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# Oppressors or Emancipators: Critical Dispositions for Preparing Inclusive School Leaders

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Leadership from school administrators is essential in creating inclusive schools. The purpose of this article is to outline the dispositions necessary for school leaders in order to develop and maintain inclusive educational services for all students. This work comes from a qualitative study of university-based experts who teach courses in leadership preparation and professional development specifically designed to address how to build and maintain inclusive schools. The article includes a description of these experts in leadership for inclusive schooling, what they see as the required dispositions, and how they foster these. The article concludes with a discussion of the educational importance of this study.

Inclusion is not about disability, nor is it only about schools. Inclusion is about social justice ...Inclusion demands that we ask, what kind of world do we want to create? ...What kinds of skills and commitment do people need to thrive in diverse society? ...By embracing inclusion as a model of social justice, we can create a world fit for all of us. (Sapon-Shevin, 2003, pp. 26, 28)

Sapon-Shevin (2003) raises the challenge that we cannot separate inclusive schooling practices from social justice. With a growing interest and increasing scholarship around the issues of teaching for social justice (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Ayers, Hunt, & Quinn, 1998; Darling-Hammond, French, & Garcia-Lopez, 2002) and leading for social justice (Grogan, 2002a, 2002b; Marshall, 2004; Marshall & Olivia, 2006; Scheurich & Skrla, 2003; Theoharis, 2007) it is essential at this moment to take heed of the necessary connection between social justice and inclusion shared by Sapon-Shevin.

This article positions creating and leading inclusive schools as a leadership imperative and a matter of social justice as a reflection of the following conditions:

1. More and more students with disabilities are being educated in the general education classroom (U.S. Department of Education, 2003) because of a legal preference for inclusion (Huefner, 2000),
2. Schools are being held accountable for all students' performance in relation to the general education curriculum (No Child Left Behind, 2002),

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3. There is a wealth of research establishing that inclusive practices for students with disabilities can truly benefit all students (Baker, Wang, & Wahlberg, 1994; Freeman & Alkin, 2000; Kennedy, Shulka, & Fryxell, 1997; McGregor & Vogelsberg, 1998; Peterson & Hittie, 2002; Sharpe, York, & Knight, 1994; Waldron & McLeskey, 1998).

4. The literature is clear that leadership, specifically principal leadership, is central to creating and sustaining inclusive schooling practices that work for all students (Capper, Frattura, & Keyes, 2000; Riehl, 2000; Stainback, Stainback, & Forest, 1989; VanHorn, Burrello, & DeClue, 1992).

Understanding the importance of the leader's role in inclusive schools is not enough to create these educational environments. Many administrators do not have sufficient knowledge of educational diversity (e.g., special education, ELL) and are not prepared to create and sustain inclusive service delivery systems (Capper et al., 2000; Powell & Hyle, 1997; Riehl, 2000; Sirotnik & Kimball 1994). Given the above realities, this article centers on the dispositions leaders require to include students effectively.

Two aspects make this article distinct from the growing body of literature on teaching and leading for social justice as well as the literature on special education and leadership. First, while there is a growing conversation and body of literature on leadership for social justice (see, for example, Grogan, 2002a, 2002b; MacKinnon, 2000; Marshall & Olivia, 2006),[1] there is surprisingly minimal literature suggesting a connection between leadership for social justice and inclusive schooling. Second, although the field of educational leadership is developing a substantive body of literature on leadership preparation,[2] there is little theoretical or practical literature about how to prepare leaders to create and lead inclusive schools.[3] This article addresses those two major gaps in education scholarship. With that in mind, the purpose of this paper is to build a greater understanding of how to prepare leaders to develop and maintain inclusive services for all students by starting with the dispositions of school leaders.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Capper, Theoharis, and Sebastian (2006) developed a framework for designing and evaluating administrative preparation programs geared to prepare leaders for social justice. This framework included examining the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessments used to deliver and measure the dispositions, knowledge, and discrete skills necessary to prepare future leaders. This article is built upon that framework by examining the curriculum and pedagogy experts use to foster the necessary dispositions for inclusive school leadership.

Hafner (2004) articulates that dispositions are "nebulously defined throughout the literature. Some refer to dispositions as belief systems while others substitute the term values for disposition" (p. 7). In order to be clear, we use the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) definition of dispositions. The ISLLC standards define disposition as what "the administrator believes in, values, and is committed to" (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996, p. 10)

Using this framework and understanding of dispositions, and in light of the previously discussed gaps in the literature, this article addresses the following research questions. In order to

prepare leaders to develop and lead inclusive schools: (1) What are the critical dispositions? and (2) What curriculum and pedagogy are used to foster these dispositions? This article focuses on the required dispositions for inclusive leaders and how curriculum and pedagogy experts foster those dispositions.[4] We begin with dispositions because the experts involved in this project unanimously described these beliefs, values, and commitments as the foundation for leading inclusive schools. We center on dispositions because we see that some administrators come to their position with a strong philosophical grounding in inclusive education and some do not. But we believe dispositions are not a fixed attribute that people either have or do not have, they cannot be mandated, but can be learned. Lastly, beginning with dispositions resonated with our belief in activist research (Fine, 1994) and the necessary role pedagogy must play in ending oppression or marginalization (Freire, 1974, 1990).

## PRESENT STUDY ON INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP DISPOSITIONS

This research is grounded in qualitative methods (Bodgan & Biklen, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) and uses a positioned subject approach (Conrad, Haworth, & Millar, 2001). In a positioned subject approach, the researcher can assume that the experts under investigation actively create meaning from and interpret their work (Conrad et al., 2001). According to Conrad et al., subjects are considered people who have "particular needs, perceptions and capabilities for action" (p. 284) where position in this context refers to the setting in which they are located.

The positioned subject approach of this inquiry was selected because it allowed us to take in varied perspectives and interpret these perspectives through the lens of an expert's own particular setting and situation. Within the context of this study, the subjects of interest were experts in the field who specifically prepare administrators to hold the critical dispositions necessary to be inclusive leaders. These experts were positioned in their particular settings and circumstances, that is, university preparation programs and professional development situations. In order to gain varied perspectives, we felt that it was important to look at experts who would be positioned in different domains of the field.

Using purposeful and snowball sampling (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Maxwell, 1998), we sought to identify experts who focus on creating inclusive leadership. We were looking for one expert from three separate but overlapping domains. The first domain is the field of educational leadership preparation. We sought an expert who was a permanent faculty member in an administrator preparation program whose teaching and research focuses on inclusive leadership. The second domain is the area of school leadership professional development. We sought an expert who was affiliated with a university (permanent, clinical, or adjunct faculty) but whose work centered primarily on leadership professional development around inclusive schooling. The third domain is diversity and curriculum. We sought a participant who worked with school leaders in preparation/professional development around inclusion but whose primary area of expertise was centered on issues of diversity and curriculum. This participant's work could originate from a number of fields, including special education, educational policy, educational foundations, curriculum studies, or curriculum and instruction.

These three domains represent varied perspectives on preparing school leaders. First, traditional administrator preparation is an important vehicle for how school leaders view and

think about inclusion and their own work. Second, school leaders are expected and required to participate in their own professional development, and this development also influences her or his thinking and work. However, preparation and professional development are not the only influences to developing inclusive leadership, thus the inclusion of the third and more broadly conceived domain. These varied perspectives are central to the use of the positioned subject approach (Conrad et al., 2001). We also sought to have geographic diversity represented in our experts by having participants who work in different areas of the United States.[5]

All participants, regardless of which domain they represented, had to meet the following five criteria. They (1) were permanent, clinical, or adjunct faculty who taught in accredited teacher and administrator preparation programs, (2) regularly taught courses that dealt with issues of inclusive schooling and educational diversity (special education, English language learners, race, etc.), (3) had a national reputation for scholarship about inclusive schools and educational diversity through publications and activity with the University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA), the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the Council of Exceptional Children (CEC), and/or TASH–Equity Opportunity and Inclusion for People with Disabilities, (4) had evidence to show that their teaching had produced more inclusive schools (their current/former students held administrative positions leading inclusive schools or in the process of restructuring their schools to become inclusive), and (5) had written/ presented over 50 research articles, books, or presentations on the topic of inclusive education. These criteria were used as a way to identify participants who are scholars, teachers, and national experts in the area of inclusive leadership.[6]

We identified three national experts who met the above criteria, who represented the three domains, and who worked in different geographic areas. The method of data collection relied on a series of in-depth interviews, a review of documents/materials (syllabi, readings, class agendas, instructional materials), and a detailed field log. The constant comparative method of data analysis was used to make sense of the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) using both deductive and inductive components (Erickson, 1985; Graue & Walsh, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The deductive analysis began with the framework Capper et al. (2006) proposed. We deductively coded the data based upon how these experts described the dispositions necessary to create and sustain inclusive schools.

We are framing this discussion of values, beliefs, and commitments around the definition of dispositions we provided in the Theoretical Framework and Research Questions section, although the three experts did not uniformly use the term "dispositions" when they spoke about preparing leaders for inclusive schools. As we identified the critical dispositions through our analysis, we shared them with the experts for further discussion, refinement, and another opportunity to clarify and, additionally, to explain how they facilitate these dispositions. The specific dispositions we discuss in the findings section did not come verbatim from the words or materials these experts provided. The dispositions came from the constant comparative analysis and from this checking back with the experts. We used one additional deductive code to capture how these experts became interested in inclusive education in order to provide more context for this study.

We will focus our discussion on (1) the expert participants, (2) what critical dispositions ground their preparation and professional development of school leaders, and (3) how they foster these dispositions during their teaching.

## EXPERT PARTICIPANTS

We provide a description of who the three participants are, their backgrounds, and how their interest in inclusive education has evolved. These participants are discussed by which domain they represented in this study.

### Elise Frattura—1st Domain: Education Leadership Preparation

The first participant in this study is Elise Frattura. She received a Ph.D. in Special Education and is now an associate dean at a large public university in a major midwestern metropolitan area. Before entering higher education full time, Frattura was an adjunct professor and the Director of Special Education and Student Services in a mid-sized district in the Midwest. She helped transform the district to provide inclusive services for all students. This district is located on the periphery of an urban area and serves students from urban, suburban, and rural communities. The racial and economic demographics have become significantly more diverse over the past 20 years. Before holding this position, she was Director of Student Services in two other districts. In total she had 12 years of public school administrative experience.

When asked about how she came to this work, she discussed the roots of her commitment to inclusive education within the context of the era in which she grew up "being a 1960s kid." She grew up outside Kent State in Ohio and attributes the activism at Kent State in the 1960s, the activism around the Vietnam War, and the Civil Rights Movement to "enhancing her understanding to building a society that is socially just, a society that ensures non-discrimination." She shared that her commitment to social justice and non-discrimination is what drew her to becoming a leader of inclusive schooling.

Frattura dropped out of high school and became a cook at Head Start. She did eventually go to college and became a high school teacher. She went into teaching for "ego reasons." She shared:

> I wanted to teach those that nobody else could teach. I knew I could do it better . . . schools should not segregate kids, I knew that some of these things did not sit well with me—those beliefs made me consider administration.

As a teacher and graduate student, Frattura described that she "did a lot of parent advocacy and consulting with schools about service delivery." In working with families, she saw that many families "were feeling a huge loss about the education their children were receiving." Her commitment to social justice was combined with her need to "understand how school systems are run." She felt that administrators needed to be leading the charge in including every child. That evolution led Frattura into administration and then higher education to train future and current administrators. She has published 11 peer-reviewed articles on her work, over 50 other articles and presentations, and has co-authored two books on leadership for inclusive schools and social justice.

### Richard Villa—2nd Domain: Leadership Professional Development

The second expert in this study is Richard Villa. He has an Ed.D. in Educational Administration and a master's degree in Special Education. Over his career he has held the positions of general education teacher, special education teacher, special education coordinator, director of instructional services and staff development, and professor. Villa has worked as an educational consultant working closely with administrators on issues of inclusive education for the past 13 years. He has co-authored eight books on the topic of inclusive education and has written over 100 articles and book chapters on the topic of inclusive education and leadership. When asked how he has come to hold such deep beliefs about inclusive education, he responded, "I guess it is coincidence, opportunity, and a belief that inclusion is really mostly about social justice." It seems based on his career trajectory that these beliefs have sustained him on his path to creating more just schools.

When speaking of the origins of this work he goes back in time 20 years when he was hired as a special educator working in segregated classrooms. As he taught in these separate settings, he observed something that has held great meaning for him as an educator.

> I watched the self-esteem of these kids fall as they came to my room, as they got further behind academically ... and socially. The following year, I was a general education science teacher, and I watched the same thing happen as students left my room. I saw them fall behind more and more. I saw how separate special education programs created social stigma for each of these great kids. I knew in my heart that this was not the right way to educate these students. It all seemed frankly quite silly to me.

Villa's convictions around this topic began here, and grew, as he became an administrator.

As an administrator, Villa shared that he began to see not only the problems in special education but also that education in general was in trouble. He observed many different groups of marginalized students who were not succeeding and saw it all as a failure of the school system, not a failure of the learner. "I decided the answer to the bigger problems in school was not to remove the learner from the most enriching academic environments. The solution is quite the opposite. It becomes essentially an issue of access or of social justice."

His beliefs and convictions for inclusive education qualitatively changed while he was an administrator. Villa became aware of the possibilities for including students with much more significant disabilities. He spoke of his mentors, his wife, teachers, and friends who are now widely known as the pioneers of the inclusive education movement. At this time in his career, he has begun to teach this philosophy to educators and administrators nationally and internationally as a college instructor and consultant for preservice and in-service administrators.

### Mara Sapon-Shevin—3rd Domain: Diversity and Curriculum

Our third participant was Mara Sapon-Shevin. Sapon-Shevin received her Ed.D. in Curriculum and Instruction with a focus on teacher education. Her bachelor's degree was in elementary education and master's degree focused on behavioral disorders. She has written four books on the topic of inclusive schools and over 100 articles and book chapters. She started in education as a

special education teacher. She became a pioneering university faculty in the area of mainstreaming and now has a joint appointment in a teaching and leadership department that includes general education, special education, and educational leadership.

Sapon-Shevin described personal experiences of being Jewish where she experienced marginalization and, as a child, "felt left out." Even at a young age she knew "that feeling left out was not right; no one should have to feel that." Sapon-Shevin also reflected on her own academic and intellectual abilities and that "being really smart led to teasing and isolation . . . Students should not have to choose between being smart and having friends."

Sapon-Shevin states that she came to the topic of inclusive schools through the desire to "construct a different social climate in schools." She said, "I have real feelings of righteous indignation—a different vision of the way schools could be. . . . Diversity must be seen as enriching, not as a problem." She started as a teacher working with students with emotional and behavioral disabilities in segregated programs. "That was ridiculous . . . I knew that segregating them was not the way to treat kids with behavioral issues. It did not help anybody." In her work with students with disabilities and her critique of gifted education (another form of segregated schooling), she states: "We need a school system to address the whole thing, to really meet everybody's social and academic needs within the classroom community. . . . If we keep pulling kids out, who are the four kids who are going to be left?"

## CRITICAL DISPOSITIONS REQUIRED FOR INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

Our study of these experts suggests that they purposefully select curriculum and pedagogical techniques to foster the essential dispositions to develop and sustain inclusive schools. We will discuss the three dispositions that these experts all identified as necessary to leading inclusive schools and how they work to "teach" those aspects.

These dispositions that leaders need to create and sustain inclusive schools were considered foundational, and the faculty felt they needed to spend "a good deal of time on these pieces." There were strong commonalities or themes that emerged among the dispositions that these experts discussed. The specific dispositions discussed next did not come verbatim from the expert participants. The analysis and the authors' interpretation of the participants' words and experiences produced the three dispositions. These dispositions are (1) taking global/theoretical perspective, (2) possessing a bold, imaginative vision, and (3) embracing a sense of agency. Each of these will now be discussed.

### Critical Disposition 1: Taking a Global Theoretical Perspective

The first disposition that the experts discussed was that leaders needed to have a global theoretical perspective on schools and on inclusion. In his discussion of dispositions, Villa began by saying, "For leaders to be successful, they need to see the issues in the broader context." He discusses that they need to understand that inclusive schools might come from the field of special education, but inclusion is really "about social justice and creating equity for all students. It is not just special education."

Frattura also began her discussion of dispositions with the idea that leaders need to wrestle with "the theoretical underpinnings of marginalization." She continued:

> We need to be able to understand how each of us sees the world. [While it is neither easy nor what students want to do], they need to first understand theoretical perspective, critical theory, positivist, post-modern, interpretivist paradigms. . . . They need to see that schools are set up in a positivist way and that way embodies a particular perspective. From there they must understand critical theory and oppression. . . . The theoretical underpinnings of leading inclusive schools are understanding how both in the past and present we continue to marginalize vast numbers of students based on race, based on income, based on sexual orientation, based on language, based on ability. When we remove students from the regular class, when we structure our schools in this way, we and . . . I mean that we need to take ownership for this; we are acting as the oppressors. Administrators need to understand that when we do this and allow this to happen, then we are telling kids they do not belong, and we are oppressing and marginalizing them. This has to feel personal, my students need to see that they are either oppressors or emancipators; there is not middle ground. This is not about disability or only disability; it is about all marginalization. When they see that, when they understand oppression and that they are oppressors, then they want to do something. Then they can change how things are done.

Frattura concluded with why this global theoretical perspective is essential: "If they do not know why they would support inclusive schools, the work to accomplish it is not worth it without this knowledge. They will not be able to lead this if they don't understand why."

Sapon-Shevin stated a similar belief when she said, "We have to recognize that there is no such position as neutral. . . . You are not a leader if you are not doing anything about ending tracking, separate programs, and exclusion." Sapon-Shevin felt a necessary component of this global theoretical perspective was believing that inclusive schools are:

> desirable and that leaders have to make the leap to believing that really positive things can occur for all kids. . . . they have to feel that inclusion is not a special education thing but that it is positive for everyone, students, staff, teachers and parents.

This first critical disposition is clearly about understanding the big picture connecting social justice and inclusion. These three experts describe it as the foundation for developing schools that embrace diversity and include students of varying abilities and varying areas of difference. That embracing allows leaders to envision bold possibilities for including all children, which leads directly to the second disposition

## Critical Disposition 2: Possessing a Bold, Imaginative Vision

The second critical disposition the participants felt was essential for leaders of inclusive schools was to possess a bold imaginative vision. This vision is built upon that global theoretical perspective. Frattura offered, "When they get the theoretical perspective, they can make changes, but they need to be able to think big and envision a better way."

Sapon-Shevin discussed that after leaders understand the big picture and understand that inclusive schools are desirable

They need to have a vision of inclusion. They need to believe that this is possible. . . . I find that this is where many administrators and future administrators fall short. They do not have a big enough vision. . . . [For example] when there are problems in the lunchroom too often their vision is "we need another staff member to help supervise." But the vision needs to be much bigger . . . [instead] they have to be able to imagine how the lunchroom could look and feel. . . . It is the combination in believing that our dreams for inclusion are really possible and having the imagination to picture what could be.

Sapon-Shevin added, "Leaders need to see how all the pieces fit together into the big picture of justice and inclusion. All the pieces of the school need to fit into that vision." She cautioned: "I see administrators who lose their common sense" and do not notice all the many decisions, policies, and actions they implement that do not support that inclusive vision.

Villa echoed Sapon-Shevin's sentiment about the local decisions fitting in with the global perspective. "[Leaders] need to have a dual vision. First, a social justice orientation and second a local vision for their own school." He felt the combination of "thinking globally and acting locally" was essential to the leader's vision. He continued by adding that the vision is contingent upon "[leaders] needing to genuinely like kids and adults." But more than liking, Villa discussed that leaders need to believe at their core "that all kids and adults can and will learn . . . They need to be concerned with excellence for kids at the same time have the ability to foster a learning community for adults." He added that leaders require "creativity to build a bold vision" and "the resourcefulness to make it happen."

All three experts discussed the critical disposition of a bold imaginative vision as a necessary component of inclusive leadership. This vision built upon the global theoretical perspective. They saw that both of these formed the groundwork for the last disposition they discussed: a sense of agency.

## Critical Disposition 3: Embracing a Sense of Agency

The three experts each made the case in different ways that having a global perspective and a bold vision are precursors for the disposition of agency—or a sense that as leaders they have the power and ability to make changes, the power and ability to do this work. They cannot recognize it as a problem or an issue, and then act and feel powerless in the face of major obstacles. They need to deeply believe that they can work to make more inclusive schooling happen. Sapon-Shevin shared, "First they need the see that inclusion is desirable and possible in order to have a vision for inclusion. Then they need to feel that agency. These leaders need to feel that they can make it happen." She continued, "There is such a thing as a respectful use of power . . . [Administrators] need to feel they are allowed to bring a vision of inclusive school. . . . They need to see they have the ability to change things."

Villa described that administrators need "tenacity" to feel "that they can accomplish an inclusive vision. . . . It is about envisioning inclusive schools, but it is also about knowing that they can create a more just and equitable school." Villa described that while administrators require the sense that they can and will create more equitable inclusive schools they also "need to be approachable" in order to do the actual work.

Frattura described this agency slightly differently:

> When these administrators understand the theoretical and see that we are oppressors, they never see the world the same again. . . . Teaching the theoretical is not just about leaders knowing theory, it is to get them to a place where the need to take action, a place where they feel compelled to take action, a place where they feel they can make changes to become inclusive.

These three experts believed that future and current administrators need to develop a sense that they can indeed make the changes necessary to create and sustain inclusive schools. In sum, they discussed that the three dispositions needed to build upon and from each other. First, taking a broad theoretical perspective should help lead to possessing a bold imaginative vision. Those two would then compliment embracing a sense of agency. All three experts who work in different parts of the country shared in their own way all three critical dispositions. They also discussed how they foster the development of these dispositions in current and future school leaders.

## FOSTERING INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP CRITICAL DISPOSITIONS

As these experts identified aspects of these dispositions we directly asked them about how they worked to foster that belief, value, or commitment in their students. After completing our initial analysis that produced the three dispositions, we went back to the experts to probe for ways they facilitated the embracing of those dispositions. When asked how to "teach" these critical dispositions to practicing and preservice administrators, their responses varied; however, they each shared that facilitating the development of these was not straightforward. They felt this process was complex, multifaceted, personal, and non-linear. They all were adamant that this learning needed to be personal and grounded in the local school situation. While all three shared that the process for students acquiring each disposition was far more involved than course readings, in-class activities, and assignments, they were willing to share how they contributed to their students' development in this area. We share their suggestions and ideas across each of the three critical dispositions: taking global/theoretical perspective, possessing a bold, imaginative vision, and embracing a sense of agency.

### Fostering Critical Disposition 1: A Global/Theoretical Perspective

The participants shared a combination of starting locally with their students' personal experiences and theoretical underpinnings. Frattura (2006) begins with the movie *Color of Fear* as a startling beginning to the course and "slap in the face about marginalization and power." During their second class they unpack and discuss how the film relates to inclusive schools. They also do "serious theoretical readings about epistemologies and theoretical underpinnings. As a part of that I now have them read Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.[7]" She continued,

> To help them better understand theoretical perspectives, I put them in groups and they have to create, with play dough, a representation of a theoretical perspective. Each group is given a different perspective and they have to make a physical symbol or metaphor and explain it to the class. (This

expert gave Colleen Capper credit for this activity and shared the in-class activity description that Colleen Capper provided.)

Frattura and Sapon-Shevin have students draw a representation of how they serve children in their school or district. Frattura does this as an in-class activity and the directions are in the syllabus as "Draw a picture of current educational services provided in your district and how students are determined eligible." This includes, but is not limited to, special education, English language learners, Title I,[8] talented and gifted, and other distinct programs. With that drawing students "have to explain and discuss what perspective or framework is it from.... and the problems or successes of the models." Sapon-Shevin had a colleague/former administrator model this in class, but has students gather this information and prepare the visual as an assignment.[9]

All three experts use a combination of data that students bring to class from their own schools[10] as well as data, research, and statistics[11] about the ineffectiveness of pull-out, self-contained, or segregated services to help create the foundation that exclusionary practices are harmful, and Frattura explained that as a part of the broad perspective "they need to understand the poor outcomes of non-inclusive programs."

Sapon-Shevin shared,

> I begin with students' own history, and we work to unpack it ... they re-connect with when they felt excluded, and remember how difficult that was for them ... we then move to when they felt they were excluding others and how that felt . . . and that was hard too. I tap into the feelings of both; I start with the emotions. I do this in the beginning of the semester but not the first night, since we need to build community in class before we can effectively unpack our experiences.

Villa shared the outline and materials he used for a sequence of activities as one way he tries to help accomplish this. He titles this series as "Rediscovering the Right to Belong": (1) Have participants view the video, "Rediscovering the Right to Belong;[12]" (2) ask participants to discuss the video with a neighbor or two; (3) request that they share the major learning(s) from the video as well as the feelings they experienced as they viewed it; and (4) ask participants to share examples from their own lives that support what the authors are contending.

In all of these examples, the experts use reflections to better understand their students' thinking about this disposition. One expert emphatically stated, "I feel [through reflections and discussion] that my students are really understanding and embracing inclusive schooling more now that I begin with the theory. Adding that theory really has made a difference."

These experts discussed various ways they engage their students to foster the critical disposition of a global/theoretical perspective. They viewed these experiences not necessarily as linear but as building toward how they attempt to foster the second disposition.

## Fostering Critical Disposition 2: A Bold, Imaginative Vision

Villa stated:

> In order for them to be able to have a vision, they first have to see it [inclusion] in action. You have to show them inclusive schools, teach them through stories, site visits, videos, readings, conferences,

and institutes. Surround them with others who are in the process of becoming more inclusive. As soon as they are on the right track, have them begin to support other schools by presenting their own information to others. This not only helps them hone their vision, but helps to sustain them in the process.

Frattura uses specific real schools to illustrate and help build the belief that real inclusion is possible. She brings in guest leaders who are committed to this work and have made significant changes. According to the course syllabus there are at least four class periods where principals, directors of special education, or other administrators come to class to share their experience making a vision on inclusive schools reality. Through these guests and specific readings, .

> I try to give these students the sense that all this stuff I talk about in terms of inclusive, just schools is possible and it does happen ... it is important they see that this is not something the university is pushing down their throat, this is real, it happens and letting them see and experience it as much as they can helps them to envision in for their school.

Another example that Villa provided, which he uses to teach administrators how to form a vision, is a systematic planning process like MAPs (McGill Action Planning Process) or PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope). These processes were originally designed as personal future plans for students with disabilities, but this respondent changes the prompts and uses these processes to help administrators organize and clarify their local vision.

Sapon-Shevin uses the students' schools and experiences to practice bold imaginative visioning. According to the syllabus she provided, students bring in information and data about specific topics at four points in the course (student service models, staff relationships, school climate, and relationships with families). After students unpack and examine what they are learning,

> They are asked over and over to create a vision for what they would like to see in that area ... this is hard for many of them. But, in maintaining my expectations of a big vision and pushing them to think big, I see many of them begin to do that with practice over time.

These experts saw possessing and using that vision as integral components to their own pedagogy. They discuss how their students' global/theoretical perspective and their bold/imaginative vision together contributed to helping students embrace a sense of agency.

## Fostering Critical Disposition 3: Embracing a Sense of Agency

The experts stated that a sense of responsibility or ability to do this work [agency] comes after their students develop a broad theoretical base and a vision. One way that these experts helped their students gain a sense of agency was through continually making them do the mental work. Frattura stated,

> There becomes a time in class when they want me to tell them the answers. I am tempted to tell them how I might handle a situation. I resist my temptation and turn the question around and ask them to solve their own problems. I restate their question and write it on the white board and put the phrase, "In what ways might we ... " before the question. Then all the students go to work on the problem.

> This shifts me from the center of the power dynamic. More importantly it gives them some sense of power. It makes them feel that they can do the work; it is much better for them.

According to the course material and syllabus, Frattura's final assignment requires students to outline specific steps they can take to move their current school structure and norms toward meaningfully inclusive services.

Sapon-Shevin discussed that with each topic or issue students are asked to think about how to tackle it. "I have them commit to doing something, even something small that they can do tomorrow that will help change their situations. ... They practice taking action, which leads to them seeing they can make changes, they can have an affect." According to the course materials she provided, she requires students to identify one aspect of their current school where they identify growth needed in becoming more inclusive and lay out a specific plan—week-by-week and month-by-month—that they can accomplish in their current position. Two of the three experts discussed that when developing a sense of agency, this needs to be done in a planful and strategic way.

In sum, the three experts described the critical dispositions necessary for leaders to create and sustain inclusive schools. While they all saw that facilitating the acquisition of these dispositions is complex and on going, they shared various strategies they have used to accomplish that goal. The findings from this study suggest that there is much to be learned and shared from university faculty teaching courses to prepare administrators to create and lead inclusive schools. It is our hope that in sharing this information, it will help build the capacity of administrators to lead toward more inclusive and socially just schools.

## DISCUSSION: EDUCATIONAL IMPORTANCE OF THIS STUDY

The field of "Educational leadership does not have a history of being on the forefront when it comes to social justice" (Kohl as quoted in MacKinnon, 2000, p. 13). In light of this history, and realizing Sapon-Shevin's (2003) connection between social justice and inclusion, this article takes steps to move the field of administration toward social justice through examination of how to prepare school leaders to develop and maintain inclusive schools. It is in the public interest to combine what is known about the benefits of inclusive schools and the leadership necessary to sustain them to allow more children to reap the benefits of this type of schooling. In connecting inclusion and social justice, Sapon-Shevin asks, "What kinds of skills and commitments do people need?" (p. 26) for inclusive schools and society. Analyzing and sharing the curriculum and pedagogy from nationally renowned scholars/teachers can help address Sapon-Shevin's question and can assist others in the field to prepare their students to become inclusive school leaders. Certainly, an important practice in K-12 education is for expert teachers to share their knowledge and skills to help their colleagues grow and refine their teaching. Administrator preparation and professional development should be no different. We all can benefit from the knowledge and experience of skilled scholars/teachers in preparing inclusive school leaders.

In administrator preparation we are faced by several challenges, including future leaders who do not come to do social justice work. Many potential leaders have not seen a different or a better way, and though many state their desire to do this type of work they require particular dispositions to become an inclusive school leader. Our central purpose necessitates implications

for administrator preparation. The implications of this work come directly from the respondents. First, we must use this knowledge to create a curriculum that brings future leaders to discuss and consider these essential beliefs outlined above. Second, we need to help the future leaders see the broader context of marginalization through explicit teaching. Third, we need to help these individuals see themselves as change agents who are not as helpless as they might believe in the face of the larger unchangeable school systems. Through many of the practices and techniques outlined in this article, we may begin to help future leaders to imagine, create, and maintain a bold new educational system where all students rightfully belong.

We recognize, as each of the experts did, that just "covering" this information does not mean that all future and current administrators will embody inclusive leadership. However, given that specifically preparing administrators to be inclusive leaders has not been a historic priority of many preparation programs (Capper et al., 2006; Frattura & Capper, 2007; Theoharis, 2004), reframing preparation and professional development with this at the center we anticipate can make a significant difference. We also recognize the intense resistance that comes with championing inclusive schooling and know that making leading inclusive schools a central tenet of leadership development will not eliminate that resistance. We conclude with the words of Frattura:

> When we give them a foundation in oppression, and we come back to them again and again with why exclusion does not work, and we give them ways to think about their schools differently, then I have seen time and time again, that resistance to inclusive leadership subsides. It is never easy; it takes time and persistence, but when we instill these beliefs, our students can lead this way and systematically create a more just society . . . They do not choose to be oppressors; they choose to be emancipators.

## NOTES

1. This is further evidenced by the University Council of Educational Administration Annual Meeting (UCEA) and the American Educational Research Association Programs (AERA) from 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006, and additionally the development of a new AERA special interest group, Leadership for Social Justice.
2. See, for example, Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996; Hafner, 2004. Additionally, the University Council of Educational Administration has launched a new peer-reviewed journal dedicated to leadership education, and the American Educational Research Association sponsors a special interest group focusing on issues of teaching in educational administration.
3. Frattura (2006) and Frattura and Capper (2007) are notable exceptions.
4. As a follow-up, we are now examining the knowledge and skills necessary to lead inclusive schools.
5. We did not establish quotas for where the participants needed to work but we wanted a range of geographic areas. For example, we did not want all three participants to be working primarily on the west coast or in the south. Through purposeful sampling we achieved the geographic balance where one participant was from the west coast, one from the Midwest, and one from the east coast.
6. We started the purposeful and snowball sampling process with faculty in our educational leadership and special education programs. We used the suggestions we were given across all three domains, along with our own knowledge of experts in inclusive leadership. From the initial stage we were given five names of possible participants. We contacted those experts, four of whom replied. All four of these referred us to other people as well as completing the participant screen themselves. The sample snowballed to 11 experts in total. These possible participants appeared to have members across all three domains. In completing the participant screen, there were five possible participants who met our criteria. Across these five experts, two different people could have covered all three domains. One possible participant would have fit into either

the first or third domain but did not agree to participate. Another possible participant became unavailable due to travel commitments. This left three participants—one in each domain.

7. Reading portions of Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is included in the course syllabus at the beginning of the semester.

8. Title I is a common name for a section of the historic Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. It has been reauthorized a number of times since its inception. The most recent reauthorization was a part of No Child Left Behind (2002). Part A of Title I provides funding to states and districts with the purpose of assisting student performance in schools where there are concentrations of children from low-income families. Title I monies are used in a number of ways which typically include funding school-wide improvements or providing targeted assistance to specific students.

9. The assignment description in the syllabus is: "Collect the following information from your school: 1. Create a map of your service delivery for special education, Title I, ELL, T&G, etc. (This will be modeled in class.) What other information would help you understand the service delivery of your school? (We will make a list in class.) 2. Complete a BRIEF write-up of who supervises, who hires, and who controls the allocation for each staff member.

10. One of the instructors has this as one of the major assignments of the course. The syllabus states: Data Collection—Students will work in groups to collect data on their current school or district. If a student is not currently associated with a district—one will be provided. Complete Appendix B of Frattura & Capper, in press.

11. Two of the experts used a presentation or mini-lecture using their state and national data about students' with disabilities performance in combination with highlighting findings from numerous research studies done in the past 30 years about the potential of strong inclusion models. They shared their class agendas and PowerPoint presentations with us as a part of our collection of data. Some but not all of the data the two experts used can be found in Frattura and Capper (in press ). Some of the research they used can be found in McGregor and Vogelsberg (1998). Additional research can be found in Peterson and Hittie (2002). Additionally, they used they own state and local data to enrich their presentations.

12. A link to information on how to acquire the video "Rediscovering the Right to Belong" can be found at http://www.normemma.com/videos.htm

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