past with present to engage its young readers, the book suggests how racism can be stamped out in their daily lives and explores hope for an anti-racist future. It is said to be one of the most-challenged books of the 2020s in schools. A middle school in Texas tried to remove it from a reading list but not library shelves. A group of Black parents protested, and the book was returned to the library.
7. *All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds and Brendon Kiely. The young adult novel *All American Boys* portrays themes of racism and police brutality as seen from the perspectives of its two teenage protagonists: Rashad Butler, who is Black, and Quinn Collins, who is white. In the story, Rashad is assaulted by a police officer who suspects him of stealing from a convenience store, and Quinn witnesses the encounter. During the wave of Black Lives Matter protests in 2020, the book received increased

attention and scrutiny. Complaints about the book often cite profanity and messages perceived as anti-police, divisive, or “too sensitive”.

8. *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas, In this book, a 16-year-old student at a prep school who is from a low-income community describes the balance between her two worlds. She witnesses the shooting of a childhood friend by police and becomes a witness. The book has been banned because of anti-police language and profanity. It was banned in Texas in 2017, in Illinois in 2018, and in Pennsylvania in 2021. In that last case, students need parental permission to read it.
9. *Lawn Boy*. This is a semi-autobiographical story about Mike Muñoz, a young Mexican American navigating poverty, sexuality, and self-identity as he comes of age in Washington state. The book has been a target of bans for containing content described as “homoerotic”. The book is among those involved in the ACLU of Missouri’s lawsuit against Wentzville R-IV School District, filed in February 2023.

Another free speech issue came before the Supreme Court and involved the right of school administrators to remove material from school newspapers. In that case, *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier* (1983), the principle of Hazelwood School routinely reviewed the school newspaper before publication, but in this case, for the first time, he questioned articles on two of the six pages of the newspaper, including the articles in question. These articles dealt with divorce and pregnancy. In one, the article reported on students’ reactions to their parent’s divorces, and the other included interviews with students who had become pregnant. The principal said that the identities of students were not entirely concealed. The lead in the case was the editor of the newspaper, Cathy Kuhlmeier. Ultimately the court held that principal did not violate the student editor’s freedom of speech. Those dissenting, Marshall, Brennan, and Blackmun, held that the court shirked its responsibility to free speech (Brennan J, p. 251).

An earlier case seen as a free speech case, *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* in 1969, involved a school leadership decision to ban black armbands protesting the Vietnam War. Students who wore them were suspended if they did not remove them. In that case, the courts decided that the decision violated the students’ First Amendment rights.

In *Tinker*, the question arises as to whether schools can ban books. The general conclusion was that while individuals acting for themselves can ban books, government agencies cannot. Although under a different government than the state government, schools are interpreted to be part of government and therefore it was at first considered that they cannot legally ban books. In practice, according to Pen America (pen.org), schools can

establish committees that include principals, superintendents, and board members to consider a request to reconsider a school holding. These committees must act with the constitutional rights of students in mind and recognize the harm of eliminating access for all based on the concerns of an individual or faction. In the years leading up to 2023, it does appear that book bans are increasing, as we have noted, and the ACLU has taken action to overturn bans.

Agents and Targets

One source on social justice (Adams, et al, *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*) is a comprehensive handbook for planning social justice–based courses. One particular idea that will help with our conclusion is the use of the concept of agents and targets in which the agent is those who are violating social justice through discrimination, while the target is those who are discriminated against. In this example, bases for discrimination are identified, including gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, age, and disabilities. For example, the conclusion is that gender discrimination has men as the agent and women as the target and that sexual orientation has heterosexuals as agents and gays, bisexuals, and lesbians as targets. Examining the source leads us to say that we have not said enough about discrimination based on disabilities. It is sometimes the case that those who are "able" discriminate against those who are "disabled". Disabilities can be physical, psychological, and developmental. One excellent source is Connor on Ableism (source).

Some Conclusions for Making Change

Each of the chapters presented on elements of social justice includes broad discussions of the element, comments on the latest research on the element, and suggestions for change. For example, if the problem is civic education, a proposal is provided for what should be considered and how it might be assessed. Another is segregation: obviously we should find ways to eliminate it, and there are examples in the chapters.

One critical point is remembering that movement towards social justice is not an easy path. While it is unlikely for someone to say they are against social justice, their actions sometimes lead to social injustice. This has not been an easy book to write. A focus on injustice for months obviously has its effect. One of us, in the last weeks of writing, had a dream that was remembered and recorded the next morning that we think is worth reporting because it is evidence of how difficult our task is.

Spending the better part of a year writing a book on social justice can certainly take over one's thinking! It isn't always clear that this is happening. As we near the end of our writing, one author awoke reflecting on a dream that night—yes, a dream! It was so intense that it caused the author to want to write about it.

Anyone who has read any part of this book knows that social justice has been defined as living a life devoid of discrimination and repression. It has to do with our view of others and our actions towards others.

The dream caused our author to raise the question of "morality" in all this work and note that we had only used the term once. At one point we encountered a program called Invest in Our New York that argued that a budget should be a "moral" document. Should we have said that social justice means engaging life through moral endeavors? We wonder now what that could mean. This thought led to morality and to reconnecting with the ideas of Laurence Kohlberg, a psychologist whose work intrigued many when it was published decades ago. Kohlberg tried to build a model of stages of morality and to develop a plan to enhance morality by examining what he called "moral dilemmas". Kohlberg's work was fascinating, but his views brought strong criticism and led him to such a state of depression that he committed suicide. The exploration did lead to the development of some definitions:

- What is the difference between ethics and morals?

  Ethics and *morals* relate to "right" and "wrong" conduct. While they are sometimes used interchangeably, they are different: ethics refers to rules provided by an external source, such as codes of conduct in workplaces or principles in religions. Morals refers to an individual's own principles regarding right and wrong.

  Morals refers to a sense of right or wrong. Ethics, on the other hand, refers more to principles of "good" versus "evil" that are generally agreed upon by a community.

- What are examples of morals and ethics?

  Examples of morals can include things such as not lying, being generous, being patient, and being loyal. Examples of ethics can include the ideals of honesty, integrity, respect, and loyalty.

- Can a person be moral but not ethical?

  Because morals involve a personal code of conduct, it is possible for people to be moral but not ethical. A person can follow their personal moral code without adhering to a more community-based sense of

> ethical standards. In some cases, a person's individual morals may be at odds with society's ethics.

So, the interpretation of this is that it can be concluded in terms of the morals in this book that social justice means taking into account the well-being of others as we lead our lives. What can and should we do to assure ourselves that in our society, our actions as a society take into account the well-being of all, especially those who have not been attended to in terms of the quality of their lives? Having individuals examine their own sense of morality is an important first step. How do we treat others? What do we do when we encounter evidence that some are not being treated fairly and morally (clearly terms that need some definition)?

Notice the definition of ethics in terms of morality. Ethics, by one common definition, is "community based". One can have moral standards regarding justice, equity, caring, and the like for personal actions, but to really make a difference as educators, isn't it necessary to be equally concerned about community standards? Think of a time when racial discrimination was common and perhaps the expectation of the majority (perhaps that time is still now). Or a time when antisemitism was the rule. Or Islamophobia, or homophobia, or any of the other examples of discrimination that have been noted.

Given this and where we seem to be in 2023 in our society, can educators undertake to change community values and beliefs? Maybe it is possible to think of getting there by helping develop moral values in our students that expand the concern for the lives of all in our society. We know that some will challenge that effort—as we have seen in our review. I am thinking of the rules limiting discussion or race, sexuality, or other potentially moral issues in schools as the conclusion takes shape. It is more pronounced in some states than others.

So, this is our dilemma—if, in this book, we are talking about our own values as educators, can we seek to "impose" them on our students? Given where we are in this society, how do we proceed to change the ethics within which we live, recognizing that ethics that are present in one group in society do not necessarily apply to society as a whole?

Obviously if teachers pursuing a set of moral principles lose their jobs because of opposition to them by others, we cannot make much progress. So, it seems to be the case that we must seek to change society as part of our work! OMG—another book? No. But lots of work. And lots of action on our dreams! To paraphrase one quote associated with Robert Kennedy that seems to say where many of us are:

> Some dream of things that never were and ask why. I dream of things that never were and ask, why not?

So, let us all ask ourselves that question about access to social justice for all. Social justice for all: *why not*?

Writing in the *LA Progressive* on March 3, 2023, Henry Giroux said:

> If the civic fabric and the democratic political culture that sustains democracy are to survive, education must once again be linked to matters of social justice, equity, human rights, memory, and the public good. . . . The task of education is to encourage human agency, refresh the idea of justice in individuals, and recognize that the world can be different from how it is portrayed within an authoritarian world view that poses a dire threat to democracy.

Furthermore, at about the same time, several polls looked into the issues that were highest in the minds of voters. Two came to the top in a Marist poll reported on NPR's *Morning Edition*. "The economy continues to dominate as the most important issue facing the country, followed by preserving democracy, according to the latest NPR/PBS *NewsHour*/Marist poll". Preserving democracy! It is difficult to remember when or if that was ever a critical issue for voters.

How might we get closer to having social justice for all?

There are some ideas that have been seldom tried but seem promising.

How do we advance social justice?

The advancement of social justice has become a critical point of progress within the field of education. Research grounded in this field has shown that continuous improvement principles embedded within social justice work have a positive impact on the sustainability and success of this work. These principles, while grounded within the field of education, are easily applicable across a variety of organizations and systems. Under the umbrella of continuous improvement, two models have been shown to address inequities and power imbalances that suppress and marginalize across a variety of levels. Research to practice partnerships and the use of communities of practice and transformation are promising models that we can consider when trying to answer this question.

What is continuous improvement?

Over the last decade, research in education has focused on the definition and examination of the principles of continuous improvement, or the solving of problems through a set of inquiry processes at the heart of which are transparency and accountability (Bush-Mecenas, 2022). The problems that continuous improvement methods strive to address are "ambiguous and wicked" problems, namely complex problems with multiple goals or value systems in play, with variability present within and across systems and networks (we have called them essentially contested concepts); these

problems are often interdependent and nested, and efforts to solve them quickly set off other consequences, outcomes, or by-products (Yurkofsky et al., 2020). Social justice problems meet all of these criteria.

Another feature of continuous improvement principles is that they are grounded in incremental progress rather than expansive, one-time improvements. The idea is that innovation that occurs thoughtfully and incrementally has a greater chance for success than dramatic sweeping initiatives (Bush-Mecenas, 2022). This avoids surface-level changes to practice that are more angled around compliance than improvement (Yurkofsky, 2021). By proceeding in such a manner, we have a greater chance of permanently disrupting unjust systems and solving the dilemma of essentially contested concepts. It requires implicitly that we can primarily expect incremental progress and continuously work towards that. It must be progress that can be seen and accepted (Bush-Mecenas, 2022).

Continuous improvement can be conceptualized as grounding improvement efforts in local problems, empowering practitioners to take an active role in research and improvement, engaging in iteration, and striving to make changes across schools and systems, not just individual classrooms (Yurkofsky et al., 2020). A critical feature of continuous improvement is the focus on accountability. The use of performance metrics, root cause analyses, and logic models can improve a group's chances of addressing problems of social justice as they happen in real time and in real-world contexts (Peurach et al., 2021). Reflective practice is at the heart of continuous improvement—models that embrace this feature include action research and design research (Peurach et al., 2021). Peurach and colleagues conceptualize this by discussing two layers within the bedrock of education: resource-forward approaches and practice-forward approaches. Resource-forward approaches focus on the availability of resources as the primary driver of improvement, while practice-forward approaches focus on the opportunities, experiences, and outcomes that can be bettered by improving instructional practice and the contexts in which it is situated (Peurach et al., 2021). Two ways of enacting a practice-forward approach can be research-practice partnerships and communities of practice and transformation.

Research-Practice Partnerships

Research-practice partnerships (RPPs) can be a great way to advance social justice work. Not only do they bridge research to practice, but, if done well, they can create long-standing relationships and identify problems and solutions directly connected to the populations and contexts they serve (Vetter et al., 2022). RPPs engage in research that addresses inequities and power imbalances (Vetter et al., 2022). It is important to note that careful planning

is required as to who is involved in this collaborative work—what may seem fair may lead to inequitable choices and decisions made by a small part of a seemingly collaborative group (Vetter et al., 2022). Vetter and colleagues outline five dimensions when building these partnerships:

1. The use of equity- and/or justice-related frameworks
2. Focused purpose of the research on equity and justice
3. Clearly defined terms related to equity and justice
4. The use of research methods and designs aligned with equity and justice
5. Clear contribution to equity and justice

Organizations should encourage the funding of equity-oriented research partnerships, and scholarship related to equity and social justice should be easily accessible (Vetter et al., 2022). We also observe that this is an ideal way to structure school–university or business–university partnerships.

Communities of Practice and Transformation

A community of practice (CoP) is a group of individuals who exchange information and ideas and negotiate the meaning of shared constructs, in the process developing relationships as well as a sense of belonging and mutual commitment (Wenger et al., 2002). They stand at the intersection between organizations and networks of common practice (Brown & Duguid, 2001). For a community of practice to be successful, its members must discuss issues important within their domain; this goes beyond role title, as a role title may be the same, but the issues that individuals face could be vastly different (Wenger et al., 2002). The importance of time is a key component of successful communities of practice, as it is only over a period of time that participants are able to build a sense of identity and shared history (Brown & Duguid, 2001; Wenger et al., 2002). This sense of shared vision does not mean that homogeneity needs to be reached within the group; rather, differentiation is encouraged and respected among members (Wenger et al., 2002). Diversity makes for deeper learning, richer relationships, and increased creativity (Wenger et al., 2002). CoPs can play a mediating role between individuals and large formal and informal social networks as well as between organizations and the surrounding environment. As a result, communities of practice are where a substantial amount of the work involved in knowledge creation and organizational learning occurs, and their value is underscored if one subscribes to the belief that useful knowledge in organizations is often best cultivated by those directly involved and who will benefit from the solutions created rather than specialists removed from a problem (Brown & Duguid, 2001). Social-emotional learning must be

approached within the context of forming strong student–teacher relationships, building inclusive classrooms and school communities, and combating deficit mindsets (Leonard & Woodland, 2022). Engage teachers in designing piloting and reflecting on curricula that actively value and engage all students. The focus is on transformative pedagogical approaches rather than initiatives (Kim & Gentle-Genetty, 2020; Leonard & Woodland, 2022).

A variant of CoPs that appears to hold promise is communities of transformation (CoTs). Communities of transformation, as proposed by Kezar and colleagues (2018), are defined as communities that create and foster innovative spaces and envision and embody a new paradigm for practice. Whereas the goals of CoPs are mostly aimed at improving work within existing practices, CoTs seek to challenge and alter underlying values. This aim is consistent with many of the tenets of transformative learning, whereby individual frames of reference can be shifted through critical reflection and discourse. CoTs have three distinct characteristics: a persuasive philosophy that challenges traditional ways of thinking, the creation of critical reflection by expressing this philosophy through various events and activities, and the development of a plan of action and incorporation of new practices into a daily routine (Kezar et al., 2018).

Finally, the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship program, which focused on recruiting teachers, has been transformed into the Citizens and Scholars fellowship program. In an age of fracture and distrust in our democracy and countless examples of local and national issues that threaten society's long-term future, the Institute for Citizens & Scholars is attempting to fundamentally rethink the ways young people are prepared to be successful citizens and problem solvers.

The organization seeks to strengthen democracy by investing in today's young people with an overarching goal: within 15 years, most Americans will be well informed, active in their communities, and committed to the future of our country. Their starting point is with youth who, in 15 years, will be the educators, mentors, civic and business leaders, elected officials, frontline workers, and constituents leading the fight for democracy and effecting positive change in their communities.

Since 2020, the C&S Civic Spring Fellowship has supported talented young people ages 14–24 ("Fellows") who work on projects that address a local need in their community, such as education, community health and wellness, economic opportunity, environmental justice, and immigration reform.

Fellows gain hands-on experience working on issues they care about while learning about local and state government, influencing systems, and coalition-building. They develop civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions

to positively affect their communities in the long term. Fellows also build an extensive network of peers and partners to help maximize their impact.

Since the launch of the Civic Spring Fellowship program, Civic Spring Fellows have influenced bipartisan bills and hosted rallies to advocate for veterans, among other successes. Fellows are deeply motivated to create civic change to strengthen our democracy.

So we argue that there is hope through new techniques and new organizations. You must join in the effort.

Conclusion

The advancement of quality social justice work depends on richer, more cohesive and more sustained engagement with practice and practice contexts (Peurach et al., 2021). There is a marked benefit from the production and use of practical knowledge in local contexts (Peurach et al., 2021). Collaboration can be transformative when partners enhance their cultural capacities for building collaboration and analyzing problems, treat each other with respect, make democratic decisions, and empower each other to successfully coordinate their activities (Kim & Gentle-Genetty, 2020).

Summary

1. Essentially contested concepts remain central to any significant work to improve society.
2. Gallie introduced the term, but it has been considered by others. The position taken in this book is summarized in this chapter.
3. To work with such concepts as a group requires working towards a "shared vision" of what the concept means for the group.
4. This does not mean absolute agreement, but enough to move forward towards change.
5. Lakoff's work holds that liberals and conservatives perceive the world differently. At some times in our history, including the time of the writing of this book, the split between liberals and conservatives is particularly strong.
6. Lakoff argues that we need to avoid absolute disagreement if we are to reach compromise.
7. In this chapter, the argument is made that reasoned and serious consideration of each significant and contested concept is important and should be encouraged in classrooms and other learning situations within the framework of critical thinking.
8. Critical thinking, in the eyes of Dewey and Lipman, leads to a "good judgment": a judgment that is supported by criteria that can be made

known. The use of these criteria, in the eyes of some, is the source of the term critical thinking.

9. We tried to move toward a “shared vision” of democracy and social justice. Reread our comments in Chapter 1 before you attempt to answer the discussion questions.
10. Conspiracy is a commonly used term and often has a negative connotation. If we say that it is a group that tries to promote a particular policy, is that negative?
11. There are examples of conspiracy that are negative, and we mention some.
12. The American Civil Liberties Union undertakes efforts to change the perceived absence of social justice. Their work includes examining efforts to ban books, as well as efforts to segregate students.
13. The Supreme Court has heard cases on banning books as denial of the right to free speech, with mixed outcomes.
14. An example of a large-scale effort to enhance social justice in New York is provided by examining the “Invest in Our New York” effort.
15. We need to find ways for groups to work together productively, including creating communities of practice and transformation.
16. We need to take advantage of the concern the public has about the loss of democracy, which, for us, includes social justice.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. How do you define an essentially contested concept? Can you give examples beyond democracy and social justice?
2. How do you define critical thinking? Is it to be applied to everything we do in life? Why or why not?
3. What is a shared vision? Have you had experience with shared vision?
4. Did we reach agreement, or shared vision, of the meanings of the essentially contested concepts of democracy and social justice? Why or why not?
5. Can you think of essentially contested concepts for which it is more difficult to reach a shared vision than democracy and social justice? Are there any for which it might be easier?
6. Give examples of how liberals and conservatives perceive the world differently. Is there any room for bridging the gap.
7. How would you assess the goals of IONY, mentioned previously? Do you know of any other examples? Try to find out where the effort stands at the time you read this book.
8. Do you agree that budgets should be “moral”? What does that mean?

9. How serious is the difference on abortion between liberals and conservatives? Is it likely that parties will reach agreement? You probably know if you are reading this several years after we write it!
10. Are you aware of any of the books on the ACLU's banned books list? Can you understand why they might be banned? How did you reach that judgment?
11. Are some sources of decisions to ban books more acceptable to you than others? For example, do you believe that parents have the right to ban books for their own children even if a school requires them?

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