ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: LEARNING TO TEACH FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOMS OF PRIVILEGE

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The purposes of this study were to examine how Social Justice Education (SJE) was envisioned and enacted at an elite school and to examine what the experiences of the school's early childhood teachers were as they participated in professional development (PD) programming around SJE. Through embedded case study methodology, the researcher analyzed the school as one unit, with the five teacher participants as bound cases within this context. Conducted in 2017, data included interviews with school leaders, curriculum documents, school documents, PD materials, teacher interviews, and classroom observations. These data were analyzed in the context of a theoretical framework of SJE developed from the literature.

Findings indicated that SJE was largely defined by the teacher participants and the School Head as a way to create a welcoming school community and that observed classroom practices aligned with this definition. Administrators and the School Mission & Statement of Community Values, however, included taking action against inequity in the definition, a conceptualization of SJE that would be challenging to fully realize in the context of the school and professional cultures at the time of the study. The school and

professional cultures were also found to be key factors in how teacher learning was experienced by the teachers. Each teacher participant positioned herself as an outsider to these cultures in some way, and each described this position as having an impact on her implementation of SJE. Participants described their learning experiences as both personal and professional, and they expressed that PD that supported development of their critical lenses and their classroom practices was impactful.

Implications for professional developers and school leaders include the importance of understanding the school and larger socio-political context in which teachers are learning about SJE. Three areas of focus for PD were also identified: teacher self-knowledge, critical lens development, and training programs for specific curriculum and pedagogy that supports SJE. Implications for research include inquiry into the role of school and professional culture in shifting schoolwide practices to SJE and into the impact of PD that emphasizes teacher self-knowledge, critical lens development, and training in SJE curriculum programs.

LEARNING TO TEACH FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOMS OF PRIVILEGE

by

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Dedications

To Ganna, who always understood the value of schooling. I hope I have made you proud.

To my three little boys, who made this twice as challenging to complete and four times as meaningful. You are my reason. I love you always.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Teaching, whether social justice oriented or not, is complex and personal. Ask a group of educators what they do, and you might hear about classroom management, lesson and unit design, curriculum writing, program development, individualized educational plans, selection of instructional materials, and family communication and support. You might hear about caring for students' social and emotional health, inspiring intellectual growth, supporting their skill development, or counseling students and their families. No matter the discipline or grade level, K-12 educators in various school contexts engage in these tasks and make decisions about what and how to teach children based on their stances toward teaching and learning, whether they are aware of these stances or not. From some educators, you might also hear about how teaching is the way they hope to change the world. For many, these words sound trite or clichéd. For a teacher who intentionally teaches for social justice, however, this is at the heart of why and how they teach. This mission pervades their practices and guides their decision-making in their daily work with students.

This study provides insight into the learning experiences, the complex personal and professional stories, of teachers who were learning to teach for social justice through school-sponsored professional development and how this learning was impacted and informed by the school context in which they were teaching. More specifically, this study reports on the experiences of early childhood teachers who taught in predominantly White and affluent classrooms within a school that was pursuing social justice practices as part of its overall academic program.

Social Justice Education

Social justice education (SJE), although it is at the forefront of dialogue within many branches of the educational community, has many definitions, terms, and implications. Its almost-ubiquitous presence in most teacher education programs has attracted much critique. Some scholars (e.g., Grant & Agosto, 2008; Zeichner, 2006) have critiqued the term social justice for its lack of specificity in teacher education. Others (e.g., Carlisle, Jackson, & George, 2006; Dover, 2013; North, 2008) have analyzed the term in-depth and wrestled with the tensions within the different conceptualizations. Despite these tensions, across conceptual frameworks such as democratic education, critical pedagogy, culturally responsive education, multicultural education, anti-bias education, and others, common tenets serve as the foundation of SJE: a commitment to dismantling systems of inequity; classrooms that welcome the knowledge, voices, and backgrounds of all students; and the establishment of high academic expectations for all students (Carlisle, Jackson, & George, 2006; Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Dover, 2013; Dover, 2015; North, 2008; Sleeter, 2005; Swalwell, 2013).

In addition to the challenge of coherently defining SJE, there are also several categories of critique for SJE. Cochran-Smith, Barnatt, Lahann, Shakman, and Terrell (2009) outline three of these that are dominant in the field of teacher education: the knowledge critique, the ideology critique, and the free speech critique. Critics challenge the rigor of SJE, arguing that it is "fluffy" education that emphasizes students merely feeling good about their learning and exploring their identities rather than engaging in high-level work. They also argue that SJE limits the extent to which teacher candidates

can engage in free thought, effectively indoctrinating students with a particular ideology rather than encouraging them to develop their own ideas and opinions. Cochran-Smith et al. respond to these by arguing that rigor and SJE are not at all mutually exclusive, that SJE should always engage students in high-level critical work, and that teaching and teacher education is always political in nature, whether the content and instruction is social-justice oriented or not.

For this study, I conceptualize SJE as a coherent, comprehensive approach, belief system, pedagogy, and curriculum that holds central the idea that teaching and learning have the power to transform lives and make the world a better, more equitable place. I also conceptualize it as a set of practices that lead to rigor, responsive teaching, and support for all children in early childhood classrooms. This definition aligns with the work of scholars in many areas of education research (e.g., Apple & Beane, 2007; Banks, 2004; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Gay, 2010; Nieto & McDonough, 2011; Sleeter, 2005). Under this definition, which I develop further in Chapter 2, teachers who teach for social justice create classrooms that are student-centered and value each student's knowledge and background, inviting them fully to contribute to the classroom community. They hold high expectations for all students, practice asset rather than deficit thinking about their students, and compel each of them to be not only the best students, but the best members of their community. They explicitly introduce topics of identity, inequity, inequality, and oppression into their curriculum and instruction. They also examine their communities through a critical lens and prepare and require their students to do the same so that they can work to dismantle systems of inequity, both while they are engaging in learning experiences at school and in the future.

For this study, I examined how SJE was envisioned and enacted at Harper Academy (HA), an elite Pre-Kindergarten-12 college preparatory school in the American South. The theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2 guided this analysis. HA's student population is 80% White, and 84% of families pay the roughly $16,000 tuition in full each year. I selected this site because it was predominately White and wealthy and because its Lower School had just begun focusing on building teacher practices in SJE in an intentional way and supporting this focus through targeted PD. Because the school was predominantly White and wealthy, and because the early childhood teachers were experiencing learning about SJE through school-sponsored PD, this site was an ideal one for this study.

Privilege

What do I mean by "privilege"? For this study, I conceptualize groups of people who are privileged as those who benefit from cultural norms, policies, institutions, and systems as a result of their membership in dominant identity groups in a given context (Choules, 2007b; Curry-Stevens, 2007; Goodman, 2011; Johnson, 2006; Leonardo, 2009; McIntosh, 1990). All people can be "privileged," depending on the context, although there are those who benefit from privilege in most situations and are a part of an elite group based on their identities (Choules, 2007b; Swalwell, 2013). For this study, I explored the experiences of those who work primarily with young children who are privileged by their race (White) and class (middle or upper middle class).

The classrooms on which I focused my research were overwhelmingly White and affluent, the school leaders and teachers at the school are predominantly White, middle class women, and I am a White, middle-class woman. Why study these teachers and their

experiences when there is an urgent need for scholars and researchers to interrogate the learning and systems of those who experience oppression? Why shift the lens to those who benefit most from the policies and practices social justice educators and scholars seek to re-imagine?

Systems of oppression are *systems* rather than single individuals operating in oppressive ways, and all schools, including those that educate the privileged, can be places of potential transformation and can be powerful tools to dismantle these systems (Apple, 2013; Choules, 2007a; Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011). Teachers who work in schools that serve children who live in poverty, students whose basic needs are not predictably and reliably met, and teachers who struggle to find resources to support their daily instruction urgently need the attention of researchers and scholars; the learning of these teachers is critical to understand in order to support them effectively, for all students are entitled to receive a high-quality education delivered by skilled teachers. Research, theory, and action that originates within communities and/or is conducted with local collaboration, are particularly important (see Apple and Beane, 2007). In pursuing this study, however, I am responding to Apple's (2013) entreaty to "...pay considerably more attention [than has been paid in the past] to those who are situated in classed, gendered, and raced positions that give them more advantages because of that very location" (as cited in Swalwell, 2013, p. xv). Choules (2007a), as well, asks that we broaden our lens on the oppressed to include examination of the privileged so that we might avoid placing the burden of change on the oppressed and not lose sight of the systemic nature of inequity. Doing this, she argues, holds all of us who experience privilege accountable and keeps us from viewing inequity as something outside of our

own experiences. McIntosh (1990), too, compels those who benefit from privilege to take responsibility for making the world more equitable.

Children Within Privilege

Not all Harper Academy students experience race and class privilege, however. Twenty percent (20%) of the student body identify as nonwhite. While data on social class is more difficult to obtain, 16% of students receive financial aid for the roughly $16,000 tuition, which indicates that not all students are able to access this expensive education easily. Research describes the experiences of students who are marginalized within classrooms dominated by White, affluent students as characterized by lower academic achievement, lower levels of self-esteem than their peers, and greater likelihood of attrition throughout their schooling (Delpit, 1995; Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011). As I inquired into teachers' experiences, much of our conversation centered on students who are in the racial or class minority and their experiences and learning in a predominately White and affluent school. Supporting teachers who teach students of color and students who are not affluent in communities of privilege has urgency because of the vulnerabilities students experience as a result of racism and classism.

As for students in communities of privilege who are White and affluent, they will likely continue to be in positions of power throughout their lives. It is important that they, like their peers who are less affluent and/or who are of color, are ready to lead with equity at the forefront of their minds and hearts in order to make their communities more equitable. Children of privilege are a part of the systems that create, sustain, and reproduce oppression—we all are—and, in turn, they are a part of the ways that these

systems must be dismantled and re-imagined with equity in mind (Apple, 2013; Choules, 2007a; Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Goodman, 2011; Swalwell, 2013).

Early Childhood

How do early childhood teachers, grades Pre-Kindergarten to 2nd grade, learn to create social justice oriented classrooms and curriculum that inspire and prepare students of racial and class privilege, as well as those who experience marginalization within this community, to make the world more equitable? Many parents and teachers argue that talking to young students about prejudice, stereotypes, racism, and other topics that are central to a social justice curriculum is a developmentally inappropriate practice (Derman-Sparks, 2008; Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011). Research into children's understanding of racial differences and similarities suggests, however, that children as young as five can begin to understand scientific explanations for these differences and similarities, providing a foundation for discussion about race as both a social construct as well as something central to people's experience in our society (Brown & Bigler, 2005; Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001). Practitioner self-studies also suggest that young children tend to express that a more equitably distributed power structure, a system that is more "fair," is preferable to one that is "unfair" (Cowhey, 2006; Derman-Sparks, 2008; Whitney, 1999). Taken together, these two bodies of research indicate that there is a window of opportunity for building on students' conceptualizations of equity and understanding of identity through explicit SJE work that supports students' empathy, understanding, and activism skills.

Study Focus

This study focused on how HA conceptualized and practiced SJE and what teacher learning at this school was like as a part of schoolwide efforts to develop teachers' SJE practices. My findings illuminate the experience of learning to teach for social justice in early childhood classrooms of privilege and how the professional and school cultures and larger socio-political context in which these classrooms were situated impacted this experience.

I used an embedded case study approach to address my research questions. The school served as the larger case and the teacher participants were five cases embedded within the larger one. Through my review of the literature, I developed a theoretical framework of SJE, described in Chapter 2, and I used this framework as a structure for analysis of the data, which included teacher and school leader interviews, classroom observations, curriculum documents, professional development materials, and school documents. I looked within each case for patterns and insights as well as across cases in order to more fully understand what it was like to learn to teach for social justice in this school community.

Research Questions

I asked two research questions to focus my inquiry:

1. How did an elite school envision and enact social justice education?
2. What were the experiences of the school's early childhood teachers as they learned about SJE?

Scope

This study examined how SJE was envisioned by teacher and administrator participants as well as how SJE was enacted at the school. My windows into SJE practices were the classrooms of the participants as well as my informal interactions with families, teachers, administrators, and students who were not participating in the study. This bound my case by grade levels, since I did not interact with individuals who were a part of the Middle and Upper Schools. I also did not observe formal instruction in classrooms other than those of the participants, although I did observe grade level events, such as a rehearsal for a class performance and a gathering to prepare for a field trip. Moreover, I did not include analysis of how SJE was envisioned at the school by individuals who were not a part of the study, although I did analyze pertinent school documents in relation to my theoretical framework.

This study also inquired into what the experience of learning to teach for social justice was like for teachers working in early childhood classrooms in elite schools. I have described the boundaries of this study as they pertain to grade levels being taught and school demography. It is also important to define, however, the boundaries of my analysis. First, although classroom practices were a large part of the interview discussions, as well as the focus of my observations, I did not analyze these data for teacher effectiveness or evaluate teachers' practices in any formal way. Instead, I observed how SJE appeared in teachers' classrooms, in materials posted on the walls, in student work, and in their interactions with and instruction of students. My analysis describes these observations and how they related to my theoretical framework, but it

does not evaluate to what extent these interactions and materials impacted student learning.

Second, this study did not evaluate Professional Development (PD) practices. As with teacher practices, descriptions of PD were a focus of several interviews and provided insight into both how the school enacted and envisioned SJE as well as what ideas teachers were wrestling with as a part of their professional learning. Additionally, PD experiences that I facilitated were ways for me to gain insight into what learning about SJE was like for teachers. This study did not, however, address to what extent each PD experience was effective in building teachers' classroom practices or shifting beliefs and dispositions.

Significance

My aim is for this study to inform the work of professional developers, curriculum specialists, instructional coaches, and school leaders who work to support teachers' learning about SJE in their schools and communities. In my review of research on PD for teaching for social justice, I found a rich base of scholarly thought and research regarding the support of preservice teachers in teaching for social justice. There was little, however, about how to support in-service teachers, especially those in early childhood classrooms, in ongoing learning about SJE, and what this learning is like for teachers. Even fewer resources were available regarding the learning of teachers working in elite communities or of early childhood teachers. As a school leader and professional developer in such a school community, research on this would have been key to my own planning and reflection on how to support SJE in my school.

This study addresses this notable gap in the research base. The research and scholarly thought on SJE are substantive. Through my review of the literature, I was able to develop a comprehensive and coherent definition of SJE by identifying common foundational ideas and threads across conceptual frameworks. It was challenging, however, to locate literature on SJE with students who are privileged by race and class and/or with young children. While I found practitioner guides and some teacher accounts of work with young children (e.g., Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Lee, Ramsey, & Sweeney, 2008), I found few scholarly texts that examined the development of teachers who primarily work with young, White, and affluent students. According to scholars, however, engaging dominant groups in social change is important work, for members of dominant groups are a part of the systems of oppression, can suffer as a result of them, and must be a part of the dismantling of them (e.g., Choules, 2007a; Curry-Stevens, 2007; Goodman, 2011; Swalwell, 2013). Given that the early childhood years are a critical time for children to develop their identities, their roles in communities, and their senses of fairness (see Derman-Sparks, 2008, pp. 8-12), and that children of privilege are likely to be in roles of power as they grow up, this is a notable gap.

I brought to this study my own stories of learning to teach for social justice and having known and lived in the stories of my colleagues for over a decade. I conceptualize my learning to be an ongoing journey and inquiry into student learning and the world, one that was heavily impacted by my school context. I also come to this study as a parent of young children who is interested in learning about teaching for social justice as a collaborative process. I want to know more about what this experience is like for teachers because I have been one of these teachers as well as collaborated with, guided, and

supported these teachers. SJE and supporting teachers and schools in implementing SJE has been the focus of my work for most of my career, and the power and urgency of SJE is something that I am now seeing in my relationships with my own children and their education.

Overview of Subsequent Chapters

In Chapter 2, I review the literature on SJE and develop the theoretical framework that guides this study. I also provide overviews of the research and scholarly work on defining SJE, teacher learning about SJE, and implementing SJE with young children and children of privilege. In Chapter 3, I describe my methodological approach, my positionality as the researcher, and the study's limitations. I also describe my data collection and analysis processes and provide an introduction to the site and to the participants in the study. Chapter 4 is an analysis of the larger case of HA. I focus on how SJE was conceptualized and implemented and describe HA's school and professional cultures. In Chapter 5, I analyze each teacher participant's experience of learning about SJE within the school context. Chapter 6 provides a summary of the study, an overview of its findings, a discussion of these findings in the context of the literature, and implications for research and practice.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

In this chapter, I will describe and analyze the relevant literature regarding the definition of Social Justice Education (SJE), teacher learning about SJE, and SJE with young children in communities of privilege. There is a dedicated section to each of these topics. I began my review of the literature by referring to the books and articles I had used in my work with early childhood teachers and in my own classrooms (e.g., Banks, 2004; Derman-Sparks, 2010; Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Friere, 1970; Tatum, 1997; Vasquez, 2014; Wade, 2007). In the introductory research sections of these, I looked for frequently cited texts.

In order to ensure a comprehensive and systematic review, I also conducted four sets of searches for scholarly articles and chapters in the EBSCO, ERIC, and JSTOR databases. For the topic of SJE, I used the following search terms: social justice education, culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally relevant teaching, multicultural education, multicultural curriculum, democratic education, and critical education. I conducted three searches on my other topics and combined the following terms with the terms stated above: teacher learning, professional development, early childhood, privileged students, and elite schools. For example, I used the search terms early childhood multicultural curriculum, social justice education elite schools, and professional development culturally relevant pedagogy. To make the process manageable, I limited the sources I included from these searches to the past 10 years, although several of the frequently cited articles and books that I identified in my initial review were older than that. Because these were seminal works, I decided to include them in my review of the literature.

Defining Social Justice Education

Social justice education means different things to different people, including teachers, scholars, policy-makers, school leaders, and teacher educators (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Dover, 2013; North, 2008). For some, social justice education is about preparing students from non-dominant cultural groups for success in the dominant culture, by making sure all students have access to opportunities (Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2010; Nieto & Bode, 2016; Powell & Brantlinger, 2008). For others, it is also about providing all students with a set of skills to critically examine society and continually question what they see (Banks, 2004; Darder, 2002; Freire, 1970; Grant & Sleeter, 2007; Sleeter, 2005). Still others see it as a way to prepare students to pursue and contribute to a democratic way of life that values diversity and cultural pluralism (Apple & Beane, 2007). The boundaries between these different conceptualizations are not fixed, however; for example, approaches such as culturally responsive pedagogy, democratic education, and multicultural education have conceptual, foundational, and pedagogical overlaps and similarities (Apple & Beane, 2007; Banks, 2004; Delpit, 1995; Dover, 2013; Dover, 2015; Gay, 2010; Nieto & Bode, 2016; Sleeter, 2015; Swalwell, 2013).

The tensions between these definitions are substantive, however. For example, providing all students with access to opportunities includes providing access to rigorous education. Rigor, to some, means teaching traditional academic knowledge that is measurable and can be assessed on a large scale (Crowe, 2008; Leming, Ellington, & Porter-Magee, 2003). Achievement and opportunity, then, is accessed through meeting traditional academic standards, with teachers and policy-makers providing support for all students in meeting these standards. Social justice aims can be met under this definition

without the implementation of such SJE visions as the one that I outline in this chapter. In this scenario, however, the very classroom practices and the knowledge that have maintained inequity over time will continue to oppress non-dominant cultures (Dover, 2009). The very systems and structures that SJE seeks to transform would be replicated, with little opportunity for transformation or re-imagining.

Critics of SJE have cited the multiplicity of conceptual frameworks and practices as well as the tensions between them as a lack of coherence that can de-legitimize the term as well as the field (Grant & Agosto, 2008; Zeichner, 2006). Moreover, the recent prevalence of the term social justice has highlighted the lack of a clear, concise, and well-understood definition (Dover, 2013; North, 2008). North, a staunch advocate for teaching for social justice, notes that in the last decade, the ambiguity and shifting terminology has meant that organizations with widely different values and beliefs are now using "social justice" to justify their methods, philosophies, and approaches. North concludes from her review of the literature and analysis of the tensions between and among concepts of social justice that a singular approach is insufficient for moving toward increased equity, a conclusion that opens up conversation about the ways, rather than the way, that social justice education might make our society more equitable. Dover (2013) and North (2008) do not offer concise definitions of SJE; however, SJE that seeks to transform society, rather than replicate it, does have clear unifying elements.

For this study, I conceptualize SJE as an umbrella term that includes the foundational practices and ideologies of several branches of education and educational research that aim to actively work against societal inequity. Multicultural education, democratic education, anti-bias education, culturally responsive pedagogy, and critical

literacy/numeracy, although they differ in their specific areas of emphasis, share foundational tenets in the areas of curriculum, pedagogy, ideology, stance, and mission (Apple & Beane, 2007; Banks, 2004; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Grant & Sleeter, 2007; Nieto & Bode, 2016). Anchored by a mission to transform society and work towards greater equity, social justice educators develop curriculum that is rigorous, critical, and focused on issues related to equity and justice. Their pedagogy is responsive, aims to reduce prejudice, and supports a community of learners engaged in critical inquiry. Social justice educators are reflective, ever-questioning and curious about their students' ideas and their own effectiveness as teachers. Moreover, social justice educators share common beliefs about teaching and learning: that greater societal equity is possible through education, that culture matters in teaching and learning, that all students can learn and achieve, that critique of social institutions and dominant ideology is necessary, and that cultural pluralism is both desirable and possible.

In the following sections, I discuss in greater detail the work of Cochran-Smith (2004), Sleeter (2005), and Banks (2004), scholars whose works are particularly relevant to this discussion. When reviewing the literature, these three scholars were frequently cited, and their collective work includes a diversity of perspectives: teacher education, curriculum development, professional development, ethnic studies, urban education, and multicultural curriculum.

Cochran-Smith's (2004) Principles. Cochran-Smith (2004) developed six principles in response to reviews of the literature on multicultural education, urban and minority education, culturally responsive curriculum and pedagogy, and research in various fields: (1) enable significant work within communities of learners; (2) build on

what students bring to school with them-knowledge and interests, cultural and linguistic resources; (3) teach skills, bridge gaps; (4) work with (not against) individuals, families, and communities; (5) diversify forms of assessment; and (6) make inequity, power, and activism explicit parts of the curriculum.

The first and third principles emphasize the importance of teachers' development of academic rigor in their programs. Adhering to these principles means that teachers maintain high expectations for all of their students and hold students accountable for high-level work that is academically challenging. Additionally, teachers scaffold learning in effective ways and explicitly teach students the skills they need in order to access high-level concepts and content. Within a strong community of learners, all students, then, have access to high-level learning.

The second and fourth principles, build on what students bring to school and work with (not against) individuals, families, and communities, address the ways in which teachers who teach for social justice bring students' lives into the classroom in more intentional ways in order to strengthen their academic and social-emotional programming. These two principles compel teachers to know their students' contexts and communities and to ask students to bring their knowledge directly into the classroom as a way to tap into what they already know about concepts and content, as well as to teach in ways that are effective for particular students. Understanding and valuing a student's cultures and communities, and teaching in response to this knowledge, demands that teachers have an inquiry stance that enables them to learn from and with communities.

The fifth and sixth principles, diversifying assessment and implementing an activist curriculum, address the importance of thoughtful and responsive program design

in schools and classrooms. Cochran-Smith (2004) sees these principles as the way in which teachers look critically at the assessment, particularly standardized testing programs, and curriculum in their classrooms and how they make changes in response to their inquiry into the equity of each. While a teacher likely will not be able to eliminate standardized testing that disadvantages a large portion of her student population, for example, she may be able to integrate formative and summative classroom assessments that more accurately reflect and support student learning. Likewise, a narrow curriculum that assumes a transmission-model might be re-envisioned with an activist stance, inspiring students to real action and critical thinking work while also adhering to academic standards. According to Cochran-Smith, in order to teach for social justice, these kinds of classroom-level actions in response to teacher reflection are essential.

Overall, Cochran-Smith's (2004) teaching for social justice framework asserts that all students can and should access a high-level academic program. It also compels teachers to teach in response to their individual students and with a critical stance toward the contexts of their classrooms, including the educational policies that impact their work, their curriculum, the best instructional practices as defined by schools and professional organizations, and the communities in which they teach. Additionally, she identifies ongoing teacher learning, within learning communities and with an inquiry stance, as a key aspect of teaching for social justice.

Banks' (2004) Dimensions and Levels. Several scholars, theorists, and researchers have conceptualized teaching for social justice within the context of curriculum (e.g., Banks, 2004; Dover, 2009; Freire, 1970; North, 2008; Sleeter, 2005). These conceptualizations have been built from analyses of history, reviews of research,

and/or analyses of theories from other disciplines, such as social and economic theory. Scholars such as Cochran-Smith (2004), Sleeter (2005), Dover (2009), and Nieto (2010) have cited these theorists' work as underpinnings to their own work in teacher education, curriculum design, research, and pedagogy. Banks' (2004) framework for multicultural curriculum in particular has served as a foundation for many scholars' and researchers' work.

Banks' (2004) framework, grounded in historical description and analysis, provides a vision for how multicultural education plays out in various aspects of school communities with a particular focus on curriculum. He identifies five dimensions of multicultural education and four levels of curriculum reform that describe to what extent a classroom curriculum is a multicultural one. While each dimension can be viewed separately in order to analyze a particular aspect of a school, the dimensions also interact in important ways and must be viewed as a complete group in order to guide comprehensive analysis. The levels of curriculum can be overlaid across the dimensions to analyze a particular curriculum. He developed the framework from historical analysis, reviews of research, and his own observations and work. In this framework, he provides a model for curriculum that goes beyond just inclusion of content from various cultural groups; rather, he views curriculum as extending beyond the written curriculum and into the lived experiences of students in school:

> ...for multicultural education to be implemented successfully, institutional changes must be made, including changes in the curriculum; the teaching materials; teaching and learning styles; the attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of

> teachers and administrators; and the goals, norms, and culture of the school (Banks, 1992; Bennett, 2001; Sleeter & Grant, 1988). (p. 4)

Banks's conceptualization of SJE is a comprehensive one that is not only about curriculum, but that also extends to all facets of students' experience. It requires an examination of, and likely transformation of, an entire institution in order to be implemented.

The first dimension, Content Integration, addresses the extent to which a curriculum includes texts, instructional materials, and resources from a variety of cultural groups (Banks, 2004). Content Integration means that teachers use a broad range of materials for illustrating key concepts and ideas and building skills. Content Integration is also about teachers choosing texts and instructional materials for students that not only reflect students' cultures but also provide new perspectives into cultures that are not their own. While this is an essential part of a curriculum, Banks warns that content integration has historically been the sum total of multicultural education as viewed by some in the educational community. In order to truly work towards the goals of equity in education, content integration needs to be seen as a part of the larger picture of the entire framework.

The second dimension of Banks' (2004) framework is Knowledge Construction. This is the process of unpacking how knowledge in academic disciplines and within communities is constructed. On the school and classroom level, this means the extent to which students are provided with opportunities to examine the perspectives from which texts are written and produced, the times in which they were written, and the biases that authors and researchers bring to their work. Knowledge Construction is also about

challenging dominant narratives and searching for additional perspectives when inquiring into historical events, statistics, stories, and theories. In order to teach for social justice, then, students must have opportunities to critically examine the information that is available to them in the world and to challenge the assumptions that are embedded within this information.

The third and fourth dimensions, Equity Pedagogy and Prejudice Reduction, describe how curriculum and pedagogy can support students' development of positive self-concepts as well as positive views of those from differing cultural groups (Banks, 2004). Banks conceptualizes Prejudice Reduction as the practice of supporting students' positive racial attitudes and values. Conceptually and in practice, however, this can be extended to other cultural identifiers, including gender and sexuality. Equity Pedagogy is closely related to Culturally Responsive Pedagogy as described by Delpit (1988) in that it includes the way in which teachers use techniques and methods that are effective for students from diverse racial and ethnic groups. Again, while Banks' focus is primarily race, Equity Pedagogy can be extended to include teaching in response to many cultural identifiers, including gender, ability, and sexuality.

The fifth dimension, Empowering School Culture, includes school practices such as tracking and ability grouping, labeling and referrals, creation of school groups, the social climate and power structure of the school, and schoolwide policies. In an empowered school culture, all community members have access to high-level education and are able to access support readily when needed. Banks' (2004) focus is on the process of continually examining school practices in order to evaluate the extent to which all community members are accessing services in equitable ways. While teachers might

often have limited control over school practices, those who teach for social justice work toward greater equity in these policies by taking Cochran-Smith's (2004) inquiry stance and advocating for their students by navigating these power structures.

Banks' (1989) levels of curriculum reform, structured as a hierarchy, provide insight into what extent a curriculum is working towards the goals of equity and justice. The bottom level, the Contributions Approach, describes a curriculum in which students are exposed to different cultural groups, but the overall structure of the curriculum remains static; this approach is what Banks describes as the historically accepted vision of multicultural education. The top level, the Social Action approach, describes a curriculum for classrooms that is most like what Cochran-Smith (2004) envisions as teaching for social justice. In this model, students are actively involved in uncovering inequity and injustice and working toward greater equity through their academic work. This approach also demands that students have access to a broad range of curricular materials, as in the Contributions approach, but they also have access to a curriculum that is structured for students' social justice work. The Additive and Transformation Approaches describe how a curriculum might develop along a continuum to become a Social Action one.

Banks' (1989, 2004) dimensions of multicultural practice and levels of curriculum reform provide schools, curriculum theorists, and teachers with tools for analysis of current curriculum and ways to envision a future one. While they are fundamentally hierarchical, the levels can also be used in combination, based on what content is being taught or as a way to plan for interim steps along the way to a social action curriculum. The dimensions, too, provide a way to analyze current practices. A curriculum's

weakness in one dimension might be accompanied by strength in another, providing schools, teachers, school leaders, and curriculum designers with tools for designing strategic plans for reform towards social justice goals.

The content of Banks' (1989, 2004) framework is similar in many ways to Cochran-Smith's (2004) principles. Like Cochran-Smith, Banks envisions teaching for social justice as teachers maintaining high expectations for all students, as an artfully designed curricular program that is rigorous and asks students to reflect critically on their world and take action, and as a curricular and instructional approach in which teachers teach responsively and build on students' knowledge in order to support achievement and the development of positive self-concepts. Additionally, Banks gives explicit attention to developing students' positive racial attitudes and values in order to promote a more democratic society and includes opportunities for this within a curriculum as a part of his definition of teaching for social justice. While this sentiment is embedded in Cochran-Smith's principle of making inequity and activism an explicit part of the curriculum, it is more of a focus in Banks' framework.

Both Cochran-Smith's (2004) and Banks' (2004) conceptualizations demand a high level of expertise from teachers, both in terms of content knowledge and pedagogical skill and in terms of reflective practice. Social justice teaching, then, means teachers and school leaders must meet high expectations, as well.

Sleeter's (2005) Practitioner Framework. The frameworks of Cochran-Smith (2004) and Banks (2004) describe the features of teacher pedagogy, school-level and classroom-level systems and structures, curriculum, and teachers' reflective practices, but they do not include concrete examples of SJE in action. There are, however, a wealth of

resources available specifically for practitioners that describe what teaching for social justice looks like, how teachers can shift their practices to create more equitable classroom environments, and how they can create curriculum that works towards social justice goals (e.g., Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Gay, 2010; Nieto, 2010; Nieto & Bode, 2016; Sleeter & Cornbleth, 2011; http://www.tolerance.org; http://www.rethinkingschools.org). Scholars, theorists, teacher educators, and teachers are among the authors of these resources that are intended to further the goals of teaching for social justice by directly communicating with those who are currently in classrooms. Curriculum design ideas, pedagogical guidance, practitioner accounts, reflections about the impact of language on classroom culture, and theory can all be found within this group of resources intended to directly impact classroom practice.

Sleeter (2005) is one scholar who has written practitioner texts that consider the challenges of teaching in a standards-based environment while also providing guidance that is grounded in theory and research. She supports teachers in the design and implementation of curriculum; her rationale for this focus is that curriculum reflects and has the capacity to change power structures. According to Sleeter, curriculum is political, and it has great impact on students and their learning:

> ...multicultural curriculum is a valuable resource for educating citizens for participation in a multicultural democracy. Knowledge itself is embedded in social power relations. Curriculum, and who gets to define it, is political because knowledge in a multicultural democracy cannot be divorced from larger social struggles. It is a medium through which a society defines itself and forms the consciousness of next generations. (p. 3)

Her conceptualization of curriculum as political and as something lived as well as documented on paper aligns with Cochran-Smith's (2004) framing of teaching as political as well as Banks' (2004) ideas about the power of curriculum to work toward social justice goals. Sleeter asserts that curriculum has the capacity to lead students and teachers to social action if it is implemented in a culturally responsive and intellectually rich way.

Sleeter's (2005) Framework for Multicultural Curriculum Design conceptualizes curriculum design as centered on Concepts and Big Ideas. From these, six aspects of teaching and learning extend, comprising a framework that defines multicultural curriculum as far more than only the documents that guide teachers' classroom instruction and that are highly aligned with both Banks (2004) and Cochran-Smith (2004): (1) Academic Challenge, which includes designing intellectually rigorous learning experiences that are made accessible to all students through scaffolding; (2) Transformative Intellectual Knowledge, which is the exploration and examination of the stories of historically marginalized groups as well as the critical practice of imagining a more just world; (3) Students and Community, which places students' lives, knowledge, and cultures outside of the classroom central to the classroom community and experience; (4) Classroom Resources, the use of intentionally selected classroom resources that provide both windows and mirrors for students; (5) Democratized Assessment, which both guides instruction and prompts reflection on the curriculum; and (6) Teacher's Ideology, which involves teachers' self-reflection and evaluation of their beliefs about teaching and learning and to what extent these align with the foundational ideas of multicultural education.

Sleeter's (2005) framework guides teachers to center their curriculum on Concepts and Big Ideas, which works toward building Academic Challenge into the learning experiences of students. Sleeter recommends starting the curriculum development process by identifying the key ideas and concepts in the discipline and/or content area rather than only the set of standards to be taught or the textbook pages that need to be covered. This approach encourages understanding rather than memory work and also works toward the integration of multicultural content into the curriculum. According to Sleeter, by starting with big ideas, teachers are more likely to be able to meaningfully integrate culturally diverse content because they will not simply "add on" to the list of standards or content to be covered but will be required to integrate this content in order to support concept development in their students. She also asserts that it leads to more rigorous academic work because of its emphasis on understanding and the transfer of big ideas to novel situations. Like Cochran-Smith (2004), Sleeter describes multicultural curriculum as a way to engage all students in this kind of significant, meaningful, and challenging work.

Sleeter (2005) recommends the second step of multicultural curriculum design be the development of assessments that authentically evaluate the learning of students as well as the curriculum itself. With what she terms Democratized Assessment, students are asked to demonstrate what they have learned and what they understand in many different ways and in meaningful contexts; the emphasis is on understanding and learning. Assessment may also be differentiated, with different students demonstrating understanding in different ways, according to how they best share their knowledge, skills, and understanding. This is similar to Cochran-Smith's (2004) fifth principle, diversify

forms of assessment. The key ideas with this element of the framework are that the goals are for students and teachers to gain a deep understanding of the Concepts and Big Ideas and that teachers use assessment practices to evaluate student understanding in authentic and meaningful ways.

Sleeter (2005) states that multicultural curriculum should be strongly informed by Transformative Intellectual Knowledge, which "provides conceptual tools for addressing conditions that have historically oppressed and excluded peoples and communities" (p. 84). Through the integration of, and not simply the addition of, disciplinary knowledge that has not been valued in traditional mainstream schools, teachers can develop curriculum that works toward social justice aims. Like Banks' (2004) Knowledge Construction, Sleeter's (2005) Transformative Intellectual Knowledge asks teachers and students to critically question what society "counts" as knowledge and why some voices have been heard across history while others have been silenced. When designing a multicultural curriculum, teachers can integrate these silenced stories and knowledge and enrich students' understanding of the concepts, for often this critical study leads "to a reconceptualization of the central ideas themselves" (Sleeter, 2005, p. 91).

The voices of students are also highly present in Sleeter's (2005) multicultural curriculum. She describes Students as Curriculum, meaning that students bring their own knowledge and understanding to the concepts and big ideas of the curriculum and to the classroom context in which the studies are taking place. By intentionally seeking understanding of students' lives outside of school and their communities, and by anchoring curriculum in what students bring to school in terms of this knowledge, teachers build more supportive and authentic classroom communities as well as more

authentic inquiry into their teaching and learning. These practices also lead to more responsive teaching, for teachers have a deep understanding of their students and their students' families and communities. Cochran-Smith's (2004) second principle highly aligns with Sleeter's (2005) Students as Curriculum.

Carefully selecting Classroom Resources is an important component of Sleeter's (2005) Framework for Multicultural Curriculum Design as well. Teachers, knowing and understanding both their students and their curricular content, can intentionally select instructional materials that are both reflective of their students (Mirrors) and that open up students' worlds to different ways of being (Windows). This practice works toward Banks' (2004) goal of transforming curriculum rather than taking an Additive approach; materials are selected that align with the big ideas of the curriculum and are selected by teachers who are viewing through a multicultural lens.

The last element of Sleeter's (2005) framework is Teacher's Ideology. She states that in order for teachers to design and implement multicultural curriculum, they must first understand their own beliefs, including their beliefs about what defines knowledge and how curriculum is impacted by their beliefs. She also provides a framework for understanding the progression of teacher beliefs as they learn and develop as multicultural curriculum developers. In this framework, "Accomplished" educators understand that curriculum can be designed in different ways based on ideology, they actively seek multiple perspectives on content, they continually question the curriculum and their process for developing it, and they engage students and their communities in shared decision-making. These elements of ideology highly align with Banks' (2004)

Knowledge Construction as well as Cochran-Smith's (2004) fourth principle, work with (not against) individuals, families, and communities.

Sleeter (2005) presents a framework for curriculum design that supports teachers in teaching for social justice in the context of a standards-based program. Like Banks (2004) and Cochran-Smith (2004), Sleeter's conceptualization of teaching for social justice adheres to the same guiding principles. She, too, sees pedagogy as intertwined with curriculum and other aspects of practice, including creating classroom learning communities. The pedagogy that she describes is specific to teaching for social justice and is based on the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy and equity pedagogy (Banks, 2004; Delpit, 1988; Gay, 2010). She supports teachers in creating a curriculum that is based on big ideas, reflective of the voices of historically marginalized groups, responsive to students, challenges students to think critically and at a high level, and provides all students with access to intellectually rich learning experiences. In short, as described below, Sleeter maintains an ideological commitment to the guiding principles and vision for teaching for social justice while also situating these principles and vision in the context of the standards-based movement.

Sleeter's (2005) framework for curriculum design is highly aligned with the ideology embedded in Cochran-Smith's (2004) and Banks' (2004) conceptualizations. She, too, builds on the foundational ideas that all students can meet high expectations, that culture matters in teaching and learning, and that curriculum can and should work towards greater equity in society. Her work examines curriculum, pedagogy, teacher's beliefs about teaching and learning, curriculum resources, and students and their communities and cultures, all of which she sees as intertwined and interacting in

significant ways on macro- and micro-levels. While she terms this framework a curriculum one, Sleeter integrates many elements of practice, including a specific pedagogy that mirrors culturally responsive pedagogy and equity pedagogy (Banks, 2004; Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2010). Sleeter (2005) conceptualizes teacher learning about SJE as a process that is transformative and comprehensive. While her focus and language are centered on curriculum, embedded in her frameworks are ideology, teacher dispositions, and pedagogy.

A Theoretical Framework of SJE

Through a synthesis of Banks (2004), Cochran-Smith (2004), and Sleeter (2005), I have developed a Theoretical Framework of SJE. I conceptualize this framework as an idealized vision for SJE, one that is impossible to fully realize within a classroom, school, program, or practice. I understand SJE to be a comprehensive approach that is constantly in development and responsive to students, teachers, and the world. I conceptualize it as a way of structuring an analysis of SJE in relation to programs, policies, and practices.

In this section, I define each part of the theoretical framework and describe it in greater detail. The primary sources for the framework were Banks (2004), Cochran-Smith (2004), and Sleeter (2005), although other sources informed its development, as well (See Figure 1).

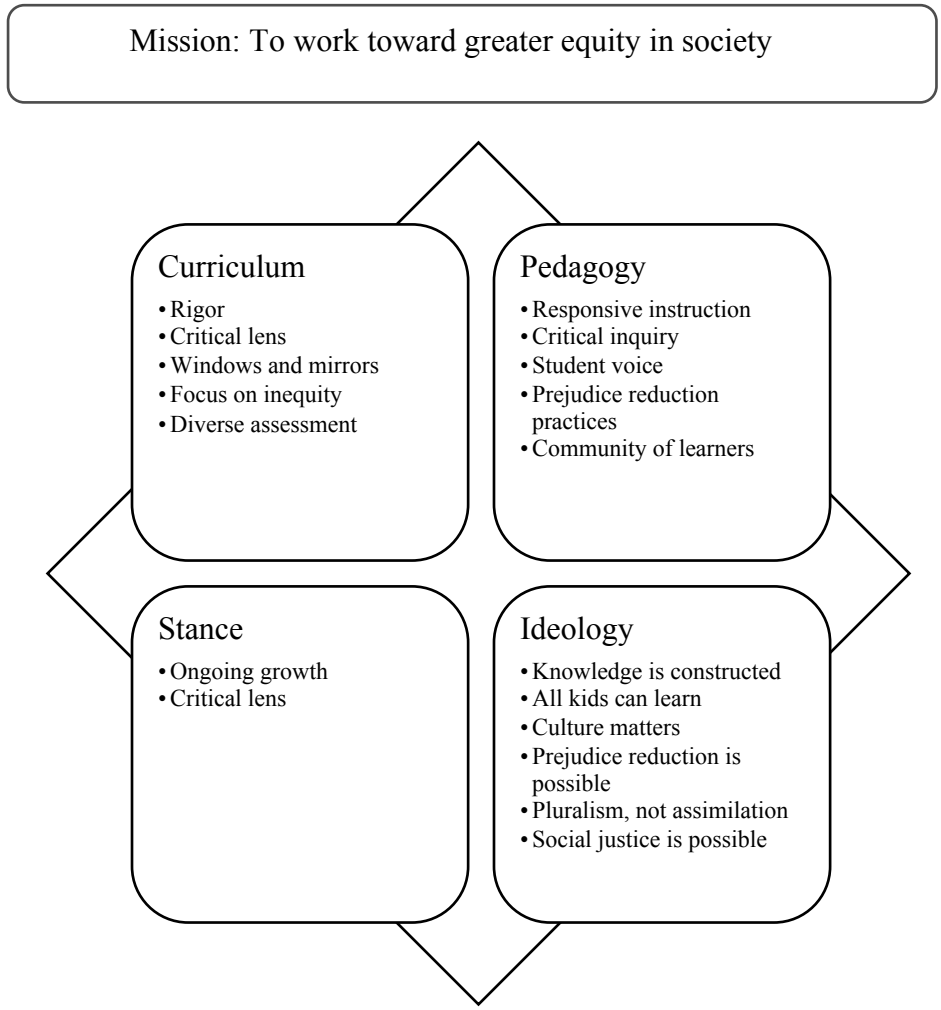

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework of SJE, a synthesis of the works of Banks (2004), Cochran-Smith (2004), and Sleeter (2005)

Mission of SJE. The Mission of SJE is to work towards the creation of a more equitable society. In the Theoretical Framework, I positioned it above the other elements to illustrate its role as an overarching purpose. This mission reflects the goals of multicultural education as described by Banks (2004), Cochran-Smith (2004), and Sleeter (2005), who all envision this kind of education as ultimately empowering students and

teachers to change their classrooms, schools, and society both while they are teaching and learning together and in the future. Many other scholars, as well, have described SJE as working toward this large mission of societal change (e.g., Friere, 1970; Apple and Beane, 2007). This idea of working toward greater equity was prevalent throughout the literature I reviewed.

Curriculum. A social justice curriculum is a specific kind of curriculum, one that has characteristics grounded in the guiding ideology of SJE. It is not a curriculum in the sense that it cannot be "boxed" and purchased like other curricula. Although there are curricular programs that can be implemented that align with the features of SJE, other elements of a program must shift toward SJE in order for it to fully be integrated. SJE curriculum can be defined as one that supports students' abilities to identify inequity and take action against it in developmentally appropriate and rigorous ways that adhere to the foundational ideology described above. The aspects of multicultural curriculum described below are derived primarily from Banks (2004) and Sleeter (2005).

Rigor. A social justice curriculum is rigorous, reflecting the principle that all students deserve to meet and are capable of meeting high expectations. Cochran-Smith's (2004) first and third principles, Sleeter's (2005) Intellectual Challenge, and Banks' (2004) Equity Pedagogy all echo this idea. Scholars see a social justice curriculum as, first and foremost, one that supports academic excellence. Critics' claims that social justice education is only concerned with students' self-esteem or identity development miss the mark; social justice educators attend to and consider students' contexts and identity development because this, too, is essential to understand as a part of academic excellence (Banks, 2004).

Critical lens. SJE is a way to nurture students' abilities to think critically, to challenge the world in intelligent and informed ways, and to access information in order to gain a fuller understanding of the world and their places in it. In a social justice curriculum, students and teachers together ask critical questions of the texts and the disciplines that they explore, and they seek additional information and perspectives in order to inform and deepen their understandings. Sleeter (2005) guides teachers to structure their curriculum around big ideas and to integrate Transformative Intellectual Knowledge, both of which involve revising curriculum so that students have opportunities to develop a critical lens on the world.

Windows and mirrors. In an SJE program, instructional materials are thoughtfully selected so that students have both a range of these perspectives to explore and a wide variety of materials to engage their thinking. Materials both reflect the cultures of the students who are participating in the curriculum, serving as mirrors, and open up the world to these students, providing windows into cultures with which they may not be familiar. Banks' (2004) Content Integration, Cochran-Smith's (2004) second principle, and Sleeter's (2005) Curriculum Resources are reflected in this idea.

Explicit focus on inequity and activism. A social justice curriculum is an activist one. Students uncover inequity, examine and critique power structures, and take social action to work against inequity. Banks' Social Action Approach and Cochran-Smith's sixth principle both reflect this aspect of social justice curriculum.

Diverse and authentic assessments. A social justice curriculum includes an assessment program that employs diverse forms of assessments that are fair and responsive to student needs. Rather than keeping an exclusive focus on standardized

and/or high stakes assessments, social justice educators also use varied classroom assessments to guide their instruction and better meet the needs of their students. Cochran-Smith's fifth principle, Banks' Equity Pedagogy and Empowering School Culture, and Sleeter's Democratized Assessment all align with this idea.

Pedagogy. Teaching for social justice is also a specific pedagogy, which I define here as instructional practices and strategies that teachers use in order to support student understanding. While curriculum can be conceptualized as the "what" of education—the skills, knowledge, and understandings that students will wrestle with and learn—pedagogy can be conceptualized as the "how," the way in which teachers deliver, present, or communicate this content through the learning experiences that they design. Cochran-Smith's (2004) six principles, Banks' (2004) Equity Pedagogy and Empowering School Culture, and Sleeter's (2005) Students as Curriculum all inform the elements of pedagogy described below.

Responsive instruction. SJE practitioners make instructional decisions that serve their particular students, that are responsive to their social, emotional, and intellectual needs and interests, and that build on the cultural knowledge that students bring to school (Delpit, 1995; Sleeter, 2005). Delpit (1995) and Gay (2010) term this culturally responsive pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching (CRT), respectively. With this pedagogy, teachers consider the cultural background of each student when making instructional decisions and acknowledge the importance of culture in understanding students and families. It is important to consider CRT in the context of the underlying ideology of SJE, that students come to school with valuable cultural knowledge and that teachers approach students with asset rather than deficit thinking. Responsive Classroom

(RC), while it is not explicitly social justice oriented or an anti-bias program, is an approach to school discipline that aligns with this element of SJE. It asks that teachers consider the whole child in how they plan for and respond to students, that families be an essential part of the process of schooling, and that teachers value and build upon the knowledge that students bring to school.

Critical inquiry. Critical inquiry means that students pursue worthwhile questions as a part of their learning and that teachers provide ample opportunities for students to engage in meaningful inquiry as a pathway towards understanding in a discipline. Critical inquiry is essential to SJE because examining the world for inequity requires engagement in meaningful questions: What is fair? What is equitable? How can things shift in order to be more equitable? Why is the world the way it is? What can we do? Sleeter's (2005) Framework for Multicultural Curriculum Design is centered on big ideas, which demands that students engage in meaningful ways with content and with their world.

Student voice. This element of SJE pedagogy is informed by Apple and Beane (2007) and can be seen in programs such as AMAZE and RC. This concept applies to classroom practices on several levels. First, students take an active role in explicitly discussing and maintaining positive and equitable classroom rules and structures. This democratic approach can be conceptualized as a way to engage students and ensure high investment in classroom work as well as a way to model democratic values in action. Sleeter (2005) includes this as a part of her guide for teachers, as well, citing democratic processes in the classroom as an essential part of a multicultural curriculum. Student voice can also be seen in the academic program in student-led projects such as those featured in Apple and Beane. Young children's voices are also valued and inform

curricular content. In AMAZE, during conversations centered on the persona dolls and/or literature, teachers do identify student understandings that they intend to support, but conversation is largely guided by students' contributions and their interest and inquiry. In Vasquez's (2014) critical literacy, young children also have a key role in steering curricular decisions; similar to AMAZE, critical literacy involves making space for students to share their understandings, and misunderstandings, about the world, and the teacher's role is to support inquiry into where these ideas come from and to assess if they are accurate. Student voice positions teachers beside, rather than in front of, students. Teachers facilitate student inquiry rather than direct content delivery, although teachers do still keep clear goals in mind and ensure that students are engaging in worthwhile and rigorous inquiry.

Prejudice reduction practices. In an SJE classroom, teachers explicitly open up conversation about bias and directly address student misunderstandings about the world as it relates to prejudice. In order to reduce prejudice, teachers in SJE classrooms use strategies such as centering conversation on persona dolls from a wide variety of familiar and unfamiliar cultures, introducing literature that can disrupt stereotypes, and including visual material on the classroom walls that sends the message that all cultures have value. This element aligns with Sleeter's (2005) Transformative Intellectual Knowledge, which is integrated into effective multicultural curriculum in meaningful ways and serves to foreground the stories of groups of people who have been historically silenced. Students are also supported in learning what to do when they observe instances of prejudice; teachers design learning experiences that provide opportunities for them to practice these skills.

Community of learners. Development of a community of learners within which students and teachers can learn together is essential to an SJE pedagogy. Teachers who practice this pedagogy listen to, respond effectively to, and collaborate with their students as well as the families they serve and the communities in which they practice. Responsive Classroom's approach places the creation of a community of learners central to teaching and learning. AMAZE also emphasizes the importance of community in creating a safe environment for teachers and students. Vasquez's (2014) critical literacy, as well, requires students to trust their teachers and peers, and teachers support the establishment of this trust through intentional building of a positive, safe, welcoming community that reflects the ideology of SJE. Sleeter (2005) also emphasizes a democratic classroom community that values the backgrounds, family, and cultural knowledge of each of its students.

Stance. A critical and reflective stance, with which scholars and practitioners can critically examine society, school, as well as their own practices, is crucial in order to work toward the Mission of SJE. Cochran-Smith (2004), Banks (2004), and Sleeter (2005) all discuss the importance of taking such a stance toward the world in order to implement SJE in meaningful and potentially transformative ways. In order to do this, teachers must engage in learning experiences, paths of inquiry, reflective thinking, and classroom experiences that challenge their thinking and assumptions, a process that is often uncomfortable (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; North, 2009; Sleeter, 2005). Believing that this discomfort is a pathway to growth and opening oneself up to learning from the communities and classrooms in which one is teaching are key parts of teaching for social justice.

Ongoing growth. This element of stance is embedded in the definition of critical lens below and is simply the idea that part of being an SJE practitioner is engaging in ongoing growth and learning across a lifetime. Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2011) describe pursuing SJE as a lifelong process and a pursuit of a goal that can never be realized. For educators who teach for social justice, Cochran-Smith's (2004) Inquiry Stance is ongoing and never-ending, as is Sleeter's (2005) curriculum revision. These are practices that are ongoing work for social justice educators.

Critical lens. This positions practitioners as researchers into their classrooms, their schools, their students' learning, and/or the larger world. Teaching for social justice demands that teachers engage in ongoing inquiry into their own practices and with the awareness of the power structures that are a part of the context of this work. Having a critical lens means developing a cultural critical consciousness and an inquiry stance (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Gay and Kirkland's (2003) cultural critical consciousness asks that teachers engage in inquiry into their own assumptions and experiences as well as their practices and the systemic inequities present in their communities and schools. This is also termed critical social consciousness by other scholars (Freire, 1970; Nieto & McDonough, 2011). Cultural critical consciousness involves inquiry into one's position in a political space; for teachers, this means looking critically at how their teaching is politicized and positioned within society, the relations of power at play, and how their assumptions and biases impact their teaching and learning. Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2011) discuss the more specific White consciousness, which is the way in which White teachers are aware of their positions of privilege and can critically examine the world for inequity through this lens.

Ideology. The ideology of SJE includes the understandings that inform the curriculum, pedagogy, and stance of a practitioner of SJE. These understandings undergird the SJE practices of teachers, school leaders, and teacher educators.

Knowledge is constructed. This idea is based on Banks' (2004) Knowledge Construction, Sleeter's (2005) Transformative Intellectual Knowledge, and Cochran-Smith's (2004) first principle. This idea reflects the beliefs that knowledge is not simply something objective, that humans make choices about what "counts" as knowledge, and that the ones who make decisions about what counts as knowledge hold power. This idea also includes that academic subjects are socially constructed.

All students can learn. This idea holds that all students deserve to have access to a high-level education, including opportunities for critical thinking, and that all children are able to meet their potential when appropriate scaffolding is in place (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Delpit, 1995; Sleeter, 2005). This places responsibility on the educator to find and build on the assets of the students and to avoid deficit thinking.

Culture matters in teaching and learning. This idea is embedded in the practice of responsive teaching, in which teachers view students within the contexts of their identities and their cultures (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Sleeter, 2005).

Prejudice reduction is possible. This idea holds that addressing bias in a community can effect change and that prejudice can be reduced through explicit and intentional measures. This idea is the foundation of programs such as AMAZE, which is an anti-bias curriculum specifically designed to address young children's emerging biases through literature and persona dolls. It is also the foundation of Banks' (2004) Prejudice Reduction dimension, in which he describes both an intentional focus on creating

learning experiences that address bias and prejudice in children as well as a practice of evaluating and transforming school culture so that it also supports that anti-bias work in individual classrooms.

Cultural pluralism, not assimilation, is desirable and possible. With assimilation, individuals who identify with non-dominant groups are expected to shift their cultural norms and abide by the dominant group's norms in order to be accepted. With pluralism, however, all individuals in the community are a part of defining the norms, and what results is a community that reflects a diversity of cultures, including those that had been nondominant. This idea is foundational to Sleeter's (2005) Students as Curriculum, which describes a part of multicultural curriculum as bringing students' cultures, background knowledge, experiences, and families into the classroom as a central part of the classroom community.

Greater social justice is possible. Banks (2004) and Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2011) describe SJE as an ongoing process, one that never ends because social justice can never fully be realized. SJE's goal to create greater equity remains a foundational goal, however, even though it may never fully be met. The idea that greater social justice is possible underpins the ideology and Mission of SJE and seeking this progress towards greater equity is a large part of the definition of SJE.

Challenges to SJE

Several scholars have asserted that SJE, if it is to change education for students, must begin with a transformation in the thinking of educators, professional developers, teacher educators, and communities within an educational climate that is frequently hostile to social justice aims (Banks, 2004; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Derman-Sparks &

Ramsey, 2011; Nieto, 2010; Sleeter, 2005). Some of the arguments include that the existence of an increasingly prescribed curriculum, a standards-based movement that has led to the narrowing and homogenizing of curriculum, and pressures to move away from goals of democratic participation and towards preparing students for a global capitalist workforce have resulted in teacher education that conceptualizes teachers as technicians (Sleeter, 2013). As teachers need to be trained in specific curricula and able to teach to state-adopted standards, teacher preparation and professional development has narrowed in focus and in pedagogy; standards related to equity, multiculturalism, and justice are being eliminated from teacher education programs. As a result, the goals of teacher learning have been conceptualized by university programs as well as schools and districts in a way that can be seen as misaligned with SJE, which demands responsive teaching grounded in social action and with a high expectation for teachers' professional decision-making regarding curriculum and instruction.

Research, however, has found alignment and points of reconciliation between SJE, standards-based education, and teacher education (Alsup & Miller, 2014; Banks, 2004; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Dover, 2015). The work of practitioners, as documented in Rethinking Schools and Teaching Tolerance, has also shown alignment between learning to teach for social justice and learning to teach in a standards-based program (http://www.rethinkingschools.org; http://www.tolerance.org). These scholarly works and practitioner accounts shift the conversation away from seeing SJE and the demands on teachers as opposing forces and toward a focus on what SJE might look like in practice in everyday classrooms.

Another significant challenge to implementation of SJE is its comprehensive nature. On the classroom level, transformation toward SJE requires a comprehensive examination of pedagogy, curriculum, and foundational teacher beliefs and dispositions. Practitioner guides provide examples of SJE in practice as well as frameworks to support planning and preparation for implementing a social justice oriented program. Sleeter (2005) provides a road map for how teachers can reconcile state-mandated curriculum standards with SJE. Derman-Sparks (2008), Nieto (2010), and Vasquez (2014) provide examples of what classroom instruction looks like in an SJE program. While challenging, teachers who continually engage in ongoing learning about their context, their students, the world, and effective practices can continue to work toward the aims of SJE across the course of their careers.

Without a transformation of an entire school, however, how feasible is SJE? On a school level, this examination is even more complex. Banks (2004), Cochran-Smith (2004), and Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2011) describe a shift toward SJE practices as transformation that likely involves the dismantling of oppressive structures in a school, whether these are curriculum, pedagogical practices, or overarching school policies. SJE cannot be simply "adopted" and infused into a school without analysis of the way in which the entire school works both toward and against equity. What is not available is a structure for transformation of a school community or a roadmap for how to position oneself within (or outside of) a school culture when the community itself is highly oppressive. Cochran-Smith (2004) and Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2011), among others, describe the use of a critical lens on the world, including the school community.

What happens, though, when the community is highly oppressive? To what extent can SJE really be implemented?

Teacher Learning about SJE

Given the definition of SJE in the framework above, what do we understand about teacher learning about SJE? SJE is rigorous both in its commitment to challenging students to think critically about inequity in systems and in its commitment to scaffold students' mastery of the knowledge, skills, and understandings as described by the larger educational system. Teachers, then, must know the content they teach as well as the developmental levels of their students (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Additional teacher knowledge is required in order to teach for social justice, however.

Defining coherent goals of this teacher learning, including specific pedagogical practices, conceptual understandings, and habits of mind, is both significant and possible through analysis of key scholars' and theorists' work (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 2004; Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Sleeter, 2013) as well as practitioner guides (e.g., Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Goodman, 2011; Nieto & Bode, 2016). In my review of the literature, I did not find many studies on what the experience of learning about SJE is like for in-service teachers, and none on the experiences of teachers engaging in professional development (PD) as a part of schoolwide efforts to implement SJE programming. I did locate several practitioner accounts that documented what teaching for social justice was like and the learning that teachers engaged in as a result of these practices (Cowhey, 2006; Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Vasquez, 2014; Whitney, 1999). Sleeter (2005) also examines what in-service teachers experienced in her multicultural curriculum class. In the self-studies, teachers did not discuss being engaged

in PD focused on SJE, although they did engage in reflective practice that revealed some information about what learning about SJE is like for in-service teachers.

Although the studies and scholarly works I located did not specifically address what teacher learning was like for early childhood teachers engaged in PD within communities of privilege, I did identify three key features of teacher learning about SJE: it is a lifelong process; it requires the development of a critical lens on the self, community, and world; and it requires training in the specific curriculum and pedagogical practices that support SJE (e.g., Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Goodman, 2011; Whitney, 1999).

Ongoing Process. Because of the comprehensive nature of SJE, the process of learning to teach for social justice often requires transformation of teachers' skills, understandings, beliefs, and/or knowledge and unfolds across an entire career (Banks, 2004; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Kose & Lim, 2011; Nieto & Bode, 2016; North, 2009; Sleeter, 2005). Learning to teach for social justice differs from learning how to implement a new teaching strategy or a new curricular program. While integrating writing workshop into a teaching practice or a specific problem-solving approach into a set of instructional strategies for mathematics can certainly have high impact on a teacher's practice, learning to teach for social justice may involve a comprehensive and complex shift in stance, curriculum, pedagogy, and understanding of the purpose of education that challenges or affirms deeply-held personal and professional ideas and values. Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2011) describe learning to implement SJE as a *life journey*, one that is challenging and nuanced:

> Being an AB/MC [Anti-Bias/ Multicultural] educator means accepting that this work is a life journey of learning and growing, through which we must be persistent yet strategic, passionate yet thoughtful, proactive yet patient. Ultimately, it requires us to have faith that change can and will happen. (p. 27)

Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2011) further describe this learning as something that requires constant engagement, enthusiasm, and tending, on both personal and professional levels. Sleeter (2005), more specifically, describes how teachers who teach for social justice have to seek more extensive knowledge about topics that they are expected to teach and that they must also acquire the information and skills needed to meet the needs of each student in their classes. These pursuits are not "one-and-done" curriculum revisions or sets of lesson plans; what Sleeter describes is a constant reflection on and engagement in refining and improving the impact of curriculum in order to work toward the Mission of SJE.

Practitioner accounts support this idea of learning about SJE as an ongoing process. For example, in Cowhey's (2006) account of teaching for social justice in her first and second grade classroom, she describes how she designed her program to be centered on anti-bias work and activism and what the experience was like to teach and learn about equity and justice with her students. She focused on building a supportive community, nurturing and understanding each child and family, and engaging in meaningful inquiry into issues of equity with her students. She describes her pursuit of SJE as one that has taken place across her career and that has demanded engagement on both personal and professional levels. It was ongoing and is never-ending. North (2008), as well, explores the experiences of teachers who teach for social justice. They, too,

describe it as a lifelong pursuit, something that has impacted all areas of their lives and unfolded across years of practice.

Critical Lens. Teachers who teach for social justice must understand how students' individual, cultural, and social contexts impact their academic experiences at school and be able to analyze their students' learning and experiences within this context (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Delpit, 1995; Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011). Thus, an essential part of learning about SJE involves the development of teachers' critical lenses. Cochran-Smith (2004) terms this an inquiry stance. Teachers who take an inquiry stance do not teach as technicians; rather, they actively construct their understanding within communities of practitioners. Policies, practices, and norms that they see in their schools, classrooms, and communities are subject to examination and reflection. This stance enables social justice educators to practice what they are aiming to nurture in students as well as identify problematic and inequitable situations or practices that they would like to change. By turning these lenses to themselves, the school, the community, and the world, teachers can better meet the needs of their students, engage families, and understand how to prepare students to work against inequity.

Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2011) recommend that all teachers who are learning about SJE engage in learning about the history and context of students' lives in order to develop a sharp critical lens on the world: "Anti-bias/multicultural teaching is not a matter of simply carrying out a collection of activities. It is a complex of large and small decisions that reflect our life histories, beliefs, and knowledge about children and the contexts of their lives" (p. 11). When a teacher uses her critical lens to examine the world for inequity, she is gaining understanding of the context in which her students are

learning, which better prepares her to facilitate student learning as well as support her students in developing their own critical lenses. Turning a critical lens to the self is also an important part of teacher learning about SJE, as is understanding how schoolwide policies and procedures, such as how students are grouped or tracked and to what degree families have access to leadership and a voice in decision-making, can impact students' experiences (Apple & Beane, 2007; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011).

Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2011) describe turning the critical lens to the self as particularly important for White teachers, who often do not have a strong sense of racial identity or of their own position within the power structures of society. Use of a critical lens involves looking at all levels in which classroom practice is embedded: a teacher applying her critical lens might explore how the nationwide educational system defines knowledge, how her school supports and disadvantages particular populations through policies and practices, as well as how her own classroom discussion practices give voice to some students and silence others.

SJE Practices. The skills teachers need in order to teach for social justice include the specific pedagogical practices associated with teaching for social justice, such as critical literacy, critical numeracy, culturally responsive pedagogy, and democratic education (Apple & Beane, 2007; Gay, 2010; Nieto, 2010; Vasquez, 2014; Whitin & Whitin, 2010). These include nurturing a community in which students are known and understood by their teachers and their peers, providing learning opportunities that provide time and space for students to explore issues of identity, culture, and systemic inequity, and that show them how to take action in response to inequity. Additionally, social justice

educators also need to skillfully adapt curriculum to their students and communities while holding high expectations for all students and keeping social action at the heart of their program (Banks, 2004; Nieto, 2010; Sleeter, 2005). Being able to refine standards-based curriculum is essential, given that the curricula provided in most schools do not reflect the goals of social justice education (Nieto & Bode, 2016; Sleeter, 2005). Using questioning techniques to open up conversation about students' understanding, assessing in varied and authentic ways, and making learning relevant to the daily lives of students are all components of this, as well. Teachers need to know how to ask questions that open up space for exploration of issues related to equity and justice in their classrooms as well as provide all students with access to high-level skills and knowledge (Banks, 2004; Nieto & Bode 2016; Sleeter, 2005). SJE teachers need the pedagogical skills associated with the disciplines that they teach in order to ensure that their teaching holds students to high academic and thinking standards (Delpit, 1995).

Teachers who practice SJE nurture safe classroom communities in which students hold each other accountable for rigorous thinking, fluency with discipline-specific skills, and knowledge of the world. They also aim to develop students' appreciation for the cultural pluralism of their classroom and community as well as their motivation and abilities to solve the problems of inequity present in their communities. Outside of the classroom, as well, teachers need the cultural competence to collaborate effectively with families and colleagues as well as a cultural critical consciousness (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2010; Gay & Kirkland, 2003). These goals are lofty and cross-cutting; they are not only professional, but also personal, and they involve the examination and development of the entirety of a teaching practice rather than a single aspect of it. This

complex, engaging, and purposeful work demands support from professional developers, school leaders, and colleagues that is targeted, ongoing, aligned with schoolwide goals, and integrated into the professional lives of teachers.

SJE and Young Children of Privilege

I reviewed the literature on SJE in early childhood classrooms and with children of privilege. With the exception of Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2011), the literature focused on either early childhood education or the education of students of privilege rather than on the intersection of the two groups.

In my review of the literature on SJE and early childhood education, I located several empirical studies as well as practitioner accounts. These tended to focus on the developmental levels of young children and their capacity to understand concepts of race, privilege, equity, discrimination, and power. Findings across these studies include that young children notice race; that they categorize people, including their peers, according to race; and that they express being White as preferable to being of color (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Hyland, 2010; Ramsey, 2008; Ryan & Grieshaber, 2004; Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001). These findings emerged from observation of and engagement in play as well as discourse with young children. Studies also found that young children equated fairness with an equal distribution of resources and that children applied this concept to their play as well as to their discussions about literature (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Hyland, 2010; Ramsey, 2008; Ryan & Grieshaber, 2004; Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001).

After toddlerhood and through the primary grade years, ages three through seven, children develop understandings about identities, both their own and those of the people

around them (MacNaughton & Davis, 2009; Ramsey 1991; Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001). Research on this has focused on race and has found that much of what preschoolers and early elementary children understand about race is reflective of the power structure of society: to be White is to have privilege and power. For example, Van Ausdale and Feagin (2001) concluded from their yearlong study of a racially diverse preschool class that White children not only identify their own races and the races of others, but that they also identify being White as superior to being Black. They also found that White children experienced fear of losing their identities around Black students, that they associated being White with being American, and that they were hesitant to interact with students of color. In Clark and Clark's (1918) frequently cited doll test, when presented with Black dolls, Black children expressed bias toward White dolls, reflecting the larger societal structure that privileges Whites. In later studies, these results were replicated for both White and Black children (Davis, 2005; Spencer, 2010). Young children not only notice and begin to categorize people based on race, but they also assign value to these races, values that reflect and reinforce the inequitable power structures of society.

Practitioner accounts and guides describe what SJE looks like in practice in early childhood classrooms (Ballenger, 1999; Cowhey, 2006; Paley, 1992; Whitney 1999). Through the use of developmentally appropriate instructional materials such as persona dolls, picture books, and storytelling, teachers engaged students in high level discussions about power, fairness, difference, and how to respond when they notice unkindness. These practices align with the theoretical framework described earlier in this chapter; the accounts describe meaningful, student-led inquiry into inequity in the context of a

supportive classroom community in which students are known and understood by a reflective, social justice oriented practitioner.

Studies on SJE in communities of privilege were focused on adolescent students and adults (Choules, 2007; Curry-Stevens, 2007; Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Goodman, 2011; Hernandez-Sheets, 2000; Swalwell, 2013; Wade, 2001). These studies found that White students lacked a strong racial identity, tended to resist acknowledging the presence of privilege, experienced guilt, and expressed a deficit mindset about people of color when discussions of equity were introduced. Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2011), whose work centers on young children of privilege, states that in order to support young White children's understanding of inequity, teachers must make a particularly intentional effort to do so. They note that White children are unlikely to be as aware of discrimination and inequity as children of color because they are less likely to experience it themselves and are less likely to hear about it from their families and home communities.

Conclusion

Given what we understand about the developmental levels of young children, as well as how children of privilege learn about equity, practicing and examining SJE in early childhood programs in communities of privilege is both appropriate and urgent. Young children notice and identify race and gender as well as the hierarchy of these identifiers, and they tend to express a desire to make the world more fair through redistribution of resources. Moreover, older students were found to be more likely to express that societal inequity regarding power and resource distribution was fair. Clearly, there is a window of developmental opportunity to build understanding about race and

justice in meaningful ways during the early childhood years. Children who are White and wealthy tend to be less aware of inequity, however, and can be resistant to acknowledging privilege. An SJE program enables students from diverse backgrounds to have access to opportunities for high-level thinking, engage in meaningful inquiry, and develop a better understanding of themselves and their place in society. SJE equips students with the tools to transform society by examining systems and structures for inequity and using their skills to work against oppression. Since the goal of SJE is to ultimately work toward a more equitable society, beginning this work in the early years and with students who will likely continue to have power in society makes good sense.

SJE, however, is comprehensive and complex, and it involves transformative work. Teacher learning about it is ongoing and extends beyond the professional and into the personal, involving development of a critical lens on the world in addition to specific classroom strategies and practices. What is this experience of learning to teach for social justice like for early childhood teachers in communities of privilege? For teachers who are a part of schoolwide efforts to shift toward SJE practices? The following chapters address these questions through analysis of how SJE was conceptualized and enacted at Harper Academy and how early childhood teachers at Harper Academy experienced this kind of learning.

Chapter III: Methodology

The purposes of this study were to examine how social justice education was envisioned and enacted at an elite school and to examine the experiences of the school's early childhood teachers as they participated in site-based professional development programming around SJE. I chose to design my inquiry as a case study because of the approach's capacity to investigate "complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon" (Merriam, 1998, p. 41). Because I intended to explore both the importance of context and the complexity of SJE in my inquiry into the phenomenon of learning to teach for social justice in early childhood classrooms, and because of the epistemological assumptions and theoretical perspective I brought to the research, case study was an appropriate choice.

In this chapter, I provide a description of the philosophical assumptions undergirding the methodology of the study, an overview of the school as the context in which participants were teaching and learning, background information on each participant, and a discussion of my own positionality as the researcher. I also describe my data collection and analysis processes.

Philosophical Assumptions

An interpretive theoretical perspective and a constructionist epistemology guide this study. I understand, and my research design reflects, that meaning is not discovered or uncovered from an objective reality but constructed in different ways by different individuals (Crotty, 1998). Moreover, I bring to the design and implementation of this study an assumption that my own biases and interpretation are ever-present in the design as well as the collection, analysis, and presentation of the data (Creswell, 2007). I intend

to "make explicit those values" that I bring to the study (Creswell, 2007, p. 34). Because of these understandings, assumptions and intentions, my study was qualitative rather than quantitative, each participant's individual experiences are described as unique and individually constructed within a common context, and I look for patterns across these experiences. These philosophical assumptions and implications, as well as my particular research questions, led to my design of a qualitative embedded case study.

Each teacher participant experienced the same phenomenon of learning to teach for social justice in the same context of Harper Academy (HA) and its professional development programming. This study assumes, however, that each of these participants constructed meaning in different ways in relation to this same phenomenon. From this epistemological base, a case study design enabled me to inquire into each individual participant's experience through their accounts of these experiences as well as my own observations as the researcher.

This epistemological orientation also meant that my relationship with the participants was a collaborative one and that I spent time in the field with participants and became as much of an "insider" as possible (Creswell, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1988). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), "Qualitative researchers study the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of things in their natural settings, or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 2). I studied what it means to learn to teach for social justice through listening and observing in the natural setting of Harper Academy as teachers learned, reflected, taught, and led.

The data I collected include interviews, observations, and analysis of documents, the three types of case study data collection outlined by Merriam (1998). I relied most heavily on interview data, although classroom observation and curriculum and school documents provided both context and additional information about teacher practices as well as insight into how individuals conceptualized and enacted social justice education. Throughout the time period during which I collected these data, I also documented my reactions and initial analyses of interviews, interactions, and observations through jottings on transcripts and notes as well as researcher memos (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Merriam and Yin (2003) encourage ongoing analysis and memoing as a part of rigorous case study practices.

In alignment with Creswell's (2007) thoughts on implications for qualitative research that assumes constructionism, keeping as much of the data in the words of the participants as possible while also being clear about my own biases and interpretations were key considerations in the design of this study. The interview questions that I composed prior to the interviews were designed to be open-ended and flexible so that the participants could speak at length in their own words about their learning and experiences. I also remained flexible with my questioning; although I was mindful of topics I intended to cover, I asked additional questions in response to participants' ideas and eliminated ones that I deemed irrelevant or not useful. I transcribed each of the fifteen interviews so that the words of the teachers and school leaders would be clearly documented for my analysis.

I completed brief researcher memos after each interview, observation, interview transcription, study group/PD session, and initial read-through of documents. These

memos included reflections on my interactions with participants, participants' interactions with each other, their interactions with students, and the school in general. This process provided a way for me to document and reflect on my initial reactions to the data and to track my thinking in preparation for coding, which was more systematic. For coding, I coded the transcriptions of interviews, classroom observations, and school documents. I began with a predetermined set of codes for most of my analysis and modified these as themes emerged, although I also used an open coding approach for some of this work.

An interpretivist theoretical perspective also guides this study, and my presence is as much a part of the study as the presence of the participants and the context (Denzin, 1989a in Creswell, 2007). This was particularly important as I considered the power dynamics at play during my interviews and classroom observations; as a professional developer at the school, I spoke openly about my values and educational philosophy, and in particular, my stance on social justice education. While I was not ever an evaluator, I served as an instructor of staff. In light of this, I was intentional about positioning myself at the outset of professional development sessions as a facilitator of learning experiences and, in some cases, a coach. My approach was to provide resources and support as well as direct instruction, and to facilitate learning through targeted questioning and the creation of collaborative, reflective learning experiences. I also reached out to connect with each individual participant prior to the study in order to begin building collegial and collaborative relationships. By the end of the study, and into the following school year, I believe I had established positive working and personal relationships with each participant. An exception to this was Matthew, who was largely unavailable during the

data collection period and who did not participate in the professional development experiences or take part in the planning of them.

One way that I sought to include the power dynamics as a consideration in this study was through my own written reflections. The memoing that I engaged in immediately following observations, interviews, and PD sessions provided a way for me to capture my interpretations and include them as a part of the study's data. It also placed our interactions in context and enabled me to observe my own reactions in a more systematic way and from a greater distance as I prepared to analyze the data in a more systematic way.

Research Design

A case is an entity that has clear boundaries within which a researcher studies a phenomenon (Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 1995). In this study, each early childhood teacher is a single case embedded within the larger case of the school. For the case of Harper Academy, I looked at how participants conceptualized SJE and how SJE is reflected in the School Mission, Statement of Community Values, and Strategic Plan. I also examined how SJE was enacted at the school by analyzing the classroom observation notes. Because context is critical in case study, I also analyzed the professional and school culture of HA in order to more fully understand the role SJE plays. In addition, I delved deeper into each administrator's conceptualizations of SJE, its role in the school, and teacher learning around SJE.

Each of the teacher participants' cases are bound in three ways: by the three-month time period during which I collected data, the early childhood program, and SJE. For each of the teachers, I examined the teacher's experiences, practices, and learning

about SJE in the early childhood program during the three months I spent interviewing, observing, and collaborating with her through onsite professional development. While I did clearly articulate these boundaries at the outset of the study, sometimes aspects of learning, practice, and experience became relevant as a part of the context of the cases. I sought to understand how aspects of teacher learning and experiences interacted and to interpret the findings in a holistic way (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). As a result, ideas outside of the boundaries of this study were discussed and considered as they related to the phenomenon of learning to teach for social justice. I did not, for example, delve deeply into any learning or experiences related to general mathematics education. Since I conceptualize SJE as a cross-cutting, interdisciplinary set of practices, however, there were times when aspects of practice like general mathematics education became relevant.

Research Site

Harper Academy is a Pre-Kindergarten-12th grade college preparatory school in a large and growing city in the American South. I selected this school because its demographics aligned with the focus of my study, its early childhood teachers were beginning to develop their SJE practices through school-sponsored professional development, and its leadership expressed a commitment to building a community that values diversity, equity, and inclusion. I also began to serve as a professional developer at the school while I was designing the study, and I anticipated that I would be able to collect data effectively through development of collaborative and collegial relationships with participants. Additionally, the Lower School Head and Early Childhood Head both were enthusiastic about my conducting research at their school, and they viewed my study as an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their experiences and deepen their

learning. While there was initial hesitance from the School Head, after conversation about the purposes of the study as well as the boundaries, I received approval to move forward with research.

HA was also an ideal site for me to conduct research because of my own personal and professional background. I attended a school that was demographically and philosophically much like HA for my 5th - 12th grade education. I also taught in independent schools for all of my 17 years of teaching and was an administrator in one for the last 10 years that I worked at the school. Students, families, and staff were predominantly White and wealthy at this school, as well, although the overall population was more racially and socio-economically diverse than that of HA. Although my teaching philosophy, and that of the school that I led, are far more progressive than HA's, I have used many of the programs and curricula implemented at HA and can both talk to teachers about it in meaningful ways and recognize these programs in action. In a more general sense, I have participated in professional development, read newsletters and other publications, and been actively involved in independent school networks for all of the 18 years of my career. I understand the language of independent schools, their particular challenges at this time in history, ways that these schools can serve students in profoundly positive ways, as well as how they serve as a part of oppressive systems in our society. In short, I understand the culture and context of independent schools. Because of this, my analysis is grounded in a meaningful context and my connections with participants are authentic.

Demographics. The 70-year-old school serves about 1,660 students, most of whom live within the city limits, although some commute from surrounding counties.

Students are predominantly White and upper-middle class, with only 20% of students currently identifying as non-white and 16% of students on financial aid to support the $16,000 per year tuition. These statistics contrast sharply with those of the city in which the school is located; 71% of students in the city's public schools identified as non-White in the 2015-16 school year. HA's student population also contrasts with the U.S. Kindergarten-12th grade public school student population, which during the 2015-16 school year was about 50% non-white. In addition, just over half of U.S. public school students came from low-income families just two years prior to this study's completion (Southern Education Foundation, 2015).

School Mission and Statement of Community Values. The School Mission and Statement of Community Values (SCV) outline commitments to maintaining a school that emphasizes academic excellence, a sense of community responsibility, and an appreciation of inclusivity and diversity. Leadership, integrity, and service are also emphasized. Notably, the SCV explicitly includes elements of SJE, including a commitment to building "a community diverse in membership" and "curriculum which equips students to think critically, to act respectfully, and to show sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others". Moreover, the school's strategic plan, intended to guide school change for five years, emphasizes maintaining a diverse staff as a part of supporting exceptional teaching, as well as building a program that is academically rigorous and that encourages effective cross-cultural communication. The School Head places great emphasis on building a diverse staff and counts the increased ethnic and racial diversity since he has arrived as one of his greatest leadership successes at the school.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Harper Academy uses the term Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) as an umbrella under which SJE, multicultural education, diversity work, and general social-emotional learning fit. Throughout the time of this study, during interviews, professional development sessions, and informal interactions, DEI and SJE were used interchangeably, although a key component of SJE— explicit pursuit of a more equitable society through activism—did not always appear to be a part of the speaker's intent. More extensive discussion on this and its significance is in Chapters 4 and 5. In this section, however, the terms are used as synonyms.

The school's leadership and structure are notable in terms of its DEI work for two reasons: it is led by an African-American male School Head, and it was the first independent school in the nation to have an entire department devoted to diversity and equity. In 2007, only 2% of independent schools were led by African-American Heads of School, although an overall larger number of people of color apply for headships (Profit, 2007). For decades, through its dedicated department, it has been funding professional development and student and family support around diversity, equity, and inclusion.

These efforts and funding, however, have primarily been focused on the middle and high schools. Despite the school's historical focus on DEI, the early childhood programming had not been intentionally informed by social justice aims or practices until the arrival of the new Lower School Head, Leah, and Early Childhood Head, Rachel, in 2015. While teachers in this division cite a commitment to diversifying the student body, they are just now learning through school-sponsored professional development about SJE as a curriculum, pedagogy, and ideology that is more complex and comprehensive than a shift in numbers. The school is also overwhelmingly White and affluent, so teachers are

wrestling with how to do this work well with these particular kinds of students as well as the few students of color present in most classrooms.

School-Based Professional Development. Prior to the start of data collection, I engaged in several conversations with the new Lower School Head and Early Childhood Head at the school about the teachers in the early childhood division and their schoolwide PD programming. All three reported that teachers in this division were very hardworking, want to be seen as successful educators, and are committed to student success as defined by reading levels, mathematics achievement, and the meeting of behavioral expectations. They had been generally open to learning about SJE, although most had little knowledge of critical pedagogy, multicultural curriculum, or anti-bias education when the new leadership arrived. Terms such as social justice and White privilege tended to elicit defensive responses as well as confusion from some staff members. According to Leah and Rachel, those who were more comfortable talking about racial and class inequity as well as redistribution and the dismantling of oppressive policies and practices, still fell mostly in the realm of Level 2, the Additive Approach, of Banks' (2004) Levels of Integration of Multicultural Content. At this level, teachers "put ethnic content into curriculum without restructuring it"; while these teachers might integrate new literature and "add on" new content at times, they did not work to transform the school's curriculum or policies to support equity (Banks, 2004). In response to this, Leah and Rachel brought two curricular and instructional resources to the school to support teachers' work in classrooms: Responsive Classroom (RC) for the entire lower school, Pre-Kindergarten-5th grade, and the AMAZE curriculum, for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten, with long-term plans to move this up to 1st and 2nd grade in subsequent

years (www.amazeworks.org; www.responsiveclassroom.org). Both are established programs that have been used widely in independent schools, and they addressed teachers' expressed needs for concrete, hands-on, immediately applicable tools for classroom use. They also aligned with the comprehensive and complex definition of SJE outlined in Chapter 2. During the school year 2016-17, teachers were expected to use both of these in their classrooms, and ongoing support for the integration of these was available through PD as well as targeted supervision and evaluation from administrators.

I also provided targeted professional development for teachers that situated these curricular and instructional programs in the larger context of SJE. I facilitated four whole-staff workshops on elements of SJE and two optional study groups of ten teachers each to go deeper into SJE. During the study group sessions, which met three times over the four month time period, I provided direct instruction on the definition of SJE, rationale for approaching curriculum and instruction in this way, and what it looks like in practice. The goal was for teachers to leave these sessions with tools for thinking about students, curriculum, the school, and the world through a social justice lens as well as with tools for planning for instruction.

An additional professional development opportunity is relevant to this study: the 21-Day Equity Challenge, which took place in the weeks prior to the start of the data collection period. Leah brought this idea to teachers at the beginning of the study, and it was intended to be a way for teachers to focus on ideas related to equity for a defined and relatively short amount of time. Participation in this was voluntary, and two study participants took part in addition to Leah, Rachel, and several other teachers in the Lower School who were not a part of the study. For twenty-one days, teachers posted articles,

reflections, and responses to each other's postings through a Facebook group. The content focused on inequity and identity both inside and outside the world of education. Several teacher participants referred to this experience in my interviews and described it as a way to bring their reflections to the greater world as well as a way to engage with their colleagues in a unique way. For some, this group's discussion caused discomfort that led to what they describe as growth. During my visits to HA, I also heard teachers who were not participating in the study describe others' postings as inflammatory or annoying. Others described the group as a place where they were able to process their learning in meaningful ways and with the support of their colleagues.

Participants reported that PD is highly valued at HA, both in the school's rhetoric and among faculty; it is an explicit as well as implicit value. It is a financial priority, as well, and most teachers participate in off-site PD most years that they are employed there. Continuing to grow and learn in order to teach more effectively is an explicitly stated value at HA, and this expectation is built into the Lower School's faculty evaluation system. Moreover, according to administrators as well as teacher participants, the Lower School PD programming is designed to be a coherent way for teachers to grow and learn as a part of the HA's schoolwide reform efforts. That is, while regular PD on general best practices is continually offered and encouraged, because DEI work is a current focus for the Lower School, PD on DEI is more likely to approved for funding by administrators.

Teachers access school-sponsored PD in several ways. First, schoolwide PD is offered each year in the form of onsite trainings and workshops. Second, elective PD is available for teachers who want to go deeper with their learning on particular topics. Summer reading and collaborative study groups are among these opportunities. Third,

ongoing coaching and feedback from administrators in response to classroom observations are heavily focused on teacher learning and growth. Last, offsite workshops and degree work are available for teachers who are interested; teachers must apply for funding for these.

Trainings in implementation of Responsive Classroom and the AMAZE curriculum were key components of teachers' PD for the school year 2016-17. Teachers began the 2016-17 school year with a training in Responsive Classroom (RC) prior to the first day of school. RC is a cross-curricular approach to school-wide discipline and social-emotional as well as academic learning that can be aligned with SJE. RC's foundational tenets include placing the social-emotional curriculum as high priority, collaborating with all families in meaningful ways, knowing and understanding each child, collaboratively designing behavioral expectations as well as consequences for when these are not met, and integrating choice into academic settings (Charney, 2002). These ideas align with SJE in several ways, particularly in that they call on teachers to value and build on students' cultural knowledge that they bring to the classroom, although they are not specifically social-justice oriented. They do not, for example, include social action as a goal or ask teachers to examine structural inequity as a part of their programs. They do, however, provide structures and language to support respectful, equitable conversations and ways for teachers to build a positive and supportive classroom community that honors all voices.

The AMAZE curriculum and its accompanying persona dolls and texts support early childhood teachers in building classroom communities that value diversity, as well. AMAZE also is described as an anti-bias curriculum with concrete resources for teachers

to use with students to facilitate discussions about race, sexuality, bias, gender, family structure, and religion. Where RC is a cross-cutting approach with guidelines and suggested language to use with students in particular situations, AMAZE is a curriculum, complete with texts and accompanying lesson plans. AMAZE seeks to widen students' understanding of the world by showing them the diversity of the world and support students in developing love and empathy for others. Like RC, there is no explicit focus on evaluating policies and practices through a social justice lens, and there is no activism component, although AMAZE's focus on anti-bias work is explicit.

During the data collection period, I facilitated two three-hour sessions of full-faculty PD on elements of SJE. The first, intended to connect RC with overarching DEI practices, focused on how to build a community that welcomes all students through identity affirmation and that creates a climate in which students can bring all parts of themselves to school. The second built on these concepts through a focus on stereotype threat and media literacy as anti-bias work.

The two study groups focused heavily on exploring the definition of SJE as well as on the practice of looking at interactions, policies, practices, curricula, and situations through a critical lens. Each study group met three times over the course of three months, with an average of seven participants in each group. One of these groups included all of the participants in this study, and notes from these meetings provided study data.

Researcher and Positionality

Yin (2003) describes a good case study researcher as one who can "Ask good questions...be a good listener...be adaptive and flexible...have a firm grasp of the issues being studied…" (p. 59). In this study, I have aimed to demonstrate skills and an

approach that align with these attributes, beginning with a thoughtful inquiry into how I am positioned within the study. Merriam (1998) suggests that researchers view the final product of their studies as a layer of interpretation over the interpretations of the participants; this is how I view my work here.

I am positioned as an outsider to the cases in many respects, but as an insider in several others. While I am not a teacher or leader at the school, I have been a part of their teacher learning programming. I also know the culture of independent schools, as well as several of the school's curricular and instructional programs, very well. Some of my professional experiences also mirror those of some of the study's participants, including ways in which they learned and were challenged by SJE. I believe that this has enabled me to build trusting relationships with participants so that the data and my analysis are authentic and meaningful (Weis & Fine, 2004).

In keeping with Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) emphasis on identity's impact on research, it is also important that I consider ways in which my gender, social class, race, and history impact my research practices, including how I interact with participants and how I analyze data. I am a White, middle class, heterosexual, cisgender woman who has attended, taught and led in independent schools for most of the years of my life. As a child, I attended independent schools until college. My elementary school was racially and socio-economically diverse and possibly more integrated racially and socio-economically than many of the public schools in Knoxville, TN, the city in which I grew up (data on this were not available). I excelled in elementary school and loved the learning environment. For middle and high school, however, I attended a school much like Harper Academy. It, too, was predominately White and upper middle class, with all

but a very few going on to attend and graduate from 4-year universities, most of them selective. While my family did not struggle financially, we also were not among the wealthy, and this was apparent to me throughout my years there. I do not remember feeling marginalized, although I was aware of class differences and how these played out in various ways. I also did not struggle academically, although I only sometimes excelled. In general, I was a decent student with no learning challenges, did not work particularly hard, and pursued writing and art because they were passions for me; the school mostly supported these efforts, and my family was very supportive of my writing and my visual art. As a part of the dominant racial group, race was largely absent from my mind and my daily experiences, and this was reinforced by norms at home and in my community. Race was not discussed, and I felt largely without any racial identity at all. I blindly benefitted from the privilege of my race and class and engaged in no reflection on how these impacted my life.

In many ways, my schooling was much like that of many of the White students at Harper Academy. I, too, saw my identities represented in my peers, teachers, and curriculum, I rarely felt marginalized within my school community, and I easily adapted to school and to various classrooms. Race was rarely a topic of conversation, much less a topic of critical conversation, and it certainly was not a part of the school curriculum in an intentional way.

My teaching experiences have been much like those of the Harper Academy teachers, as well. As a teacher, school leader, and consultant, I have worked in independent schools for 18 years. Fifteen of those years were in a more racially and socioeconomically diverse and much smaller urban school, but there are far more

similarities than differences. I, too, was encouraged throughout my teaching career to engage in ongoing professional development and to take on teacher leadership roles both formally and informally. My doctoral degree work was partially funded by the school, and the leadership team was supportive of my efforts.

I shared most participants' racial and class identities, and my teaching experience has been in school communities similar to their own; although my students were far more racially diverse, they were predominantly middle and upper-middle class. My role as researcher positions me as a co-constructor of knowledge, and the lenses of race, class, and career through which I view my experiences were in large part similar to the participants. This enabled me to understand their perspectives and experiences and perhaps more readily build trust.

My own conceptualization of SJE is also important to understand as context to this study. I view the world and the United States as inequitable; some social groups have greater power and access to resources while others have little power and access, including to high quality education. These inequities play out in individual interactions as well as in larger structural issues, such as gerrymandering, police brutality, the lack of universal access to healthcare, and the impact of the burden of childrearing that is placed on women in the workforce. I believe that educators should be engaged in activism that seeks to right this imbalance through high quality education for all students that provides children with experiences, skills, and knowledge that prepares them to work actively against an inequitable society. I also believe that essential parts of being an educator are to continually engage in self-reflection, to position ourselves within this inequitable society, and to challenge dominant social norms and political structures that perpetuate

inequity through education. I value pluralism. I also believe that noticing differences is a natural part of being human, but that oppression is not. Understanding and exploring differences does not lead to oppression; prejudice and misunderstanding and a desire to preserve power does. I also understand identity and affiliation with social groups to be complex.

To me, teaching is not politically neutral; choosing to teach in this way is a political act, as is choosing not to teach in this way. Similarly, "mainstream" or "traditional" knowledge that has been generally accepted is not politically neutral, and a shift toward teaching through different perspectives and in a more critical way does not indicate a politicization of school. Classrooms and schools have always been political. Moreover**,** regarding political affiliations in the United States in 2018, with Trump halfway through his term as President, I do not believe political conservatism, its foundational ideology, or its proposed and enacted policies to be aligned with SJE. I see political liberalism to be closer to SJE tenets, although its commitment to structures that have historically oppressed groups of people is problematic. I believe in a true re-imagining of structures and systems that more equitably distributes resources and access, a vision that does align with SJE.

Over the course of my life and career, I have undergone major transformations in my understanding of the purposes of schooling; my skills in facilitating lessons that support transformative, social justice centered student learning; and my knowledge of my own position and my students' positions in the communities of which we are a part. My graduate education, life experiences, particularly as a parent, and collaborative learning and teaching within my school and classrooms have all contributed to this transformation

toward becoming a social justice educator. SJE has been the single most inspiring, challenging, and purposeful practice that I have pursued over these years. I believe that my teaching has power, urgency, and relevance because of it, and that my students are better people, more fully academically ready for the world, and prepared to make change in their communities as a result.

As a supervisor, evaluator, coach, school leader, and consultant over the past eleven years, I have had the opportunity to learn from and with my colleagues about SJE. Through PD experiences, we have learned about ourselves, our practices, our students, our world, and the power we all hold to change it. Authoring and telling our stories, both personal and professional, has been essential to reflecting on our understanding of SJE and has provided a way for us to collaborate and share with one another. SJE has transformed the practices of many of us because we have conceptualized it as a comprehensive, coherent way to teach and learn in communities. It is because of these experiences that I was compelled to research and share what the experience of learning to teach for social justice is like, particularly for early childhood teachers, who face unique challenges with this work.

Ethical Considerations

During the three-month data collection period, I served not only as a researcher in this community, but also as a professional developer. In the months prior to the study period, I collaborated with the Lower School administrators to design two workshops on SJE for all Lower School teachers. I facilitated one of these sessions prior to data collection and one during data collection. I also informally supported teacher participants and other teachers in the school through email and in-person meetings. We discussed

curriculum and instruction related to SJE as well as how to support students and families that teachers identified as marginalized in the school community. Through this role, I believe I developed collegial and collaborative relationships with the teacher participants as well as the administrators who participated in the study, with the exception of Matthew, whom I interacted with only once in person during the study period. At this meeting, he signed the consent form for the study, and we did not discuss SJE or PD.

Relationships with the participants and an accurate and authentic analysis of their shared experiences were of great importance to me during the data collection and analysis processes. I have seen and experienced as a teacher, administrator, colleague, and friend the ways in which learning about SJE can be personal and heart-opening. Throughout the study, I was committed to protecting these relationships and placing care, for both teachers and students, at the center of the research.

Particular ethical issues to consider in this study include the confidentiality of the participants' data and the benefits and risks of research to participants, both of which I considered and addressed in my research design and implementation. First, participants' identities have been protected through the use of pseudonyms, and their data were stored securely in Google docs, with sharing privileges only afforded to the researcher. Second, participant risks primarily included possible planning time lost because of time spent in interviews, meetings about observations, and the study group. Since the school required reflection on practice as an ongoing part of job-embedded professional learning, this time spent on teacher learning as a part of the study was well spent and of possible benefit to the participants.

Limitations

This study focuses on a very small group of in-service teachers who are positive and engaged members of the school community and who have expressed investment in pursuing learning about SJE. The small size of this group limits the study because it provides few perspectives on the same phenomenon. It also does not include teachers who are reluctant to engage in PD around SJE. Despite these limitations, learning from these teachers still enabled me to understand what learning to teach for social justice is like for early childhood teachers in the context of an elite school pursuing SJE. A particular challenge of professional developers is finding ways to support change and growth in in-service teachers, and studying these teachers' experiences is an opportunity to learn how this change and growth happens around SJE.

The school context of the study is also limiting. The school has an expressed commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity, but for the early childhood division, an explicit emphasis on social justice practices is new. In fact, according to the School Head as well as the Lower School Head, the term “social justice” still is received with discomfort by most school leaders and teachers. At the time of the study, the new Lower School administrators were committed to shifting the school towards these practices, however, and they are continuing to require PD and hold teachers accountable for classroom practice in response to their learning. Because this was an explicit school initiative and focus, many resources are dedicated to teacher learning in this area. A potential challenge of supporting teachers through targeted PD was mitigated by the resources available, a situation not found in all schools.

The demographics of the school also limit the study. It is largely White and wealthy, with an extraordinarily high tuition. The demographics do not reflect those of the city in which the school is located, nor do they reflect national statistics. All schools are specific contexts, to be sure; this school's profile, however, is uncommon and limits the generalizability of findings.

These factors limit the study's generalizability to teacher learning about SJE in general, but they also are the reasons why this study specifically addresses a gap that currently exists in the research base. In short, the strengths of this study's design outweigh its limitations.

Participants

I used Foster's (1997) community nomination process to select the teacher participants for this study. I hoped to gather a group of participants that was diverse in terms of gender, race, sexual orientation, and age. I also was interested in the experiences of teachers at various stages in their careers and in their learning about Social Justice Education. I collaborated with the Lower School Head and Early Childhood Head to develop a list of potential participants with these factors in mind. We also considered to what extent faculty would be enthusiastic about reflecting on these experiences in an open and honest way, regardless of their levels of experience with SJE or teaching in general. Throughout the year, these administrators collaborate closely with teachers to reflect on and refine their practices through goalsetting meetings, check ins, classroom observations and debriefs, and written reflections. Because of the way in which HA's goalsetting and teacher evaluation system is structured, both administrators had insights into which faculty would be reflective, open, and honest about their experiences,

learning, doubts, and critiques of the school, its programs, and their own learning and practices.

We generated a list of six teachers from a variety of grade levels, with varying levels of experience, and with different approaches to and understandings about Social Justice Education. On the day that I visited Harper Academy to facilitate the first of four whole-staff workshops on SJE, prior to the session, I approached the teachers individually, told them about the study and my background, and asked if they would be willing and interested in participating. All were positive about participating and, although a few were initially cautious about the time commitment and their level of comfort with interviews and observation, all cited the opportunity to go deep into their learning and reflection on learning as a motivator for participating.

I began the study with six teacher participants and ended with five. One reluctantly left the study because of a personal crisis that required time away from school. Of these five, all are heterosexual women from middle class backgrounds, two are Black, and three are White. Although this represents a less diverse group than I intended, it reflects the levels of diversity in the early childhood division of the school. There were no male teachers in the early childhood division, no openly LGBTQ teachers, and few teachers of color. The group does, however, reflect a range of ages, teaching experience, and experience and knowledge about SJE.

I also interviewed three administrators for this study: the School Head, Lower School Head, and Early Childhood Head. Rather than analyzing their interview data as individual cases, analysis of their data contributed to the larger case of Harper Academy, within which the teacher cases are embedded. The leaders' conceptualizations of SJE,

their reflections on how the school enacts SJE, and their visions of teacher education around SJE, along with AMAZE and RC documents and the School Mission, Statement of Community Values, and Strategic Plan documents, comprise the data for this case. For AMAZE and RC, I analyzed their published overview documents.

Sam. Sam, a Pre-Kindergarten Assistant Teacher, identified as a White heterosexual cisgender woman in her 20s. During this study, she was in her 4th year of teaching as an Assistant Teacher. She was born and spent most of her childhood in Great Britain and moved with her family to the city in which HA is located when she was in high school. She attended HA for her high school years and loved being a part of the community. After college, she became a teacher assistant in the Northeast, eventually moving back to HA to become a teaching assistant in a 3rd grade classroom. During the time of this study, she was hired to be a Pre-Kindergarten Lead Teacher for the following year. Her administrators described Sam as a joy to work with and someone who would be a transformative teacher one day, once she refined her practices and had greater autonomy in her own classroom.

Sam was warm with adults and children and radiated a calm kindness. In her classroom, she was constantly talking to her students, and she communicated a genuine curiosity about their observations of the world and their insights. Sam respected and honored her students and what they had to say, and this was evident in observations as well as in conversation with her about her students. Sam greatly valued the professional culture at HA and was especially grateful for the opportunity to pursue her Master of Education degree, which was being funded in part by the school. She was energized by learning and was thankful to be in a school where PD and continuing education were so

valued. HA's commitment to teacher professionalism and autonomy was also in alignment with Sam's beliefs about teaching and schooling. She valued the opportunity to be creative and innovative in her work and to build on the knowledge that her individual students brought to the classroom and the HA community. She felt trusted and empowered at HA.

Sam first learned about SJE at HA, as a part of the professional development programming for teachers. She was profoundly moved by Banaji's (2013) *Blindspot*, and she and Leah both remember a conversation in which Sam emotionally reflected on the biases and stereotypes she had uncovered in herself in response to this text. During interviews and reflections, Sam spoke little about social justice, and did so only when prompted. Her focus, even after conversations with her colleagues and with me about racial justice, working for equity, and transforming society, remained on creating a classroom that welcomes all kinds of students, values the knowledge they bring to school, and works against bias through its curriculum and instructional programming. While these are central aspects of SJE, transformation and action were notably missing.

During interviews and observations, Sam was incredibly open with me and welcomed me into her classroom with enthusiasm, asking for feedback and eager to hear my observations. As a part of the study group, Sam was often quiet. In discussion, she contributed in ways that indicated her full engagement, however. At the end of the study, Sam said that DEI work was of high priority to her and her practice. Fully implementing AMAZE and RC in her classroom and continuing to grow her practices in responding to pre-prejudice, affirming students' identities, and building a strong and loving classroom

community were her goals for the upcoming year, her first as a Lead Teacher at the school.

Abigail. Abigail, a Kindergarten Lead Teacher, identified as a White, heterosexual, cisgender woman in her 30s. During the time of the study, she was in her 5th year of teaching at HA in her 15-year career. Prior to HA, she worked at an independent school in the same city. Her 2 children attended HA at the time of the study, as well.

Abigail was identified by administrators as a high-performing teacher at HA. Her practices had been described by evaluators as effective and targeted, especially in reading instruction, and as being artful and masterful in her teaching. Her students had consistently thrived in her care, socially, emotionally, and academically. It was also clear when watching her teach that she connected meaningfully with students; she was warm, listened closely to what they had to say, and artfully directed them to purposeful work.

Abigail came to SJE by way of personal journey work. Reading Irving's (2014) Waking Up White in the summer of 2015 was a pivotal experience for her. Since then, she became involved in an organization in her city that works toward building community across difference. With this work, she built her own sense of racial identity as well as competencies in talking about race, class, gender, and sexuality. Abigail did not readily talk about this work at HA, however. While it influenced and informed her work with students, she did not discuss it or her personal journey regarding racial identity with her colleagues. She saw this as a way of maintaining professional boundaries and keeping her home and professional lives separate. Her goal at the outset of the study was to bring

more of this part of herself into HA's teaching community. At the close of the study, however, she still struggled to find ways to do this that felt comfortable for her.

Abigail was eager to gain an understanding of what SJE is and how it relates to the programs and practices in her classroom, including AMAZE and Responsive Classroom. At the end of the study group experience, she had gained this understanding and was still wrestling with the idea of teaching as political, sharing political ideas with students, and what "counts" as political. Abigail, like her colleagues, also placed the creation of an inclusive and open community at the top of her priorities for students and their learning. She did not readily talk about racial justice or systemic oppression as it applied to schools or to HA, but she did discuss its role in the larger world.

Alex. Alex, a Kindergarten Lead Teacher, identified as a White, heterosexual, cisgender woman in her 40s. During the time of the study, she was in her 10th year of teaching at HA in her 17-year career. Alex grew up in the Northeast US and moved to the city in which HA is located 11 years ago. At the time of the study, her two middle and high school aged children attended HA, as well.

Alex spoke many times about moving to the South and the differences she encountered in dominant political opinions as well as in general cultural norms. She identified as politically liberal in an area of the country that is predominantly conservative.

Alex immediately credited her mother with her stance on diversity, equity, and inclusion. She described her mother as open-minded and accepting, and this openness was a large part of their family's culture and norms. Alex described learning from her mother as the beginning of her journey in learning about SJE.

Alex began her career at a school in New England that supported teacher education in multicultural practices. It was at this school that Alex began learning about SJE, although she did not call it by that name. At the time of the study, the term social justice was relatively new to her as an educational term. In her first few years of teaching at HA, Alex did not focus on her practices in multicultural education; she describes this as "putting aside" that part of her in order to focus on learning about her new school and community. Once DEI was an explicitly stated priority in the Lower School, however, it was again front and center in her teaching. Through participation in the study group, Alex developed a clearer definition of SJE that included not only tolerance and acceptance but also active work toward social justice. Open-mindedness, acceptance, and tolerance, however, continued to be primary focal points of her reflection and planning for DEI work in her classroom throughout the study.

Alex was an incredibly thoughtful and analytical practitioner. She spoke at length about her students, their needs, their motivations, and their strengths and weaknesses. She eagerly participated in both the study group and the interviews; she welcomed the opportunity for reflection and cited it as essential to her growth as an educator. When I observed her teaching, she was constantly "reading" her children and informally assessing and analyzing them. Her goals for the upcoming school year were to create an environment that welcomes all kinds of children so that they might bring all of themselves to school. Community and identity affirmation continued to be at the center of her practices.

Alex viewed the curriculum and the culture of HA through a critical lens. Among the participants, she was the teacher who most readily identified inequities embedded in

curricular practices, including books and other texts. During my observation days, she spoke at length about the performance for which her students were rehearsing, one facilitated for the whole Kindergarten class through the drama and music department. She focused on both the product and the process of this and asked for my feedback on the project. She had several ideas for how to better plan this performance and how to include it as a meaningful part of the Kindergarten year. This conversation was representative of many I had with Alex, where we built ideas for how to design a program that emphasized equity and inclusion.

Jamie. Jamie, a First Grade Lead Teacher, identified as a Black, cisgender, heterosexual woman in her 30s. During the time of the study, she was in her 7th year of teaching at HA in her 15-year career. The first part of her teaching experience was spent at a Title I school in the South. She came to HA on the recommendation of a friend who worked at the school and spoke highly of the professional community. Jamie interviewed, loved the feel of the place, and decided to send her own children to HA once she was offered the job. At the time of this study, Jamie had one child at HA, a middle schooler, and one who would attend the following year in Pre-Kindergarten.

Overall, Jamie found HA to be warm and welcoming to her family, although there were issues that Jamie detected under this surface that revealed a community that was not entirely open. Jamie maintained what she described as a professional distance from these issues, and she kept her personal life personal while also participating in the professional community at HA. These reflections did, however, impact her thoughts and learning about SJE over the course of the study period.

SJE and DEI work were introduced to Jamie at HA, although much of the stance and practices were familiar to her prior to her teaching there, just under different names. A few years prior to the study, she served on the Diversity Committee, which aimed to create resources and some accountability for teachers to integrate DEI work into their curriculum and instruction. The Committee produced a calendar of activities and readings for teachers to use. Jamie reported that providing this calendar and instructional resources for teachers was a successful project because it was so concrete; the resources were easy to use, and teachers were more comfortable bringing up topics like race and diversity with them in hand. She also reported, however, that this kind of resource should be a part of a more holistic approach to school-based instructional support of, and teacher learning about, SJE practices.

Jamie was the most hesitant to participate in this study, although this was only relative to the very enthusiastic participation of the other teachers. Of the group, Jamie was also the most interested in receiving direct feedback on her teaching in order to improve her practice. In study group meetings and in interviews, Jamie was reflective, open, and thoughtful about the ideas she was wrestling with and why and how. Her training in Responsive Classroom was a particularly impactful experience for her, and she had focused all year on these practices in her classroom. This was clear during my observation; Jamie easily used the language and "moves" of RC and facilitated a well-run and engaging morning meeting.

Jamie was firm but unequivocally warm with her students. She was also fun loving and silly with them at moments and used humor to redirect students effectively. She welcomed me warmly into the classroom as well, invited me to be a part of her

Morning Meeting, and encouraged me to interact with students and ask them questions about their work.

When reflecting on the observation day, Jamie also asked me specific questions about students and incidents of pre-prejudice and bias. She was planning to pilot AMAZE in her classroom in school year 2017-18 (it was used only in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten in 2016-17) to build her skills in this area. She was also planning to continue building her collection of texts to use as points of departure for conversations about race, class, gender, equity, and diversity with her students.

Gina. Gina, a Second Grade Assistant Teacher, identified as a Black, cisgender, heterosexual woman in her 40s. During the time of the study, she was in her 20th year of teaching at HA in her 25-year career. Both of her children graduated from HA. Her daughter, the younger of the two, began work as an intern in the DEI office at HA during the time of this study. She had recently graduated from college and was interested in pursuing a career that centered on social justice and law. In addition to being an Assistant Teacher at HA, Gina was also a tutor with a volunteer organization devoted to supporting students from low-income housing communities during after school hours. Her work with this organization helped her to bring perspective to her work with her students at HA, who largely come from privilege and have entirely different challenges in both scope and scale.

Gina readily signed on to be a part of the study. She was not outwardly hesitant at any point, although she did mention some trepidation about the observation component. In fact, despite having to reschedule because of an unexpected absence, my observation of her classroom did not include any direct instruction from her. As an Assistant Teacher,

her role is primarily one of support when students are working independently and to assist in preparing materials for the Lead Teacher. Gina does plan and teach lessons on her own, although not very often. While I was not able to see her instruct a full lesson, I did observe her informal interactions with the students during transition times and recess as well as a few brief lessons during which she provided individual support to students. In these, Gina was firm but very loving with her students. She held them to high behavioral standards regarding their volume and movement and did so with warmth.

During interviews, Gina spoke at length about the HA community, its care and support, and its tendency to exclude those outside of its dominant identity groups: White, wealthy, Christian, and heterosexual. She also reflected on the variance in teacher and parent awareness of systemic inequality, personal identity and its relevance to personal growth, and current events that brought racism and oppression into sharp focus. She was a frequent participant in the 21-day Equity Challenge, and her posts led to a fair amount of conflict, both within herself and between colleagues. The content she posted pushed the boundaries of the conversations that HA staff members had previously engaged in; she was incredibly open and honest about her thoughts and feelings in response to colleagues' reflections and posts.

Her experience with the 21-Day Equity Challenge was consistent with experiences Gina had had in the past with her colleagues when discussing issues of race and equity. In interviews, Gina spoke at length about frustrations with her colleagues' lack of awareness and understanding, particularly about White privilege, and the ways in which this played out in her direct conversations with teachers as well as in more subtle and indirect ways.

Gina's interviews took, by far, the most pessimistic tone of all the interviews I conducted. In other interviews, I asked multiple questions in order to get to participants' critiques of the community. In Gina's, she readily identified issues of equity and justice that impacted students and teachers, particularly community members of color, sometimes unprompted. Where others might hint at or talk diplomatically about observed inequities, Gina spoke directly about them. While directness is not inherently pessimistic, she rarely offered hope in response to her observations and experiences. Gina had been a part of many initiatives to increase diversity at HA and to promote teachers' equity practices. She had a history of leading some of these efforts, as well, most recently as a member of a working group that proposed an affinity group for staff. She also was a longstanding member of the Diversity Committee before it was dissolved. While she identified several flaws in the structure and the implementation of these past efforts, she also regretted the loss of them and some of the structures that they had put in place; she was particularly frustrated that her proposal to start a staff affinity group had not gotten off the ground.

Regarding her own classroom, Gina felt the most urgency for change around the social studies curriculum. She was particularly troubled about the messaging in their Immigration unit, which directly aligned with the prevalent narrative about assimilation and White immigration while neglecting to tell the story of American slavery, which forcibly brought so many to the United States. Other teachers in this study cited a need to change the social studies curriculum, as well, although Gina was the most passionate about the negative impact that the curriculum, and this unit in particular, could have on students of color.

In this study, Gina's contributions highlighted the tensions underneath the pleasant exterior of the school in ways that other interviews did not. While I did not count Gina's words as completely representative of all staff's experiences, or of the experiences of all teachers of color at the school, I did use her observations as points of departure for questions that were more probing and pointed in future interviews. Her long history at the school and her roles as both a staff member and a parent also provided perspectives unlike those of other participants.

Data Collection

In this section, I describe each type of data collected, how I collected it, and how the data aligned with each of the research questions. Data for the larger case of Harper Academy are listed in Table 1. An overview of data collected for each teacher is outlined in Table 2.

Table 1.

Harper Academy Data Sources and Types RQ #1
How is SJE envisioned and enacted at this school?

Data Source	Type
Matthew, School Head, 1 interview Leah, Lower School Head, 2 interviews Rachel, Early Childhood Head, 2 interviews 10 teacher participant interviews	Interviews
School Mission, Statement of Community Values, Strategic Plan	Document analysis
Responsive Classroom Overview	Document analysis
AMAZE Early Childhood Curriculum Overview	Document analysis
2 Whole-Staff PD sessions	Document analysis
5 full-day classroom observations	Observations

Table 2.

Participant Data Collected RQ#2
What are the experiences of early childhood teachers in an elite school that is pursuing SJE practices?

Teacher	Data Collected	Duration (hours: minutes)
Sam	Initial Interview	0:45
White	Study group sessions (3)	3:00
20s	Classroom Observation	4:30
Pre-Kindergarten Assistant	Observation Debrief	0:30
Teacher	Final Interview	0:50
4th year teaching		
Alex	Initial Interview	0:45
White	Study group sessions (3)	3:00
40s	Classroom Observation	6:00
Kindergarten Lead Teacher	Observation Debrief	1:00
19th year teaching	Final Interview	0:40
Abigail	Initial Interview	0:55
White	Study group sessions (3)	3:00
30s	Classroom Observation	6:00
Kindergarten Lead Teacher	Observation Debrief	0:30
16th year teaching	Final Interview	0:25
Jamie	Initial Interview	0:45
Black	Study group sessions (3)	3:00
30s	Classroom Observation	6:00
1st Grade Lead Teacher	Observation Debrief	0:30
16th year teaching	Final Interview	0:30
Gina	Initial Interview	1:00
Black	Study group sessions (3)	3:00
40s	Classroom Observation	2:00
2nd Grade Assistant Teacher	Observation Debrief	0:45
21st year teaching	Final Interview	1:00

During February-May 2017, I made two multi-day trips to Harper Academy to conduct interviews and observations in addition to my two visits to facilitate and lead full-staff workshops on SJE. I facilitated all of the study groups via Google Hangout, with all the participants in one room and me participating remotely. While much of what I saw during observations depended on the timing of my visit, I did consult with each teacher to ensure that it would be a day in which I would see some evidence of SJE in action. With the exception of Gina, I saw each teacher lead at least two full lessons

during each day-long observation. Interviews were scheduled in collaboration with teachers, and they were held on-site either during the school day or immediately before or after in a quiet office space.

I conducted two interviews each with the Lower School Head, Leah, and Early Childhood Head, Rachel, and one interview with the School Head, Matthew, as a part of my inquiry into the school's context and, specifically, leadership's conceptualizations of SJE, teacher education around SJE, and how SJE is enacted at HA. These interviews helped to clarify my understanding of how HA envisions social justice education, the focus of my second research question, by building on and adding nuance to what was in the School Mission, Statement of Community Values, Strategic Plan, and RC and AMAZE overviews as well as what was reported during teacher interviews. All but one of these leadership interviews were conducted at the same time as and in a similar format to those of the teacher participants. The interview that I conducted over the phone was with the School Head.

The School Mission, Statement of Community Values, Strategic Plan, and AMAZE and RC documents were also part of this study's data. These supported my inquiry into how SJE is enacted and envisioned at HA. Additionally, throughout the study, I had informal interactions with Leah, Rachel, and the teacher participants; while these were not a part of the data that I systematically analyzed, they informed how I framed questions in subsequent interviews and factored into how I analyzed the data.

Interviews. The two 45-60 minute interviews that I conducted with each teacher participant focused primarily on my second research question, "What are the experiences of early childhood teachers in an elite school that is pursuing SJE practices?" I also

explored the ways in which the teachers defined SJE and how it was enacted in their classrooms as a part of the process of answering my first research question, "How is SJE envisioned and enacted?" The first round of interviews took place in February 2017, at the beginning of the time period during which I collected data. The second interviews were conducted in May 2017, marking the end of the data collection period as well as the school year. We met in a small private office for each interview, and I audio-recorded all of them. During interviews, I made what Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) describe as "Attempts to capture data on the perceptions of local participants from the inside through a process of deep attentiveness, of empathetic understanding, and of suspending or bracketing preconceptions about the topics under discussion" (p. 8). This meant that I immersed myself in these interviews and connected with participants as best I could, seeking to understand their experiences and how they were making sense of their experiences.

The initial teacher interviews focused on how each teacher conceptualized SJE, what learning experiences, formal or informal, she had had up until the time of the interview, what learning about SJE had been like for her, and how SJE professional development and informal learning impacted her classroom practices. Additionally, I asked questions about the culture of learning at HA and what it was like to be a teacher there. Examples of specific questions are:

- What is it like to be a teacher here?
- How would you describe the culture of HA?
- How would you describe your learning about SJE? What has that been like? What have you participated in? What experiences have been most powerful for you?
- To what extent has this impacted your practice?

- What is important to you in this work?
- How might you define SJE?
- What are your next steps in your learning?
- What are your goals for your students while they are in your care? How does SJE help you work towards those goals?

The final interviews focused on what learning about SJE had been like during February-May 2017, the time period during which I collected data. Because each interview unfolded as a conversation rather than a more formal question-and-answer session, additional areas of focus varied. Some interviews centered on particular challenges each teacher had had regarding student support, while others tended to focus on curriculum. School culture and leadership were also discussed. A few teachers also reflected on how schoolwide practices impacted to what extent HA was a school that welcomed all kinds of families and students. We discussed what I observed in classrooms, their experiences in study group and in onsite workshops, and their reflections during the 21-day Equity Challenge, if they participated. We also discussed their goals and next steps in learning about SJE for the summer break and into the following school year. Examples of specific questions are:

- What has the SJE PD been like for you?
- What was the most impactful learning experience you had this semester around SJE?
- How do you define SJE? Has this changed over the course of these months?
- What do you think needs to happen for the school to be more equitable for students?
- What are your next steps in learning about SJE?

At the end of each day of interviews, I met informally with the Head of Lower School and, sometimes, the Early Childhood Head. During these conversations, I asked questions about PD programs as well as school-wide policies and practices that were discussed so I would have context for analysis.

After each set of interviews, I transcribed the audio recordings into a Google doc within a week. I also completed researcher memos after each set of interviews. Most of these were in response to individual interviews, although I did complete a few that were more general and cross-cutting that included reflections on all interviews as a group and on the school in general. These memos included reflections on both of my research questions, and at several points included observations of how the school's vision of SJE impacted the learning experiences of the participants. These memos played a significant role in shaping subsequent interview questions, the focus of my classroom observations, and how I developed the codes for data analysis.

Observations. Full-day classroom observations provided insight into how SJE, and teacher learning about SJE, impacted classroom practices, which provided context for the interview data as well as data on how SJE is enacted at the school. School-wide community experiences, such as lunchtime, transitions between classes, and special assemblies, provided insight into the culture of the school. In individual classrooms, I observed for SJE at the curriculum and instructional level, although I also made observations of a more general nature in order to gain a sense of each teacher's style and what it was like to be a part of her classroom community.

I observed each participant for one full day of instruction. Instructional time for each teacher ranged in length from 120-200 minutes total for the day. For all, I observed

not only direct instruction time, but also informal classroom times, such as transitions between classrooms, lunch, and recess. I took notes on a computer when I could, although there were many times when I chose to take minimal notes so that I could be more present in lessons and conversations. It was, for example, difficult to capture what I saw during Center Time in the moment, so I chose to take notes on what I observed immediately after the students transitioned to a new class. I also took photographs during my observations and collected any classroom artifacts, such as lesson plans or instructional materials, that were relevant to the day's events.

Because there frequently were visitors in the classrooms of the participants, my presence was not particularly disruptive to learning. I did, however, interact quite a bit with the students and teachers as students worked independently and transitioned between activities and classes, so I was not a passive observer. I asked students questions, had informal conversations about their learning, and talked briefly to teachers about their students and lessons. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) emphasize that well-collected data should focus on "naturally-occurring, ordinary events in natural settings, so that we have a strong handle on what 'real life' is like" (p.11). Overall, each observation felt very natural, and there were no moments in which I felt as if my presence was a hindrance to learning or in which I was observing unusual classroom activities. In short, I felt as if I were observing typical days in each classroom and that I was welcomed into the classroom communities by both teachers and students.

After each observation day, I met with the participant individually in her classroom to discuss the day. Some of the questions I asked are listed below, although the

interviews did not follow a script; rather, these unfolded as conversations about what I observed and what each teacher was compelled to reflect on:

- How did the day go?
- What did the students learn?
- What did you learn?
- How did SJE inform your work with students?
- What were the important moments of the day?

Most teachers also asked for feedback on what I saw or for advice on how to address particular concerns about student learning, social-emotional health, and/or curriculum. Most of these questions were centered on SJE rather than general practice. I responded primarily with open-ended questions intended to deepen teachers' reflections on their work with students, although there were a few times when I was more directive in my feedback, particularly when it concerned the wellbeing of students of color. At these times, I felt compelled to speak directly about the urgency of creating spaces in which all students are held to high standards and in which all students are welcomed for all that they bring to the classroom. These conversations aligned with and continued the work begun with my first workshop on identity affirmation in the classroom.

Within a day of each classroom observation, I wrote a description of the observation and post-observation interview based on my notes, which were as close to transcripts as possible, and used what Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) refer to as jottings to document my initial thoughts, reactions, and analysis. These jottings were short notes that I recorded directly in the documents that captured my initial analysis as

well as informed future interview questions and areas of focus for observations. I also completed brief narrative researcher memos after observations.

Study Group Materials. As a part of my work with teachers at HA, I facilitated two study groups that met for three 60-minute sessions each over the course of February 2017-May 2017. The first of these was the group of teachers participating in the study. The other was for teachers not participating in the study who were interested in learning more about SJE beyond what was offered in the regular PD programming at HA. Each session had a particular focus area: how to define SJE, SJE curriculum and pedagogy, and particular issues from participants' teaching. None of these sessions were scripted; however, they were structured in terms of content focus and time allocation for activities. Each session followed a similar structure: a brief review of norms for the group and prior learning, a mini-lecture on the focus for the day, an application/practice time for participants, and a reflection and discussion among the group.

The first session included introduction and approval of group norms, such as arriving prepared for discussion, listening with generosity to contributions, and holding each other accountable for speaking with accuracy and compassion. The first session's mini-lecture was more extensive than the other two. I provided an overview of a definition of SJE that aligned with the definition I developed in Chapter 2. For the application and practice portion of the session, I created a "quiz" centered on the beliefs and assumptions facet of SJE. Teachers answered the questions independently, then shared their responses with the group. During this conversation, teachers identified several areas of tension within their own beliefs and assumptions as well as between teachers, particularly around the extent to which all children should be held to high

expectations. We ended the session with an introduction to Gorski and Pothini's (2014) structure for analyzing equity case studies, which we used in the subsequent sessions to discuss classroom and school-wide situations through an equity lens.

The second session's focus was on SJE curriculum and instruction, including misconceptions around this. I provided an example of a first-grade unit on Community that was more "traditional" in structure and content and the same unit transformed to be centered on SJ and reflective of beliefs, assumptions, and practices that align with SJE. Teachers reflected on what work they might do in their own curriculum to shift towards SJE as well as what particular challenges they could anticipate during the process of writing such a unit as well as teaching it. We ended the session with a discussion of one of the case studies, "Two Moms," provided by Gorski and Pothini (2014). This discussion was guided by Gorski and Pothini's seven-step process.

The third session's focus was on SJE-aligned reflective practices. Participants prepared for the session by bringing an example of an instructional or curricular issue, a student, a situation, or an interaction that was currently challenging them. Using Gorski and Pothini's (2014) seven-step process, we discussed a few as a group before breaking into partners for discussion of the others. We ended the session with a brief reflection on what teachers took away from the study group experiences as well as what their next steps were in their learning.

I facilitated each of these sessions via Google Hangout, a video conferencing platform; the teacher participants gathered in a conference room at HA around a projector while I participated remotely. They were not audio or video-recorded, and I did not take notes during the sessions except when this process was a part of documenting discussion

ideas for the group. Immediately following each session, I wrote a researcher memo reflecting on the content of the session, comments and discussion from individual teachers, and questions that emerged for both me and the teacher participants. These memos guided the design of subsequent sessions, informed my interview questions for the final interview, and served as data for the study. Presentation materials were also coded as part of the data analysis process.

Curriculum and School Documents. Several school documents were part of my analysis and gave context to my observations and conversations with participants. I examined the School Mission, which outlines the purpose of the school and the values at its core, and the accompanying Statement of Community Values, which describes a vision for a community and culture that is diverse, inclusive, and embraces difference. Analysis of these documents also provided insight into the overarching vision of SJE at the school and its role in the academic program and community.

In order to more fully understand the underlying tenets of the new curriculum and approach that teachers were implementing (and learning to implement) as a part of SJE work, I analyzed the AMAZE and Responsive Classroom overview documents. One of the Lower School's priorities during the school years 2016-17 and 2017-18 was to align the curriculum vertically and horizontally and to refresh areas of the program that felt outdated to teachers. Both Leah and Rachel identified the need to document the curriculum in all subject areas in a more comprehensive and coherent way and framed this as an opportunity for teachers and administrators to author curriculum that placed social justice at its center. During interviews, several teachers cited the curriculum as something that they were excited to work on and refine as a part of their learning about

and implementation of SJE. Analysis of AMAZE and RC provided insight into how elements of SJE might play out in the program of the school and addressed my first research question regarding how SJE is envisioned and enacted at HA.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process began the first day that I began collecting data, a practice that aligns with scholars' description of good qualitative research (Maxwell, 1998; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Regarding case study specifically, Merriam (2009) describes case study's data analysis process as concurrent with collection of data. This approach enabled me to develop and refine my approaches to the more systematic analysis, including the codes themselves, that I began after data collection was complete. It also enabled me to develop and refine my questions and areas of focus during subsequent interviews and observations.

While interviewing and observing, I did not refer to my conceptual framework. While I certainly had the conceptual framework in mind, I did not systematically document and analyze what I observed and heard during the interviews and observations through a checklist or other structure. For the interviews, I focused on engaging fully in the conversations, taking notes only very sporadically, since I audio-recorded and later transcribed them. For the observations, I took copious notes, but did not use a checklist; rather, I read through my notes immediately after the observation and used my conceptual framework as a point of departure for my reflections. I also took sporadic notes while talking to teachers after their observation day, instead documenting my impressions and ideas immediately after our conversations. My focus was on collecting the richest data that I could, and this approach worked toward the goal of engaging fully in the interviews

and observations, yet also remaining grounded in the conceptual framework (Maxwell, 1998).

Coding. Prior to systematic coding of the data, I identified six categories of codes: Definition of SJE, Professional Culture, School Culture, Supports and Challenges, Professional Learning, and Observed SJE. I chose these based on my initial reflections on the data, my researcher memos, and my research questions. These categories are defined below:

Definition of SJE. This category includes the elements of SJE described in my theoretical framework and includes the subcategories of Mission of SJE, Stance, Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Ideology. Nested within this category were the a priori codes derived from my theoretical framework (see Table 3). I assigned codes from this category to the interview transcripts and the Responsive Classroom and AMAZE overview, School Mission, Statement of Community Values, and Strategic Plan documents.

School culture. School culture included the explicit and implicit norms, practices, and values that were generally adhered to and accepted by the families, students, and staff of the school. Open codes were nested under this category (see Table 6). I assigned school culture codes to the interview transcripts.

Professional culture. Professional culture was defined by the values, beliefs, norms, and practices shared by the staff of the school. Open codes were nested under this category (see Table 6). I assigned professional culture codes to the interview transcripts.

Supports for SJE. This category included the elements of the culture, curriculum, structure, climate, policies, classroom practices, traditions, population, and more that participants identified as supportive of the school's efforts to shift toward SJE. Open

codes were nested under this category (see Table 6). I assigned codes under this category to the interview transcripts.

Challenges for SJE. This category included elements of the culture, curriculum, structure, climate, policies, classroom practices, traditions, population, and more that participants identified as impediments to a shift toward a more SJE oriented program and school. Open codes were nested under this category (see Table 6). I assigned codes under this category to the interview transcripts.

Professional Learning. Professional learning included the site-based professional development, off-site workshops and learning experiences funded by the school, and/or learning pursued independently in response to the school's focus on shifting its program towards SJE. It included the individual, collaborative, online, in-person, formal, and informal experiences that teachers identified as a part of their learning about SJE. I nested a priori as well as open codes under this category (see Table 4). I assigned codes from this category to the interview transcripts, curriculum documents, and documents from the workshops and study groups I facilitated.

Observed SJE. This category included the elements of SJE that are observable in the categories of Curriculum and Pedagogy. Because I could not directly observe elements of categories such as Stance and Ideology, I did not include these. A priori codes from my theoretical framework were nested under this category, and I assigned these to the notes from my observations of teachers (see Table 5).

I knew that School and Professional Culture were topics that were prevalent in the data because I sought contextual information about the school through my interview questions. In addition, Supports and Challenges for SJE were often identified in the

interviews as a part of the conversations about professional learning in response to school initiatives. I created distinct categories for these two topics because I wanted to separate analysis of these from the four categories that were more directly relevant to my research questions. Definition of SJE and Observed SJE directly align with my first research question, "How is SJE envisioned and enacted?" and Professional Learning provided me with a way to analyze data in response to my second question, "What is professional learning about SJE like?"

Within the Definition of SJE (Table 3), Professional Learning (Table 4), and Observed SJE (Table 5) categories, I used a deductive approach to list twenty-one descriptive codes that were directly aligned to my conceptual framework. For each element of SJE, I included a corresponding code in each of these three categories. As I engaged in the heuristic process of coding, I revised these to include several more. While this process led to a large quantity of codes in total, the process of coding was manageable because the categories were distinct.

For the other two categories, Supports and Challenges and School and Professional Culture (see Table 6), I used an inductive approach; I began with general ideas, identified patterns, then became more specific and targeted as I neared the end of the process. I used Corbin and Strauss' (2008) open coding, creating codes that were specific to each participant using participants' own terminology when possible. I then combined codes as I identified patterns and larger categories. This process was the most time-consuming of all my data analysis work, and it led to a deep understanding of the data through the lenses of these two categories. At the end of the process, I identified three Supports for SJE codes, nine Challenges for SJE codes, six School Culture codes,

and nine Professional Culture codes. At times, however, I had up to fifteen in each category.

Table 3.

Definition of SJE Codes, Alignment, and Type

Conceptual Framework	Code	Type
Mission of SJE:		
To work toward greater equity in society	WORK TOWARD EQUITY	A priori
	SKILLS FOR SUCCESS	Open
	TOLERANCE	Open
Stance:		
Ongoing growth and learning	ONGOING GROWTH	A priori
Cultural Critical Consciousness	CRITICAL LENS	A priori
Curriculum:		
Rigorous	RIGOR	A priori
Students and teachers critically question texts and information	CRITICAL LENS	A priori
Instructional materials open up as well as reflect students' worlds	WINDOWS AND MIRRORS	A priori
Explicit focus on identifying inequity, examining power, and activism	EXPLICIT FOCUS ON INEQUITY	A priori
Includes academic, cultural, self, and transformative knowledge	IDENTITY WORK	A priori
	CULTURAL COMPETENCY	Open
Diverse and authentic forms of assessment	AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT	A priori
Pedagogy:		
Responsive instruction that builds on the knowledge students bring to school	RESPONSIVE INSTRUCTION	A priori
Critical inquiry		A priori
Values student voice	CRITICAL INQ	A priori
Prejudice reduction practices	STUDENT VOICE	A priori
A community of learners	PREJUDICE REDUCTION	A priori
	COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS	
Ideology:		
Knowledge is constructed	KNOWLEDGE IS CONSTRUCTED	A priori
All kids can learn and achieve and deserve access to high level programming	ALL KIDS CAN LEARN	A priori
Reduction of prejudice is possible	PREJ RED IS POSSIBLE	A priori
Cultural pluralism, not assimilation, is both desirable and possible	PLURALISM	A priori
Social justice and greater equity is possible	SJ IS POSSIBLE	A priori
	TEACHING IS POLITICAL	Open

Table 4.

Professional Learning Codes, Alignment, and Type

Conceptual Framework	Code	Type
Mission of SJE:		
To work toward greater equity in society	WORK TOWARD EQUITY	A priori
	SKILLS FOR SUCCESS	Open
	TOLERANCE	Open
Stance:		
Ongoing growth and learning	ONGOING GROWTH	
Cultural Critical Consciousness	CRITICAL LENS	A priori
Self-Knowledge		A priori
		Open
Curriculum:		
Rigorous	RIGOR	
Students and teachers critically question texts and information	CRITICAL LENS	A priori
		A priori
Instructional materials open up as well as reflect students' worlds	WINDOWS AND MIRRORS	A priori
Explicit focus on identifying inequity, examining power, and activism	EXPLICIT FOCUS ON INEQUITY	A priori
		Open
Includes academic, cultural, self, and transformative knowledge	ACTIVISM	A priori
	IDENTITY WORK	Open
Diverse and authentic forms of assessment	CULTURAL COMPETENCY	A priori
	AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT	Open
	EMPATHY	
Pedagogy:		
Responsive instruction that builds on the knowledge students bring to school	RESPONSIVE INSTRUCTION	A priori
Critical inquiry	CRITICAL INQ	A priori
Values student voice	STUDENT VOICE	A priori
Prejudice reduction practices	PREJUDICE REDUCTION	A priori
A community of learners	COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS	A priori
Ideology:		
Knowledge is constructed	KNOWLEDGE IS	A priori
All kids can learn and achieve and deserve access to high level programming	CONSTRUCTED	A priori
	ALL KIDS CAN LEARN	
Reduction of prejudice is possible		A priori
Cultural pluralism, not assimilation, is both desirable and possible	PREJ RED IS POSSIBLE	A priori
	PLURALISM	
Social justice and greater equity is possible		A priori
	SJ IS POSSIBLE	Open
	TEACHING IS POLITICAL	
Structure of Professional Learning Experiences	MODELING	Open
	EMERGENT PROJECTS	Open
	PRACTICE	Open
	COLLABORATIVE	Open
	AMAZE TRAINING	Open
	RESP CLASS TRAINING	Open
	BOOK CLUBS	Open
	INDEPENDENT	Open

Table 5.

Observed SJE a priori Codes and Alignment

Conceptual Framework	Code
Curriculum:	
Rigorous	RIGOR
Students and teachers critically question texts and information	CRITICAL LENS
Instructional materials open up as well as reflect students' worlds	WINDOWS AND MIRRORS
Explicit focus on identifying inequity, examining power, and activism	EXPLICIT FOCUS ON INEQUITY
Includes academic, cultural, self, and transformative knowledge	IDENTITY WORK
Diverse and authentic forms of assessment	AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT
Pedagogy:	
Responsive instruction that builds on the knowledge students bring to school	RESPONSIVE INSTRUCTION
Critical inquiry	CRITICAL INQ
Values student voice	STUDENT VOICE
Prejudice reduction practices	PREJUDICE REDUCTION
A community of learners	COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

I did not code each source of data in each category; rather, I matched the data source to the categories that were relevant (see Table 7). I did not, for example, analyze the Strategic Plan document through assigning Professional Learning codes.

I used footnotes in Google Docs to assign codes and tracked code frequency in Google Sheets. I organized codes according to the category and code directly in the footnote as I analyzed (e.g., "O Pedagogy: RESPONSIVE INSTRUCTION" for Observed SJE Pedagogy of responsive instruction), then documented the frequency of each in the spreadsheet after I had analyzed the entire document. I also added notes and tracked these through the comment feature in Google Docs. During the data analysis process, I also frequently printed the spreadsheet as well as the footnoted documents and made notes by hand on the hard copies.

Table 6.

Categories, Open Codes, and Data Sources

Category	Open Codes
Professional culture	Care & support One way to be Obedience Politically conservative Values traditions Openness to learning Lack of teacher professionalism (Autonomy) Teacher autonomy Hierarchical
School Culture	One way to be Politically conservative Prestige Hierarchical Values teachers Values diversity
Supports for enacting SJE	School Mission & SCV Leadership (administrative) Teacher leadership
Challenges to enacting SJE	Fear of parents Teacher capacity Lack of diversity Political climate Lack of leadership School culture Additive not action Symbolic not lived Competing priorities

My approach for coding the School Mission, Statement of Community Values, Strategic Plan, Responsive Classroom, AMAZE documents, and PD documents was similar to the one I used for analyzing the interview transcripts. Bowen (2009) describes document analysis as the process of eliciting meaning and gaining understanding from text that was created without the researcher's intervention. Since my perspective on these documents was somewhat different from my perspective on the interview transcripts, however, my process did differ slightly. First, I read through the document and recorded

my initial reactions and responses to it, even if they weren't relevant to my conceptual framework. I also underlined parts of the document that stood out to me as particularly relevant to my study. Prior to my second reading, I read through my codes to re-familiarize myself with them. I then read through a second time, coding as I went. I read a third and fourth time, as well, revising the codes as needed.

Table 7.

Data and categories of codes

Category	Data
Definition of SJE	Administrator interview transcripts Teacher interview transcripts School Mission and SCV documents Strategic Plan documents
Professional and School Culture	Administrator interview transcripts Teacher interview transcripts
Supports and Challenges to enacting SJE	Administrator interview transcripts Teacher interview transcripts
Professional Learning: content and structure	Administrator interview transcripts Teacher interview transcripts Responsive Classroom documents AMAZE curriculum documents Professional Development instructional materials Study Group instructional materials
Observed SJE	Notes from observation days

Case Analysis. I used Merriam's (2009) and Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's (2014) approaches for within- and across-case analyses in this study. First, I focused on Harper Academy as a single, bounded case. I started by looking closely at the professional and school culture of HA as well as what participants identified as the supports and challenges for the school's enactment of SJE. I analyzed the frequency of the codes in the Professional and School Culture and Supports and Challenges categories

and referred to quotations in the interview transcripts that I had highlighted during my transcription, coding, and memoing processes. I also referred to my researcher memos and the codes that I had used and revised and deleted during the open coding process. While doing so, I kept a list of what Miles, Huberman, and Saldana refer to as assertions and propositions as a way of tracking my thinking (e.g., "Teachers have a pathway into SJE through personal identity work" and "Teachers conceptualize SJE as, first and foremost, tolerance") (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

I followed a similar process for examining how Social Justice Education is defined and enacted at Harper Academy as well as its school-based professional learning programming. I looked at code frequency in the three relevant categories, analyzed key quotations and passages, and kept a list of assertions and propositions. For observation data, I also reviewed my photographs of each classroom and referred to my post-observation memos.

I then shifted to analysis of Leah, Rachel, and Matthew's interviews as a way of understanding how the leadership in particular envisions SJE and teacher learning about SJE. While I did not treat Leah, Rachel, and Matthew as discrete cases, I did analyze them by first looking for patterns within their data and then by looking across the coded data.

After conducting analysis for the case of Harper Academy, I focused on each individual teacher as a separate case within this context, following a similar method of looking for patterns in the codes and tracking my thinking through the use of assertions and propositions. Through my analysis of the larger case, I had gained an understanding of the context in which the teachers were learning and working and the dynamics that

were at play for them. Because I was also a participant in their learning program, as well, I had even greater insight into their experiences.

After examining each teacher's data individually and drawing conclusions about their experiences, I engaged in a cross-case analysis. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) cite cross-case analysis as a way to "enhance generalizability or transferability to other contexts" (p. 101). I see the "other contexts" in this study as being other teachers in similar kinds of schools and in similar situations rather than schools in general. The second rationale Miles, Huberman, and Saldana offer for cross-case analysis is to "deepen understanding and explanation" (p. 101). Looking across cases enabled me to more fully understand what learning about SJE is like in a school community, and how the experience, entry points, and emotions can vary greatly depending on what the teacher brings to the experience, how she conceptualizes SJE, and what goals she has for her learning.

Trustworthiness

Guba and Lincoln (1994) identify trustworthiness as the way in which qualitative studies can be evaluated. Trustworthiness involves establishing confidence in the findings, showing that the findings are applicable in other contexts, and ensuring that the findings are shaped by the participants rather than researcher bias or interest. In this study, I used three techniques for establishing trustworthiness: prolonged engagement, triangulation, and thick description.

I spent an extensive amount of time immersed in the daily life of Harper Academy and engaged in conversation with its staff and students. I built trust with the participants as well as the larger faculty and developed relationships and rapport with many members

of the community. As a result, I was able to understand the context in which teacher learning was happening and the role and history of SJE at the school. This prolonged engagement works toward establishing this study's credibility.

Triangulation and thick description also work toward trustworthiness in this study. I used many sources of data: interviews, observations, school documents, and program documents. This triangulation of the data led to a robust and rich understanding of Harper Academy and its teachers' learning and practice. I also provided thick descriptions of my field experiences, both in my notes and transcripts and in this paper, which works toward the goal of moving beyond superficial descriptions of phenomena and toward detailed, nuanced descriptions.

Challenges in Data Collection and Analysis

There were two primary challenges in the data collection and analysis processes. First, capturing teacher and student interactions, as well as evidence of student learning, was challenging without the use of video recording. Because students were so young, evidence of learning and thinking was most often embedded in classroom discussion and in informal interactions with the teachers rather than in written work. Additionally, I found it challenging to focus on both the teacher behaviors and the students' responses. Had I been observing in classrooms with which I was familiar, and with students I knew, I anticipate this would have been easier. While my intentions were to capture the feel of the classroom, the topics of academic work, the nature of student-student and teacher-student interactions, as well as the curricular and instructional materials being used through my note-taking, my observations and analysis would have been more complete if I had had access to video recordings of these days.

Second, I worked with a high number of codes. I intentionally chose not to use a software program after researching how they work and deciding that I could do something similar using simpler Google Docs and Sheets. This resulted in an analysis that was highly aligned with my conceptual framework and, in the case of the categories for which I used open coding, a robust and deep understanding of the data. It demanded that I think conceptually and at a high level while also concurrently documenting ideas in a meticulous and systematic way. This aspect of the research was by far the most challenging.

Overview of Subsequent Chapters

In Chapter 4, I discuss the larger case of Harper Academy. I provide an overview of the professional and school culture, the supports and challenges of enacting SJE at HA, and how SJE was defined at the school based on my interviews with teachers and administrators. I then examine how SJE was enacted at the school based on my classroom observations. In Chapter 5, I discuss what learning about SJE has been like for each teacher participant, including impactful PD, what challenges she has encountered, what she would like to focus on next in her professional learning, and how SJE plays out in her classroom practice. I also discuss each teacher's experience in the context of the school and professional cultures of HA. In Chapter 6, I discuss findings in the context of the literature, limitations of this study, and implications for future research and practice.

Chapter IV: Harper Academy

This chapter describes how Social Justice Education was envisioned and enacted at Harper Academy and includes analysis of HA's school and professional culture as well as the supports and challenges to SJE that were present at the time of the study. I analyzed all the interview, observation, and document data for the sections on school and professional culture and supports and challenges to SJE. For analysis of how SJE is defined at HA, I used interview data as well as the School Mission, Statement of Community Values, and the Strategic Plan. Interviews ranged from forty-five to sixty minutes. Matthew's interview was the only one conducted by phone and was done so because of scheduling difficulties. For analysis of how SJE is enacted at HA, I examined the observation notes and codes for these in the categories of Curriculum and Pedagogy.

Central to my analysis was examination of the school and professional cultures at Harper Academy. Participants described a welcoming and kind community that supported its members in times of crisis and that prioritized ongoing teacher learning and professional development. They also, however, described a community that had a clearly defined dominant culture that created a sense that there was "one way to be." To participants, this element of the school culture served as a direct challenge to implementation of SJE at the school, for it worked against foundational tenets of SJE.

At Harper Academy, SJE was largely conceptualized as the creation of a tolerant and welcoming school community, a definition that stopped short of including students in taking action against inequity. This conceptualization was shared by the teacher participants and the School Head and was reflected in what I observed in classrooms; the creation of classroom community and prejudice reduction practices were the two SJE

practices that I saw most frequently during my observations. The Lower School Head and Early Childhood Head, however, conceptualized SJE differently and placed supporting students in taking action against inequity at the center of their definitions.

School and Professional Cultures

By the end of the data analysis process, I had identified nine codes for Professional Culture and six for School Culture (see Table 8). Of the nine codes used to analyze interview data on HA's professional culture, one primary and one secondary concept emerged as dominant. First, HA's professional culture was repeatedly described as a caring and supportive environment. Second, it was also described as a place where there was an "in" group and an "out" group, a place where there was really only "one way to be." This concept also emerged as the dominant concept for the larger school culture. One aspect of this one way of being, political conservatism, was mentioned frequently in the interviews, so much so that I separated it as its own code.

Every teacher and administrator mentioned that Harper Academy is a place where its staff members are cared for and nurtured. In times of personal crisis, HA faculty and staff were unequivocally perceived to support those who are suffering and in need. Gina described this in her first interview:

> ...this place has been good to me, good to my family. When my husband died, this place wrapped its arms around me and my family in a way that I never thought would be. So, there are good-hearted, good-intentioned people here. So that's why I stay.

Leah also described HA as a place of "genuine care, which is a beautiful part of the school." Matthew cited the tuition remission program, which provided two student

tuitions for teachers' children to attend HA, as another piece of this support and care, a financial one; he and others described this as a "perk" that has immense meaning and that communicates how valuable teachers are to the community as a whole.

Table 8.

Code Frequency

Category	Codes	Frequency across all interviews
Professional culture	Care & support	10
	One way to be	7
	Obedience	5
	Politically conservative	4
	Values traditions	4
	Openness to learning	3
	Lack of teacher professionalism (Autonomy)	3
	Teacher autonomy	3
	Hierarchical	2
School Culture	One way to be	12
	Politically conservative	4
	Prestige	2
	Hierarchical	2
	Values teachers	1
	Values diversity	1

In addition, professional needs such as ongoing teacher education and support for new learning were mentioned again and again. In our first interview, Sam described working at HA as "Amazing...the resources we have are incredible. I wouldn't be able to get my Master's degree without Harper Academy funding that partially, which is huge. It's a warm, inviting place to work." Abigail, too, talked about feeling known personally and professionally by her colleagues, and shared that Leah had created an environment in which teachers could take risks and collaborate in order to better serve students. A supportive professional culture was cited by several teachers as a reason for staying at the school long term.

Who is really and authentically a part of this professional community, though? The second theme that emerged from the data was that there is a defined "one way to be" a staff member at HA. White, enthusiastic, conventionally attractive, bubbly (if female), middle class, politically conservative...these are examples of the descriptors used by participants to describe what is "normal" at HA. Several teachers described this as an unspoken part of the culture, one that was not explicitly exclusive but was a definite presence in daily professional life. Gina described being a Black teacher in HA's predominantly White community as isolating: "I have to be two people. As far as that's concerned, it's been hard. And I don't know if that's just me or if it's this place in general...it's lonely." In her reflection during our first interview, Jamie also described this "insular" quality of the culture. Moreover, she identified the contradiction embedded within it:

> It's a very insular place. So, like I say, you are either in or you are out. It's a funny dynamic, too, because it's very welcoming. Everyone's very welcoming, friendly, hospitable, but I do feel like the bulk of my relationships here are very surface.

This "one way to be" also emerged in the data around the larger school culture and was by far the most discussed element of the school, for it emerged in interviews with every participant, with the exception of Matthew. In our first interview, Leah directly outlined the one way to be for families at HA:

> The things that get you in the in group are connectedness before getting here so if you are in the same church groups, the same country club, same SES circles, we draw from certain neighborhoods where there are a lot of families that go there

> and a lot of generational friendships between families. So, I would say mostly wealth and name within Harper would get you in the in group. What gets you in the out group? I mean there's a pretty narrow definition I feel like of what a Harper Academy family is...it's something that the school is actively trying to work against, that idea that there is one way of being, but it is fairly entrenched, so anyone falling outside that norm in family structure, race, ethnicity, gender, two-family households or is just quirkier or not conventionally conservative has a difficult time here. You might have an outlier who crosses over but predominantly white and Christian and upper middle class.

Here, Leah clearly describes the "in" group as individuals who are a part of dominant culture in the United States: White, Christian, gender-conforming, heterosexual. She also describes the group as wealthy.

Leah also states, however, that the school is trying to counter this. Three teachers also commented that having this "one way to be" is changing. Abigail mentioned that the prior administration may have created a culture that created division rather than community. The residual effects of this could still be felt today, although she perceived a shift under Leah's leadership. Abigail said,

> I wasn't here for much prior to Leah, but it seems like there are wounds that people are healing from in the past administration...everyone is more positive and inclusive and trying to do something new and it's good.

In addition to several teachers commenting on the need for leadership in order to change this dynamic, Gina cited professional development focused on identity work for teachers as a possible effective response to this aspect of professional culture.

Specifically, she envisions structures such as affinity groups for staff and a leader for the lower school who would be focused entirely on supporting teachers, parents, and students who do not fit the "norm" of HA.

A more specific subset of this one way to be is political conservatism, which was an idea that also appeared in many different teacher and administrator interviews. Several teachers discussed that this was a strong element of the parent and professional culture. This emerged as an area of particular importance in our conversations because of teachers' beliefs that political conservatism is counter to SJE tenets. Sam talked at several points during our two interviews about the conservatism of her colleagues and the parent community. At the beginning of our first interview, she said, "It's very conservative, Southern. Out of the six [teachers on the team] I'm the only one that didn't vote for Trump."

Alex also talked at length about political conservatism as a defining feature of both the parent and teacher communities. She noted that she is particularly attuned to it because of her roots in the Northeast United States:

> It's a southern thing...the political climate is just so different than it was [in the Northeast US]. There, we were all pretty much Democrats and the Republicans, the conservative person was outside the norm. It felt like it was insulated...it's the flip here.

Alex stated that political conservatism is dominant, it is an element of Southern culture, and it is a part of this "one way to be."

Each teacher and administrator introduced and discussed at some length the idea of "one way to be" among the families of HA without prompting from me, with the

exception of Matthew, who was also the only interviewee to directly challenge this idea. He described this perception of there being a dominant group as a "misnomer" and reported that no single group has any more actual power than another. He said that the decisions he makes as School Head are his own and not influenced by an "in" group of powerful families or teachers. He also addressed the admissions processes, citing those as independent from any particular power group. This was unusual in my interviews because the focus was on the decision-making process rather than on the "feel" of the culture or the impact that this has on personal or professional life. Additionally, while he did not acknowledge that there was a defined, powerful group of identities, he did acknowledge that this belief existed among teachers.

This idea that there is a defined dominant, accepted, and ideal set of identities at HA is in direct conflict with the ideology of Social Justice Education. In addition, it is in direct conflict with the theme of care and support articulated so strongly by teachers and administrators. Moreover, it is in direct conflict with HA's Statement of Community Values, a foundational document, which states that an inclusive and diverse community is central to the school. The personal and professional care and support directly aligns with the SJE tenets of valuing pluralism and acknowledging that culture matters in communities. It also works toward building a community of learners that extends beyond each classroom and into the school community as a whole. Leah, Rachel, and several teachers stated that reconciling this contradiction through an emphasis on inclusion and opening up the community to different ways of being is a part of the school's overall equity and justice work. In fact, it is this emphasis on tolerance, acceptance, and the

opening of a community, classroom or school, that emerged later as the primary element of the school's shared definition of SJE.

Supports for Implementing SJE

Across all interview data, I identified three codes to utilize in my analysis of supports for enacting Social Justice Education practices at Harper Academy (see Table 5). Having a School Mission and Statement of Community Values that aligned with SJE was the one that was mentioned most often. The three administrators, however, were the only participants to discuss this; the teacher participants rarely mentioned supports of any kind.

Leah, Rachel, and Matthew all discussed the School Mission and Statement of Community Values (SCV) as a support for SJE at the school, and the SCV was particularly important to Rachel and Leah. In our first interview, Rachel talked about its role in her decision to become a part of the community:

> I came from schools that did a lot of social justice work and it's what attracted me to Harper Academy. It's sort of a vision of who we are. We are an accepting community and we are growing together and that we value diversity, and we are stronger because of diversity, we have a commitment to diversity.

Leah, too, talked about the Mission and SCV. She described SJE as "written into our school mission" while also "not apparent in practice" when she arrived at the Lower School. She described the School Mission as a lighthouse for the school, a vision towards which the school should move. She also viewed the SCV as a keystone as the school shifts more towards SJE:

> I think you could do the SJ work in a school like HA without it changing...I mean it would change the culture, but it wouldn't change the fundamental values of the place and I think those are clearly articulated in the Mission and the Statement of Community Values. I think the Statement of Community Values is saying to do social justice work.

Matthew also described the school's hiring practices as a response to the SCV's commitment to build a diverse community and cited the community as "open to diversity" because of the Mission and SCV.

In my interviews with teacher participants, however, discussion of school-wide supports for SJE other than ongoing professional development were rare. The idea of structural or ongoing support for SJE emerged in only three teacher interviews, and all three participants discussed the same one: Leadership. In all instances, teachers referred specifically to Leah's leadership.

Alex, Abigail, and Jamie attributed part of their momentum for learning about SJE to the strong message from the administration that SJE was and will continue to be a priority. They also cited this leadership as central to the future of SJE at the school and to teachers' continued growth. Jamie talked specifically about how Leah's leadership created accountability:

> I think it's been amazing that Leah really came with that at the top of her agenda. I think that it has really pushed people to kind of step outside the box...that started a trend of accountability like we are supposed to be doing this and following through. I do feel like the next step in this kind of work is digging deeper and not just doing surface work like "I read a book for Black History Month" but really

> where the rubber meets the road, like you said where someone says something that is stereotypical, and you are able to respond to that in an appropriate way.

What Jamie describes as the next step is the shift that Leah described in her first interview as one that she is pushing her teachers to take: embedding SJE into their everyday practices rather than envisioning it as activities separate from their regular classroom work.

Abigail described a different aspect of Leah's leadership as central to the school's pursuit of SJE practices. She emphasized the role of trust in the school's ability to shift teacher practices toward SJE and described Leah's approach as one that both created and relied on trust:

> There's trust there with her and she's also very smart. For me, a lot of my philosophy aligns with her so that's been really like thank goodness. Even if your philosophy didn't necessarily align with Leah, the way she approaches it, she tried to get the buy-in, she explains everything, she includes people in the process and I think people have come to trust her and see that she is inclusive of all of us.

In a professional culture characterized by care and support, Abigail sees trust, an element of care and support, as a part of why these efforts to embed SJE in teachers' practices can be successful.

Challenges to Implementing SJE

Across all interview data, one primary challenge for enacting Social Justice Education at Harper Academy emerged: fear of parents. Every participant except for Matthew mentioned this as a challenge among the faculty and administration. In several interviews, this was a dominant theme and one that was intertwined with a reluctance to

discuss anything political with students. While Matthew did not mention fear of parents explicitly, he did discuss the challenge of doing this work in the current political climate, an idea that also appeared in all of my interviews with administrators and in several interviews with teachers. Although he did not articulate this challenge as teachers being afraid to teach for social justice, an idea present in many other interviews, he talked specifically about the difficulty of talking about equity and justice in a polarized climate that was so filled with political conflict. This climate of conflict was a rationale given in many instances for the fear that teachers had of parents; they were afraid of being perceived as teaching liberal politics.

For the teacher participants I interviewed, this fear of parents was something that they had identified in their colleagues rather than in themselves. In our first interview, when asked about what gets in the way of SJE at HA, Gina had a clear and immediate response: fear of parent push back. She also shared an anecdote that illustrated the kind of situation in which fear of parents plays a role:

> I think fear...this is the direction we are going, if you can't go there, this is not the place for you. Our whole community is changing...it's time for us to move on. But we had a little boy in the first grade in the play. The boys were lobsters and the girls were mermaids. Well, he wanted to be a mermaid. Are you kidding? At HA? Having a boy on stage as a mermaid? No, all hell would have broke loose. The money would have stopped coming, kids would have been withdrawn. I don't know if administrators were aware, but I know teachers probably stopped that and his parents would have probably had a fit. I don't even know if his parents were contacted. He wasn't in my class, but I was made aware of it.

This anecdote illustrates the fear that Gina senses from her colleagues about challenging norms, particularly those that involve issues of equity and identity. While it was not clear to Gina whether or not parents or even administrators were actually involved, what was clear was that there is a sense of trepidation around bending and shifting ways of doing things in order to expand the definition of what it means and what it looks like to be a boy. This challenges the one way to be idea that was described as so entrenched in HA's school culture.

In our second interview, I asked Gina about talking to young children about race and racial inequity. She described the fear around these discussions that she feels her colleagues face, specifically around talking about Black racial identity:

> Teachers are scared, you aren't going to have the conversation with kids because the teachers are afraid to have it. I'm telling the truth! Teachers are gonna be afraid to have it. Can't you just hear it? "The emails, can you just see the emails, can you just hear the parent conversation, that's not my job, that's a job for mom and dad." Now if you're asking me, Gina, to do it in my class, absolutely. But the majority? Now, to talk about little Timmy in a wheelchair or little Azad getting treated differently because he wears a turban...but Black and White? Nuhuh.

Again, Gina reports being willing to discuss racial identity, but she does not see this confidence to do so in her colleagues.

Alex offered similar comments on this, citing instances in which other teachers were challenged by parents, but not feeling that same fear herself. Of all the teachers, Jamie and Sam talked about parent fear the least and they, too, located this fear in their

colleagues. In Sam's first interview, she discussed her view on how SJE could grow and develop at HA:

> It will just take a lot of PD and some personal growth for some. And so maybe more diversity on campus, that would be good, too. People are so worried about the parents, and I think a lot of the parents would maybe be okay with these conversations.

In her second interview with me, she was more specific about how she thinks about this work and possible parent pushback:

> I think if we just stick to the facts, it's what I've said in conversations with teachers, too, if you just stick to the facts, I don't think you can go wrong. If you have a parent complaining, then I think our administration is there to support everything that we are teaching in the curriculum, it's not just our own beliefs that we are bringing to it.

This quotation affirms that this has been a topic of conversation among teachers. It also affirms the idea that teaching our "own beliefs" is something that is both possible and perceived as problematic with SJE.

Even when I directly asked for examples of parent challenges to SJE programming, no one could provide an instance in which school change was halted or activities were stopped in response to negative parent feedback about equity work in classrooms. There was, however, a single instance that was reported to me in three interviews in which a parent came to Leah in anger, frustrated with "all this diversity stuff." Leah reported that her conversation with him required her to be clear and firm about the goals of the Lower School program and about the School Mission and SCV, but

that this was a single conversation that reflected an outlier's perspective on the school's programming. In general, Leah reported, there is little parent pushback on anything the school does regarding curriculum and instruction. Even if some private parent conversations had indicated resistance to a more SJE-focused program, these sentiments certainly had not risen to the level of administrator meetings or demands that progress be halted.

Matthew, too, described parents as supportive of the school, the School Mission and SCV, and its programming. Rachel's perspective, as well, was one that affirmed the presence of this fear while also categorizing it as largely unfounded:

> There is a lot of concern about what will the parents think, a lot of discomfort around is it the school's place. Is it the school's place to talk about different family structures? Is it the school's place to be talking about race? It very clearly states in our Statement of Community Values who we are and what we value as a school and our diversity work as a school...It's interesting that the teachers are so worried about parents. My impression is that the parents really trust the school and trust the teachers and they don't push back.

Rachel, Matthew, and Leah see this fear as one based on a misperception of families. Still, Leah's sentiment was echoed throughout many of my interviews and in my informal conversations with teachers: "[There is] a sense of paralysis given the political situation that we don't want to rock the boat or ruffle too many feathers."

Teacher capacity emerged as another challenge of enacting SJE at the school. This was most strongly articulated by Leah and Rachel. Among the teacher participants, Abigail, Jamie, and Gina identified this as a challenge, as well. For Leah and Rachel, they

came to HA from schools with faculties that had background and experience in teaching for social justice, either through multicultural curriculum studies, critical pedagogy practices, or even just Responsive Classroom, which does not have an explicit SJE focus but is grounded in tenets that are in alignment with SJE. Having seen SJE in action at greater levels at another school, Rachel was clear in differentiating that she sees this challenge as one of capacity rather than motivation: "The impression I have is that people really value this work. Confidence level with implementing it in their classroom and skill level vary, but overall, people all see the importance of this work." She also described push back from teachers as possibly something that has more to do with capacity than actual resistance: "I don't know if it's 'I don't want to do this' or 'I don't know how to do this' so we need to unpack that a little bit. I think it's 'I don't know how to do this.'" Jamie discussed how teacher capacity at HA impacts the presence of SJE in the classrooms in her first interview: "I just don't know how people feel about presenting this information and I don't know if we have put together the tools and the resources to make people feel more comfortable." She went on to discuss how training and support could provide these skills and lead to teachers becoming more confident.

In all instances when teacher capacity was mentioned, it was described as an issue with a clear solution: professional development. Leah and Rachel talked extensively about providing targeted, practice-focused, concrete learning experiences for faculty that enabled them to first create welcoming and affirming environments for all their students and then develop curriculum that enabled them to skillfully facilitate conversation about inequity and identity. Leah described this during our first interview:

> [We are] trying to create a baseline of concepts and skills and understandings so that we can start doing the work really intentionally...you have to break it down and show everyone what it would look like in the classroom and model that with teachers, so they have a better sense of what we are talking about. There is lack of exposure, lack of experience.

Instructional skills were also an area on which Rachel focused:

> We need to give them the skills they need to do it. They need to learn how to have conversations with their students. That's one that comes up. If you spend any time in a Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten classroom, these kids are going to say things on a daily basis that are huge and as a teacher you can react in one of two ways. You can ignore it, or you can teach into it. The tendency that I've seen is to ignore it for right now, so that's a big skill, to be able to first identify that it's something that needs to be addressed.

Rachel described the AMAZE trainings and workshops that provide tools for teachers to use in their classrooms as highly valuable to developing teacher capacity in SJE at HA. Rachel also discussed teachers' need to develop curriculum for their classrooms that is grounded in SJE practices. She framed the challenge of doing this as one of teacher capacity, as well, since teachers collaborate to develop curriculum at HA. Jamie and Gina also mentioned the need for curriculum revision, and they both cited the need for support and education in order to do that well.

Definition of SJE

How is SJE envisioned at HA? To answer this question, I analyzed all the interview transcripts and notes, the School Mission and Statement of Community Values,

and the school's published Strategic Plan. After systematically coding all of these, a dominant theme emerged as central to SJE: a shift toward tolerance and inclusion and away from norms that create and perpetuate a single, dominant way to be within the school. This concept appeared in all participants' conceptualizations of SJE as well as in all documents. In addition, I identified three clear pathways toward tolerance and inclusion as areas of convergence among most participants: teachers' development of a critical lens through which to view the world, a curriculum that includes instructional materials that provide both windows and mirrors for students, and prejudice reduction practices. The first common theme, tolerance and inclusion, emerged separate from my conceptual framework as an open code as I engaged in the data analysis process. The first pathway toward this goal aligns with "Cultural Critical Consciousness," nested under "Stance" in my conceptual framework. The other two are nested under "Curriculum" as "Instructional materials open up as well as reflect students' worlds" and under "Pedagogy" as "Prejudice Reduction Practices." (see Table 9). Every teacher participant and administrator cited these elements as central to their definition of SJE.

Table 9

Code Frequency and Alignment

Conceptual Framework	Code	Frequency
Mission of SJE:		
To work toward greater equity in society	WORK TOWARD EQUITY	4
	SKILLS FOR SUCCESS	5
	TOLERANCE	11
Stance:		
Ongoing growth and learning	ONGOING GROWTH	5
Cultural Critical Consciousness	CRITICAL LENS	14
Curriculum:		
Rigorous	RIGOR	12
Students and teachers critically question texts and information	CRITICAL LENS	8
Instructional materials open up as well as reflect students' worlds	WINDOWS AND MIRRORS	14
Explicit focus on identifying inequity, examining power, and activism	EXPLICIT FOCUS ON INEQUITY	5
Includes academic, cultural, self, and transformative knowledge	IDENTITY WORK	8
	CULTURAL COMPETENCY	3
Diverse and authentic forms of assessment	AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT	0
Pedagogy:		
Responsive instruction that builds on the knowledge students bring to school	RESPONSIVE INSTRUCTION	8
Critical inquiry	CRITICAL INQ	2
Values student voice	STUDENT VOICE	5
Prejudice reduction practices	PREJUDICE REDUCTION	25
A community of learners	COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS	12
Ideology:		
Knowledge is constructed	KNOWLEDGE IS CONSTRUCTED	0
All kids can learn and achieve and deserve access to high level programming	ALL KIDS CAN LEARN	2
Reduction of prejudice is possible	PREJ RED IS POSSIBLE	3
Cultural pluralism, not assimilation, is both desirable and possible	PLURALISM	4
Social justice and greater equity is possible	SJ IS POSSIBLE	2
	TEACHING IS POLITICAL	6

The Strategic Plan data differs from the participant interview data and the School Mission and Statement of Community Values, however. This document, which reflects the work of representatives from the parent community, faculty, and administration, outlines a vision for the school that is intended to guide the planning of school change. It

only included one of the three common themes across the data, tolerance. Elements of SJE appear sporadically, but there is one section of the document that specifically articulates the importance of creating a community that respects differences. This is framed as a part of the school's commitment to developing students' personal integrity and aligns with the idea of tolerance and inclusion. There is another section, as well, that outlines a different element of SJE: cultural competency. In this section, the Plan describes a vision for building students' communication skills so that they are prepared to engage in and lead a multicultural world. This focus on cultural competency appeared only one other time in my interviews, during my first interview with Leah, and she listed it as one goal among many of SJE. While this is not counter to the definitions and pathways that appeared in other data sources, it does emphasize a part of SJE that is different from the areas of convergence found among interview data and the School Mission and SCV.

Tolerance and Inclusion. In my theoretical framework (see Fig. 1), I describe the Mission of SJE as "to work towards greater equity in society." Embedded in this is the vision of creating communities that welcome all kinds of people from all kinds of backgrounds and that challenge the maintenance of oppressive systems, structures, and norms. Also included in this is the need to actively work against systemic oppression that currently plays out on all levels of society, including in schools and classrooms, and taking action to dismantle existing systems.

Harper Academy teachers and administrators described a vision of creating classroom and school communities that value diversity and accept people from many different backgrounds. This theme was dominant in all of my interviews and was often

framed as a challenge to the "one way to be" that was also conceptualized by participants as a facet of professional and school culture. This vision stopped short, however, of wanting to dismantle and disrupt the oppressive systems of greater society or, even, of the school. Moreover, in some instances in which tolerance and inclusion were discussed, support for students was framed as helping marginalized students to become more accepted among the dominant group through teaching them the norms of the school; in other words, assimilation rather than pluralism.

Abigail, Jamie, Gina, Alex, and Sam all shared that creating a classroom community that welcomes all kinds of students is critical to providing safe spaces for students and that this is a central goal of SJE. Abigail spoke several times about how important safety is to her work with students and how critical it is to their learning that they feel known and understood for who they are. In our first interview, she described this as the Mission of SJE, to ensure that all of her students felt safe and welcomed while learning with her. She positioned SJE initially in the realm of social-emotional learning, and then reflected on her next steps as moving beyond this definition: "I really like how Leah talks about how DEI is the lens through which you see your curriculum, not a separate piece, so I'm trying to make it that." This focus on inclusion and tolerance and creating a community that welcomes all kinds of students was present in her final interview, as well. Although she described several elements of SJE that she had learned more about, the central tenet of SJE for her still remained to create a welcoming climate for all students. Sam described a similar shift toward a broader view of the role of SJE in her classroom:

> I remember when I came into Pre-K and I was so excited about the AMAZE curriculum because I thought good, I can check off that we are doing this DEI work with this teaching the students all about it. Over this year, I've realized that's not all that it is, and it has to be every day and I have to really listen to the conversations my kids are having every day.

Still, she described the Mission of SJE as the creation of open-mindedness in her students, particularly because they are so homogeneous as a group:

> Just to be open-minded and exposed to different people because they are in a bubble, a lot of them are in a bubble, and I just feel like when there's a student in the classroom that is from outside of the bubble, the students that are in the bubble don't connect with that child, there are just so many things that separate them, the differences.

Gina focused on the children who fell outside of the "norm" at HA rather than on the majority group, as Sam did, but the theme was similar:

> We talk about teaching the whole child and knowing the child and feeling safe. Knowing that my child is going to be heard, my child's voice is going to be heard, my child's story is going to be heard. And told.

Jamie, as well, mentioned acceptance and creating a welcoming environment as a goal of SJE, particularly for students of color. Alex's interviews were also focused on open-mindedness and tolerance as a goal of SJE, although she focused more on the development of students' larger understanding of the world rather than on their immediate experiences in the classroom. For her, their safety and inclusion in their Kindergarten classroom was a pathway to their understanding of the world and its

diversity in a broader sense so that they would be open to differences when they see them in the world outside of HA.

Tolerance and inclusivity were discussed as a part of the definition of SJE in all the interviews I conducted with administrators, as well. Matthew shared that his conceptualization of SJE, particularly in the early childhood years, was the development of students' empathy for the purpose of creating tolerant and accepting classroom and school spaces where all kinds of kids can learn. This aligned with teacher participants' conceptualizations, which also focused on tolerance and inclusivity. Leah and Rachel, however, shared that these ideas were only one part of their understanding of the goal of teaching for social justice. For them, taking action to make societal change was also an essential element of SJE and was the overarching mission of purpose of SJE.

Critical Lens. Teachers' use of a critical lens through which to view the world, the school, and the classroom was reported by all participants to be a key component of Social Justice Education. Leah was emphatic that teachers need a critical lens in order to develop curriculum, deliver instruction, and create learning environments that welcomed children from all kinds of backgrounds and that prepared them to work toward a more equitable world. Rachel, too, spoke several times in each interview about teachers and students looking critically at the world and themselves as a part of SJE. During Matthew's interview, this idea appeared less often, but was the first concept he mentioned when asked about his definition of SJE.

All teacher participants, as well, talked about their own critical lenses and how developing these was essential to their growth and to deepening their classroom practices in SJE. In my conversations with Sam, this was a dominant theme. In my second

interview with her, she described this: “I just think about every little thing, everything I say, when working with more diverse people, or not even more diverse people, just people, even teachers who are white and look like me, I’m thinking critically which is good.” Throughout this interview, she shared anecdotes of things that she had observed more acutely as her eyes were opened up to inequities in the world.

Alex described a sharpening of her critical lens as a big area of growth for her over the months of the study and as a key component of working toward SJE in her classroom:

> Things will come up and you know it will spark a notion for me, is that something that is equitable, is that something that’s inclusive, is that something that we are mindful of for women, for marginalized groups in society, for people of color, and even narrowing that down, when a lesson is being taught or a book is being read, I try to ask those questions, how does it fit in the classroom and beyond, who is it representing, who is it not representing, you know connecting it that way, so each time we talk about social justice or DEI work, it makes me more acutely aware of how I’m developing my curriculum or the curriculum that I am asked to teach, either one.

Throughout her interviews she described this as a primary component of her SJE work.

Gina and Abigail discussed with me the importance of placing a critical lens on the school curriculum, in particular the social studies program. Gina shared that there are immediate changes that need to be made in order to more accurately reflect history as well as to open up the classroom to multiple perspectives. She emphasized the need to

look closely at these and to make changes after looking through a critical lens. She shared her observations about a unit of study she taught with a lead teacher:

> The grade prior to where I am now, one of the units of study was American symbols-statue of liberty, the flag, and so on. Well there are children of color in that classroom and being the assistant of that classroom and with the lead teacher being white, she was teaching from her point of view: "Well, we came to this country for religious freedom." Well, all of us didn't come here for that. So, I said to her, "You know, you have four children of color in this classroom and you have said to them that their ancestors came to this country for religious freedom. And that's not true."

Abigail's focus was on this particular unit of study, as well. She said that "Everyone is pretty excited" to look closely at it through a critical lens and make intentional changes that were more focused on personal identity work as well as the integration of multiple historical perspectives. Alex, as well, emphasized the need for educators who teach for social justice to look critically at programming throughout the school. As an example, she shared her thoughts on the Kindergarten play, which she felt strongly should be re-envisioned with equity and diversity in mind.

All the teacher and administrator participants identified taking a critical lens as essential to SJE. All agreed that teachers, by looking at their own classrooms, their materials and curricula, and their communities, are able to create more welcoming learning environments for students. There was an important point of divergence within this, however. Whereas Rachel and Leah spoke about the importance of students taking action against injustice that they observe with these critical lenses in the outside world,

and the importance of schooling in preparing them to do this, Matthew and the teacher participants stopped short of asserting this. They conceptualized these lenses as relating primarily to teachers developing ways to create environments of tolerance, open-mindedness, and acceptance and to preparing students to tolerate and accept difference beyond the classroom walls, but did not mention action, dismantling of oppressive systems, or racial justice. Teachers primarily talked about turning their critical lenses on their own classrooms rather than on the oppressive systems in larger society. All used similar language but envisioned the goals of using these critical lenses differently.

Windows, Mirrors, and Prejudice Reduction. Throughout my interviews, teachers and administrators referred to the need for Harper Academy's program to include instructional materials that both reflect HA students' identities and that feature people from backgrounds unfamiliar to students in order for it to become more social justice oriented. This was often framed as part of prejudice reduction practices and as working toward the goal of creating classroom communities that are welcoming, open-minded, and tolerant. The curriculum documents and HA documents, as well, consistently included this theme, particularly the AMAZE curriculum and HA's Statement of Community Values. In my analysis, I looked at these two ideas, windows and mirrors and prejudice reduction practices, separately; in the process of looking more closely at the interview transcripts, however, it became clear that these were interrelated, so I discuss them together here.

My interviews included many instances of discussion about including images and texts that reflect a variety of racial, ethnic, and cultural identities as points of departure for conversations about difference and how to respond to it. This was a particularly

strong theme in Alex's interviews and in Jamie's second interview, during which she identified prejudice reduction practices and inclusion of multicultural texts as her next steps in developing her SJE practices. Some of the discussion in Alex's and Jamie's interviews, as well as in Abigail's and Sam's, was reflection on the AMAZE curriculum, which emphasizes the use of multicultural texts and characters who are a part of historically marginalized groups. This is a part of the program's vision for anti-bias and prejudice reduction work with students. AMAZE's texts and persona dolls, which reflect a variety of racial, ethnic, and cultural minorities, are designed to be points of departure for their lesson plans, which include discussion questions and activities about identity, stereotyping, being a part of a community, and responding to difference. Gina's interviews, as well, included discussion of inclusion of multiple perspectives in social studies units. Her take on windows and mirrors was somewhat different in that it focused on how to show students that different groups have experienced and been a part of historical events differently based on their identities. She was, however, similarly interested in ensuring that people of color were represented in the instructional materials so that students of color in her class had mirrors in the curriculum and so that White students had windows to open up their perspectives on the world.

Jamie was also focused on both windows and mirrors in her read alouds, which she framed as points of departure for "grand conversations" with her first graders. She described grand conversations as class discussions that moved beyond discussion of textual elements and toward discussion of real world topics such as stereotyping, exclusion, and tolerance. In her final interview with me, Jamie shared her thoughts on providing windows for students to look through in order to see beyond the HA bubble as

a part of this prejudice reduction work. She shared that this was an essential part of SJE for her:

> You are opening their eyes to reality because there is life outside of South Harper and you know there are other races and genders and ages and there's just so many things to see in the world beyond the bubble that is here. The first step is to bring it into the classroom, they're not being exposed to it any other place.

Intentionally choosing texts that opened up the students' eyes to life beyond their community and school as well as facilitating conversations that work toward prejudice reduction were themes throughout this interview with Jamie.

Leah and Rachel also discussed prejudice reduction practices and providing windows and mirrors for students. When asked about what she hoped to see in classrooms in terms of SJE, Rachel said,

> I'd like to see more diversity represented in the classroom, books with more diverse characters, more child-created work and that I think naturally would bring out some of the children's own experiences. I'd like to see some purposeful identity work with the little kids and some teaching into those teachable moments and not backing away and wondering if they are going to say the right thing but having some of those conversations. I'd like to see teachers being a little bit more skilled in how to broach those conversations with their students.

Rachel's conceptualization of SJE in early childhood classrooms as represented here includes several ideas present in my conceptual framework: windows and mirrors, pluralism, student voice, building on what students bring to the classroom, and prejudice reduction practices. The first and last of these were echoed in teachers' interviews, as

well, and also emerged as a part of Leah's conceptualization of SJE. For Leah, these ideas were foundational and worked toward the larger goal of preparing students to take action to make the world more equitable.

Classroom Practices

How is SJE enacted at HA? What does it look like in practice? For this question, I focused on the curriculum and pedagogy I saw in action during my observations of teachers. I looked at the frequency of codes across all observations (see Table 10) and identified two elements of SJE, building a community of learners and prejudice reduction practices, that I observed most often during my five days of classroom visits. I then looked back at my notes and photographs in order to delve deeper into the specific classroom moments in which I had observed those elements.

Community of Learners. The sense of community and the intentional creation of a supportive community were readily apparent in all classrooms I visited. In two in particular, Abigail's and Jamie's, I observed many elements of Responsive Classroom in their practices. In Responsive Classroom, these elements of practice are intended to work toward the goal of building and maintaining a community of learners. Abigail and Jamie both facilitated morning meetings that called on students to participate in meaningful ways, they asked students to bring what they knew about the world to the classroom, and they facilitated reflective problem-solving discussions with students about playground conflicts. I also observed several student-teacher interactions that communicated to students that they were known and understood. In Jamie's classroom, this included times when she connected with one student after she redirected his off-task and disruptive behavior. This happened two times and both times she offered positive words and then

asked him to re-join the class community. In the following paragraphs, I describe two classroom anecdotes, one from my observation of Abigail and one from Sam, that illustrate the concept of community of learners.

Table 10.

Observed elements of SJE and code frequency

Conceptual Framework	Code	Frequency
Curriculum:		
Rigorous	RIGOR	6
Students and teachers critically question texts and information	CRITICAL LENS	1
Instructional materials open up as well as reflect students' worlds	WINDOWS AND MIRRORS	3
Explicit focus on identifying inequity, examining power, and activism	EXPLICIT FOCUS ON INEQUITY	0
Includes academic, cultural, self, and transformative knowledge	IDENTITY WORK	3
	CULTURAL COMPETENCY	0
Diverse and authentic forms of assessment	AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT	0
Pedagogy:		
Responsive instruction that builds on the knowledge students bring to school	RESPONSIVE INSTRUCTION	7
Critical inquiry	CRITICAL INQ	0
Values student voice	STUDENT VOICE	5
Prejudice reduction practices	PREJUDICE REDUCTION	9
A community of learners	COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS	12

During my observation of Abigail's classroom, one moment in particular is illustrative of this intentional building of classroom community. While coming back from having some time on the playground, several students argued among themselves about a rule regarding the use of sticks during play. Abigail asked these students to share their understanding of the problem with the group as they gathered to sit in the classroom morning meeting space. After sharing, she asked other students to discuss with each other the issues at play, including safety and fairness. Students identified that the problem was that there was no other way to build a castle other than using sticks, which eventually turned into weapons. Abigail asked students to think of other ways that they could create

castles that ensured everyone's safety since some students talked about it being unsafe to use the sticks as weapons. At the end of the conversation, students had listed ideas for things that they could use to play castle as well as a rationale for not using sticks: keeping their community safe.

In Sam's classroom, I observed a curricular activity that is a sustained part of the Pre-Kindergarten program throughout the school year: family share. According to Sam, this activity has many purposes, including affirming each child's culture, identity, and background and building students' oral language skills. It also serves to build classroom community by creating an entry point for students to learn about each other and their backgrounds and by encouraging students to ask each other questions about their lives. The family share I observed featured a Black girl who was a twin. She shared about her experiences being a twin and about her mother and father and special holidays that they enjoy together. Sam invited students to ask the featured child questions about her family. During the conversation, students made connections, such as similar holiday traditions and number of people in their families. This structure served to open up conversations about similarities and differences as well as build a sense of the members of the classroom community.

Other instances of community building in classrooms included times when students and teachers engaged in cheers and sayings that were unique to that class, such as in Alex's classroom when they danced to "get their wiggles out" and refocus after a lesson in which several students were observed to be off-task, and when Jamie asked students to share ways in which they can be welcoming to visitors and to each other each day.

In Gina's class, community-building was not as observable. During morning meeting, Gina's Lead Teacher was the dominant voice and primarily discussed behavioral expectations as well as the schedule for the day. In addition, students' behavior was monitored almost exclusively by the teacher with little student to student redirection, which I observed in other classrooms. In my researcher memo after this observation, I noted that Gina's interactions with students were warm but firm, as were her lead teacher's, but that I did not observe any elements of Responsive Classroom aside from Gina's personal connections with students, which were warm and indicated that she knew and understood the children as individuals.

Prejudice Reduction Practices. In every classroom observation except for Gina's, there was at least one learning experience that specifically worked toward prejudice reduction. All of these were read aloud lessons and featured texts that had characters who felt marginalized in some way and/or who identified as racial minorities. The discussions around these texts were prompted by teacher questions that asked students to empathize with characters and to relate their experiences to incidents they had observed or been a part of in their own lives. In addition, there was conversation and, in some cases, direct instruction on how to include others and how to stand up to exclusion. The inclusion of texts that feature racial minorities works toward prejudice reduction and overlaps with the concept of providing both windows and mirrors into students' lives through instructional materials. Alex's classroom visit was unique in that I saw the beginning of a read aloud focused on prejudice reduction, but she had to stop the lesson early on because of disruptive student behavior. I also observed a few instances of teachers integrating this work and language into the informal interactions and instruction

outside of these read aloud times. This was most observable during my visit to Sam's classroom.

During my visit to Jamie's classroom, she read The Invisible Boy, which tells the story of a quiet, isolated boy who feels invisible at school because he is not known or celebrated and does not have any friends (Ludwig, 2013). At the beginning of the book, he is drawn in black and white, but by the end of the book, after connecting with a friend who shows kindness and having experiences that affirm who he is, he is in full color. During this read aloud, Jamie asked students to discuss how this boy was different from the other students and how the other students responded to these differences. She also asked them to think about what was fair or not fair about the situations in which the boy felt marginalized. At the close of the lesson, she asked students to document what they thought was the lesson, the big idea, of the book. During the discussion, students shared ideas such as "People are judging him and that's not fair," "Everyone needs someone to connect with," and "They are making fun of him and that feels really bad." While this book did not explicitly address difference based on social identifiers, it did work toward prejudice reduction through direct conversation about difference and how and why people are excluded based on people's pre-judgement of them. It also addressed the inequity of students in classroom communities feeling isolated and ways that other students can support their peers by being kind and inclusive.

Abigail's read aloud had similar themes of how and why people feel isolated, and her text also featured a main character of color. In The Name Jar, Unhei, a Korean immigrant who has just moved to the United States with her family, is teased because of her name (Choi, 2001). After experiencing this, she tells her classmates that she will

choose a name for herself. Her classmates use a name jar to submit ideas. One of her classmates travels to her neighborhood and learns the origins of her name; after that, he takes the name jar and, with encouragement from him, Unhei decides to talk to her class about her name and why it is special. While reading this story, Abigail asked students to connect with the character and to consider why her name was so important:

- Why do you think they teased her?
- Did they know they were being hurtful?
- Why is her name so important?
- Why did her mom say it is good to be different? What do you think about that?
- Why do you think people tease each other?
- What are some things you can do when you see teasing?

Students responded by sharing that kids tease each other when they see someone different, when something sounds "funny" about them, and that her name was important because her family gave it to her. They also said that it is good to be different because it would be boring if everyone was the same. At the end of the lesson, the class identified three things to do or say when they witness teasing:

- Say, "What you said makes me (or him/her) feel sad!"
- Get a teacher to help if you don't know what to do.
- Say, "Stop! I don't like that."

This kind of conversation and student discussion is aligned with prejudice reduction practices; it asks students to consider the ways in which people are unfairly judged as well as how to address this unfairness when they see it.

In Sam's classroom, she focused on the concept of similarities and differences through a read aloud. She read The Colors of Us and asked students to describe different skin tones that people can have (Katz, 2002). She also asked them to describe other ways in which they are similar or different. When I visited Alex's classroom, she had planned to read This is the Rope (Woodson, 2013). While she did not finish this lesson with the

students, she introduced it by saying, “My goal for this story is for you to see how the family is connected just the way we are all connected.” Although I did not observe her instruction, her goal directly aligns with prejudice reduction practices by featuring an author and main character from a historically marginalized group and by encouraging connections between this character and the students.

Conclusion

Analysis of all interview and document data provided insight into Harper Academy’s professional and larger school cultures; the supports and challenges to enacting Social Justice Education; how SJE is conceptualized by teachers and administrators; and how SJE is enacted at the school. Participants described a professional culture of care and support that also defined a “one way to be” aligned with the dominant groups of larger society. Embedded in this is a contradiction, one that is also counter to what I identified in my conceptual framework as important elements of SJE. Within this professional and school culture, two primary supports for SJE and two challenges also emerged in the data. A School Mission aligned with SJE and strong leadership were cited as supports for SJE programming at the school while fear of parents and teacher capacity were identified as challenges.

The data suggest that at HA, SJE is largely conceptualized as a set of practices that aim to create safe and welcoming communities for students. Pathways to this include teachers’ development and use of a critical lens and the inclusion of instructional materials that provide both windows and mirrors for students as a part of prejudice reduction practices. In classrooms, I observed prejudice reduction practices as well as instruction that works toward the goal of creating supportive classroom communities.

These practices, and what I observed during my visits, are not in conflict with my conceptual framework; they do, however, stop short of taking action and preparing students to take action against oppressive societal structures. Given the school and professional culture, the one way to be, this kind of work might be particularly challenging. This is compounded by the narrative that this work might also "rock the boat" and upset parents, who are largely members of the dominant identity groups and can be assumed to benefit from these structures.

Leah and Rachel, the leaders of the professional development programming at the Lower School, do conceptualize SJE as action against societal inequity, however. Teachers identified leadership as a support for SJE's enactment at HA, and under this leadership, perhaps the Mission of SJE will be more meaningfully tied to the action implied in the Statement of Community Values. Moreover, with the development of teachers' skills and capacity, perhaps the fear of parents will be mitigated as well; perhaps with more skill and confidence in teaching, and the concurrent continued development of teachers' critical lenses, will also come greater confidence with parents.

In the following chapter, I examine each teacher participant as a bounded case within the larger case of Harper Academy. My focus is on understanding what learning to teach for social justice has been like for the early childhood teachers in this elite school. I provide an overview of each teacher's learning about SJE during her career, with specific focus on her learning during the time period of the study and within the professional and school culture of HA. This analysis includes moments, texts, and experiences that were particularly impactful. I also provide description of each teacher's classroom as observed during my visits to HA and ways in which SJE appears in her practice.

Across cases, I found that each teacher communicated that she saw herself as an outsider to the school or professional culture in some way and that this perception played a role in her learning about SJE. I also observed examples of each teacher using a critical lens to analyze practices in her classroom, the school, or the larger world. I include details and analysis of these for each teacher, as well.

Chapter V: The Teachers

This chapter describes how each of the five teacher participants experienced learning about Social Justice Education at Harper Academy. For each teacher, I begin with an overview of how she described the school and professional cultures of HA and the way in which she positioned herself within and to these cultures, including the ways in which she felt like an outsider. I then provide an overview of her learning about SJE, including her learning during the time of data collection, and discuss examples of impactful learning experiences, themes that emerge across these experiences, and any shifts in thinking that the participant noted. Finally, I describe each teacher's classroom and evidence of SJE that I observed in her practice. In the conclusion to this chapter, I discuss themes across cases in the context of Harper Academy and the implications of these themes.

Political stances, commitment to elements of SJE, membership in the "out group," and racial identity were the ways in which the participants described their outsider status. Moreover, each teacher described the way in which she was outside the culture as one way in which she was well positioned to teach for social justice. Learning that was personal as well as professional, experiences that focused on development of teachers' critical lenses, a focus on specific classroom practices, and learning that was done independently were among the features of professional learning experiences that participants found impactful.

Sam, Pre-Kindergarten Assistant Teacher

At the time of this study, Sam, a cisgender white woman in her 20s, was in the middle of her fourth year as an Assistant Teacher at Harper Academy and her first year in

Pre-Kindergarten. Sam also attended Harper Academy for high school, when she moved to Harper with her family from Great Britain. In the middle of the data collection period, Sam was offered and accepted a position for the following year as a Lead Teacher in a Pre-Kindergarten classroom at HA. She expressed excitement at continuing to be a part of the school and professional community, which she described as supportive, hardworking, politically conservative, and warm. She was particularly positive about the school's respect for teacher professionalism and teacher autonomy and its support of teacher professional development, including her own pursuit of a Master's in Education degree, which was partially funded by the school. In looking toward her upcoming year as a Lead Teacher, Sam expressed eagerness to create a classroom environment grounded in tenets of Social Justice Education, particularly tenets related to identity development and prejudice reduction. She described ways she might develop and implement more social justice-oriented curriculum and facilitate meaningful conversations about identity in her own classroom using the AMAZE curriculum.

In addition to her enthusiasm for the warmth and support of the school and professional cultures of HA, Sam also had critiques of these cultures. First and foremost, Sam found HA's lack of student and faculty diversity to have a large and negative impact on the school. She initially framed this as an issue regarding diversity of political affiliations, for she found the school to be overwhelmingly politically conservative. She also, however, identified this as a lack of racial, socioeconomic, gender, family structure, and religious diversity. Her analysis of the dominant school and professional cultures was in alignment with my description of the "one way to be" in Chapter 4; White, politically conservative, wealthy, and Christian.

Outsider: Political Leanings. Sam described this homogeneity, this one way to be, as having a negative impact on the extent to which she was comfortable at the school. Sam described herself as politically liberal and as an outsider to the school and professional culture in this way. At the beginning of the study, Sam reflected on this:

> I find it hard to talk about that. I've kind of kept my feelings to myself just because I was new to the team this year and they were so open about being in favor of Trump and not in favor of the other candidates. And they're older...I don't know if that has anything to do with it. I don't know if I could change their opinions or even get them to see my perspective...I've kind of kept my mouth closed when it comes to politics.

Later in this interview, Sam said that she sees Social Justice Education as both very political and incompatible with political conservatism, particularly as it relates to diversity and inclusion:

> I don't understand how you can vote for someone who is just so openly biased and hateful towards certain groups and I don't know how you can go through the trainings that we are given, your training yesterday, and still vote for that person and believe that that's what's best for our country, for everyone overall.

As a politically liberal and young Assistant Teacher, Sam positioned herself as an outsider to the dominant HA culture. This outsider status also, however, well-positioned her to teach in alignment with the tenets of SJE, for the open mindedness and acceptance that she described as embedded in the definition of SJE, she also described as embedded in the ideology of political liberalism in the United States.

Sam described political conservatism and lack of student and teacher diversity not only as having impact on her level of comfort in HA's culture, but also as a challenge to her classroom practices. In our last interview, she described one particular challenge with implementing the AMAZE curriculum: the ability to observe its impact on students' interactions with people who differ from the "norm" of HA:

> Every conversation, they've been great. Also, I wonder if that's because there's not an actual person in our classroom, it's just a storybook. It's just a conversation we're having about a potential person. They don't have a friend with two daddies, they don't have those experiences with actual people. We read books all the time with crazy out there fiction things, so it could just be fiction to them. If we had more diverse families, we could find out.

In addition to the challenge of racial, religious, socio-economic, and family structure homogeneity, Sam also described political conservatism as having a role in the biases that students bring to the classroom that have to be "undone" as a part of SJE: "I feel like some of them do get biases from their parents and maybe their parents don't allow certain things." For Sam, the one way to be, and in particular the political one way to be, was a direct challenge to her teaching goals and to the development of SJE practices at HA.

Professional Learning: Personal Connections and Critical Lens. Two themes emerged when I examined Sam's learning about SJE throughout her career and during the data collection period: making personal connections and developing a critical lens. From the beginning of her learning about SJE at Harper Academy, experiences that Sam found impactful were ones in which she was challenged to reflect on her own assumptions and identity and/or connect personally with her colleagues. In addition to the

experiences in which she made personal connections, she also tended to describe instances of growth as those in which she worked to develop a critical lens on her teaching and the world. At the end of the data collection period, during our second interview, this was particularly evident, for Sam spent a lot of time reflecting on the importance and power of using a critical lens to look at the world in new ways and to support the creation of a tolerant, welcoming classroom for all kinds of students.

Sam's learning about SJE began at Harper Academy when the staff read Blindspot for a summer reading book club in 2016 (Banaji, 2013). This book had an immense impact on Sam, and it was the first learning experience she mentioned when I asked about important PD during our first interview. Sam said that she learned from that book that everyone has implicit biases and that this is a part of being human rather than something that indicates character flaws. After reading it, Sam began looking internally in order to examine her own biases, and she identified this as the beginning of the creation of her critical lens.

This experience was highly personal for Sam. In my interview with Leah, she shared a conversation she had with Sam about the book in which Sam described the emotional impact it had on her and the way in which it gave her teaching urgency and purpose. In my first interview with Sam, she described reading the book as a highly personal transformative experience, one that shifted her thinking completely about the role of identity and bias in teaching and learning. Moreover, she shared how she sees this personal reflection having impact on her teaching:

> We did a book study on Blindspot, it was all about your implicit biases basically, and that was huge for me because it was so personal, and I figured out, oh my

> gosh, I have these biases I didn't even know I had. I feel like when you do that personal work, then you bring it automatically into the classroom in a good way so that was huge for me.

Later in this interview, she described how difficult it is to teach anti-bias curriculum when you yourself do not fully understand who you are, what your biases are and where these come from in the world. In fact, she recommended that HA's whole faculty engage in more "personal diversity professional development because there's a lot of people that need to dig deeper personally." She connected this personal work to practice specifically in the context of discussions about gender fluidity: "I feel like you only don't feel comfortable with that, talking about it, if you don't believe in it yourself...it will just take a lot of PD and some personal growth for some." For Sam, making personal connections to the tenets of SJE, particularly as they relate to the importance of identity and bias, and deepening understanding through this can have a positive impact on SJE practices.

Sam also noted that connecting to her colleagues on a personal level through the 21-Day Equity Challenge and the study group that met during the data collection period were impactful for her. She said that the 21-Day Equity Challenge "gave her hope" for the community because it included staff who were not the ones who usually reach out for PD on SJE or who tend to participate in discussions about identity, diversity, equity and justice. It also provided an opportunity for her to sharpen her critical lens through readings both inside and outside the world of education and to collaborate with her colleagues in order to learn and reflect on these. The collaboration aspect of the study group was important to Sam, as well:

> I feel like our sessions have been great with the study group, learning from other people, too, I really enjoyed this last one where Alex really opened up, that was really, I don't know, helpful to talk to somebody, or listen to somebody and their thinking.

This collaborative experience facilitated personal connections with her colleagues, which Sam noted was helpful to her learning. Later in our interview, she said, "I feel like our study groups are always impactful for me, especially when Gina and Jamie are there, and we can hear their perspectives."

Sam also reported that she experienced a significant shift in her thinking during the data collection period. She considered the ways in which race factors into her relationships with and understanding of students and families. This, too, relates to the theme of personal connection, and it also is an example of Sam's use of a critical lens. Sam said that prior to the study period, she would be reluctant to consider race a defining factor in how she understood her students and their families. During the study period, however, her thinking on this changed:

> I may have before thought, ok, Sam, you need to stop focusing on that and almost downplay it a little bit, but now I think I need to think about that and how the family is from a completely different background and different perspective and I have to think about all those things when I'm talking to them and building relationships might be a little more difficult. I just wish I had more experience with African-American families or friendships with African-Americans… it was an "I'm not going to see color" type of thing, but now I'm like ok, I know that is

> completely wrong, that is a massive part of that person and I need to take that into consideration.

When asked what was responsible for this shift, Sam said that the workshop I facilitated on identity affirmation challenged her thinking. During the workshop, we discussed how to know, understand, and nurture each child, including affirming each of his/her identities and cultures:

> I remember your very first and it was full faculty training that you did on unpacking backpacks and making sure that each child is known and valued, making sure they bring their full self. You had mentioned something about that we need to focus on what they are, if they are African-American, that is a big part of them and that makes a difference and that's why I try to think about that. I guess that goes for everyone, every piece that makes somebody a minority, family structure or any culture differences, but it's just getting to a comfortable conversation with that.

She was particularly moved by thinking about what it must be like to come to school as a part of a minority group, and she said she connected on a personal level with this idea of feeling like an outsider.

Sam integrated this idea into her critical lens, as well, sharing that she intended to re-think her connections with families the following year:

> I was thinking that next year, I really want to make it a goal to really get to know my families, I feel like that's been my goal every year, but I really want to know HOW to get to them without me overstepping my boundaries or asking questions that are ignorant...we never get that one on one time when we can actually talk

> with the parents and figure out what's important to them and where they come from so I'm hoping that will help. I need to work on my conversations with parents, so I can get to what is meaningful to them and how we can best meet our families' needs.

Later in this conversation, Sam reflected on how this critical lens has become a part of how she sees the world both at work and beyond the school, particularly regarding race:

> I saw it, but I didn't want to see it. It wasn't that I was blind to it, it's that I was trying to not make that a big part of the person, you know, but mostly because when I see a White person I'm not thinking about it, but now I am always thinking about it all the time. We were at a wedding this weekend and it was at this Southern plantation and the names of the places in the venue were like the Master's Suite. There was this one Black man there, the only Black guest at the wedding. I was thinking how awful to be, one, the only Black person at this wedding, and, two, to see the Master's Suite...I was thinking about the guy the whole time, what is it like to be the only Black person here...I was the only Brit there, but that's different. It's not on my face.

In this quotation, Sam explains not only how she has developed a critical lens on many facets of her life, especially racial identity, but also how personal connections have an important role in her thinking and reflection.

At the end of the study period, Sam said she was looking forward to learning more about AMAZE and how to bring this curriculum meaningfully into her practice. She also emphasized that she intended to continue to think critically about how to best connect with families from all backgrounds and how to bring them more authentically

into the community, since Pre-Kindergarten is the first year of HA and most families are new to the school. At the conclusion of our last interview, Sam described her critical lens as well as how she might use it to create a more welcoming classroom environment for the following year as a Lead Teacher:

> Just thinking more critically, as I said before, I just think about every little thing, everything I say, when working with more diverse people, or not even more diverse people, just people, even teachers who are white and look like me, I'm thinking critically which is good...I would like to work that [SJE] more seamlessly in or maybe think about and observe the kids' conversations and their biases and then choose what to bring in to make it more purposeful for our group. Or think about our student population in the class...be more intentional with our materials and books and names of things, like our puppets and our baby dolls; they are all "white" names. Even the books we use, a lot of them are animals, but even then, we can be more thoughtful.

Two themes emerge when analyzing Sam's professional learning about SJE: personal connection and critical lens. The impactful experiences that Sam described in interviews were those that facilitated her personal connection to elements of SJE, including her own identity development and her personal connections with her colleagues. Even in her description of next steps for the school and her own learning, Sam focused on ways to create personal connections through collaboration with families. For Sam, connecting in meaningful and personal ways to issues of diversity and equity, and to her colleagues, students, and families, were important for both herself and her students.

Sam's entry point to SJE was a personal one that facilitated the development of her critical lens. This critical lens continued to be an area of focus for her throughout the data collection period, and Sam continued to emphasize its importance as she looked toward the following school year.

Sam's Classroom Practices. During my visit to Sam's classroom, I observed students' arrival to school, which consisted of free play; a singing practice with the other Pre-Kindergarten classes; circle time, a morning gathering during which students and teachers explore the calendar and greet each other; family share, a time for one student to share about his/her family; a learning stations activity, during which students completed various academic activities; and read aloud. In addition, there was a letter focus for the day, "W," so many of the activities involved things that start with "w," including walruses, worms, and magic wands. Throughout the day, Sam informally reflected on the day with me, and, at the close of the day, we had a more extended meeting. During these conversations, Sam noted that the day was a typical one in many respects and that I was observing students in their "normal" learning environment. The only exception to this was the singing practice, which was an event familiar to the students, but not something that occurred on a regular and predictable schedule.

Sam was unequivocally warm and positive with her students. She frequently interacted with them individually or in very small groups or partnerships, making sustained eye contact and kneeling or sitting so that she was at their level. She radiated a genuine curiosity about their thinking and their opinions and seemed to enjoy her time with them. The students responded positively to her, as well, and sought her attention and support during conflicts or times of confusion. During her reflection with me, Sam noted

that this personal connection is a critical part of her teaching. She said that times such as arrival and centers are important to her because they are chances to connect with each student, especially those who don't usually seek out teacher attention. She also identified this as a chance to help students resolve conflicts with their peers in the context of natural play.

While teaching or giving directions to the whole group, Sam remained warm and positive in tone and tended to continue to connect individually with students. When she needed to redirect off-task students, she tended to do so quietly and individually rather than by calling out their names in front of the whole group. This approach contrasted with the strategies and approaches of the other teachers I observed during the whole-grade singing practice. For this, the approximately forty-five students gathered in one room, sat in rows on the floor, and practiced singing three songs in unison in order to prepare for a class visit to a local assisted living facility. The behavioral expectations were very high and included silence in between songs and keeping hands to self at all times. Several teachers called out students, all boys, by name in order to redirect their behavior and a few were removed from the group for talking loudly or touching other students. Sam, in contrast, sat beside three students who were beginning to exhibit off-task or distracting behavior at different times, spoke quietly to them individually, and the students responded by re-focusing on the singing.

Sam also frequently observed interactions between students from a distance before intervening and offering support. Sam noted that her students sometimes had difficulty with independent problem-solving, as well as moving independently between

activities in the classroom, and that she carefully considered when to intervene as a way to support that growing independence.

There were two elements of SJE that I observed in Sam's classroom: Community of Learners and Prejudice Reduction Practices. The most frequently noted in my coding was "Community of Learners." Throughout the day, Sam facilitated positive student relationships by encouraging them to listen to each other and respond respectfully during play as well as during more academic experiences. She also positioned herself as a learner alongside students in the classroom community at two points. During circle time, she said that she was going to find some books on walruses "so I can learn more about their teeth and tusks." During a transition, Sam told another student, who shared that she had seen worms cut in half that still wiggled, that she observed something similar about worms, and that she had questions about that, too. The Family Share activity also was an opportunity for students to learn from and about each other, which supports the goal of building classroom community. During this, one featured student shared information and pictures about her family and answered questions from the group. Sam and the Lead Teacher prompted students to make connections with the student who was presenting: do any of you have a sister, too? Do any of you have four people in your family? Who else celebrates with cake on special holidays? Who else likes to go hiking?

I also observed an instance of "Prejudice Reduction Practices." Sam read The Colors of Us to the students, which served as a point of departure for conversation about the ways in which students are similar and different (Katz, 2002). Sam encouraged students to share their observations, which included the ways in which everyone's skin tones varied, and the ways in which their interests varied. One student said, "Our skins

are different, and we don't like to do the same things, or we might, or we might not." Sam then asked students to stand up if they enjoy dramatic play, then trucks and cars, and then soccer. Several side conversations ensued about whether or not trucks and cars were for girls and if dramatic play was really for boys. Sam told the students that they were going to talk more about these ideas the next day since this was the end of the day and time for dismissal. During our reflection, Sam noted that this class conversation about observed skin tone differences was an ongoing one, as was the one about gender roles, and that the students were becoming more comfortable discussing both topics as a group. Bringing these topics to the forefront of classroom conversation and work is a part of prejudice reduction practices.

Abigail, Kindergarten Lead Teacher

Abigail, a cisgender, White, heterosexual woman in her 30s, was in her third year of teaching at Harper Academy at the time of this study. Throughout my interviews with her, Abigail was positive about the Harper Academy community, particularly regarding its professional culture, and she shared few critiques of the school. She described HA as an inclusive place, although she acknowledged that she was aware of people feeling otherwise. She attributed this to the "wounds that people are healing from in the past administration." Abigail did, however, talk about keeping her political views and her social justice work outside of school separate from her professional life, rarely discussing this with her colleagues, and attributed this to the political homogeneity at the school and the political climate in the United States. Abigail also expressed that she laments the lack of diversity among students and teachers. Her comments and my subsequent coding suggest that Abigail felt mostly like an insider at HA, although the one way to be did

have a major impact on her level of comfort with discussing a key aspect of who she is: her engagement in social justice work outside of HA. In this way, Abigail positioned herself as an outsider to the school community.

During our first interview, Abigail expressed several times that HA was a place in which teachers are expected to grow, work hard, and refine their practices, and that her own values were strongly aligned with these. She framed these expectations as supportive of teaching and learning and a way of professionalizing practice. Although she noted that the expectation for ongoing growth and hard work led to challenges in terms of workload, she was very positive about its impact on the students and teachers of HA overall:

> We want to do our best, we are perfectionists. My team has talked a lot about putting pressure on ourselves to do good work and then where it comes from in the administration is, "How can you grow? How can you grow your practice?" and no one can be complacent. They are very interested in giving us professional development opportunities and opportunities to grow. Before, I mean I can't really speak to before, but I think you could plateau a little bit, and now, you can always get better.

Abigail also noted that the expectations for teachers were high regarding taking time for personal connections with students and families:

> Really trying to make good decisions for your kids and get to know them on a very personal level. I do think it is valued here that we make relationships, that we share a bit of ourselves with the kids, that we get to know the families, and partner with families. Um, which I think is where a lot of the workload comes from

> because you want to be so accessible to those families…And then making your teaching practice strong. We all want to be excellent teachers, not just like so-so.

Abigail also mentioned the role of administrative leadership in the culture of the school and in the process of school change. Throughout this interview, Abigail spoke a few more times about Leah's leadership and attributed what she saw as HA's positive growth-minded culture to the shift that happened as a result of her hiring: "I do think that's more of a recent development under Leah. At least in the Lower School, things are a lot cheerier and happier; it's a great atmosphere." Specifically, Abigail discussed how Leah supported teachers by being clear and transparent about expectations and including teachers in the process of school change:

> She is the ultimate professional so that helps a lot. From what I've heard, in the past, that's not the way things were handled. If she has a problem with anything in your professionalism, your teaching, she will let you know, and if not, then carry on. There's trust there with her and she's also very smart. For me, a lot of my philosophy aligns with her so that's been really like thank goodness. Even if your philosophy didn't necessarily align with Leah, the way she approaches it, she tries to get the buy-in, she explains everything, she includes people in the process, and I think people have come to trust her and see that she is inclusive of all of us.

In addition, Abigail cited Leah's work with parents as a part of the positivity in the school culture, particularly around SJE. Abigail attributed her own confidence in using the AMAZE curriculum in part to Leah's dedication to educating parents about SJE and being supportive of teachers' work with students. To Leah, this mitigated concerns about parent pushback on SJE and contributed to a positive and supportive professional culture.

Abigail's confidence in the leadership and her alignment with the professional culture's value of hard work and ongoing growth positioned her as an included part of the HA community.

Outsider: Social Justice Work. Like Sam, however, Abigail positioned herself as an outsider to HA because of the political climate in the community. At the time of the study, Abigail had been involved for a few years in the larger Harper community's equity and justice work, which she framed as counter to political conservatism and in alignment with SJE. During our first interview, she described her involvement in an organization that facilitates conversations among people from different communities, using a set of norms and practices intended to support conversations across difference. She also stated that this aspect of her life was not a part of her professional life:

> I'm involved in the larger Harper community with racial justice...So it's really kind of a personal journey. It's funny because no one at work would maybe know that about me. I mean maybe Leah and Rebecca...it's a small group and it's people from different races, religions, political backgrounds, and you come together and you discuss.

Abigail went on to express that this work informed her teaching, her parenting, and how she interacted with colleagues. She described it as a way of infusing her practice with SJE because its intention is to facilitate authentic conversation among people of diverse backgrounds through a structured approach, which she described as similar to the prejudice reduction practices of SJE. Despite the Lower School's focus on SJE, her confidence in Leah's leadership and support, and her feelings of inclusion in the school community, however, Abigail continued to keep this part of herself outside of HA. Like

Sam, Abigail found that the very thing that made her an outsider to the culture of HA also situated her to practice SJE effectively.

Abigail cited parents and politics as her reasons for keeping her social justice work separate from her professional life. Her initial reflection on why included an uncertainty around parent response as well as a hesitance to have this work labelled and dismissed as political; Abigail expressed a desire to remain politically neutral at school:

> There are many families that are [open-minded] and they're lovely. They are open and forward-thinking and growth-minded, but I think there are also families that are lovely that are just a lot more conservative socially and have a tendency, instead of saying for example, "I think of DEI work as work for everybody, obviously you do too," they will chalk it up to that's such a liberal thing, so political. So, it dismisses it, like we are pushing this agenda that's so liberal...So I try to find that balance and remain really neutral. I think that's probably why I don't speak about my personal work in the larger Harper community because I'm trying to remain really neutral to this community.

Abigail's reluctance to discuss her personal social justice work was impacted by the political climate in the community. This also revealed a different issue; that SJE could be "dismissed" as political. In seeking to keep SJE a valuable and valued part of her teaching, she sought to protect it from political labeling. In doing so, however, she also kept a central part of herself and her SJE practices separate from her professional life, particularly in her collaboration with colleagues.

Professional Learning: Anti-Bias Work and Politics. Abigail discussed several impactful professional learning experiences during our interviews, and two themes

emerged from these discussions: understanding anti-bias work and the role of politics. The former was a defining feature of her learning prior to the study, and it continued to be a part of her learning during the study, as well. During study groups and in our interviews, however, the role of politics in SJE, particularly in the context of the 2016 election, became a more dominant topic. Abigail came to the study with this issue in mind, and she cited that learning experiences focused on this were impactful for her. By the end of the study, she had not fully resolved it, but her analysis of it had shifted.

Abigail's introduction to SJE began at Harper Academy with reading Waking Up White in the summer of 2014, a learning experience that she would later cite as central to her personal and professional journey towards a social justice teaching practice (Irving, 2014). Banaji's Blindspot (2013), another faculty summer reading experience, was also an important book for her. In both, identity development, systemic racism, and building awareness of personal biases were topics that resonated with Abigail personally:

> I just thought Waking Up White was amazing. I made everyone in my family read it, and I felt like that's the first time I really understood systematic racism and my part in it and also sort of made me move towards the social justice movement, like I could no longer be a bystander, so that is where I am in my personal journey.

Like Sam, the personal connection to the text was impactful for her. Moreover, Abigail found the identity development aspect of these texts to be powerful, so much so that she sought involvement in social justice work outside of HA, anti-bias work that specifically focused on how to communicate across identity lines.

Anti-bias work was also a key aspect of the other impactful professional learning experience Abigail identified in our first interview: working with the AMAZE

curriculum, which supports students' identity development as well as their skills in discussing difference and identity. She described AMAZE as a way to support building a welcoming school and classroom environment and creating a tolerant and open-minded community that celebrates diversity. Abigail not only described these goals as central to the AMAZE curriculum and SJE, but also as central to her personal values, her teaching practice, and the Kindergarten curriculum as a whole:

> I want them to feel so safe in my classroom. I really like how you and Leah talk about how DEI is the lens through which you see our curriculum, not a separate piece. I'm trying to make it that, because I feel like so much of Kindergarten is social-emotional and it just lends itself so naturally to DEI work and inclusivity, so I'm trying to integrate it in that way.

Throughout the study, Abigail continued to discuss working with the AMAZE curriculum and was particularly focused on integrating SJE into the larger curricular goals.

At the beginning of the study period, Abigail was considering to what extent and in what ways politics are a part of SJE practices, particularly in the context of potential parent and colleague responses to classroom practices. At the end of the study, she cited PD that informed her thinking on this as impactful. This issue was one that remained unresolved for her by the end of the study period, however. As discussed, Abigail primarily wrestled with this in terms of its relation to the school and professional community rather than classroom practices. She described her reluctance to openly discuss her social justice work outside of the classroom as a part of her struggle to position politics in her professional life. At the end of the first interview, Abigail stated that her goals for her SJE work were to bring her personal work to her professional life

and to include more information about her work toward social justice goals in the classroom in her communication to families:

> Personally, I probably need to talk a little more about it around here. Like just last week my team was thinking about reading Waking Up White and I just said, "Oh I've read that it's really good" and they said something else, and I said, "Actually it is the book that made me get into social justice work and racial reconciliation" (laughing). That was really the first time. I really should bring that into the fold more, so that's my personal goal. Professionally, honestly I probably need to work on my communication with my parents. We do a lot of communication and it's always about curriculum and I should probably bring in a little more with "This is what we did with our persona doll." I've been a little bit afraid to go there.

When asked about impactful PD, Abigail mentioned learning that supported her thinking about this issue, including direct instruction on the definition of SJE and its relationship to politics:

> The time when you did the lecture on SJE and you sort of outlined the tenets of that and you talked about how teaching is political in nature and it was interesting because that's something I've always kind of fought or tried to push aside, the politics of it. So, having that experience made me go out and think why am I trying so hard not to...not that I'm trying to teach politics all the time or anything, but it's opened me up to it.

Learning experiences outside of HA also contributed to her thinking on this issue; moreover, she continued to consider it primarily in the context of parent response to SJE:

> It's been interesting hearing different people's perspectives on this [outside of HA]. Like one school during the election they had a lot of backlash because a lot of parents thought they were teaching in favor of a certain candidate.

At the beginning of the study period, Abigail asserted that she wanted to remain neutral. By the time of the second interview, however, her thinking had shifted to consider how politics might be a part of her practice, including how she might engage with parents and colleagues.

Abigail also solidified her rationale for framing SJE as "just good practice," and built on this idea as rationale for it being apolitical:

> It's just interesting the conversations that come up that always go back to the point that we aren't teaching one agenda for Democrats or Republicans, it just happens to be that in this...I don't know what I'm trying to say...I believe teaching being for all children is not a political agenda but is just good SJ education, good practice, but it's become kind of taboo in a way. Some things that aren't necessarily political have been given that slant. I think it's because of the larger political climate. I feel like I don't know teaching maybe five years ago, everyone could get behind service for others or how to help children for whom English is a second language, but in this climate it's become this is handouts or welfare or they need to speak English, and it's become so nasty, it's just different. So that was a big take-away for me, to just stay the course and think of it as SJE and not a political agenda and if people are receiving it that way then help remind them that this is not. Of course, we want children to be aware of differences, and I'm not trying to make them raging liberal Democrats or whatever that is, so that was

> interesting that that's sort of been on the down low and hush hush and now the truth of it is that it's just good teaching.

Much like Sam, Abigail described SJE's focus on acceptance and celebration of differences and its emphasis on taking action as fundamentally not aligned with a particular political party. She does describe these elements, however, as having a political slant as a result of the particular political climate in 2017. In this climate, SJE practices can be seen as liberal rather than conservative, and, thus, counter to the dominant political conservatism of the HA community.

When asked about her goal of being more open about her social justice work, which she sees as aligned with SJE, Abigail said that she was still reluctant. While she did not describe this work as politically liberal, she did describe it as perceived as politically liberal. At the end of the second interview, she described her rationale for keeping this work separate from her professional life:

> Nothing has really changed on that front. I feel like it's really separate. I feel like it would be really uncomfortable to start to share that. Enough has been said among colleagues that I know how they would feel so I would not feel safe...Just comments like we know she's all Kum-bah-ya or diversity is her biggest piece things like that where I'd sort of rather not be identified either way. I can shut myself in my room and be like alright, this is how I feel.

Even though Abigail expressed discomfort with colleague response and with potential family response, she expressed confidence in teaching for social justice in her classroom. The professional learning experiences that facilitated her thinking about politics shifted her understanding of SJE as both political in nature and not affiliated with any particular

party. She continued to frame it, like Sam, as "just good practice," that supports students' identity development, capacity to interact across difference, and appreciation for diversity.

Abigail's Classroom Practices. Abigail's classroom hummed with positive energy throughout the day I visited. I observed a wide variety of academic as well as more play-based structures: arrival time; centers, when students choose from various activities around the room; morning meeting, a Responsive Classroom structure for students to gather together to talk about the upcoming day, play community-building games, and greet each other; Word Study, a literacy program which was facilitated in small groups; Kindergarten play practice in the auditorium with the other Kindergarten classes; a read aloud with an explicit anti-bias focus; reading workshop; mathematics; a second round of centers with a more academic focus; and an afternoon meeting, another Responsive Classroom structure when students gather to close their day and discuss any class-wide conflicts that might need collaborative resolution. Throughout the day, I reflected informally with Abigail on her students, their learning, and her teaching and curriculum and had a more extensive reflection at the end of the day. She noted that what I observed was representative of Kindergarteners' experiences in her classroom as well as her teaching practices. As in Sam's observation day, there was one activity that was unusual for the class, although not entirely unfamiliar: Kindergarten play practice.

Abigail was an artful and skilled teacher to observe. Her role was one of facilitator for much of the day, although she did direct student conversation through questioning. When she did deliver direct instruction, her language was clear and concise. Students responded positively to her, seemed to fully understand the classroom

expectations, and moved independently throughout the classroom. They sought her support and guidance when working independently and returned to work confident after consulting with her. She held students to high expectations, both behaviorally and intellectually, and she supported these with positive comments and some cheerleading, such as, "You can start writing two-syllable words. You are ready!" and "This is something you all can do. Repeat after me, 'I can do it! I'm so smart! I am a math genius!'" This was received with many smiles and seemed to both lighten the mood during rigorous work and boost students' confidence.

Abigail also tended to "coach" rather than direct her students when she worked with them. For example, when she was working with a student struggling with r-controlled vowels during word study, she did not simply provide the answer and re-teach what she had already taught. Rather, she built on what the student already knew about encoding with another pattern to illustrate how to encode with the r-controlled vowel pattern. She did something similar when facilitating the class discussion on The Name Jar (Choi, 2001). Rather than taking responses from students and collecting them, she re-framed student insights and elevated them to an instructional level. For example, one student said that the main character, Unhei, was being made fun of for her name because she was from a different country and no one in her class knew the language. Abigail re-framed this by saying, "It sounds like you are saying that when people are different and from different places, it makes people uneasy and they might lash out. Has this ever happened to any of you?" Rather than focusing on the specific moment in the text, Abigail used this moment as a point of departure and built on what the students were saying to define a teaching point.

I observed many elements of SJE in Abigail's practice: Responsive Instruction, Rigor, Student Voice, use of Windows and Mirrors, Prejudice Reduction practices, Pluralism, and Activism. I coded each of these elements on the notes from my observation either two or three times. While there were no clear dominant elements when looking only at the code frequency, Prejudice Reduction Practices and Rigor were what emerged as most central to her classroom practices that day. Her read aloud of The Name Jar and subsequent discussion, literacy instruction, and facilitation of centers included both of these elements, and these were the primary activities of the day (Choi, 2001). Moreover, I noted both of these elements multiple times in my post-observation memo, which I completed prior to formally coding the observation notes.

The primary learning experience that included prejudice reduction practices was the read aloud of The Name Jar. In this book, a child who has recently immigrated to the US from Korea, Unhei, is made fun of for her name and subsequently refuses to share it when she arrives for her first day of school (Choi, 2001). A new friend helps her by creating a name jar, in which students place suggestions for a new name. At the end, Unhei and her classmates arrive at a new appreciation for her unique name and how special it is to her and to her family. During the discussion, Abigail supported students in articulating why difference is often an underlying reason for conflict, how names can be important cultural identifiers, and how to respond if you are a witness to or a target of unkind words. She shifted the conversation several times to focus on the importance of identity in the story. She also wove in examples of students' experiences, including a child in the class who had celebrated her "Name Day" with the class as a way of sharing her Greek culture with her peers. Abigail's prejudice reduction practices were grounded

in showing students how identity and difference can create discomfort but also how they should be celebrated:

> Listen carefully and touch your nose. Carrie loves dinosaurs, Alex loves animals, Wade is a puppy lover. I know that Sarah loves to draw and color, and Thomas loves to play baseball...I could say something about everyone. That makes you special, that makes you interesting. Can you imagine how uninteresting, how boring it would be if everyone just liked cats?! You don't want to be just like everyone else. Think about something that makes you special and different right now. Whisper in your hand.

She initially discussed diversity of interests, but then expanded this to include nationalities and cultures. She also provided students with examples of what to say when they witness unkind words. Students practiced these phrases with her and then created a few of their own that they said they could try to use. Abigail then asked students to report back to her how they worked.

The rigor present in Abigail's instruction was primarily evident in how she held all students to high expectations for thinking and academic behaviors. Throughout the day, she supported students through "coaching" and questioning that led them toward success. One example was her work with a student who was initially reluctant to read with her. The student chose a book that was familiar and easy. Abigail told her to choose a new one and try to read it using a storyteller voice. The student had several stumbles, and Abigail reminded her to use strategies for decoding with which she was familiar and that now she could apply them to a higher-level text. The student finished successfully, and Abigail encouraged her to bring home books at the new, higher level to challenge

herself and grow. The student grinned widely at this and said she was excited to try the new books. Abigail held this student to a high standard for growth and performance and did so with positivity and scaffolding that offered effective support for reaching these high expectations.

As in Sam's observation, Abigail's included a part of the day that was out of alignment with her classroom practices: Kindergarten play practice. Although I did not observe a major contrast in how Abigail interacted with students and how other teachers interacted with students, I did note that the experience of rehearsing for and performing this play was very different from the experiences students seem to have had in Abigail's classroom. Abigail's center time, class meetings, academic instruction, and discussion with students centered on learning and, in many cases, on practicing the values of equity and diversity. The play, however, did not. It celebrated the 75th anniversary of the school by highlighting HA's history. It had a railroad theme, the Harper Academy Express. Students sang songs (e.g., You are my Sunshine, I've Been Working on the Railroad, When the Saints Go Marching In) and a voiceover gave an overview of the school's history. The points that were highlighted included the move to the school's current campus, the library, school motto, school spirit, school colors, and the theater. There was no mention of values of the school or of the School Mission or Statement of Community Values, which had been described to me in interviews with Leah, Rachel, and Matthew as important elements of the school.

Alex, Kindergarten Lead Teacher

At the time of the study, Alex, a White, cisgender, heterosexual woman in her 40s, was in her tenth year of teaching Kindergarten at Harper Academy in her eighteen-

year career. Originally from the Northeast United States, Alex initially felt like a "fish out of water" in Harper as well as at Harper Academy. Over time, she said she had come to be happy at HA: "Generally speaking, [it's] a pretty happy place. You feel like there's many resources. My team in particular, I really enjoy working with. I think we have good camaraderie. I'm very happy here 90% of the time." She described her acclimation to the school as "an evolution," primarily because of its dominant political conservatism, which she spoke extensively about during our first interview. She described this political conservatism as part of a larger set of norms associated with the Southern United States, norms that included not only political conservatism, but also evangelical Christianity, adherence to traditional gender roles, and reluctance to embrace racial and cultural diversity. She described these norms as in direct opposition to her own personal values, which included appreciation and respect for all cultures, acceptance, and empathy. Alex also described the dominant HA norms as highly misaligned with the elements of SJE. Over the years, she said, she had come to accept these norms, grow used to them, and adapt her behaviors in response to them. Although she articulated at the time of the study that she still felt like an outsider to the community in this way, she also discussed feeling newly empowered to more openly communicate her values, including political liberalism and multiculturalism, and to discuss these in the context of SJE at HA. This perspective was somewhat different from Sam's and Abigail's, for Alex communicated that she felt emboldened to speak openly about her views.

Outsider: Values of Multiculturalism. For Alex, the "one way to be" extended beyond HA and into the larger Harper community, worked directly against the goals of SJE, and positioned her outside the HA, Harper, and Southern cultures in significant

ways. Politics and religion, both of which she described as important parts of the culture's "one way to be," played roles in how she positioned herself:

> In [the Northeast] we were all pretty much Democrats and the Republicans, the conservative person, was outside the norm. It felt like I was insulated and we all sort of felt the same, and then I came here and it was like the time when Sarah Palin was around and they were like she's the best and I was like, oh where am I?...I come with these views, but I know from conversations and stuff that there is a much more conservative nature here, the feeling that you may go to hell if you don't believe in Jesus, it's wrong to be gay. I do not feel like all the people believe that, but in my classroom of 24, I know there will be some. It's much safer for me to believe that there will be some who may combat my thinking whereas where I came from before there would be one or two that might combat what I'm thinking but the general populous would support. It's the flip here.

Alex identified her position as clearly outside the dominant Christian and politically conservative majority at HA. Alex framed the relationship between politics and SJE similarly to the way Abigail did: as both political and counter to political conservatism. In doing so, she not only positioned herself outside of the HA community but also positioned SJE outside the HA community. Alex, with rationale similar to Abigail's, described SJE as political mostly because of the particular political climate of 2017:

> I don't see it as political. That is not my reason. I see it as a human thing. I see it as to be a good humanitarian, you need to understand, accept, reach across the difference to all people. To me, I bring up the politics mostly because we are just in the middle of the election and all of that. For me, it's about growing a child that

> won't have, won't think that someone is going to hell because he's gay, they won't be afraid of someone because they are wearing a hijab, that's my goal, totally aside from the politics. Though there's political undertones, it doesn't stem from there for me.

Alex framed SJE as not fundamentally political but perceived to be political by the community because of the political climate.

Like Sam and Abigail, Alex communicated that the very thing that separated her from the school community also increased her capacity to teach for social justice. Alex defined SJE as largely about celebration and acceptance of differences, of nondominant identities, labeling this "multiculturalism." She attributed her use of these terms to her learning about multicultural education at the first school at which she taught: "I don't think I necessarily would have called it equity and justice, probably multiculturalism because 15 years ago when I was doing the work that's what it was called. Diversity as well, but mostly multiculturalism." Alex reflected on her role in the school, noting that this outsider status kept her quiet about her opinions at first, but now that there is momentum around SJE and support for it among the leaders of the school, she is more open. She reflected on one instance in particular, shifting the way in which Kindergarten celebrates Thanksgiving:

> ...it's been a journey. When I first started in Kindergarten, they did these Native American activities around Thanksgiving and they were just so bad. And I was just like, I can't do that. I just can't do the feathers and the cap... this is completely inaccurate, you can't do this kind of thing. Little by little, there was this buy-in and now it's really shifted greatly, so not being the angry voice so to

> speak, has helped to incrementally shift thinking. Now, [teachers] will be like, well we need to check with Alex on this.

Her role as an outsider, as someone aligned with values of multiculturalism, positioned her to become a voice of leadership regarding implementation of SJE.

Professional Learning: Critical Lens. Unlike Sam and Abigail, who identified the origin of their SJE learning journey as PD they experienced at Harper Academy, Alex said that her thinking about equity began with her family, specifically her mother:

> Growing up, my mother said to me, there is only one race, the human race. She literally was like there aren't any races, and I completely believed that. When people started talking about different races openly, I was a little confused. Why are they saying that there is this race and that race? I completely believed everything that my mother said. She is extremely...she thinks a LOT, she thinks about other people a lot, their experiences, how to relate. One of her best friends is a Black family (mostly everyone is Caucasian [where we lived]), and I don't know if it's through her reading, but she always kind of instilled this in us. Not color-blindness. Impassioned. I definitely think acceptance, I mean she, not that she is accepting of all people (laughs) but very open to differences. Never was a problem if anybody was gay or, never was an issue growing up.

From this foundation of what Alex termed acceptance and open-mindedness, Alex continued to consider how to bring these ideas into her classroom while at her first school, which was in the Northeast United States, prior to moving to Harper. There, she learned about multiculturalism and how to think critically about how best to meet the

needs of individual students. This, Alex said, was the beginning of her introduction to the definition of SJE and what it looks like in practice at the school and classroom level.

When she arrived at HA, Alex said she was disappointed to find that SJE was not a central part of teaching practices, collegial discussions, or comprehensive school change plans. Rather than pushing for an increased focus on SJE, however, which would have differentiated her even more outside the norm, Alex focused on building a positive professional and personal life at the school:

> For a while, I let some of my passion go for equity and justice... Some of it I acquiesced on and I was just like, well, I'm fighting a battle. A lot of what I experienced was good and kind and happy, and my kids got to go here, so I let some of my passion and fight go.

After a while, however, she became increasingly frustrated with the lack of momentum around learning about and implementing SJE, although she acknowledged that the school did make efforts to sponsor relevant PD:

> It seems like we would start this journey toward cultural understanding and cultural competency and then it would just be dropped. And it was frustrating, that was frustrating. And because the demands in the classroom were so great, I would just let it be dropped too.

In the two years prior to this study, Alex had become re-engaged in learning about and practicing SJE, which she attributed to Leah's leadership and the clear focus on SJE for professional development and school change:

> So, I've been extremely grateful... for Leah's vision on this. Actually, really re-awakened a lot of my thinking on it, and where I've done a lot of thinking on it

> before, now I have someone to share it with, which I think sometimes drives her crazy! I didn't feel like I had anybody to share it with before.

Alex, like Abigail, described Leah's leadership as central to her engagement in learning about SJE.

During our first interview, when asked about impactful learning experiences, Alex was not specific about what had worked for her prior to the study. She did, however, note that all professional development around SJE worked to keep her thinking about inequity and justice, even if it was PD that did not provide her with any new information. During our second interview, however, she described the study group experience as one that had sharpened her critical lens:

> Things will come up and you know it will spark a notion for me, is that something that is equitable, is that something that's inclusive, is that something that we are mindful of for women, for marginalized groups in society, for people of color, and even narrowing that down, when a lesson is being taught or a book is being read, I try to ask those questions, how does it fit in the classroom and beyond, who is it representing, who is it not representing, you know connecting it that way, so each time we talk about social justice or DEI work, it makes me more acutely aware of how I'm developing my curriculum or the curriculum that I am asked to teach, either one.

Throughout our interviews, Alex spoke extensively about examples of her use of this critical lens. She discussed the Kindergarten play as an opportunity for the grade to deepen learning about the School Mission and SCV. She also mentioned particular books she would like to use and ways she might better meet the needs of particular students of

color, students whose experiences she wondered aloud about. Like Sam, she took her critical lens to many parts of her practice. She also extended this to considering how to support similar ways of thinking in her students, how to support their development of a critical lens:

> Even silly things like in the math program they have these pictures, and the girls-they were mice, but they were supposed to be girls because they had earrings—it, for lack of a better term, it bugs me. It bugs me that gender is represented even when they are cartoon animals, and I can't really change that, we've purchased a math program, and these are the math cards, but now I'm more aware of saying things like "How do you know that's the girl?" "Does it have to be the girl?" "Could that be the dad?" "Have you seen dads with earrings?" So that kind of thing, questioning the materials and letting the kids question it or at least having them start to think that way. If a person is wearing pink, do you automatically assume they are a girl, starting that critical thinking at a young age.

Like Sam and Abigail, Alex also experienced a shift in her thinking during the study period. Sam ended the study more openly and more closely considering race in her thinking about students and people. Abigail had begun to delve more deeply into thinking about the political aspect of SJE, an idea she had been considering since the beginning of the study. In Alex's case, she extended her critical lens to include not only the consideration of who is "tolerated" or "accepted" in a group, but also who holds power:

> Social justice for me has always been, "Is it fair?" "Is it equitable?" That's the piece that has always carried over. But I think now I'm beginning to recognize, especially this year, like who has the power in the classroom more, like not only

> in my classroom, my K classroom, but I notice it with my own children and their grade level group, like who runs the show basically.

Later, she related this idea to redistribution of resources, considering what redistribution of social power in the school, in her classroom, might look like:

> Redistribution of funds and services, that's where I probably was at before and it definitely carries through, but since I can't really redistribute things that people have in my class, we try. Everyone gets an equal opportunity to do different jobs and things like that. But I think how we allow the kids to operate and to recognize when "Well why did you let him skip you in line? What do you think you could do? How could you take your position back?" It takes a lot of work. It takes a lot of energy, I think. Also, an awareness that if they keep dominating, you let them keep skipping, you let them be first, and I don't think that's right.

Through engagement in professional development experiences, and with the support of a clear vision from leadership, Alex continued to develop her critical lens. Through this practice, she also shifted her thinking toward social justice aims and began to consider how social power might be redistributed through SJE and the impact that might have on making the world, or at least the world of HA, more equitable.

Alex's Classroom Practices. During my visit to Alex's classroom, I observed the following: morning meeting, which included a brief greeting and a read aloud; the Kindergarten play practice; a second read aloud, which was focused on identity development; a mathematics lesson and independent work; academic centers time, during which most of the students worked on their writing; and dismissal. We had two thirty-minute conversations during the day, one in the morning just after morning meeting while

the students were in Physical Education and one after students left for the day. During our first conversation, Alex described the needs and challenges of several students in the class and reflected on the behavioral challenges of the group, which she attributed to negative peer dynamics. She also discussed the pressure to focus on behavioral standards; Alex stated that this was an important part of HA's professional standards and that there was an expectation that students adhere to these standards during transitions and in specials classes such as Physical Education and Art. Because of this, she said, she found herself focusing on student behavior for much of instructional time. During our second conversation, Alex communicated some disappointment in the students' behavior that day and noted that other than the play practice, it felt like a typical day. She also talked about her goals for her second read aloud, which she had to stop because she said the students needed something more structured at that particular time. This read aloud was intended to support social justice goals by serving as a point of departure for conversations about how families and humans are all connected, despite our visible differences.

Throughout the day, Alex connected individually with nearly every child in the class. She used arrival time, transitions, independent work time, and lunch as opportunities to talk with students about their thinking regarding academic work, their feelings if they seemed sad or upset, or how their day was going in general. During our reflective conversations, she also provided nuanced analysis of individual students in the class and articulated how she intended to support their learning and why. Students responded positively to her, and she was consistently warm and positive with them.

There were, as Alex noted, several student behaviors that disrupted instructional time, including talking out of turn and engaging in peer conflicts. Alex addressed these immediately, but with uneven results. At times, she was able to redirect their behavior back on task or toward the conversation, but at other times, the Assistant Teacher removed students from the lesson after they did not respond to Alex's prompts. I also saw several instances of student conflict during transitions and at lunch, which carried over into instructional time in the classroom.

In contrast to the challenges I observed during whole group instruction, the students were consistently engaged and on-task during independent work time. When I conferred with them individually during independent work, the students tended to communicate excitement about their writing work. Alex and the Assistant Teacher had experiences similar to mine, as well; they, too, expressed that the students were finding lots of success when working independently on their mathematics and writing. Students who found sitting on the rug for whole group instruction challenging found working independently to be much more successful. Moreover, I observed several groups of students working successfully on collaborative activities and engaging in positive peer interactions.

During whole-group instruction, Alex assumed primarily a facilitator role, unless she was redirecting behavior. She asked open-ended questions about the content, invited students to share what they knew about topics, and connected ideas across disciplines. For example, for the first read aloud, she read Me on the Map, a book that served as an introduction to paper maps and the concepts associated with maps (Sweeney, 1997). Alex connected this reading to an ongoing and emergent block center activity: creating rivers

and roads to plan and create a town. She asked students to share what they knew, eventually discovering that the students primarily understood maps to be electronic, like GPS systems, rather than paper, and that some were not familiar with paper maps at all. She used this information to clarify for students what the girl in the story was doing: creating a map of her room on paper, just like you might see a digital map of a road, neighborhood, or city on a GPS navigation system in a car.

I observed five instances of elements of SJE in Alex's classroom. Of these, one was coded as Student Voice, one was coded as Community of Learners, and three were coded as Responsive Teaching. Of these elements, Responsive Teaching was the one most observed and the one that I noted in my post-observation research memo. I also noted that there was little sense of community among the students, although Alex did facilitate morning meeting and a closing share with the students. At these times, however, students did not seem engaged in conversation with each other, and the negative peer dynamics that Alex noted at the beginning of the day were apparent.

Responsive Teaching was observable in Alex's individual interactions with students as well as in how she supported their thinking or redirected their behavior during whole group instruction. In her interactions, Alex varied her tone and her response with each student. With some students, she was gentle and direct. For others, she spoke privately to them rather than in front of the whole group. She also used nonverbal cues to communicate with a few students. In addition to varying her interactions with students, including her responses to misbehavior, Alex also was responsive to her students' needs as a group. She abandoned the read aloud, electing instead to provide students with time to work independently, a structure that was more successful and less frustrating for them.

Jamie, 1st Grade Lead Teacher

At the time of the study, Jamie, a Black, cisgender, heterosexual woman in her 30s, was in her seventh year of teaching at Harper Academy in her fifteen-year career. Prior to Harper Academy, Jamie worked in a Title 1 school, and, in our first interview, she framed many of her observations about HA in relation to this prior experience. Jamie found the transition to HA to be "shocking" in many ways, including having far more access to vast resources at HA:

> It's been a long time. These are the things I remember though. The amount of professional development offered, the unlimited resources, like I remember having to go out and buy things for myself and for my classroom and now just going in and seeing the overflow of materials. I was just talking to my husband the other day about this, like I've got a shelf just full of paper clips that I will never use, and every year we order paper clips. I feel like everything is that type of abundance, and it was a shift in thinking.

This abundance was not the only shift. She was very positive overall about HA and its school and professional cultures, especially what she termed "professionalism." She expressed a particular appreciation for having the general trust of the administration to complete work thoughtfully and well without daily supervision, something that felt very different from her prior experience at her other school. The trust she felt with the administration, however, was not initially present with families. Over time, Jamie said that she had built this trust with parents, but that it had taken time as well as work to understand the expectations for teacher-family relationships:

> I felt that way with the staff and administration, but it was a different feeling with the parents...My initial conferences were a disaster. These were my first conferences my first year, and I'm thinking, my gosh I've been teaching seven, eight years, I know how to run a conference, and my first two conferences left my conference table and immediately came and talked to the Head.

This was an emotional experience for her, one that she had reflected on a lot in the seven years since it had happened. She described it as a blow to her confidence and an experience that made her second guess her instincts and her skills.

Outsider: The Out Group. Jamie's first parent conferences experience was also an example of why she felt like an outsider to the community and the way in which this outsider status impacted her comfort in the school:

> ...that [experience] brought on that feeling of inadequacy. I also feel like when I first came…I've had this sense of feeling like, do I belong here? And when are they going to figure out that I don't? That was also something that came to the table from some of those conversations. Struggling with acclimating to the community. Initially, too, I feel like I wasn't set up for success. This is a place where you are in or you are out. Coming from outside of the community, I wasn't tied to anyone here. I was recommended by a coworker, but I didn't know anyone at HA, I hadn't heard of HA, I didn't know where it was, I didn't know what kind of school it was.

While this feeling of being outside the community had numbed over time, Jamie expressed that the feeling of being "out" rather than "in" had persisted.

> I still don't feel like an insider. I think it's kind of perpetuated itself, like I've kind of felt that way in the beginning so then I've kind of removed myself from it...I feel like I get along with everybody, I have great working relationships...I'm fine with that.

Jamie went on to describe her desire to keep her personal and professional lives separate, and that this could have been a factor in her remaining removed from the "in" group. Jamie entered the HA community not knowing anyone and not knowing the expectations for family communication, which positioned her as an outsider. Even after being at the school for years, however, knowing many people as well as the expectations, Jamie still reported feeling like an outsider.

While Jamie did not directly discuss the role of race in her outsider status, being Black did differentiate her in a significant way from the defined one way to be at HA. Jamie shared her observations about the role of race in her experiences at the school, both as a teacher and as a parent. As a teacher, she shared that she felt it was important to provide modeling for students to see that people of color hold positions of power:

> I do feel like I have a lot to offer. I think it's great for people to see—well, teaching is predominantly female anyway- but to see a female of color in this position. Typically, the people of color that these kids see are people in the cafeteria or our custodial staff so just to be able to know that that is not all that minorities do, that we are professionals, too, we are visible in other places.

She also described one challenge of being a Black parent in a predominantly White school community:

> I don't want to make it seem like I have my own agenda. I think that just being a minority in a place like this, I don't want to be accused of being the spokesperson for all things Black. I think that's the bottom line, I don't want to be accused of having my own agenda.

As both a teacher and a parent, being a Black woman positioned her outside of the one way to be. While Jamie acknowledged that to her this role was important for students to see, she also talked about the challenges and stress of assuming a spokesperson role for her race, stress that she suspected at times had silenced her.

Jamie described herself as an outsider to the community, but like Sam, Abigail, and Alex, she also communicated an appreciation for the warm community and the opportunities the school provided for teacher learning and support:

> Why do I stay? It really is an amazing school. Although I did speak about it being insular and you are kind of in or out, the community is still a great community to be in and I honestly feel like even though I feel that way sometimes, I don't think that's anyone's intentions. I don't think that anyone intentionally comes to a situation and says I am not going to include her or I am not going to talk to her, I'm going to leave her out. I think most people come with the best of intentions.

Jamie communicated that, while the community does have a defined one way to be, and she is in some ways not defined in that way, that it has been, on balance, a positive place for her family. She also gave weight to people's intentions toward her, attributing any exclusion to implicit, unexamined norms in the culture. As someone outside of the culture in some ways, Jamie made it clear that being a teacher and a parent here has still been a positive part of her life.

Jamie did share that she wanted to change this culture, however. During our interviews, Jamie's reflections on HA's school and professional cultures extended beyond her personal experiences as a teacher and a parent at HA to the larger HA community. She shared two ways that she thought HA could become a more inclusive place: affinity groups for teachers and students of color, and a revised approach to the buddy family program for new families. Both structures, she said, would support people's inclusion in the school by educating them about hidden norms as well as providing space for reflection and connection. Regarding affinity groups, Jamie envisioned them as safe spaces for lower school students of color to experience HA in a place that would not be dominantly White:

> I think that there is a place for [affinity groups] in the Lower School even if it is an after-school activity so people don't feel like it's something that they were pushed into or forced into, but I think that that would be a safe place for the students here to let their hair down because we all need that safe space. It's hard to be on all day, you know, where you've had to switch the code and now you are in HA mode and you never have the opportunity to relax.

She shared a similar vision for them for teachers of color, as well.

Jamie also described her ideas for revising the buddy family program. The current buddy family program at HA pairs newly admitted families with returning families and encourages them to connect before and during the school year. During one of the study group sessions, Jamie discussed the ways in which the buddy family program could be used as a structure for building a more inclusive culture. Her critique of this program was that it currently paired families together who already knew each other and did not provide

a lot of guidelines or suggestions for how or when to connect. In our last interview, Jamie described how this structure might be used to encourage connections across difference:

> I think we do need to do the buddy families better to offer more opportunities for families to connect, deepening the community piece, it's interesting I do think we talked about this in our initial interview, it's welcoming but then sometimes it's not and I don't know sometimes you just really have to see it we're like oh we're so glad you're here, and then sometimes you can see that separation where groups have formed and if you don't necessarily fit into a group where do you go? Like if you didn't come with friends already, how do you navigate? So really doing buddy work and making it clear what the expectation is when you are meeting with your buddy families and also offering opportunities for true connection, like you don't put faculty with faculty because then that's just closing off an opportunity for them to meet someone outside of the community that they are already in.

Like Sam, Abigail, and Alex, Jamie positioned herself outside of the HA school and professional cultures. Unlike them, however, Jamie was also positioned there because of her race. In an overwhelmingly White community, Jamie's experience was fundamentally different from theirs in important ways that led to stress. Her understanding of this, she said, also placed her in a position to be a leader in SJE work, including creating, designing, and leading school-based affinity groups. Jamie explained her perspective on this during our second interview:

> In my mind I feel like there are always the best of intentions. I think it is that sometimes you just don't recognize where people have been overlooked or left

> out because it's not you and you never really experienced it and you are a little more in tune to it when you've experienced it. Like with all things.

Sam, Abigail, Alex, and Jamie all found that their outsider status also positioned them to support SJE in meaningful ways.

Professional Learning: Making Space and Focusing on Classroom Practices. Jamie expressed positivity about most SJE PD experiences she had had prior to the study and was glad to see that they had been high priority under Leah's leadership: "I think it's been amazing that Leah really came with that at the top of her agenda." She reflected several times on the importance of professional development to her own teaching and expressed that ongoing learning, training, and access to resources to support SJE practices were of very high value to her personally and professionally. She also communicated confidence in the potential of training and resources to shift the thinking and practices of her colleagues toward social justice aims, especially with a clear vision in place from administration:

> We have so many resources and so many things right at our fingertips what is the most, the best way to compile this information and get stuff out there for people and what's the best way to present it so that everyone is on board...I just don't know how people feel about presenting this information and I don't know if we have put together the tools and the resources to make people feel more comfortable.

Jamie said that professional development and training were critical to shifting the school as a whole toward SJE. Like Alex, Jamie did not identify specific PD that was impactful. She did identify, however, two kinds of PD experiences that she found most helpful:

those that provided her with a safe space to reflect, learn and share and those that focused on classroom practices.

Jamie expressed a similar perspective to Abigail's regarding teacher workload and investment: the expectations were high, and her values were in alignment with this. Jamie, also like Abigail, expressed a need to step back and reflect with colleagues on practice. For Jamie, this also meant to be in a space that felt separate from the busy-ness of the school day and that felt safe and inclusive. In our last interview, Jamie discussed how the study group had become such a space:

> I think it's been nice to have a voice and a safe space to have conversations around that and hearing other people's voices and perspective and position too and having those "aha" moments when I never thought about that. That has been the most appealing part of it to me because I just don't think we have opportunities to really do that. I mean everything is really hustle bustle go go go so creating a space for it like with all things, like we are going to do this work, and this is what it looks like now let's do it.

For Jamie, who had been hesitant at times to speak up about SJE, study group was a structure that encouraged her to share and consider ideas in a more comfortable setting, where she was surrounded by people she considered to be like-minded. It was also a way for her to hear the perspectives of others with whom she might not otherwise connect.

Part of the effectiveness of the study group for Jamie was the focus on classroom implementation. In both of Jamie's interviews, as well during study group meetings, she was very focused on practice. Sam, Abigail, and Alex all talked a lot about their use of a critical lens as well as the importance of identity affirmation and acceptance as concepts

and big ideas that they held as priorities for their teaching. Jamie, too, discussed the importance of these to her teaching, although she was far more specific about the work she envisioned doing with students in her classroom. In our first interview, Jamie explained the kinds of things she was currently considering regarding SJE, and what she would like to learn more about through the study group:

> I think just kind of [how to have] those tough conversations. Like you were saying yesterday, I think a lot can be done through literature. I love the media literacy that you put out yesterday and just look at magazines and starting to notice you know what is this really telling me, what do I really see? We've been playing with some ideas of what might be good for morning meeting, like some survey questions like, What do boys like? What do girls like? What does it mean to be a boy? How would you feel as a boy if someone told you you couldn't like some of the things that are considered for girls? Like just putting some of the things out there and then looking for some good intentional books to springboard those conversations.

She discussed using literature as well as other parts of the program to also expand the world view of her students:

> Just seeing it in action and seeing that they can have the kind of conversation that is appropriate, and you aren't planting a seed you are opening their eyes to reality because there is life outside of South Harper and you know there are other races and genders and ages and there's just so many things to see in the world beyond the bubble that is here. The first step is to bring it into the classroom, they're not being exposed to it any other place.

Jamie also discussed the impact of Responsive Classroom on her social justice practices; she felt confident implementing it and said she was ready to deepen her understanding through a more intentional focus on her use of teacher language. She cited the importance of setting achievable goals and gradually building on these so that change to her teaching was meaningful and effective:

> With RC we did the training last year and she said, "Don't overwhelm yourself and try to do it all at once." So for me, this was my year of really doing the Morning Meeting and the closing circle and next year I want to focus more on the language.

Jamie also discussed the importance of accountability to seeing success of school change efforts and of her own teaching. In the case of SJE, Jamie had been a part of a diversity committee that created a calendar of suggested activities for teachers to use in their classrooms. Each month, there was a suggested focus area and reading. Jamie said that this kind of support wasn't perfect and wasn't totally authentic to the aims of SJE (i.e., it wasn't woven throughout the curriculum), but she said that it did encourage teachers to step outside of their comfort zones and try out aspects of SJE teaching, or at least got them talking about race with their students. This kind of practice-focused support reflects Jamie's focus on classroom teaching and her understanding of effective PD.

Jamie, like Sam, Abigail, and Alex, experienced a shift in thinking during the study period. As described above, Jamie came to the study wanted to learn more about what SJE looks like in the classroom, specifically what it looks like to have conversations with students about inequity and identity. She said that at the beginning of the study, she

wasn't entirely comfortable with designing learning experiences that focused on these weighty topics. At the end of the study, however, Jamie reflected on how she now sees how literature can be an authentic and relatable point of departure for meaningful conversations with her six and seven-year olds:

> You know an underlying theme of 1st grade is, 'That's not fair!' When someone has or gets to do something that you didn't get to do, so having those conversations I'm just most excited about the relatability of some of the texts that I've seen and seeing that it is doable for this age group and that they can have conversations with depth. That's my next step.

Jamie also experienced a shift in how she thought about the importance of this work with young children. During one of the study group sessions, I shared an example of how to work against stereotypes through presenting students with images and having them examine their own perceptions of what various people look like (for example, a firefighter, a doctor, a nurse). Before, she said she might have seen this as something that would be good to do, a fun activity that had a meaningful social justice bent. At the end of the study period, however, she said that she had more of a sense of urgency around this kind of teaching:

> So, I think it was eye opening to me when you and Leah both said that that's prime time teaching, that you have to clarify those misconceptions and when you and I talked, and you were talking about some of the community things, like pictures and laying those out and what jobs do you think they have. So just opportunities to clear up those biases and stereotypes and that it can be done right here on the ground before they are old, and it is ingrained. When they are older,

> it's like we are teaching and reteaching but when they are younger, it's like at the ground and it's exciting.

Jamie's next steps in her learning after the study period were also practice-focused. She discussed bringing more literature into the classroom to use as points of departure for meaningful conversations about race. She also hoped to use the AMAZE curriculum to bring more intentional anti-bias work into her program:

> I still really am excited about doing more of the read alouds and pulling more of those in where appropriate especially through the setup we've done with RC, I feel like that is the next step. I feel like I've really got Morning Meeting down and some of the other tricks like proximity and noticing when the kids are getting squirmy and the chants and all of that, I feel like I've got a pretty good handle on that piece, so I'm excited to extend that more to the read alouds and have those grand conversations.

Jamie's Classroom Practices. Responsive Classroom was very apparent in Jamie's instruction; she connected with students individually, used positive language with them, redirected students effectively when they began to be off-task, and facilitated class meetings that were focused on community building. In all instructional settings, Jamie was a warm and positive presence who held students to high behavioral as well as academic standards. I observed Morning Meeting, which included a greeting, an activity, and a share, as well as general class announcements; calendar activities, which included reinforcement of mathematics concepts and skills; Reading Workshop, which included a mini-lesson and small group work on close reading of nonfiction texts; Word Study; a read aloud focused on including others in a community; mathematics games in pairs; and

a closing meeting before the students dismissed for the day. I reflected on the day twice with Jamie while the students attended specials classes. During both conversations, Jamie shared that the day was a typical one for students. She also spent some time sharing with me about particular students and their strengths and challenges, students who were on her mind because they were marginalized, or could potentially be marginalized, in some way.

Jamie's approach with students who struggled to sit still during instruction and to stay focused on a single task was supportive and positive. She often talked individually to these students rather than calling on them publicly to change their behaviors. Jamie also offered positive reinforcement to these students when she noticed them refocusing after being redirected. She also was silly with them at points throughout the day and connected with them personally, and they responded with smiles and positivity.

There was a single dominant aspect of SJE present in my observations during my visit: Community of Learners. The presence of this also reflects Jamie's RC practices, which are intended to support the development of a positive classroom community. There were several RC structures present in her practice, including Morning Meeting and Closing Circle. There were also a few structures and "traditions" unique to Jamie's classroom that she said were intended to encourage a sense of community. For example, during Closing Circle, students all gave compliments to one "featured" child. This occurred throughout the year and was something that Jamie said encouraged appreciation for all the students while also showing them how to make others feel included.

Jamie also focused on community in more informal ways throughout the day. For example, when redirecting one child who was drifting off-task, Jamie told him that he needed to re-engage with his class, be a part of the community, and that they needed him

to contribute his ideas. Rather than only addressing the behavior, she cited the community of learners as the reason he needed to re-engage. Jamie also called on a wide variety of students during instruction, giving voice to all members of the classroom community.

The read aloud was also focused on building a positive community of learners. Jamie read The Invisible Boy, a story of a boy who feels unwelcome in his class because he has interests that are different from his peers and because he tends to be a quiet presence (Ludwig, 2013). At first, the boy is illustrated in black and white. As he makes a friend and becomes appreciated by his peers, he is illustrated in increasingly more color. At the beginning of the book, he feels invisible, but gains friendship and visibility by the book's end. Several students at first thought that he was literally invisible. Jamie supported their discussion and their understanding of the text by asking them to cite evidence and to talk to one another about their observations. Not only did she ask students to learn from each other, but the topic of the book itself was focused on how to welcome others and what to do when you observe exclusion.

Gina, 2nd Grade Assistant Teacher

Gina, a Black, cisgender, heterosexual woman in her 40s, had been teaching at HA for twenty years at the time of the study. Her two children had also attended and graduated from HA. Gina described being a part of HA's school and professional culture as "a good thing," and she was especially positive about the personal support she had received over the years from her colleagues. She also mentioned that her children had positive experiences at HA and that she was thankful for that. Like the other teacher participants, she described HA as a warm, supportive, and friendly place. Gina also

shared that she loved working with the children at HA. She also, however, like her colleagues, described HA as having a defined "one way to be." Gina was especially emphatic that this "one way to be" did not include people of color.

Gina was clear from the outset of the study that social justice, equity, and diversity were personally and professionally important to her. Throughout our interviews and in the study group, Gina provided critical examination of the school and professional cultures that was both very personal and focused on structural change to the school. She spoke many times about the experience of being Black in a predominantly White community and of being middle class in a predominantly wealthy community. She also discussed the ways in which the school community could implement changes and new structures, such as affinity groups, that would support families and teachers who were not a part of the dominant groups.

Overall, Gina communicated a sense of frustration about the pace of change toward a more social justice oriented program and a more equitable school community. She cited teachers' fear of parents, a lack of strong and clear leadership, and a focus on other aspects of the school throughout the years as reasons for the slow pace:

> It [the message from leadership] hasn't felt strong to me. But maybe I'm, I mean, I don't know what I was looking for. I think that something's missing. I don't know. It hasn't felt...I know it's intentional, but it hasn't felt intentional. I know it is. But it just hasn't felt that way. But maybe that's just me...I think the fact that I've been here so long and the fact that I haven't seen the changes that I think need to have been made. I mean, it's 2017, for crying out loud. We've been

> talking about this forever and start doing what needs to be done. Let's stop talking about it and get it done.

This sense of frustration and fatigue permeated our interviews as well as Gina's contributions during study group sessions. At one point in our second interview, Gina was particularly pessimistic about the potential of having robust conversations about race at HA:

> No, it's not gonna happen. That's what I've been wanting. It's not gonna happen...People are scared. I don't understand it, I don't. I think it's the fear of being shot down so many times, it's the fear of making people uncomfortable, I think it's the fear of money...that family might not write that check if we do that. Might lose a building if we do that. I mean, oh girl, please. That would be great. I've been wanting that for years. Let's talk about race at Harper Academy.

Outsider: Racial Identity. Gina discussed her outsider status early on in our first interview. Gina described her experiences as a Black woman in in HA's predominantly White community as personally isolating, professionally challenging, and painful:

> I have to be two people. As far as that's concerned, it's been hard. And I don't know if that's just me or if it's this place in general...it's lonely...I've done it [talked about racial identity and equity] enough to the point that those who have been here just as long as I have glaze over and say, "Oh here she goes again." I've learned my audience. And that has been helpful and painful.

Like Jamie, Gina discussed feeling like she served as a representative for all people of color and that she had also become the voice of diversity work at some points. She had

even learned to modify her voice and to hesitate to speak up lest she upset her colleagues. She described being a voice for people of color as frustrating:

> I think I've done it enough to the point that those who have been here just as long as I have glaze over, "oh here she goes again" ...So that's very frustrating for me. Very frustrating. And that now with it being February and Black History Month, it's always been that because I am the person of color in the classroom, I teach it. I mean, why do I have to teach it, you can teach it! So, it's frustrating. Yeah. Very frustrating.

Gina cited the concept of White privilege as a particularly difficult one to discuss with the faculty, particularly with colleagues with whom she had collaborated for many years and with whom she had had positive relationships. Gina said that their misunderstanding or outright denial of the existence of White privilege was both unanticipated and painful:

> I saw things that were very painful for me and hard for me to accept. I can't believe I've been working beside you for x number of years and you've shown me one thing when we are planning a program and now I see other things that I didn't know were there or took for granted that were not there and to see that is really painful. Very painful.

Gina said that some of her White colleagues' unawareness of their privilege also translated to issues of practice in the classroom. Gina discussed one example of this in our first interview:

> There are children of color in that classroom and me being the Assistant of that classroom and with the Lead Teacher being White, she was teaching from her

> point of view: "Well, we came to this country for religious freedom." Well, all of us didn't come here for that. So, I said to her, "You know, you have four children of color in this classroom and you have said to them that their ancestors came to this country for religious freedom. And that's not true. And as children of color, their parents have told them we didn't come here because we wanted to. So, you have taken everything that those parents have said and have taught them about their history and told them that it is a lie." And she was offended.

Gina pushed back against the one way to be, challenging the dominant narratives of history that she said were prevalent at HA, as in the example above, and sharing ideas about identity and equity with her colleagues that created discomfort. As an outsider, a woman of color, she spoke personally about her experiences, but also critiqued the larger systems and structures of the school. One system she critiqued was the way in which new families, particularly families of color, were supported. She described her own experience as a parent of color and characterized it as stressful and difficult. Gina said that a re-envisioned buddy family system or another kind of support program for families could prevent this from happening to others. Upon reflection over time, Gina had found that the stress of applying pressure and high expectations to her own children was ultimately unnecessary and reflected an element of the culture that needed to change; rather than expecting students of color to be stronger academically and better behaviorally than their White peers, she hoped to see current families as well as the leadership of the school send the message that they were not outsiders and that they could bring all of themselves to the HA community:

> I understand those parents, though, there is a pressure in an environment like this, for African American parents, I mean we did the same thing, my husband and I. We did the same thing. Don't go in there acting colored, don't give those White people a reason to say that this is not the place, this may not be the place, for your child, your children, don't give them a reason. So, I understand that, I really do. But now that I'm here as faculty, I get it. But there's no need to put it on. I understand the pressure, but there's no need.

Like Jamie, Gina also saw affinity groups as a structure that could support faculty of color:

> I think we need them for faculty because this can be a lonely place and not being able to voice those opinions or voice those feelings to people who look like you, it's frustrating and stressful and so I think we need to start there first and I know there's going to be some pushback, some backlash, but I think it needs to happen. I really do.

Professional Learning: On Her Own. Gina mentioned professional development many times over the course of our interviews and the study group. Her focus tended to be on PD for her colleagues rather than herself, however, with an emphasis on the need for White teachers to "be made uncomfortable" and to look at their personal biases as well as an emphasis on the need for PD to be more in-depth at the school. She also stated that PD around SJE should be required for all teachers, particularly those whom she sees as having a long way to go with their knowledge and understanding of issues related to equity and justice:

> It's oftentimes preaching to the choir when it's time to sign up for the PD as it relates to diversity and inclusion and social justice and all that umbrella. It's the same people all the time, so you're preaching to the choir. But that teacher who said to the class, "We all came over here for religious freedom," it's THAT teacher, that's the teacher that needs it and that's the teacher you should say this is the direction we are going, if you can't go, this is not the place for you. It's THAT teacher.

At the end of this quotation, and further along in this interview, Gina went on to say that sometimes PD has a limit in terms of its effectiveness. She said that strong leadership is required for there to be institutional shifts toward SJE and that some teachers might need to leave the school as a result of this clear focus.

Gina was positive about PD around SJE overall, however, although she did not express that the PD offered at HA had had much impact on her thinking or her teaching; she said that she felt it often did not go deep enough into relevant issues, particularly ones that were perceived to be sensitive, including racial identity and racial justice. Instead, she said that some of the texts suggested by the school were readings that she had done on her own and that she had found useful to reflect on independently:

> I do my PD on my own. I read the Waking Up White on my own, I read Whistling Vivaldi on my own. The Blindspot, I read that on my own, so I do a lot of it on my own. For me, it's been great, it's my interest, so for me, it's been fine.

She also described the recent sharpened focus on SJE in the Lower School, and its subsequent school-sponsored PD, as ultimately frustrating. She acknowledged that there

seemed to have been an increased focus on it, but she found the experiences themselves to be in large part reflective of the overall slow pace of change at HA:

> I don't know if there's been anything that stands out, I mean we've had conversations, I've had conversations, but I don't know that there's one particular thing that stands out. I don't think that since last time or maybe I'm not looking at it the right way or maybe it's just where I am, I just don't see that there's been enough done.

She did, however, describe both the 21-Day Equity Challenge and the study group as positive experiences. She said that the Equity Challenge "was the most growth I've seen" among her colleagues. Gina largely described this experience as impactful for others rather than a source of learning for herself. She also described it as something she did mostly on her own; although she posted ideas and articles on the Facebook group, she did not tend to directly engage with her colleagues around these ideas.

In our conversations, Gina focused almost entirely on analysis and reflection on the culture of HA and the way in which this culture impacts teachers and families that are not a part of the one way to be. Aside from a few examples of others' classroom teaching, Gina rarely discussed classroom practice, and did not discuss her own at all. She did, however, share one instructional aspect of SJE that had been on her mind: supporting students' thinking about equity, particularly around socioeconomic class, in developmentally appropriate ways:

> I want my children to be more aware that this is not the norm. I don't quite know how to do that. My frustration is not quite knowing how to do that with them being so small. I mean, I'm in second grade, how do you tell a second grader,

> "Listen, kid, everybody doesn't live behind gates, everyone doesn't own private planes, and yes, your last name is on that building over there. That's not the norm."

Like Jamie, Gina was considering how to make conversations about equity accessible and relatable to young children.

Near the end of our second interview, I asked Gina what her next steps were regarding her professional growth. Gina communicated that she would like to continue learning about SJE and that she also would like to continue this development on her own, separate from HA: "I would like to continue more professional development for DEI. I don't know if I would want that to be here... I'm thinking it might be time to go someplace else and do something else [for PD] ...I'm just frustrated, I think."

Gina's Classroom Practices. My observation of Gina's classroom was very different from my observations of the other four participants' classrooms. First, I did not observe Gina teaching the whole group at any time. I did observe her interacting informally with the students, offering support one-on-one while students worked independently, supervising recess, and facilitating a whole-class mathematics game. Second, I only coded one instance of SJE, Responsive Instruction, in my observation notes and did not note any elements of SJE in my post-observation memo. When I reflected on the day with Gina, she said that it felt like a normal day to her, and that the Lead Teacher typically did most of the teaching in the classroom. It also, however, was a day with a special event: the teacher's luncheon, in which all teachers had a special lunch while parent volunteers supervised the classroom. For that reason, the teachers were away from the class for much longer than would be typical. I do not feel that I gained an

understanding of Gina's classroom practices based on my observations. I did, however, gain a sense of the classroom context in which Gina taught, one in which I did not observe SJE practices. Although it did not seem to be explicitly focused on classroom community, anti-bias work, or responsive teaching, which I observed in other classrooms, it was similarly positive in tone to several of the other classrooms I observed.

The classroom environment was highly structured, and students moved with little conflict through transitions. There was little time or space for social interaction between students, which happened instead on the playground. There was also an emphasis on maintaining behavioral standards; most of the teacher-student conversation was focused on reinforcing these expectations. There was a particular emphasis on this in the context of a behavioral management system that connected to the current unit of study in Social Studies, Westward Expansion. Groups of students were placed in wagon trains, which earned chips or had chips taken away based on positive or negative behaviors. When the Lead Teacher told students about the teacher luncheon and the parent supervision, she said, "Most importantly, I want to hear about how you behave when we get back. Is this a day when you can get extra chips?" The students responded chorally, and with excitement, "Yes!"

Students were praised for working hard, sitting still, staying on task, and correct answers. They seemed positive and warm with each other and their teachers, and I did not observe a single instance of peer conflict, even on the playground. Discussions tended to be teacher-student rather than student-student. Additionally, when Gina or the Lead Teacher offered individual support to students, they tended to help students arrive at the correct answers rather than "coach" them on strategies they had taught or new strategies

to use. In general, the classroom seemed to be task-oriented, with students and teachers focusing on completing work and celebrating success in doing so. This was very different in feel from the other participants' classrooms, which included instruction on long-term and transferable strategies for solving academic as well as social problems and in which teachers were transparent with students about the purpose of activities.

Gina's interactions with students were warm and playful. When she reminded them of the behavioral expectations, she was direct and firm, and they responded positively to her. On the playground, she played ball with them, laughed with them, and hugged them; of all the teachers I observed during my visits, Gina was by far the most playful and most engaged during their recess time. She was also playful during her facilitation of the mathematics game with the whole group. The game, Around the World, was intended to help students practice addition and subtraction facts. Students competed to say the answer the fastest, a structure that could potentially be stressful to students. What I observed, however, was much laughter and fun along with the practice, with Gina cheering students on when they were correct and encouraging them when they were not. She also talked seriously to them about playing fair.

Conclusion

This chapter described the experiences of five early childhood teachers who learned about teaching for social justice in the context of an elite school with a culture defined by a one way to be. For each teacher, being an outsider to the dominant culture in some way was important to how they perceived their SJE work and to how they perceived and experienced HA's school and professional culture. Sam, Abigail, and Alex discussed how their political leanings differentiated them from the predominantly

politically conservative faculty and families of the HA community. Jamie and Gina expressed that being a racial minority in the majority White HA community was challenging as both professionals and as parents, and they also saw themselves as outsiders. All noted that being outside of this "one way to be" in the school community impacted the level of comfort they had with discussing issues of identity and equity with their colleagues, HA's families, and their students. Several directly stated that this outsider status had silenced their voices in some way.

All also noted, however, that this outsider status positioned them to be effective social justice educators and/or advocates of SJE in the school community. Sam, Abigail, and Alex viewed SJE as in alignment with their political views, their social justice work, and their multiculturalism values, respectively. Jamie and Gina were able to understand the perspective of students, families, and teachers outside of the dominant culture and, therefore, reflect on effective systems and structures to support them and a create a more inclusive environment. They described their own, sometimes painful, experiences in the culture of HA, and discussed ways that structures in the school could support families and teachers of color more effectively and could widen the definition of what it means to be a member of the HA community.

Most participants described impactful professional learning experiences as those that developed their personal identities, understanding of anti-bias work, critical lenses, and/or practices. Rather than simply focusing on training to deliver a particular program, most participants responded positively to PD that supported their thinking about particular questions and/or areas of focus that they brought to the experience: Sam sought to develop her critical lens; Abigail wrestled with the relationship between SJE and

politics; Alex wondered about the role of power in her classroom and how it might be redistributed; and Jamie considered how literature and other curricular resources and practices could support student understanding of issues related to equity and justice.

Gina, however, began and ended the study with similar sentiments: that PD was important, although limited in its power, that administration needed to be firm in its vision for SJE, and that the current culture of HA could not realistically support meaningful examinations of equity and justice, at least not at the time of the study. For Gina, priorities after the study continued to be her own personal and professional development, which she would engage in on her own or with her colleagues.

The elements of SJE that emerged in practice were primarily those that were a part of the definition of SJE outlined in the case study of Harper Academy: Prejudice Reduction and Community of Learners. I also observed Rigor and Responsive Teaching. With the exception of Rigor, these elements are central to both the Responsive Classroom approach and the AMAZE curriculum. Jamie's and Abigail's practices in particular reflected the tenets of Responsive Classroom.

What was it like to learn about SJE with young children in an elite school? For these participants, it was both professional and personal. It involved acknowledging, confronting, and, for some, embracing being an outsider to the school and professional culture. It also involved looking critically at not only curriculum and instruction but also the world as a whole, including the school in which they worked and their roles within it. It included thinking about what is appropriate to say to students, colleagues, and parents about political, or perceived to be political, viewpoints. It involved building confidence in their own capacity and skills and values so that they could be prepared for families. It

involved evaluating the trust of leadership to support them as they tried new practices and/or pushed back on the oppressive norms of the school itself. Frustration, anger, silence, inspiration, and validation were all part of the experience of learning to teach for social justice for the early childhood teachers at Harper Academy.

Chapter VI: Discussion

In Chapters 4 and 5, I presented the analysis for the larger case of Harper Academy as well as the teacher cases: Sam, Abigail, Alex, Jamie, and Gina. This chapter summarizes the study, discusses the findings in the context of the literature, acknowledges limitations of the research, and identifies implications for future research and practice.

Summary of the Study

The purposes of this study were to examine how SJE was conceptualized and enacted at an elite school and how this school's early childhood teachers experienced learning about SJE within this context. In my review of the literature, I identified a coherent and comprehensive definition of SJE that served as a theoretical framework for the study. I also identified important elements of teacher learning about SJE: that it is an ongoing process, that it necessitates development of a critical lens, and that it includes learning about specific pedagogical and curricular strategies to support students' thinking about equity and justice (Banks, 2004; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Derman-Sparks, 2011; Sleeter, 2005).

I also reviewed the literature on SJE in early childhood classrooms and with children of privilege. Studies and scholarly texts tended to focus on one or the other rather than on the intersection of both. Regarding SJE in early childhood, empirical studies primarily addressed children's understanding and awareness of race and gender as well as the power dynamics associated with these identifiers. Practitioner accounts, guides, and self-studies focused on early childhood anti-bias work. Altogether, these studies found that young children conceptualized race as well as power codes around race

and gender, that this was observable in their play and discourse, and that young children tended to express that a more equitable distribution of resources and power was more desirable than an inequitable one (Davis, 2005; Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Hyland, 2010; Ramsey, 2008; Ryan & Grieshaber, 2004; Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001). I found no empirical studies that examined teacher practices or teacher learning in response to this, although I did find practitioner guides as well as practitioner accounts and teacher self-studies (Ballenger, 1999; Boutte, 2008; Cowhey, 2006; Marsh, 1992; Paley, 1992; Whitney 1999). In these self-studies and practitioner accounts, teachers were able to build on the discourse that related to race, gender, equity, and/or power embedded in children's play and bring it to the center of the classroom through intentional instructional design, such as the use of persona dolls and carefully selected literature. The practitioners also engaged in self-reflection about their own identities and beliefs in response to these teaching and learning experiences.

Regarding SJE with children of privilege, studies focused primarily on work with students that were high school level or older. These studies identified particular challenges and risks with teaching for social justice in communities of privilege: that White students tend to lack a racial identity and an understanding of what race means; that they tend to be invested in the experience of privilege; and that SJE can nurture a deficit mindset, a paralyzing sense of guilt, and an us/them mentality that is detrimental to the goals of SJE (Choules, 2007; Curry-Stevens, 2007; Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011; Goodman, 2011; Hernandez-Sheets, 2000; Swalwell, 2013; Wade, 2001). Implications for teacher learning included a need for teachers to understand their own identities in order to support White and wealthy students' identity development and

awareness of their privilege. I located a practitioner guide on teacher learning about SJE at elite schools and with young children, but no research (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011). It is this research gap that I sought to address with this study.

Through an embedded case study approach, this study focused on the following questions:

1. How did an elite school envision and enact social justice education?
2. What were the experiences of the school's early childhood teachers as they learned about SJE?

The school, Harper Academy, was a predominately White and wealthy K-12 college-preparatory school in the American South. Participants included five early childhood teachers, two Lower School administrators, and the School Head. Over the three-month data collection period, I interviewed each teacher participant and the Lower School administrators twice, once at the beginning of the study and once at the end, and I interviewed the School Head once at the end of the study. I also analyzed curriculum documents from programs recently implemented in response to the administrators SJE PD efforts as well as the School Mission, Statement of Community Values, and Strategic Plan. I visited each teacher's classroom for one full day of observation. Additionally, I facilitated two two-hour whole-staff workshops at the school and led two study groups, each of which had three one-hour sessions over the course of the data collection period. One of the study groups consisted of all the teacher participants. The notes from this study group and my workshops also served as documents that informed my analysis.

For the larger case of Harper Academy, which addressed the first research question, I used interview data, observation data, and document analysis to understand

the school and professional cultures, the challenges and supports for enacting SJE within the context of these cultures, and how SJE is largely defined by the community members who participated in the study. I also analyzed how SJE appeared in the classroom practices of the teacher participants as a group. For each individual teacher case, which addressed the second research question, I used interview data and observation data to analyze her experiences within the school and professional cultures of HA and the way in which she positioned herself outside of the dominant "one way to be." I also discussed what she identified as impactful professional learning experiences and how SJE emerged in her classroom practices. For my data analysis for the larger case of Harper Academy and the embedded cases of the teachers, I assigned codes that aligned with my theoretical framework to interview transcripts and documents and analyzed these codes for frequency. I also referred to researcher memos, which were written after each interview, study group session, and classroom observation, to inform my analysis.

Discussion of Findings

The school context in which teacher learning around SJE took place in this study is central to the findings. Stake (1995) explains that the knowledge acquired from case study is more contextual than knowledge from other research methods because the experiences of the participants as well as the experiences of the researcher are rooted in context, just as they are in the world. Because this study was an embedded case study, it was important to understand the school culture and the professional culture in which SJE was envisioned and enacted and in which the teachers were learning and practicing. The cultural context was also important to consider because of what Banks (2004) describes as the school's function as a "microculture" that impacts students' educational

experiences: “When formulating plans for multicultural education, educators should conceptualize school as a microculture that has norms, values, statuses, and goals like other social systems” (p. 25). In this study, analysis of interview data revealed a kind and supportive school culture that valued teachers, teaching, ongoing professional development, and community. It also, however, revealed a culture with a clearly defined “one way to be” that aligned with dominant and powerful identifiers on a societal level: White, wealthy, Christian, heterosexual, and gender-conforming. This supportive school culture as well as the “one way to be” were essential to my analysis.

A Tolerant Community as SJE. Regarding the first research question, findings included that SJE was largely conceptualized by the teacher participants and the School Head as a way to create a tolerant and welcoming school community that is accepting of a wide range of identities, including those of historically marginalized groups. This conceptualization aligned with my theoretical framework, particularly in the category of Pedagogy. It stopped short, however, of supporting students in taking action against inequity and of working to transform school or societal structures. This conceptualization of SJE also aligns with Banks’ (2004) description of an Additive approach to curriculum design. In this approach, various content and cultures are represented in the curriculum, but the fundamental structure of the curriculum is not changed. Similarly, a conceptualization of SJE as accepting and welcoming implies that students, families, and staff who are not a part of the dominant culture are welcomed and accepted, although do not participate in the creation and re-definition of the dominant culture.

I also found that enactment of SJE at the school aligned with the definition described by the teacher participants and the School Head. In teacher participant

classrooms, I observed many instances of Prejudice Reduction practices as well as instruction that worked toward the goal of creating supportive and kind classroom communities. These practices also aligned with the recently implemented curriculums, AMAZE and Responsive Classroom, which focus on building a supportive community of learners and on prejudice reduction.

One Way To Be. The supportive school and professional cultures that were revealed in this study support a vision of a community that is welcoming and accepting. The "one way to be" that defines this community, however, limits the extent to which students, teachers, families, and curricular programming can move toward a more comprehensive SJE approach. The definition of SJE articulated by the teacher participants and the School Head is problematic, for it continually reinforces oppressive norms. The "one way to be" does not change in this conceptualization; outsiders instead play the role of welcomed guests who are treated with kindness. A more comprehensive approach, one in which cultural pluralism, rather than assimilation, is valued, and in which students focus on making the world more equitable through identifying and dismantling oppressive systems and structures, requires a cultural transformation. Banks (2004) explains why such a comprehensive shift is needed in order to support an equitable school environment:

> Multicultural education views the school as a social system that consists of interrelated parts and variables. Therefore, in order to transform the school to bring educational equality, all major components of the school must be substantially changed. A focus on any one variable in the school, such as the formalized curriculum, will not implement multicultural education. (p. 25)

This is the challenge that Gina identified: without structural and cultural changes that broaden the definition of what it means to be a Harper Academy student, teacher, and family, progress towards enacting a comprehensive social justice-oriented program that fully embraces and seeks a diverse community will stall.

Social Action? The School Mission and Statement of Community Values, as well as the interview data from the two Lower School administrators, however, reflect a different definition of SJE. In these documents and interviews, SJE aligned more closely with Banks' (2004) Social Action approach, in which students are prepared to take action against inequity through the curricular programming. While teacher participants did express interest in this kind of work, they still primarily defined SJE as a way to create a welcoming classroom and school. Jamie and Abigail, for example, described taking action against inequity as difficult for young children to conceptualize, but expressed that this kind of work would be something that they would like to learn more about and eventually implement if provided with tools to support their instruction. This finding echoes Derman-Sparks and Ramsey's (2011) assertion that young children are developmentally ready to discuss issues of equity, but that these issues need to be grounded in students' everyday lives and supported by teacher education:

> Challenging prevailing views and inequities in society at large may be developmentally beyond young children. At the same time, they are able to identify injustices in their immediate world, as is evident in their vociferous claims of "That's not fair!" (p. 117)

With teacher education focused on learning how to support students' extension of analysis of injustice in their own lives to injustice in the larger world, teachers can

successfully facilitate those "grand conversations" that Jamie found so inspiring to see in her own classroom. Early childhood classroom conversations that reveal inequity in the classroom, playground, school, community, and, ultimately, society, are prerequisites for learning to challenge oppressive norms on a larger scale. This approach is one that several practitioners have taken and have touted as successful (Cowhey, 2006; Marsh, 1992; Vasquez, 2014; Whitney, 1999).

Leah identified the same challenge that Gina did: the difficulty of shifting toward SJE within a school context that defines a clear one way to be. Leah framed this challenge differently, however, and with more optimism. She described a potential shift of the school and professional cultures as a return to the School Mission and Statement of Community Values, a re-centering of the school rather than a complete transformation. With leadership cited by teachers as important to the school's shift toward SJE, Leah's insights are particularly important. Abigail, Jamie, Alex, and Sam all mentioned strong leadership for a more social justice-oriented program as essential to their learning and their implementation of new practices. They were particularly confident in trying new curricular programs and integrating new literature in response to Leah's clear articulation of her goals to implement SJE throughout the Lower School in a comprehensive way and with support from targeted, practice-focused PD programming.

Self-Knowledge. Regarding the second research question, findings suggest that the way teachers positioned themselves in relation to the culture of the school impacted their learning, their framing of SJE, and/or their classroom practices. Each teacher in this study positioned herself as an outsider to the culture of the school in some way. The three White teachers expressed feeling outside the dominant political culture because they had

liberal political leanings and, in the case of Abigail, participated in social justice work outside of the school community. The two Black teachers were positioned outside of the "one way to be" because of their race. In Jamie's case, an initial negative experience at the school also led to her perception of herself as an outsider to the school community and culture. All teacher participants expressed that this outsider status, however, also positioned them to work toward SJE practices in meaningful ways, either in their own classrooms or in the larger community. For Abigail, Alex, and Sam, in the current polarizing political climate, this outsider status was particularly relevant to their work with students around issues of equity and justice because they saw SJE as highly aligned with politically liberal values. For Gina and Jamie, experiencing HA as Black teachers and parents positioned them to identify the need for structures such as affinity groups and a re-envisioned buddy family program.

These findings echo the experiences of Cowhey (2006) as well as teachers that Swalwell (2013) studied. Cowhey describes at length her experience feeling like an outsider at her school. Her implementation of SJE in her first and second grade classroom, particularly when it involved activism, was controversial among her colleagues as well as her administrators, and she attracted much critique. The very things that made her a controversial teacher—empowering students, engaging students in high-level inquiry, supporting students' critical lens development—also made her a strong social justice educator. Over time, her colleagues, families, and students began to see her as a renegade in many respects, a role that she both welcomed and resisted.

Swalwell (2013) also describes the teachers that she studied as experiencing this outsider status as they implemented an SJE program in their classrooms. For one teacher,

her school's mission was centered on SJE, yet she still felt "shut down" when proposing new ideas and more innovative practices with a social justice focus. For another, his experience was much like Cowhey's (2006): he described himself as a renegade who was constantly working against the norms and structures of the school itself.

Findings also revealed that teachers experienced learning about SJE as both a professional and a personal process. This theme was especially strong in the cases of Sam and Abigail, whose journeys towards understanding SJE began with journeys toward self-knowledge. For Sam, this meant an exploration of her own implicit biases, which led to the development of a critical lens. For Abigail, this meant beginning to understand her own racial identity and the way in which all members of society are a part of systemic racism. Sam's and Abigail's self-examination echo Derman-Sparks and Ramsey's (2011) call for educators to develop a White Consciousness and to "reject the false notions of racial superiority and racial entitlement and realize how they would benefit from a society free of systemic and individual racism" (p. 3). The authors assert that this work is essential for White educators to engage in so that they might effectively support students' identities and social-emotional development. They state that this is particularly important for White teachers of White students.

Goodman (2011) also cites ongoing personal work as critical to the process of becoming a social justice educator who effectively teaches children who are privileged by race, class, gender, and/or sexuality. She frames this self-reflection and development as a practice "to expand our capacity for being open-hearted and non-judgmental," primarily because of the tendency for children of privilege to respond to conversations about social justice with defensiveness and entitlement (p. 190). Cochran-Smith (2004), as well, states

that prospective teachers should be challenged to build a critical knowledge of themselves. Although this study involved in-service teachers, they, too, found that this critical knowledge was a large part of their growth in the process of learning about SJE.

Socio-political Context. Each teacher related this personal and professional learning around SJE to the school and professional cultures of HA as well as the current political climate. This aligns with Derman-Sparks and Ramsey's (2011) stance on comprehensive learning about SJE: "Anti-bias/Multicultural teaching is not a matter of simply carrying out a collection of activities. It is a complex of large and small decisions that reflect our life histories, beliefs, and knowledge about children and the contexts of their lives" (p. 11). The authors state that understanding this larger context is critical because curriculum and instruction, if it is to be authentically social justice oriented, must not only be responsive to students, but also to the socio-political context of their lives. Cochran-Smith (2004) also asserts that teachers have a duty to examine issues of race, culture, and oppression in their daily classroom practices and in the context of their communities and larger society. She states that just as teachers must build their self-knowledge and situate this within particular communities, histories, and contexts, they must also build their knowledge of students within their own particular contexts.

Critical Lenses on the School. All teacher participants turned their critical lenses on the school and professional cultures and identified ways that HA could become more equitable as a part of the process of learning about SJE. This theme was particularly strong in Gina's and Alex's interviews. Gina focused on supporting students, teachers, and parents of color through new structures such as affinity groups and revising existing structures such as the buddy family program. In addition, Gina discussed ways that the

curriculum could be critically reviewed as a part of the process of shifting the school in a comprehensive way toward social justice aims. Alex discussed curriculum revisions, as well, and also described how the school could support a shift in student social power dynamics to make the school more equitable. She explained that teachers and families could support power redistribution through new schoolwide structures such as designing lunch seating assignments in the middle school. Other teacher participants mentioned curriculum revisions and policies that could be re-envisioned to support equity, as well, although to lesser extents than Gina and Alex. Abigail, Jamie, and Sam all discussed how HA's admissions processes could be revised to "cast a wider net" in recruitment in order to support efforts to diversify the student population in terms of race and class. In all teacher participant cases, teachers thought critically about the school, its systems, policies, and practices in a comprehensive way as a part of their learning about SJE.

Focus on Practice. All teachers were also interested in learning how SJE could be made accessible for young children and found PD that centered on this to be useful and impactful. As scholars acknowledge, many believe that talking to young children about equity and justice is developmentally inappropriate (e.g., Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011). Jamie was particularly focused on practice, and most of our conversations during interviews centered on how she was thinking about facilitating meaningful, equity-focused discussions with students, affirming diverse student identities, and selecting appropriate and effective curricular and instructional materials, such as AMAZE lessons and multicultural literature. Even Gina, who did not explicitly discuss practice very much during interviews, shared that she had questions about how this work could be effective with young children, especially regarding teaching the more

painful parts of American history. All participants expressed that seeing an example of a unit plan that had been re-envisioned as a social justice-focused unit was helpful, as were the curricular materials and conversation transcripts from the AMAZE curriculum. These concrete resources provided teachers with the kind of support they needed to implement rigorous and critical work with very young children at developmentally appropriate levels.

Personal Learning within a Specific School Context. This study's findings largely substantiate prior research and scholarly thought regarding teacher learning about SJE. Teachers framed their learning as ongoing, they developed and used critical lenses as a part of their learning, and they expressed a need for training in the specific pedagogical practices and curricular content that support SJE. These elements of teacher learning about SJE appeared in my review of the literature, as well, and were not specific to early childhood teachers working in communities of privilege. One finding that is noteworthy, however, is that teachers in this study emphasized the very personal nature of this learning. In my review of the literature, I concluded that the ongoing nature of the work was significant, but in this study, its personal character emerged as highly important. These two ideas do not contradict each other, but the areas of emphasis differ.

What was not highly present in the literature, however, was a focus on how the context of the school impacted teacher learning. Harper Academy's school-wide policies, practices, and culture were noted by administrators to both support and work against social justice aims, although teacher participants focused their critical lenses on the way in which the school community served as an obstacle to SJE classroom practices. In particular, the school's "one way to be" was identified as highly detrimental to the

creation of a culturally plural and accepting school culture despite the school's positive and welcoming veneer, a contradiction that Gina identified as insurmountable unless addressed by leadership. Teacher participants also positioned themselves outside of this one way to be in meaningful ways that impacted their learning about and enactment of SJE. This aligned with research that inquired into teachers' experiences implementing SJE; some of these teachers also positioned themselves as outsiders, but this was not a significant focus of the research findings.

Misalignment of Definition of SJE. Also largely unexamined by the literature was how the school community in which the teachers were learning largely envisioned SJE and how this related to teachers' understandings of SJE. In this study, the School Head as well as the teacher participants conceptualized SJE differently from the way in which the Lower School administrators did. While this was not something that teachers discussed in interviews, it is a finding that is significant given the framework that I developed in Chapter 2. Teachers' and the School Head's conceptualizations fell short of defining SJE as taking social action, a key element of SJE in my framework and in the scholars' works from which I developed this framework.

Figure 2 illustrates how the teachers and School Head envisioned and enacted SJE in relation to the Theoretical Framework of SJE guiding this study. In Figure 2, elements of SJE that appeared as themes in the interview and observation data appear in bold. Tolerance and prejudice reduction are prevalent ideas, with activism, critical inquiry, student voice, and other elements of SJE in the background. The primary Mission of SJE has even shifted to become the creation of a tolerant community, an idea present in the

original framework not as a part of the Mission of SJE, but as an element of SJE Pedagogy, a means to the end rather than the end itself.

Figure 3 illustrates how SJE was defined and described by the Lower School Head and Early Childhood Head as well as the elements of SJE that were reflected in the School Mission and Statement of Community Values. In Figure 3, nearly all elements of SJE were cited as important to its implementation. The overarching Mission of SJE and other elements of SJE as described by the Lower School administrators were highly aligned with the Theoretical Framework and the scholars' works from which I developed this framework. When viewed together, Figure 2 and Figure 3 illustrate a significant misalignment.

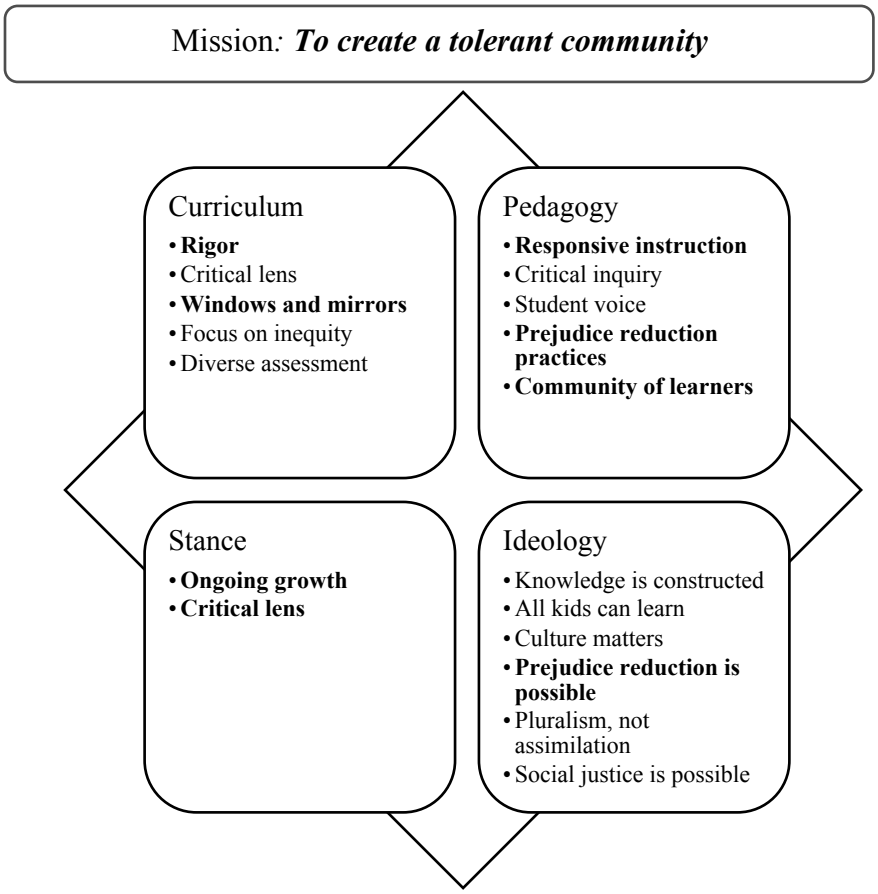

Figure 2: SJE as envisioned and enacted by HA teachers and School Head

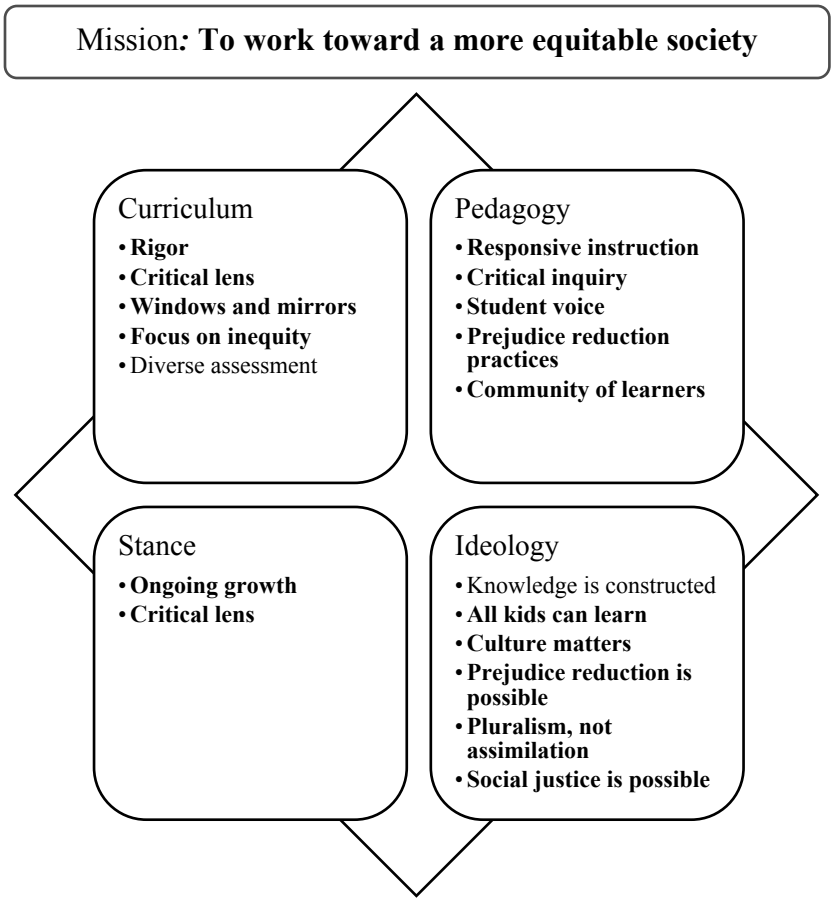

Figure 3: SJE as envisioned by Lower School Head and Early Childhood Head and as reflected in School Mission and SCV

This leads to questions about the impact of this misalignment on schoolwide SJE practices: How important is a common understanding of SJE at the beginning of a school's journey towards schoolwide SJE practices? What matters most in terms of school change—the School Mission, the vision of the School Head, the conceptualizations of the teachers, or the visions of the Lower School administrators? How does this misalignment impact the learning of teachers? The experiences of students?

Limitations

This study's findings were the result of my immersion in the learning experiences of teachers and the school and professional context in which these teachers were learning. I built trust, engaged with students and teachers in authentic ways, and participated in formal and informal PD experiences around SJE as both a facilitator and collaborator. This approach led to a rich analysis of the teachers' learning experiences; it also, however, resulted in some limitations. I used Lincoln and Guba's (1994) four criteria— credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability— to evaluate this study's trustworthiness. In doing so, I identified several aspects of this study that limit its trustworthiness: participant selection, my positionality towards the participants, limited data on enactment of SJE, and the inherent bias in code assignments.

Participant Selection. The population this study addresses is small by design: early childhood teachers teaching and learning about SJE in elite school communities. The participant selection, however, limits the findings even further. The teacher participants were all invested in and excited about pursuing PD around SJE. They did not express any resistance to learning about SJE or to shifting their practices in response to this learning, a shared stance which is unique to this group in this school as well as in the early childhood teacher population in general. During interviews, all participants discussed that some of HA's teachers, none of whom participated in the study, were reluctant to try SJE practices. Participants expressed that these teachers were uncomfortable with bringing discussions of race, sexuality, and oppression into their classrooms and did not necessarily share the underlying ideology of SJE, especially ideology that involves the acceptance of diverse family structures and/or

acknowledgment of White privilege. Participants also described other teachers who might share this ideology but were reluctant to discuss issues of equity in their classrooms because they did not feel it was their role or responsibility as a teacher and that these kinds of discussions were more appropriate for parents to have with their children. The study participants did not have these ideological obstacles to enacting SJE, so the data and my analysis do not address the role of these obstacles in teacher learning. This limits the study's transferability to other contexts in which teachers are resistant to learning about and enacting SJE.

Given additional time and resources, I would have used Foster's (1997) community nomination process to specifically identify teachers who were enthusiastic about learning about SJE as well as teachers who were reluctant to implement SJE. Including the additional perspectives of those who were resistant would have enabled me to explore the role of ideological obstacles in learning about SJE and would have increased the study's transferability to other contexts.

Researcher Positionality. I served as both researcher and teacher educator at HA during the time of the study. My values as an educator and my high investment in SJE were transparent to all participants in the study. I facilitated two workshops and designed three study groups during which I clearly communicated that I defined SJE as a rigorous and developmentally appropriate approach to early childhood education and that I viewed education as a pathway toward greater equity in society. I also was transparent with teachers that I believed this work to be essential to do with young children of privilege. Teacher participants may have been more likely to communicate affinity with my own ideas or to resist discussing their feelings of discomfort around what I had taught them.

My role as facilitator of teacher learning provided a pathway into a deeper understanding of their learning because I was close to it, but it also limited the confirmability of the data. In future studies, researchers could address this limitation by positioning themselves as outsiders to teacher learning and observing rather than participating in the professional development experiences of the teachers.

Limited Observation Data. I observed each teacher for one full day of teaching. This enabled me to gather data on teachers' practices in a variety of disciplines and in both formal and informal settings. Because I observed for only one day, however, I did not gain an understanding of Gina's or Alex's teaching practices. In both of these instances, I did not observe lessons that were specifically social-justice oriented, which would have provided insight into how their learning might impact practice. Alex had to stop teaching the social-justice oriented lesson that she had planned because of challenging classroom dynamics and student behavior, and I did not observe Gina engaging in any direct instruction. Although I did gain a sense of the classroom environment in which both taught, I do not feel I have an understanding of what their SJE practices look like in action. This limits the study's credibility in addressing how SJE is enacted at the school as well as how teacher learning impacted and was revealed in classroom practice. With additional time and resources, I would have preferred to observe teachers over several days or observe for select days over the course of many weeks in order to gain a sense of the units taught, the routines of the classes, the practices of the teachers, and the students' experiences.

Code Validity. Assigning codes to interview and observation data is inherently biased. I come to the research with my own stances and ideology, with a specific

definition of SJE, and with particular definitions of each aspect of SJE. I have been transparent about my biases, stance, and background, and I have attempted to clearly define the terms I use in my theoretical framework and the subsequent coding and analysis. The study's dependability is still limited, however; another researcher, even if using the same definitions, would have interpreted and assigned codes differently. Moreover, teacher participants and administrators reviewed the analysis in draft form, but I did not provide them with access to my coding. Using a more formal member-checking process and conducting an external audit, if I had had more time and resources, would have addressed this limitation.

Implications for Research and Practice

This study's findings suggest that understanding an elite school's culture is a key factor in the design and implementation of professional development around early childhood SJE. In my review of the literature, I did not find research that focused on the impact of school and professional cultures on SJE practices or school reform efforts, although Cochran-Smith (2004) does discuss the importance of teachers turning their critical lenses to school practices and Banks (2004) discusses the importance of comprehensive transformation to support SJE. This study's findings suggest a need for empirical research into the roles school culture and professional culture play in the shifting of schools toward SJE and in the teacher learning that is central to these shifts.

Future research might include comparative case studies of teacher learning about SJE within the context of different elite school cultures, perhaps one with a specific SJE mission and one without, with a focus on the question of how school culture impacts teacher learning. An additional possibility is an ethnographic approach that delves deeply

into how school culture impacts shifting school practices toward SJE. Specific inquiry into how teachers position themselves in relation to the school community and culture and how this impacts practice and learning could also be explored through comparative case studies across different school environments.

The primary challenge to SJE that participants identified was fear of parent responses. This suggests that family engagement around SJE in elite communities and with young children might also be a priority for school leaders who envision a more SJE-focused school community. As a part of comprehensive change efforts, this process of family engagement could address misunderstandings about and discomfort around SJE and its aims, particularly around issues of politics and developmental appropriateness; provide a space for family members to build their own self-knowledge and knowledge of the socio-political context in which they and their children live; and provide support and language for talking to their children about issues related to diversity, equity, and justice. It might also be a pathway towards re-defining the culture of the school. Although I do not believe that a series of parent education nights would comprehensively transform a school culture, this study's findings suggest that a shift in thinking about parents as partners in this work and about the level to which the school collaborates with them could serve to sharpen the vision of the role of SJE at the school as well as contribute to impactful SJE classroom practices. In this study, I did not focus on teachers' perceptions of the role of families in their students' learning or in the school in general. Moreover, I did not engage families at all in my inquiry. An embedded case study of an elite school pursuing a shift toward SJE practices that includes teachers and families could provide insight into the role of families in these shifts.

A secondary challenge to enacting SJE that participants identified was teacher capacity. This study's findings suggest that there are three clear elements of impactful PD that school leaders and professional developers should consider when designing learning experiences for early childhood teachers in elite school communities. In addition to understanding the cultural context of the school, teacher educators working in such contexts can make space for teachers to:

- Work toward increased self-knowledge and knowledge of their and their students' socio-political contexts
- Develop and apply a critical lens to their classrooms, schools, communities, and larger society
- Be trained in specific programs and practices that support anti-bias work with young children

There are several possible learning structures that, when included in a comprehensive plan for ongoing professional development aligned with schoolwide SJE goals, could support this work. A series of whole-staff professional development sessions that build knowledge of the definition of SJE would provide a school with a common vocabulary and a shared understanding. Administrator-facilitated grade-level child studies, focused on the growth and achievement of individual students or groups of students, could center on inquiry into how marginalized students are and are not thriving in the school community; by taking a strengths-based as well as an inquiry approach to supporting students, teachers would build capacity in SJE-aligned practices. A small group of teachers that meets regularly over a school year could create lesson plans, meet to discuss the impact of these in their classrooms, and provide a structure for peer feedback. Small study groups could also connect to create action projects in the larger school community, including family education on SJE, such as how to talk to young children about race or

wealth inequality. Taking part in activism in the larger city or town is also a possibility. Groups or pairs of teachers could research field trips and activist organizations with which the school or classrooms could partner. Engaging in cultural inquiry, particularly what it is like to be a child in this particular moment in time, would build knowledge of the socio-political context in which students are learning and growing up. Critical examination of television shows, popular toys, and more could be included in this inquiry. In pairs or groups of three, teachers could develop reading lists on various topics, such as activism and resistance, particular points in history, gender and sexuality, family structure, and poverty or wealth inequality. These partners could collaborate to review texts and develop brief reading guides to share with the school as a resource bank. Individual work and reflection about implicit biases, growth in response to SJE learning, and goals for future learning about SJE could be woven into the supervision and evaluation process. Individual reading and response journaling is also a structure that could be impactful for teachers who prefer to engage independently in reflective professional learning.

This is not a simple prescription for action, however. Teachers in this study described learning about SJE as highly personal and described enacting SJE as transformative and challenging. Teachers need to take risks in this work, and professional developers and school leaders should be prepared to support teachers in shifting their practices in comprehensive ways through collaborative structures and with authentic support for their learning, especially when teachers feel vulnerable to parent critique or their own self-doubt. Research into the relationships between teachers and administrators as they collaboratively pursue SJE practices could provide insight into what these

structures look like. Additionally, studies regarding the efficacy of PD designed and delivered with the above features in mind would serve to clarify how to implement PD that positively impacts SJE practices.

Professional developers and school leaders also take risks when engaging in efforts to shift teacher practices. Teacher learning and school change around SJE is ongoing. Banks (2004) writes, "Multicultural education is a continuing process because the idealized goals it tries to actualize-such as educational equality and the eradication of all forms of discrimination-can never be fully achieved in human society" (p. 25). Because enacting SJE is so comprehensive and is a continuing process, school leaders are called to sharpen and define a vision of SJE, to invest extensive time and money in designing teacher learning programs and curriculum in a targeted way, and to engage in their own ongoing personal and professional learning about SJE. In this study, I did not focus on the learning of the administrators I interviewed; my interviews with school leaders were included in the data for my analysis of Harper Academy as a whole. Future case studies focused on the experiences of school leaders could illuminate what it is like to lead in a school pursuing SJE and how leaders conceptualize this change process as well as SJE itself.

School leaders also need to be prepared for teachers to turn their critical lenses on the school itself. For some elite school communities, particularly those that operate under traditional hierarchical structures, this process involves school leaders relinquishing some power and giving voice to teachers in new ways that can potentially transform communities toward equity. In this study, the teacher participants offered substantial analysis of how the school could shift its policies and practices and work toward creation

of a more equitable culture. SJE calls on teachers to engage students democratically in the classroom; similarly, a school that enacts SJE might also shift to engage teachers in a more democratic way, redistributing power so that a diversity of perspectives is heard by those who are ultimately guiding HA towards its School Mission and SCV. Research into how power is distributed and used in a school community, in regard to position as well as race and other identifiers, could provide insight into the role of power distribution in the enactment of SJE. Again, because cultural context would be essential to an analysis of these dynamics, case study and ethnography would be well-matched to questions that would guide such studies.

Conclusion

Social Justice Education transforms curriculum, pedagogy, stance, and ideology towards the mission of working toward a more equitable society. For a teacher learning to teach, reflect, and learn in this way, it is intense "head" work—intellectually rigorous, challenging, meaningful, and extensive. It involves ongoing learning about histories, cultures, teaching, politics, how people learn, and more. By taking a critical stance, teachers examine current events in the larger world as well as their schools and classrooms. It is "heart" work, too, though. Teachers who are learning to teach for social justice engage in transformative work that requires them to open their own hearts and histories to examination, as well, and often to share what they have found with their colleagues. This kind of head and heart work has the potential to create authentically collaborative and caring communities centered on student growth and learning and a shared mission to create a more equitable society through teaching and learning.

What happens when the school in which teachers are learning has to transform to fully support this work? What happens when the culture itself works against social justice aims? For the teachers in this study, learning how to teach the young children in their classrooms has also meant learning how to envision a more equitable school community, one in which the explicit policies and practices and the implicit norms communicate the same pluralism and justice they are trying to teach their four- to seven year-olds. The ongoing practice of looking critically at their classrooms and at the institutions in which their classrooms are situated may continue to push forward this transformation, as might the leadership of administrators who continue to place SJE at the center of their work and a School Mission and Statement of Community Values that describe social justice aims. Moreover, with rigorous social justice education, students themselves could take the lead in a cultural shift towards a more equitable school for all. For professional developers, school leaders, and teacher educators who hope to support teachers of SJE, understanding the importance of the context in which teachers are learning and intentionally planning for the complexity of the head and heart work that comprises learning about SJE are essential to creating an environment for learning that works toward more equitable practices, policies, institutions, and communities.

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