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In this dissertation, I explored how residence life professionals are teaching social justice. Using critically informed qualitative methods, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 student affairs professionals who are responsible for ongoing social justice-oriented initiatives in residence life. I also analyzed documents associated with these initiatives. Initiatives included living and learning communities, resident advisor courses, workshops for residents, and peer education programs. I found that personal experiences, professional preparation and development, and academic resources informed the design of these initiatives; while institutional factors, stakeholders, and human resources influenced design. The seven key behaviors for delivering these initiatives were largely consistent with critical pedagogy, even as participants did not systematically draw upon this theory, or specific other theories. While there is much to praise about the work being done, there is a need to enhance training for professional staff facilitators, incorporate assessment of the impact these initiatives are having, and reconceive the competency and value of inclusion.

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION IN RESIDENCE
LIFE

by

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Approved by

Committee Chair

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To Grandaddy,

Your encouragement and enthusiasm throughout this process kept me going. I can feel
you celebrating this accomplishment with me. We made it. -xoxox

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation, written by Krista L. Prince, has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Research Problem	1
Purpose of the Study	3
Research Questions	4
Background Context	4
Positionality	11
Theoretical Framework.....	14
Research Approach	23
Significance.....	24
Dissertation Overview	24
II. DIVERSITY AND MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE IN STUDENT AFFAIRS THEORY AND PRACTICE	26
Student Affairs Preparation and Practice	27
Multicultural Competence and Education in Student Affairs.....	42
Summary	61
III. SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION AND STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE.....	63
Frameworks for Social Justice Education Influencing Student Affairs	65
Empowering Social Justice Education Facilitation.....	77
Conclusion	103
IV. METHODOLOGY	105
Research Design.....	106
Data Collection	118
Data Analysis	122
Trustworthiness.....	124
Conclusion	126

V. FINDINGS	128
Designing Social Justice-Oriented Initiatives	128
Delivering Social Justice-Oriented Initiatives	158
Conclusion	172
VI. DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS.....	173
Discussion and Recommendations	173
Research Limitations	199
Opportunities for Future Research.....	201
Final Thoughts	203
REFERENCES	207

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the fall semester 2014, I was taking a course entitled *Critical Perspectives in Education, Leadership, and Culture*. We were learning about social justice issues in education, and more specifically, we were interrogating the systemic causes that perpetuate oppression and inequality therein. Coupled with a course on *Teaching Social Justice*, I was learning definitions and dynamics of terms such as privilege, socialization, oppression, and social justice. While these concepts were not novel, reading more about each and learning how they operate in practice illuminated clear gaps in the depth of my prior understanding. In thinking about how to promote democracy in schools, many questions about my own practice and that of my profession, student affairs, arose for me. Student affairs is a profession that espouses commitments to concepts such as “diversity and inclusion” and even “social justice;” but I started to wonder how sophisticated our understanding of these constructs really is, and thereby how productive our practice can be.

Research Problem

To begin to understand how social justice issues play out in student affairs, I first explored the launching point for professional practice, graduate preparation programs, to examine how the curriculum therein aligns with competencies of the profession. I found disparities between what professionals learn through their master’s education, and their

responsibility for facilitating social justice education in the co-curriculum when they are professionals. While I analyze these disparities in detail in chapter two, they are important to acknowledge here given the influence that this observation had on shaping my research questions. In particular, graduate preparation program curriculums often do not facilitate students' interrogating their own positionality or developing an understanding of systems and structures, which are key precursors to engaging in social justice work.

According to Sensoy and DiAngelo (2012), "awareness of ourselves as socialized members of a number of intersecting groups within a particular culture in a particular time and place (social location or positionality) will increase our critical social justice literacy" (p. 35). This is because understanding our socialization enables us to interrogate the assumptions that underlie our beliefs and behaviors about the world. Further, developing an understanding of systems and structures is imperative to social justice work because we are situated within these, they influence socialization, and they often perpetuate inequity in society. In order to engage in social justice education and work for equitable outcomes, professionals must come to understand their own positionality and the broad structures that influence their positionality and understanding. This will enable professionals to develop and facilitate stronger social justice-oriented initiatives for students. If graduate students are not learning about positionality and systemic issues through preparation programs, it follows that their work professionally as social justice educators may be impacted. Given the dissonance between expectations for professional competency and the curriculum of graduate preparation programs, I am interested in

exploring how professionals develop content and facilitate social justice-oriented trainings and programs for their students. In this study, I specifically narrow the scope to social justice-oriented trainings and programs created and facilitated by residence life professionals.

Purpose of the Study

My goal in this study is to explore how student affairs professionals are teaching social justice through their training and program initiatives. My interest in this topic developed through coursework as I considered how social justice concepts and approaches to education both intersected and contrasted with my anecdotal experiences working in residence life. However, this inquiry is timely given that professionals in student affairs revised their competencies to emphasize a focus on social justice and inclusion around the same time. Given the shift in the competency language, I am curious how professional practice aligns with the standards we espouse and with critical social justice education. In this study, I explore the content and delivery of social justice-oriented initiatives through the lens of critical pedagogy and provide recommendations for practice. While there are many theoretical discussions of social justice in the literature, there are only a few empirical studies specifically focused on residence life and social justice education. Empirical studies that do exist typically do not explore the underpinnings, content, and delivery of these social justice education initiatives. My goal is to explore how professionals are teaching social justice. This includes not only how they facilitate social justice-oriented programs and initiatives, but also how they inform their development.

Research Questions

In order to better understand how residence life professionals are teaching for social justice, the following research questions guided this exploratory study:

1. What theoretical models, frameworks, and research can inform curricula for social justice-oriented initiatives in student affairs and more specifically in residence life?
2. How are residence life professionals teaching social justice?
 - a. To what extent is the language of social justice and inclusion evident in program and training curriculum?
 - b. What influences and informs the design and content of social justice-oriented trainings and programs for residents?
 - c. What pedagogical strategies do residence life professionals employ in the delivery of social justice-oriented trainings and programs?

Ultimately, these questions derived from the gaps that I found in the literature; however, the emergence of the profession and evolution of philosophical commitments and competencies inform practice in student affairs. Therefore, to begin, I explore the history of the profession with particular attention to its espoused values and philosophical commitments. Then, I will move forward to present-day competencies for professional practice.

Background Context

Student affairs emerged as a field with professionals devoted to supporting student life outside of the traditional classroom on college campuses. Several factors

contributed to this need such as faculty devoting more time to their research, the diversification of the student body, and the expanding world of work (Evans & Reason, 2001). While student services had been developing over many years, “in the latter half of the nineteenth century, accelerated changes in the character of institutions of higher education and their students produced conditions that made the greater development of these services both possible and urgent” (Nuss, 2003, p. 69). According to Nuss (2003), the two enduring and fundamental principles of the profession of student affairs are a commitment to the development of the whole person by “creating supportive and responsive environments” (as cited in Evans & Reason, 2001, p. 374) and to “supporting the diversity of institutional and academic missions” (p. 66). Beginning with *The Student Personnel Point of View (SPPV)* in 1937, several major student affairs philosophical statements highlighted core commitments of the profession, which have remained fairly consistent over time.

The 1937, SPPV emphasized considering the holistic development of students, improving instruction through collaboration with faculty, and using research to develop theory that guides the field. The 1949 iteration of the SSPV prioritized organizational structure and “went a step further in stressing the importance of recognizing individual differences in students and stressing that students are agents in their own development and should be included in decision-making” (Evans & Reason, 2001, p. 363). Further, recognizing the influence of the co-curriculum on student’s growth and improvement, the authors included “a call for the intentional use of out-of-class activities to educate students” (Evans & Reason, 2001, p. 363). In the 1960s, increased federal involvement in

higher education lead to several pieces of legislation that “mandated the elimination of discrimination and required equal access and treatment for educational and other programs receiving federal financial assistance” (Nuss, 2003, p. 73). As students who had been previously excluded or underrepresented gained access to higher education, institutions created specialized student support services and roles for professionals. Just as the 1937 SPPV noted the importance of research, The Hazen Foundation published a report in 1968 emphasizing “the importance of using research to guide the development of curriculum, learning strategies, and extracurricular programs” in order to influence holistic development of students (Evans & Reason, 2001, p. 364).

The sixties also mark a changing relationship between institutions and students as the latter became more engaged on institutional committees and through campus governance. In loco parentis and the emphasis on student affairs professionals as disciplinarians declined in favor of an emphasis on student development and education. Additionally, in considering affective and cognitive development, educators were encouraged to attend more to individual differences when designing educational experiences. Specifically, Tomorrow’s Higher Education, Phase II “noted that a developmental perspective requires being inclusive of student diversity” (Evans & Reason, 2001, p. 366). This perspective is important given that student development theory marks the second wave of theorizing the field, and many programs still center this focus today. In the 1980s and 1990s, overall enrollment did not change, but “the student population became more diverse in all aspects than at any other time in American higher education” in part resulting from new initiatives to recruit underserved students (Nuss,

2003, p. 78). Efforts to better serve and retain minoritized students complemented these new recruitment efforts.

As the background and situational characteristics of students continued to change, professionals needed to engage in ongoing learning in order to better support them. Nuss (2003) argues student affairs professionals are key to helping institutions navigate “the challenges and conflicts associated with many varied perspectives, cultures, values, and ways of thinking that are inherent in these diverse populations” (p. 424) by developing “the awareness, knowledge, and skills for working with diverse constituents” (p. 424). Likewise, Young (1996) situates equality and justice as the two most prominent values guiding the profession (as cited in Arminio, Torres, & Pope, 2012, p. 190). The Principles of Good Practice (1997) for student affairs include “inclusive and supportive communities” among the good practices for creating positive learning environments (Evans & Reason, 2001, p. 369). Although an attention to individual differences in focusing on the “whole” student is an enduring concept, initial considerations were less sophisticated than they are now. However, “as the United States society became more complex and student populations became more diverse, the need to be more knowledgeable about older students, students from different socioeconomic backgrounds, and various racial and ethnic populations was more explicitly stated” (Evans & Reason, 2001, p. 372).

Later statements about the field of student affairs complemented the attention to diversity by professionals with an emphasis on “the importance of educating all students about diversity, appreciation of differences, and respect for all people, regardless of

background” (Evans & Reason, 2001, p. 372). However, philosophical statements have not addressed the role of advocacy and activism among student affairs professionals, which are both critical given the issues that still face historically marginalized students today. Evans and Reason (2001) suggest that “student affairs professionals should seriously examine critical theory as the lens through which to view the world” (p. 376). This call aligns with what Rhoads and Black (1995) name a critical cultural perspective and situate as the third wave in the evolution of student affairs practice. According to Jones and Stewart (2016), the third wave of student development theorizing takes a critical perspective. Although my focus is not specifically on student development and identity theories, I do employ critical theory as a lens through which to view and perform my work. Likewise, it shapes this research, so I discuss critical theory in more detail later in the theoretical framework section of this chapter.

The two major professional associations for student affairs are ACPA-College Student Educators International and NASPA-Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education. Building from the philosophical statements of these groups, they collaborated to develop *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners*, which outline expected knowledge and skills of professionals and guide the development of training opportunities (ACPA & NASPA, 2010). In 2015, ACPA and NASPA released their revised *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators*. The authors espouse that one of their most significant changes was renaming and revising the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion competency to Social Justice and Inclusion (SJ&I) (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). After identifying “a shift away from awareness and diversity...to a more

active orientation,” (ACPA & NASPA, 2015, p. 4) task force members decided to situate equity and diversity within a social justice framework. They felt this approach would minimize the tendency of tokenizing and othering non-dominant groups while norming or centering dominant ones in diversity programming. The recent shift to Social Justice and Inclusion as a professional competency area signifies an explicit expectation of knowledge, awareness, and skills in the area of social justice education. Further, the existence of numerous social justice-oriented trainings and programs facilitated by student affairs professionals indeed suggests that they are expected to educate about these concepts. However, Gorski (2013) questions whether “our commitments and our practice have kept pace with our language,” worrying “that our evolution from ‘diversity’ and ‘multiculturalism’ to ‘social justice’ is more a shift in language than a shift in consciousness or shifts in institutional cultures” (para. 5). Karunaratne, Koppel, and yang (2016) identified categories to describe the ways in which student affairs professionals engage social justice praxis in their work. They conducted six semi-structured interviews with entry and mid-level professionals comprised of fifteen open-ended questions. They designed these questions to elicit participant experiences enacting social justice values in their practice. They found that the main ways student affairs professionals enact social justice praxis in their work include: communicating and employing social justice concepts in presentations and dialogues, programming models, and hiring or training. To support their praxis, participants in Karunaratne et al., (2016) outlined the following as key priorities: seeking professional development opportunities to acquire new knowledge; strengthening their adeptness at navigating institutional politics; developing

skills to educate students, including being deliberate about presentation content and delivery, and facilitating difficult conversations; and grounding their praxis with thoughtful self-reflection. Even prior to the formal shift in professional competency language, Phillips (2014) explored how student affairs professionals were talking about social justice, and how a critical paradigm informs the work of those who self-define or have been described as critically-oriented professionals. She asserted that:

We have shifted to a place where student affairs practitioners are seen in some cases as ‘social justice experts’ and/or expected to be equipped with a certain level of knowledge about systemic issues of difference even as there is no corollary expectation for systematic education on social justice issues. (p. 35)

She highlights the dissonance between expected competency in the area of social justice and a lack of systemic education. From this gap between educational content and expectations for practice come my questions about the social justice education in which student affairs professionals engage.

Because of their prevalence in the field, I use the language of competencies throughout this dissertation, including knowledge, skills, and dispositions, the latter of which Thornton (2006) defines as “habits of the minds...that filter one’s knowledge, skills, and beliefs and impact the action one takes in professional settings” (as cited in ACPA & NASPA, 2015, p. 6). Although those in student affairs use the term “competency” to describe what professionals should know or be able to do, I am troubled by the notion of finality that competency (competent) evokes in me, especially as it relates to social justice work, which is an ongoing journey. The authors do take care to

note that “the work of applying the competencies in practice will likely consist more of varied best practices than of standardized approaches, and these practices will likely evolve over time reflecting the dynamic nature of the competencies” (ACPA & NASPA, 2015, p. 10). Additionally, there is no “competent” level, rather they use foundational, intermediate, advanced. However, I want to directly acknowledge the ongoing nature of the journey within social justice education, and to trouble any notions of finality or credentialing associated with such work. While the evolution of competencies informs my questions about professional practice, my initial interest in the topic at hand stems from my personal experiences in the field. In the next section, I describe my positionality and experiences that shaped and are shaping this work.

Positionality

According to Bettez (2014), positionality involves

The combination of social status groups to which one belongs (such as race, class, gender, and sexuality) and one’s personal experience (understanding that experience is always individually interpreted, and it is the interpretation that gives an experience meaning). (p. 934)

My own experiences as a student affairs educator [note: this term is used intentionally to further characterize my professional work, and stands in contrast to practitioner or professional] in residence life, who is expected to do social justice-oriented work, largely inspired this research. I concur with Nuss (2003) that one of the fundamental principles of student affairs work, and in particular residence life, is developing the whole person through the learning environments we create. As a residence life educator, I provide

experiences that complement the ones students have in the classroom. For example, through advising students in their leadership opportunities, I help students develop skills in conflict resolution, communication, collaboration, and project management. Through conversations about violations of conduct policies, I foster students' ethical decision-making, accountability, and responsibility for ones' actions. Each of these skills will transfer to their future experiences in their careers and beyond. Given my role in facilitating students' holistic development, I did not question the expectation that I not only attend to diverse needs, but also that I facilitate social justice education through my role. I viewed doing so as imperative to creating supportive and inclusive communities in which all students can grow, develop, and thrive personally and academically.

However, while studying the cultural foundations of education, I began to question how the ways I was teaching social justice through my job did or did not align with the values, habits, and dispositions of critical social justice education. In my own professional experiences, I have been expected to serve as a social justice educator designing opportunities for colleagues and residents. My supervisors assumed that I had gained a base level of competency in this area through my master's degree program even as I did not learn about social justice concepts or curriculum design through coursework when I was pursuing that degree. Most of the social justice-oriented work I did was informed by what I learned from peers through conferences or other professional development opportunities. At the time, I thought I was equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to do the work expected of me. However, looking back I find that my borrowing and implementation of initiatives was not largely informed by a deep

interrogation of my own identities, by a complex understanding of social justice concepts, nor by an intentional focus on curriculum design and effective facilitation. As my understanding in each of these areas grew (and continues to grow) through my doctoral studies, I began to recognize how I could have more adeptly created stronger learning environments, managed resistance, and attended to my own privileged identities while facilitating.

Through my doctoral studies I have developed a critical theoretical lens, which I bring to this inquiry. Based on this perspective, I prioritize studying how power operates within social structures and aim to foster social change (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). In studying how professionals are teaching social justice, not only do I investigate the concepts that they include, but I also attend to the extent to which power is shared through facilitation approaches. In addition to my experiences and theoretical framework, my social identities will inevitably influence the ways that I take up this work. I identify as white, cisgender, woman, middle class, and educated. It is important to name my positionalities here because of their potential influence on my interpretation of data and production of knowledge. However, it is also important to note that “the naming is always partial and unfinished” (Bettez, 2014, p. 936) as my positionalities intersect and evolve rather than remaining in silos as fixed categories. During my research, I was particularly attuned to the ways that my identity as a doctoral student influenced my interaction with participants and my interpretation of data. I was concerned from the outset of privileging academic knowledge over experiential knowledge and feeding into educational elitism. Although my own learning has enhanced my ability to deeply

interrogate the ways in which folks are teaching social justice, I am cautious not to privilege my educational knowledge over the experiential understandings that my participants have. Likewise, it was important for me to consider how my own whiteness may have shaped my engagement with participants and interpretations of their experiences. Although attending to my whiteness and academic identity were both considerations from the start, doing so became even more imperative once I recruited participants and learned more about their identities as the majority of participants in this study identify as women of color. Taken together, my social identities, theoretical framework, and professional experiences shape the positionality from which I approach this research.

Theoretical Framework

As mentioned above, a critical theoretical lens informs this work. The critical theorists began their work at the Institute for Social Research within the Frankfurt School in 1923 (Hanks, 2011, p. 81). Forerunners such as Karl Marx, who analyzed capitalism as a form of domination, brought to light the ways in which market values left power in the hands of few (Levinson, Gross, Link, & Hanks, 2011, p. 26). Sensoy and DiAngelo (2012) describe that critical theory “explores historical, cultural, and ideological lines of authority that underlie social conditions” (p. 1). According to Levinson (2011), “critical social theories are those conceptual accounts of the social world that attempt to understand and explain the causes of structural domination and inequality in order to facilitate human emancipation and equity” (p. 2). The many branches of critical inquiry include LatCrit, critical feminist theories, queer theory, and critical race theory to name a

few. Scholars who draw from these theories question taken for granted norms, trouble the status quo of constructed realities, center marginalized voices in their research and advocacy, and advance equity. More specifically, Tierney and Rhoads (1993) highlight that “critical theory focuses on individual reflexivity, the socially constructed nature of knowledge, and issues of culture and power combined with a goal of emancipation” (as cited in Barone, 2014, p. 9). While critical theory originally focused on the effects of capitalism on equity, it now extends to examining other social, cultural, and economic systems such as racism and patriarchy. With attention to power, critical theorists analyze the current socio-political moment and historical influences upon it to expose issues of power, privilege, and oppression.

Critical theory, with its emphasis on social critique and change, is one framework for exposing and disrupting disempowering and oppressive systems and institutions in pursuit of more liberating experiences and equitable outcomes. This orientation compels educators to interrogate the norms and values of schooling, whose interests they serve, and what they reinforce. According to Weis et al. (2011) “primary questions in the sociology of education revolve around the production of inequality; the field recognizes that schooling is a valued commodity and that it is distributed unevenly” (p. 15). Thus, critical sociologists (and educators) examine how issues of power, privilege, and oppression present in and through educational systems; how access and equity are promoted or stifled in schools. Attention to how policies and pedagogy influence outcomes, access, and experiences differentially across social identities enables us to

evaluate how education could work towards more democratic aims that improve equity in outcomes and opportunities.

From a methodological perspective, Henning and Roberts (2016) note “critical theorists posit that social, political, and historical forces influence individuals and their experiences and that people must be understood in relation to these forces to truly clarify how they construct meaning from their experiences” (p. 25). Further, Henning and Roberts (2016) outline several key assumptions of critical theory such as:

- “oppression has many faces, and focusing on only one at the expense of the others (e.g., class oppression versus race oppression) often elides the interconnections among them
- language is central to the formation of subjectivity (conscious and unconscious awareness)
- all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are socially and historically constructed
- mainstream research practices often contribute to the reproduction of systems of class, race, and gender oppression” (p. 25).

These key assumptions coupled with principles of critical pedagogy inform not only my methodology, but also my analysis of data, and my conception of effective strategies for teaching social justice.

Critical Pedagogy

Critical cultural studies scholars are particularly attuned to the role of schools in a vision for democratic society “in which the voices and contributions of all citizens are

taken into account, and in which all forms of oppression and exploitation are diminished” (Hyttén, 1999, p. 539). Schools ideally prepare students to take part in democracy by teaching “the habits, dispositions, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for democratic citizenship” such as “openness, tolerance, respect, humility, cooperation, accountability, moral commitment, critical thinking, and concern for the common good” (Hyttén, 2007, p. 441). They work towards equitable and emancipatory aims through their curriculum and pedagogy.

Giroux (2011) elaborates on the relationship between critical pedagogy and democracy, suggesting that the two are inherently interconnected. He offers that:

Educating young people in the spirit of a critical democracy by providing them with the knowledge, passion, civic capacities, and social responsibility necessary to address the problems facing the nation and the globe means challenging those modes of schooling and pedagogy designed largely to promote economic gain, create consuming subjects, and substitute training for critical thinking analysis. (p. 12)

Rather than centering economic gains and advancement through education, education guided by a vision for critical democracy calls for interrogation of the human experience through embodied and liberating teaching and learning (Freire, 1998; Shapiro, 2006).

Such an approach to education provides a vision for society where people are treated with equal respect and where counter-hegemonic narratives to status quo stories are valued.

Rather than serving regulatory purposes, whereby schools “categorize, punish, resist, and restrain those students who failed to fit the proper demographic,” critical educators “develop distinct practices to help particular students flourish in schools” (Kincheloe,

2008, p. 7). A pedagogy that supports the development of critical, self-reflective, knowledgeable, and socially responsible citizens enables education as a practice of freedom whereby citizens identify and disrupt places that deny their agency (Giroux, 2011). The liberating and emancipatory ideas, theories, and practices that comprise critical pedagogy support realizing the goal of educating for equity and freedom.

A concern for the social mobility of diverse students leads critical educators to challenge the ideas and methods that continue to privilege dominance. Careful attention to the way power operates and is distributed through schooling can enable educators to expose and disrupt its influence on policy, curriculum, and teaching. Since capitalism is central to U.S. society, it also serves as a framework for school operations. For example, “conventional management practices of efficiency, order, hierarchy, and reductivism,” often inform leadership approaches because they have been presented as the primary way to do things (Davis & Harrison, 2013, p. 168). As a further example, students are often concerned with career or job outcomes as a “return on educational investment;” and competition, conformity, standardization, and production characterize educational experiences. These concerns often lead to a banking pedagogy whereby teachers “fill” their students with knowledge and prioritize intellectual knowing over other potential educational outcomes. This process is laden with power dynamics as the teacher is presumed to have the knowledge, makes the classroom decisions, and controls class actions and curriculum content. However, a meaningful pedagogy with democratic foundations extends beyond the “transfer of received knowledge, an inscription of a unified and static identity, or a rigid methodology; it presupposes that students are moved

by their passions and motivated, in part, by the affective investments they bring to the learning process” (Giroux, 2011, p. 82). Taking as a starting place that affective investments matter, critical pedagogues draw on a number of practices to develop curriculum that fosters engaged, embodied, liberating teaching and learning that attends to power dynamics.

According to Kincheloe (2007), the central features of critical pedagogy include helping students to “imagine new forms of self-realization and social collaboration that lead to emancipatory results” (p. 36), understand how power operates, cultivate a “critical consciousness that is aware of the social construction of subjectivity” (p. 37), and build community (pp. 36-38). When developed through a critical pedagogy, teaching and learning are active processes whereby reflection and curiosity are encouraged. Students are supported in analyzing their own experiences by situating and contextualizing them within a broader societal framework, which can be liberating and empowering for them. Freire (1998) describes how critical pedagogy facilitates a process of becoming in the classroom. Through experiential, intuitive, connected, embodied, and holistic learning, critical pedagogues disrupt rather than reinforce the oppressive structures of society. Forming a community in the classroom that fosters reciprocity rather than competition and comparison supports the goals of critical pedagogy. Community is imperative for the social justice classroom because “basic counseling and psychology theories posit rapport as an essential foundation for any sort of change work” (Davis & Harrison, 2013, p. 108). As part of a community, students and teachers learn with and from one another in a

process of connected learning; they deconstruct power dynamics and the authority inherent in traditional schooling to form democratic environments (hooks, 2010).

There are many ways to develop community and embody the central tenets of critical pedagogy in the classroom through one's practice. For example, critical pedagogues rebuke a banking model of education by encouraging teachers as learners and learners as teachers. They promote critical reflection and curiosity by providing students with the space to question, doubt, and criticize. They encourage praxis, intellectual and emotional knowing, and center marginalized voices and texts. One of the central features of critical pedagogy is dialectical engagement in teaching and learning. Some examples of dialectical questioning include asking "whose interests are represented? Whose voices are marginalized? What are other perspectives on this issue, and what does credible evidence suggest? How would history, positionality, or awareness of power and hegemony influence our understanding?" (Davis & Harrison, 2013, pp. 179-180). As part of dialectical education, a learner "explores tensions among relevant concepts, but also seeks to expose the various ways knowledge is constructed" (Davis & Harrison, 2013 p. 84). Critical educators and learners acknowledge "that our view of the world is necessarily incomplete, and movement toward greater clarity comes from the awareness of how our position both limits and captures phenomena" (Davis & Harrison, 2013, p. 181). Thus, educators employing critical pedagogy problematize the notion of neutrality in curriculum and teaching, acknowledge how values and hidden relationships influence knowledge, and disrupt common sense notions that center dominant ways of knowing and being. In addition to empowering and liberating teaching and learning, critical

pedagogy involves “understanding the socially constructed nature of knowledge; illuminating the historical, economic and other factors that influence knowledge; and exposing the processes by which certain information is validated or invalidated” (Davis & Harrison, 2013, p. 85). Using critical reflection to uncover these hidden influences is ideological in nature and thus “it should be implemented not in some apolitical, disinterested, or seemingly objective way” (Davis & Harrison, 2013, p. 181). There are many concrete strategies for employing a critical pedagogy in practice.

Although some of the central ideas of critical pedagogy may seem abstract, Hytten (1999) offers five concrete suggestions for practice and educational reform to support educators in their work. In order to problematize the notion of neutrality and disrupt the status quo, “curriculum choices need to be seriously investigated for the explicit and implicit messages that they send,” and “dissenting voices to the status quo need to be included” (Hytten, 1999, p. 540). Further, educators can design curriculum in ways that allow students to make connections to their “lives, aspirations, and cultures” (Hytten, 1999, p. 541). Attending to diversity and learning how power and privilege operate is imperative for schools. Developing the skills to recognize and analyze how power operates and to critically consume media and other social messages will enable students to resist abuses of power and anti-democratic practices effectively. Finally, engaging “new models for teaching and learning that better connect what occurs in the classroom to efforts at social transformation” (Hytten, 1999, p. 541) will enable schools to further support a vision for social justice in society. These are just a few of the

tangible ways that educators can embody the tenets of critical pedagogy through their practice, foster liberating educational experiences, and promote justice in society.

Since critical pedagogy informs the ways I engage with students outside of the classroom as a leadership educator and inside the classroom as an instructor, it will be particularly important as a framework for my research on teaching social justice in residence life. Rouse (2011) describes critical pedagogy as both a methodological approach and a methodological tool. As an approach, it supports the design and implementation of initiatives that are effective for diverse populations. As a tool, “critical pedagogy is transformed into an in-depth critical inquiry that encompasses modes of critical thinking, critical dialogue, and praxis (action and reflection) to construct/structure multidimensional methods of teaching and learning” (Rouse, 2011, p. 96). It informs the development of curriculum that “exposes the dynamics of power and privilege” (Rouse, 2011, p. 95) fostering “social justice ideologies that bring about social change” (Rouse, 2011, p. 96). Serving as a foundation for social justice education, critical pedagogy provides central behaviors that can guide classroom facilitation, including “reflective praxis, ethical commitment, respect for the lived experience and knowledge of students, driving curiosity, ego-challenging awareness of the reality of our being unfinished, and an entrenched belief in the human capacity for transformation” (Davis & Harrison, 2013, p. 100).

In the student affairs profession, we have a commitment to social justice and inclusion that is ostensibly enacted through our policies and programs. Engaging in social justice education is one of the ways that we work to foster a more just and equitable

world. For example, my hope is that students' participation in social justice-oriented trainings and programs helps develop a critical consciousness that is liberating and empowering for them, but also cultivates the skills to expose and disrupt oppressive systems in pursuit of justice for everyone. In order for this to be possible, educators must design and facilitate social justice-oriented trainings and programs with attention to power dynamics and authority. Such trainings and programs can foster community, employ active and embodied approaches, prioritize reciprocity, and embrace both intellectual and emotional knowing. Consistent with the vision of critical education and critical pedagogy that I have described, my research is a qualitative study informed by these theories in which I explore how student affairs professionals in residence life are engaging critical approaches and teaching for social justice.

Research Approach

In this exploratory study, I use critically informed qualitative methods to investigate how residence life professionals teach social justice. I explore ongoing residence life programs by interviewing the professionals who are responsible for designing and delivering these initiatives. When I was exploring feasibility for my study, I contacted colleagues with whom I used to work about initiatives in their new residence life departments (all had left the department we worked in together). What I learned during those discussions provided a starting point for recruitment as many of my former colleagues had initiatives that met the parameters for my study in their new departments even if they were not directly responsible for them. I was able to send invitations to colleagues responsible for the initiatives I learned about during my initial explorations,

thus my recruitment began with a convenience sample of social justice-oriented residence life programs or trainings. I also included programs that I learned about through recruitment via social media platforms, conference booklets, and list serves. I interviewed professionals who create or deliver these trainings and programs to learn more about what informs and makes their work possible. To complement my interviews, I analyzed written material from these programs including syllabi, academic and co-curricular lesson plans, facilitator and student training guides, PowerPoints, position descriptions, monthly reports from program facilitators, and publications on the initiative. I also reviewed strategic plans and overviews of the initiative mission, vision, and values in an effort to learn how residence life professionals are teaching social justice.

Significance

Given the recent shift (2015) in student affairs competency language from Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to Social Justice and Inclusion, my study is among the first to explore how student affairs practice is aligning with the revised competencies and existing frameworks for critical social justice education. While much of the existing literature is anecdotal or theoretical in nature, this study employs an empirical approach to understanding social justice curriculum in student affairs, and more specifically residence life, by providing qualitative research on programs and trainings.

Dissertation Overview

In this chapter, I provided a historical overview of the philosophical commitments, principles of practice, and professional competencies for student affairs. Given the recent shift in competency language from Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to

Social Justice and Inclusion, I am interested in learning how professionals are teaching social justice through their work. In chapter two, I offer a literature review beginning first with exploring what professionals are learning in their graduate preparation programs. I then explore the prevalent literature on multicultural competence and education in student affairs. In chapter three, I explore how social justice education is taken up in student affairs. Taken together, chapters two and three both provide a foundational review of the literature relevant to my study and also an initial response to my first research question. In chapter four, I more thoroughly describe the methodology that guides this study. Chapter five highlights key findings from interviews with professional staff and a review of documents associated with their social justice-oriented trainings and programs. In chapter six I discuss the findings and implications from my investigation, and then I provide a conclusion and offer future research directions.

CHAPTER II
DIVERSITY AND MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE IN STUDENT
AFFAIRS THEORY AND PRACTICE

This chapter provides an overview of the new Social Justice and Inclusion competency for student affairs practice. Given the emphasis on social justice as a competency, I then explore whether social justice constructs and language are evident in graduate program curriculum. Further, I investigate the theories that graduate programs emphasize through the curriculum for additional insight about how such programs attend to social justice. In addition to understanding theories informing practice, it is critical to consider the organizational structure of a college campus given its influence upon institutional commitments and values; therefore, I review various models of practice for how they attend to social justice. Finally, I turn to multicultural competence and education in student affairs as a key component of educating for social justice, particularly given how the field has prioritized diversity education and issues over time. In addition to defining multicultural competence, I provide an overview of models for multicultural and intercultural development, explore multicultural competence in student programs, and review the research on multicultural issues. This chapter, combined with chapter three, provides not only an overview of relevant literature, but also an initial answer to my first research question about the models, frameworks, and research upon which student affairs professionals can draw when designing social justice-oriented

initiatives. I develop this further with empirical data drawn from an analysis of 10 ongoing social justice-oriented initiatives in residence life.

Student Affairs Preparation and Practice

The profession of student affairs has prioritized a commitment to social justice and inclusion through its revised competencies in which the authors reconceive the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion competency to a more active Social Justice and Inclusion framework (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). The authors claim that “diversity can imply a static, non-participatory orientation where the term diverse is associated with members of non-dominant groups,” and they “aimed to frame inclusiveness in a manner that does not norm dominant cultures” (ACPA & NASPA, 2015, p. 4). Drawing on Bell (2013), they define social justice “as both a process and a goal that includes the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to create learning environments that foster equitable participation of all groups and seeks to address issues of oppression, privilege, and power” (as cited in ACPA & NASPA, 2015, p. 30). Some examples of how student affairs professionals can incorporate this competency into their practice include “seeking to meet the needs of all groups, equitably distributing resources, raising social consciousness, and repairing past and current harms on campus” (ACPA & NASPA, 2015, p. 30). The task force that revised the competencies also developed rubrics for each area to further guide how professionals can demonstrate various components through their practice.

According to the competencies rubric, the dimensions of the Social Justice and Inclusion competency are “understanding of self and navigating systems of power,” “critical assessment and self-directed learning,” “engaging in socially-just practice,” and

“organizational systemic advocacy,” which can each be learned or applied at the foundational, intermediate, or advanced level (ACPA & NASPA, 2016, pp. 28-29). For example, at the foundational level, professionals “engaging in socially-just practice” would be able to “integrate knowledge of social justice, inclusion, oppression, privilege, and power into one’s practice,” but at an intermediate level they would “facilitate dialogue about issues of social justice, inclusion, power, privilege, and oppression in one’s practice” (ACPA & NASPA, 2016, p. 29). At a foundational level, professionals show an “understanding of self and navigating systems of power” by being “able to articulate one’s identities and intersectionality;” whereas, at an advanced level they would “provide consultation to other units, divisions, or constituents on strategies to dismantle systems of oppression, privilege, and power on campus” (ACPA & NASPA, 2016, p. 28). However, one of the participants in Karunaratne et al. (2016) acknowledged that “student affairs is a field that wants to be social justice minded but sometimes falters because of the lack of education and the people within it” (p. 10). Therefore, given this shift in what professionals are expected to know and be able to do, I begin this section by outlining how academic preparation programs support their development. Subsequently, I explore the theories included in preparation program curriculum and undergirding practice. Likewise, I share models that shape institution organizational structures and thereby student affairs practice.

Preparation Programs

Noting the competencies that the profession prioritizes, it is important to investigate if and how social justice concepts and ideas are centered in graduate

preparation programs. The literature suggests that few preparation programs center social justice education in their courses or pedagogy (Edwards, Riser, Loftin, Nance, & Smith, 2014; Landreman, Edwards, Balón, & Anderson, 2008; Manning, 2009; Osei-Kofi, Shahjahan, & Patton, 2010; Phillips, 2014). In fact, through the early part of this century, most research suggests that student affairs programs were also limited in their focus on multicultural competence.

Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2004) draw upon Pope and Reynolds' (1997) Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Practice, which outlines seven core competencies for practice, to evaluate how to apply the competencies in a multicultural context. Further, they evaluate implications for their model in research and practice. They assert that multicultural competence is therefore an important responsibility for preparation programs. Talbot (1992) found that the role of diversity in courses varies by topic and faculty comfort level, and was often only addressed in theory courses (as summarized in Pope et al., 2004). Extending this work, Talbot & Kocarek (1997) called for greater attention to faculty competencies, recruiting more diverse faculty, and providing incentives for faculty to devote time to cultivating self-awareness and knowledge of diversity (as summarized in Pope et al., 2004). Further, King and Howard-Hamilton (2000) recommended that faculty create more opportunities for graduate students to explore multiculturalism and engage cross-culturally through the curriculum (as summarized in Pope et al., 2004). Similarly, Mueller and Pope (2001) called for faculty to build in opportunities for students to explore racial attitudes and experiences through self-reflection and "cognitive-restructuring, which challenges individual's assumptions

and beliefs about the world, other races, and oneself as a racial being” (as cited in Pope et al., 2004, p. 176). These recommendations suggest that diversity courses should have an important role in graduate curriculum, yet there is little evidence that this goal has been realized.

In a national study including fifty-three student affairs programs, Flowers (2003) found that 74% of program coordinators and directors of student affairs graduate programs indicated their master’s-level curriculum included a diversity course requirement while another eight percent (four programs) were working to incorporate this requirement. (Flowers, 2003). In this study, Flowers (2003) defined diversity courses as those “developed and taught with the expressed intent of promoting the development of culturally proficient student affairs professionals who were knowledgeable and sensitive to the histories, circumstances, and needs of culturally and racially diverse individuals” (p. 75). Of the 211 NASPA members who responded to this survey, 27.4% indicated having a diversity course requirement (p. 81). The researcher suggests that the response rate may have been low because not all members of the professional association completed Higher Education and Student Affairs master’s programs, and diversity course requirements are relatively new. Mastrodicasa (2004) explored differences in responses to the Multicultural Competence for Student Affairs-Preliminary 2 Scale (MCSA-P2) between professionals who had taken a diversity course in their student affairs graduate program and those who did not. Mastrodicasa (2004) did not find a significant difference on the MCSA-P2 from those who did and did not have a diversity course, although those with the course scored higher on average. Likewise, there was no significant correlation

between years of experience and multicultural competence although the correlation was positive.

The finding that diversity courses are not as widespread in student affairs programs as we might expect is interesting given Barone's (2014) conclusion that

Unless a component of graduate preparation programs, and if not intentionally sought out by SSAO's [Senior Student Affairs Officers], a dearth of SJ [social justice] training opportunities exists for top higher education leaders. Most social justice training opportunities in higher education, including the popular Social Justice Training Institute, are frequented by participants early in their careers. (p. 216)

Looking at these studies, one can infer that many SSAO's have sought training opportunities throughout their career to yield the positive correlation that Mastrodicasa (2004) found, at least related to multicultural issues. Some of the effects of a lack of training include desiring to be more social justice-oriented in their leadership, but struggling to operationalize the desire; and recognizing the need to diversify staff without a plan for doing so. Additionally, student affairs' hierarchical structure isolates these leaders and reduces the likelihood that they receive critical feedback. Finally, Barone (2014) found that SSAO's cautiously approach social justice activism even though "these leaders have substantial autonomy and power within their own divisions, and brazen social justice leadership within this large sphere of influence is needed for higher education to achieve goals of inclusivity" (pp. 218-219).

Given the findings related to senior student affairs professionals, it is unlikely that graduate courses alone would remedy the challenges to employing social justice activism

that SSAO's face. Further, courses in preparation programs often align with higher education's early efforts at inclusion "aimed at diversifying American education systems (i.e. representation in and access to education)" (Landreman & MacDonald-Dennis, 2013, p. 3). Such "diversity courses may not directly correlate to increased knowledge, awareness, and skills to be a social justice advocate" (Karunaratne et al., 2016, p. 16), which seems to align with findings from Barone (2014) and Mastrodicasa (2004). As the competency area of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion has evolved to the more active Social Justice and Inclusion, this literature suggests that coursework nonetheless remains limited.

Several scholars call for centering social justice education in graduate preparation programs or courses to expand professionals' understanding of structural and systemic inequities, equip them to translate theory to practice, make space for social justice discourse in the academy, disrupt the range of issues in which higher education is implicated, and better prepare professionals to teach social justice (Edwards et al., 2014; Kline, 2004; Malaney, 2006; Mather, 2008; Mitchell, Hardley, Jordan, & Couch, 2014; Osei-Kofi et al., 2010). The necessity of such changes is exemplified by participants from Karunaratne et al.'s (2016) interview-based study who

Discussed the lack of knowledge of and skills to disrupt social justice issues in the field of student affairs as a challenge to their social justice advocacy. Professionals stated the importance of their graduate preparatory programs in learning about issues of oppression and privilege...Although some graduate programs are including social justice issues in their curriculum, these courses may not necessarily be guided by specific attainable learning outcomes or involved effective facilitation. (p. 16)

Edwards et al. (2014) posit that essential components of “educative spaces that best support the development of critically engaged student affairs practitioners; professionals that will model socially just practices in cocurricular settings” (p. 1) include faculty commitment, emphasis on social justice across the curriculum, and the creation of spaces where students can engage without shame. Additionally, such courses need to include a pedagogy that centers subjugated knowledge, honors different ways of knowing, and works for progressive social change (Osei-Kofi et al., 2010).

Osei-Kofi et al. (2010) and Edwards et al. (2014) provide valuable resources for faculty wishing to center social justice education in the curriculum and engage an explicit socially just pedagogy to model the way for their students. Although these researchers posit what educative spaces could include to best support the development of critically-oriented professionals, and in some cases, include case studies of how they have employed these recommendations in their own practice, this content and approach is still limited in student affairs programs. Edwards et al. (2014) trouble this deficit at the curricular level and question “if student affairs practitioners have not been provided the theoretical tools necessary to engage issues of equity, how can they be expected to develop programs that inspire meaningful change?” (p. 5). Edwards et al.’s (2014) question is imperative given the revised competencies and the positional responsibilities that many professionals assume once they graduate or even in graduate assistant roles. In fact, this deficit can lead to what Rouse (2011) names a “quasi form of social justice” which “pretends to support and promote social action; taunts [sic] a respect and honor for cultural difference and diversity; demonstrates equity and equality indifferently; and

endorses, but does not commit to a positive change that benefits everyone” (p. 2). Since theories guiding the profession ostensibly ground graduate preparation programs, these provide further insight about the curricular emphases and limitations of current programs.

Theorizing the Profession and Theories Undergirding Practice

It is important to explore the theories many student affairs professionals are taught in their graduate preparation programs because “theories that undergird the practice in higher education and student affairs reflect the historical contexts in which they were created, the nature of the questions held up for concern, and the commitments and values of those individuals developing theories” (Jones & Stewart, 2016, p. 17). Rhoads and Black (1995) outline three waves of evolution in student affairs work: in loco parentis, student development, and critical cultural perspective. Many student affairs preparation programs include a course focused primarily on student development theory using the foundational text *Student Development in College: Theory, Research, and Practice*. This second wave of theorizing student affairs work, focusing on student development, is also evolutionary in its content. Earlier iterations of this text prioritized psychosocial and cognitive-structural developmental theories with some attention to social identity theories (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998; Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010). Additionally, they included person-environment, typology, and maturity theories (Jones & Stewart, 2016). Jones and Stewart (2016) characterize such theories as part of the first wave of student development theories, which evolved from questions about how development occurs and what influence the college environment has upon it.

Interdisciplinary and intersectional understandings of student development.

The second wave of student development theories foregrounded social identities, drew on other disciplines, attended to intersectionality, and incorporated multiple domains of development (Jones & Stewart, 2016). However, they did not examine dominant identities and “not examining dominant identities reinforces their ‘normalcy’” (Jones & Stewart, 2016, p. 21). Given the theories and theorists who have been privileged in the field, Patton, McEwen, Rendón, and Howard-Hamilton (2007) called professionals to consider “context of the theorists’ backgrounds, identities, and assumptions; the population on which the theory was based; how sociopolitical and historical contexts, privilege and power may have shaped the theory; and the applicability of the theory to various student populations” (p. 49). Pope et al. (2004) highlight that most student development and organizational theories were based upon “research and practice with predominantly White, male, and privileged individuals and organizations” (p. 35), often failing to address the influence of culture or identity on experiences. These critiques have prompted what Jones and Stewart (2016) classify as the third wave of theorizing, which “appl[ies] critical and poststructural perspectives to an understanding of student development,” (p. 18) and centers theories that address larger structures of power and oppression.

Critical and poststructural perspectives for understanding student

development. In the latest iteration of the primary student development text, Patton, Renn, Guido, and Quaye (2016) have foregrounded and expanded the chapters on social identity theories by including newer theories that attend to the experiences of a wider

array of students. They made this decision in part because since the previous edition, “almost all the research related to student development has centered on social identity and foundational knowledge related to privilege, oppression, multiple identities, and intersectionality” (Patton et al., 2016, p. xxi). Such theories seek to analyze “the impacts of structural and systemic oppression and privilege on individuals and their learning and development” (Jones & Stewart, 2016, p. 21). Such theories provide new ways of thinking about development that characterizes “identity articulations as enacted, dynamic, and fluid,” (p. 22) and introduce different types of knowledge with attention to context, intersectionality, and agency (Jones & Stewart, 2016). Similarly, and recognizing the limitations of traditional student development theories, Cuyjet, Howard-Hamilton, Cooper, and Linder (2016) provide new cultural frameworks and models to extend professionals’ understanding of the complexity of identity in order to create more supportive and inclusive environments for marginalized groups. They explore the history of participation in higher education, effects of oppression on identity development, and important characteristics and challenges for various cultural and social identity groups such as Latinx, biracial and multiracial, white, Asian American, International, students with disabilities, etc. The third wave of student development theorizing aligns better with the newly named Social Justice and Inclusion competency and influences the way that current graduate students are learning about theory. However, it is unclear what influence this new wave of theorizing will have on the ability of professionals, who are already in the field, to serve as social justice educators. Students examine important concepts such as intersectionality, privilege, and oppression in the context of student development in

this third-wave of theorizing; however, courses do not center these concepts more broadly to help students cultivate an understanding of social justice education for their practice. However, in their final chapter entitled *From Cultural Competence to Critical Consciousness*, Cuyjet et al. (2016) attend to an important shift in the profession. This third wave of student development theorizing shares emphases with what Rhoads and Black (1995) describe as the third wave in the evolution of student affairs work: a critical cultural perspective.

A critical cultural perspective for theorizing student affairs work. Manning (1994) and Rhoads and Black (1995) draw upon critical pedagogy linking Freire's educational philosophy and concepts such as praxis, critical consciousness, problem-posing, and transformation to student affairs work. Although she highlights key components of Freire's pedagogy, Manning (1994) does not clearly demonstrate the "congruence with the field's goals and mission," (p. 97) but rather takes this for granted in suggesting that scholars and practitioners in the field should further examine Freire's philosophy. In spite of this limitation, this early work draws an important parallel between student affairs work and critical pedagogy that Rhoads and Black (1995) take up further as they describe a critical cultural perspective as the third wave of theorizing about student affairs work. Drawing on the works of Freire, Giroux, and hooks, Rhoads and Black (1995) propose a critical cultural practice whereby transformative educators work "to establish educational conditions in which students, teachers, and staff engage one another in mutual debate and discourse about issues of justice, freedom, and equality" (p. 418). They place culture at the center of theorizing, and draw specific

attention to the responsibility of transformative educators to work alongside students to address ways the organizational culture inhibits democracy. Pulling from feminism, postmodernism, critical theory, and multiculturalism, the critical cultural perspective “is an overarching framework for building educational communities rooted in an ethic of care and connectedness, democratic ideals, and respect for diverse cultures and voices” (Rhoads & Black, 1995, p. 417). Moreover, they are able to offer specific recommendations for professionals’ working within this framework.

Rhoads and Black (1995) extend Manning’s (1994) work by proposing seven principles for how student affairs professionals can serve as transformative educators. These include principles such as “building empowering social and cultural settings” (p. 418) by considering the social and cultural contexts for development; “creating conditions in which diverse students, faculty, and staff can participate fully in campus decision making;” (p. 419) and “treat[ing] students as equals in the struggle to create a more just and caring academic community and society” (p. 419). It is noteworthy that Rhoads and Black (1995) theorized the practice and profession of student affairs from a critical cultural perspective more than twenty years before we start to see critical perspectives applied to student development theories and social justice frameworks in the field (Cuyjet et al., 2016; Jones & Stewart, 2016). However, given their persistent focus on student development theory, graduate courses often do not center Rhoads and Black’s (1995) third wave of theorizing the practice of student affairs itself through a critical cultural perspective. Instead, many of the foundational student development theories also inform student-centered organizational structures and models for practice in the field.

Models for Student Affairs Practice

In addition to understanding theories undergirding and guiding practice, it is imperative to consider the organizational structure of a college campus given its influence upon institutional commitments and values. Manning (2013) conceptualizes student affairs as an integrated experience involving student services, student development, and student learning. Drawing on the literature, she outlines six traditional models for student affairs practice. These include out-of-classroom-centered established models; administrative-centered established models such as functional silos and student services; learning-centered models such as co-curricular and seamless learning; and competitive/adversarial models. From the research, Documenting Effective Educational Practices (DEEP), she offers five innovative models including student-centered ethic of care, student-driven, student agency, academic/student affairs collaboration, and academic-centered. In her work, student engagement and student success are concepts that underlie the models for practice. These models are important because they influence educational priorities in the co-curriculum and the extent to which units focus on social justice education and competency development. However, there are numerous potential models for student affairs practice contingent upon the institutional mission, student needs, and campus culture.

Traditional models. Manning (2013) derived these six models from a review of the literature. The out-of-classroom-centered established models separate social emotional and cognitive learning. Rather than a seamless experience, the former occurs through extracurricular involvement and the latter through in-class academics. The

administrative-centered established models include functional silos where there is very limited collaboration and coordination across a student affairs division and the units are administration rather than student-centered. The second administrative-centered model is student services. This model places functions and services such as the registrar and financial aid, which students may use periodically, in proximity to one another for student convenience. The learning-centered models include co-curricular and seamless learning models. The co-curricular model conceives of in and out of classroom as having complementary yet separate missions focused on social or intellectual growth. Staff in both spaces are concerned with each type of growth, but only with regard to how they contribute to learning in their specific location. However, educators design seamless learning models under the assumption that learning can result from all experiences and there are no distinct lines between learning in or outside of the classroom. Thus, there is greater collaboration and a joint mission for student learning. Finally, the competitive/adversarial models place student affairs activities in opposition to classroom activities. While Manning (2013) derived these models from the literature, she also developed five innovative models from research on effective educational practices.

Innovative models. While academic and student affairs collaboration along with academic-centered models fit in this category, I focus here on the student-centered models. These models grew out of DEEP research and include student ethic of care, student-driven model, and student agency model. They presume that the student should always be at the center in student affairs work and prioritize the education of the whole student just as the profession does. Through the DEEP research project, scholars found

evidence that these approaches enhanced student engagement and success. Some examples of student-centered approaches include having students lead campus initiatives, including students on important committees that inform campus decisions, providing on-campus student employment, or even offering intentional developmental support services.

As its name suggests, the student-centered ethic of care model centers on care and relationships. Students' needs and perspectives are at the center of professionals' work and there is an assumption that the university has a moral and educational obligation to provide both academic and social support. This approach offers individualized support that attends to the differences between students, and therefore is a time-intensive model. The student-driven model relies on students to manage numerous college functions, prioritizes leadership development, and aims to empower students. Examples include involving students in policy-making decisions, including them on search committees, and/or providing more autonomy in their student organization leadership. Administrators must trust in the ability of students to drive decisions and functions on campus. In this model, students invest significant time and energy in experiences that support their success, and the institution allocates resources and organizes its services to encourage engagement. In the student agency model, students are wholly responsible for student life and serve as full partners to faculty and staff. They take ownership of their experience, and faculty and staff create structures that enable this. Engagement and initiative are key, but this model may be inefficient at times.

Student development theories inform each of these models. For example, Carol Gilligan's (1982) work on women's psychological and moral development and Schlossberg's (1989) *Marginality and Mattering*, which describe how students become invested on campus when they feel like they matter, inform the student-centered ethic of care. Astin's (1984) *Theory of Student Involvement*, which postulates that the physical and psychological energy a student devotes relates to the impact of their college experience, informs the student-driven model along with Schlossberg (1989) and Tinto's (1993) *Theory of Integration*, which suggests that students are more likely to persist and succeed when they are connected academically and socially. Finally, Badura's (2001) work on agency, "the capacity to exercise control over the nature and quality of one's life" (as cited in Manning, 2013, p. 146) is important to the student-agency model. Taken together, the curriculum, theories, and models for practice inform and affect the ways in which professionals are able to embody the values of the field and demonstrate the competency shift to Social Justice and Inclusion. As this shift is very recent, much of the literature in the field focuses on diversity and multiculturalism. Therefore, in the next section I explore the emphasis on multicultural competence and education within the literature and field of student affairs. This research is foundational to the more recent shift to new understandings of inclusion.

Multicultural Competence and Education in Student Affairs

Although the ACPA and NASPA (2015) professional competencies only recently shifted from Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to Social Justice and Inclusion, the literature in the field over the past twenty-five years is not so linear. As the student demographics

changed, an attention in student affairs to diversity and inclusion became prevalent.

Talbot (2003) asserts two core beliefs of the profession: “learning not only to tolerate but also to accept and appreciate diverse populations is not an optional activity,” (p. 426) and “the multicultural journey...begins with individual self-assessment and self-work, especially for those who have memberships in social groups that ascribe them privilege” (p. 426). As in the second commitment, scholars are at times writing about frameworks in multicultural competence and social justice education simultaneously, and several have produced hybrid-frameworks focused on both of these areas. In this section, I begin with an exploration of multicultural competence in the field including models for multicultural and intercultural development. Then, I explore how these models inform student programming and research on multicultural issues in student affairs.

Defining Multicultural Competence

Although the newest revision of the competencies includes a shift to the more active social justice and inclusion framework, much literature in student affairs centers on professionals developing multicultural competency. Pope and Reynolds (1997) provide the *Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence*, components of which include: theory and translation, administration and management, multicultural competence awareness knowledge and skills, assessment and research, teaching and training, and ethics and professional standards. Here they advocate for more continuing education programs and graduate preparation focused on multicultural competence: “the awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary to work effectively and ethically across cultural differences,” and outline thirty-three characteristics of multiculturally competent student affairs

professionals (Pope & Reynolds, 1997, p. 270). According to Arminio et al. (2012) the dimensions of knowledge to be multiculturally competent include:

Knowledge of diverse cultures, how change occurs within individuals, the impact of social identities on the perception of experience, cultural differences in communication, information about the nature of institutional oppression and power, identity development models, within-group differences, internalized oppression, institutional barriers that limit access, and systems change theories. (pp. 38-39)

Knowledge in each of these areas is imperative for interpersonal relationships. Both Pope and Reynolds (1997) and Howard-Hamilton et al. (1998) recommend not only developing shared definitions of constructs such as multiculturalism, but also creating assessments that measure multicultural competence or the implementation of related initiatives. Such assessments can inform future planning and training. Pope et al. (2004) extended this work by describing how to infuse and demonstrate multicultural competence in the form of awareness, knowledge, and skills through all facets of student affairs work.

According to Arminio et al. (2012), “the earliest evidence of the term *diversity* (referring to race or ethnicity) did not appear in higher education literature until the 1970s” (p. 86). There are a number of hypotheses as to why it took so long for the term to become central, including that white men were initially the majority (or only) students, a preference for universal applicability and objectivity in language, and a color-blind approach assuming equality rather than interrogating the influence of differences (Arminio et al., 2012, pp. 86-87). Just as the hypotheses are numerous, so too are the different definitions of diversity. For example, Talbot (2003) asserts “diversity is a

structure that includes the tangible presence of individuals representing a variety of different attributes and characteristics, including culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other physical and social variables” (p. 426). However, according to Arminio et al. (2012) for others diversity “is the challenge of acknowledging the differential access to social power that gives privileges to some groups and not others” (p. 85). These varying definitions represent the evolving meaning of diversity, which lies on a continuum including a range of positions: from absence of awareness of difference to diversity meaning increasing difference, responding to difference, incorporating differences, learning about differences, understanding the complexity of difference, and acknowledging the power in difference (Arminio et al., 2012, p. 90). The evolving meaning of diversity can be situated historically and seems to align with the continuum of multicultural education that I discuss in the following section.

Along with the evolving nature of diversity, multiculturalism is a key term conceived in varying ways. According to Pusch (1979), “multiculturalism is a state of being in which an individual feels comfortable and communicates effectively with people from any culture, in any situation, because she or he has developed the necessary knowledge and skills to do so” (as cited in Talbot, 2003, p. 426). Developing these skills can occur along a continuum of multicultural education ranging from assimilation approaches focused on similarities, tolerance, and acceptance to “critical multiculturalism” that attends to power dynamics in relationships (Zylstra, 2011). Strategies for addressing power dynamics and inequities through critical multiculturalism include “critical questioning, democracy, the analysis of systems of oppression, and

engagement in social action” (as cited in Zylstra, 2011, p. 380). Further, critical multiculturalism helps individuals to interrogate social, political, and historical influences on their identity. These approaches tend to be structural in nature rather than individual, and they attend to power, privilege, and oppression. However, many approaches gravitate towards the assimilation side of the continuum. Thus, Gorski (2006) offers five practices through which professionals undercut their commitment to equity and justice through their work in multicultural education (pp. 167-172). These include:

1. “Being the change, but not changing the being:” engaging in self- reflection, but not working towards institutional change. For example, while multicultural issues inform many decisions and services on campus, institutionalized forms of oppression undercut this progress. Karunaratne et al. (2016) offer as examples “institutionalized forms of racism such as culturally biased standardized tests in admissions, culturally biased curriculum, and underrepresentation of people of color in faculty and administration” (p. 6).
2. “Universal validation,” which is “the insinuation that multicultural education should not question the legitimacy of any point of view. And if we do, we fail to practice what we preach” (p. 169). On this practice, Gorski (2006) offers that “as multicultural education professionals, we bear the responsibility to be exclusive when doing so enables the eradication of inequity” (p. 169).
3. “The whitening of the field,” which includes not only who is in leadership and guiding the work, but also focusing on color-blindness rather than exposure and on the experiences of people of color rather than doing reflective work as whites.

4. “The Ruby Payne Syndrome,” which is when one focuses on only popular frameworks and speakers.
5. “Regressive multicultural programs.”

Later in this chapter, I analyze the final practice, regressive multicultural programs, more thoroughly. Taken together, Gorski’s (2006) practices and Grant and Sleeter’s (2007) continuum highlight how imperative institutional and systemic change are to equity work. Further, they advocate interrogating one’s own privilege as a precursor to doing institutional work, and would agree with Owen (2009) that in working toward “diversity for equity” one must analyze “the differences that differences make” in order to mitigate their effects rather than just valuing the diversity of difference (p. 187).

In addition to the continuum of multicultural education, others conceptualize it “from a single-group studies perspective” such as women’s studies or African American Studies in order to give voices to the historically marginalized, who can advocate from their own perspective. As Grant and Sleeter (2007) differentiate assimilation approaches from critical multiculturalism, Monje-Paulson (2016) conceives multicultural competence as a component of social justice. Multicultural competence must have a critical framework in order to prepare practitioners for action that advances justice. Without such a framework, multicultural competence only fosters empathy, awareness, and understanding but does not equip educators with the skills needed to act. Others such as Zylstra (2011) and Osei-Kofi (2011) similarly caution that awareness has limitations although awareness and understanding are foundational to informed and transformative action.

Models of multicultural and intercultural development. A number of models for developing multiculturally and interculturally as an individual and organization exist to guide student affairs professionals in their work. For example, Pedersen (1988) offers the Multicultural Development Model which is comprised of three stages: awareness, knowledge, and skill. These three stages correlate with the affective, cognitive, and behavioral domains; which Pope and Reynolds (1997) drew on to develop their definition of multicultural competence and characteristics of a multiculturally competent professional. Pedersen's model relies on the belief "that by teaching multicultural development an individual will increase his or her repertoire of beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors for use in a variety of situations" (Talbot, 2003, p. 429). During the awareness stage, individuals learn more "accurate and appropriate" beliefs about cultures, which includes examining one's own culture in relation to others. The knowledge stage involves acquiring new information about other cultures. Finally, the skill stage involves acting upon newfound awareness and knowledge of other cultures to engage appropriately with people from other cultures (Talbot, 2003, p. 429).

Similarly, Talbot (2003) offers that enhancing multicultural competence begins with developing an awareness of self and others in order to better understand one's cultural values. Engaging in cognitive processes such as reading and interrogating are a start, but individuals must also experience difference in their journey to becoming more multiculturally competent. Experiencing difference involves not only cognitive levels, but also affective and behavioral levels as well. According to Talbot (2003), "tapping into the affective aspects of multicultural development and developing skills to be more

effective with diverse populations is critical” (p. 439). One of the means for doing so is Parker’s Multicultural Action Plan (1998), through which individuals first observe difference from a distance and then investigate difference. Through processing the information they gain as part of investigating difference, individuals become prepared for an immersion experience that facilitates more possibility for transformation. Such an experience might include participating in a privilege walk, listening to a panel of diverse individuals, or attending an event where they are the minority. Likewise, simulation activities such as roleplaying and representing a different voice serve as a tool for experiencing difference. In addition to these cognitive, affective, and behavioral levels, Talbot (2003) highlights the importance of attending to language and how it is used to maintain power differentials as key to enhancing multicultural competence. Finally, in the journey towards competence, individuals must walk their talk even in the midst of roadblocks such as backlash or fear.

Bennett (1986) created a multicultural model focused on the Development of Intercultural Sensitivity, which outlines a six-stage continuum that people may pass through. The first stage is denial whereby one does not have contact with people who are different, and their worldview is unchallenged. Second is defense when one recognizes differences that may challenge their worldview. A typical response may include an assumption of cultural superiority. The next stage is minimization, where an individual overlooks differences and stresses only similarities. Fourth is acceptance, which is comprised of two phases. Initially an individual may acknowledge behavioral differences and then eventually they accept differences in cultural values, which “marks the shift

from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism” (Talbot, 2003, p. 428). The fifth stage is adaptation during which “the individual develops the ability to empathize with a person of a different culture in a particular, immediate situation” and acceptance of difference is relative (p. 429). Finally, there is integration, which “involves the evaluation of events and situations in a cultural context” (p. 429). King and Baxter-Magolda (2005) advance a specific framework for describing the development of intercultural maturity informed by their key question: “how do people come to understand cultural differences in ways that enable them to interact effectively with others from different racial, ethnic, or social identity groups” (p. 571)? The conceptual framework is supposed to support educators in organizing their diversity goals and outcomes for programs. While they claim to measure competence rather than attitudes, which was a limitation of prior models, they do still emphasize an appreciation for diversity as opposed to action toward justice-oriented change. Likewise, while they integrate multiple domains of development (cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal), they still focus, as many student development theories do, on progression through phases over time. This is problematic because individuals likely will not experience the model as distinct sequential phases, but rather as overlapping and fluid. Finally, as of the time of their publication, King and Baxter-Magolda (2005) had not evaluated their model to understand its strengths and limitations in practice.

While these models focus on the individual, Pope (1993) modified existing multicultural organizational development (MCOOD) models for student affairs. The stages of multicultural organizational development in higher education include: monocultural

campus (“devoid of ‘non-dominant group’ traits”), ethnocentric campus (“dominant, white, male, hetero culture, which admits select ‘others’”), accommodating campus (“personnel and policies modified to accommodate diverse populations”), transitional campus (“limited pluralism”), and transformed campus (“multicultural in all aspects”) (as cited in Talbot, 2003, p. 432). This model evolved from and integrates other organizational models, and it assumes the following:

MCOD must occur in the entire institution; addressing only issues of diversity that obviously exist on campus is self-serving and may not represent true multicultural organizational change; inclusion of some areas of diversity, but not others, does not result in true multicultural organizational change; all members of the community have vested interest in and ability to contribute to the multicultural development of the institution; and for an institution to experience MCO, it must also be committed to eliminating all forms of oppression and providing multicultural education to the broader community. (Talbot, 2003, p. 434)

Arminio et al. (2012) also attended to creating inclusive campuses and offer that considering institutional history and context should be key priorities. According to Arminio et al. (2012) some components of institutional culture and context include “institutional mission and culture, geographic location, zeitgeist, institutional type, and structural diversity, and how they may influence multicultural change efforts” (p. 125). These visions for “transformed” or “inclusive” campuses are ideal and many institutions only scratch the surface in attending to priorities that would lead to their realization. However, it is evident that the values of equality and justice guide the student affairs field, and professionals play a crucial role in fostering understanding, positive, supportive, and inclusive campus communities.

None of the above models is meant to be rigid or separate, but rather individuals may experience them with fluidity and simultaneity: “individuals may revisit, retreat, or stagnate as they progress through the stages. Stages or phases may overlap as an individual moves from one to another” (Talbot, 2003, p. 434). The models also share many similarities. For example, “each assumes that the individual or organization has a desire to move toward multiculturalism” (Talbot, 2003, p. 434) as this desire is key to initiating the process. Further, “the models also assume that there is a dominant culture with dominant norms. All emphasize that some level of self-awareness and awareness of others must be achieved and monitored,” and “for each of these models, there is an initial introduction of difference that begins the developmental process” (Talbot, 2003, p. 434). While the organizational model begins to attend to the way that institutions maintain oppression, the individual models focus mostly on understanding difference interpersonally, or what Owen (2009) describes as the diversity of difference as opposed to the difference that differences make.

Attending to this limitation in thinking about diversity simply in terms of difference and not reflecting on issues of power, Goodman (2013) situates multicultural competency within a social justice framework, making more explicit the shift from attending only to difference with goals of understanding and appreciation to interrogating systemic inequities with equity-oriented goals. Given the tendency for most cultural competency initiatives to attend only to the development of interpersonal skills, Goodman (2013) proposes the “Cultural Competence for Social Justice (CCSJ) model, a framework that clearly integrates social justice issues into developing cultural

competency” (para. 3). Goodman’s model addresses Osei-Kofi’s (2011) critique of how “college and university administrators often address injustices that result from oppressive structural arrangements on campuses as interpersonal issues resulting from differences among individuals” (p. 391). Goodman (2013) acknowledges the importance of living and working in diverse environments, but adds an emphasis on enacting a commitment to social justice. For her, a commitment to social justice involves “creating a society (or community, organization, or campus) with an equitable distribution of resources and opportunities” where “people are safe (physically and psychologically), can meet their needs, and can fulfill their potential,” which aligns closely with Bell’s (1997) definition as well (Goodman, 2013, para. 4). The model attends to five specific components: “1) self-awareness, 2) understanding and valuing others, 3) knowledge of societal inequities, 4) skills to interact effectively with diverse people in different contexts, and 5) skills to foster equity and inclusion” (Goodman, 2013, para. 5). Elaborating upon each of these components, she suggests that one can use the framework to support the development of programs, trainings, and initiatives; however, she does not provide specific examples for doing so in this work.

Further highlighting the link between developing cultural competence and working for social change that is central to Goodman (2013), Monje-Paulson (2016) employed social cognitive theory to understand what influences professionals to choose social justice work on campus. For this part of her study, Monje-Paulson (2016) got 446 student affairs professionals to complete the Student Affairs Social Issues Questionnaire, which is a national survey designed for her study. She found that “respondents who rated

themselves as having higher multicultural competence also tended to indicate higher levels of social justice self-efficacy” where the former serves as a precursor to the latter (Monje-Paulson, 2016, p. 103). Combined, multicultural competence and social justice self-efficacy indicate social justice preparedness. Based upon her data, social justice preparedness was a more reliable pathway to predicting social justice actions and choices than institutional support. This suggests that institutions should focus their efforts more on supporting individual development than on being perceived as supportive because “the focus on person-level equity frames could have a powerful impact on student affairs professionals’ engagement in social justice actions given the role multicultural competence plays in the social cognitive model” (Monje-Paulson, 2016, p. 129). Monje-Paulson (2016) hypothesizes institutional support was a less likely pathway toward predicting social justice actions because “the more SA [student affairs] professionals develop a critical consciousness, the more they are likely to be critical of the institution, and may therefore have more experiences that contribute to their perception of the institutional environment as unsupportive” (p. 116). While Monje-Paulson (2016) explores the relationship between institutional context, multicultural competence, and social justice self-efficacy and their influence upon social justice actions empirically, Rouse (2011) previously theorized how academic advisors develop social justice practices.

In her research, Rouse (2011) theorizes the development of social justice practices for academic advisors. Rouse (2011) created the Social Justice Development Model “to facilitate academic advisors through three developmental phases that encourage advisors

to examine the fundamental connections and conflicts between self and society that influence our personal lives/relationships and our interactions within our social world” (p.103). Her developmental phases include critical awareness, transformation, and action. More specifically,

The critical framework for the model posits that a critical awareness of self, critical social constructs, and cross-cultural competencies are fundamental components in developing the knowledge’s that spur a transformation toward critical consciousness (or a personal concern for social action), which in turn through ‘sustained involvement’ (Landreman et al., 2007), may encourage academic advisors to support and promote social justice ideologies through various modes of social action such as advocacy and empowerment (Freire, 1992; Landreman et al., 2007). (Rouse, 2011, p. 104)

Along with Goodman (2013) and Monje-Paulson (2016), Rouse (2011) underscores the importance of multicultural competency to social justice education. Further, she touches upon the necessity of awareness of self and social constructs for teaching social justice. While these scholars offer models that weave together the development of cultural competence and critical consciousness, a number of other scholar-practitioners offer frameworks to guide teaching social justice in student affairs. Themes from these works connect to Rouse’s model by further grounding the importance of components such as reflexivity (self-awareness) and content mastery (of critical social constructs). I examine these frameworks for social justice education in student affairs more thoroughly in the next chapter.

Unsurprisingly given Pope and Reynolds’ (1997) early work focused on defining multicultural competence, and the initial emphasis on equity, diversity, and inclusion in

the professional competencies (ACPA & NASPA, 2010), several professionals and researchers take up outlining recommendations for practice as they relate to student programming or training and research on multicultural issues (Barone, 2014; Howard-Hamilton, 2000; Howard-Hamilton, Richardson, & Shuford, 1998; Gorski, 2006; Poon et al., 2016; Pope, Mueller, and Reynolds, 2009). As a primary strategy for enhancing students' multicultural competence according to the models above, professionals often implement programs focused on diversity topics. These typically align with Owen's (2009) diversity of difference rather than for equity, and they are usually located more towards the assimilation side of Grant and Sleeter's (2007) continuum emphasizing the human relations outlook that they critique.

Student programs and multicultural competence. The earlier works on multicultural competence emphasized programs that focus on cultural sensitivity, bias reduction, and learning about diverse cultures with accompanying competencies informing the development of such programs (Howard-Hamilton, 2000; Howard-Hamilton et al., 1998). Competency was comprised of awareness, understanding, attitudes, and appreciation. While emphasizing the integration of multiculturalism into curriculum and programming efforts, and stressing the need for holistic and comprehensive approaches involving faculty and staff collaboration, the early recommendations did not address systemic and structural issues. While these authors draw attention to the past failures of interventions at addressing institutional problems that underlie multiculturalism, their suggestions do not attend to this aim in any

comprehensive way either (Howard-Hamilton, 2000). More recently, drawing on Gorski (2006), Barone (2014) warns that

The well-intentioned social justice programming in higher education may be reinforcing essentialism through cultural awareness events which function to ‘celebrate’ cultural and racial diversity on campus without any analysis of privilege, power, and oppression (p. 30).

Gorski (2006) names this “regressive multicultural programming” because it is facilitated at the expense of any real institutional reform, without attention to the sociopolitical context, and thereby undercuts a commitment to equity and justice. Such programs focus on “food, festivals, and fetish” rather than structural dynamics. When they do focus on privilege and power, they can take up a deficit-based narrative depending upon how they are facilitated (Barone, 2014). Similarly, Poon et al. (2016) note that “common campus programs focused on diversity, such as culture-based festivals, leadership retreats, and diversity trainings, have the potential to reify stereotypes when lacking a grounding in a critical cultural perspective” (p. 23). Likewise, Gorski (2006) describes how “these programs, including multicultural student clubs, service-learning opportunities, and staff development workshops, when detached from a contextual understanding of equity and justice, tend to recycle biases and inequities” (p. 172). For example, universities invest in multicultural organizations (at best) without addressing campus climates that in part necessitate them in the first place. Student affairs professionals, who program to address multicultural issues, rely on research and student development theories to inform their work and to identify impact.

Research and multicultural issues. Pope et al. (2009) claim that student affairs has assumed a large responsibility for multicultural issues on campuses, but “the literature supporting and guiding these efforts has been, arguably, rather scant” (p. 640). Thus, they explore the trends, scope, and direction on this topic within the research. They attend to research methodologies that are more equitable in nature sharing power between researchers and participants. They note some of the barriers to multicultural scholarship such as having no common language around diversity, limited funding, and questions about the rigor of such research given participatory and inclusive methods (Pope et al., 2009). Pope et al. (2009) also comment on how researchers often only address issues of diversity when the research involves underrepresented populations, yet research in the field has uncovered limitations of traditional student development theories in accounting for multiply marginalized groups. However, research has identified benefits of diversity programs such as increased exposure to ideas, increased interaction leading to openness and understanding, enhanced critical-thinking, and higher satisfaction with campus (Pope et al., 2009, p. 646). In addition, “the multicultural literature has continued to expand with new populations, interventions, theories, methods, and approaches” (Pope et al., 2009, p. 654). Nevertheless, like Howard-Hamilton et al. (1998), Pope and Reynolds (2009) recommend future research assessing the impact of initiatives and trainings, especially with attention to differences between groups.

Watt, Howard-Hamilton, and Fairchild (2004) and Dresen (2013) do offer some empirical research on the impact of trainings for the resident advisor population. Specifically, Watt et al. (2004) assessed multicultural competence among resident

advisors, while Dresen (2013) evaluated the effectiveness of diversity training for them. The Social Response Inventory (SRI), which Watt et al. (2004) had 455 undergraduate student resident advisors take before training, assesses students' perceptions of their own competence related to issues of diversity such as gender, sexual orientation, social class, etc. They chose the campuses in their study because the institutions are well-known for having comprehensive training programs for their student staff. On the inventory, they found significant differences among the demographic variables of political orientation, college, and sex. Females and less conservative students scored higher than their counterparts. There was also an upward trend in scores of students raised in a household with lower income and among continuing-year students. The significant difference between colleges could suggest that these institutions select more multiculturally competent staff, or train them in ways that enhance competence. Watt et al. (2004) offer as implications for their study that residence life departments need a diverse staff and need student staff members who are willing to do the work it takes to become more self-aware. Using an instrument such as the SRI during selection could inform hiring decisions or training content. Further, training on issues of diversity should be ongoing, and it may need to be differentiated by sex and political orientation. Finally, dialogue could be a tool for enhancing the multicultural competence among males or more conservative staff as it exposes students to diverse issues and perspectives. Additionally, training should foster facilitation skills in student leaders, who can then facilitate conversations about diversity issues for their peers. Watt et al. (2004) also suggest that focusing intentionally on diversity training for white students at predominantly white institutions

can lead to a more culturally sensitive environment as they hold the majority of leadership positions even as campuses become more diverse. Whereas Watt et al. administered their inventory before training, Dresen (2013) wanted to assess a residence life staff training itself.

Dresen (2013) explored if a residence life department's training for full-time, graduate, and student staff members enhanced their understanding of diversity and confidence serving as diversity educators. Dresen (2013) issued a 47-item Diversity Educator Perception Survey to evaluate multicultural competence both before and after a diversity training. This survey included items unique to the department's training, but also included modified questions from two other surveys. Although staff members come with varying levels of multicultural competence, there were no significant differences in DEPS mean score within any demographic groups, including staff position, after the diversity training. Dresen (2013) had expected that mean scores would increase in statistically significant ways after the diversity training. However, they did find significant differences within demographic groups for a few individual items. Dresen (2013) also concluded from focus groups that staff members did feel prepared for their role as diversity educators. Many of the recommendations Dresen (2013) offers draw from those in Watt et al. (2004). These include holding training in the fall, incorporating reflection to uncover biases and work on them, training on facilitation, increasing the number of trainings throughout the year, incorporating experiential learning and debriefing, and providing diversity education ideas to student staff who are looking for initiatives to adapt for their community. Many of these recommendations align with

strategies for facilitation that appear in the social justice education literature I discuss later even though this study uses the language of diversity and diversity educator. However, Pope and Reynolds (2009) offer an expanded definition of diversity in the field which influences trainings, programs, and initiatives: “diversity is no longer only about understanding and appreciating differences, breaking down stereotypes, or providing access to a wider range of students, it is also about confronting systems that privilege some groups and challenging the defensive reactions to dismantling those systems” (p. 645). The attention to structural and systemic barriers is an important piece of social justice education, and we see here a point at which student affairs work begins to attend to these.

Summary

In this chapter, I reviewed the theories and models for practice that graduate preparation programs most often draw upon. Through a review of literature that helps to both offer a foundation for my study and address my first research question in this chapter, I explored how and to what extent graduate preparation programs and theories guiding the profession take up justice and equity education because these programs are where professionals initially learn theories, models, and frameworks to inform their practice. Given that the professional competencies only recently shifted from Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to Social Justice and Inclusion, it was imperative to understand the evolution of paradigms such as diversity and multicultural competence that have informed student affairs work. Therefore, I defined multicultural competence and shared models for multicultural and intercultural development that have been central to student

affairs work. More specifically, I investigated how professionals attend to multicultural competence through student programming and research. As we begin to see an expanding definition of diversity to include an attention to systems of privilege, I now turn to social justice education in student affairs practice. There is extensive theoretical literature that could guide the development of social justice-oriented programs and initiatives, which I include in the next chapter. This will provide a foundation for later exploring how the existing programs align with recommendations for social justice curriculum development.

CHAPTER III

SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION AND STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE

Given that the revised professional competencies draw on the conceptualization of social justice education provided by Bell (1997), it is fitting to provide that description here:

We believe that social justice education is both a process and a goal. The goal of social justice education is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. (p. 3)

In order to engage a practice that works towards equity, Bell (1997) posits that “social justice education needs a theory of oppression” as a conceptual basis to ground our thinking about curricular choices, question our practices, and help us to “learn from the past” (p. 4). Oppression “is the structural, systemic, institutionalized, pervasive, and routine mistreatment of individuals on the basis of their membership in various groups who are disadvantaged by the imbalances in social power in society” (Davis & Harrison, 2013, p. 41). Further, Bell (1997) attends to the covert ways that oppression is embedded through internalized dominance and social institutions: “the normalization of oppression in everyday life is achieved when we internalize attitudes and roles that support and reinforce systems of domination without question or challenge” (Bell, 1997, p. 12). She also attends to the active orientation of social justice as a “process and a goal” by

emphasizing lived experiences and critical consciousness as precursors to social action, which also inspired the shift in student affairs competency language. Drawing on Freire (1970), Karunaratne et al. (2016) offer that “critical consciousness describes the process by which individuals’ develop awareness of systems of power resulting from reflection and move towards social justice action” (p. 5). This reflection includes “critical interrogation of the self and where one fits in regimes of oppression and difference” (Arminio et al., 2012, p. 16). According to Zuniga, Naagda, and Sevig (2002), it is through this consciousness raising that individuals come to “recognize, broaden, and challenge individual, cultural, and institutional beliefs and behaviors that perpetuate estranged and oppressive relations between groups” (as cited in Arminio et al., 2012, p. 16). Thus, raising critical consciousness is imperative as a precursor to social justice action.

Naming how Bell (1997) conceives of social justice education is important because this definition grounds the student affairs competencies; however, prior to this work scholars such as Rhoads and Black (1995) were theorizing student affairs practice through a critical cultural perspective rather than just according to student development theories. Further, while Bell’s (1997) work underlies the professional competency of Social Justice and Inclusion, varying frameworks for implementation guide the actual practice of social justice education in the field. In this chapter, I begin by reviewing the frameworks for social justice education that influence student affairs including orientations to work on difference, a systemic and institutional level focus, ally identity development, and intersectionality. Then, I explore aspects of empowering approaches to

social justice facilitation including reflexivity, managing resistance, and employing experiential learning. I explore the frameworks for implementation not only as background content for my study, but also in service to answering my first research question regarding the theoretical models, frameworks, and research that can inform social justice-oriented initiatives. Naming the empowering approaches to social justice facilitation in student affairs provides a point of comparison for the empirical portion of my study where I describe the pedagogical strategies residence life professionals use in the delivery of their programs and trainings.

Frameworks for Social Justice Education Influencing Student Affairs

As models for multicultural competence evolved, we begin to see scholars drawing a connection between these models and social justice work. For example, Cuyjet et al. (2016) offer new cultural frameworks and models for understanding the complexity of identity, Goodman (2013) provides a model of cultural competence for social justice, Monje-Paulson (2016) found a positive correlation between multicultural competence and social justice self-efficacy, and Rouse (2011) conceptualized a Social Justice Development Model in which cross-cultural competency is fundamental for spurring critical consciousness. While many models in student affairs work have stated goals of social change, not all are “embedded within explicit frameworks that work toward upending systemic social oppressions such as racism, ableism, etc.” (Poon et al., 2016, p. 23). However, for scholars who do so, situating their work within a social justice framework is imperative for moving toward active efforts at addressing systemic inequities. These works exemplify how social justice education began with its “roots in

conceptions of diversity and multiculturalism” (Landreman & Macdonald-Dennis, 2013, p. 3) focusing initially on representation, access, support, and integration and evolved toward “raising one’s consciousness about the ways educational systems continued to marginalize the very students institution administrators declared they wanted to admit, welcome, and retain” (Landreman & Macdonald-Dennis, 2013, p. 3). Thus, Landreman and Macdonald-Dennis (2013) contend that “multicultural education began as a radical approach to education toward greater equity and is now seen by social justice educators as an approach that was ineffective at challenging oppression and inequality” (pp. 14-15). They argue, therefore, that social justice education must build upon “the earlier stages of inclusion and multiculturalism” (p. 8) and should focus on “more directly identifying and remedying institutionalized systemic privilege and discrimination in higher education” (p. 3). To that end, even as the language of multiculturalism remains prevalent in the field, a number of professionals and scholars from the mid-nineties to the present have been conceptualizing practice within student affairs using critical frameworks and developing models for teaching social justice in the field. In the following sections, I outline these various models for teaching social justice in the field beginning with Manning’s (2009) overview of the beliefs and assumptions informing and differentiating seven perspectives of work on difference. I then move to frameworks with a systemic and institutional level focus. Lastly, I review models of ally identity development and intersectionality as these show up often in the student affairs literature as ways of conceptualizing social justice education in the field.

Orientations to Work on Difference

Manning (2009) defines different orientations to work on difference that may at times be conflated. Similar to how Howard-Hamilton et al. (1998) and Pope et al. (2009) problematize the conflation of terms and Grant and Sleeter (2007) conceptualize a continuum of multicultural education, Manning (2009) notes

Because of limited discussion of approaches to difference, student affairs professionals, classroom faculty, and others on campus may assume they are talking about the same concept when they are not. This misunderstanding can happen because similar words are often used to express distinctly different concepts. (p. 12)

Similarly, Davis and Harrison (2013) “believe that a lack of common language and a complex social justice conceptual framework undermines accuracy and clarity in the discourse about social justice” (p. 23). To address this limitation, Manning (2009) describes seven perspectives in work on difference to make explicit the beliefs and assumptions guiding each. These include: “political correctness, historical analysis, color (or difference) blindness, diversity, cultural pluralism, anti-oppression, and social justice” (Manning, 2009, p. 11). She takes care to highlight each with examples, contextualize them historically and theoretically, and address positive and negative attributes of each. She discusses a social justice perspective last and differentiates it from anti-oppression describing “the difference between the concepts is that anti-oppression focuses on the cause-assumed superiority of the oppressors-whereas social justice focuses on the outcome-hope, equity, and fairness” (p. 16). Here she highlights that she has described this perspective last because she is concerned that professionals often “claim this position

yet have an incomplete understanding of its full meaning” (p. 17). For Manning (2009), understanding the goals, beliefs, and assumptions underlying a perspective can help educators to better pursue their intended outcomes through purposeful action. It can also foster greater collaboration and understanding between professionals who may be operating from slightly varying perspectives.

Systemic and Institutional Level Focus

As Bell’s (1997) definition of social justice education includes an institutional level focus, so too do many of the subsequent pieces drawing on her work. For example, one of Hackman’s (2005) five components of social justice education is “tools for content mastery,” which include “factual information, historical contextualization, and macro-to-micro content analysis” (p. 104). She also asserts the importance of examining how power and oppression operate with specific attention to systemic and institutional inequities. Similarly, Mayhew and DeLuca Fernández (2007) explored how educational practices, including the classroom environment that educators create, influence social justice learning. Seeking to understand the relationship between class content, pedagogical practices, and student outcomes, they surveyed 423 students in five courses by administering The Measure of Classroom Moral Practices to “assess student attitudes toward and perceptions of educational practices most conducive to facilitating the development of moral reasoning and social justice learning in a classroom context” (Mayhew & DeLuca Fernández, 2007, p. 65). Mayhew and DeLuca Fernández (2007) found that student learning was best facilitated when social justice educational content focused on systemic oppression and the institutions that maintain it. Students more often

reported achieving outcomes when the course employed sociologic approaches for analyzing oppression and how individuals perpetuate it. Additionally, student learning was best facilitated by the use of reflection and dialogue, which are both discussed further in a subsequent section. Osei-Kofi (2011) and Zylstra (2011) also emphasize the importance of focusing on the structural and systemic maintenance of oppression. Osei-Kofi (2011) specifically highlights that “doing social justice work calls for a critical understanding of issues of injustice relationally, historically, and contextually” (p. 392). A contextualized focus at the systemic level is imperative for efforts that lead to long-term, sustainable, and impactful change.

Adding to systemic understandings of injustice, Sensoy and DiAngelo (2012) explore in depth the role of socialization as it relates to cultural norms, prejudice, discrimination, oppression, and power. To exemplify the invisibility of oppression and to elaborate on how institutions perpetuate oppression, the authors provide examples of sexism, racism, and white supremacy. Davis and Harrison (2013) offer “definitions, meanings, and central concepts that illuminate how people become plugged into the matrix of hegemony and learn fundamental assumptions that make seeing the need for social justice obscure” (p. 23). Specifically, they explore how “acculturation to certain norms and the nature of privilege coalesce to not only blind many to the systems of oppression, but also build resistance to concepts, discussions, and lived experiences that reflect such influences” (Davis & Harrison, 2013, p. 24). Within student affairs, Watt (2007) describes how a social justice praxis “requires that individuals challenge dominant ideology and advocate change in institutional policies and practices” (p. 115). Here, we

see the student affairs literature drawing on critical social justice education (Bell, 1997; Hackman, 2005) to provide guidance for student affairs professionals engaged in this work. However, a focus on structural oppression is limited if it is not complemented by action to influence equity outcomes. Therefore, Monje-Paulson (2016) notes

Although social justice is a priority at both the professional and institutional level, the lack of action-oriented and structural-level change may temper the extent to which these messages provide roadmaps for achieving social justice in higher education. (p. 93)

This understanding is foundational to working towards more equitable outcomes.

Ally Identity Development

Another way social justice education is conceptualized in student affairs literature specifically is through ally identity development (Broido, 2000; Edwards, 2006; Reason & Broido, 2005; Reason & Davis, 2005). Researchers writing in this area define ally, identify underlying motivations for allyship, and outline components or attributes of effective and sustainable ally work derived from both empirical and theoretical studies. According to Reason and Broido (2005), these components include inspiring and educating the dominant group, creating institutional and cultural change, and supporting target group members (p. 81). Definitions of ally primarily center those with privileged identities; allies “are members of dominant social groups (e.g. men, Whites, heterosexuals) who are working to end the system of oppression that gives them greater privilege and power based on their social-group membership” (Broido, 2000, p. 3). However, troubling the way this definition prioritizes those with primarily dominant

identities working for rather than with groups, recognizing the agency of minoritized populations, and accounting for intersecting identities, Jenkins (2009) offers additional categorizations. She categorizes people who give voices to a cause affecting groups they may or may not be a part of as advocates. Those who are action-oriented and work to change the system, but may or may not identify with the affected group, are agents. She creates these additional categories noting that “real, substantive change has always come from within oppressed and underrepresented communities” (p. 29). Aware that most of the literature on allies focuses on those with dominant identities working to support marginalized populations, Reason and Broido (2005) offer this reminder:

Allies must find a precarious balance between knowing when to take a seat at the table of social justice advocacy, joining those who are oppressed at combating oppression; when to speak up; when to be silent in order to listen to the experiences of others; and when to leave the table altogether so as not to infringe on or usurp the role of target group members in advocating for their own liberation. (p. 88)

Defining and troubling the notion of ally provokes important considerations among social justice educators. Specifically, through their curriculums, educators must create the space for students to develop the critical tools to evaluate how to use their agency in ways that do not reproduce inequity. Attending to what motivates students in their efforts to be an ally can be a key factor in cultivating more discerning behaviors among them.

In her phenomenological investigation of how six white, heterosexual students understood their development as allies, Broido (2000) found three major components that lead to their ally work: increased information on social justice issues, engagement in

meaning-making processes, and self-confidence (p. 6). Drawing on Broido's (2000) Ally Development Model along with two other relevant frameworks, Edwards (2006) offers a conceptual model that identifies different types of allies based upon their motivations for engaging in the work. For him, "Aspiring Allies for Self-interest are primarily motivated to protect those they care about from being hurt," (p. 46) yet "as an awareness of privilege begins to develop, seeking to engage in ally behavior as a means of dealing with the guilt becomes a primary underlying, often unconscious, motivator for Aspiring Allies for Altruism" (p. 49). Finally, he describes Aspiring Allies for Social Justice as people who "work with those from oppressed groups in collaboration and partnerships to end the system of oppression" (p. 51). Given the limitations and power dynamics inherent in defining allies as those members of dominant groups who work for minoritized populations, this conceptualization represents collaborative and systemic aspects of the ally role. However, I could not find any empirical studies drawing on Edwards (2006) or Broido's (2000) models to explore students' ally identity development. However, Karunaratne et al. (2016) investigated the motivations for social justice advocacy among student affairs professionals. They found motivations include privilege (having it or lack thereof), involvement and exposure to social justice concepts, a desire for change, and values. It is important for educators to understand what motivates allies in their work in order to foster behaviors that contribute to outcomes that are more equitable. Given the emphasis on ally identity development in student affairs, it seems that professionals in the field view social justice education as a means for fostering ally behaviors, which is an important outcome for programs and trainings focused on social justice.

Intersectionality

Engaging in self-awareness requires one to interrogate their intersecting identities and their identities in relation to those of other people. Doing so allows for a deeper understanding not only of difference itself, but also of how difference is constructed, in order to disrupt the status quo. According to Karunartne et al. (2016), “training students to do social justice work begins with providing opportunities to learn about their identities and the power dynamics associated with those identities” (p. 11). Embracing intersectionality means attending to the fluid and contextual nature of identities “understanding that an individual’s various identities mutually shape one another” (Arminio et al., 2012, p. 13). Given how understanding intersectionality requires prioritizing self-awareness, student affairs professionals often draw upon the framework in developing their initial and foundational trainings and programs for students.

Often student affairs professionals organize social justice-oriented initiatives around the concept of intersectionality of identity. For example, Claros, Garcia, Johnston-Guerrero, and Mata (2017) observed, “existing approaches to understanding inequality tended to focus solely on singular forms of oppression” (Claros et al., 2017, p. 46) and therefore drew on core aspects of intersectionality when planning and implementing a dialogue project for residential students. These dialogues took place with cohort members weekly for two hours over the course of three weeks. Ultimately, their goal in framing the program around intersectionality was to equip the participants to make residential spaces “more inclusive for all students by being able to identify and challenge systems of oppression that may prevent all students from fully participating in campus life” (Claros

et al., 2017, p. 48). Since it has become part of common vernacular, intersectionality is regularly drawn upon in student affairs work, yet professionals often do not have foundational understanding about the origins nor complexity of the theory.

Although conceptually, intersectionality predates Crenshaw's (1989) work, it is in this piece that she names and further develops it as a theoretical framework. Classifying her work as a "Black feminist criticism because it sets forth a problematic consequence of the tendency to treat race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis" (p. 139), Crenshaw (1989) centers the multidimensional experiences of Black women in her work. However, she does not call simply for inclusion in existing structures. Rather, she offers intersectionality as a framework to explore the experiences of "those who are multiply-burdened [in ways] that cannot be understood as resulting from discrete sources of discrimination" (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 140). She approaches this problem by investigating examples from the courts that illustrate the ways existing frameworks do not attend to the complexity of Black women's identities and therefore exclude them.

Unfortunately, "sex and race discrimination have come to be defined in terms of experiences of those who are privileged but for their racial or sexual characteristics" (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 151). The effect of this essentializing framework is that the narratives of white women and Black men take precedence over those of Black women, and intersectionality is ignored in both theory and praxis (Crenshaw, 1991). Yet, a focus on the experiences of those who are most disadvantaged would, according to Crenshaw (1989), also benefit those with only a single marginalized identity. In student affairs, it is

rare that the origins of the theory of intersectionality, as an analytic for the experiences of Black women, are addressed. Likewise, intersectionality is often used to facilitate self-awareness without regard to whether students are multiply marginalized.

Drawing on Crenshaw's works, Jennifer Nash (2008) suggests that the notion of intersectionality is too ambiguous. She interrogates whether intersectionality is an "anti-exclusion tool" whereby only multiply marginalized people have intersectional identities or a "general theory of identity" which suggests all identities are intersectional (p. 10). While programs framed by intersectionality may rightly begin with raising self-awareness, not all of them extend to interrogating broader concepts such as privilege, oppression, and socialization or the systems and structures that influence identity in complex ways. Nash (2010) suggests there is a "need to understand the interaction between structure and identity, and to capture how structures of domination mediate and enable identity formation" (p. 3). Thus, she advocates viewing intersectionality as just one framework from which to examine identity.

Further, Nash (2016) claims "rather than treating categories as Crenshaw proposed, as intimately entangled and unknowable apart from each other, intersectionality as practiced has treated race, gender, class, and sexuality as separate and distinct 'components' that simply coincide to mark subjects' experiences" (p. 57). Instead, she explains that "the call of intersectionality is to re-think the categories themselves, and to consider how our categories, our modes of analysis, might look and feel different if our starting point was the experiences and material realities of women of color" (Falcón & Nash, 2015, p. 5). While Nash (2016) prioritizes centering the

experiences of women of color, the concept of “more” (p. 46) decenters them because it “is often paired with the idea that intersectionality can be practiced without black women” even though as an analytic it emerged to understand legal harms against them (p. 53). She calls for an attention to more intersections only when trying to understand how “multiply marginalized subjects come to negotiate their privileged and subordinated identities” (Nash, 2011, p. 461). The concept of “more;” which calls for “more intersectionality, an attention to more intersections, and pleas for more disciplines adopting intersectionality” (Nash, 2016, p. 46) is linked to intersectionality as a “general theory of identity” (Nash, 2008, p.10). Although there are some benefits to intersectionality’s movement across disciplines, “the price of institutionalization is that [intersectionality] comes to be conflated with diversity and difference” (Falcón & Nash, 2015, p. 6). This is a common occurrence in student affairs social justice-oriented trainings and programs.

Nash’s critiques raise numerous questions about whether student affairs professionals’ use of intersectionality in curriculum suggests that everyone has an intersectional identity. If so, what might be beneficial or problematic about this? Sensoy and DiAngelo (2012) define intersectionality as “the term scholars use to acknowledge the reality that we simultaneously occupy both oppressed and privileged positions and that these positions intersect in complex ways,” which frames intersectionality as a more general framework (p. 115). Jennifer Nash would likely critique the ways student affairs professionals use intersectionality to frame trainings and programs given that a more general approach de-centers multiply marginalized subjects and analyzes identity

categories discretely even while attempting to attend to how they converge and entangle. Likewise, intersectionality sometimes serves as a framework for programs and trainings regardless of the students participating, which thus perpetuates the idea that it exists without Black women.

Each of these frameworks for social justice education influencing student affairs is unique in its orientation to the work and emphasizes particular priorities. However, Davis and Harrison (2013) suggest

Social justice practice that focuses only on the individual transcendence of prejudice and stereotypes is not enough. Critical capacities to interrogate institutional-level oppression- including how knowledge is constructed and maintained through forces of hegemony and power-are necessary, but not sufficient. The former fails to acknowledge systemic domination, while the latter leaves individual agency out of the discourse. (Davis & Harrison, 2013, p. 174)

Effective social justice education requires incorporating intellectual, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and institutional level meaning-making. A number of facilitation strategies enable educators to attend to varying levels and foster empowering and democratic educative spaces. These are important to my specific study because when social justice-oriented trainings and programs are not implemented and facilitated intentionally, they can exacerbate the harms they seek to address.

Empowering Social Justice Education Facilitation

In addition to providing theoretical frameworks and models for engaging social justice education in student affairs, a significant portion of the literature specifically addresses social justice education facilitation, including strategies, activities, and content.

Osei-Kofi (2011) advises that “in our 24/7 society, it is important to guard against leaping from a concern for social justice to action without forethought” (p. 388). Rather than simply attending conferences and transferring activities and initiatives from one campus to another, Landreman et al. (2008) note the importance of attending to the complexities of learning and transformation: “educators who aspire to teach social justice have an obligation to be aware of how well-intentioned work may actually do harm if good intentions are assumed to be all it takes to be effective” (pp. 2-3). To this end, they offer a framework for social justice educators comprised of four competencies including “knowing ourselves, knowing learners, designing outcomes-based activities, and co-creating facilitation” (Landreman et al., 2008, p. 3). In order to design transformative learning experiences, educators can incorporate “cognitive, affective, interpersonal, and intrapersonal domains” and facilitate “making meaning of major life events and changes through a combination of critical reflection and cognitive processes” (Landreman et al., 2008, p. 3). Incorporating multiple domains and engaging students in critical self-reflection requires an adeptness in facilitation skills and strategies.

According to Landreman and MacDonald-Dennis (2013), the critical skills for social justice facilitation include “skills in managing group dynamics, communication and empathy, an awareness of oneself and historical and contemporary social justice issues, and knowing how to apply this knowledge to optimize learning for participants” (p. 15). Additionally, it is imperative for facilitators to understand the complexity of identity, effectively navigate triggers, incorporate multipartiality (leveling power in interactions), and intentionally design and implement privilege awareness programs

(Landreman & MacDonald-Dennis, 2013). Intentionally designing such programs should involve grounding “activities within a theoretical or conceptual lens,” and designing them “with clear learning objectives that are linked to the chosen framework” (Lechuga et al., 2009, p. 241). Ideally, facilitators would employ assessment to evaluate whether outcomes were met via the initiative. Additionally, thoughtful design involves attending to “students’ level of experience with social justice issues” and includes student input (Lechuga et al., 2009, p. 241). Thus, assignments need to “support and challenge all students’ learning, whether they were initially more or less familiar” with the topics (McCann, 2018, p. 15). Finally, intentional program or curriculum designed to address social justice concepts must “break the mold away from the traditional educational praxis” (as cited in McCann, 2018, p. 9), and employ innovative strategies and activities. As opposed to traditional papers or journaling, educators can employ “personal story, media, [and] photo stories” (McCann, 2018, p. 3, 15) as tools for teaching social justice concepts.

The aforementioned critical skills parallel the four competencies from Landreman et al. (2008) and relate to Hackman’s (2005) five essential components for social justice education: “content mastery, tools for critical analysis, tools for social change, tools for personal reflection, [and] an awareness of multicultural group dynamics” (p. 104). Since Bell (1997) defines social justice education as a process and a goal, Hackman (2005) describes the “processes to include democracy, a student-centered focus, dialogue, and an analysis of power” (p. 104). Active engagement by students and trust-building with educators are imperative to these empowering educational environments. Although

educators try to level power and collaborate with students in social justice education, it is also important that they acknowledge true equality and democracy are not entirely possible in the classroom space. For example, educators often have power through their responsibility for assigning grades. Recognizing power dynamics is also important in student affairs, particularly as facilitators might have positional power within an organizational structure and through decision-making. At social justice programs and trainings, they do hold some power as facilitators and leaders.

According to Davis and Harrison (2013), some strategies for effective facilitation, challenge, and support include “immediacy; appropriate self-disclosure; moving past ‘getting it’ to ‘being in it;’ connection, trust, and vulnerability” (pp. 118-124). Immediacy involves staying in the moment and “allows people to respond to the unique nuances of what is happening in a specific moment” rather than reacting (Davis & Harrison, 2013, p. 119). This allows for difficult situations to be addressed while still fostering a continued dialogue. Self-disclosure enables immediacy because it puts the facilitator in the learning process and allows them to model authentic engagement for students. In the third strategy “moving past ‘getting it’ to ‘being in it,’” the “it” refers to what the facilitator believes to be true. It is not the facilitator’s role to convince students of anything, but rather to help them develop tools for navigating issues themselves. “Being in it” typically involves conflict, which “plays a central role in the social justice classroom” because “conflict avoidance serves the status quo by framing those who challenge it as argumentative or rude” (Davis & Harrison, 2013, p. 122). Effective facilitators teach students how to negotiate conflict, so that they can hear each other’s stories rather than being positioned

in opposition on an issue. Finally, effective facilitators help students connect to the issues, trust in their capacity, and let themselves “be seen by students so that they might let themselves be seen by us” (Davis & Harrison, 2013, p. 125). These strategies enable facilitators to produce classroom environments that model a vision for social justice in society. The strategies can be employed when facilitating curriculum grounded in self-awareness and content knowledge in order to effectively navigate group dynamics and incorporate dialogic and collaborative approaches. More specifically, in the student affairs literature there is an emphasis on reflexivity (self-awareness and awareness of learners), managing resistance, and experiential learning.

Reflexivity

In describing “tools for personal reflection,” Hackman (2005) calls for educators to engage in ongoing self-reflexive practice; analyzing their motivations, practices, and experiences as they grow, change, and evolve in their social justice education. Knowing ourselves also refers to understanding the influence of our social, historical, and political experiences on our perspectives. Osei-Kofi (2011) notes that “a deep level understanding of how we are located within our social structure, and how this informs not only why we do social justice work but also the types of social justice work we do, is critical to advancing social change” (p. 388). When designing learning opportunities for students, educators must interrogate the influence of their own positionality on their motivations for the work and on the choices they make about content and facilitation. Self-knowledge and knowledge of/experiences with others are also important elements for engaging in difficult dialogues as an avenue for creating inclusive campuses (Arminio et al., 2012).

They describe that “only after educators are honest and knowledgeable about their own cultures, beliefs, values, privileges, and biases can they begin to interact with others authentically in their daily contexts” (Arminio et al., 2012, p. 3). Further, in the ally-identity development frameworks, Reason and Broido (2005) emphasize the importance of self-understanding about the role power, privilege, and oppression have in one’s life as foundational for sustainable ally behavior and a precursor for social justice education.

Thoughtful reflection on self and participants is also imperative for any effective facilitator in order to mitigate power dynamics inherent in the situation and reduce the likelihood of “doing harm and perpetrating oppression” (Landreman et al., 2008, p. 9). Social justice educators who lack an understanding of how they are implicated in larger systems may reproduce oppression through their practices:

When we see our own commitment to social justice work as the result of coming to know the Other without implicating ourselves in what we come to know, we position the Other as what is to be known in the service of our transformation while erasing any acknowledgement of the social conditions that structure relationships between dominant and oppressed groups. (Osei-Kofi, 2011, p. 389)

Engaging in ongoing self-reflexive practice supports social justice educators in facilitating empowering learning experiences for students that help them develop the tools for action needed to foster justice. Further, an “awareness of multicultural group dynamics” is critical for effective practice because it influences pedagogical choices in attending to the other components of social justice education. For example, “the form and type of content that the teacher presents, the attention to how these different class compositions affect dialogue and facilitation, and the amount of time spent on content

versus process” may vary across differently composed classrooms (Hackman, 2005, p.108). Attending to student positionalities is a priority in a student-centered classroom in order to ensure that the educational experience does “not reproduce disempowering societal dynamics” (Hackman, 2005, p. 108) such as multiply marginalized students doing the labor of educating those with primarily privileged identities. According to Kelly and Gayles (2010), such dynamics can lead to resistance among students of color during dialogues or other experiences (as cited in McCann, 2018, p.3). Self-reflection can also be used as a practice for freedom when multiply marginalized students analyze the influence of internalized oppression on their lives. Developing skills for critical analysis makes this possible.

Mayhew and DeLuca Fernández (2007) suggest that student learning is best facilitated when social justice education also equips them to recognize how they may reify oppression or employ tools to disrupt it. They found that “students who reflected on material, examined the material from different perspectives, and applied this knowledge to analyzing societal problems consistently gained a better understanding of themselves and issues related to diversity, regardless of course content” (Mayhew & DeLuca Fernández, 2007, p. 75). This finding demonstrates the importance of opportunities for reflection and dialogue that foster critical thinking. According to Hackman (2005), critical thinking is “the process by which we consider perspective, positionality, power, and possibilities with respect to content” (p. 106). Hackman (2005) highlights, critical analysis is an essential component of social justice education because these skills enable students to contextualize information in relation to power, more deeply understand and

expose how power and oppression operate, and develop plans for action. Sensoy and DiAngelo (2012) begin their work on key concepts in social justice education with a discussion of critical thinking: “to think with complexity; to go below the surface when considering an issue and explore its multiple dimensions and nuances” (p. 1). Because knowledge is socially constructed, it is “reflective of the values and interests of those who produce it” (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012, p.7). Therefore, like Hackman (2005), they assert that the value of gaining new information is lost if one does not critically interrogate how such knowledge was produced, the meaning of such information, and who benefits from particular claims.

Sears and Tu (2017) explored how a living and learning community’s curriculum influenced students’ development of critical consciousness and commitment to social justice. Critical consciousness includes two elements: critical reflection, which refers to an understanding of privilege, power, and oppression at the societal level, and critical action which refers to their perceived ability to be agents of change. The community had four primary components including community building, two sociology courses, service-learning, and a travel experience. Sears and Tu (2017) conducted qualitative content analysis on one hundred twenty-nine reflection papers to understand how students developed critical consciousness throughout the sociology courses. Students found the residential community to be a place to receive support, be challenged, and teach each other. They reflected on their own identities in relation to the identities of others, which facilitated structural analyses of oppression and a desire for social change. Sears and Tu (2017) found “students expressed an increased understanding of the root causes of

oppression and their place within the matrix of privilege, an increased belief that they could be effective change agents, and they reported a deepening of their critical consciousness” as a result of participating in the community (p. 55).

Sears and Tu (2017) offer a number of promising practices for enhancing social justice education, including aligning curriculum with institutional goals around social justice, diversity, and inclusion to justify resources; making sure course requirements count toward graduation; considering cross-departmental partnerships for supporting such programs, and targeting second-year students (or older) for participation once they have taken courses to develop critical thinking and are no longer transitioning to college. Regarding social justice curriculum, Sears and Tu (2017) recommend having a “multi-pronged pedagogy” that allows access for students with varying awareness levels. For example, in this learning community, the service-learning and travel components were lower risk as they encouraged reflection on “external” issues. Higher risk components like deep reflection, projects, and dialogue required internalizing social justice concepts and making meaning. They also recommend sequencing the curricular and co-curricular components to allow significant self-reflection opportunities. The residents developed trust early on through community meetings and retreats that were then tested in the spring through their work on projects. In their classes, they developed analytical tools in the fall that they could further develop through their winter travel opportunity and apply to spring community projects. Teachers could use student reflections and self-assessments to adjust the curriculum as warranted for the best outcomes.

In addition to adjusting the curriculum as needed, it is important that facilitators incorporate innovative strategies for reflection. For example, McCann (2018) investigated “how, if at all, an educator’s approach to the multicultural curriculum impacted changes in students’ understanding of privilege, oppression, and social justice over time,” and used a photo project as a tool for analysis (p. 2). In part one of the project, students took a few photos related to core course concepts of privilege, oppression, and social justice in their daily lives and wrote a short caption for each photo before engaging with any course material. Part two occurred at the end of the semester when students revisited their initial photos, “replaced or reinterpreted the original photographs to reflect new or nuanced interpretations of the concepts that might have emerged,” and wrote a five-page analysis of their learning in relation to the core concepts (McCann, 2018, p.7). The instructors found that this activity challenged and supported students’ learning about core social justice concepts, personalized students’ understanding of the concepts, and helped them connect theory to practice (McCann, 2018, p. 15). Further, personalizing the concepts through the photo project “provided a common point of departure for ongoing dialogue” regardless of each student’s level of understanding around them. Rather than distancing themselves from understanding social justice concepts, the project encouraged a personalized understanding and was therefore a tool for managing resistance. The photo project serves as just one pedagogical approach to facilitate students’ self-reflexive practice around social justice concepts and reduce instances of resistance. However, even when instructors employ strategies to social justice education that are democratic and student-centered, students with primarily

dominant identities may still experience discomfort as learning occurs. To guide students working through their discomfort and towards critical consciousness, while simultaneously supporting multiply marginalized students within the group, facilitators must have the skills to manage resistance effectively.

Managing Resistance

Facilitators of social justice education programs and workshops must not only understand learners and be aware of multicultural group dynamics in order to manage these dynamics and foster democratic spaces that are empowering, but they must also be adept at managing resistance (Landreman & MacDonald Dennis, 2013; Hackman, 2005; Broido, 2000). A number of research studies in student affairs (Chizhik & Chizhik, 2002; Watt, 2007; Obear & martinez, 2013; Cook & McCoy, 2017; Davis & Harrison, 2013) investigate resistance and offer strategies for facilitators to effectively respond to it.

In their exploration of students' conceptions of privilege and oppression, Chizhik and Chizhik (2002) had 65 predominantly white and middle-class students at three institutions (community college, state university, and research university in varying settings) complete a questionnaire. Chizhik and Chizhik (2002) investigated whether students "subscribed to the compensatory relationship between privilege and oppression, that is, whether the privileges that one person has contributes to the oppression of others within society" (p. 804). They found that no participants subscribed to this view of the relationship between privilege and oppression. Rather than causal explanations, the researchers found themes in students' descriptions of privilege and oppression. For example, those who blame the oppressed for their circumstances may be challenged in

courses examining systems, so the researchers recommend "developmentally aligning the course content with the preconceived notions of the students to minimize resistance to multicultural discourse" (Chizhik & Chizhik, 2002, p. 800). This aligns well with Landreman et al. (2008) and Hackman (2005) calls to know learners in developing social justice education content and experiences.

Watt (2007) draws on longitudinal research examining participant responses to difficult dialogues to offer the Privileged Identity Exploration Model grounded in psychodynamic theory. The research included over 200 narratives and reaction papers from 74 helping professionals at various points during a course on multiculturalism. A difficult dialogue

Is a verbal or written exchange of ideas or opinions between citizens within a community that centers on an awakening of potentially conflicting views and beliefs or values about social justice issues (such as racism, sexism, ableism, heterosexism/homophobia). (Watt, 2007, p. 116)

According to Watt (2007), "the eight behaviors identified in the model are primal responses one has to cognitive dissonance introduced by new awareness (dissonance provoking stimuli) about self or the other" (p. 118). The model is intended to help facilitators both recognize and respond to resistance that arises when engaging students in dialogue about their privileged identities in order to raise critical consciousness. While Watt (2007) does a good job situating herself as a woman of color facilitator and acknowledging the resistance this may provoke, she offers little by way of specific strategies for navigating resistance once a facilitator recognizes any of the defenses she

thoroughly outlines. She does highlight that the model serves as a reminder that defenses are normal and raising critical consciousness is tiring. Further, she does not address how to mitigate the effect such defenses might have on multiply marginalized students who are participating in the dialogues too.

Obear and martinez (2013) offer race caucuses as a structural approach to mitigating the effects defensive responses during difficult dialogues may have on multiply marginalized students or professionals. Such caucuses allow an initial exploration of privilege and oppression in spaces with people who share one's racial identity. Race caucuses are intended to raise consciousness about internalized dominance and internalized oppression, enhance dialogue, and facilitate work towards more equitable campuses. The white race caucus Obear and martinez (2013) describe focused on participants' feelings and white guilt. Little attention was given to how a facilitator could work with them to strategize about how to disrupt racism. Rather, during the caucus it seems many of the participants admitted times they had reacted based on racist attitudes or benefited from privilege, but attended more to their own relief and connectedness (because they were in safe company) than to next steps. The facilitators do highlight several lessons learned that connect to the recommendations for practice found in other social justice education frameworks. For example, they recommend making sure participants have a common foundation of training and awareness about privileged and minoritized group statuses, developing a shared understanding around concepts and terms, and engaging in follow up professional development opportunities. These recommendations for practice during staff development translate well to strengthening

opportunities for student learning. Yet often time constraints limit the ability to implement these recommendations effectively as found in a study of resident advisor training by Cook and McCoy (2017).

Cook and McCoy (2017) completed a critical qualitative study at a single site where they interviewed ten resident advisors (RAs). These ten students participated in twelve hours of diversity and social justice training over a two-week summer program. The twelve hours was broken down into three, four-hour sessions. These included foundational language and concepts such as privilege through two sessions on identities and one on racial identity development and racism. The latter used racial affinity groups as a strategy for exploring positive white identity, connecting with other white students about white culture, practicing interrupting oppression, and learning at the expense of other white people and not people of color. These affinity groups were similar to the race caucuses Obear and martinez (2013) employ. The researchers wanted to explore the beliefs these white RAs have about racism on campus and whether the training affects their attitudes about creating socially just living communities. Their findings fell into three thematic areas: students felt exposed, they felt angst over what they considered incongruent messages between the training and what they learned growing up, and they regularly mentioned the department's agenda. Students described four key messages from the training that conflicted with others they believed to be true: segregation is necessary, white people need to learn from other white people, being colorblind is bad, and racism continues to exist. These were counter to past learning that diversity efforts were to unify people, white people need to learn about diversity from people of color, it is safer to

ignore differences, and things are better for people of color. Students found incongruence between their beliefs and training messages, and “their White privilege allowed them to completely ‘miss the point’ of the training curriculum while believing they received everything out of it and more” (Cook & McCoy, 2017, p.76). Researchers found that the students were unable to recognize how they perpetuate racism and hold tightly to colorblind ideology. Cook and McCoy (2017) suggest that the training was detached from personal experience and connection to the resident advisor role. The training did not allow appropriate time for participants to process as they became more aware, thus they retreated in their dissonance and colorblind ideology. Cook and McCoy (2017) assert that “residential life programs must be explicit in how diversity and social justice training connects and applies to the RA role and to White RAs racial identity development,” (p.77) and “more time should be allotted for the participants to fully engage and make connections between the training content and format, and the training goals, such as a semester-long course to fully explore diversity and social justice issues within a societal context” (p.77). In sum, a two-week training is not sufficient for White students to unpack and unlearn the messages they have received over a lifetime.

While race caucuses and affinity groups are overall approaches to training, there are a number of specific responses and strategies that facilitators can draw upon during trainings to address resistance. Kegan (1992, 1994) describes a model of “learner positions and corresponding facilitative environments” (as cited in Davis & Harrison, 2013, p. 187). These include meeting the psychological position of defending with confirmation, of surrendering with contradiction, and of reintegration with continuity.

Defending involves protecting one's worldview and what they have learned. Facilitators can confirm that new information can make one feel confused or even angry in order to lessen defenses. Some strategies for doing so include “establish[ing] and model[ing] ground rules of respectful listening; identify[ing] misinformation, stereotypes, and assumptions; affirm[ing] it's okay to be uninformed and confused; and use[ing] low-risk self-disclosure activities early to establish norm of interaction, reflection, disclosure” (as cited in Davis & Harrison, 2013, p. 189). Facilitators may find that displaying empathy is a valuable strategy “when working with students who demonstrate need for additional social justice development” (Lechuga et al., 2009, p. 242). As students feel understood, they may be more likely to surrender “passively received dogmas and knowledge to begin a liberating exploration toward constructing self-authorship” (as cited in Davis & Harrison, 2013, p. 189). In response, facilitators can offer alternative perspectives and help students recognize how knowledge is constructed through contradiction.

Strategies for helping students recognize how knowledge is constructed through contradiction include “validat[ing] personal risk taking; encourage[ing] full discussion with multiple perspectives; and allow[ing] contradictions to emerge and resist[ing] temptation to smother” (as cited in Davis & Harrison, 2013, p. 189). Finally, reintegration occurs when students reinterpret their past understandings through new learning to form a new foundation. The facilitative response of continuity “helps[s] confirm new learning, facilitate constructing action plans that reflect new ideas, [and] explore how to behave in old contexts with new perspectives” (as cited in Davis & Harrison, 2013, p. 189).

Learning strategies include identifying action options and ways to find support for such

action. These learning interventions move from lower to higher risk and from the personal to the institutional. Further the learning strategies facilitate development by creating spaces for students to be vulnerable and supporting students as they experience dissonance. Such approaches recognize that learning is not solely a cognitive process, but rather it is embodied and affective too.

Finally, as another strategy for managing resistance, Davis and Harrison (2013) suggest “the intellectual realm is both an appropriate and effective starting point in an academic environment, understanding that the distinction between the cognitive and affective is largely artificial” (p. 108). Starting in the intellectual realm indicates to students that there is a knowledge base in social justice that can inform their thinking. Doing so may feel more comfortable or “normal” for students at first, and “focusing on the academic aspects of social justice can have a democratizing effect, providing a common language in which to ground divergent experiences” (Davis & Harrison, 2013, p. 110). Although honoring experiences and feelings is valuable, “students too often mistake the idea of subjective realities with the notion that social justice education is all a matter of opinion” (Davis & Harrison, 2013, p. 115), which is reinforced by what Gorski (2006) describes “universal validation,” thus it is important to emphasize the existing knowledge base that grounds this work. However, according to Watt (2007), it is important for students to connect social justice concepts to their lives to avoid “over intellectualizing the concepts, which can be common defense mechanism among students with dominant identities” (as cited in McCann, 2018, p. 15). While resistance may need to be managed when it presents in ways that uphold the status quo, it can be affirmed

when it serves as a tool for marginalized populations to push against “isms” such as sexism and racism. Educators can create spaces for such resistance through welcoming counternarratives. Along with providing the knowledge base in social justice education, encouraging counternarratives can support richer, more vulnerable, embodied, and engaged experiences as the community develops over time.

Experiential Learning

Lechuga et al. (2009) note that students need an awareness of basic concepts in social justice education, such as power, privilege, and oppression, in order to work for systemic change. Lechuga et al. (2009) draw upon experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) and other research on learning to contend that experiential learning, including the key components of knowledge, activity, and reflection, is an impactful approach for raising awareness about these basic concepts. Thus, they offer strategies for successfully designing and implementing experiences that support social justice awareness and action. Similar to Goodman (2013), Hackman (2005), and Landreman and MacDonald-Dennis (2013) they suggest “that before student affairs professionals and students create, facilitate, or participate in learning activities that promote social justice, they should possess a basic understanding of how power and privilege maintain existing social systems that inhibit progress towards equity” (Lechuga et al., 2009, p. 232). Lechuga et al. (2009) describe encountered situations as a type of experiential learning that can facilitate student’s understanding of social justice concepts. They offer privilege immersion experiences and role-playing as two types of encountered situations that educators can employ in their work with students.

Privilege immersion experiences and role-playing. Lechuga et al. (2009)

describe the value of encountered situations such as privilege immersion experiences and role-playing for students to learn about fundamental social justice concepts and evaluate their role in disrupting or maintaining the status quo. Lechuga et al. (2009) describe the work of Bohmer and Briggs (1991), who used role-playing as a learning tool to address the difficulty their students were having understanding privilege in an introductory sociology course. They used interactive lectures, dialogue, and role-playing through perspective-taking to facilitate learning, which according to Lechuga et al. (2009) “allow[ed] students to realize that their interpretation of events could be vastly different if they were members of a different population” (pp. 234-235). Further, they describe how Livingston (2000) drew on instruction, pre/post reflection, and field work to facilitate students’ learning about challenges that people with disabilities incur (Lechuga et al., 2009, p. 235). As evidence that this approach facilitates learning, Lechuga et al. (2009) describe the main themes characterizing students’ realizations as a result of the experience. Just as Landreman (2013) called for facilitators to intentionally design and implement privilege awareness programs such as Tunnel of Oppression, Lechuga et al. (2009) use this program to exemplify one type of privilege immersion experience. By acting out scenarios, showing videos, and displaying imagery, the Tunnel of Oppression raises awareness about how various social identities are marginalized within oppressive systems and structures. This experience, and other encountered situations, engage students in dialogue based on personal experiences related to social equity and justice. Similarly, Broido (2000) reiterates that professionals should engage students in

discussion and encourage perspective-taking, which is emphasized across the literature on social justice education and multicultural competence (Goodman, 2013; Hackman, 2005; Landreman et al., 2008; Lechuga et al., 2009; Mueller & Pope, 2001). The authors themselves do not engage in empirical research to justify their claims about the value of experiential learning about social justice concepts through encountered situations. Further, only anecdotal evidence exists to regarding the effectiveness of the Tunnel of Oppression initiative.

Although they are offered as an impactful practice, role-playing and urban immersion can also be problematic. For example, role-playing may benefit those with a particular dominant identity at the expense of those who are multiply marginalized. Likewise, some urban immersion experiences provide students an opportunity to learn “about” or at the expense of communities without partnering to address any of the equity issues they identify. Poon et al. (2016), when referencing Lechuga et al. (2009), describe that immersion programs (such as within a homeless shelter) are problematic in a critical framework because they

Assume a one-way transference of knowledge from a subordinated group to a privileged group, representing a ‘taking of knowledge’ from shelter guests by students. Such a model of learning does not directly address wide-ranging systemic forms of oppression that contribute to homelessness. (p. 23)

Sometimes, these immersion experiences can be framed as service-learning opportunities, which can be similarly problematic in that they do little to address systemic issues.

Service-learning experiences. At times, privilege immersion experiences can be presented as service-learning programs, but these are often equally limited in their ability to advance social justice goals. For example, sending students to working class neighborhoods can be problematic because “students are rarely provided sufficient opportunity to learn about the complex nature of poverty (locally or globally), degenerative infrastructure in poor communities, or the ways in which their class privilege relates to others’ repression” (Gorski, 2006, p. 172). Just as Poon et al. (2016) reference the “taking of knowledge” from subordinated groups through immersion experiences, Zylstra (2011) describes that service-learning in the name of social justice is often a faulty association. Experiences are “usually designed to promote development and learning among students who participate, [but] studies show most service-learning yields minimal transformation for communities yet has a profound impact on the lives of students” (Zylstra, 2011, p. 382). Service learning may enhance students’ self-awareness, but it does little to affect social change.

In spite of the problematics within the specific examples they provide, Lechuga et al. (2009) nonetheless offer a framework for experiential learning that may enhance student experiences and learning about social justice concepts. Their work is positive in that it demonstrates many of the principles outlined in Landreman et al. (2008) such as knowing learners, designing outcomes-based activities, and co-creating facilitation. Specifically, they ground social justice education in a theoretical or conceptual lens, outline learning objectives linked to it, create opportunities for dialogue, and attend to students’ level of experience with concepts. In addition to role-playing, immersion

experiences, and service-learning, intergroup dialogue is another experiential opportunity that many student affairs professionals facilitate in the name of social justice education.

Intergroup dialogue. Since being dialectical is a central feature of critical pedagogy, educators can support an empowered environment by teaching tools for action and social change such as protest, Freire's (1973) "problem-posing," (as cited in Hackman, 2005, p.106), or intergroup dialogue. These tools for action become critical as students develop a deeper understanding of central concepts in social justice education. Additionally, Hackman's (2005) processes and tools parallel those Grant and Sleeter (2007) describe for multicultural social justice education: questioning, democracy, analyzing systems, and social action (as cited in Zylstra, 2011). Although educators often facilitate intergroup dialogue as a tool for fostering social justice action because it supports identity formation, builds intergroup relationships, and can reduce prejudice, Poon et al. (2016) warn that "action for transformative social justice change is not an explicit goal" and therefore not often an outcome of intergroup dialogues (p. 23). However, drawing on Watt (2007), in their book on creating inclusive campuses, Arminio et al. (2012) suggest difficult dialogues are so "because they involve an awakening to different views individuals have of ideas that have roots in the interrelationship of power, oppression, and privilege for marginalized and dominant groups in this society" (p. 133). They suggest that engaging in such dialogues can foster more welcoming campus environments. This seems to align with Mayhew & DeLuca Fernández's (2007) finding that students were less likely to achieve social justice learning when they had negative interactions with diverse peers, thus it is "imperative for

educators to create spaces for students from differing social identities to have healthy, positive interactions with each other” (p. 76). Dialogue serves as another experiential pedagogical strategy that supports students in achieving social justice outcomes.

A precursor to engaging in difficult dialogues involves interrogating the self and examining how the individual is implicated in practices that do not contribute to inclusivity. Further, in order for dialogue to be productive, there must be “mutual purpose and mutual respect,” where the former involves a shared meaning of the end goal and the latter involves trust, attending to relational dimensions, acknowledging power differentials, and determining a consistent structure for dialogues (Arminio et al., 2012, p. 137). Just as Freire’s concept of “problem-posing” is acknowledged as a tool for creating empowering classroom spaces, Arminio et al. (2012) suggest using meaningful questions “to explore complex issues that are complicated by historical and structural dynamics and include individuals’ investments in their personal and social identities” (pp. 140-141). Such issues often have many possible answers or no answer at all. In addition to developing meaningful questions, leaders must vet the questions with relevant and diverse stakeholders, involve skilled facilitators, and provide summary reports about progress of such dialogues towards a shared vision.

Effectively using dialogue to foster organizational change in diversity must be “informed by the latest scholarly work in the area of diversity, it is an inclusive process that demands active involvement of all voices on campus, and it takes precautions to help the dialogue to move toward action” (Arminio et al., 2012, p. 142). Arminio et al. (2012) purport that engaging in processes, such as dialogue, that change campus organizations

can be liberating. While dialogue that includes students can advance organizational change, so too can dialogue between professionals given their role in decision-making.

Arminio et al. (2012) encourage student affairs professionals to

Imagine how our campuses might be more inclusive if we routinely asked ourselves and colleagues questions such as, Do our current systems, policies, and practices (such as those relating to student conduct and those governing student activities events) allow room for the voices of the students and stakeholders to emerge? and, How does who I am (as a person and as a professional) influence my thinking about this situation, and what are other perspectives that I might not be seeing? (p. 183)

Often as professionals, we spend more time engaging our students in these questions as it relates to their own self-awareness or interpersonal interactions than we do interrogating our own practices.

For example, Claros et al. (2017) describe a dialogue project they initiated in residential life with a cohort meeting one night per week over three weeks for two hours each time. They acknowledged the different catalysts that might spark a students' journey toward understanding the interconnections and intersections of oppression such as "(a) different levels and types of oppression; (b) different social identities; and (c) different residential experiences" (Claros et al., 2017, p. 53). They saw residence life as an optimal setting for incorporating intersectionality into programs, interventions, and practices; therefore, they grounded the dialogue project in this construct.

Claros et al. (2017) observed that students were easily able to name times they experienced or observed overt oppression and implicit bias at the interpersonal or individual level, but naming institutional forms of oppression was more difficult.

However, drawing on these individual and interpersonal experiences, educators supported students in developing a more complex understanding of interlocking systems of oppression. They observed those with multiple privileged identities sometimes struggled to find entryways to the discussions on intersectionality. Balancing speaking time between those with primarily dominant identities learning about intersectionality and those who are multiply marginalized was challenging at times. However, the strategies they used to address this included having equal numbers from each group and focusing initially on broader social constructs before connecting to one's own experiences. In the final week, when participants were encouraged to connect levels of oppression to their own experiences, they sometimes focused more on the intersections of identity, neglecting the connection back to interlocking systems. While the facilitators describe the program and their observations, they did not systematically research outcomes.

Focusing on intersectionality seemingly aligns with other recommendations for effective social justice education to focus on a systemic level if connections are made back to it. However, enhancing the comfort level and reducing resistance of students with mostly dominant identities was the primary motivating factor behind their decision to depersonalize the discussion. They seem to primarily employ Kegan's facilitative response of "confirmation" in their work. Facilitators felt tension because students who are multiply marginalized contributed more, which aligns with the social justice goal of centering their voices; however, they wanted to help students with more dominant identities find an entryway to the dialogue. They note that exposure to "compositional diversity" or being around people different from oneself may be a starting point for those

newly exposed to the concept of intersectionality. While it is important to engage all students in these dialogues, it is unclear to what extent the facilitators focused on creating empowering and liberating spaces for multiply marginalized students and challenging those with dominant identities where appropriate.

As students journey through their residence life experience, other modes that can incorporate intersectionality include roommate agreements, bulletin boards, common readings, staff meeting continuing education sessions, and one on one meeting follow-ups. Through these methods, residence life experiences can spark and support students' journeys toward understanding intersectionality. Not only can these initiatives, including dialogue projects, facilitate critical-thinking and awareness, they may support interpersonal relationship building. Drawing on research by Hausman, Ye, Schofield, and Woods (2009), Zylstra (2011) describes how student retention correlates strongly with sense of belonging. Based upon this research and personal anecdotes, Zylstra (2011) suggests that sense of belonging is not cultivated directly through programming, but rather through relationships: "we sustain a commitment to justice during and after college through the relationships we build with those who represent different sociocultural and historical experiences" (p. 383). That is to say the relationships built, perhaps through programming efforts, have greater influence than the programs themselves. Initiatives aimed at fostering an understanding of intersectionality and connecting through dialogue have long-term influence upon students' commitment to justice and ability to link their decisions to effects on other people.

Conclusion

Given the prior emphasis on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the student affairs professional competencies, it is unsurprising that a significant portion of the existing literature emphasizes the development of multicultural competency with little attention to systemic and institutional concerns. Although scholars are beginning to evaluate the impact of power, privilege, and oppression on student development across social identities in the third-wave of theorizing in student affairs, graduate preparatory programs are still limited in their focus on social justice concepts and frameworks apart from student development. The existing literature on critical social justice education provides a lens through which to view social justice-oriented trainings and programs in student affairs. Additionally, there is a growing body of literature specifically situated within the field that draws upon critical social justice education to inform curriculum development and facilitation. Since much of this literature tends to be conceptual, theoretical, or anecdotal; my thorough review in this chapter and in chapter two was necessary to answer my first research question about the theoretical models, frameworks, and research upon which professionals can draw to inform their work. Scholars do not often explore the alignment of existing initiatives with “best” practices in social justice education nor are there many empirical studies on the effectiveness of existing trainings and programs. Thus, my review of empowering social justice education facilitation in the literature provides a point of comparison for the pedagogical strategies I found that residence life professionals employ in practice through my study. These themes in the literature coupled with the shift in professional competency area to Social Justice and Inclusion

suggest it is a prime time to investigate how residence life professionals develop content and facilitate delivery of their social justice-oriented programs and trainings in practice.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

In this dissertation, I use critically informed qualitative methods to learn more about how residence life professionals are teaching social justice. I decided to investigate programs or trainings designed and delivered by residence life professionals for several reasons. First, my interest in this topic originates from the intersection of my academic studies and professional work in residence life, a functional area within the student affairs profession. Second, many residence life departments espouse a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice, or a combination of these values. Given this commitment, and my anecdotal experiences with programming and training in residence life, I am interested in exploring how social justice-oriented initiatives reflect key components of social justice education and the newly revised social justice and inclusion competency area for the profession. Much of the existing literature in this area was written prior to the shift in competency language from Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to Social Justice and Inclusion in 2015. Further, existing literature tends to be conceptual, theoretical, or anecdotal and not based on empirical research. Thus, in addition to a careful analysis of the conceptual and theoretical research in this area, in this dissertation I offer an empirical approach to understanding existing programs and trainings in practice. According to Glesne (2016), one of the potential contributions of a qualitative study is that the researcher's "interpretations can point out significances, meanings, and

critiques that, through [a researcher's] representation, can inspire others to perceive, value, or act in different ways" (p. 26). In the empirical portion of this dissertation study, I aimed to learn more about how residence life professionals are teaching social justice, if the new competency language of social justice and inclusion is evident in their initiatives, and whether current residence life practices align or diverge from recommendations for practice in social justice education. Based upon my findings, I offer implications and recommendations for practice.

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the qualitative research design and subsequently share the research questions along with sampling and recruitment methods. Further, I provide a profile for each program or training that is included in the study and of the participants with whom I conducted interviews. Next, I outline my data collection procedures, including the interview questions I asked, and reflect on my role as a researcher in this process. Finally, I describe how I attended to trustworthiness throughout this process.

Research Design

In order to learn more about the social justice-oriented programs and trainings in residence life, I completed a qualitative study incorporating interviews with ten program facilitators and document analysis of materials associated with their initiatives. I employed a combination of convenience sampling and targeted outreach to recruit colleagues who facilitate social justice-oriented initiatives in residence life.

Research Questions

Two primary research questions guided this study. I answered the first question in significant part through reviewing the literature in chapters two and three. I answer the second question, and accompanying sub-questions, by analyzing the qualitative data I collected through interviews and document analysis.

1. What theoretical models, frameworks, and research can inform curricula for social justice-oriented initiatives in student affairs and more specifically in residence life?
2. How are residence life professionals teaching social justice?
 - a. To what extent is the language of social justice and inclusion evident in program and training curriculum?
 - b. What influences and informs the design and content of social justice-oriented trainings and programs for residents?
 - c. What pedagogical strategies do residence life professionals employ in the delivery of social justice-oriented trainings and programs?

Sampling and Recruitment

To identify programs, I initially planned to use a database that one of the regional housing organizations was compiling for “best practices,” but their call for submissions to that database did not yield any contributions. In the early stages of my research, I assessed the feasibility of conducting an analysis of documents that are associated with program or training implementation. This preliminary exploration became an alternative means for recruiting participants when my initial plan to use the “best practices”

submitted to our regional association, and to get participants who opt in to my research call, did not yield any prospective participants. To evaluate the feasibility of incorporating document analysis as a method in my study, I contacted a convenience sample of colleagues with whom I used to work via email. These colleagues are now at different institutions working in residence life, but our past work together gives them knowledge about the training initiatives for resident advisors from which my interest initially stemmed. I was able to ascertain whether their new department has a program or training similar to the training initiatives for resident advisors with which we were familiar from our previous work together. Further, I explored if these trainings have documents such as assessment plans, reports, outlines, overviews, scripts, etc. that I could review for document analysis to learn more about the program. Of the eight colleagues who responded to me, six have social justice-oriented programs or trainings with accompanying written materials in their current department. The other two did not have any initiatives comparable to the training for resident advisors with which we were familiar from our prior work together. After I received formal Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, I sent an invitation to the staff member (program facilitator) within my colleagues' new departments who is responsible for the training or program inviting them to participate in this study, and five agreed to do so. However, prior to sending those invitations, I had recruited other participants who self-define an ongoing departmental training or program as social-justice oriented by putting out a call via professional social media platforms and listservs including: ACUHO-I Women in Housing Network, SA Pros Dismantling White Privilege, the Journal of Critical Scholarship on Higher

Education and Student Affairs, University of South Carolina HESA Alumni, University of South Carolina/University Housing Alumni, Student Affairs Professionals Involved with Leadership and Diversity Programs, Residence Life Professionals, and The Admin: A Place for Student Affairs Professionals, Student Affairs Professionals. The chairpersons of the Commission on Housing and Residence Life and Commission for Social Justice Education with ACPA both agreed to send emails to their listserv and post on their facebook pages. Unfortunately, only one prospective participant responded to my open research calls, and when I sent them the parameters for my study, it turned out that they did not have an initiative meeting the criteria. The lack of response led me to revisit the initiatives I learned about from prior colleagues and to pursue another avenue for recruiting prospective participants. I researched the past three years of conference abstracts for NASPA, ACPA, and the Southeastern Association of Housing Officers (SEAHO) for session abstracts that indicated the presenters might have an initiative meeting the parameters for my study. I recruited two participants through this means, five from my prior outreach to former colleagues, and three through snowball sampling using recommendations of participants.

Based on conversations with my committee, I decided not to stipulate institutional type or size. Instead, I established the following parameters to include initiatives in my study:

1. Facilitators define the training or program (initiative), which is developed and implemented by their office, as social justice-oriented
2. The initiative is ongoing

3. The initiative is intended for residents or student staff
4. Facilitators have documents/written material related to the program (overview, reports, curriculum, scripts, etc...)

I decided to include only ongoing initiatives that are curricular in nature because they would presumably allow more time for exposing students to social justice concepts and facilitating engagement with them as compared to a one-time workshop or short-term training. This is consistent with recommendations from the literature. For example, based on their study of resident advisors, Cook and McCoy (2017) recommend providing appropriate time for students to reflect and process as their awareness grows. According to their findings, even a two-week training was not sufficient time for White students in particular to unpack and unlearn a lifetime of messages. Additionally, ongoing initiatives would presumably allow space for participants to foster relationships and build trust, which might encourage more vulnerability and reflection than one-off programs for residents.

During recruitment and sampling, it was imperative that I adhere to the “three ethical principles for research involving humans: respect, beneficence, and justice” (Glesne, 2016, p. 159). At the outset, with the invitation to participate, I provided each program facilitator with a summary of the research project and overarching research questions. They signed an informed voluntary consent form, and agreed to be audio-recorded. I also asked them to engage any relevant stakeholders such as departmental directors, program creators, or others in a discussion about their (program facilitator’s) participation in the study to confirm these parties also did not have any reservations before committing. To

ensure participant confidentiality, I have stored printed transcripts and consent forms in a locked cabinet. Further, I allowed participants to select pseudonyms for themselves and their programs or trainings (or I assigned a pseudonym for them if they did not care to select their own), which are used throughout this text and transcripts. Although three of the pseudonyms include the term “social justice,” only one of the initiatives has the term in its actual name.

Participant Profiles

The ten professional staff members who I interviewed all work at four-year public institutions in residence life departments of varying size and residential population. They have from two to 13 years of experience with an average of 6.3 years of post-master’s experience in Housing. Two participants had experience in another functional area due to dual reporting to a Diversity & Inclusion or Multicultural Affairs unit, and one spent four years in a unit outside of residence life, which they did not name. All participants had earned a master’s degree. Only one participant had completed a terminal degree in Educational Leadership, but four were working on their Ph.D. in cultural studies or higher education with one concurrently pursuing an MBA. Six participants listed supplemental trainings that inform their current work including: SafeZone (2), GreenZone, Juvenile Justice, Intercultural Development Inventory Qualified Administrator Training (2), National Coalition Building Institute’s Train the Trainer (2), ACUHO-I Certificate in Assessment, StrengthsQuest, Implicit Bias Training, and the Social Justice Training Institute. An overview of the participants and programs can be found in *Table 4.1*

Table 4.1

Participant Profiles

Pseudonym	Initiative	Gender Identity	Race	Sexual Orientation	Post-Master's Experience in Housing (years)	Number of On-Campus Residents	Number of Professional Staff in Residence Life Unit	Average Number of Annual Participants
RD	Resident Advisor Class	Woman	Brown	Straight	2	8500	24	147
Nia Jones	Diversity Dialogues in the Halls	Woman	Black	Heterosexual	5	6300	36	350
Kate	Dialogue Facilitators	Female	White	Heterosexual	13	7600	15	4200-4800
Lauren	Diversity Evolved	Female	Black	Heterosexual	3	514	35	50-150
Elizabeth	Leadership Class	Female	White	Bisexual	8	5000	19	130-150
Jurnea	Social Justice Educators	Woman	Black	Heteroflex	8.5	9000	30	19
Nikki	Peer Advisors	Female	Asian	Straight	3.5	11400	68	21
Eden Breeze	Social Justice Dialogues Living Learning Community	Female	Black	Heterosexual	13	5500	25	100
Shawn	Social Justice Training Program	Man/Male	Black	Heterosexual	3	7000	N/A	350
Oliver	Eastern Men's Learning Community	Male	White	Bisexual	4	7500	25	250

Initiative Profiles

Of the ten initiatives included in this study, two of them were living and learning communities, two were primarily resident advisor courses, two were professional staff-lead workshops for residents, and four were primarily peer education programs. Of the four peer education programs, three also include a course to complement student staff training. Four of the participants spoke about having a residential curriculum of which the initiative is part. Four of the initiatives have been in place for five or more years, four have been in place less than five years, and the two facilitators for the resident advisor courses did not know how long the courses have been in place. To provide a bit more context about the initiatives, I include a brief description of each below. I also list the documents corresponding to each initiative that I reviewed as part of my research.

Diversity Dialogues in the Halls. Nia reports both to the housing and multicultural affairs offices. She works with housing staff to plan two dialogues per hall per semester, and they are each one hour long. Undergraduate peer educators lead the dialogues. Their preparation to do so consists of a day-long training. Dialogue topics have included: microaggressions, toxic masculinity, and unconscious bias to name a few. She provided me with a range of documents related to these dialogues, including schedules, flyers, session PowerPoints, and email templates for planning.

Diversity Evolved. Lauren facilitates workshops for five weeks during the winter term on topics such as sexual orientation, gender identity, racial identity, etc. The workshops also allow students an opportunity to write a personal narrative. The program is only in its third year, but moving forward will expand beyond just the winter term. It

also includes an experiential learning trip. Lauren did not respond to follow-up reminders to provide accompanying documents for review.

Dialogue Facilitators. Dialogue facilitators are undergraduate students who also serve as resident advisors. The program is a collaboration with multicultural affairs, whose staff help to supervise the student facilitators and instruct their preparation courses. The semester before assuming their position, the students participate in a one-credit course focused on intergroup dialogue that meets for two hours weekly. During their term, they facilitate dialogues for first-year students and within the residential community. Finally, they complete a capstone project during their third semester of coursework while fulfilling the role. Kate shared the syllabus for the dialogue facilitator preparation course. She also shared the outline for dialogues that they facilitate during their term. This outline included outcomes, materials, and activities. The position description for dialogue facilitators included responsibilities, benefits, learning outcomes, and qualifications. Finally, Kate shared references from her own research that informed the dialogue facilitator program.

Eastern Men's Learning Community (LC). Oliver oversees the area of campus that houses Eastern Men's Learning Community, and directly supervises the professional staff member overseeing the community. Students are part of the community by virtue of living in a particular area of campus and not because they choose to participate in the learning community. The community is part of the housing department's residential curriculum. There are workshops for the LC two-three times per month. Some of these include collaborations with other offices such as the Interpersonal Violence office. Events

and workshops have included topics such as consent and power, masculinity in the media, and aggression. Corresponding documents that I reviewed include a community overview outlining its history and culture. The document also outlines the community mission, vision, and goals. Further, Oliver shared citations for books, articles, and videos that inform or are used as part of the curriculum.

Leadership Class. Elizabeth oversees this eight-week course, which meets twice per week, in the spring semester. The course is intended for undergraduate students, who enroll as part of the resident advisor application process. At the conclusion of the course, they participate in an interview and group process day. Entry-level hall directors facilitate or co-facilitate the course, and there is typically an undergraduate peer leader who is a current resident advisor. I reviewed the course syllabus and session outlines for the courses on Identity Development, Developing Multicultural Competencies, and Power, Privilege, & Microaggressions. Each session outline included goals/learning outcomes, skill(s) to learn, materials and handouts needed, and a session agenda. The agenda takes the facilitator through each slide in the PowerPoint with corresponding talking points and time limits. Elizabeth also provided a training PowerPoint on “Teaching Tips and Organization,” a copy of the residential curriculum model, a handout on the learning cycle, a handout on teaching strategies for Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle, an overview of instructor training, and team teaching questions to guide planning.

Peer Advisors. This program originated in the 1970s as an activism initiative meant to promote inclusion of minoritized students who were not feeling a sense of belonging in the halls. Today, the program focuses on creating “inclusive community

through programming, resources, and support.” The peer advisors provide support to residents who may not feel included or who have experienced a bias incident. They also facilitate programs and advise a [diversity] council. Their role involves helping residents understand themselves and the identities of others better through educational and awareness programs or dialogues. Peer Advisors facilitate ongoing training with their staff at least once per semester, though many do so more often. They are compensated with room and board. Before they begin their role, they are required to take a course on inclusive communities. Then, they have four-days of training in the fall semester on facilitation and dialogue. They also participate in the rest of resident advisor training as well. Peer Advisors meet weekly for ongoing training during the semester. They collaborate with hall staff to develop tailored workshops for their staff team. Nikki shared an article written about this initiative that focused on training student staff. She also provided her institution and division strategic plans along with a document outlining her department’s community values.

Resident Advisor Class. This course is a one-credit nine-week class that meets weekly for two hours. Students enroll in the class once hired to be resident advisors, and before assuming the role. They can choose to take it pass-fail rather than for credit. Entry-level hall directors co-facilitate each section. Corresponding documents that I looked at include the most recent course syllabus and session outlines. Each outline included goals/objectives and discussion topics/timeline with corresponding directions and materials for each activity. The topics of the session outlines included: Community Agreements/Active Listening, Social Identities, Intersectionality & Levels of Oppression,

Systems of Socialization, Social Justice & Leadership, Campus Climate & Resources, Wellness & Self Care, and Practical Applications.

Social Justice Dialogues Living-learning Community (SJD LLC). Eden is responsible for all living learning communities in her department, including the SJD LLC. This community includes first-year students living together and exploring “social justice, intercultural engagement, and diversity.” Participants engage in weekly campus and community events and trainings related to social justice and leadership, including a weekly community meeting. A graduate student and undergraduate resident advisor primarily lead the community’s initiatives, though Eden and a full-time hall director are involved in curriculum planning. The documents I reviewed include two years of co-curricular plans and one year of monthly reports. The co-curricular plan outlined the community description, mission, benefits, learning outcomes, weekly schedule, and goals.

Social Justice Educators (SJE). The SJE’s provide training and development for their peer resident advisors every two weeks. These trainings can be dialogic or presentation based. They also partner with campus organizations to host dialogues about hot topics or salient issues. Jurnea shared a syllabus for the two-credit pre-employment course that SJE’s take over ten weeks with resident advisors. The course is taught either by an entry-level hall director, a member of Jurnea’s team who focus specifically on social justice work in residence life, or another residence life or student affairs staff member. The course includes topics such as identity salience, intersectionality, diversity, community-building, cross-cultural communication, being an ally, and creating inclusive

communities. SJE's are also responsible for attending two weeks of training before entering the role, including 48-72 hours on intergroup dialogue followed by four hours of ongoing weekly training and development. Jurnea provided the training curriculum for the two-week fall training. Finally, Jurnea shared her department's residential curriculum, which includes the priority of engaging in an inclusive community, along with goals and learning outcomes such as "social justice exploration." The document also provides an overview of the educational strategies used to achieve these goals (e.g. bulletin boards & dialogues) and monthly themes. To complement the list of educational strategies, Jurnea shared a sample outline for a bulletin board on Identity Exploration and one for a dialogue on social identities.

Social Justice Training Program. This training includes an online portion first where participants watch a video, answer a prompt, and respond to another participant. Then, Shawn facilitates Part II, which is an eight-hour training. It can be broken into multiple sessions, and the topics include: power and privilege, identity and intersectionality, systems of socialization, cultural competence, and allyship/advocacy. Corresponding documents that I reviewed include learning outcomes, session summaries, and references for each of the five sessions in this series.

Data Collection

To begin, I interviewed residence life professionals who self-reported that they center social justice in their program or training. These participants included facilitators I recruited after being referred to them by former colleagues who used to work alongside me at my current institution, but who now work in other residence life departments.

Participants also included professionals who I reached out to after reviewing past conference presentation abstracts. I provided the parameters for my study in my call to participate, and facilitators for each program included in my study affirmed that their initiative met each parameter when they opted in to participate.

Initially, I conducted 60-90 minute semi-structured interviews with the 10 professionals from around the country, who are responsible for the social justice-oriented training or program in their department. I offered to use google hangout or skype, but only one participant chose this option. The other nine participants opted to participate via phone. I used semi-structured interviews to allow some flexibility in asking follow-up questions based on responses, while still ensuring that each participant was asked a set of core questions (which I list in the following section). The interviews allowed me to learn more about the program or initiative: its history, goals, content, and outcomes. Thus, I drew on the first four of Frankel, Wallen, and Hyun's (2014) six types of questions: "background, knowledge, experience/behavior, opinion/values, feelings, and sensory" (as cited in Henning & Roberts, 2016, p. 171). Further, interviews illuminated professionals' assessment of their own proficiency in social justice education, factors that may support such an initiative on the campus, and the nuances of program development and implementation.

I also reviewed the available documents that program facilitators from these residence life departments sent to me. When I received these documents before the interview, I would review them in advance and prepare any supplemental questions based on my review. However, in some cases these materials were not available to me until

after the interview concluded, and in some cases, I requested specific documents as a result of the interview that facilitators did not initially think to share. The documents I received included syllabi, academic and co-curricular lesson plans, facilitator and student training guides, powerpoint presentations, position descriptions, monthly reports from a program facilitator, and publications on the initiative. I also received, or located, strategic plans and overviews including the initiative mission, vision, and values. I conducted my review always in the context of my research questions seeking to understand how professionals are teaching social justice and to identify whether social justice and inclusion language is evident in these initiatives. A review of the documents gave me a more thorough understanding of the concepts, activities, facilitation approaches, and curriculum design of the program. In the absence of observations, the documents complemented interviews, enabling me to analyze programs in the context of the literature on social justice education, and identify trends across programs. In the next section, I include my interview guide for this study.

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about the {insert name} program/training and what you feel makes it social justice-oriented
 - a. If you know the program's history, please share how it came to be
2. How does social justice factor into your department's mission, vision, or values?
3. How do you define social justice?
4. How do you (or program/training framework) connect and differentiate diversity, multicultural competence (multiculturalism), and social justice?

5. What is your process for developing and revising content?
 - a. Who is involved in this process?
 - b. Do you draw upon any resources? If so, tell me about those
 - i. Note: theories, books, websites, activities- will elaborate if the question does not elicit relevant responses
6. What are the goals for the program and participants? (Learning outcomes?)
7. Have you assessed the impact of this initiative?
 - a. If yes- describe and share findings and implications
 - b. If no- In your opinion, which aspects of the program are strongest or most impactful? Which aspects of the program could be enhanced? What leads you to these conclusions?
8. What experiences or factors support your work with this program?
 - a. Additional context if needed: could be personal, professional, institutional, academic, or other
 - b. How do you feel about your proficiency implementing this initiative?
9. If you have experienced any challenges implementing the program, please you share those with me
10. Describe some specific considerations or strategies influencing your facilitation
11. Given that I am interested in how residence life professionals are developing content for and facilitating social justice-oriented trainings and programs, is there anything else that would be helpful for me to know that I might not have thought to ask?

- a. Abbreviated: Is there anything else you would like to share with me about the program?

12. If you aware of any other residence life initiatives that may meet the parameters for my study, can you share those with me?

Data Analysis

With permission, I recorded my interviews and subsequently had them transcribed. I listened to the interviews myself to verify accuracy of the transcription, make edits where appropriate, and also add my own comments related to particular interview responses. I began this process while still conducting subsequent interviews, thus data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously. This is known as constant case comparison whereby “new data, particularly from new cases, are coded and continually compared to previously collected data to better refine theoretical categories and to assist the researcher in pursuing new cases or questions” (Glesne, 2016, p. 295). This process enabled me to add question four to my interview questions after conducting the first three interviews.

Coding

To analyze the interviews and documents, I employed an inductive thematic analysis: “searching for themes and patterns” in order to better understand social justice education in residence life (Glesne, 2016, p. 184). I categorized the data using codes, “a word or short phrase that ascribes meaning to each datum for pattern detection, categorization, theory building, or other analytical purposes” (as cited in Henning & Roberts, 2016, p. 159). To begin, I applied Holistic Coding, an Exploratory Method, to

large sections of data in order to understand the overall essence of each (Saldaña, 2013). Then, I moved to Structural Coding, “a question-based code that ‘acts as a labeling and indexing device, allowing researchers to quickly access data likely to be relevant to a particular analysis from a larger data set’” (as cited in Saldaña, 2013, p. 84). I sorted according to my initial research questions, which included the major categories: theoretical models, resources and concepts, process of developing and facilitating, language of social justice, and pedagogical strategies. This process led me to further refine and differentiate my research questions as I found that they were too specific and not entirely distinct, which lead to chunks of data fitting under both the main and sub questions.

From here, I refined my Holistic Codes by using the Elemental Methods of Process and Descriptive Coding. I used Process Coding by applying gerunds as codes for content related to my research questions about the process of developing and facilitating as well as about pedagogical practices. I applied Descriptive Codes to data related to my research questions about theoretical models, resources and concepts, and language of social justice. These codes describe what the data is about and identify topics rather than just summarizing the content (Saldaña, 2013). From here, I derived larger themes from these codes using comparative analysis whereby I sorted and defined the data continually in order to make connections across the data and provide interpretations of meaning. At this phase, “the coding process move[d] from description to interpretation” (Henning & Roberts, 2016, p. 159) through analytical coding. I named themes using my words, the participants’ words, or concepts in the literature. Developing and applying a uniform

strategy for analyzing documents was difficult given the variability of initiatives and their supplemental materials. Instead, I used the documents as a resource for deepening my understanding of the initiative concepts, outcomes, and activities.

With regard to data analysis and reporting, the issue of representation is key. Glesne (2016) outlines that “the onus is on us to be rigorous in our work and thoughtful in what we represent, considering the feelings and perspectives of those we represent and honoring their voices” (Glesne, 2016, p.170). My biggest ethical concerns in taking up this research related to considering participant feelings while honoring their voices and ensuring that I fairly capture the information that they share with me. To ensure ethical engagement with participants’ ideas and experiences, I worked to attend to my own subjectivity throughout the process. One way to manage bias and subjectivity is by utilizing strategies to enhance trustworthiness.

Trustworthiness

According to Glesne (2016), “trustworthiness is about alertness to the quality and rigor of a study, about what sorts of criteria can be used to assess how well the research was carried out” (p. 53). In qualitative studies, trustworthiness is comprised of the concepts “credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability” (Henning & Roberts, 2016, p. 162). Credibility refers to whether findings match reality, transferability is the extent to which findings can be applied in a different context, dependability speaks to whether the results make sense, and confirmability is whether the results can be validated (Henning & Roberts, 2016, p. 162). Since the researcher serves as the

instrument for analysis in a qualitative study, some degree of bias and subjectivity are inevitable. To ensure trustworthiness, bias must be acknowledged and addressed.

There are several ways a researcher can attend to trustworthiness, and I employ four key strategies in my work: triangulation of multiple data-collection methods and sources; clarification of researcher bias and subjectivity; member checking; and rich, thick description. According to Denzin (1978), there are “four approaches to triangulation: multiple methods, multiple sources of data, multiple investigators, and multiple theories to confirm findings” (as cited in Henning & Roberts, 2016, p. 165). In this study, I employed multiple methods, including interviews and document analysis.

This allowed me to look for themes in response to my primary research question.

Drawing on the idea of triangulation, Lincoln et al. (2011) offers the idea of crystallization because “what we see depends on the angle of repose” (p. 122).

Crystallization accounts for our positionality and how it influences our interpretation of the data.

I also attended to the trustworthiness criteria of “clarification of researcher bias and subjectivity” which involves “reflecting upon your subjectivities and upon how they are both used and monitored” (Glesne, 2016, p. 53). Reflexivity is “the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the ‘human as instrument’” (as cited in Lincoln et al., 2011, p. 124) and it allowed me to interrogate the influence of my experiences and social identities throughout the research process. I have already outlined my personal interest and work experiences related to social justice and residence life that have informed this study. As I moved forward, I reflected on the interviews I conducted

and materials I reviewed in a separate journal. I made connections to my own experiences and took notes when I had questions or concerns about what I observed or heard. I attempted to be conscious of how my own experiences and positioning influenced each phase of the process from my initial interest in these research questions as described in the introductory chapter to writing interview questions, facilitating the interviews, reviewing documents, and interpreting my data.

Additionally, I used member checking during the interview by repeating back what I heard the program participant say, and asking them to clarify what they meant by their remarks. There were times where I thought we were on the same page, but would still ask a participant to clarify or explicitly state what they meant, to ensure that I was not assuming what they intended. In my analysis, I looked for themes across programs using “cross-case analysis” (Merriam, 2009, p. 49) rather than representing them individually in my findings chapter, which allowed me to provide possibilities for practice where there were shared growth opportunities. Finally, I provide “rich, thick description” herein to help “readers to understand the context of [my] interpretation” (Glesne, 2016, p. 53). Through quotes from my interviews and the documents I review, I hope readers will also get their own sense for the data and its meaning.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided an overview of the qualitative methodology that guided this study including citations from the existing literature that informed my research decisions. Specifically, I shared the research design and questions, data collection strategy, and data analysis approach. In the chapters that follow, I present my findings,

and I offer my interpretation of these findings through discussion. Finally, as I conclude this dissertation, I also provide implications for practice and directions for further study.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

In this chapter, I present findings from the 10 semi-structured interviews I conducted with residence life professionals responsible for a social justice-oriented initiative, along with my document analyses. I organize the findings according to the themes that I developed after coding and categorizing my data. I coded transcripts as my primary source of data, but documents associated with each initiative complemented what I was able to learn from interviews alone. In response to my second research question, how are residence life professionals teaching social justice, I focus first on how they are designing such initiatives with attention to the language and meaning of social justice and inclusion among participants. Then, I discuss the factors influencing the design of social justice-oriented initiatives, which include institutional factors, stakeholders, and human resources. Next, I share the factors informing the design of such initiatives including personal experiences, professional preparation and development, and academic resources. Thereafter, I share the seven key behaviors relating to how participants are delivering social justice-oriented initiatives.

Designing Social Justice-Oriented Initiatives

My study includes four types of social justice-oriented initiatives in residence life: living and learning communities (2), resident advisor courses (2), peer education programs (4), and professional staff-lead workshops (2). When reviewing materials

associated with these initiatives and discussing them with my participants, I learned that they included one or more of three primary design approaches. Designs were dialogic, experiential, and/or developmental. Dialogic initiatives involved prioritizing dialogue across difference over content learning, and they centered opportunities for large and small group engagement. Jurnea described how the Social Justice Educators in her program were trained extensively in dialogue facilitation: “they have about 48 to 72 hours of training specifically around inter group dialogue, if you will. Thereafter, in those two hours, staff development meeting with the program director, their training and development around facilitation continues.” Experiential initiatives were highly interactive and creative. They included aspects such as trips, conference presentations, and other opportunities for experiential learning and application. Finally, developmental initiatives focused on the progression and sequencing of content often starting with a focus on self-awareness and working outward toward a societal level focus.

In addition to these design approaches, participants discussed the influence of particular frameworks or theories on their initiatives. Four initiatives operate out of departments guided by a Residential Curriculum, which participants shared influenced their learning goals, assessment, learning strategies, and educational priorities. For example, Elizabeth described that her department grounds the residential curriculum in the theory of Emotionally Intelligent Leadership, which informs the curriculum, goals, and learning outcomes of the Leadership Class we discussed. Elizabeth described how Emotionally Intelligent Leadership calls for one

To work on yourself and think about your own experiences and how people perceive you and how you perceive others before you think about how do others work together and how do others do things. And then you think about context and environment. And a lot of what we do falls into that as well as far as timing. So, our training right now, we have two days of self, three days of others, and then two days of context.

One of the departments focuses heavily on restorative practices and spoke to how that framework largely influences their peer education initiative and emphasis on repairing harm. Likewise, several other participants described the influence of intergroup dialogue practices on the development and implementation of their initiatives.

Language of Social Justice and Inclusion

All participants in my study defined their initiative as social justice-oriented even as most of them include other terms, such as diversity or multiculturalism, in their names. In fact, only one initiative used the term social justice as part of its name, and only three others included the term in their overall description or goals. For example, the Social Justice Educators program has a goal of “Social Justice Education,” whereby “each resident will understand the identities of self and others, how the interaction between identities influences community, and the promotion of allyship and advocacy” (Jurnea). However, all of the initiatives included social justice concepts as part of their content. The initiatives heavily focused on self-awareness through understanding one’s intersecting social identities and positionality. For example, learning outcomes for Jurnea’s program included “exploration of self and personal reflection of self in relation to others,” “examine their personal values and identities,” and “define and explore the concepts of social, relational, and core identities.” Starting with understanding oneself,

most initiatives then moved to teaching broader concepts such as power, privilege, oppression, systems, equity, justice, and ally behaviors. Following the learning outcomes focused on exploration of self for Jurnea's Social Justice Educators was the outcome that students would demonstrate "knowledge of the role of power, privilege, and oppression on the histories and experiences of self and others." Thus exemplifying the move from a focus on self to understanding broader concepts.

Similar to Jurnea, RD described how the resident advisor course begins with a focus on identity and moves to broader concepts:

So we're talking about the I [self] before work exploring systems that are outside of our control. So we do a lot of identity exploration, talking about what identities do we hold that are salient, that are not salient? We talk about the privileges in those identities. After discussing that, we kind of then transition into the larger sphere of social justice and inclusion and talking about systems of power and oppression, the levels of oppression, and how we kind of either perpetuate those or our identities that are marginalized are oppressed through those levels of oppression.

Nikki described a similar progression of concepts from understanding oneself to understanding the experiences of others for peer advisor training:

I would say the structure, I think that's been something over the years as far as going from we understand that in order to understand someone else, you have to understand yourself. So that's why we really start with that, my own social identity exploration. So I can understand myself, and then I can hear the stories of others in my class to understand how they're experiencing, so then we start to move into that. Okay. I understand myself. I understand that there are people who have different experiences than me. What creates that different experience in how they experience the world? And then, so that's why we move into power, privilege, oppression. So now that I have that, those two things, what does that mean in my role? What does it mean for me to be an ally or to exhibit ally

behaviors towards others in my role or just for me as a person. And so that's why the last section is really focused on that.

Shawn's Social Justice Training Program included similar concepts, but he takes a somewhat different approach to their progression. Believing that participants may be more receptive if they can disassociate from more difficult topics, at least initially, he begins his training by covering power and privilege before moving into identity, intersectionality, systems of socialization, cultural competence, allyship and advocacy. He described these concepts as "the core five components to social justice." For Shawn, the five components in his training comprise social justice, which he emphasized must include an active component. Oliver also emphasized the active and aspirational nature of social justice:

I really think social justice is an active term, where you are working to actively create an inclusive community where people of all different identities and experiences have a sense of equity and safety that is permitted and supplied and provided productively in that option. And so I see social justice as an active component. Not just an environment, but more something that we're working towards.

Even as participants focus on the concepts allyship and advocacy in their trainings and programs, and they emphasize the active nature of social justice, they also shared that actually moving students to action was an area for improvement.

For Eden, social justice was not only a mission, but also frames her way of seeing and acting in the world. She described social justice as a "mindset. Social justice is when you're watching a movie and you're looking at who's represented and you're asking the

questions, who's at the table, where are the gaps? For me, I try to live that in my daily practice.” Participants described social justice as a lens for viewing the world and as an aspirational mission. They centered social justice concepts in their initiatives, which often progressed from a focus on self-awareness to an emphasis on other people’s experiences as well as societal structures and systems. While I noticed the absence of the term social justice in the names, descriptions, and goals of the initiatives that I explored, through my interviews I learned that this was an intentional choice by participants.

Social justice as covert language in residence life. While all participants described their initiative as social justice-oriented when opting in to this study, the majority of them also mentioned that the language “social justice” was intentionally not readily apparent nor publicized in their work. In effect, to continue the work of social justice education, they had to call it something else. For many, this manifested in the naming of the initiative that they represented. However, because of the influences upon the designs of social justice-oriented initiatives, which I share in the following section, some departments even changed their guiding documents or position titles to remove “social justice.” For example, Eden described how in her department

There was a discussion and there was a year that we actually took social justice out of our mission and it was all because of the voice of someone coming out of a different generation and during that time, social justice in their mind was politicized and that kind of thing, so we took it out of the department mission. We still continued to have the social justice and diversity initiative, which is a committee within our department.

She also shared that the person who advocated removing social justice did not see a problem with doing so because “inclusion” was still part of the mission.

Shawn and Nikki also described removing social justice from their position titles and departmental values respectively even as the professional competencies began situating equity, diversity, and inclusion within a social justice framework. For Shawn’s unit, this was due to the influence of stakeholders, while for Nikki’s it was to align with institutional language. All three spoke to how social justice work was still happening in spite of these changes in language. This was something Kate spoke about as well. She shared

So, [Institution] is a tricky place sometimes. And sometimes, in order to do our best work, we have to do it without saying that we're doing it. And that's really frustrating for some of our staff. Particularly, since we are very intentional about recruiting people who are passionate about social justice and inclusion and who want to see us make strides in those areas. But sometimes, we have to use different words or focus certain things towards community and not be really public about it. . .If we ever put it, publicly, on our website, someone would probably tell us to stop doing what we're doing.

Several participants described that social justice has a negative connotation among stakeholders, which has led them to name their work differently. For example, Elizabeth described that in her Leadership Class, they do not use the term social justice often after finding “that students really either take to it in a way that is not productive for engaging conversations with multiple perspectives, or they're scared off by even saying social justice.” Jurnea shared that her unit uses the language of multiculturalism even as they

don't actually engage under a multicultural framework. Jurnea is considering renaming their initiative to more aptly align with the work they are doing, but she is hesitant stating

Multicultural is more inviting, right? It's not as politicized of a term. It still gets to be related to dish/dance/song, if you will, just like exploration of difference and it invites folks who may not be ready to use their position or their privilege to incite change to at least being invited to the dialogue and the conversation itself. If our purpose is to assist residents in exploring their own identities, values and those of others, then we probably, we may want to consider what language does to bring that.

For Jurnea, aligning the name of the program with the work she feels they are doing may turn off the audience the Social Justice Educators (pseudonym) intend to serve. Shawn also described that "it's difficult to push social justice without that negative connotation," and thus "social justice is always the end goal" even as various departments may name their work differently. Participants shared the feeling that there is risk inherent in using the term social justice to represent their work or departmental values, which leads them to engage in social justice education while only covertly calling it such. However, participants commonly discussed inclusion as an overt value and goal of their work in residence life.

"Inclusion being inclusion of everyone." While the term "social justice" was removed from the guiding documents in several departments where participants work, the term "inclusion" was readily embraced. For example, Lauren shared that one of her department's six values is inclusion, which means they are "committed to developing environments where all students can feel a sense of belonging and are able to fully engage in the residence hall experience." Similarly, Elizabeth's department added "ability

to contribute to an inclusive community” as one of the goals for her department’s course learning outcomes and residential curriculum. The learning outcome for this goal is that

Students will examine their own identity and develop skills in areas of multicultural competence to effectively develop inclusive relationships. Students will do this through articulating the need for creating inclusive communities within a residence hall setting [and] practicing the skills that enable student[s] to understand and advocate for the cultural needs and differences of others.

Eden’s Social Justice Dialogues Living and Learning Community (SJD LLC) includes a learning outcome that states students will be able to “articulate how they will contribute to building a safe and inclusive community,” and Jurnea’s course for Social Justice Educators includes a learning outcome that students will develop “enhanced skills for the development of social inclusion.” Part of the overall description of RD’s resident advisor course states it will “build an understanding of creating inclusive communities by using the tools of development theories, practical application, and self-reflection.” Oliver described how the Eastern Men’s Learning Community explores “what does inclusion look like? How do you build a safe and just environment where people feel included and supported?” Nikki shared that inclusion more aptly represented the work they are able to do, which at times frustrated students:

It was hard for students to then think about inclusion being inclusion of everyone. So I think when we use social justice, they want us to be at the front lines of really advocating in a way that we can't necessarily always do because we're trying to support everybody. So I would say some unrealistic expectations maybe from some of our students in wanting us to do some things that we can't do in order to be inclusive.

Nikki's comments and conceptualization of inclusion exemplify why it is a term that does not receive resistance. Inclusion is a concept that people readily embrace because it seems to be for everyone. However, characterizing inclusion in the way Nikki does suggests that social justice is at odds with inclusion or somehow excludes rather than supports. This characterization is contrary to the aims of social justice, which involves people striving for "full and equal participation of all groups in a society" (Bell, 1997). Her comments imply that advocating for one group detracts from their ability to support another. These misconceptions do help to explain why there is risk inherent in using the language "social justice" given the negative connotation it may hold for folks who influence the work these participants are doing. Using the language of inclusion draws less attention to the work that is occurring, engages the intended audience (typically students), and enables the work to continue. Participants drew on their own conceptualization of social justice to frame the design of their initiatives, but several other factors influenced the content and experiences that participants designed in pursuit of social justice education. In the next section, I elaborate on these key influences upon professionals designing social justice-oriented initiatives.

Influences upon the Design of Social Justice-Oriented Initiatives

Through open-ended coding, I found that participants spoke frequently about factors influencing the design of their initiatives. These influences included institutional factors, stakeholders, and resources.

Institutional factors. Aspects such as the institutional context, geographic location, priorities, commitments, departmental values, and organizational structures

influenced the design of social justice-oriented initiatives. For example, although Nia defined Diversity Dialogues in the Halls as social justice-oriented, she described how her office uses the term diversity in the name of the program because “it’s in alignment with the institution and so our language at [institution] is diversity.” Similarly, Nikki described how an institutional shift in terminology influenced her functional area and guiding documents:

We've used social justice as one of our values and used that language in our documents in housing, within housing specifically. And then, recently, the entire institution is under a diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic plan started a couple years ago. So, we've changed our language this year and our values now have a diversity, equity, and inclusion. And then, through those values, we promote social justice, but instead of using social justice as the name of our values, it is diversity, equity, and inclusion instead to be more encompassing of what we're doing in addition to social justice.

Although institutional terminology has shifted, Nikki still describes the importance of institutional commitment to the Peer Advisors program: “So I think that's what's continued to help support and sustain it...is the institution's commitment, so knowing that this has been the institution's commitment to creating a more inclusive space.” Similar to Nikki, Lauren described how the university’s priorities have supported the workshops she creates with Diversity Evolved, which she defined as social justice-oriented:

Factors that support ... definitely the university shift in their diversity and inclusion efforts have really been a huge support because now it's like.... The institution or our president now supports this so now we can start doing things. I think that has made the biggest difference in our ability to do some of things that we want to do, whereas before we had the university's support, but it wasn't vocal support, and now it's very vocal support. Not only from the president's office, but from our overall student life division.

Lauren emphasized that the university's explicit commitment has been an important factor influencing their ability to continue the social justice-oriented work her unit is doing.

In addition to institutional factors influencing the language and terminology of the social justice-oriented initiatives, they also influence the timing and success of development and implementation. For example, Eden described

I think the timing of developing any of the ... in developing an LLC, was a good time. It was a goal for the university to ensure that all first-year students were in a LLC. The other thing is, there was more talk at the time coming off of that multicultural competency, but then the quality enhancement plan moved into global engagement.

While the timing was right for the creation of SJD LLC on Eden's campus, Elizabeth described how her university was redefining their mission, vision, and goals. This transition has influenced the social justice work that Elizabeth anticipated doing as part of her role along with how colleagues prioritize such work:

...like when I came into this position, social justice was supposed to be a part of what I was doing, and we were supposed to have social justice committee and all this other stuff. None of that stuff happened because of consolidation and because we're waiting for a real strategic plan and real vision to happen from a university perspective, so we'll start cross campus delegations or committees to be able to address some of these things. So I think there's more that we can do. I would say as a department, and as our leadership team, our department would say we are all about social justice, and I think that the people within our group are for those components and for that education. Whether or not there's an active role that people are playing, I think that's more me and a couple of RDs, not that other people aren't bought into that or supportive of that. Just the way in which we do things doesn't always prioritize that.

Here, Elizabeth emphasizes that the lack of clarity of the institution's priorities such as the mission, vision, and values, had affected the way staff members prioritize social justice education. Without explicit goals related to social justice, some of her colleagues have vocally supported it without enacting such a commitment in their daily work.

Stakeholders. Another key influence upon the design and delivery of social justice-oriented initiatives are stakeholders such as students, parents, donors, alumni, media, and leadership. Their buy-in or resistance to such initiatives had profound effects on participant decision-making in relation to their initiatives.

Students are the key stakeholders in all of these initiatives, and participants prioritized both student feedback and readiness in the design and delivery of them. Eden described how student interest continues to sustain the SJD LLC program:

I think it was a way that our students, who were not sure of how they would be embraced by [institution] for their own identity, that they found a place there. Then there were other students like, 'I came to [institution] because I wanted to learn about diversity and people different from myself so that's why I signed up for it.' At the end of the day, who's going to say, 'No, we don't want to talk about diversity and social justice.' In some way, it was the hot topic.

The "hot topic" nature of diversity and social justice augmented student interest, filled beds in the LLC, and therefore sustained the program. Similarly, Nikki described how students have influenced the creation and continuity of the Peer Advisors program, which "is rooted in student activism, came to be out of that, and I think we continue to sustain it in that way, as well, that students really, if anything, they want more." While student support and feedback for these initiatives are imperative, student readiness is an

important consideration in their design and delivery. For example, Jurnea described the influence both of student feedback and readiness on the Social Justice Educators curriculum:

We've shifted some of our learning goals, and shifted the language, learning objectives, learning outcomes based on feedback. We have also ... we've seen where our students are, and we've seen where they're not, and by and large we have primarily first year students and so we've seen where a majority of our students may not be as aware of perspectives that are different from their own before experiencing at the onset of the academic year if you will compared to where they are when they leave the halls or when they exit their first, second, third etc. year. Yeah, those. We've continued to see varying ranges in terms of that data. We use a system called Think Tank to collect data from the para professionals about the experience residents had, and so sometimes qualitative information that we collect also helps us understand what language is being used or not being used which might help us to better market the lesson plans, or the experiences, opportunities we're trying to develop for residents.

Students' background and experiences influence where students are in terms of understanding and readiness upon entry to the institution. Lauren emphasized how important considering student demographics was when evaluating readiness and designing programs. She described how the student demographics and background at the institution where she works influence the choices she made about the Diversity Evolved workshops:

It's a predominately white institution and the majority of our students come from very affluent and wealthy families, and so when you jump right into social justice it's almost like they feel targeted for having access to the things that they have access to, whereas, if we break it down a little bit simpler and say, 'Oh, you're from Jersey and you're from New York, let's talk about your differences first,' it gives them a little bit something to relate to and their guard isn't immediately up.

My participants found student interest, background, feedback, and readiness as critical influences upon the design of social justice-oriented initiatives. However, current students were not the only stakeholders influencing the design and delivery of social justice-oriented initiatives.

In addition to students, several participants spoke about the influence parents, donors, and alumni on their initiatives. In particular, resistance by these stakeholders has led participants to roll back the extent to which they would define their initiative as social justice-oriented even though these stakeholders were often small in number. Kate described several occasions when initiatives in her department have come under fire. For example, their resident advisor training tends to be progressive given the conservative campus climate and surrounding area. A couple of years ago media pundits wrote about it very critically. She described how they needed “to dial back pretty significantly. It’s really unfortunate for us. . . We know that some of our sessions were recorded for use in these articles, and we know that those sessions were recorded by people who were on our staff.” Shawn had a similar experience when he was trying to develop a new peer education initiative to complement his Social Justice Training Program. He described how “a couple of donors and alumni were pulling rank and threatening a little bit.” However, he was pleased with the institutional support he received from key leaders:

I would say on the pro side, the Dean of Students at the time or still the Dean of Students was really in my corner. We had the new President just stepped into this and so he was like, ‘Look. We’ll find a way to handle this.’ There are people institutionally that were supportive. At the same time, externally, it was very much trouble.

The support Shawn received from key leaders provided him the coverage he needed to continue the work he was brought to the campus to do.

When describing the evolution of the Dialogue Facilitators program, Kate also discussed a time when they received quite a bit of pushback from parents and students alike:

These are difficult conversations for people to have. So, students and parents had some feelings that, from the conversations we were having in the dialogue. And institutional leadership that would make decisions about the curriculum ...felt that our dialogues were too high of a level of an initial learning entry point. I disagree, but I'm not in charge. So, we were asked to level it down a bit and create one standard curriculum so that we can ensure that we focused more on the dialogue skills and less on the identity elements.

Unlike in the situation Shawn described, leadership in Kate's situation responded to stakeholder resistance by forcing a curricular and content change in the program.

Similarly, Lauren reflected on her department's choice of language around their program.

For example, in addition to current institutional priorities, they use the language of diversity and intercultural competence, even as she defines their Diversity Evolved program as social justice-oriented, in part because of resistance they have experienced in the past. She describes:

I think when we immediately go to social justice and using those terms my department has had really bad experiences and so they've shied away from that for sure. We're slowly getting back to a point where we can begin to share information with students without feeling the backlash from faculty, or other members, or stakeholders in the university.

The resistance Lauren's department has experienced in the past lead them to cautiously progress in their educational initiatives from a diversity and awareness focus back towards social justice education. Resistance by stakeholders has had varying levels of influence upon the design of social justice-oriented initiatives from simply perpetuating a name change to forcing the reconceiving of the entire curriculum.

Finally, institutional leaders and participants' supervisors proved to be key stakeholders influencing the design and implementation of social justice-oriented initiatives. In particular, leadership serve as gatekeepers whose priorities have a role in what staff are able to emphasize in their work. RD described the influence of leadership's accountability (or lack thereof) for social justice work in residence life can have on the team sharing

I think for a lot of us in our department, a lot of the personal staff accountability with social justice work and equity work is sometimes put in the back corner. There is a lack of accountability. And we're trying to work on this in creating an actual committee where our leadership team is at the forefront of the social justice work. And it's been because we've been putting a lot of pressure on them to do that.

Leadership may also influence the design and delivery of initiatives based on their prior experiences. For example, Jurnea described how her new program director may decide not to use intergroup dialogue because they are not trained facilitators. Instead, the program director

May decide to utilize other facilitative techniques that they have developed over time or in their graduate work, or in their professional career. The [Social Justice Educators] program is hugely based upon who the program director is at the time.

Shawn also discussed the influence of new leadership upon the work that he is doing with the Social Justice Training Program:

In the midst of all the reorgs, it's particularly frustrating when you had motions in place, with my position with maybe the prior Director or Executive Director and then once they're gone and new leadership comes in all that gets put to the side or killed in some way, shape or form. Now you're left with figuring out how to reestablish your position without the support that was once promised to you or whatever. It's frustrating in that sense.

Just as leadership's priorities and prior experience can pose challenges for the vision my participants had for their initiatives, they can also be important allies in the work given the positional power they hold.

Although Shawn works for a Housing department, he shared how "the [Social Justice Training Program] was put on the radar of the Vice President of Student Affairs, and she saw that it was something she wanted to make accessible campus wide." Leaders have significant influence on how and where staff are able to spend their time and thus whether social justice is emphasized in their work. More specifically, participants' supervisors were the leaders who most influenced their work designing and delivering social justice-oriented initiatives. They can choose whether and how to prioritize social justice education, facilitate ongoing learning, and hold staff accountable.

Kate talked at length about how important having a supportive supervisor has been not only in the midst of challenges, but also in supporting her role with the Dialogue Facilitators, even as it is not part of her position description. In addition to support from supervisors, participants described how they as supervisors prioritize ongoing learning

and development for their staff, who are also responsible for social justice-oriented initiatives for students. For example, Shawn described working with his graduate student. He explained

We'd meet weekly and we'd have conversations about different topics and identities, but what I tried to do in those situations for consistency, I tried to make them more systematic. Maybe in August we'll talk about race. Every week we meet we're having a conversation about race. We watch *Dear White People*. The next week we watch *The Power of the Illusion* and so on and so forth. The next month maybe we talk about gender. That's how we would do it. We would make it aligned with whatever big event we had coming up. We would use that month to tailor to that. Hunger Banquet was in October. That one would be about food insecurity.

Likewise, Oliver would prioritize ongoing learning and development with the staff member overseeing Eastern Men's Learning Community by making questions about the students' growth and development in relation to social justice central to their weekly report. Rather than allowing operational aspects of running a residence hall to consume weekly discussions and updates, Oliver made sure to prioritize social justice education by making it central to the agenda of weekly meetings with his staff. Using his role as a supervisor to center social justice work signaled to his staff that this area was a priority even in the midst of the day to day operations of residence life. When supervisors did not prioritize social justice education in this way, it posed challenges for participants who were committed to doing this work. Supervisors who held their teams accountable for ongoing social justice learning, and who supported their staff members in committing time and resources towards social justice initiatives that fall outside their daily

operational responsibilities were critical for mitigating the influence of limited human resources on social justice initiatives.

Human resources. Participants spoke at length about the influence of human resources on the successful implementation of their initiatives. In particular, hiring, staffing, retention, and operational responsibilities influenced their capacity for designing and delivering social justice-oriented initiatives. With regard to hiring, several participants detailed how their selection process addresses whether candidates have values and competence related to social justice. Given some of the limitations I discuss subsequently, such as needing more time for professional development with regard to social justice education, participants stressed the importance of hiring those who they define as competent in this area. For example, Elizabeth shared “As far as the RDs [resident directors] go, I think for the most part, the people that we hire are very competent in these areas. Some people are more passionate than others.” Elizabeth elaborated that she

Feel[s] confident in our current people's abilities that I've never felt like this is something we really need to touch on more. If I felt like our people were struggling with some of these pieces, I would have more hesitation to having them talk about them without as much preparation, but honestly, we hire really good people, and I know they're already doing a lot of these facilitation pieces with the curriculum.

Similarly, Nia described how their Housing unit hires vocal advocates. Jurnea also described how her unit incorporates questions during the recruitment process that illuminate candidates' values, so the department can ensure they demonstrate a

commitment to social justice and inclusion. Hiring good people is critical to the sustainability of social justice-oriented initiatives, but participants also described at length the effects of having too few staff or not having staff who can be fully committed to the work of social justice within a department due to competing priorities. For example, Jurnea shared that colleagues across the institution call upon her unit to facilitate trainings and experiences, but this can be taxing on such a small staff:

Because we have so many resources, people can call us to host training, facilitate different experiences and opportunities on campus events. Well, really what I'm saying is trying to respond to those requests, but also that we need more professional staff to get the work, and then that becomes a challenge when we have campus partners who don't have as many resources and see us as an ally in the work, and we want to be their allies, but we don't necessarily have the capacity to continue to provide this level of support that everyone needs.

Similarly, Shawn's work extends beyond Housing, but limited staff have affected his capacity to meet the needs of all units:

It was two of us, but ever since the reorganization and new leadership, and I told you maybe we'd go in to this a little bit later, they decided to prioritize other areas of Housing, social justice at that point and time. The position my graduate student graduated, I was supposed to have a coordinator, but they kind of took the coordinator off line and they took the graduate assistant off line. They didn't decide to back fill those positions.

Even within a single department, staff experience competing priorities for their time that can influence their ability to engage in social justice education. For instance, Eden described how operational needs and learning goals were sometimes at odds when her department did not "allow [them] to choose staff based on the LLC. So, if I know that

there's a coordinator with a great knowledge about this topic, they can't be placed there.” By “there,” she refers to not placing staff in the SJD LLC even when they have the social justice knowledge base required to facilitate a transformative experience for participants. Additionally, Elizabeth described feeling like they “have like five jobs.” She described being the “social justice person” in a department that does not have staff fully dedicated to this work:

Everybody that I know that has worked in the social justice area, if you were not in multicultural affairs, like if you're in housing, and you're the social justice person, that's not a priority. But the department typically, it's something they want you to do, and they want it to look good, but it's not your purpose there. It's extra workload that you take on because you care about it, and you know that it needs to happen, and if nobody else does it, it won't get done.

She has committed to taking on this “extra” workload, but doing so has been tiresome as she balances multiple competing demands.

While limited staffing has been challenging for participants, so too has staff retention and turnover. In many of the departments where my participants work, entry-level professionals are implementing the initiatives that participants in my study designed. Given that this role, typically as hall directors, is entry-level, they often leave within three to five years. Turnover is a contributing factor leading to understaffed departments with employees balancing multiple competing demands. Turnover can also influence the continuity of social justice-oriented initiatives. It can pose challenges because of the lost knowledge about the program’s theoretical base, if it exists, the historical origins, and decisions throughout the evolution of the program. Most of the

participants in my study arrived on campus after the creation of the initiative that we discussed, and the majority were thus unfamiliar with any theoretical origins that may have informed the initiative at some point. Further, they shared that turnover affected the continuity and consistency of the program. For example, Eden described how turnover affected preparedness to facilitate the SJD LLC in comparison to prior years:

I think the challenging part of the evolution of the program is the constant change of staff. We've had some people, a couple of coordinators in particular, that already came in with ... One being the co-founder, with me and then the second one being someone who already came in with background and passion and well-read and understanding social justice on a deeper level. So unfortunately, I feel that last year in particular, took a dip because you had a brand-new coordinator and then you had a brand-new assistant coordinator. One of them of course had more knowledge, but not so much how to relay that to first year students and how to work with them.

Additionally, turnover brings new staff with varying foundations of knowledge and experiences. Ongoing training and development requires human resources, but often the benefits are limited as staff depart their roles and the cycle begins again. Thus, organizations as a whole sometimes struggle to surpass introductory levels of training and development because of the recurring turnover. Additionally, where student leaders are implementing the initiatives as peer educators, their time as an undergraduate is limited, but the emotionally taxing nature of the work also leads to retention challenges. Nikki describes how this has impacted her Peer Advisors.

It's part of the nature of that, but we also know part of it is the nature of this work, so it's very ... It can be taxing on individuals. Particularly, we tend to have a higher number of students of color who are hired as [Peer Advisors], although they're not all students of color. But we know that folks that have some of these

identities or marginalized identities tend to be more passionate about this work and interested, and also it creates that space of feeling drained and burnt out.

Limited staffing and turnover both pose challenges to the social justice-oriented initiatives my participants are developing and implementing where the initiative is among many competing responsibilities. In response, some departments have found the resources to hire staff solely dedicated to social justice work in residence life.

About half of the people I interviewed for this study focus solely on social justice-oriented initiatives in Housing through their role, and they shared the value of having positions wholly dedicated to this work. For example, Nia states “I’m just saying a person who has to worry about all the ResLife stuff too can’t fully dedicate to the work of diversity and inclusion within your department.” Similarly, Oliver supervises a staff member who is responsible for Eastern Men’s Learning Community, and shared

There is such value of having a full-time staff member to be present for more than just half time, and it allows them to be more invested in the community and to get more creative and deeper in terms of the learning component and the support for the students.

Although there is value in having a staff member who is completely dedicated to social justice education within a residence life department, this can also lead to this work being done in a silo rather than fully integrated to the work of the department. Further, having such personnel resources can lead other departments to call upon the residence life staff to the extent that demand outweighs human resources and staff are overtaxed. There are tradeoffs to this model just as there are limitations inherent in not having staff dedicated

to this work. Just as institutional factors, stakeholders, and human resources influence the design of social justice-oriented initiatives, several key factors inform their design.

Factors Informing the Design of Social Justice-Oriented Initiatives

In addition to influences upon the design of social justice-oriented initiatives, participants spoke often about how personal experiences, professional preparation or development, and academic resources informed the design and delivery of their initiatives. While the influences upon design affected decision-making about the initiative, the factors informing design affected content.

Personal experiences. When asked what resources inform the development of initiatives and what has supported the work, participants often referenced personal passion, identity, and experience. When describing how she incorporated more social justice concepts in the existing resident advisor leadership class, Elizabeth shared, “I’ve had social justice training and that’s a passion area for me. That was something that I specifically integrated more. I was hesitant to do it at first honestly.” Elizabeth went on to share the reason she was hesitant at first was that they were new to their role and still learning departmental culture. RD shared that because of her “passion with social justice and inclusion and equity work [she] became a chair this last year of the work group that basically, overseeing the curriculum and making edits and suggestions for class, with implementation in the spring.” Passion for the work lead participants to seek training opportunities and leadership roles that would enable them to engage with social justice education further. For several participants, passion for the work resulted from their own experiences and identities.

Several participants drew upon their own experiences as individuals who hold multiply marginalized identities when developing educational initiatives for students.

Nikki shared

I would say my own identities and experiences, like most folks that come to this work. So I think with my own experience as a student of color on a predominantly white research one kind of institution, what that means and the experiences I have, I think really help to inform me and my own identities. But I'm always learning, so I think that's recognizing my experience isn't the only experience and always learning, whether that's identities I haven't explored myself, so learning more about myself or learning about others and their experiences.

Similarly, Lauren described that her experience as a Black woman informs her work with the Diversity Evolved workshop series:

I am a huge advocate for individuals who identify as members of marginalized and minoritized populations. As a minority myself both in race and gender, and so, just empowering people overall and spreading the information I think that people can't say they don't know if I've created the content and given them the opportunity to learn about it, they just have to have the willingness to do so.

For both Lauren and Nikki, their experiences as women of color inform the social justice-oriented initiatives they are creating for undergraduate students. All participants held at least one and often multiple marginalized identities. While their experiences as members of particular social identity groups informed participants in designing and delivering social justice-oriented initiatives, so too did their previous professional experiences. Often, they relied more on their personal and professional experiences than any particular research or theories. For example, Elizabeth shared that there was no specific theory or practice they drew upon to inform the resident advisor leadership class. Instead, Elizabeth

said “A lot of it is mostly anecdotal [or] things we've done in the past, just best practices that we've seen in general.” Elizabeth elaborated:

I don't have any specific here's what I do. Because at this point, I've just been doing it for too long. But I think we try and talk about those different things, and I also give them the opportunity to talk to each other. So, when we're doing any kind of training with the RDs [Resident Directors], I ask them, okay, here are some of the things I've given you that I think help everybody else. What are the things that have worked for you? It's peer to peer education as well.

Experience plays a critical role in the work Elizabeth is doing in her current department. Similarly, Nikki shared “so it's been through our own experiential learning. I don't know if there's necessarily any literature we're drawing from other than how we've just created the course ourselves over the years.” While it is unsurprising that personal experiences would influence the work participants are doing, it was striking that they did not couple their experience with academic learning and development more often.

Professional preparation and development. Participants may be drawing so much on their personal passion, identity, and prior experiences because of the limited training they are receiving in master’s programs and the limited time for focusing on their social justice development professionally. Many of the staff who are delivering the social justice-oriented initiatives that my participants designed are new professionals, which means that their graduate program largely comprises the foundation of knowledge they bring to their role. Consistent with the literature, several participants spoke to the lack of focus on social justice education and facilitation in graduate preparatory programs for student affairs professionals even as there is an assumption that this is occurring. Nia

described incongruence between the assumptions about, and reality of, staff preparedness to engage in social justice education. She shared that while housing professionals expect entry-level staff have learned social justice concepts in their graduate programs, this is often not the case. Nia discussed how the assumption that there is more focus on social justice content in graduate programs led to reduced training once they are hired as professional staff. Several other participants echoed the reality that professional staff training is limited. RD described how her colleagues have a general shared understanding of social justice concepts, but specifies:

That didn't just happen from training because we didn't have really great social justice professional development training or anything within our team, to be honest. It's definitely improved throughout the years but when we all started last year as a team in July, we had one day that was dedicated to diversity and social justice.

Eden and Oliver both also commented on how limited time hinders the extent of staff training and ongoing development that can happen. Eden shared that in her workplace “there's not really required training, even by the university or the department, for people to even just have a basic knowledge of what does inclusion look like.” Oliver shared that the pure magnitude of content, which is ever evolving, can make it difficult to keep up against competing demands. However, both also emphasized the importance of taking responsibility for one's own ongoing learning. Oliver described

You don't just stop, you don't just become an expert, you don't just get to a level where you know it all. There's always things to keep learning, and there's always ways to keep diving in and unpacking your personal identity, and learning about the experiences of people who are different than you, and even similar to you.

Similarly, Eden shared the importance of seeking out professional development opportunities to engage in ongoing learning about social justice.

Only two of the participants in my study work for departments that have consistent, required, ongoing training for professional staff members. Both of these participants also serve in roles wholly focused on social justice education in residence life. In Nikki's department, the residence education staff take a fundamentals course during their first semester working for the department. Through this course, Nikki shares that new staff are

Getting some of that, again, introductory work to social identity. They're getting some of that understanding of power, privilege, and oppression and ally behaviors in their work thinking about it as a staff member. So they are all getting that baseline education, so we have this expectation that you're learning this, this is how we talk about it and think about, this is how we execute this work.

Nikki's department also hosts a multi-day summer social justice training that varies by topic each year, along with a workshop series, where each staff member is required to attend at least one workshop each semester. Similarly, Shawn's department hosts a five-week required training for residence education staff that focuses on identity. For example, their recent training focused on "systemic whiteness." While Shawn and Nikki work for departments that require this training, most other participants valued and prioritized this type of development, yet had to seek it out on their own. For example, Kate opted into an ongoing dialogue series for staff members. Eden took courses to enhance her knowledge on teaching social justice while developing the SJD LLC. Jurnea attended the Social Justice Training Institute. Elizabeth participated in the National Coalition Building

Institute's Train the Trainer. Oliver spoke extensively about the "reading of articles and books, and attending conferences and presentations and webinars as well as going to conferences" as critical for his ongoing development. They also participated in SafeZone, GreenZone, Intercultural Development Inventory Qualified Administrator, and Implicit Bias trainings.

Academic resources. Although participants stated that they were not drawing on particular theories or frameworks when designing their initiatives, many did reference literature that informed their work. Nia emphasized the importance of not only drawing on passion areas, but engaging in research before developing initiatives:

So I know for sure that even if it was self-identified or passion area or if it was just like I know nothing, start, where I come in is where is the historical context. I need resources like I need to ensure that there is also a credibility of research to it and so because that challenge back or sometimes say they didn't know my expectations and they do it before they even get there. My question to them are is this something that you knew or is this something you have to find and tell me what from that came about in your knowledge. And so there is always a challenge somewhere somehow or a conversation somewhere somehow about the research side of things and how that helps you to develop your own competency.

Some of the resources participants named as important either to their development of social justice-oriented initiatives or for use with students included books such as *College Students' Sense of Belonging. . .* by Strayhorn (2012); *Privilege, Power, and Difference* by Johnson (2005); *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice* by Adams, Bell, and Griffin (1997); *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High* by Patterson, Switzler, Grenny, and McMillan (2011); *From Debate to Dialogue* by Flick (1998); *Is Everyone Really Equal* by Sensoy and DiAngelo (2012); and *Creating*

Inclusive Campus Environments for Cross-Cultural Learning and Student Engagement by Harper (2008). However, the influence of literature, courses, and other academic resources was minimal compared to personal experiences and professional development. For many participants, it seemed that competing demands and time were at odds with investing the time needed to read and research to inform their social justice education efforts. While the factors influencing and informing the design of social justice-oriented initiatives emerged as an important theme, the essential components for delivering these initiatives did too.

Delivering Social Justice-Oriented Initiatives

Across interviews, participants spoke about critical strategies and skills for implementing their social justice-oriented initiatives. Strategies and skills for facilitation and delivery were key to how residence life professionals are teaching social justice. These facilitation behaviors include creating climate, fostering reflection and critical thinking, managing oneself, assessing the facilitation experience, negotiating conflict, actively engaging participants, and collaboratively and consistently facilitating.

Creating Climate

When describing how they facilitate social justice-oriented initiatives, or train others to do so, participants regularly discussed considerations related to the atmosphere. Components of the atmosphere include physical aspects of the space itself and the interpersonal dynamics among participants as well as between participants and facilitators. Physical aspects of the space itself included things such as accessibility,

furniture, lighting, temperature, technology, and décor. Lauren described a number of physical considerations when preparing to facilitate her workshops:

Thinking about our space and accessibility, so the first year, the very first year of [Diversity Evolved] most of the workshops were held in residence halls so not all students had access to the building. This year we re-imagined what we wanted the space to look like. If we were doing a workshop that required a lot of group activity or group conversation, putting them in small groups of about seven to eight people so that everyone's voice could be heard. When we did the stories of self we used a much larger space. It gives the students the opportunity who wrote actual poems and so it gave them a bigger space to break off in kind of quiet spots to write their own poems. Thinking about post-its on the wall for them to just jot down their initial thoughts or any questions that they have about some of the information being shared out. Thinking more about accessibility and inclusive of silent or ... not silent, invisible disabilities or identities, so making sure the rooms are equipped with audio, proper lighting. Making sure when we put together our Power Point slides things are created with universal design in mind.

Similarly, Eden discussed the importance of the SJD LLC students having a space that felt like their own, which was comfortable. Having a room that is too cold or furniture that is uncomfortable proved distracting for students, and affected the community-building necessary for authentic social justice dialogues.

Interpersonal dynamics of creating climate included building trust and fostering connections. Participants also discussed setting up a climate that encourages power-sharing between the facilitator and participants. For example, Shawn said “I welcome them to share their piece [perspective]. I always promote a symbiotic environment which means that I want to learn from you and your perspectives the way you want to learn from me.” One strategy Shawn and RD use to bring participant’s guards down and foster engagement at their workshops or in the classroom was to start with a systemic level

focus first rather than on individual identity. According to Shawn, this enables participants to “disassociate in order to dismantle.” In other words, detaching from students’ individual privilege at first reduced the likelihood of resistance influencing their engagement from the start. Several other participants discussed the value of establishing mutual expectations or ground rules in the beginning of a program. RD explained “we establish community agreements in the beginning to set the tone for respectful inquiry and dialogue during the first week of class.” In addition to group norms, facilitators used team builders and icebreakers to establish connection between participants. Connection was imperative for establishing trust and empathy, which enabled participants to be more vulnerable and authentic during dialogues. Vulnerability was a key aspect of the climate that participants tried to foster. When describing how he fosters an atmosphere that engages residents, Oliver addressed many of the considerations for creating climate that other participants noted were important to how they are teaching social justice:

In terms of the facilitation, one of the most important things is, at the beginning, to provide an opportunity to disarm the environment, where you are building relationships and rapport with the individuals who are there, because the more trust that you can build with the individuals in attendance, the more vulnerable we've seen them be. And so that can be through some typical icebreakers or team-builders. That can be through just disclosure and support from the facilitator and building that relationship there. It can also be with building ground rules for the conversation, that the facilitator, starting with a positive and vulnerable sense of role-modeling at the beginning is a huge support to the community after that, for that initiative, because if the facilitator doesn't build a sense of vulnerability, it can be hard for the rest of the participants to follow that. Then during the initiatives, if someone is being well engaged and vulnerable, celebrating that and affirming that.

Attending to the physical space and interpersonal dynamics is foundational for effectively teaching social justice. Creating climate is a prerequisite for fostering the engagement and vulnerability necessary for transformative experiences. Facilitators attend to creating climate from the start, but it is an ongoing process that may influence their success with the rest.

Fostering Reflection and Critical Thinking

Many of the initiatives participants in this study oversee begin with self-reflection and awareness. Given this emphasis, the facilitators are often teaching social justice by facilitating reflection and critical thinking. For example, Lauren describes how she “just want[s] to create a space and opportunities to kind of get the wheel turning on things that they haven't thought critically about.” In order to do so, she and other participants discuss how they address groupthink and help students learn to frame their contributions productively during dialogues. Additionally, she described a number of tools for facilitating reflection such as journaling and reflection art. Elizabeth, who oversees a course for resident advisors grounded in social justice, described how she uses reflection as a tool for teaching social justice:

For some of the classes we have, at the beginning of the class, there's a note card we hand out, and they have to ask questions on the note card or write down key thoughts. And at the end of class, they have our little reflection prompt, and they turn it in afterwards. With students, their only homework essentially is reflection, so every week, they're given prompt questions, and they get to choose two out of the four prompt questions to answer, and that's their homework, and then the RDs are looking through that, coming back to that in class and being like oh I saw your reflections. Here are some of the things that I saw from people, does anybody have any additional questions about this, because it seemed like it came up a lot.

Reflection and critical thinking were key to students' learning and development.

Reflection was a key tool for enhancing self-awareness, which was foundational to most initiatives. Most of the initiatives in my study incorporated opportunities for students to reflect on their own experiences and identities in relation to each core concept addressed in the curriculum such as identity, privilege, oppression, power, etc. Reflection fostered meaning-making, but participants were also challenged to contextualize their own experiences by considering institutional and systemic influences upon them. Although they were called to engage in critical reflection, most initiatives fell short of engaging students in critical action for change. However, their heightened self-awareness and skills in critical analysis may lay a foundation for action in the future.

Managing Oneself

Participants shared how they attend to their emotional and physiological responses while facilitating social justice-oriented initiatives. Doing so requires a certain level of self-awareness and emotional intelligence. Self-awareness involved facilitators taking time to “explore and unpack their own biases” and “understanding their identity as it relates to power, privilege, and oppression” (Jurnea). For student facilitators, these opportunities for self-exploration, prior to engaging their peers in dialogue, were particularly powerful. Additionally, self-care was named as an important aspect of self-management. Some forms of self-care and wellness included taking breaks, pulse checks, and breathing deeply. One tool for managing oneself RD mentioned was called PAN: pay attention now. According to RD,

There's internal and external panning...more so with conversations about social justice, there's a lot of internal dialogue that's happening and being aware of how there are physiological responses to what is gonna [sic] be triggering. So understanding if you are getting clammy hands or your heartbeat is racing or starting to race and you're breathing very deeply, this could be something that's potentially triggering you and how to you navigate that. So understanding those emotions and physiological responses that you might be going through.

In addition to being aware of one's presence and physiological responses, participants discussed the importance of discerning how vulnerable and transparent to be with the participants of the programs they facilitate. Eden described walking the "line of being professional, but be as transparent, letting the students see where you struggle or talk about a past struggle of your own, while still balancing the fact that you don't want to make yourself the subject of conversation." Similarly, other participants described limiting self-disclosure or being cautious about sharing personal experiences. Adeptness with the next skill, assessing the facilitation experience, aided participants in navigating the balance between personal veiling and disclosure.

Assessing the Facilitation Experience

The residence life professionals I interviewed reflected on their own self-awareness and management while facilitating, but they also talked extensively about assessing how the experience was progressing for participants and responding accordingly. Complementing internal panning for managing oneself is external panning, which involves an awareness of the group's responses to the facilitator, to other participants, and to the activities. RD describes external panning as

Just being aware of who's in the space, is making us think outwards. So this is more out as external. Looking at engaging the room and responses in the space. How people are reacting... So being aware of how other people are reacting and seeing and responding to discussions and dialogue. And with that, being open to asking questions. Like hey, 'I see that your response to that, you seemed a little agitated. Can you speak more about that? What's going on?'"

Oliver employs classroom assessment techniques to assess the facilitation experience. For example, with the "muddiest point" technique, he has students write down on a card something that did not make sense to them to give the facilitator a sense of how the participants understand the content. He used these responses to evaluate what content to revisit in later sessions. Lauren described how she uses pulse checks during the facilitation experience: "scanning the room a little bit more, taking in how the audience is feeling, giving them an opportunity to kind of take a break or do a pulse check on how people are feeling about the nature of the information." While scanning the room she describes her responsibility for "making sure that as a facilitator I'm aware of when, again, something has triggered something in a student or noticing body language, or tones, and things like that that other people may not pick up on." Part of assessing the experience also requires facilitators to be perceptive about how participants are experiencing them as facilitators. Jurnea describes that for student Social Justice Educators facilitating alone, "it is important that they recognize how other people experience them. The fishbowl activity allows folks who are observing to comment back to them, mirror back to them, 'this is what I'm seeing, how your body language has shifted.'" This is one way that student facilitators can gain an awareness of how participants perceive them, and draw upon this knowledge in real time. In addition to

noticing and acknowledging dynamics, participants described the facilitator's responsibility for moving the dialogue along by finding ways to respond in the moment.

As a strategy for moving the dialogue along, facilitators might take notes about who is talking and how often in order to invite others to the dialogue where appropriate and to ensure one or two people don't monopolize discussions. Additionally, Jurnea shared that notetaking could be used "to inform how we might strategize, like in the moment where to move the dialogue...acknowledging the dynamic in the midst of the dialogue to communicate 'I'm experiencing silence and I'm trying to determine what that's about.'" As a tool for developing facilitator's adeptness at decision-making on the spot, some participants described using theater warm-up activities. Jurnea shared

The arts and theater piece helps them to think on their feet because when you're engaged in facilitating dialogue, you're responsible for assessing the situation, responding immediately and when they're engaged in theater practice, they're responsible for continuing to engage in the moment, and in assessing the situation, and finding ways to respond.

There are many examples of theater warm-up activities that get the participants moving in space and interacting with one another. The embodied and interactive nature of these activities helps them to develop as leaders of learning. One low risk warm-up, "stop/go," involves participants moving around a space. The word stop comes to mean go and vice versa. Then, additional terms are added that mean the opposite. For example, when the leader says "name" participants are actually supposed to "hop," and vice versa. This activity gets folks moving, laughing, and thinking. An activity more directly related to oppression involves the group compiling a list of six to eight words that come to mind in

response to a prompt such as “what does it mean to be powerful?” Then, the participants gather in a circle facing outwards. When the leader says one of the words from the list, the participants have to turn into the circle and demonstrate that term with their body. While theater activities can help prepare facilitators for assessing and responding in the moment, they can also be used to get participants used to active engagement during trainings and programs. Facilitators who successfully assess the facilitation experience may at times detect conflict that warrants their attention or possibly intervention.

Negotiating Conflict

Many of the participants discussed how conflict is necessary within social justice education, and asserted that facilitators must become comfortable with the discomfort it produces. For example, Elizabeth described how some instructors of her Leadership class struggle with confrontation, but could use more training in that area because it is a necessary skill. Similarly, Eden described how social justice necessitates “being uncomfortable and so when you feel that tension or conflict, to just be okay sitting in that moment. Sit with the conflict. Sit with the struggle and the challenge and I have had conversation with staff about that.” In addition to embracing conflict, for participants, teaching social justice necessitated addressing negative behaviors, challenging thoughts contrary to the aims of social justice, and repairing harm. They mentioned that they needed to do all of this while still engaging participants and navigating resistance or defensiveness. They offered that negative behaviors such as laughing, side chatter, or disengagement could be addressed one on one, with care, and outside of a session. Likewise, they shared phrases that they commonly use such as “expand more on that,”

and “what do you mean by...” to get to the root of what a student means by their contributions. Oliver described a time he had to use these phrases during a session with the Eastern Men’s Learning Community:

There were some very challenging statements by some of the students, but it's important to have facilitators present who can call those statements out and ask for a little bit more clarity and unpack that, in a safe way. Not saying, ‘I'm surprised that you just said that,’ but saying, ‘What do you mean by that?’ And then providing the alternative, and saying, ‘Well, in terms of social norms, this is why that may be challenging.’

For Oliver, it was imperative to address participants in a way that did not close them off to further conversations and contributions, while still challenging harmful statements. For Lauren, directly acknowledging when something harmful has occurred, and checking in with participants, was very important for negotiating conflict successfully. She described how

If something heated has happened, just taking a minute to say, ‘We realize that something was just said that may have triggered some things so we just want to check thumbs up, thumbs down how are you all feeling? Let's take the next few minutes to do a few deep breaths and kind of relax and get it all out, or on a piece of paper let's just jot down how you're feeling in this moment. If you feel comfortable share with us how you're feeling and why that is.’

Participants saw being able to effectively negotiate conflict as an essential skill for facilitating social justice-oriented initiatives in part because doing so kept students, even those being challenged, actively engaged in the experience.

Actively Engaging Participants

All participants shared a commitment to active learning in their approach to teaching social justice in residence life. Shawn described why experiential learning is so important for him to include in the initiatives he facilitates:

The activities are critical because they're interactive and for me as the athlete, right? For some reason I always go back to this analogy, I don't know why, but there's a difference between a training and a learning session. I go to a basketball training camp. I'm expected to dribble a basketball. I'm expected to shoot. I'm expected to do something I can leave with, tangibly. If I'm going to a seminar, maybe not so much. I'm expected to maybe learn some facts and some history on how to play the game. For me if I'm doing a training anything, institute, seminar, symposium, folks can believe that they're walk away with something tangible. For me the training is always, interaction is always important for me.

Like Shawn, other participants also prioritized interactive activities as a central feature of their facilitation and from which dialogue and application could stem. They described using various activities such as case studies, an identity gallery walk (student collages highlighting their salient social identity groups), challenge the stereotype, recognizing microaggressions, social identity profile, privilege checklist, and oppression tree to help students learn about these components. For example, RD describes that the oppression tree exemplifies “how we try to give visual representations of levels of oppression and how deeply rooted they are in our society.” Through this activity, students convene in groups and develop examples of how they see oppression manifest in their communities. According to Jurnea, the oppression tree “is a metaphor for how three levels of oppression operate simultaneously while supporting and influencing each other.” These levels include individual (leaves), institutional (trunk), and societal or

cultural (roots). Eden described how participants in SJD LLC apply their learning by developing a program proposal for a local conference: “each time they put it in, it's been accepted so they really speak highly of that experience and I think it gave them the confidence. That's what we wanted it to be, is a definite application of what you're learning.” Interactive activities and multiple modalities engaged learners and deepened their experiences by requiring students to apply their learning.

In terms of varying modalities for learning, participants described using video, arts, and storytelling during their initiatives because those approaches have a bigger effect on students and engage them with the material more significantly than sessions that are simply about sharing facts and that provide little opportunity to interact with the content. Further, Lauren describes how she “bring[s] a lot of variety to the delivery of the content because I think that we have to be inclusive of all the different learning styles of our students.” Participants described asking questions as a key strategy for engaging students, but not always in the large group. For example, participants use think-pair-share, small groups, and community circles for dialogue throughout their initiatives. They also described engaging quiet participants by inviting them to the dialogue: “Suzie, did you have something to share?” while still allowing the students to decline the invitation. One challenge that many of the participants faced was choosing between activities, so that there was ample time for debriefing and dialogue.

Collaboratively and Consistently Facilitating

The professionals I interviewed shared the importance of partnering with campus and departmental colleagues for the development and facilitation of their initiatives. For

example, they collaborated with academic units for courses and diversity offices for peer education programs and workshop creation. Likewise, it was common practice for participants to co-facilitate workshops, trainings, and courses around campus. Co-facilitation was seen not only as a way to facilitate more effectively for students, but also as a source of emotional support when engaging with potentially triggering topics or harmful behaviors. For example, Jurnea described that a useful strategy for co-facilitation “is to literally have signals or have coded language between you and your peer facilitator to be able to toss it to your peer to continue to facilitate if you are in a moment where you’ve been struck by something that is upsetting, you have an emotional reaction.” Having a team of facilitators with varying identities can be valuable not only to enhance representation, but for making intentional decisions that will have the most impact on student participants. Nikki described how she relied upon a colleague to engage with a student about a recurring harmful behavior:

I had one student who I actually had a conversation with them about some similar topics two years ago, and it didn't go well. And I think a lot of it was based on identities, both that we shared and that we didn't share, that I didn't share with the student. And so this time, when the student popped up on our radar again challenging some of the work that we were doing, I said, ‘I'm not the person to meet with this student, but I have some colleagues I think who would be better.’ So I, the second time around, knowing the student ... They had a much better conversation with the student, and I think the student was able to hear from them in a different way that they couldn't hear it from me.

While this approach benefitted the student’s learning, it was also a strategy to minimize the emotional labor Nikki had to expend.

In addition to providing emotional support, participants described co-facilitation as a strategy for effectively facilitating as well. Elizabeth described

Any time you have hard conversations going on, I think somebody that can observe and point out things that maybe the facilitator can't see is important because as you're facilitating, you're already mentally doing a lot. There's no way that you can watch everybody's face, look for body language, catch everything that's said. Especially if they do small group discussion or something, you need to wander around and like try and catch bits and pieces of stuff.

To help her instructors prepare for co-teaching, Elizabeth uses a worksheet that has teaching team questions. Each instructor can reflect upon their personal aspirations and team expectations, which they then share with each other. Additionally, instructors work out logistics such as who will pick up materials, update grades, post assignments, etc. Further, they can navigate how they will communicate with one another, what time they plan to arrive at class, and other logistics associated with teaching.

In addition to collaborative approaches to facilitating, participants emphasized consistency as well. While each facilitator brings their own unique strengths and approach to facilitating, participants emphasized consistent preparation. For example, lesson plans for classes, workshops, and trainings provide minute-to-minute instructions for facilitators including timing, instructions, and debrief questions. Additionally, professional staff often modeled facilitation for student peer educators to help them prepare and practice for the experience. While standardization can limit creativity, participants thought it enhanced consistency for participants across experiences and independent of who was facilitating.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I outlined how participants conceive of social justice and draw upon their definitions in the design and delivery of their work. I presented themes related to the design and delivery of social justice-oriented initiatives in residence life. Additionally, I discussed the factors influencing and sources informing the development of these initiatives. I also shared the skills and strategies that emerged as themes for how participants are facilitating social justice-oriented initiatives. It became evident in my coding that factors external to the participants have noteworthy influence on the design and delivery of their initiatives, but even in the face of challenges, participants persisted in their commitment to social justice education. In the next chapter, I turn towards a discussion of the findings and their implications. More specifically, I discuss the findings as they related to my literature review and through the framework of critical pedagogy. Thereafter, I offer implications for practice and opportunities for future research.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In this study, I examined how residence life professionals are teaching social justice. More specifically, I explored how they design and deliver social justice-oriented initiatives by interviewing professionals who are responsible for coordinating trainings, learning communities, peer education programs, and resident advisor courses. In this final chapter, I answer my research questions by considering my findings through the framework of critical pedagogy, share implications for practice, identify limitations in the study's design, and provide opportunities for future research.

Discussion and Recommendations

In this section, I discuss responses to each of my research questions based upon the findings, and offer recommendations for practice that reflect the connection between my findings and themes in the literature. Interestingly, I found that the conceptualization of inclusion in residence life was at times at odds with social justice principles, which leads me to recommend that residence life professionals evaluate their use of the term inclusion and how it is or is not consistent with social justice principles in practice. Further, one of my key insights relates to the absence of grounding theories, guiding frameworks, and assessment of initiatives. Surprisingly, participants did not readily draw upon specific models, frameworks, or research to frame the development of their initiatives (or at least they were not able to name these during our interviews) given that

most of the literature is conceptual in nature and provides several guiding frameworks they could use to ground social justice-oriented initiatives. Interestingly, I did find that strategies for delivering initiatives were consistent with critical pedagogy, even as that theory was not named explicitly. In response, I suggest that graduate preparation programs center social justice education, both concepts and pedagogy, to provide new professionals with a foundation of knowledge, skills, and abilities in their roles. Further, residence life departments can build from this foundation by providing ongoing training and development in this area, especially for staff who are developing or delivering initiatives for students.

Although programs often had written learning outcomes, there was little assessment to demonstrate the impact of initiatives on resident participants or to evaluate facilitators. I suggest that professionals incorporate assessment into their practice, so that we can better speak to the influence that initiatives are (or are not) having on residents. Since professionals describe strategies consistent with critical pedagogy, it is also important to assess how effectively they are implemented in practice by facilitators. Hiring more staff focused on this work in residence life departments, having supervisors who prioritize and emphasize this work, and enhancing graduate preparation are all strategies for increasing the time and resources necessary to incorporate assessment, theoretically ground initiatives, and ensure facilitators are well-equipped to deliver them. In the sections that follow, I discuss my findings in more depth as they relate to each of my guiding research questions, and I offer recommendations for practice based on these implications.

Theoretical Models, Frameworks, and Research Informing Initiatives

The first research question that I explored was: *What theoretical models, frameworks, and research can inform curricula for social justice-oriented initiatives in student affairs and more specifically in residence life?* Through my review of the literature in chapters two and three, I found that student affairs largely centers student development theory to guide practice; however, these theories have become more intersectional over time. More recently, a critical cultural perspective has been used to theorize student affairs work. Much has been written about multicultural competence and education in student affairs, which specifically focuses on the knowledge, awareness, and skills that strengthen engagement across difference. Definitions of both multicultural competence and diversity range from awareness and appreciation of difference to understanding and addressing the power in difference. In the Student Affairs literature, I found that ally identity development and intersectionality were common frameworks for social justice education initiatives. Furthermore, content from these initiatives was often focused at the systemic and institutional level.

In my own study I found that professionals were not able to name specific models, theories, or frameworks that informed development of their initiatives. This was a particularly interesting finding given how extensively the literature focuses at the theoretical and conceptual level. Furthermore, professionals are encouraged to ground “activities within a theoretical or conceptual lens,” and design them “with clear learning objectives that are linked to the chosen framework” (Lechuga et al., 2009, p. 241). Although they stated that they were not relying on any specific models or frameworks for

social justice education, four of the institutions have a residential curriculum, informing the outcomes for their initiatives. For example, Elizabeth's department grounded their residential curriculum in Emotionally Intelligent Leadership. Another department relies heavily on restorative practices, which focuses on strengthening communities and repairing harm. Their peer advisor program similarly relies on this framework to inform student staff training and work in the halls. Finally, three of the initiatives focused on the philosophy and techniques of intergroup dialogue. Intergroup dialogue was not discussed as a framework in the literature, but more as an experiential learning strategy for empowering social justice education facilitation experiences. Facilitators heavily emphasized exploring intersectionality as key for self-awareness when they fostered reflection and critical thinking during their initiatives, but doing so was only one among the strategies for delivering these initiatives. A few academic resources such as books were listed as resources informing the creation, but by and large connections between theory and practice were rarely made, despite the extensive body of literature available on these issues. Participants drew much more often on anecdotal personal and professional experiences than theories or models to inform their practice, which likely intersects with the lack of focus on social justice education in graduate curriculum. Interestingly, their key behaviors for delivering these initiatives did still align strongly with my theoretical framework, critical pedagogy even as they did not name it as an influence.

Teaching Social Justice in Residence Life

One of my central interests in this study was to learn how residence life professionals are teaching social justice. This included evaluating how initiatives

incorporate the language of social justice and inclusion, while exploring the factors impacting the design and strategies used in the delivery of these initiatives. Institutional factors, stakeholders, and human resources all influenced the design of social justice-oriented initiatives; while personal experiences, professional preparation and development, and academic resources informed them. Finally, I found that professionals employ seven key behaviors when facilitating these initiatives for residents.

The language of social justice and inclusion. First, I inquired: *To what extent is the language of social justice and inclusion evident in program and training curriculum?* This question is important given the recent change in student affairs professional competencies from Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to Social Justice and Inclusion. However, it was also imperative to explore the alignment between what participants define as a social justice-oriented initiative and the concepts incorporated in them. In my literature review, I referenced Gorski's (2013) inquiry into whether professionals' language shift from diversity and multiculturalism to social justice actually reflects the institutional work they are doing. In the case of student affairs professionals, the competencies shifted to Social Justice and Inclusion because it is a more active orientation than awareness and diversity. The competencies draw on Bell's (2013) definition of social justice "as both a process and a goal..." and participants included components of this definition when I asked them how they define social justice. They moved beyond diversity and multiculturalism, which often attend only to difference rather than power and encourage awareness and appreciation above interrogating inequity. Rather than focusing on food, song, dance, bias reduction, cultural sensitivity,

representation, acceptance, or tolerance; these social justice-oriented initiatives analyze power, privilege, and oppression. Yet, many of these initiatives did focus more on self-awareness and identifying systemic inequities without seeming to move to action-oriented approaches for redressing them.

Although initiatives incorporated similar concepts related to social justice, the order in which these were taken up varied. Many facilitators started with an individual level focus and moved to an institutional level focus; however, Shawn did the reverse in part as a strategy for managing resistance. Shawn's philosophy of "disassociate in order to dismantle" is consistent with Davis and Harrison's (2013) recommendation to start with the intellectual realm. According to them, doing so has the effect of showing students that there is an existing knowledge base that can inform their thinking about their own experiences and identities. This also provides a common language and foundation for all students in the space even as they later interrogate individual experiences that diverge. Beginning with an institutional and intellectual level focus also challenges any claims that the existence of concepts such as privilege or oppression are only opinion (Davis & Harrison, 2013). However, Watt (2007) does warn against "over-intellectualizing" social justice concepts, suggesting that doing so can be a form of resistance or defense for students with primarily privileged identities. Thus, it is important when starting with an intellectual and institutional level focus on social justice concepts that facilitators still move to the individual level for meaning making and analysis. For example, McCann (2018), who facilitated a photo project, suggests that personalized understanding of social justice concepts can also serve as a tool for

managing resistance as it too provides a common starting point for dialogue. In sum, both the individual and institutional level focuses that participants included are imperative, and the facilitator has to choose where to begin in order to best manage resistance and engage a given group of participants.

Although social justice concepts were readily apparent through initiative descriptions, goals, documents, and other materials; interestingly the term social justice was itself largely absent. Even more interesting was that this is opposite what I often encountered in the literature where initiatives more focused on diversity or multiculturalism were being misrepresented as social justice-oriented even as they did little to address privilege and power. The initiatives in my study went beyond awareness programs focused on learning about others to prioritize social justice concepts, yet they intentionally did not publicly use this term in an effort to enable the work to continue in residence life. This choice can cause similar challenges to using social justice to name efforts that are only focused on interpersonal awareness of difference. The conflation of language renders a common understanding of what we are discussing nearly impossible to achieve. The term social justice was largely absent in my participants' initiatives because they have found that there is risk inherent in using the term publicly to describe or frame their work. Further, most of their institutions were not explicitly using the term social justice in their mission, vision, values, or goals; and thus participants found it important to align their initiatives with the language of the institution to ensure they received support. Many participants mentioned that the term has been politicized;

therefore, they chose “more inviting” language such as multicultural, inclusion, and diversity to publicly represent the work.

I have observed this first-hand in my department as we have learned through experience that particular language may be more inviting to certain audiences. For example, when we used the term social justice in naming a first-year experience trip, we were denied funding by an entity comprised of parents. However, when we characterized the trip as a cultural immersion experience, we were granted funding by that same body. Three of the participants in my study discussed negative media coverage of their initiatives by right-wing pundits, in part because of social justice language. Personally, I have experienced this as well when an article that I wrote about microaggressions was misrepresented by the media as a guide for suppressing employee’s free speech. Stakeholders have a large influence upon participants designing these initiatives, and their resistance to social justice work has led participants to engage this work covertly. However, inclusion was a more readily embraced term by stakeholders and thus more publicly used as part of the descriptions, outcomes, and resources associated with these initiatives.

Ironically, some stakeholders frame social justice and inclusion as being at odds with one another. They understand inclusion as incorporating everyone whereas somehow social justice is exclusionary in its aims. Many stakeholders do not understand the differences between equality and equity; therefore, they fail to account for the historical and systemic inequities that social justice seeks to remedy. Thus, stakeholders seem to politicize inclusion less than social justice because it is described as “for

everyone.” Although participants readily used the language of inclusion, they often did so at the interpersonal level. This is a start, but Armino et al. (2012) remind us that attending to institutional history, culture, and context is imperative for creating inclusive campuses.

True inclusion as described in the professional competencies goes beyond just representation and access by decentering dominant cultural norms to make space for historically underrepresented groups. To do so, inclusion involves addressing systemic issues that currently exclude some, while others are already included. Inclusion is a goal of social justice and thus intimately connected to it, and yet it does not elicit the same resistance that the language of social justice does. Professionals in my study sometimes characterized their responsibility for creating comfortable, welcoming, and inclusive spaces for all residents as at odds with social justice. To me, this characterization of inclusion seemed to fall into “universal validation,” which Gorski (2013) shares can undercut a commitment to equity and justice by not challenging any points of view in an effort to align an espoused value of inclusion with practice. Gorski (2006) asserts that eradicating inequity sometimes demands exclusion. Similarly, Karl Popper’s Paradox of Tolerance (1945) states that tolerance without limit leads to intolerance (Farija, 2018). As Gorski (2006) calls for exclusion of points of view when equity demands it, Popper (1945) calls for the intolerance of oppressive or violent actions.

Challenging problematic perspectives and actions can feel complicated for residence life professionals charged with fostering a sense of belonging and welcoming residential environments for all students. Doing so also often intertwined with free speech rights with which staff must comply. Thus, social justice educators in residence life need

to evaluate how their conception of inclusion may be at odds with social justice aims of equity and justice. They must reconcile how to engage inclusive practices without centering dominant norms; at the same time, they must also challenge ideas and behaviors that exacerbate oppression of marginalized groups. This might mean reconceiving what inclusion as a key value means, and how it can be practiced in ways that do not undercut a commitment to equity and justice.

Designing social justice-oriented initiatives. While exploring how residence life professionals are teaching social justice, I also investigated: *What influences and informs the design and content of social justice-oriented trainings and programs for residents?* The influences affected decision-making about the initiative and included institutional factors, stakeholders, and human resources. The factors informing design affected the content. Clear institutional and departmental commitments to social justice ideas as outlined through the mission, vision, and values were very important influences upon whether staff prioritized this area in their work. Staff felt that their initiatives were further supported or sustained when institutions outlined explicit values and goals related to social justice or inclusion, and they aligned the initiative with these institutional priorities. However, institutional values and goals often did not list social justice explicitly, which partially influenced the naming of many initiatives under study as the participants sought to align their language with that of the institution.

Among the influences on program design were stakeholders such as supervisors, leadership's priorities, and students. Landreman et al. (2008) describe the importance of social justice educators knowing learners, co-creating facilitation experiences, and

attending to students' level of experience with concepts. Similarly, Sears and Tu (2017) encourage facilitators to use student reflections and other materials to adjust curriculum to best meet their needs. However, the initiatives I explored in the literature had few systematic assessments of the impact of initiatives on participants. This is a glaring oversight in the empirical research in social justice education in general, where the focus is on describing what we should and could do, but not studying what we actually do and if it has any impact. In the current study, nearly all of the initiatives were mapped to specific learning outcomes, yet participants did not often measure or systematically assess them. Most participants only collected data on student satisfaction along with feedback on their experience. Although measures of learning and effectiveness were largely absent, participants were attuned to student feedback, which informed changes to their initiatives. They also emphasized student readiness as a consideration for developing curriculum. However, they could have taken the additional step of engaging students in curriculum design to truly co-create experiences.

Apart from developing measures for the existing learning outcomes, I would encourage participants to consider administering existing instruments as applicable for their initiative. A number of instruments that could be useful came to my attention through the course of this study, both while conducting my literature review and interviews, and in conversation with colleagues engaged in research such as Gray (2018). These include, but are not limited to, Miller et al. (2009) *Social Issues Questionnaire*; Torres-Harding, Siers, and Olson (2012) *Social Justice Scale (SJS)*; Diemer, Rapa, Park, and Perry (2014) *Critical Consciousness Scale*; Baker and Brookins (2014) *Sociopolitical*

Consciousness Scale; Shin, Smith, Welch, and Goodrich (2016) *Contemporary Critical Consciousness Measure*; Watt et al. (2004) *Social Response Inventory*; and Dresen (2013) *Diversity Educator Perception Survey*. Even if the existing instruments are not deemed appropriate for my participants' initiatives, they should still identify ways to measure their current (or re-written) outcomes. Doing so will enable them to identify the impact of their initiatives, to address whether learning outcomes are being met, and to make informed adjustments to curriculum. Given the impact of limited financial and human resources, leadership priorities, stakeholder resistance, and institutional factors, it is imperative that participants be able to track and identify the influence of their initiatives, so they may persist. Studying the impact of these social justice-oriented initiatives is an area of growth for participants overseeing them, a much-needed area for future research, and also a limitation of my current work.

Beyond students, institutional and departmental leadership along with supervisors were key influences upon initiatives. Leadership serve as gatekeepers, and their support of initiatives is imperative to their success. Leaders can be allies in the work, using their position to support and sustain initiatives; or they can prioritize areas at the expense of these initiatives. Thus, they were key influences upon these initiatives. Furthermore, supervisors were also key stakeholders in the work. Their support for staff engaged in coordinating the initiatives was crucial to their success. Given the often-optional nature of professional development related to social justice education, supervisors played a key role where accountability for engaging in ongoing learning and development was concerned. At my current institution, I have seen the role that leaders at the institution,

and in the university system, have upon initiatives and decisions related to equity and justice. For example, it was not until she offered her resignation that our Chancellor felt comfortable drawing upon a legal exception to have a confederate monument removed from our campus. This action was swiftly met with what I characterize as retaliation by her superiors, who accepted her resignation for a date four months ahead of when she outlined. This is a prime example of how equity and justice work is politicized, can be inherently risky, and thus is often pursued by my participants in covert ways under the guise of diversity, inclusion, or multiculturalism. When leadership and supervisor priorities were at odds with my participant's goals, there were often organizational and staffing barriers to engaging the work effectively. These staffing challenges connect to the influence of human resources on the design and delivery of initiatives.

Although there seemed to be disconnect between theory and practice given that staff members were unable to name particular theories or frameworks guiding their work, I'd like to highlight the influence that turnover may have on this finding. Human resources including hiring, staffing, retention, and operational responsibilities have a large influence upon the work that my participants are able to do. The regular turnover in particular among entry-level staff, who are often critical to these social justice-oriented initiatives, influences the knowledge of the program's evolution as well as the degree to which staff are able to take ownership over programs and develop them further (including drawing on literature). For example, the large departments where I have worked have between 13 and 17 entry-level professionals, who each stay in their roles between three and five years. This leads to a turnover of around one-fourth or more entry-level staff

annually. In particular, as staff leave, historical knowledge about the origins of a program, its development, and the theoretical base (if one existed) are lost. While theory should not only be important during the initial creation of an initiative, this loss of historical knowledge may exacerbate disconnect between theory and practice in everyday implementation of the initiative. In addition to the lost historical knowledge, turnover is also taxing on already limited departmental resources. New hires come with varying levels of knowledge and experience around social justice education. While departments may invest in their development, so they are equipped to fulfill their educational roles, turnover can render it challenging to move beyond introductory trainings. This poses challenges for really establishing a depth of knowledge and experience in social justice education across the team. It also makes it difficult to ensure that facilitators have the depth of knowledge and understanding needed to facilitate social justice-oriented initiatives for residents.

Subsumed in the theme of human resources is also a recurrent theme around time. During second-cycle coding, I had time as a theme under influences on the design of social justice-oriented initiatives alongside the theme of human resources, but later incorporated notions of time and financial resources under this overarching theme. The time theme incorporated ideas participants shared about having limited time during sessions and needing to cut activities to allow adequate time for debriefing. The theme also related to having limited time for ongoing professional staff training, to the at times “extra workload” that social justice education produced for some staff members, and to competing operational and educational priorities in residence life with limited time to

attend to all in-depth. For some participants, the social justice-oriented initiatives were an “add-on” to their primary responsibilities, and thus stretched their capacity. For others, these initiatives were a primary focus, but participants competed for the attention of the residence life staff given the operational demands upon them. Although there seemed to be institutional and departmental commitments to this work, there were limitations to the time and space it could take. This is somewhat paradoxical given that social justice education takes an inordinate amount of time, and at its most effective, becomes a framework or a lens even for operational tasks rather than existing in the silo of a single initiative or program. There is room for residence life programs to evaluate the time and space afforded to social justice education in their programs with the goal of addressing some of the limitations I’ve found through my study. For example, limited time for ongoing professional staff training and assumptions about the curriculum included in master’s programs may be among the reasons that participants relied so heavily upon their personal experiences to inform their work designing these initiatives.

Some of the factors informing the initiatives in my study included personal experiences, professional preparation and development, and academic resources. The extent to which participants relied on their passion for the work and anecdotal experiences was surprising. However, coupled with the fact that many participants are multiply marginalized, it makes sense that their experiences would inform their interest and work on social justice-oriented initiatives. Participants seemed to rely so heavily on their own experiences because training and development for professional staff in social justice education is limited, graduate preparation is less extensive than might be assumed,

and staff have many competing priorities in their roles. As professionals, there is often a move to practice or action ahead of ongoing learning, which is left to individual discretion. Since Social Justice and Inclusion is a key competency area in the field, there is an assumption that new professionals obtain a foundational level of knowledge in this area through graduate preparation; however, through the literature I discovered this is often not the case. Congruent with this finding, participants in my study did not regularly draw upon theories or ideas that they learned in graduate coursework.

Given these findings, I recommend that graduate preparation programs prioritize social justice education in their curriculum and center Bell's (1997; 2013) definition of social justice, which is cited in the professional competencies. This could occur not only through the content and assignments in courses such as student development theory, but also through the pedagogy that faculty model, and further through courses focused on social justice concepts as they intersect with the institution of education and student success. For example, theory courses should use the most recent texts on student development, which include chapters on social identity and analyze systemic influences on learning (Patton et al., 2016; Cuyjet et al., 2016). These courses must also require students to interrogate their own social identities and experiences in an effort to facilitate self-awareness that will render them more adept at serving students whose experiences differ. Further, courses in addition to student development theory should attend to social justice concerns and concepts. For example, the history of higher education course could involve assignments that call for students to interrogate the historical experiences of women or non-white students at institutions of higher education, or an assignment

requiring students to trace the evolution of laws relating to exclusion and inclusion in higher education, as two examples among many. These are examples of ways that the student development theory and history courses can prioritize social justice education, but this is possible across all of the courses in a given program's curriculum rather than being limited just to the "social justice" course in a silo, if one even exists.

More broadly, student affairs programs can move from second wave theorizing of student affairs work, according to student development, to third wave theorizing drawing upon what Rhoads and Black (1995) named a critical cultural perspective many years ago (see page 44). Doing so would influence the overall threads of program curriculum and also the way it is delivered. A critical cultural perspective would lead faculty to build connected educational communities rooted in democratic ideals and attentive to issues of power, equity, and justice. This emphasis would better equip new professionals, who are assumed to have a foundational level of knowledge, awareness, and skills around social justice education, to fulfill their roles in the design and delivery of initiatives. Further, better preparation prior to fulfilling professional roles would address the human resource challenges related to staffing, training, and competing demands on time. This would also strengthen the depth of professional development that residence life departments could provide to build upon a basic facility with social justice education; whereas, currently the turnover among entry-level staff limits the depths to which training can go. Given that the profession prioritizes this competency area, preparation programs need to do so holistically when preparing future professionals. Such careful preparation will only enhance the work residence life departments are then able to do.

Exploring the challenge of achieving expected competencies a bit further, professionals engaging at an intermediate level would, according to the competencies, “facilitate dialogue about issues of social justice, inclusion, power, privilege, and oppression in one’s own practice” (ACPA & NASPA, 2016, p. 29). Yet, participants are facilitating dialogues and developing programs even as they are not necessarily receiving the training at the graduate or professional level needed to do so. In fact, the student facilitators from the initiatives in my study often participated in more extensive training before assuming their roles and while serving as peer advisors than the professionals did. Monje-Paulson (2016) found in her study that social justice preparedness was comprised of multicultural competence and social justice self-efficacy. Social justice preparedness then predicted social justice actions and choices more readily than institutional support, which indicated to her that institutions should expend effort to support individual development in order to impact student affairs professionals’ engagement in social justice actions. This is important given my finding that most departments where my participants worked did not outline an ongoing plan for professional development in the area of social justice education for staff, even as doing so would enhance their ability to facilitate social justice-oriented initiatives. In fact, only two participants in my study work for departments that require ongoing social justice education for staff, and most ongoing training was conceptual rather than pedagogical or reflexive in nature.

In order to achieve foundational, intermediate, and then advanced outcomes related to Social Justice and Inclusion, which would also strengthen staff members’ ability to effectively facilitate social justice-oriented initiatives, I recommend that

departments follow the model of Nikki and Shawn's by requiring ongoing training for staff. I would advise that these trainings not only be ongoing and required, but also that they serve as a prerequisite for facilitating the social justice-oriented courses, workshops, and dialogues (such as those in my study) for residents. Required training would address the issue of making assumptions about what new professionals should be learning in graduate preparation programs; would ensure a foundational level of knowledge, awareness, and skills needed to facilitate; and would address the issue of time limits that seemed to affect the extent to which my participants were able to prepare facilitators. The training should not only cover social justice concepts, but also provide opportunities for facilitators to examine their positionality and intersectionality, explore how the former affect curricular decisions, and establish a shared understanding of social justice. Further, training should model empowering facilitation approaches that include an attention to power dynamics, skills for managing resistance, and strategies for assessing and responding to group needs. Additionally, training could prepare facilitators for helping students move towards action as a result of their participation in social justice-oriented initiatives. Most of the initiatives in this study supported students in ongoing self-reflection that enhanced self-awareness, and incorporated strategies for teaching key social justice concepts. The initiatives provided opportunities for interrogating how oppression operates, and yet they did not often include an action planning component where students identify ways to actively intervene and interrupt problematic systems, structures, and individual behaviors in pursuit of equity or justice. Perhaps if this was a

focus of the ongoing training for professionals, they would be better equipped to incorporate this component for students.

Delivering social justice-oriented initiatives. Finally, I examined: *What pedagogical strategies do residence life professionals employ in the delivery of social justice-oriented trainings and programs?* I identified creating climate, fostering reflection and critical thinking, managing oneself, assessing the facilitation experience, negotiating conflict, actively engaging participants, and collaboratively and consistently facilitating as the key behaviors for delivering social justice-oriented initiatives in residence life. In chapter three, I discussed the student affairs literature on facilitating social justice education opportunities. Some of the facilitation skills outlined in the student affairs literature include “managing group dynamics, communication and empathy, an awareness of oneself and historical and contemporary social justice issues, and knowing how to apply this knowledge to optimize learning for participants” (Landreman & MacDonald-Dennis, 2013, p. 15). Landreman and MacDonald-Dennis (2013) also state that facilitators should understand the complexity of identity, effectively navigate triggers, and incorporate multipartiality (leveling power in interactions). Furthermore, the main themes for empowering social justice education facilitation in student affairs, which I discovered in my literature review, included reflexivity, managing resistance, and experiential learning.

The pedagogical facilitation strategies described both in the literature I reviewed and by my participants align strongly with the central ideas or principles of critical pedagogy, which shaped my theoretical lens. Critical pedagogy fosters engaging,

connected, and embodied teaching and learning. It calls for attending to how power operates through active, reflective, and contextualized learning where knowing is considered both cognitive and affective. Further, critical pedagogy develops the skills needed not only to understand how power operates, but also to collaboratively expose and disrupt oppressive systems thus leading to emancipatory results. I found that the behaviors residence life professionals employ during facilitation aligned strongly with the tenets of critical pedagogy, and the themes I identified in the student affairs literature, with few exceptions. However, despite describing and employing approaches consistent with critical pedagogy, participants did not systematically draw on this theory, which could limit the effectiveness of their efforts. Further, if I were to observe facilitations, it is possible that the pedagogical strategies participants described may not align perfectly with practice. This is because a focus on social justice education in graduate programs was limited, more ongoing professional staff training is needed, and participants who designed initiatives are not always nor often the ones facilitating them for residents. Nevertheless, the seven behaviors described as key to facilitating these initiatives were noteworthy.

In their work, Davis and Harrison (2013) suggest that community is imperative for the social justice classroom because fostering community encourages reciprocity instead of competition or comparison, which aligns with the goals of critical pedagogy. One tool that they discuss for fostering community is developing and following ground rules for dialogue. Participants in my study were similarly attuned to the value of fostering interpersonal relationships through team builders and community agreements.

Likewise, they attended to power-sharing as an important part of creating climate just as Landreman and MacDonald-Dennis (2013) suggest they should. Shawn shared how he often starts with broader constructs such as power and privilege in his workshops before calling participants to consider how their intersecting identities connect to these. For Shawn, this is a strategy for engaging participants and managing resistance. Similarly, Claros et al. (2017) recommend focusing initially on broader social constructs before connecting to students' experiences as a tool for balancing speaking time among participants in the community.

The participants in this study were also particularly attuned to the influence that the physical environment has on fostering community and engagement among students. They attended much more to aspects such as furniture mobility, accessibility, temperature, lighting, etc. than what I found in the literature. In my professional experiences, I have also seen the influence of the physical environment, including aspects such as how the seating is arranged, on student connection and engagement. It was unsurprising to me that the physical space would be a focal point for residence life practitioners especially as their entire work focuses on community-building in a particular space (residence halls); however, it is noteworthy to mention that the role of physical space in social justice education was largely absent from my literature review.

Facilitators attended closely to their own emotional and physiological experiences during facilitation and to discerning when and what to disclose about themselves to students. On the latter, Davis and Harrison (2013) highlight appropriate self-disclosure as an important strategy for facilitators because it models authentic engagement for students.

Similarly, participating in low-stakes self-disclosure opportunities with students helps set a baseline for the type of engagement that is expected. My participants were cautious not to center themselves during initiatives that were for students, or to alienate students they were trying to engage, by making thoughtful decisions about self-disclosure. This is a critical skill for residence life professionals. In my roles as a supervisor, advisor, and teacher, this is one of the areas that I find most delicate to balance. While I want to model vulnerability and disrupt the belief that anyone is truly neutral, I have to navigate carefully. I must attend to the positional power of authority that I have in these various roles, and cultivate trusting relationships where students are comfortable disagreeing with my perspectives without fear of consequence or retribution. Having the ability to assign grades or complete employee evaluations can make this authentic two-way sharing difficult, but I have found that building rapport and engaging dialogically help.

Furthermore, for participant facilitators, managing oneself also meant interrogating their own identities, biases, and relationship to power. This helped them determine how they could care for themselves during what could be emotionally strenuous experiences. Many facilitators also spoke to the influence of their identities, personal experiences, and passion for the work. However, the majority of facilitators did not talk at length about how this self-awareness informs the choices they are making when developing curriculum or facilitating it. Arminio et al. (2012) specifically address the importance of interrogating the influence of positionality on motivations for and choices about the work as they design experiences for students. Although my participants mentioned the importance of understanding their own identity as a precursor to attending

to their emotional and physiological responses while facilitating, they did not speak at length about if or how their self-awareness informed the choices they are making about curriculum. However, their self-awareness did aid them in perceiving how participants were experiencing them while assessing the facilitation experience.

Perhaps one of the most important behaviors for facilitators was to assess the student experience and adjust as needed during the facilitation to address group dynamics and advance the dialogue. They shared a number of specific tools they used both to assess the experience and to respond. Davis and Harrison (2013) call this immediacy, which “allows people to respond to the unique nuances of what is happening in a specific moment” (p.119). Hackman (2005) calls this “awareness of multicultural group dynamics.” Facilitator’s self-awareness and attention to how participants received them along with their aptitude for assessing the overall experience enabled them to make real-time facilitation choices that would further the dialogue, engage participants, redress harm, or otherwise work towards providing what the group needed at a given time. For example, facilitators who participated in my study emphasized the importance of sitting with discomfort, navigating controversy and confrontations, and managing resistance. Managing resistance was also a theme within the student affairs literature. Davis and Harrison (2013) describe the central role of conflict in the social justice classroom as a way to challenge the status quo. Conflict and contradictions may emerge as multiple perspectives are shared and discussed, but facilitators can help students learn to negotiate conflict in order to foster listening and learning from one another’s stories. Participants were particularly attuned to the importance of facilitators developing the skill of

effectively negotiating conflict in order to facilitate learning and keep students actively engaged in the experience.

From my literature review, I found that providing experiential learning opportunities was a primary way that student affairs educators engage in empowering social justice education. These included privilege immersion experiences, trips, service-learning, role-playing and dialogue among other opportunities. I found that most participants in this study were actively engaging participants, but primarily through dialogues in the workshop or classroom format that included the key components of knowledge, activity, and reflection. Fostering reflection and critical thinking was one of the key behaviors participants employed during facilitation experiences to enhance self-awareness among students about their intersecting identities and how they are implicated in systems of power and privilege. Facilitators employing critical reflection helped students develop not only their understanding of self, but also their ability to take different perspectives, and their adeptness at identifying places that limit their and others freedom.

Facilitators used a number of different modes for critical reflection such as think-pair-share, journals, question of the day, and many more. For participants, interactive dialogic activities were imperative for engaging students, highlighting how key concepts such as privilege or oppression operate, and providing opportunities for applying their learning. They asked questions for students to engage around thereby modeling problem-posing, a key feature of critical pedagogy. Freire (1973) suggests that both dialogue and “problem-posing” are important tools for social change (as cited in Hackman, 2005, p.

106). Although facilitating dialogue was an important tool for actively engaging participants, Poon et al. (2016) suggest that since “action for transformative social justice change is not an explicit goal” it is often not an outcome of dialogues (p. 23). Similarly, during the initiatives included in my study, facilitators focused on fostering self-awareness and an understanding of systemic inequity, yet they often seemed to stop there. Most of the initiatives were not focused on the action steps for addressing these inequities, and did not themselves offer many opportunities for critical action, which seems to align well with Poon et al.’s (2016) finding. Nevertheless, according to Hackman (2005), critical analysis skills are an essential component of social justice education because these skills enable students to contextualize information, expose how power and oppression operate, and develop plans for action. Thus, the initiatives in this study lay the foundation students may need to move toward action even if they are not doing so as participants in these social justice-oriented residence life experiences. The foundation laid through these early experiences may indeed lead to future action by student participants, which would be hard to know without further study.

Finally, facilitators were focused on collaboratively and consistently facilitating curricula for classes across sections and for workshops where there were centralized themes and multiple facilitators. Partnering to develop and facilitate was a strategy for facilitators to receive emotional support and to more thoroughly observe and assess participant needs. Likewise, partnering to facilitate allowed for representing varying identities to students. Initiative coordinators tried to ensure consistency by providing thorough talking points, instructions for activities, definitions of key concepts, and

debrief questions. My participants described these efforts positively as a way to ensure students received a consistent experience regardless of facilitator. However, group composition influences interpersonal dynamics, which in turn should influence the facilitator's choices during the experience. Therefore, to me, the rigidity and specificity of session guides may have the unintended consequence of limiting how facilitators can address group dynamics through pedagogical choices about content, facilitation, and even the use of time. Although participants did not specifically state this motivation for having such structured facilitation guides, I infer this may also address the different levels of facility with social justice issues and experiences facilitating in ways that optional professional development opportunities cannot. While my participants were able to describe facilitation behaviors consistent with critical pedagogy, a next step in my research would be to observe the extent to which these are evident in practice.

Research Limitations

Reflecting back on the research I conducted for this dissertation, there were several limitations to my design. In the current study, I found recruitment of participants to be more challenging than I would have expected given that the professional associations prioritize Social Justice and Inclusion in their competencies and considering my anecdotal experiences in residence life. I had hoped that all of the participants would opt in to my study in response to my call for participants, but instead found that I had to review conference abstracts and draw upon my exploratory outreach to former colleagues to recruit the staff who ultimately participated in this study. Fortunately, I was still able to interview new colleagues to learn about unfamiliar initiatives.

I prepared my interview protocol before recruiting participants, and I chose to intentionally focus on the programs themselves rather than on my participants' experiences even as both are intricately linked. After recruiting participants and obtaining demographic information, I learned that many are multiply marginalized, in particular identifying as women of color. Although I had a semi-structured interview protocol, I did not capitalize upon this flexibility to learn more about how identity influences or informs the ways participants are teaching social justice. In hindsight, especially given the positionality of my participants, I could have attended to how identity contributes to teaching social justice. When participants spoke broadly to the role personal passion, identity, and experiences had informing curriculum, I could have asked follow-up questions to learn more in this area. My focus on curricular issues rather than identity may have led to losing the nuances of how positionality shapes the work that people do. Yet, there remains an opportunity for future or follow-up research to this end.

Further, including only ten programs is a limitation, but a smaller number of programs did allow me to become intimately familiar with each. Additionally, the timeline for my study and number of programs that I included limited my ability to observe planning or facilitation for the initiative. If I had been able to include observations, I would have been able to describe how professionals are designing and delivering social justice-oriented initiatives without relying solely on their descriptions and documentation. While I did collect significant amount of data in the form of interviews with professionals responsible for the initiatives and documents related to each, I did not incorporate any student participants in my study. Including interviews

with student peer facilitators or residents engaged in these initiatives would have provided important perspective about the experience and learning associated with participation.

Given the limited empirical research on social justice-oriented programs in residence life, in part my study and questions were limited by needing to establish a foundational body of research. Put simply, there is very little empirical research of the social justice-oriented programs and initiatives offered by residence life. Given this reality, I felt that it was important to provide an overview of what professionals are currently doing first before exploring the impact or effectiveness of these trainings and programs. While this may be a limitation for the current study, it will provide avenues for future research around the competency development of professionals responsible for the programs of study and regarding the impact of such programs on student learning and development.

Opportunities for Future Research

The current study is limited in scale and scope, but provides a foundation from which to engage in a number of future projects. Early on, I made an intentional choice to focus most deeply on the curricular aspects of program design and delivery. However, there is an opportunity for follow-up research, in particular with the women of color in my study, to learn more about how positionality shapes the work they do. Although I identified personal passion, identity, and experience as themes for what informs the initiatives under study, future research should dig deeper into how participants' identities and experiences bring them to, and shape, their work.

Having learned what influences residence life professionals when designing social justice-oriented initiatives along with how they are delivering these programs and trainings, a next step would be to try to understand the impact of these initiatives on students. Interestingly, the majority of participants had learning outcomes for their initiatives, but did not assess if they achieved stated outcomes. Rather, they focused on student satisfaction and facilitator feedback. However, there are a number of available instruments, previously listed, that they could have used to assess the impacts of their initiatives. If they do not identify direct measures of student learning, they could still implement indirect or self-reported measures even by using data they are already collecting, such as student reflections. Assessment of student learning outcomes would enable facilitators to identify and name the impact of their efforts.

Given that I have identified a number of initiatives that met the criteria for my study, it would be interesting to conduct an in-depth case study of one or more of them over time. For example, I could engage with the professionals on site while they design the initiative to observe their planning, development of outcomes, and implementation. Moreover, we could establish a plan for assessing student learning resulting from participating in the initiative. In addition to immediate measures of student learning, it would be interesting to engage in a retrospective pre/post-test, or to engage in a longitudinal study of participants, to explore the influence participating in these initiatives has on students over time. For example, did their participation lead them to engage in specific opportunities moving forward? Does the initiative serve as a foundational experience for future action? How might participants describe the influence

these initiatives have on them after some time has passed? I would be particularly interested in whether or how the critical reflection that these initiatives foster leads to future critical action, which is key to critical consciousness. A longitudinal study would enable me to explore this further.

Finally, I am interested in competency development of professionals responsible for facilitating the programs (not just those coordinating their development and implementation), especially given the seemingly limited focus on social justice education in graduate programs and through required ongoing professional development. Although program coordinators in this study identified specific desired behaviors for delivering these initiatives, I would like to observe and evaluate to what extent those behaviors are evident during facilitation. There are opportunities for future studies that explicitly relate to professionals' competency development in the area of Social Justice and Inclusion as demonstrated not only through their educational initiatives, but also as enacted in departmental policies and practices.

Final Thoughts

As I reach the end of this project, I am called to circle back to my Introduction, and moreover, to the semester where I conceived of this work. In the fall 2014 semester, I enrolled in *Critical Perspectives in Education, Leadership, and Culture*. During this course, I began wondering how professionals in my field, student affairs, develop a critical perspective. I observed how we often conflate language such as diversity, multiculturalism, and social justice. Further, I began to question how professionals in residence life departments that express a commitment to ideas such as diversity, equity,

inclusion, multicultural competence, or social justice are prepared to meet such departmental commitments and progress in their competency development. I completed the course in October 2014, and in July 2015, the profession adopted revised competencies, which changed the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion area to Social Justice and Inclusion. This change made my interest in the conflation of language and the preparedness to work towards social justice aims even more timely. At the same time, I had just begun working in a new residence life department, and was involved with the development of a new social justice-oriented initiative for student leaders. This initiative was to parallel an initiative for student staff focused on multicultural competence. My coursework, the profession's competencies, and my practical experiences all evoked in me a curiosity about curriculum development and implementation in residence life: how are we teaching social justice, or rather, are we teaching social justice?

Admittedly, the more I learned about critical perspectives, the more hesitant I became to pursue a study of how residence life professionals are teaching social justice. I grew increasingly concerned that what I might find would render my discussion section nothing but a critique. I wondered how I could offer this critique without privileging academic knowledge or implying that certain kinds of knowledge are required for doing "the work." However, the more I learned, the more interested I became in how my colleagues were designing and delivering social justice-oriented initiatives especially in light of the changing competency language. I began to pair my ever-increasingly critical eye with a compassionate heart as I learned more about critical pedagogy. My own practice as an advisor and teacher was evolving and my curiosity growing. My

consciousness of the hesitations I once had enabled me to really interrogate and mediate the influence of my preconceived notions upon my interview and interpretation process. For that, I am grateful, because I have learned much in conversation with the colleagues who participated in my study. Most noteworthy among the insights I gained is probably that my colleagues are doing very sophisticated and critical work in pursuit of social justice even as they often intentionally do not call it such. Where I anticipated I might find colleagues invoking the language of social justice to characterize initiatives that focus on little more than awareness or appreciation of difference, I found the opposite. Colleagues are grounding their work in social justice concepts and employing pedagogical approaches consistent with critical pedagogy even as they limit their use of the term social justice, which has been politicized in higher education and thus carries risk.

After all was said and done, I outlined clear themes around the design and delivery of social justice-oriented initiatives in residence life. However, one aspect of my findings had me perplexed through the coding and discussion phases of my process. Even though much of my literature review was conceptual in nature, and there is a large volume of scholarly work around the topic of social justice, by and large my participants were not able to name particular theories, frameworks, or research informing the design and/or delivery of their social justice-oriented initiatives. Yet, many of the behaviors they employ during the delivery of their initiatives align quite well with the literature. Being unable to name particular theories and frameworks may be a result of the way we come to embody in our practice what we learn and experience, even as time and distance make

specifics hard to state. As we embody particular tenets in our practice, we model them for our students and colleagues.

Although they did not name specific models and frameworks informing their curricula designs, participants readily named that personal and professional experiences informed their work. I infer this may relate to the multiply marginalized identities many participants hold, which inevitably shapes the way they engage the work. I take this as a sign of the value of learning with and from one another as practitioners in the field even as I sometimes privilege academic knowledge and research. I am sure that empirical research and theoretical models could enhance our practice, but I am also sitting with the importance of alternate ways of knowing that are at times discredited. The alignment of many of my participant's behaviors for delivering social justice-oriented initiatives with the tenets of critical pedagogy suggests that critical pedagogy may provide a way to name how we are engaging our work in student affairs. While I found some limitations to the work colleagues are doing, and identify avenues for improvement, I was largely impressed by the caliber and sophistication of social justice-oriented initiatives for which my colleagues are responsible.

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