1-1-2013

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Inspired to Lead: Two Years of Evaluation Data from a Jesuit Ed.D. Program for Educational Leadership in Social Justice

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Abstract

Program learning outcomes from a Jesuit Educational Leadership for Social Justice Doctoral (Ed.D.) program were evaluated to determine if candidates were inspired to lead socially just educational communities. This qualitative inquiry went beyond the traditional examination of graduates' self-perceptions to examine the perspectives of the graduates' supervisors in the field. Two years of data indicate that graduates were able to take concepts from their coursework and apply them in the field. Findings indicate that the program was transformational, described as a call to action to challenge the status quo, and were corroborated by on-the-job colleagues.

Introduction

Educational programs in Jesuit Institutions for Higher Education benefit from an explicit definition of social justice. Inspired by the decrees of the 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus,[1] Jesuit institutions explicitly embrace "the service of faith and the promotion of justice." In 2000, Father Kolvenbach, S.J.[2] in his seminal address clarifies this definition. Initially, he notes the difficulty in promoting a universal understanding of "the promotion of justice." Certainly, other scholars[3] have observed similar dilemmas in precisely defining social justice terminology. Ultimately, however, Kolvenbach[4] asserts that a commitment to the promotion of justice must be a "concrete, radical, and proportionate response to an unjustly suffering world." Therefore, "promoting justice" requires action that can bring about change, structural change, to the institutions that oppress and marginalize. Arrupe's[5] notion of "men and women for others" also asks that we transform the world by becoming change agents, and many scholars after him align with this definition of social justice as well.[6] Thus, social justice in the Jesuit tradition is a call to challenge the status quo, to provide a voice for the voiceless, and to walk humbly and collaboratively with the poor and marginalized.[7] Graduates who matriculate from Jesuit Institutions of Higher Education are expected to be leaders who serve with and for others, recognizing and removing privilege, and striving for the magis: more sustainable meaning, truth, and justice. In short, graduates from Jesuit Institutions of Higher Education should be prepared to act on the words of St. Ignatius of Loyola and "go forth and set the world on fire."

Educational Leadership Preparation Programs

While the definition of social justice is clear among Jesuit Institutions of Higher Education, higher education in general, and especially the field of educational leadership, has been criticized for its inability to document how their candidates impact positive change in the educational system. Over a decade ago, McCarthy[8] called for greater evaluation of leadership preparation programs: "Research on educational leadership preparation programs … is needed to inform deliberations about how to better prepare school leaders." And

while in the last decade there has been a growing body of scholarship on educational leadership preparation programs, criticism continues due to the inability to establish a link between leadership and student learning.

Levine[9] highlights that educational administration programs are the weakest among all education programs nationally. And others suggest that research on educational leadership programs has lacked a focus on the importance of connecting leadership, learning, and equity.[10] However, recent scholarship advocates for the importance of strong leadership to improve schools and student outcomes.[11] While there appears to be agreement for emphasizing social justice in educational leadership preparation programs to encourage educational leaders to engage in social change,[12] what is less clear is the success of these programs to produce quality leaders. Despite the growing body of research in this area,[13] there is little research addressing the efficacy of educational leadership programs that adopt a social justice framework.

Bogotch[14] asserts that educational leadership must be about social justice, both in discourse and action, and the authors of this article agree. Faced with social justice issues including poverty, class, race, gender, and sexual orientation on a daily basis, it is imperative to determine how well educational leaders have been prepared to handle all of these challenges. Unfortunately, studies on the efficacy of leadership preparation programs to produce high quality leaders generally rely on self-reported perceptions, graduates' employment patterns, and if possible, standardized test scores of students.[15] The reliance on self- report data weakens the strength of the research and scholars have been critical of the field for this dependence when evaluating leadership programs.[16] Therefore, scholars advocate for rigorous and innovative assessment methodology that goes beyond self-report data. For example, Pounder[17] calls for research assessing graduates' on-the-job performance.

Conceptual Framework
To inform the current evaluation of a Jesuit Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Social Justice (Ed.D.) program, Ignatian-informed

leadership was applied as the conceptual frame from which social justice and the program learning outcomes were defined. Primarily, the focus of this particular Educational Leadership preparation program is on social justice as defined by the Ignatian tradition, which challenges leaders to be action-oriented professionals who provide a preferential option for the poor.[18] The program under review is grounded in the Ignatian tradition which, in the words of Arrupe,[19] calls leaders to challenge the established status quo that "supports, maintains, and perpetuates a real disorder, an institutionalized violence; that is to say, social and political structures which have injustice and oppression built into them."

Method

Background and Context
This Educational Leadership Preparation program resides in a Jesuit University whose mission supports the education of the whole person, the encouragement of learning, the service of faith, and the promotion of justice. In true Ignatian form, educational preparation "is about encounter," or exposure to content with ongoing dialogue and conversation.[20] As such, students are called upon to reflect on their daily practice. This emphasis on reflection undergirds Ignatian formation processes and supports the conceptual framework of this School of Education. Specifically, the learning outcomes of the Educational Leadership program align to the conceptual framework and as such, candidates in this program, are called to be agents of change, especially in poor and marginalized communities.

Beyond being committed to quality education (Educate), the learning outcomes of the program require students to: Respect, Advocate, and Lead. *Respect* is understood as the encouragement of students to develop the ability to connect theory and practice, integrating leadership and social justice. The program also seeks to produce leaders who advocate for equity and diversity. *Advocacy* is understood as the preparation of leaders to critically engage in complex issues, demonstrating a commitment to social justice. And *leadership* is understood as encouraging the development of moral and ethical leaders who can help meet

student needs throughout the preK-20 public and private education system.

The goal of the Jesuit Educational Leadership Preparation program in this study is to produce leaders who implement theory into practice, advocate for social justice in educational settings, and lead to facilitate transformation in the field of education. The program (described in detail elsewhere)[21] is a three year cohort model where leadership is defined broadly to include leadership from any position including, superintendents, principals, teachers, or non-profit professionals. Students represent various educational contexts including, Catholic, public, charter, private, and non-traditional educational environments, providing a heterogeneity of voices in the classroom. Furthermore, the curriculum and dissertation work are equally committed to the integration of theory and practice and the dual concepts of leadership and social justice. While specific courses may emphasize one area more than the other, all dissertations must have an integrated focus of these two concepts. Students see leadership and social justice as concepts that are solution-based and action oriented.

Thus, this study investigates educational leaders' abilities to implement concepts of leadership and social justice in daily practice within K-20 educational environments. It is research grounded in the Ignatian perspective and utilizes an innovative assessment approach to examine the program outcomes. To assess the Educational Leadership in Social Justice preparation program, we employed an empirical approach, using two sources of qualitative data to form our conclusions. Graduates reflected on their programmatic experiences and coursework and provided examples of how they led their school communities through the lens of social justice. We also included another voice – interviews with supervisors or colleagues – who could speak to the daily practice of the graduate during their program preparation.

Participants
Graduates were selected to participate in the study because they 1) had reached a satisfactory level of completion of the dissertation for pre-publication review and 2) had worked in the K-20 educational

system during their three years of doctoral studies. Supervisors or colleagues were also selected because they 1) had worked with the graduate student during their doctoral studies and were comfortable speaking about the graduate's daily work in the field and 2) had the graduate's consent to be contacted for an interview, providing their contact information. Both groups were interviewed in a similar format.

Approximately 6 graduate students and 5 supervisors were interviewed in the first year of data collection. During this year, the sample size was intentionally small, because we wanted to interview equal numbers of both Catholic and public/charter school participants, and the participants were recruited on this basis. These students were 50% male and 50% female and the supervisors were 40% male and 60% female. Three of the graduate students worked as teachers during the program; 1 worked as a principal; and 2 held a different leadership position in the education field (i.e., Vice President of non-profit organization; Executive Director in the school district office). Experiences in various educational settings were also represented in the data, including leadership practices in Catholic, public, and charter schools.

In the second year of data collection, approximately 10 students and 8 supervisors were interviewed. During this year, all students who met the qualifications participated in the exit interview process. One supervisor did not return our phone call to schedule an interview and another supervisor expressed via email that she felt she was not the best fit for an interview – this particular graduate student had recently left the school for a fellowship opportunity. Experiences in various educational settings were also represented in these interviews including data from students who worked in Catholic, charter, public, and independent schools. For the second year of data collection, there were 20% male and 80% female students and the supervisors were 8% male and 42% female. Three students worked as teachers, three worked as principals, and the remainder held a different leadership position in the education field (i.e., District Office Coordinator for Title I funding; Dean of Discipline).

Procedures

We interviewed graduates who met the criteria for enrollment in the study upon exiting the program and extended the investigation to include the voice of supervisors and colleagues in the field, who could speak to the graduates' on-the-job performance and transformation during the preparation program. Semi-structured interviews were conducted lasting approximately 60 minutes. Students and supervisors were invited to interview in person on campus or by phone if more convenient. Student interviews occurred on campus and all but one supervisor was interviewed over the phone. The study received approval from the Institutional Review Board at the sponsoring University. Two years of data in the form of interviews have been gathered and analyzed.

Measures

Interview questions, developed by the authors, were based on a review of literature calling for an investigation into the efficacy of educational leadership preparation programs. These questions were then discussed by program faculty and modified to fit the unique needs of this particular Jesuit program. As such, questions were designed to first elicit graduates' conceptual understanding of social justice and leadership, and then questions prompted graduates to provide concrete examples of how they lead their educational communities. Specifically, participants were asked to define their view of leadership and social justice; reflect on perspectives of leadership for social justice before and after the program; provide examples from their daily practice as to how they lead from a social justice paradigm; and provide general reflections about the program. Furthermore, to address the criticism of scholars in the field[22] who suggest preparation programs rely too heavily on self-report data, supervisors were asked similar questions in relation to their experiences and perspectives about the graduate student in their daily work. The questions focused on specific examples of the graduates' on-the-job leadership skills and supervisors' perceptions of the graduates' transformation as a result of completing the Jesuit Educational Leadership for Social Justice Program.

Results

The learning outcomes of the program were utilized as the coding scheme to examine the graduates' ability to implement conceptual knowledge in their daily practice. As such, analyses of both graduates' and their supervisors' reflections focused around whether the students demonstrated the ability to Respect, Advocate, and Lead. In addition, within these categories, themes emerged that further reflected the impact of the program on student sensibility and practice.

Respect

Reflections by the graduates and their supervisors indicate the graduates' ability to connect theory and practice, integrate leadership and social justice, and advocate for equity and diversity – our definition of respect.

Charity to Sustainability. Specifically, graduates noted a transformation and discussed a philosophical shift in understanding social justice – from charity to sustainability. For example, a female graduate student, who is a principal of an elementary school, commented that the courses gave her a foundation and a voice from which to speak, describing herself as moving from a philosophy of doing *for* others to doing *with* others. And this commitment is recognized by her colleagues who stated that social justice at their school site now goes "beyond the little coin box that we used to pass out … it's way beyond that… there's a face behind it now." Another graduate commented, "I came into the program very naïve. I see social justice more broadly now. We are very good at raising money, but it's one thing to raise money and to write a check and then send the check off. We are now trying to bring it closer to the kids." These comments suggest the graduates shifted their view and practice of social justice, which was confirmed by their colleagues. While fundraising efforts continue at their schools sites, these leaders spoke about how their relationships with the community expanded and how their understanding of issues facing their communities shifted to the perspective of the people in the community. The graduates discussed building reciprocal, sustainable relationships where members of the community visit the schools to meet the students and discuss issues together. As

leaders for social justice, their approach shifted from one-time, anonymous donations to relationship building and understanding.

Awareness. Furthermore, graduates and supervisors shared a deeper awareness, specifically acknowledging the role of privilege in education, understanding the deficit model, and recognizing the system of meritocracy, which provided evidence of respect. For example, one student said:

> There was a part of me that had to get very humbled and very much aware that what I thought about things was not so… an awareness that you think you see things a certain way, but you come to understand that you're not able to see things or haven't seen things and now you can. The humbling part is that I feel like I have only half started, that there's so much more to learn, especially in the areas of race, gender, and socioeconomic status… I really believe that the program in a very strong way broke that open for me on many, many levels.

This graduate shared how the program provided him with an opportunity to open his eyes to the systemic and institutional injustice present in the very fabric of society. And he acknowledged the developmental nature of becoming a leader for social justice in that he felt he had "much more to learn."

Privilege. A specific awareness of privilege in the educational system was shared across several students. For instance, a classroom teacher shared her own transformation as "life-changing" and commented on her own awareness of new terminology and the role of privilege when she said:

> Before this program, I didn't even know what the word 'hegemony' was. And the work that we read about [in the program] … the different types of privilege…that was life changing.

This awareness of privilege was echoed by another student who shared:

> This program made me acknowledge my own privilege…interrogating my positionality, my own biases…and using those experiences to be a leader.

The courage with which these graduates shared their comments and acknowledged the role of power and privilege in leadership, suggests a deep foundation and commitment to respect others. Similarly, another classroom teacher shared his awareness of white privilege and how this awareness helped him to change his daily practice. He shared how the program helped him understand that a book he was using in class was "satirizing from a place of strong white privilege." He continued to describe how he chose an additional book to supplement the original and now engages his high school class in a discussion about white privilege. It is evident that the program helped the graduate look critically at his curricular choices and as a leader, make decisions to promote justice.

Deficit model. In addition to an understanding of privilege, a different classroom teacher shared her shift away from the deficit model when she said:

> [The doctoral program] changed my perspective and moved me to a strength-based perspective when looking at those students who may struggle or who may present problems in the classroom.

Another graduate who works as an administrator echoed this comment, saying:

> Before the program I think I had a much more deficit view. Now I understand that our job as administrators is to say, 'how can you enrich or enhance what is already happening at home.'

These comments reflect a deeper understanding of the deficit model of education and suggest that the graduates have adopted more of a "funds of knowledge" approach to their work.[23]

Recognizing meritocracy. Students shared a deeper awareness of the educational system as a system of meritocracy. A few students specifically reflected that the literature read during the

doctoral program helped in their understanding of the system of meritocracy. For example, a female graduate shared:

> As the three years progressed, I felt much more comfortable reading literature with a critical eye. I don't think I would have done that at first…I would have felt a little uncomfortable because sometimes the literature was challenging the realities of everything that I held true…for example the theory of meritocracy, you work hard, you'll do fine, everybody's equal…and now because of the program, I know that is not true.

Another female graduate echoed this comment when she discussed how the literature in the program helped her to realize for the first time that the "achievement ideology doesn't necessarily work for everyone." And another graduate shared: "I understood how poverty is a cycle and a system rather than perpetuating this idea of a meritocracy." In sum, these comments suggest that the program assisted students to learn about the role of privilege, the deficit model, and the system of meritocracy found in our educational field. This awareness is the starting point from which true social justice action can take place.

Praxis. While the examples above suggest a cognitive transformation, we sought to further understand the graduates' ability to implement social justice in practice. In other words, we wished to understand their praxis. In addition to the philosophical shift from charity to sustainability and an awareness of privilege, the deficit model, and the system of meritocracy, graduates also indicated that the program assisted with their ability to put theory into practice in their daily work. Several students commented on how the program forced them to re-examine their practice, including their curriculum, admissions procedures, discipline efforts, or work with parents and families. One student commented:

> I feel like I am at a school where there's not permission to talk about race. So that's very difficult but at the same time, when it popped up, I made sure we talked about it. I didn't avoid it. I tried to work through some of this at the administrative level, and on a pedagogical level.

Here the graduate puts into practice some of the philosophical underpinnings that she learned in the program. And while her interventions may not be welcome at her worksite, she is determined to implement them because she is aware of the need. In addition, most supervisors of graduates who were interviewed shared with us that their practice had transformed. For example, one supervisor shared:

> I think the program encouraged her to take more time to listen. She would take time to hear all the perspectives – she was trying to analyze, 'Did we forget something? Have we forgotten someone?'

Here the graduate felt comfortable asking questions, even of her supervisors, in order to implement her understanding of social justice in her daily practice. The determination to act on behalf of others and stand up to authority suggests that the graduates are striving to be leaders for social justice.

Advocate
Graduates and their supervisors offered examples of transformation during the Ed.D. program in advocating for social justice through critical engagement with complex issues and a tendency to act when witnessing injustice. As one principal shared, "This doctorate degree was for my community. It was for my students, it was for me to be able to have something that gave me a little more influence to advocate for them."

Advocacy as action. Several students commented on how leadership for social justice truly meant a call to action. For instance, one student said, "When you talk about social justice, it's a call to action." And another shared, "Before the program, I knew what was right. Now I am able to operationalize." As an example of how social justice was operationalized, one student who worked as an administrator shared:

> We created a space where teacher involvement in decision-making has been sincere and open

and I think that had a lot to do with the experience I had in the doctoral program.

Similarly, a graduate student who had worked as a teacher shared:

> I feel like I am an advocate, and I provide a social justice platform to make sure that these kids are getting a really great curriculum, and one that's not like a cookie cutter structure.

These comments reflect a true commitment to action. Similar to Arrupe's call to be change agents, these graduates were able to advocate for the marginalized and put into practice, policies and programs to encourage social justice. Finally, an administrator ended her interview with:

> Do something. And do something for the right reason. Do something for people that are unable to advocate for themselves. Do something that is just. Do something for the persons who would not be able to do it for themselves based on your position of power and influence. Social justice requires doing more than the right thing – it requires going the extra mile.

Understanding Social and Cultural Capital. In addition to action, graduates shared their understanding of social and cultural capital, which allowed them to advocate for their students. For instance, a graduate commented about poverty involving more than a lack of money, but also a lack of access to information. He shared how a leader advocates for those in poverty to assist with navigating the "system" to access information. Another graduate, a principal, reflected on how her students believe that they are different from each other because they come from different places and she shared, "really it's called cultural literacy." She continued to share how students see each other as different and that prohibits them from speaking about issues with each other. She concluded: "We have to eradicate that." In these reflections, graduates demonstrate a richer understanding of cultural and social capital and view their leadership as a form of advocacy.

Challenging the status quo. Graduates also shared how advocacy was truly challenging the status quo by making sure that traditional practices at their school sites did not outweigh social justice. For instance, one supervisor of a graduate student shared:

> We were planning a big celebration, and the kids were all supposed to bring in something, and she said 'Have you thought about the fact that a few of these kids are not going to be able to bring in that $25.00 gift? Have you thought about how that is going to make them feel?'

Her awareness of all students and her ability to ask difficult questions of her administration suggests a comfort level in challenging the status quo in order to be sensitive to all members of the community. Similarly, another candidate, when asked about his view of social justice upon conclusion of the Ed.D. program, commented:

> It's a call to challenge the status quo … making education a vehicle for change and a vehicle for advancement for everybody … it doesn't matter their economic background, it doesn't matter their racial [*sic*] or ethnicity, everyone deserves an equal chance and it's an educator's responsibility, to make sure that that is available to all students.

This mirrors the Jesuit notion of social justice as defined by Arrupe,[24] an advocacy for disrupting the status quo. This graduate's colleague commented that, prior to the program, the candidate in his role as administrator may not have realized that school policies offered preferential treatment to some. She went on to describe:

> He really looks at the individual in the context of the whole, in a more just way, recognizing that if [he's] going to give a student a particular privilege, then really all students should have access to that particular privilege.

Such evidence suggests that the graduate transformed his views and practice of social justice – that even when educators might believe they are doing the right thing for a student, social justice occurs when all students have access to privilege.

Lead
The goal of the program is to produce educational change agents who can improve the lived experiences of students and their families and lead socially just schools. For example, one graduate shared:

> Having completed the program, my view has really expanded and I'm able to clearly define the difference between being a manager and being a leader. It's not about managing the people around you. It's about leading so that when you leave the place, it's better than when you left it and there are people to carry the torch of social justice.

The Confidence to Lead. Several students discussed a transformation to lead from a social justice perspective by no longer remaining silent when issues at their school site emerged. For example, a graduate reflected, "I've learned through this program that I can't be quiet." And another shared, "It's about inspiring the people who are right on the frontline in the classroom, to have a social justice focus." Their comments suggest that the graduates are inspired, similar to the call of Kolvenbach, to bring about structural change.

Supervisors corroborated the comments made by graduates. Specifically, one supervisor shared how the graduate, "went from a serving role to a leadership role. She was willing to take responsibility and that's a huge shift." Finally, a graduate student distinctly spoke of his confidence to lead when he said, "This program gave me the confidence to speak with clarity, be direct, firm, and to understand my role and function as a leader." While leadership for social justice can take many forms, the examples provided here suggest that the graduates were inspired to enact change and were willing to take ownership and responsibility for decisions. The program appears to have had an impact on the confidence of candidates who articulated an inability to remain quiet in the face of injustice.

Collaborative Leadership. In addition to finding the confidence to lead, students discussed adopting a more collaborative view of leadership.

After the program ended, I feel it changed the way I feel about children that present challenges to me in the classroom. I'm more willing to work with them and understand. I want to work collaboratively with parents to try to help them be successful.

In this example, the student articulates how her view of leadership broadened to include collaboration with parents. Rather than seeing a child as a "problem," this student expressed how the program helped her to realize that she can work with a team, including parents, to help all children be successful. Another student commented on hierarchy and how her view of the leader as an authority over others shifted as a result of the program to include a broader and more collaborative view of leadership:

> When I started, I thought that being a leader really had a narrow definition, which was somebody who is in a position of positional authority who everybody looks to…teachers who don't necessarily have those positions of power can be leaders for social justice, as can parents and other stakeholders.

In this example, we see that the graduate broadened her view of leadership also, to include leading from any position, whether a teacher, parent or other stakeholder.

Finding their voice. Additionally, graduates discussed finding their voice as a result of the doctoral program. For example, one student reflected, "And this is all about the program. I was not this person. I was not this fierce. I was not this humble." In this comment we see the juxtaposition of being fierce and humble at the same time, which is reminiscent of Ignatian social justice where we are called to act but simultaneously walk with the poor and marginalized. Finally, a graduate student administrator shared how she fought for social justice by asking questions that challenged her school to consider how they were contributing to social inequity.

> I became more vocal about the social justice piece. I made a point to be more aggressive about the things we were doing…And to ask

'how are we contributing to social inequities, how are we as a community addressing these beyond the microcosm?'

Thus, these comments, reflected by both graduates and their supervisors, suggest a transformation during the program to lead with conviction and confidence, collaborate with others, and speak up about inequity.

Discussion

Most graduates articulated a transformation during the program from a superficial view of social justice to the ability to act on the program's learning outcomes. These findings were corroborated by supervisors. Implications from this research are varied and have significant impact on programs for Educational Leadership, including contributing to the literature on the efficacy of educational leadership programs. Further, exploring the graduates' practice in the field via supervisor interviews is one innovative way to measure the efficacy of educational preparation programs and responds directly to Pounder's call to measure on-the-job performance.[25] By interviewing supervisors we were able to capture graduates' transformation that occurred beyond dispositions or prior skills, which may have initially attracted them to our program. Thus, we were able to speak to the culmination of the teaching-learning process and the ability to implement conceptual ideas of social justice successfully in the field.

While our conclusions are aligned to the program's learning goals and offer great insight to our own program development, we hope they also provide a model to other programs for evaluating the efficacy of the preparation of leaders for social justice. As our program is unique in its design, in its Ignatian tradition, and its social justice focus, the authors caution a generalization of findings. Still, Marshall and Oliva[26] recommend that to assess programs in leadership for social justice, a clear definition of social justice must first be articulated. To that end, the program under review clearly promotes the University's mission and Ignatian tradition by grounding the definition of social justice in their conceptual framework of respect, advocate, and lead, which capture the preferential option for the poor and marginalized and the call to action.

Some limitations of the study include the fact that students self-select to apply to the program. It may be that they are attracted to the program because social justice is in the title of the degree and as such, students are naturally motivated to embrace issues of leadership preparation for social justice. To that end, it is difficult to disentangle evidence of transformation linked to the program versus attributes of the candidate upon entrance into the program. Yet, evidence from the graduates and their supervisors captured the before and after picture of the candidate with several comments tying the transformation of the candidate to the program itself, rather than a dispositional trait or prior skill. Still, these perspectives came from graduates who were able to meet the three-year deadline to complete the degree. Other students who had difficulty completing the degree within the program's three years may have different perspectives not captured here. Providing evidence from two years of graduates, however, allowed for some of the students who were unable to complete the degree in the traditional three-year period to be captured in the second year of data collection. There did not appear to be differences in the types of insight shared by graduates in the first versus second year of data collection or by students who completed the degree in three versus four years. Furthermore, the insights shared by the supervisors came from people selected by the graduates who felt comfortable with that supervisor discussing their work. It is likely that candidates selected individuals with whom they have a favorable relationship already, limiting the perspective of the supervisors. These limitations raise the question of whether the assessment methods used to assess program efficacy are socially just. Still, a key strength of this program assessment is the fact that we did not rely solely on the perspective of the student's self-reported data to determine success – something that has become the standard in the field of educational leadership preparation to determine success. As such, other programs are encouraged to also connect with their graduate students' educational communities to measure actual impact in the field.

While the majority of comments expressed by candidates and their supervisors suggested positive outcomes as a result of the leadership program in that graduates demonstrated the ability to respect, advocate, and lead in their daily practice, some additional considerations emerged while analyzing the data. First, the notion of transformation is continuous by definition. To that end, while graduates expressed feeling transformed by the program, we believe that transformation is never complete, but continuous. We would hope that leaders who emerge from our program have learned the tools to continually self-assess and grow in their ability to respect, advocate, and lead their communities. Second, the process of transformation is developmental by nature. In other words, one does not become transformed overnight. Rather, the process of transformation can and should take time. Still, we noticed that though graduates reflected movement away from being naïve and developing a greater understanding of hegemonic structures, they still used language that comes from a privileged positionality. For example, one graduate said, "My increased understanding of leadership for social justice made me more tolerant." The Ignatian understanding of social justice would require that leaders not just "tolerate," but embrace and celebrate difference. This comment indicates the beginning stages of transformation, suggesting that this graduate is still in an early phase of development. Finally, despite indications that students had undergone some transformation, notions of power and hierarchy continued to emerge in comments made by the graduates. For instance, several students mentioned wanting the degree to gain promotions in the work place. One graduate reflected "needing" the degree to advocate for her community. She understood that the doctorate degree provided her with power from which she could advocate for her students; however, while a higher education degree offers a type of capital, our hope would be that our leaders emerge embracing a democratic leadership model without reference to power or privilege. And yet, using the power of a degree as a change agent in an underserved community is not a negative outcome for the program. What is unknown is whether the graduate subscribes to the notion of hierarchy based on educational status or degree and whether she will dismiss others who do not hold the same credentials.

In this two-year study it is clear that teaching to and learning about concepts of social justice in this educational leadership preparation program was highly impactful for graduates as they earned their Ed.D. degree. Thus, evidence suggests that beyond the transformation of graduates' perspectives to understand the inequities in our educational systems, they became change agents by implementing socially just practices as leaders in their schools and communities. Graduates told of a personal transformation that influenced their practice in the local context, reporting that they looked for ways to provide more and better access to students across the socioeconomic spectrum. In addition, graduates understood that leadership meant not just managing people, or completing tasks but rather included a reconceptualization of their leadership as a platform for advocacy, ensuring that all those in the school system are being treated with equal measures of justice and care. And finally, while this research revealed that graduates exit this program at varying stages of transformation, it is clear that exposure to the teaching and learning in and educational leadership doctorate for social justice makes a difference in both the lives of the graduates, and the students they serve. HJE

Notes

[1] "Our Mission Today: The Service of Faith and The Promotion of Justice," Decree 4 of the 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus. http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/our-mission-today.html

[2] Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., "The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education," address at Santa Clara University, October 6, 2000.

[3] Michael E. Dantley and Linda C. Tillman, "Social Justice and Moral Transformative Leadership," In *Leadership for Social Justice,* ed. C. Marshall & M. Oliva (Boston:Allyn & Bacon, 2010), 19-34.

[4] Kolvenbach, "The Service of Faith," 4.

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