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# The Practice and Challenges of Social Justice Instructional Leadership In International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme Schools

Ovura Murphy

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## ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, THE PRACTICE AND CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME SCHOOLS, by OVURA THEANITA CROSBY MURPHY, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy, in the College of Education & Human Development, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chairperson, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty.

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THE PRACTICE AND CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE INSTRUCTIONAL  
LEADERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE  
PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME SCHOOLS

by

OVURA THEANITA CROSBY MURPHY

Under the Direction of Yinying Wang

**ABSTRACT**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to examine the effective social justice instructional leadership practices of leaders in schools implementing the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) and identify challenges and barriers these leaders experience when implementing social justice instructional leadership. **Framework:** Social justice instructional leadership (SJIL) includes: (a) establishing vision to promote a safe and inclusive environment, (b) facilitating high-quality learning experiences with an engaging curriculum that includes multiple perspectives, (c) building capacity of the entire school community to positively impact achievement, (d) creating a supportive organization for all stakeholders, and (e)

collaboration with external partners for innovation, support, and resources. **Methods:** This qualitative case study employed interviews and examination of documents to identify the effective SJIL actions of school leaders and the challenges these leaders experienced in IB PYP schools in one urban, southeastern school district. Deductive and inductive analysis techniques helped categorize emergent themes related to effective practices and challenges. **Findings:** The findings of this study present actions that PYP leaders identified as having a positive impact on the social-emotional and academic growth of students in traditionally marginalized groups including developing a culturally responsive environment, providing access to learning in inclusive and diverse settings, building a data driven culture, fostering relationships, and educating stakeholders. The findings also provide suggested strategies for overcoming roadblocks to SJIL including providing intensive teacher support, implementing targeted professional learning, educating parents, soliciting support through outreach, and partnering with organizations for wrap-around services. **Implications:** The findings of this inquiry suggest that to develop school cultures that promote institutional access, educational equity, and academic success for all students, school leaders must be deliberate when: hiring and developing teachers, budgeting, and implementing resources, practices, and protocols. This study also reinforces the need for providers of educational leadership training to include SJIL practices, methodologies, and competencies in leadership programs. Finally, the results of this study support the need for states and districts to change education funding formulas based on the needs of students to enable districts and schools to serve their neediest children with fewer barriers.

**INDEX WORDS:** instructional leadership, International Baccalaureate, Primary Years Programme, social justice leadership

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OVURA THEANITA CROSBY MURPHY

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in

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in

Educational Policy Studies

in

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Georgia State University

Atlanta, GA

2017

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to the people in my life who developed my love of education, thirst for knowledge, supported my personal and professional growth and encouraged me throughout this journey. First, to my mother, Anita Crosby, your boundless love and support enabled me to grow into the inquisitive woman I am today. Your love of reading and learning fostered those loves in me, which facilitated my success throughout this process. Your constant encouragement and supportive prodding kept me focused and headed towards graduation. One of my goals was to make you proud, and I know that you are. I love you! To my father, Eddie Crosby, you modeled that it was never too late to pursue your dream or earn a degree. Although you were not here to experience this journey, your love, words of encouragement, and life lessons propelled me to the end. I know that you are in heaven beaming with pride!

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## **EXPLANATION OF TERMINOLOGY**

Several study specific terms are consistent throughout the written report for the study. Throughout the written report, abbreviations of International Baccalaureate specific programs appear to limit the amount of repetition. This section provides a definition of those terms and a list of the abbreviations and their meaning.

When referring to a program offered by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), the researcher uses the British spelling of the word “program”, as that is how the IBO spells it in all its documentation (Kobylinski-Fehrman, 2013). Throughout the report, the term transdisciplinary applies to concepts, skills, and themes that support learners with making meaning of and drawing connections between any content areas. The term leaders in this study will refer to principals, assistant principals, and IB PYP coordinators, which is consistent with the IB description of the pedagogical leadership team of a PYP school (IBO, 2009b). Used interchangeably throughout this report, the terms traditionally marginalized groups and historically marginalized groups refer to groups of students who identify as Black, Hispanic, Limited English Proficient Students, and Students with Disabilities

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

CP: Career-related Programme

DP: Diploma Programme

ESEA: Elementary and Secondary Education Act

IB: International Baccalaureate

IBCC: International Baccalaureate Career-related Certificate

IBO: International Baccalaureate Organization

MYP: Middle Years Programme

PYP: Primary Years Programme

SJIL: Social Justice Instructional Leadership

## **1 THE PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME, SOCIAL JUSTICE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND CHALLENGES**

International education has experienced tremendous growth as an educational trend (Dolby & Rahman, 2008; Hallinger & Lee, 2012; Hayden & Thompson, 2008; Walker & Cheong, 2009). The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), through its curriculum frameworks, has positioned itself as a leader in this movement (Hallinger & Lee, 2012). One specific IBO framework, the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP), developed in 1997 for students between the ages of 3-12, has been implemented in thousands of schools in the U.S. and abroad (Singh, 2002). A PYP school endeavors to develop students who are aware of global issues, socially responsible, multilingual, and internationally minded (Hallinger & Lee, 2012; IBO, 2009a; Singh, 2002). Since its inception in 1997, the number of schools seeking authorization as IB World Schools offering the PYP has grown steadily. Between 2012 and 2017, the number of PYP programmes increased approximately 48 percent (IBO, 2018).

The goal of this qualitative case study is to investigate the social justice instructional leadership practices of leaders in IB PYP schools and the obstacles leaders face when working to improve the achievement of students in traditionally marginalized groups. Hallinger and Heck (1996) stress the importance of investigating leadership within the exercised context. Several components of the IB frameworks and features of IB schools make PYP schools ideal settings for studying social justice instructional leadership. First, the IB philosophy about teaching and learning centers on the academic, cultural, social, emotional, physical, and mental development of children and developing international-minded students is central to each of the IB programs (Hallinger & Lee, 2012; Stillisano, Waxman, Hostrup & Rollins, 2011).

Second, the IBO requires schools to foster the learning of each student and support students with diverse needs to increase learning (Hill, 2012; IBO, 2009c). PYP schools are expected to serve students in settings that are inclusive as possible and eliminate the practice of tracking or ability grouping of students on a continuous basis (IBO, 2017). In addition, IB schools must develop policies around language, assessment, and students with disabilities (IBO, 2016).

Finally, initially launched in Geneva to meet the needs of globally transient students, IB programs are now available in a variety of educational contexts (Hill, 2012; Hersey, 2012; Stillisano et al., 2011). Currently, there are over 4949 schools worldwide offering IB programmes serving students from a variety of countries, linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds, religious backgrounds, and cultures (IBO, 2009a, IBO, 2018; Stillisano et al., 2011). Many IB students often attend schools where the culture and language of instruction are different from their home language and culture (IBO, 2009a; Stillisano et al., 2011).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The goal of this qualitative case study is to examine the effective social justice instructional leadership practices that leaders in schools implementing the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme enact and identify the challenges and barriers these leaders face. The following questions will guide this research.

- (1) What are the effective social justice instructional leadership behaviors of school leaders in International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme schools?
- (2) What are challenges and barriers leaders in PYP schools encounter when implementing social justice instructional leadership?

The investigator will analyze qualitative data from interviews to answer the research questions. An analysis of documents will serve as an additional data source to corroborate findings.

The literature review that follows will situate this study within the literature, help acquire a sound understanding of topics and theories embedded within the research questions and identify potential gaps in the literature. The literature review will explore the growth of international education and the history of the International Baccalaureate. Furthermore, the review will analyze the PYP, social justice and instructional leadership practices, and outline challenges and barriers leaders face as social justice and instructional leaders. Finally, the review of literature includes a discussion of the relationship between leadership and student achievement.

### **Literature Review**

The purpose of this literature review is to summarize the literature related to justice, social justice and instructional leadership, identify the challenges and barriers leaders face as social justice and instructional leaders, give a brief history of the IBO, present an overview of the PYP, and outline the characteristics of leadership within the PYP. This literature review will also highlight the key literature on how leadership influences student achievement. A final goal of this review of relevant literature is to position this study within the literature and identify potential gaps in the literature.

#### **Justice**

Philosophers, scholars, and theorists across time have sought to conceptualize and define justice (Goldman & Cropanzano, 2015; Hamed, 2014; Obioha, 2011; Sandel, 2009). Justice is a concept found in ancient texts, Greek philosophies, legal writings, and organizational theories. Many scholars consider justice to be one of the most significant issues throughout the history of

philosophy and believe its importance has experienced a resurgence in the modern philosophical discussion (Hamed, 2014; Kirk, 1993; Obioha, 2011). Scholars throughout time have tried to conceptualize and define justice, yet, there is still no one agreed upon conception or definition of the term, although the imprint of various philosophies, cultures, individuals, and disciplines have influenced how justice is perceived. Obioha (2011) offers one idea why so many concepts of justice may exist. According to Obioha, justice is contextual; thus, context determines how one interprets justice. The writings of Kirk (1993) reinforce Obioha's thoughts on how individuals define justice. Kirk writes that people derived their definitions of justice from established family and community customs, habits and beliefs.

### **Classical Concepts of Justice.**

The classical definitions of justice come from the writings of philosophers such Thrasymachus, Plato, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Aristotle, and Cephalus (Bhandari, 1998; Kirk, 1993; Obioha, 2011). Many of the classical philosophers had different concepts of justice, although some of the classic theories support or build upon each other.

Thrasymachus' and Plato's ideas are one example of dichotomous philosophies of justice. Thrasymachus argued that interest of those in power was right and constituted justice (Bhandari, 1998; Obioha, 2011). Conversely, Plato contended that justice was not about the interests of the those in power, but the effective harmony of the whole (Bhandari, 1998; Obioha, 2011). Saint Thomas Aquinas' view of justice is different from Thrasymachus and comparable to Plato's in that Aquinas considered justice a virtue and at its core involved considering the welfare of others (Obioha, 2011). Aristotle and Plato also held differing notions of justice. Aristotle espoused justice as giving individuals what they deserve, thus believing that injustice is treating unequal things the same (Hamed, 2014; Kirk, 1993; Obioha, 2011; Sandel, 2009). Aristotle believed that

considering the most desirable way of life was necessary to determine the meaning of justice (Sandel, 2009). Plato, on the other hand, believed that it was necessary to rise above the desire to experience every pleasure, overcome the need for selfish satisfaction, and move past the prejudices and routines of ordinary life to understand the meaning of justice (Bhandari, 1998; Hamed, 2014; Sandel, 2009). Another difference in Aristotelian and Platonic justice is the fact that Aristotle emphasized rights, while Plato gave importance to duties (Hamed, 2014). Cephalus' view of justice also involved duties. Cephalus viewed telling the truth and paying one's debt as justice (Bhandari, 1998). The ideas of power, the common welfare, virtue, duties, rights, and integrity that are the components of the classical concepts of justice serve as the foundational core of the modern theories of justice.

### **Modern Concepts of Justice.**

Contemporary views of justice are just as varied as traditional views of justice. While modern and classical theories of justice have a different contextual beginning, many modern definitions of justice incorporate ideas from classical theories of justice such as virtue, the common good, rights, and duties. Rawls (1957) views justice as an amalgamation of liberty, equality, and reward for contributions to the universal benefit. While Sandel (2009) believes there are distinctive lenses through which to think about justice, which include improving welfare, valuing freedom, and stimulating virtue. Obioha (2011) offers a succinct summation of the current discourse on justice. Obioha writes, "whatever differences there may be in the definition of justice by scholars, broadly speaking, the concept pictures integrity, impartiality, rightness and fairness as constituting the notion of justice" (p. 183).

Justice scholars have used various terms to classify justice based on the context and underlying concepts. Prevalent classifications include vindictive or retributive, contributive or

legal, normative, commutative, distributive, and social justice (Obioha, 2011). Vindictive or retributive justice encompasses the belief that wrongdoers should receive punishment proportionate to the offense (Goldman & Cropanzano, 2015; Obioha, 2011). A classic reference to justice that includes the notion of retribution is the Code of Hammurabi. The Code of Hammurabi speaks of bringing justice to the land to protecting the weak from the strong through destroying the evil and the wicked (Goldman & Cropanzano, 2015). Contributive or legal justice centers on the common welfare of the community. Legal justice focuses on adherence to the law (Goldman & Cropanzano, 2015; Obioha, 2011). Contributive or legal justice maintains that the good of the individual should not prevail over the good of the whole (Obioha, 2011). Distributive justice relates to the relationship between a community and its members. Supporters of this concept of justice propose that proportionate equality drive the distribution of advantages and burdens in a community (Obioha, 2011). Aristotle is one of the proponents of distributive justice (Bhandari, 1998; Goldman & Cropanzano, 2015; Hamed, 2014). Social justice centers on social institutions, social groups, rights, and relationships. Rawls (1999) views justice as the primary goal of social institutions. The manner that major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and decide the division of benefits is the main idea of justice (Rawls, 1957; Rawls, 1999). In their writings, Sandel (2009) and Obioha (2011) discuss the work of Immanuel Kant and his belief that all people are worthy of respect, because of their humanity, which a belief echoed by social justice advocates today. Many justice scholars view justice as a fundamental quality and the bedrock of societal structure. The writings of Kirk (1993) and Obioha (2011) echo Plato's beliefs about justice as a critical virtue that is the foundation of social order.

## **Social Justice Leadership**

Just as there are many definitions of social justice, there are an equal number of definitions for social justice leadership. Although the definition of social justice leadership varies among scholars, there is a consensus that social justice leadership involves behaviors that serve to remove barriers and inequities and improve outcomes for marginalized groups (Bogotch, 2000; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Furman, 2012; Gerwitz, 1998; Theoharis, 2007). While there are numerous studies on social justice leadership, few link social justice leadership practices and student achievement or that connects social justice and instructional leadership.

Advocating for the educational needs of students in historically marginalized groups is one of the guiding forces behind the increasing demand for social justice leadership (Theoharis, 2007). The definition of social justice leadership varies among researchers, but most agree that social justice leadership involves behaviors that serve to eliminate inequities for marginalized groups (Bogotch, 2000; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Furman, 2012; Gerwitz, 1998; Theoharis, 2007). Blackmore (2002) characterized education as a social, ethical, and political practice and argued that practices of responsibility, recognition, reciprocity ground social justice leadership. Bogotch (2000) wrote that social justice is a continuous effort to share power, knowledge, and resources equitably and that leaders should be able to communicate how their educational leadership actions relate to social justice inside and out of schools. According to Furman (2012), social justice leadership is action oriented, transformative in nature, involves commitment, persistence, and relationship building, and requires a belief in inclusion and democracy. Furman concluded that social justice leadership requires both action and reflection. DeMatthews and Mawhinney (2014) offered that social justice leadership entails identifying marginalization of groups and continuously working to eliminate the injustices. Theoharis (2007)

described social justice leaders as leaders whose advocacy, leader behaviors and vision include a focus on issues related to marginalizing conditions including race, class, gender, disability, and sexual orientation. Theoharis (2009) describes social justice leaders as those who (a) promote inclusion, access, and opportunity for all; (b) improve the teaching, curriculum, and learning environment; (c) create a climate of belonging; and (d) raise student achievement. Theoharis believes the social justice leaders also possess essential leadership traits, work to develop a comprehensive knowledge and skill set, and sustain themselves professionally and personally. In addition to defining social justice leadership, research in this field has also focused on developing frameworks for both enacting social justice and leader preparation programs. A social justice leader works to make his or her school a place where all groups are valued, honored, and recognized for their contribution to the school community. Currently, some educators question whether pre-service leaders are sufficiently prepared to combat political, economic, cultural, and social pressures so that they can advocate for students to create schools that support the achievement of all children (Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009). Leader preparation programs should work to provide pre-service leaders with the knowledge and skills needed to lead through social justice. Capper, Theoharis, and Sebastian (2006) reviewed 72 studies to develop a framework to prepare leaders to enact social justice leadership. From their review, they developed a seven-dimension framework. One dimension, curriculum about knowledge, stresses the importance of preparation programs including courses that focus on social justice related theories, areas such as special education law (Capper, Theoharis, & Sebastian, 2006). Leader preparation programs should also expose developing leaders to evidenced-based practices associated with second language acquisition, reallocation of resources and culturally responsive and inclusive reading and math programs (Capper et al., 2006). The

framework developed by Capper et al. (2006) also includes other social justice focused dimensions that leader preparation programs should encompass including critical consciousness, knowledge, pedagogy, social justice focused practical skills, and finally, assessment-oriented toward social justice. Capper et al. also emphasized that leader development programs must create emotionally safe environments that encourage risk-taking. Jean-Marie, Normore, and Brooks (2009) acknowledged the need for more comparative research to investigate leaders in the context of their leadership and diverse settings. Jean-Marie et al. (2009) recommend additional research on the practices and experiences of school administrators.

Social justice leaders advocate for historically and currently marginalized groups and make issues related to these groups central to their work (Brooks et al., 2008; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Furman, 2012; Theoharis, 2007). Currently, the literature on social justice leadership focuses on developing a concise definition and developing frameworks for implementation and leader preparation. DeMatthews and Mawhinney (2014) recommend that researchers further develop the literature related to social justice leadership by investigating the personal commitments and practices of leaders with social justice tendencies as well as how those practices establish socially just schools. Brooks et al. (2008) reinforced the recommendation from other research that researchers explore social justice in educational settings and develop, analyze, and hone theories that may lay a foundation for future research on social justice.

Finally, scholars recognized that social justice theory and instructional leadership theory intersect on matters of marginalized groups. The primary objective of administrators is to implement processes and procedures that promote a safe, inclusive environment and ensure that students have access to a multifaceted curriculum that allows historically marginalized students

to achieve at a rate equal to their peers (Rigby, 2014; Rigby, 2016; Ylimaki, 2012). Although studies on social justice leadership are prevalent in the literature, few link social justice leadership practices and achievement or connect social justice and instructional leadership.

### **Instructional Leadership**

With the rise of the accountability movement, instructional leadership of schools has increased in importance. Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) found that instructional leadership had a more significant impact on learner outcomes than other leadership styles but stressed that abstract leadership theories offer limited examples of specific leadership behaviors that generate considerable effects on student outcomes. Although instructional leadership is crucial to student achievement, researchers have yet to develop one agreed upon definition or conceptual framework (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Rigby, 2014; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). Ylimaki (2012) identified an additional gap in the research by noting that instructional leadership theory does not do enough to address how principals use curriculum as a tool to increase learning and achievement for students or to guide their teachers and students towards critical consciousness.

Instructional leadership centers on the responsibility of the principal in setting the school mission, managing the instructional program and fostering a positive learning climate (Hallinger, 2003). Through this work, principals influence student achievement. Social networks are invaluable to instructional leaders as they rely on these networks to clarify and communicate the mission to all stakeholders and to understand and navigate the gap between policy and teacher implementation (Hallinger, 2003; Rigby, 2016). Principals and other instructional leaders must create a climate of high expectations, use various data sources, especially data from standardized assessments, and monitor implementation of the curriculum through observations to lead their schools (Hallinger, 2003; Rigby, 2014; Rigby 2016). Using meta-analysis, Robinson et al. (2008)

found five leadership practices associated with instructional leadership but identified promoting and engaging in teacher learning and development, goal setting and planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum as having a positive correlation with improved student outcomes.

Rigby (2014) classified the beliefs and associated practices of instructional leadership into three categories: prevailing logic, entrepreneurial logic, and social justice logic. The prevailing logic includes the idea that the principal is to be both an instructional leader and manager of the school. Innovation and collaboration with the private sector are the dominant beliefs behind the entrepreneurial logic. Lastly, the social justice logic focuses on the experiences and unbalanced outcomes of marginalized students. Clear targets guide the work and enable organizations and organizational members to utilize feedback to improve their performance (Robinson et al., 2008).

The reflection-growth model is a framework for instructional leadership developed by Blase and Blase in 1999. In their inquiry into teachers' perceptions of the impact of principals' instructional leadership on teacher development, Blase and Blase (1999) identified conferencing with teachers to promote reflection and encouraging professional growth as key themes of the reflection-growth model of instructional leadership. Specific strategies related to promoting reflective practices and supporting professional growth are collaboration, peer coaching, inquiry, collegial study groups, discussion based on reflection, and action research (Blase & Blase, 1999).

Also, Hitt and Tucker (2016) developed a more recent conceptualization of instructional leadership that includes establishing and communicating the vision, facilitating a quality educational experience for students, building capacity, fostering a supportive learning organization, and collaborating with external entities.

Multiple models of instructional leadership populate the literature (Blase & Blase, 1999; Hallinger, 2003; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Rigby, 2014). An examination of the literature revealed common themes among the instructional leadership models including setting the school mission, fostering a positive school learning climate, ensuring students have quality learning experiences, and promoting and participating in teacher learning and development (Blase & Blase, 1999; Hallinger, 2003; Hitt & Tucker, 2016). While there is a wealth of scholarly inquiries on instructional leadership, gaps in the literature still exist. Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) considers the limited number of scholarly inquiries that link leadership and learner outcomes as evidence that teaching and learning, which is the primary task of schools and leadership research are disconnected. Scholarly writers have provided various recommendations to guide future instructional leadership research (Blase & Blase, 1999; Rigby, 2016). Blase and Blase (1999) recommends that further research on instructional leadership include an investigation of the methods that principals use to influence the effective teaching strategies used by educators. Rigby (2016) contends that the unique backgrounds, experiences, values and social networks of principals will always influence their work as instructional leaders. Consequently, Rigby argues that future studies on instructional leadership must address how the context, experiences, and beliefs of principals influence their instructional leadership actions.

### **Challenges to Social Justice and Instructional Leadership**

While there is an increasing amount of literature dedicated to defining social justice and instructional leadership and identifying practices for both, a limited amount of literature discusses the challenges and barriers that leaders encounter when attempting to act as social justice (DeMatthews, 2016) or instructional leaders. Jean-Marie, Normore, and Brooks (2009) question whether new leaders are adequately prepared to deal with the accountability, political,

economic, cultural, and social pressures they will encounter when working to create schools that support the achievement of all children. Hallinger (2005) believes that the factors working against principals serving as instructional leaders are numerous, diverse, and challenging to overcome.

### **Challenges to social justice leadership.**

There are many challenges that leaders must overcome when leading with a social justice perspective including issues associated with the laws and regulations, politics and bureaucracy, beliefs of parents and staff, insufficient support, social pressures, as well as a lack of time, resources and capacity (DeMatthews, 2016; Theoharis, 2007). School leaders face considerable challenges as states control education through policy and accountability frameworks that are often uncoordinated and contradictory (Blackmore, 2002; Capper & Young, 2014). A U.S. principal in a 2015 study conducted by Angelle, Arlestig and Norberg, shared that he often felt as if state and district policies and mandates limited his social justice leadership decision-making. He also felt as if the policies and mandates forced them to focus on results rather than the whole child. In this same study, another U.S. principal revealed that he felt that state mandates cause issues by not allowing them to meet the individual needs of their students. Slater, Potter, Torres and Briceno (2014) believe that the ways people have learned to think is the major impediment to social justice. Slater and colleagues (2014) emphasize that some educators have developed low expectations and operate under a deficit mindset, which impedes the implementation of social justice practices in schools. The work of Theoharis (2007) supports the findings of Slater et al. (2014). Theoharis interviewed principals who lead through social justice and they listed the power of the status quo, obstructive staff attitudes and beliefs, and narrow-minded and privileged parents as challenges to social justice work in their schools. Several principals in this study

shared interactions with teachers and parents who want to maintain the status quo by keeping things as they are, or who are against supportive programs like inclusion for students with disabilities due to deficit thinking, low expectations, or fear. In a 2016 study, DeMatthews reported similar results. Ms. Uribe, the focus of the study conducted by DeMatthews (2016), described the resistance she faced from parents when implementing a more inclusive program for language learners as coming from multiple fronts. Some parents were concerned that having language learners in classes with their children would lessen the rigor of instruction, while others expressed concerns about possible bullying of their child, and still others were reluctant to have their children coming in classes with certain types of immigrants. Principal Uribe overcame this challenge by using a blended model for language instruction based on data.

Social justice researchers have also found a lack of support to be a challenge for social justice leaders to overcome. Lack of district support in the form of inadequate district provided professional development is a problem for social justice leaders (DeMatthews, 2016). The principals in the Theoharis study discussed how unsupportive central office administrators acted as barriers to their social justice leadership (Theoharis, 2007). Schools where principals lead for social justice face many obstacles that require resources and capacity that may not be available (DeMatthews, 2016). Angelle et al. (2015) interviewed RP, a U.S. principal, who perceived the greatest obstacle to his social justice leadership was time. Part of social justice leadership for RP centers on caring for and the meeting needs for both students and teachers, which required time, that he sometimes did not have. Principals in the 2007 Theoharis study discussed a lack of resources as barrier to their social justice leadership. Principals in this same study reported that their administrator preparation programs did not give them the capacity to face the challenges of social justice leadership.

### **Challenges to instructional leadership.**

Researchers have identified challenges and barriers that leaders must overcome while serving as instructional leaders including unclear definitions of role (Costello, 2015; Fink & Silverman, 2014), inadequate pedagogy and content knowledge (Costello, 2015; Hallinger, 2005), lack of central office support (Fink & Silverman, 2014; Louis & Robinson, 2012), increased job responsibilities, and time constraints (Costello, 2015; Fink & Silverman, 2014). A vague conceptualization of the instructional role is one challenge to instructional leadership for many leaders. Research suggests that a lack of a universal definition of instructional leadership in the literature and at the district level causes many principals to be uncertain of what instructional leadership should look like in their schools, and they are unsure of how to implement this type of leadership effectively (Costello, 2005; Fink & Silverman, 2014). Researchers have found that instructional leaders' feelings of inadequacy related to curriculum content and pedagogical expertise practices is another challenge to the implementation of instructional leadership (Costello, 2015; Hallinger, 2005). Costello (2015) found that some principals believe that they must be curriculum experts because they view instructional leadership as exclusively their responsibility. Hallinger (2005) recognized that more principals now consider themselves accountable for instructional leadership, regardless of whether they feel knowledgeable enough to lead such work. Costello found that many principals' feelings of inadequacy and uncomfortableness in viewing themselves as curriculum experts stem from their time away from the classroom or the belief that the teachers have more content-based knowledge. Lack of central office support in the form of district provided professional development and collaboration is another challenge to instructional leadership in schools. Fink and Silverman (2014) believe that districts do not provide instructional leaders with enough

targeted, job embedded, concentrated professional learning needed to improve their skill. In a study conducted in 2012, Louis and Robinson found a positive correlation between a collaborative instructional focus from central office and the effective instructional leadership from principals. In this same study, Louis and Robinson (2012) found that of the seven principals studied, only two reported participating in formal professional development coordinated by central office. Louis and Robinson wrote that collaboration between central offices and schools is critical to ensuring that instructional leaders experience support that is appropriate for their school. Increasingly, the daily responsibilities of instructional leaders have multiplied, which results in more work, but not more time in the day (Costello, 2015; Fink & Silverman, 2014). In addition to serving as instructional leaders, principals must manage administrative tasks, student and parent concerns, personnel, partnerships, conflicts, and resources (Costello, 2015). Goldring, Huff, May and Camburn (2008) believe that a major challenge principals face is how to divide their time between numerous, competing demands and responsibilities. Fink and Silverman believe that districts do not provide principals the daily time they need to engage with teachers and students to improve teaching and learning. These increased demands often limit the time that school leaders spend on instructional leadership. The added responsibilities have also made it difficult to share instructional leadership roles because principals often handle extra duties after hours (Costello, 2015). In a 2005 review of literature, Hallinger categorized leaders attempting to carry the instructional leadership burden alone as one of the foremost obstacles to effective school leadership.

Few empirical studies focus on the possible dilemmas inherent with social justice leadership (DeMatthews, 2016) or instructional leadership. The accountability movement and political environment both spur and hold back social justice leadership (Angelle et al., 2015).

Challenges in the form of budget cuts, lack of resources, time and capacity also limit social justice and instructional leaders from implementing practices to improve school for marginalized students (Costello, 2015; DeMatthews, 2016). Finally, lack of district support can be a major challenge for both social justice and instructional leaders to overcome (Louis & Robinson, 2012; Theoharis, 2007).

### **International Baccalaureate**

The IB and schools offering its programs have been important contributors in the global arena of international education for several decades, and IB has established itself as a leader in this arena (Bunnell, 2011; Hallinger & Lee, 2012; Lee et al., 2012b). The IB is a non-profit association founded over 45 years ago with the aim of creating a better, more peaceful world through high quality, international education (Hill, 2012). According to the IBO Facts and Figures (2015), there are 5,308 programs offered in 4,162 schools worldwide. Schools in the Americas represent 61.3 percent of schools offering IB. African, European, and the Middle Eastern schools represent 22.9 percent, and schools in Asia-Pacific round out the total representing 15.8 percent of the schools.

The mission of the IBO is to create caring young people who are inquiring, and knowledgeable, who use intercultural understanding and respect to an improved more peaceful world (IBO, 2013). The IBO offers four programs for international education, the: Diploma Programme, Middle Years Programme, Primary Years Programme, and Career-related Programme (Stillisano et al., 2011). Each program is stand-alone and developed as a realization of the IB's educational approach (IBO, 2013). The goal of each IB program is to cultivate internationally minded individuals who, recognizing their shared humanity and mutual guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world (IBO, 2013). The IB

Learner Profile provides common ground for all the programs and is the tangible manifestation of the IB mission (IBO, 2013). The IB learner profile encompasses the characteristics and outcomes correlated with teaching international-mindedness (IBO, 2013). The programs share a common educational framework grounded by a consistent philosophy about teaching and learning that centers on the academic, social, emotional, physical, and mental development of children. The process of developing international-minded students is central to each of the programs. Each curriculum connects the traditions of learning in languages, humanities, sciences, mathematics and the arts (IBO, 2009b). The authorization journey as an International Baccalaureate World School is rigorous and can take a school three to five years to complete. The authorization process includes school personnel completing application documents, creating strategic implementation plans, participating in extensive IB sponsored training, and undergoing a visit from a panel of IB trained evaluators (Stillisano et al., 2011).

The Diploma Programme (DP) originated at the International School of Geneva and was the first program established by the IBO. Developed in the 1960s, the DP serves students during the last two years of their secondary education. In 2012, Hill identified three principle reasons for the establishment of the DP as being pedagogical, idealistic and pragmatic. The first reason was to educate children with an emphasis on critical thinking skills (Hill, 2012). Secondly, the founders intended for the DP to encourage intercultural understanding and providing students with an international perspective. The final goal that guided the development of the DP was to endow graduates with a diploma that would ensure entry to higher education worldwide (Hill, 2012). Students in the DP encounter disciplinary and interdisciplinary study. The core of the DP is the extended essay, Theory of Knowledge, and Creativity, Action, Service (CAS) (Hill 2012; IBO, 2012a). The extended essay requires learners to engage in an original investigation through

an in-depth examination of an inquiry relating to one of the DP subjects of study (Hill, 2012). Theory of knowledge develops a coherent approach to learning that unifies the academic disciplines. CAS involves students in a variety of activities besides their academic studies throughout the DP (IBO, 2012a). The IB introduced its newest program, the Career-related Programme (CP), in 2012. The CP offers students the IB Career-related Certificate (IBCC). This program allows for students on vocational and career pathways to benefit from elements of the IB DP (Hill, 2012; IBO, 2014a). Personal and trade skills, service learning, language development, and the reflective project are the core components of the CP (IBO, 2014a). The purpose of the personal and professional skills course is to develop skills students need to navigate higher education, the workplace, and society (IBO, 2014a). Service learning is the practical application of information and expertise toward meeting an identified need in the community (IBO, 2014a). Language development ensures that all CP students develop oral, visual, and written communication skills in another language. Students produce an in-depth body of work over an extended period through the reflective project. During the reflective project, students analyze, discuss and evaluate an ethical dilemma associated with an issue from their career-related studies (IBO, 2014a).

Launched in 1994, The Middle Years Programme (MYP) is a school-wide program that serves students ages 11 to 16. The MYP typically spans grades 6 through 10, but not all schools offer the entire span. In the United States, middle schools usually offer the first three years, with the final two completed during the first two years of secondary school (Kobylinski-Fehrman, 2013). The MYP was established around the concept of holistic learning and focuses on making real world connections and discovering interdisciplinary relationships (Hill, 2012; IBO, 2014b). The MYP provides students opportunities to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they

need to manage difficulties and take responsible action for the future (IBO, 2014b). The MYP ensures breadth and depth of understanding through learning in eight subject clusters. Students study the language of instruction and an additional language of choice. Participation in service activities within the community is a requirement of the MYP (IBO, 2014b).

The PYP is one of the frameworks for international education offered by the IBO. The PYP has been implemented in thousands of schools in the U.S. and abroad (Bunnell, 2011; Singh, 2002; Tan, 2013). Since its inception, the number of schools seeking authorization as PYP IB World Schools has grown steadily. The number of schools authorized to implement the PYP increased from 989 in 2012 to 1468 in 2017 (IBO, 2018). A PYP school endeavors to develop students who are aware of global issues, socially responsible, multilingual, and internationally minded (Hallinger & Lee, 2012; IBO, 2009a; Singh, 2002).

With its 45-year history and implementation in over 4,000 schools worldwide, the IB is a leader in the international education movement (Bunnell, 2011; Hallinger & Lee, 2012; Hayden & Thompson, 2008). The International Baccalaureate strives to use quality international education programs as a tool to create a better, more peaceful world (Hill, 2012). The IB offers four curriculum frameworks for schools, which spans ages 3-18. Each model operates independently, but there are core elements encompassed in each program that makes it possible for schools to offer one or more of the curricula frameworks depending on the organizational structure of the school (Hill, 2012; Stillisano et al., 2011). The DP serves students during the last two years of their secondary education and includes the extended essay, Theory of Knowledge, and CAS (IBO, 2012a). The CP involves vocational and career pathways and serves students during the last two years of their secondary education offering students the ability to develop personal and trade skills, participate in service learning, and produce a reflective project (Hill,

2012; IBO, 2014a). The MYP is a school-wide program that serves students ages 11 to 16 and focuses on learners making real world connections and discovering interdisciplinary relationships (IBO, 2014b). The PYP, based on structured inquiry and concept-based teaching, is a school-wide program that serves students between the ages of 3-12. (Hill, 2012; IBO, 2012b). Thousands of schools in the U.S. and abroad have sought authorization as PYP schools with approximately 1,468 schools currently recognized by the IB as PYP schools in 2017 (Bunnell, 2011; IBO, 2018; Singh, 2002).

### **Primary Years Programme**

The PYP is the third framework for international education implemented by the IBO. The PYP was designed to be transdisciplinary in nature, inquiry-driven, and taught through various conceptual lenses. Schools implementing the PYP are required to develop international-mindedness in students, offer second language development, and encourage student action (IBO, 2012b; Singh, 2002; Stillisano et al., 2011). Though offered in over 1,400 schools worldwide, research on the PYP is limited (Bunnell, 2011; IBO, 2018; Lester, Lochmiller, Williamson, & Germain, 2014; Singh, 2002; Nichols, 2010).

Established in 1997, the Primary Years Programme (PYP) provides an option for international education for students between the ages of 3-12. The PYP developed because of the work of a group of international school leaders and teachers formerly known as the International Schools Curriculum Project (IBO, 2009d). The goals of the International Schools Curriculum Project were to develop a common curriculum for international elementary education that would be acceptable to all the communities represented within the group and cultivate international-minded learners. There was a collective belief that substantive teaching serves as a tool to promote insight, empathy, and compassion (IBO, 2009b). Access to the PYP has broadened

since 1997, with public, private, and national schools offering the program (IBO, 2009c). As of 2017, there were approximately 1,468 IB World Schools offering the Primary Years Programme (IBO, 2018).

At the core of all IB programs, is the IB Learner Profile. The IBO (2009a) defines a PYP school as a school that strives towards developing an internationally minded person, which is, one who demonstrates the attributes of the IB Learner Profile. The attributes of the IB Learner Profile are inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective (IBO, 2009a).

Based on the work of educational theorists such as Vygotsky, Piaget, Dewey, Bruner and Gardner, the PYP curriculum framework helps schools construct their curriculum around structured inquiry and concept-based learning. The PYP includes five fundamental components including knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes, and action (Hill, 2012; IBO, 2009a, 2009c, 2010a). Exploration of knowledge in the PYP occurs under six transdisciplinary themes that IB believes are globally significant. The transdisciplinary nature of teaching in the PYP requires teachers to be able to teach concepts across content areas while using structured inquiry to drive students' learning. PYP classrooms incorporate the characteristics of inquiry-based learning including real-life problems in the context of the curriculum. Students in a PYP classroom take responsibility for their learning, rely on resources, and support from the media center and technology to carry out inquiries (IBO, 2009a). Teachers and students consider the characteristics of certain things (form), how things work (function), and why things are the way they are (causation). Teachers and students also explore how things change (change) and how things are connected (connection). PYP learners also learn to consider other viewpoints

(perspective), ask about responsibility (responsibility), and answer how we know (reflection) (Hill, 2012; IBO, 2009a; Singh, 2002).

Educators create PYP units of inquiry using the PYP planning document called a planner. IB requires teachers to plan by first considering what they want students to know. Beginning with the desired outcomes is a fundamental component of planning in the PYP and critical to the implementation of an effective standards-based curriculum (IBO, 2009a; Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). After identifying the desired outcomes, IB educators determine evidence that students will provide to demonstrate learning. Assessment is the next section of the PYP planner and is the second phase of the planning process outlined by Wiggins and McTighe (1998). Teachers then plan the learning experiences (IBO, 2009; Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). The learning experiences section is where educators and students suggest learning experiences that will drive the inquiry and address the unit questions. The resources section is the last portion of planning that occurs before instruction begins. In this section, teachers list tools, people, places, literature, and materials that are essential to the unit. Completion of the remainder of the planner sections occurs as the unit progresses. Throughout the unit, teachers reflect and plan how they will improve the unit for the next year. Questions such as, to what degree did we accomplish our purpose, at what level did we include the elements of the PYP, and what student-led inquiries and action happened during the learning, guide PYP teachers' reflections (IBO, 2009a).

Embedded throughout the essential elements of the PYP are assessment processes. Students assess their growth related to the attributes of the Learner Profile and the attitudes. Teachers and students use reflection as assessment. Teachers reflect on their units and evaluate how well the units of inquiry fostered inquiry, taught the concepts, and met the needs of the students (IBO, 2009a). Students reflect on their academic growth during the unit, how they

exemplified the Learner Profile traits and attitudes, how they used the skills, and if their learning resulted in action (IBO, 2009a). PYP teachers utilize a variety of assessment tools and strategies. In the culminating year of the PYP, students participate in Exhibition, which is a culminating test that requires students to utilize the skills and knowledge they have gained throughout participation in the PYP. Hill (2012) characterized the exhibition as an assessment that requires students to collaborate to select a global real-world issue to investigate and propose solutions. Exhibition products include a research paper, a technology component, oral presentations, and the incorporation of the arts.

The final element of the PYP is action. Student initiated action should occur because of inquiry-based teaching and learning. Teachers are to provide students with the power to engage in a cycle of choosing to act, acting because of learning, and reflecting on the impact of their action (IBO, 2009a).

Global awareness and skills are the new core competencies of our society (Stewart, 2010). The present demand is for schools to graduate students who are ready for career and college, critical thinkers, problem solvers, globally competent, and prepared to communicate, cooperate, and compete with others around the world (Stewart, 2010; Walker & Cheong, 2009). The IB PYP fulfills this demand by requiring schools to develop internationally minded students who can communicate in a second language and understand issues from a global perspective. There also continues to be an educational push to improve student achievement. Stewart (2012) suggests that disadvantaged students are most at risk for being unprepared for the demands and opportunities of this global age. As a result, many school administrators, especially those in Title I schools, have turned to the PYP to promote achievement in their schools. The IB research brief, entitled Title I IB Schools 2009-2010, reported that 56 percent of IB World Schools and 40

percent of IB candidate schools offering the PYP in the United States have the school-wide Title I designation (IBO, 2012).

The literature is limited on leadership in schools implementing IB programs and more specifically, the Primary Years Program (Dabrowski, 2016; Lester et al., 2014; Nichols, 2010). There are no empirical studies on leadership in IB schools focused on social justice instructional leadership and its link to student achievement. Finally, despite rapid growth in the number of schools implementing the IB, the literature on leadership in IB schools is meager (Lee et al., 2012b).

### **Leadership in the PYP**

Research on leadership in international schools is sparse; nonetheless, this field of study requires more inquiry because the number of international educational institutions continues to swell (Dolby & Rahman 2008; Hallinger, Lee, & Walker, 2011; Hayden & Thompson, 2008; Riesbeck, 2008; Walker & Cheng, 2009). The importance of international education is expanding, but leadership research in international schools is an underdeveloped field of inquiry (Hallinger et al., 2011; Lee, Hallinger, & Walker, 2012b; Walker & Cheong, 2009). Considering the growing importance of this field of education, there are a comparatively small number of published empirical studies (Hallinger et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2012b). Although there are few published empirical studies, researchers agree that leadership in international schools is critical (Hallinger et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2012b). Research on leadership in IB schools includes transformational leadership (e.g. Pushpanadham, 2013), distributed instructional leadership (e.g. Lee, Hallinger, Walker, & 2012a; Lee et al., 2012b), and distributed social justice leadership (e.g. Brooks, Jean-Marie, Normore, & Hodgins, 2008). Studies on IB that focused specifically on social justice instructional leadership are limited, although many of the leadership characteristics

and responsibilities outlined by IB relate directly to constructs of both social justice and instructional leadership.

According to the IB, effective school leaders must consider their primary roles as pedagogical leaders (IBO, 2009b). The IB defines pedagogical leadership as the management of human, time, and fiscal resources to ensure the improvement of the teaching and learning and to achieve the overarching mission of the school, which should be in alignment with the IB mission (IBO, 2009b). The long-term responsibility of the pedagogical leadership team of an IB PYP school is to cultivate a pervasive understanding of the PYP so that it implemented confidently, considered successful, and becomes entrenched in the school culture (IBO, 2009b). In 2012, Hallinger and Lee studied distributed instructional leadership in IB schools and found a link between leadership and the perceived quality of IB program implementation. Findings from a 2009 study conducted by Hall, Elder, Thompson, and Pollack that examined the implementation of PYP in 16 U.S. schools using data from administrators and teachers offer that strong leadership was a key factor that enabled thriving implementation of PYP. Pushpanadham (2013) substantiates the findings of Hall, Elder, Thompson, and Pollack with results that suggest that effective leadership is possibly the chief reason for the success of IB PYP in India. The strategic work of articulating a vision for the school, supporting teachers, and staff recruitment is perhaps the principals' most significant contribution to the PYP because it affects the school culture and the implementation of the PYP (Day, Townsend, Knight, & Richardson, 2016). Day, Townsend, Knight, and Richardson (2016) studied leadership in the Primary Years Programme and discovered that the PYP Coordinator is a key player in the success of the PYP in a school, and accordingly must be part of the leadership team. Pushpanadham (2013) also found that the PYP coordinator was the most important person in the PYP, employing transformational leadership in

building a culture of learning, promoting creativity, facilitating vertical communication, gathering resources, and observing and reflecting with teachers to improve implementation. School leaders play a major role in student achievement because they set the school mission, manage the instructional program, and foster a positive learning environment as instructional leaders (Hallinger, 2003).

The administrators, coordinators, and teachers should engage in school level professional development and out-of-school professional development provided by IB (IBO, 2009b). It is critical for PYP principals to understand the philosophy, ideals, and practices of PYP (Day et al., 2016). Principals can gain this understanding through continuous professional learning dedicated to IB. Principals play a fundamental role in supporting and encouraging teachers' professional development needs (Yager, Pedersen, Yager, and Noppe, 2011). It is also vital for the principal of PYP schools to ensure that leaders and teachers receive annual professional and implementation support because modeling the values and practices of PYP is a core purpose of practitioners of PYP (Day et al., 2016; IBO, 2009b). According to Day et al. (2016), this professional learning and support include induction training for new staff, on-going professional development support, and intervention for all PYP teachers. Day et al. also found that improved implementation of PYP occurs when the PYP coordinator has adequate time to lead training on classroom practices and continuous professional development of PYP teachers. Learning about the philosophy, beliefs, and practices are not solely the purview of leaders and educators. IB recommends leaders arrange regularly occurring informational sessions about the PYP for the entire school community (IBO, 2009b). Findings from research conducted by Day and colleagues (2012) show that IB schools benefit when there is a plan for the orientation of new parents who may have minimal or no experience with PYP, and the IB corroborates the need for

general information sessions for the parents. Leaders must provide the time and money to ensure that on-going training, including IB workshops, visits to other schools, and onsite professional development sessions occur because research has shown that they are vital to PYP implementation (Hall, Elder, Thompson, & Pollack, 2009). Studies have shown that promoting professional learning as a function of instructional leadership has a positive correlation with improved student outcomes (Hallinger, 2003; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Robinson et al. 2008). Ensuring that regular IB training occurs for leaders, teachers, parents, and community members allows leaders to share knowledge, build the capacity of the school community, and create a supportive organization. These behaviors are some of the behaviors associated with social justice and instructional leadership (Bogotch, 2000; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Robinson et al., 2008).

Often, students in PYP schools have a home or first language (mother tongue) that is different from the language of instruction and a cultural background that is different from that of the majority student group (IBO, 2009a; IBO, 2009b; Stillisano et al., 2011). In their 2009 study of primary international school leaders in Hong Kong, Walker and Cheong propose that leaders in international primary schools need to be keenly aware of the cultural differences students bring to school. Equally as important is the need for leaders to understand how these cultural differences influence how and why students learn and recognize means that the school can use this understanding effectively (Walker & Cheong, 2009). PYP schools must afford all students the opportunity to nurture their mother tongue and an understanding of their culture to support their learning (IBO, 2009b; IBO, 2016). Schools must also develop and implement a language policy that outlines the school's commitment to the development of language and how the school will teach the language of instruction, a second language instruction, development of students' mother tongue, and communicate with parents related to language (IBO, 2009b; IBO, 2016). IB

also directs PYP administrators to ensure that communication with parents happens in their native languages when necessary (Hall et al., 2009; IBO). Successful social justice and instructional leaders are familiar with culturally responsive teaching strategies and advocates for the needs of all students by supporting teachers in developing a toolkit of appropriate instructional strategies (Theoharis, 2007; Walker & Cheong, 2009; Ylimaki, 2012).

Facilitating a quality learning environment, removing barriers to learning, and using culturally responsive practices are mainstays of social justice and instructional leadership (Furman, 2012; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Theoharis, 2007). It is the responsibility of instructional leaders to guide the teaching and set expectations for learning. The PYP framework requires that teachers differentiate instruction to meet students' learning needs and styles (IBO, 2016). PYP leaders are to ensure that instruction in PYP classrooms addresses human commonality, diversity, multiple perspectives, the language needs of students, as well as provides support for students with diagnosed disabilities (IBO, 2009b; IBO, 2016).

In the literature, scholars associate several leadership theories with successful implementation of the PYP. Pushpanadham (2013) wrote that the transformational leadership of the school principal and the PYP coordinator were necessary on the front end for the successful implementation of the PYP. Hallinger and Lee (2012) discovered that distributed instructional leadership was a critical factor in the implementation of IB programs. IBO (2009b) believes that the charismatic or transformational model of leadership is beneficial, but points out that in comparison, team or distributed leadership has benefits that are more notable. There is evidence in the literature of research linking leadership in the PYP to some prevailing leadership theories. Though research connecting social justice with instructional leadership is noticeably absent in the literature on leadership in PYP schools, it is evident from the literature that leaders in PYP

schools must not only be instructional leaders, but they must enact instructional leadership through the lens of social justice to meet the needs of students, parents, and the requirements of IB.

### **Leadership and Student Achievement**

Over the course of three decades, researchers have shown interest in educational leadership and its impact on student outcomes (Witziers, Bosker, & Krüger, 2003). According to Hitt and Tucker (2016), knowledge about effective practices educational leaders implement to support teacher effectiveness and influence student achievement has expanded substantially. Researchers have found that leaders have a direct effect on educators and the school environment through culture, climate, capacity building, curriculum, instruction, resources, and the goal-setting process, which translates to an indirect effect on learners (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). Hallinger and Heck (1996) and Leithwood and Mascall (2008) found that few studies reported significant direct effects of leadership on students, whereas they discovered that indirect effects studies often do report significant influence on achievement. Although there is a dearth of research on the connection between leadership and student achievement, there is no research connecting social justice instructional leadership to student achievement.

Scholars have also studied the impact of specific leadership styles on achievement through the lens of leadership theories. Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe, (2008) wrote that abstract leadership theories provide insufficient guides to the specific leadership practices that have significant effects on student outcomes. Therefore, research on the connection between leadership styles and student achievement should focus on theories that provide specific behaviors leaders perform that positively influence learner outcomes. Robinson et al. (2008)

concluded that the impact of instructional leadership on student outcomes is remarkably greater than that of other leadership styles, including transformational leadership. In their 2008 review of the literature, Robison et al. found seven studies with 49 effect sizes that indicated establishing, communicating, and monitoring goals and expectations had a mean effect size of 0.42. In this same investigation, Robinson et al. uncovered 80 effect sizes from nine studies that showed when administrators provide oversight of the curriculum through planning, organizing, and evaluating the curriculum and teaching and learning, there was a mean effect size of 0.42 on student achievement.

Twenty years ago, Hallinger and Heck (1996) discussed the need for educational leadership scholars to further their understanding of how leadership contributes to school improvement. Throughout the subsequent years, educational leadership researchers have attempted to expand their understanding utilizing a variety of investigational methods. These methods include literature reviews (e.g. Hallinger, 2003; Robinson et al., 2008; Witziers et al., 2003), cross-sectional studies of school leadership effects on learning (e.g. Hallinger and Heck, 1996), and longitudinal studies of leadership and school improvement (e.g. Heck and Hallinger, 2014).

Thirty years of research has proven that leadership does matter as it has an indirect, but significant effect on learner outcomes (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Leithwood & Mascal, 2008; Robinson et al., 2008). Although many researchers have tackled this issue, less than 30 studies published in English have explored the links between leadership and student outcomes (Robinson et al., 2008). Finally, Robinson et al. (2008) call for leadership researchers to focus more on changes leaders encourage and promote than merely on the degree to which they promote changes or innovation, while Witziers, Bosker, and Krüger

(2003) expressed the need for researchers to use longitudinal data to detect the actual impact of leadership.

### **Need for the Study**

Research on leadership in international schools is sparse; nonetheless, this field of study requires more inquiry because the number of international educational institutions continues to swell (Dolby & Rahman 2008; Hallinger et al., 2011; Hayden & Thompson, 2008; Riesbeck, 2008; Walker & Cheng, 2009). The educational research literature is even more limited when narrowed down to leadership in international schools implementing IB programs and more specifically, the Primary Years Program (Nichols, 2010). In an annotated bibliography compiled in 2016, Dabrowski identified 117 inquiries related to IB, of those only 14 related specifically to the PYP. While it is possible that Dabrowski did not include all available research in her examination, her work does illustrate the limited amount of research available on the PYP.

In educational literature, there are studies that describe the challenges and barriers that social justice and instructional leaders face (DeMatthews, 2016; Hallinger, 2005; Slater et al., 2014; Theoharis, 2007), including deficit thinking, resistance to change, budget and time constraints, limited personnel, and lack of support. Although numerous researchers have documented examples of challenges and barriers social justice and instructional leaders encounter, few provide specific examples of how leaders overcame these challenges.

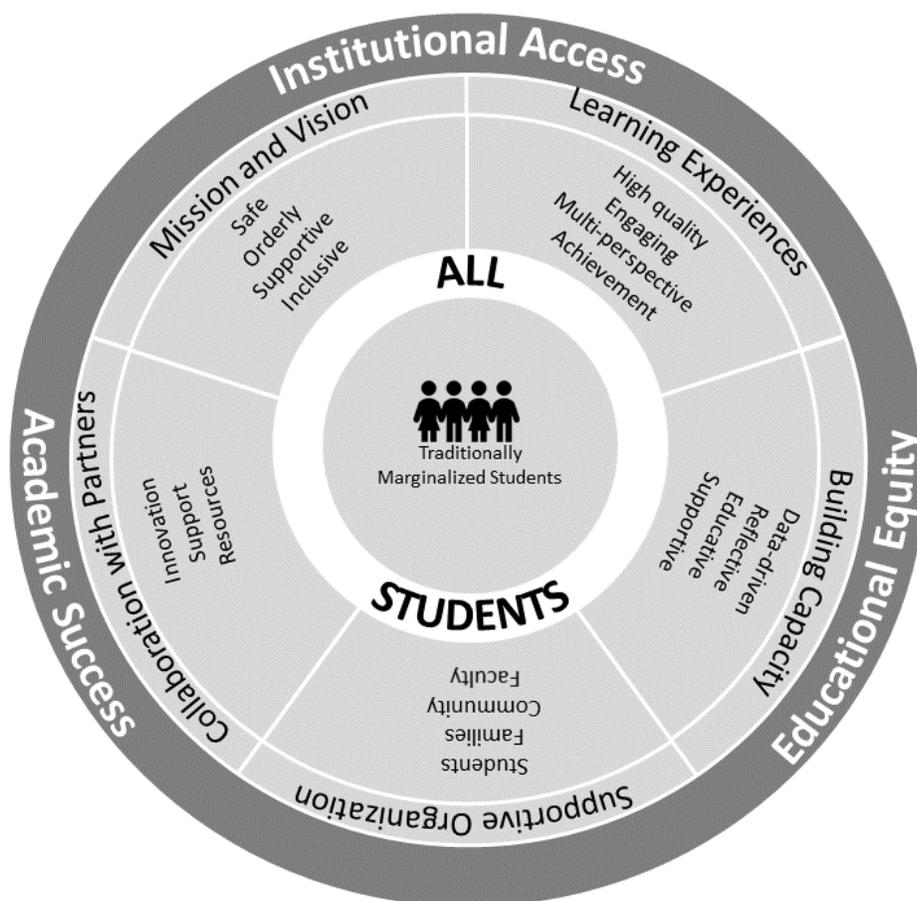
Many researchers have investigated the link between instructional leadership and student achievement and found that leaders impact student achievement indirectly through specific actions (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Robinson et al., 2008). While researchers have linked instructional leadership to

student achievement, this researcher was unable to find any studies linking social justice leadership or social justice instructional leadership to student achievement.

As of the writing of this study, this researcher was unable to find any empirical studies on leadership in international or IB schools focused on social justice instructional leadership and the link to student achievement. Despite tremendous growth of international education and the PYP, the literature on these topics is very limited. Although studies on social justice leadership and instructional leadership are prevalent, few focuses on how leaders overcome challenges inherent in implementing social justice and instructional leadership, and none focuses on the link to student achievement. This study addresses the identified gaps through the analysis of qualitative study data collected in IB PYP Schools in one urban, southeastern school district.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Jabareen (2009) defines a conceptual framework a network of interconnected concepts that collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon. Grant and Osanloo (2014) view the conceptual framework as the representation of the researcher's understanding of the best way to investigate the research problem, the direction the research will take, and the connection between the different study variables. Theories found in the social justice and instructional leadership research guided the development of the conceptual framework for this inquiry. The social justice instructional leadership conceptual framework guided the development of the design for this research study. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the social justice instructional leadership framework.



*Figure 1.* Social Justice Instructional Leadership Framework. This figure illustrates the relationship of the five domains of the social justice leadership framework and highlights the outcomes of institutional access, education equity, and academic success for students

### **Social Justice Leadership**

Advocating for the educational needs of students in historically marginalized groups is one of the guiding forces behind the increasing demand for social justice leadership (Theoharis, 2007). The definition of social justice leadership varies among researchers, but most agree that social justice leadership involves behaviors that serve to eliminate inequities for marginalized groups (Bogotch, 2000; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Furman, 2012; Gerwitz, 1998; Theoharis, 2007). Blackmore (2002) characterized education as a social, ethical, and political practice and argued that practices of responsibility, recognition, reciprocity ground social justice

leadership. Bogotch (2000) wrote that social justice is a continuous effort to share power, knowledge, and resources equitably and that leaders should be able to communicate how their educational leadership actions relate to social justice inside and out of schools. According to Furman (2012), social justice leadership is action oriented, transformative in nature, involves commitment, persistence, and relationship building, and requires a belief in inclusion and democracy. Furman concluded that social justice leadership requires both action and reflection. DeMatthews & Mawhinney (2014) offered that social justice leadership entails identifying marginalization of groups and continuously working to eliminate to injustices.

Theoharis (2007) defined social justice leadership as leadership by “principals who make issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions in the United States central to their advocacy, leadership practice, and vision” (p. 223). Theoharis (2009) describes social justice leaders as those who (a) promote inclusion, access, and opportunity for all; (b) improve the teaching, curriculum, and learning environment; (c) create a climate of belonging; and (d) raise student achievement. Theoharis believes the social justice leaders also possess essential leadership traits, work to develop a comprehensive knowledge and skill set, and sustain themselves professionally and personally. The work of Theoharis supported the establishment of the conceptual framework for this qualitative inquiry.

### **Instructional Leadership**

With the rise of the accountability movement, instructional leadership of schools has become increasingly important. Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) found that instructional leadership had a more significant impact on learner outcomes than other leadership styles but stressed that abstract leadership theories offer limited examples of specific leadership behaviors

that generate considerable effects on student outcomes. Teachers in a study conducted by Blase and Blase (2000) reported that leaders who talk with teachers to promote reflection and who promote professional growth had the most impact on their classroom performance. Although instructional leadership is crucial to student achievement, researchers have yet to develop an agreed upon definition or conceptual framework (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Rigby, 2014; Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008). Using meta-analysis, Robinson et al. (2008) found five leadership practices associated with instructional leadership but identified encouraging and engaging in teacher learning and development, goal setting and planning, and coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum as having a positive correlation with improved student outcomes. Rigby (2014) classified the beliefs and associated practices of instructional leadership into three categories: prevailing logic, entrepreneurial logic, and social justice logic. The prevailing logic includes the idea that the principal is to be both an instructional leader and manager of the school. Innovation and collaboration with the private sector are the major beliefs behind the entrepreneurial logic. Lastly, the social justice logic focuses on the experiences and unbalanced outcomes of marginalized students.

Hitt and Tucker (2016) conceptualized instructional leadership as five broad domains including: “(a) establishing and conveying the vision, (b) facilitating a high-quality learning experience for students, (c) building professional capacity, (d) creating a supportive organization for learning, and (e) connecting with external partners” (p. 542). This framework, with contributions from others, guided the conceptualization of social justice instructional leadership.

### **Social Justice Instructional Leadership**

There are many overlapping theories in the field of education research. One such overlap is between social justice theory and instructional leadership theory. Hallinger and Heck (1996)

found that the leadership of school principals had an indirect but significant effect on student learning outcomes when directed at practices such as developing the school mission, setting academic expectations, creating an instructional organization, and ensuring all students have the time and opportunity to learn. Rigby (2014) and Ylimaki (2012) believe it vital for principals to put procedures in place to promote a safe, orderly, and inclusive environment, and ensure that students have access to a curriculum that is multifaceted and engaging so that historically marginalized students achieve at a rate equal to their peers. Although not specifically addressed in this study, researchers of distributed instructional leadership have proven that instructional leadership is not exclusively the purview of the principal (Hallinger & Lee, 2012; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, Patten & Jantzi, 2010; Robinson et al., 2008). Scholars acknowledge that effective instructional leadership in a school includes multiple leaders and this study will address its distributed nature through the inclusion of multiple instructional leaders in the qualitative sample to include principals, assistant principals, and IB coordinators.

In sum, for this study, principals and other school leaders enact social justice instructional leadership, which includes five domains. The first is establishing and conveying the mission and vision to promote a safe, orderly, supportive, and inclusive learning environment for all stakeholders. The second is facilitating a high-quality learning experience to ensure that all students have access to a curriculum that is engaging and includes multiple perspectives so all students, including those in historically marginalized groups, achieve. The third is building the capacity of the entire school community in order utilize multiple sources and types of data to reflect on and enhance the mission and support the teaching and learning of the school to impact student achievement in a positive way. The fourth is creating a supportive organization for

learning that meets the needs of all its stakeholders. The last domain is the collaboration with external partners as a source of innovation, support, and resources.

Scholars recognized that social justice theory and instructional leadership theory intersect on matters of marginalized groups. The primary aim of administrators is to implement processes and procedures that promote a safe, inclusive environment and ensure that students have access to a multifaceted curriculum that allows historically marginalized students to achieve at a rate equal to their peers (Rigby, 2014; Rigby, 2016; Ylimaki, 2012). Leaders must work to empower families to serve as educational and community advocates for their children, themselves and their families (DeMatthews, Edwards & Rincones, 2016). Researchers also acknowledge that effective instructional leadership in a school is not exclusively the purview of the principal and that it takes multiple leaders to lead a school instructionally (Hallinger & Lee, 2012; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood et al., 2010; Robinson et al., 2008).

The work of Theoharis (2007), DeMatthews, Edwards and Rincones (2016), along with that of Hitt and Tucker (2016) guided the development of the conceptual framework for social justice leadership that steers this inquiry. The SJIL framework includes: (a) establishing mission and vision to promote a safe and inclusive environment, (b) facilitating high-quality learning experiences with an engaging curriculum that includes multiple perspectives, (c) building capacity of the entire school community to positively impact achievement, (d) creating a supportive organization for all stakeholders, and (e) collaboration with external partners for innovation, support, and resources.

Both social justice leadership and instructional leadership as separate theories have a presence in the literature and on the connection between leadership and student achievement. However, there is a gap in the literature on social justice instructional leadership (SJIL) and the

literature fails to address the connection between SJIL and student achievement. Even though, scholars have acknowledged that social justice theory and instructional leadership theory intersect on matters of marginalized groups (Rigby, 2014; Rigby, 2016; Ylimaki, 2012). Twenty years ago, Hallinger and Heck (1996) discussed the need for educational leadership scholars to further their understanding of how leadership contributes to school improvement. Robinson et al. (2008) called for leadership researchers to focus on changes leaders encourage and promote.

The goal of this qualitative study was to fill gaps in the literature by using qualitative data to investigate the how leaders in IB PYP schools influence student achievement through SJIL. Two research questions guided the investigation (1) what are the effective social justice instructional leadership behaviors of school leaders in International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme schools; and (2) what are the challenges and barriers leaders encounter when enacting social justice instructional leadership to support students in traditionally marginalized groups in IB PYP schools. The qualitative data analysis allowed for exploration of the SJIL practices employed by leaders and provided insight into the challenges and barriers that inhibit SJIL to support students in traditionally marginalized groups, as well as how leaders overcome these challenges and barriers.

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## **2 THE PRACTICE AND CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME SCHOOLS**

International education has grown immensely as an educational trend and the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), with its four international curricula of education, is a leader in this movement (Dolby & Rahman, 2008; Hallinger & Lee, 2012; Hayden & Thompson, 2008; Walker & Cheong, 2009). The International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP), aspires to develop elementary students who are aware of global issues, socially responsible, multilingual, and internationally minded (Hallinger & Lee, 2012; IBO, 2009a; IBO, 2009b; Singh, 2002). There were over 4,949 IB schools worldwide serving students from a variety of countries, cultures, and backgrounds in 2017. Approximately 1,468 of those schools were PYP schools (Bunnell, 2011; IBO, 2009a; IBO, 2018; Singh, 2002; Stillisano, Waxman, Hostrup & Rollins, 2011).

This research project investigated the effective social justice leadership behaviors of leaders in IB PYP schools and the challenges they faced employing qualitative data collection methods. Hallinger and Heck (1996) stress the importance of investigating leadership within the exercised context and several components of the IB philosophy and features of IB schools make schools offering the PYP ideal settings for studying social justice instructional leadership. First, the IB philosophy about teaching and learning centers on the academic, cultural, social, emotional, physical, and mental development of children and developing international-minded students is central to each of the IB programs (Hallinger & Lee, 2012; Stillisano et al., 2011). Second, the IBO requires schools to foster the learning of each student and support students with diverse language and learning needs (Hill, 2012; IBO, 2009b; IBO, 2009c). Finally, IB programs

are available in a variety of educational contexts and serve students who come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Hill, 2012; Hersey, 2012; IBO, 2009a; Stillisano et al., 2011).

Researchers agree that school leaders have an obligation to establish procedures that promote a safe, orderly, and inclusive environment, and ensure that students have access to a multifaceted, engaging curriculum that allows students in marginalized groups to achieve at a rate equal to their peers (Rigby, 2014; Ylimaki, 2012). Scholars also acknowledge that leaders, who develop goal-driven school missions, set high academic expectations, create organizations focused on instruction, and ensure that all students have the time and opportunity to learn has an indirect but significant impact on learner outcomes (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). Social justice instructional leadership (SJIL) developed from a consolidation of themes that emerged during the review of the literature on social justice leadership, instructional leadership, and leadership and student achievement. SJIL includes: (a) establishing a vision to promote a safe and inclusive environment, (b) facilitating high-quality learning experiences with an engaging curriculum that includes multiple perspectives, (c) building capacity of the entire school community to positively impact achievement, (d) creating a supportive learning organization for all stakeholders, and (e) collaborating with external partners for innovation, support, and resources. Few empirical inquiries focus on possible obstacles social justice leaders (DeMatthews, 2016) or instructional leaders encounter. Challenges related to finances, resources, capacity, support culture, accountability movement, and the political climate limit social justice and instructional leaders from implementing practices to improve school for marginalized students (Angelle et al., 2015; Costello. 2015; DeMatthews, 2016; Louis & Robinson, 2012; Theoharis, 2007).

## **Purpose**

The goal of this multiple instrumental case study was to use qualitative data to learn about the effective social justice instructional leadership practices of leaders in PYP schools and identify challenges and barriers these leaders encountered when implementing social justice instructional leadership. In this study, interview and document analysis data served to answer research question one by uncovering the effective social justice instructional leadership behaviors of school leaders in International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme schools. Concurrently, in this study, analyses of interview data helped answer research question two by allowing the researcher to ascertain and categorize the obstacles PYP leaders encountered as social justice instructional leaders.

This qualitative investigation addresses two research questions:

- (1) What are the effective social justice instructional leadership behaviors of school leaders in International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme schools?
- (2) What are challenges and barriers leaders in PYP schools encounter when implementing social justice instructional leadership?

## **Significance of Study**

Scholars recognize that social justice theory and instructional leadership theory intersect on matters of marginalized groups. Social justice instructional leadership is characterized by the implementation of processes and procedures that create a safe, inclusive environment for students and families and that ensures that students in historically marginalized groups have access to a curriculum that allows them to thrive at school and achieve at a rate equal to their peers (Rigby, 2014; Rigby, 2016; Theoharis, 2007; Ylimaki, 2012). Social justice instructional leaders seek to provide families with a voice in the education of their children and empower

them to serve as educational and community advocates for themselves and their families (DeMatthews, Edwards & Rincones, 2016). Researchers also acknowledge that effective instructional leadership in a school is not exclusively the purview of the principal and that multiple people can serve as instructional leaders (Hallinger & Lee, 2012; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, Patten & Jantzi, 2010; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008).

Both social justice leadership and instructional leadership as separate theories have a presence in the literature. There is also literature documenting the connection between leadership and student achievement. However, there is a gap in the literature on social justice instructional leadership, and the literature fails to address the link between SJIL and student achievement. Even though, scholars have acknowledged that social justice theory and instructional leadership theory intersect on matters of marginalized groups (Rigby, 2014; Rigby, 2016; Ylimaki, 2012). Twenty years ago, Hallinger and Heck (1996) discussed the need for educational leadership scholars to further their understanding of how leadership contributes to school improvement. Robinson et al. (2008) called for leadership researchers to focus on changes leaders encourage and promote.

The goal of this qualitative case study is to fill gaps in the literature by using qualitative data to investigate how leaders in IB PYP schools enact SJIL and the challenges they must overcome as SJIL leaders. Two research questions guided the investigation (1) what are the effective social justice instructional leadership behaviors of school leaders in International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme schools, and (2) what are challenges and barriers leaders in PYP schools encounter when implementing social justice instructional leadership. The qualitative data analysis allowed for exploration of the SJIL practices employed by leaders and

provided insight into obstacles leaders must overcome when leading through a social justice instructional framework.

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this multiple instrumental case study was to utilize qualitative data to discover the effective SJIL practices that leaders in schools implementing the IB PYP enact and the challenges leaders encounter while working to support students in marginalized groups. The work of school leaders matter, as the work that they do has an indirect but significant effect on learner outcomes (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Robinson et al., 2008). Consequently, leaders have an obligation to lead their schools through the work of becoming safe, inclusive environments that provide all students access to a multifaceted, engaging curriculum. School leaders must endeavor to remove barriers so that students in historically marginalized groups achieve at a rate equal to their peers (Rigby, 2014; Rigby, 2016; Theoharis, 2007; Ylimaki, 2012).

### **Research Methodology**

Qualitative research has an extensive history in anthropology, clinical psychology, and sociology, although since the 1980s, qualitative research has gained visibility and achieved status as an acceptable form of research in the social sciences (Merriam, 2002). Qualitative research encompasses a group of research methodologies that begin with assumptions or an interpretive/theoretical lens and that seek to aid in understanding and explaining a social phenomenon, such as educational leadership, by exploring the problem in context (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 1998). The participants, with their varied perspectives and the meaning they make of the problem or issue assists investigators in qualitative research to learn about and gain understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 1998). In

qualitative research, data moves through the researcher, so the researcher is the primary data collection tool (Merriam, 1998; Merriam, 2002). Qualitative researchers usually collect multiple forms of data including artifacts and documents, field notes, interviews, journals, and observations (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 1998). The qualitative researcher collects the data in natural settings, analyzes data using deductive and inductive strategies, and establishes patterns or themes (Creswell, 2013). Creswell (2013) names narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study as five approaches to qualitative research and Merriam (1998) lists generic qualitative study, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study as types of qualitative inquiries that are prevalent in educational research.

### **Research Design Type and Definition**

This study employed a case study design. According to Merriam (2002), a case study is an intensive description and analysis of a social phenomenon or individual, group, institution, or community. Creswell (2013) describes a case study as a qualitative methodology that explores over time and in detail a real-life and modern, single bounded system or multiple bounded systems through in-depth data collection. While Yin (2014) defines a case study as a type of empirical inquiry that comprehensively examines a contemporary phenomenon within its everyday context. Yin further defines a case study as a methodology that relies on multiple sources of data because the variables under study outnumber the data points in which a previously developed theoretical framework guides data collection and analysis. Yin explains that researchers commonly use case studies in political science, social work, business, community planning, and education because they contribute to our knowledge of phenomena related to individuals, groups, and organizations.

The specific case study design used in this study is the multiple instrumental case study approach. Creswell (2013) defines a multiple instrumental case study as a case study that uses multiple individuals, groups, organizations, or communities to illustrate a specific problem. Yin (2014) describes a multiple-case design as inquiry that contains more than a single case. For this investigation, the leaders (principals and IB coordinators) in different schools are the multiple individuals that aided this investigator in exploring and explaining SJIL and challenges to SJIL in PYP schools.

### **Appropriateness of Research Design**

Yin (2014) deems a case study design appropriate for use when the study intends to find out how or why and based on Yin's rationale, a case study was appropriate for this study because through this study, this researcher sought to understand how leaders in PYP schools enact effective SJIL practices and the obstacles they face. Yin also deems a case study a suitable methodology when the researcher cannot manipulate the behavior of participants and the fact that this researcher could not influence the behavior of the participants is another reason why the case study approach was feasible. The fact that the context of PYP schools of various size, demographic, community, and socio-economic features influences the enactment of SJIL practices and determines the challenges that leaders may face is another reason that a case study methodology was appropriate because according to Yin a case study can include contextual conditions because they are pertinent to the phenomenon under study. Social justice and instructional leadership researchers stress the importance of studying leadership in context and thus this researcher could not consider SJIL outside of schools. A final characteristic of a study that Yin believes makes it ideal for a case study design is if the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context. Through the collection of interviews and document analysis, this

researcher sought to answer research questions one and two by focusing on the effective SJIL practices of leaders in multiple PYP schools and the challenges they face while serving marginalized student groups, which makes a multiple instrumental case study appropriate.

Limited research is available on how PYP school leaders or school leaders in general use social justice and instructional leadership to improve learner outcomes. Few studies explore the difficulties SJIL leaders experience when working to serve marginalized student groups. Guided by a theoretical perspective derived from social justice and instructional leadership, this study sought to provide a richer and more comprehensive understanding of SJIL, how leaders enact it in schools and the possible barriers to SJIL. According to Yin (2014), the case study methodology is an appropriate methodology for an inquiry if it requires extensive and thorough description of a social phenomenon within its everyday context or seeks to explain the how or why of a social phenomenon. Merriam (1998) believes that case study research is most often carried out in educational research to identify and explain specific issues and problems of practice. Finally, a qualitative multiple instrumental case study design is appropriate for an inquiry in which a theoretical perspective, such as SJIL, provides a basis for the need to gather qualitative data to provide a lens for examining the problem (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998).

### **Research Design Challenges**

Several obstacles have the potential to complicate qualitative studies with the multiple instrumental case study design. Merriam (1998) and Yin (2014) pinpoint the availability of time and resources as a challenge associated with multiple case studies in general. Yin recommends researchers carefully consider the time, available resources, and number of researchers before undertaking multiple case inquiry. Creswell (2013) describes possible dilution of the analysis as

a challenge to having multiple cases and recommends limiting the number of cases to prevent weakening of the analysis.

Multiple case studies can be work intensive, time-consuming and expensive (Merriam 1998; Yin, 2014). Several strategies helped to reduce the expense and the amount of time needed to collect data for this exploration. The money saving strategy involved limiting the geographic area of the study. Focusing on schools in one school district minimized travel costs. One timesaving strategy utilized included limiting the number of interviews conducted to maintain a manageable amount of qualitative data. Limiting the number of participants also made the workload more manageable for the single student researcher. Another strategy that helped maximize time and resources was using a secure and reliable transcription service to complete the transcription of the interview data. The researcher reviewed each transcript for completeness, accuracy, and familiarization before analyzing. Next, the limited number of interviews made professional transcription less cost prohibitive. To prevent the analyses dilution that Creswell describes, the study was limited to two issues: (1) enactment of SJIL leadership practices; and (2) challenges and barriers to SJIL and the participants were limited to two leaders at three different schools for a total of six participants.

Multiple case studies often require enough knowledgeable personnel to manage the collection and analysis of the data (Creswell 2013; Merriam; 1998). The limited number of interviews, proximity of interviewees, and the use of a reliable transcription service made this study manageable for the single student researcher. In any study, there is the potential to find contradictory results (Yin, 2014). The researcher was prepared to collect additional data or reexamine preexisting data to validate or explain the results. Contradicting results can also guide the researcher in developing suggestions for future investigations.

## School Sites

The goal of this study was to identify effective SJIL behaviors of leaders in PYP schools and identify the challenges that these leaders face when serving students in marginalized groups. Accordingly, the researcher chose the urban, southeastern district identified for this study because of the high concentration of PYP schools. The three case sites were selected based on the survey responses where both the principal and IB coordinator agreed to participate in the study. Table 1 outlines basic information about the PYP schools ultimately selected for this study, including size, year that each school received authorization as an IB World School, the geographic location within the district boundaries, socio-economic status of students, and how the schools perform on their state's accountability measure compared to similar schools.

Table 1  
*Basic PYP School Information*

PYP school	School size	IB year <sup>a</sup>	Location <sup>b</sup>	SE status <sup>c</sup>	BTO Designation <sup>d</sup>
School 1	Medium	2010	South	Title I	Beating the Odds
School 2	Large	2007	North	Non-Title I	Beating the Odds
School 3	Small	2011	West	Title I	Beating the Odds

*Note.* Small schools have less than 500 students, medium schools have 500-900 students, and large schools have more than 1000 students.

<sup>a</sup>IB Year indicates the year that the school received authorization as an IB World School.

<sup>b</sup>Location refers to the geographic location within the city boundaries of the PYP schools.

<sup>c</sup>Socio-economic status (SE) refers to the school's designation as a Title I school, which is a school that has a high number of students living in poverty.

<sup>d</sup>Beating the Odds (BTO) is a term used to identify schools that are doing better than expected. Meaning the schools perform better than similar schools based on school characteristics, such as the percentage of economically disadvantaged students, percentage of English language learners, percentage of students with disabilities, percentage of students in each race/ethnicity, school size, student mobility, and school type (Elementary, Middle, High, and schools that span grade clusters).

The PYP schools are in three different regions of the selected district (see Table 1). School 1 in the southern quadrant of the district and has an enrollment of between 500 to 900 students. The student body of this school is majority black and approximately half of the students live in

poverty. Less than one-tenth of the student population is identified as having a disability and only one percent is identified as having limited English proficiency. School 2 is in the northern quadrant of the district and has over 1000 students enrolled. Most of the students enrolled are white with blacks representing the second largest group. Fewer than one-tenth of the students are identified as a student with a disability and less than five percent of the students are labeled as having limited proficiency in English. School 2 is in an affluent community and has very few students who are classified as living in poverty. School 3 is in the western quadrant of the district and serves less than 500 students. Most of School 3's student population is black, and more than half of the students live in poverty. Over ten percent of the students are served as a student with a disability and one percent is classified as having limited English proficiency. All three of the schools perform better than expected based on school characteristics and outperform similar schools their state's school performance measure.

Table 2  
*PYP School Demographic Information in Percentages*

PYP school	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Multi-racial	SWD <sup>a</sup>	LEP <sup>b</sup>	Directly Certified <sup>c</sup>
School 1	0	96	2	0	2	7	1	54
School 2	4	15	5	72	4	7	4	4
School 3	0	96	3	0	1	12	1	59

*Note.* Percentages rounded

<sup>a</sup>Students with Disabilities (SWD) refers to students who has been evaluated as needing specialized instruction due to developmental, cognitive, emotional, communicative, or physical impairments.

<sup>b</sup>Limited English Proficient (LEP) refers to students who have limited speaking, reading, writing and comprehension skills in English relative to the standard expected of native speakers of English.

<sup>c</sup>Directly Certified refers to students who fall into at least one of the following categories: lives in a family unit receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food stamp benefits, lives in a family unit receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits, or identified as homeless, unaccompanied youth, foster, or migrant.

## Participants

The researcher invited PYP leaders, including principals, assistant principals, and PYP coordinators that had a broad range of experience levels as leaders and as leaders in PYP schools to take part in the study. The criteria for participant selection for this study included serving as principal, assistant principal, or PYP coordinator of a PYP elementary school in the targeted school district. The potential participant pool consisted of approximately 24 PYP leaders from the selected district. Exclusion criteria included serving at the PYP elementary school less than two years. After applying the exclusion criteria to the potential pool, the potential participant pool was narrowed down to 15 eligible PYP leaders. I was able to obtain the district email addresses for all the PYP leaders who met the study eligibility criteria in the targeted district. The university provided email system was used to send an individual recruitment email to the qualifying PYP leaders to solicit their participation (see Appendix A). A demographic survey was sent via email to all the PYP leaders in the targeted district who expressed interest in participating (see Appendix B). The survey collected information on ethnicity, gender, years of experience as a leader, years of experience at current school, years of IB experience, and contact information. The survey also provided informed consent information which notified perspective participants that their school and personal identity would be protected using pseudonyms and of their rights, including the right to withdraw consent and leave the study at any time (see Appendix C). Additionally, survey respondents were given the option to agree or decline participation. It was the original goal of the researcher to interview one principal, one assistant principal, and one PYP coordinator from three schools for a total of nine participants, but the investigator was not able to obtain participation agreement for nine leaders, even after making personal contact with all non-respondents to personally request their participation in the study.

Based on the participation agreements, six participants, comprised of three principals and three PYP coordinators, were purposefully chosen from the participant pool using demographic information so that the interviewees represented the diversity of experience and longevity at the PYP schools, the school type, and the position (Creswell, 2003). Principals and PYP coordinators from the same school were selected to participated in this study to obtain multiple perspectives of the leadership practices and the effectiveness from individual serving in very different leadership roles. Table 3 describes the participants 'role, gender, ethnicity, years of experience as an educator, years employed by the district, years working at the school site, and years of experience with the PYP.

Table 3  
*Participant Demographic Information*

PYP school	Title	Gender	Ethnicity	Years as Educator	Years in District	Years at School	Experience in PYP
School 1	Principal 1	Female	Black	23	6	4	4
School 1	IB Coordinator 1	Female	Black	22	15	11	8
School 2	Principal 2	Female	White	18	8	4	4
School 2	IB Coordinator 2	Female	Black	15	15	9	9
School 3	Principal 3	Female	Black	20	19	19	8
School 3	IB Coordinator 3	Female	Black	21	16	4	4

All the participants were female and five of the six identify as black. The PYP school leaders who participated have between 15 to 23 years of experience as an educator. The range of years the leaders have worked in the district and at their current school is larger, spanning between four to 19 years. Three of the leaders have four years of experience working in PYP schools and three have 8 to 9 years of experience.

A review of the literature used to develop this study revealed examples of published research studies that utilized a similar research design and involved a similar topic that have a

small number of interview participants, and thus set a precedence for a seemingly small participant sample for case studies. These inquiries include DeMatthews (2016), which focused on one principal; Arar, Beycioglu and Oplatka (2016), who interviewed eleven principals; Arar, and Oplatka (2016), who interviewed two principals; Angelle, Arlestig and Norberg (2015), who interviewed four principals; and DeMatthews and Mawhinney (2014), whose entire study included five principal participants and focused on interviews for two of the principals in this specific journal article. These studies illustrate the appropriateness of case study methodology in conducting this study and the legitimacy of having a small sample size and using interviews and documents to collect data. Finally, according to Merriam (1998) and Yin (2014), case studies can be work intensive and time-consuming. They recommend several strategies to reduce the amount of time needed to collect data including limiting study to one geographic area and limiting the number of participants. Limiting the participants to six allowed this sole researcher to maintain a manageable amount of qualitative data and make the workload more manageable.

### **Ethical Considerations**

During the planning stage of an investigation, researchers must identify and develop a plan to mitigate potential ethical issues that may arise during their study (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998). To protect the rights and welfare of participants in this study, the researcher followed the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process of both Georgia State University and the school district involved.

Consent to participate in this research project was obtained from all interview participants using an informed consent form before the commencement of this study (Creswell, 2003; Seidman, 2006). Each participant was given the opportunity to read the informed consent and electronically provide consent before beginning the recorded interview. Each participant

received a copy of the consent form, and the review of consent was the first part of each interview recording (Seidman, 2006). The informed consent form included an invitation to participate, and provided the length of participation, potential risks and possible benefits, notification of the right to withdraw and approve transcript. The informed consent also included the study's confidentiality procedures, the purpose of the interview, and researcher and IRB contact details (Seidman, 2006). Only initials were used to identify the interviewees on the interview transcript, and pseudonyms are used throughout this study to maintain confidentiality and protect the identity of the district, schools, and participants (Seidman, 2006).

The documents collected as a part of this study were converted to a portable document format (PDF) and stored along with the other study data. The document conversion occurred at the school site so that the originals could remain at the school. This was done to safeguard the confidentiality of the documents by preventing unintended exposure or misplacement of the documents.

Demographic data was collected from the participants. The data was deidentified using pseudonyms. The identifying information is stored separately from the data using a key. The key will be maintained in a separate storage location from the data on an encrypted password protected storage device, only the researcher will have access to the key and the data.

The data collected, as a part of this study will be maintained on an encrypted, password protected, storage device. Only the researcher has access to the storage device. A daily data backup was done each day to prevent loss of data from computer or system failure. As an additional level of security, the researcher changed the password used to protect the study data every 90 days and will destroy the data three years after the completion of the study.

## **Validity**

It is the duty of a researcher to ensure that the qualitative data that they collect is accurate from the standpoint of the researcher and the participants to increase the validity of the study (Creswell, 2003). Interviews are one source of qualitative data for this study. The researcher structured the interviews in a way that minimized the effect the interviewer and the conditions on the participants' abilities to share their experiences. No matter the preparations, the interviewer remains a part of the interview equation through their techniques for questioning, methods of responding, and decisions on sharing personal experiences (Seidman, 2006). Interviewers also affect the data quality in the way that they document, select, interpret, describe, and analyze the interview material (Seidman, 2006). The inclusion of document analysis as an additional source of qualitative data allowed the researcher to verify statements made by the participants during the interviews. Examining the school mission, staff handbook, master schedules, professional development documents, essential agreements, and school policies gave the researcher insights regarding the values, practices, and experiences of the PYP leaders and allowed for corroboration of information and themes that emerged during the interviews (Creswell, 2003). Interview participants were given the opportunity to check the accuracy of the interview data by approving the interview transcript (Creswell, 2003).

## **Data Collection**

The data collection addressed the research questions by identifying effective SJIL behaviors employed school leaders in IB PYP schools and classifying challenges these leaders faced when serving students in traditionally marginalized groups. To accomplish this, the investigator used document analysis and interviews in this study. Analysis of personal and organizational documents allows a researcher to collect data in an unobtrusive manner to gain

insight regarding the values, practices, and experiences of people in organizations (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998; Seidman, 2006). Document analysis also allows a researcher to corroborate evidence from other sources (Yin, 2014). A review of documents from each school was the first source of qualitative data for this study. The researcher collected documents and artifacts from each PYP school including the mission, staff handbook, master schedules, professional development calendars, essential agreements, language, special needs, and assessment policies. The researcher also used the document review to develop questions for additional probing during the interviews. The document review also allowed the researcher to corroborate themes that emerge during the interviews.

Interviews of leaders in PYP schools gave the researcher insight concerning the values, practices, and experiences of people in the organizations. Interviews provided the added benefit of allowing the researcher to understand the meaning these PYP educators make of their experiences and how that meaning shapes their beliefs and practices (Creswell, 2003; Seidman, 2006). Pedagogical leaders, which include principals and IB PYP coordinators, were interviewed using a semi-structured interview format (Seidman, 2006). Each interview was digitally recorded by the researcher and professionally transcribed by a secure and reliable service. Each interview took place over the time span of one day and lasted no longer than 60 minutes (Seidman, 2006). The interviews occurred in person in a convenient location to the participant yet private enough to allow for a confidential interview. The interviews began with a review of the informed consent. The interview questions probed leaders around the five domains of SJIL (see Appendix D). The domains are (a) establishing vision to promote a safe and inclusive environment, (b) facilitating high-quality learning experiences with an engaging curriculum that includes multiple perspectives, (c) building capacity of the entire school community to positively impact

achievement, (d) creating a supportive organization for all stakeholders, and (e) collaboration with external partners for innovation, support, and resources. Additional interview questions sought to discover the social justice instructional leadership practices leaders found most effective in improving educational equity, academic success, and institutional access for traditionally marginalized students and families and delve into the challenges that leaders faced when serving marginalized student groups and how they overcame those challenges (see Appendix D). The researcher asked follow-up questions as necessary to gain a clearer understanding of an answer or identify a new theme.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis, in qualitative research, is a process undertaken to organize, classify, and make sense of a data set (Merriam, 1998). The data in this qualitative case study was analyzed using both deductive and inductive methods (Creswell, 2003; Creswell, 2013). Thomas (2006) describes deductive analysis as a data analysis approach that seeks to check if data are consistent with previous theories or hypotheses identified or constructed by a researcher. In contrast, Thomas defines inductive data analysis as a process that allows common, dominant, or significant themes to emerge from the unprocessed data, without the limitations imposed by formal methodologies. To aid in the analysis of the data, the researcher reviewed each school's documents before conducting interviews to gather insights about the school and the leader's practices. Analyzing the documents before the interview also allowed the researcher to glean information for areas that might require further probing during the interview. The computer-based qualitative data analysis tool, NVivo 11, was used to house all the study documents and transcripts and was used to support both the manual and computer-aided coding of the study texts.

The researcher developed a codebook, containing the SJIL framework dimensions and descriptions as well as challenges to SJIL mined from the literature, to guide the deductive analysis of the data collected (See Appendix E). DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall and McCulloch (2011) characterize a codebook as a collection of codes, definitions, and examples that help guide the analysis of data from interviews. The original codebook, which was entered in NVivo 11 as nodes, contained 11 codes mined from the SJIL literature. After all the interviews were complete, the researcher studied the transcripts, reading them multiple times to become familiar with them (Seidman, 2006). The researcher did not conduct an in-depth analysis of the interview data until all the interviews are complete to prevent imposing meaning from one interview on to the next (Seidman, 2006). After reviewing the transcriptions of the interviews, documents, and notes multiple times, the researcher examined the data to begin the coding process. Coding is the process of designating labels to various words, phrases, or paragraphs in the data to allow for easy retrieval of specific pieces of data (Merriam, 1998). This phase of coding was done using descriptive coding. According to Saldaña (2013), descriptive coding involves condensing in a word or short phrase, usually a noun, the basic topic of sections of qualitative data. For this stage of coding, words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs that connected to codes in the codebook were manually highlighted in NVivo 11 and coded with descriptive coding related to the SJIL framework and the guiding questions of the study (DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall & McCulloch, 2011). The descriptive coding helped the researcher categorize the data to provide an organizational understanding of the study data (Saldaña, 2013). A second review of the documents occurred after each interview. The second review allowed the researcher to analyze the documents using the codebook, makes notes, and substantiate statements made during the interviews.

After deductively analyzing the qualitative data, the researcher reviewed the data manually in NVivo 11 using inductive analysis to look for reoccurring words or phrases from participants that could lead to the development of a category or theme not identified in the SJIL framework or literature. The researcher used a combination of In Vivo and values coding for the inductive analysis. Values coding of the data allowed the researcher to code segments of the data based on the PYP leaders' values, beliefs, experiences, and attitudes, while In Vivo coding allowed the researcher to respect the voice of the leaders by using their own language as codes for relevant, recurrent and meaningful pieces of data (Saldaña, 2013). Emergent themes in the interview texts that differed from the themes identified in the codebook were added and new nodes were created in NVivo 11 (Creswell, 2003). The manual review of the interview transcripts resulted in additions to and a reorganization of the codebook. After the manual deductive and inductive analysis, NVivo 11 was used to verify and expand the findings of the manual review (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall & McCulloch, 2011). The NVivo aided review resulted in further changes to the codebook. NVivo 11 facilitated the collapse nodes into parent nodes and child nodes, reducing the number of codes. During this analysis phase, the codes were organized and merged into broader categories and themes. The broad themes and categories were aligned to the dimensions of the SJIL framework the study's guiding questions. The thematic analysis process allowed for the transformation of recurrent thoughts, practices and experiences of the participants into three overarching themes aligned to this inquiry's guiding research questions: SJIL practices, effective SJIL practices and challenges and SJIL. The codes related to effective practices were further refined to align them with the relevant SJIL domains. Additionally, the data coded for SJIL challenges were categorized and given a descriptive code.

The final organization for the codebook was used to establish the structure of the findings section of this inquiry (see Appendix E).

## **Findings**

One of the goals of this investigation was to discover the SJIL practices that leaders perceived as effective in providing institutional access, educational equity and academic success for students in traditionally marginalized groups. The first section that follows this introduction, describes the sub-themes that represent the practices identified as most effective by the PYP leaders and connects the practices to the SJIL framework (see Table 4). Another goal of this inquiry was to ascertain the challenges that PYP leaders encountered when implementing SJIL practices and learn how the leaders mitigated the challenges they faced. The final section of the findings segment will outline the challenges that the participants encountered when enacting SJIL and the strategies they employed to overcome those barriers. Table 5 summarizes the challenges to SJIL identified by the PYP leaders grouped by theme. Table 7 presents the challenges reported by the interviewees and the strategies they used to mitigate the effects of the barriers they experienced.

### **Effective SJIL Practices**

The main objective of social justice leaders is to implement systems and routines that promote a safe, inclusive environment and ensure that students have access to a multifaceted curriculum that allows historically marginalized students to achieve at a rate equal to their peers (Rigby, 2014; Rigby, 2016; Ylimaki, 2012). Similarly, instructional leaders set the school mission, foster a positive school learning climate, ensure students have quality learning experiences, and provide and participate in teacher learning and development (Blase & Blase, 1999; Hallinger, 2003; Hitt & Tucker, 2016). During the interviews, the school leaders shared a

variety of SJIL practices they viewed as the most effective in ensuring institutional access, educational equity, and academic success for students and families who have been traditionally marginalized. The practices that the PYP leaders identified as being effective related to three domains of the SJIL framework, facilitating high quality learning experience, building the capacity of the entire school community and creating a supportive organization for learning that meets the needs of all its stakeholders (see Table 4). After analyzing the In Vivo and descriptive codes from the interview responses on effective SJIL practices, the codes were categorized into eight themes and connections were made to the three domains of the SJIL framework to which these practices correlated (see Table 5).

Table 4

*Most Effective Social Justice Instructional Leadership Practices*

Participant	Most Effective SJIL Practice
Principal 1	educating parents; educate your stakeholders; our governance team was educated on needs and budget
IB Coordinator 1	building relationships and making sure parents are comfortable; being human; building relationship outside of school in the community
Principal 2	data; culturally responsive book study; being super obsessive, consistent, persistent focus on equity issues; the push to full inclusion for everyone
IB Coordinator 2	book study on culturally responsive teaching; community learning framework and having input from all the staff on what is our discipline plan going to be, what does discipline look like here
Principal 3	community learning framework; our work with restorative practices; implementing a structured social, emotional learning curriculum; the PYP learner profile
IB Coordinator 3	the parent workshops; inclusion

Table 5

*Most Effective Social Justice Instructional Leadership Practices Themes*

SJIL Framework Dimension	Effective Practices Themes
Learning Experiences	Culturally Responsive Culture and Equity Focus Inclusion for All
Building Capacity	Data Driving the Focus, Work and Learning for All Educating Parents and Local Governance Team
Supportive Organization	Building Relationships and Being Human Implementing Learner Profile Social Emotional Learning and Restorative Practices Community Learning Framework

**Facilitating high-quality learning experiences.**

Domain two of the SJIL framework is facilitating a high-quality learning experience. SJIL leaders facilitate a high-quality learning experience by ensuring that all students have access to a curriculum that is engaging and includes multiple perspectives so all students, including those in historically marginalized groups, achieve. Principal 2 linked the importance of building capacity to utilize data to facilitating high-quality learning experiences. Principal 2 considered the book study that her staff engaged in on culturally responsive pedagogy as an effective practice. Principal 2 shared, “Doing the book study activities together and just being super obsessive, consistent, with a persistent focus on equity issues really helped create amazing learning experience for every single child.” Coordinator 2 also believed the book study on culturally responsive teaching was effective in helping them provide quality learning opportunities for their students. Coordinator 2 stated,

The biggest thing that's moved the dial for us is the book study, on culturally responsive teaching. I think I've seen the most change because teachers will now say, when we're in a planning meeting, you know what? I don't know if that lesson is culturally responsive. I

don't know if that's going to work, I think that's going to shut some of my students down because of XYZ.

Principal 2 stressed that the combination of data usage helped make the book study impactful when she stated, “For here, for this place at this time, the two most effective practices have been focusing on data and that book study above all else.” Principal 2 goes on to say,

I know they get tired of hearing me talk about stuff like data and culturally responsive practices. But it is non-stop all we talk about. It's just constant and not in a negative way, but we're just that serious about it. It's just all the time. It has been huge and that's what I think changed and improved teacher practice over time and that's when the learning experience got better and more accessible for every single child.

Principal 2 also described inclusion as an effectual, she stated that, “Structural changes like the push to full inclusion for everyone, that's been effective.” When asked by the researcher about her definition of inclusion for everyone, Principal 2 clarified by stating, “For my school, inclusion for everyone means students with disabilities, English language learners, and gifted students all being served in classrooms with collaborative and co-teaching models, instead of being pulled out in resource classes.” Principal 2 also connected the change to full inclusion to building capacity to use data to reflect on and enhance teaching and learning to impact student achievement. She stated, “That's a huge structural change, but you can't just do that structural change without seeing the data and explaining it.” Coordinator 3 also felt that inclusion was powerful in creating meaningful learning experiences for students at her school. She said, “I think it helps for students with disabilities to be in the classrooms with their peers, inclusion helps them to learn from other children in the classroom that's not on their same academic level.”

**Building capacity of the entire school community.**

The third domain of the SJIL framework is building the capacity. Practitioners of SJIL build the capacity of the entire school community in order utilize multiple sources and types of data to reflect on and enhance the mission and support the teaching and learning of the school to impact student achievement in a positive way. Principal 2 expressed why she felt building capacity around data was important when she said,

What needed to happen here was that all of the adults that work here had to understand what was and was not happening here. They had to understand that we were teaching down the middle, and that it was not getting to everyone on the high end and the low end and we were reaching certain groups, but not other groups. The only way to make them see that was with the data.

Principal 2 went on to state,

For them to begin to understand, they had to first look at the data, understand what it said and be able to draw their own conclusions about what was happening. That has been huge because when presented with something, when they see it, they're like oh my gosh, we're gonna do better. They needed to see that first. So, that intense work with data is huge.

Principal 1 identified educating parents and other stakeholders as an effective practice for school in supporting traditionally marginalized students. She discussed using more than numerical data to educate parents and stakeholders when she described how they were able to hire a clinical therapist. She explained,

The clinical therapist came about because we educated parents about what goes on in the school with certain student behaviors. We shared best practices for addressing certain

behaviors and problems, and the meaning of wrap-around services, as well as, what type of services would be needed for students with emotional or behavioral concerns.

Principal 1 also shared how educating stakeholders on the school governance team allowed her to fund a teacher to teach keyboarding skills their students. After discussing the clinical therapist and keyboarding skills teachers Principal 1 stressed that,

Those things were possible because our governance team was educated on needs and budget and understood that those are priorities we have to budget for. It was important to educate our stakeholders and parents on what was needed in this school and help them understanding the why behind it, so that they would support our efforts. I think that that has been one of our most impactful practices.

Coordinator 3 also described her school's practice of educating parents through parent workshops as being impactful. She described parent workshops where parents are taught about a key grade-level foundational and given their child's data, class comparison data, and the current and end of year goals for that skill. She explained,

After we shared the data and taught parents how to read the chart, we taught them an easy, fun and engaging game or activity that would improve the focus skill. We also gave them everything they needed for the activity, dice, markers, pawns, cards, whatever they need. Then we helped them set SMART goals for their child's growth and helped them set goals for the number of days and minutes per day that someone outside of school would help their child with the activity.

### **Creating a supportive organization.**

The fourth domain of the SJIL framework is creating a supportive organization. Through SJIL, school leaders create a supportive organization for learning that meets the needs of all its

stakeholders. Coordinator 2 described her school's book study on culturally responsive teaching as "a real pulse check moment, where we had to identify what our biases were and what we were doing either intentionally or unintentionally that was really hurting, not just our subgroup students but all of our students." Principal 2 echoed her coordinator's sentiment about the impact of the book study on the supportive nature of their school. She explained that the "conversations we've had have been so powerful and people are being really honest." Principal 2 shared that her teachers were coming to some meaningful realizations about how they support students. She shared several quotes from her teachers including, "I just didn't realize, I do that all the time." and "I didn't realize that I could be like turning off a whole portion of my classroom, I feel so bad about it, but now I know and now I'll do differently." Coordinator 2 also shared that their conversations and language had changed because of their work with culturally responsive teaching. She shared a recent encounter with a teacher. She recalled, "I just had a teacher come in today that said, "Hey, can you come in and help me with a student? He's really triggering me, and I don't know why." Coordinator 2 shared, "So it's conversations like that, that would never have happened before." Similarly, to Coordinator 2, Principal 3 shared that her school's effective practices had an impact on their conversations and language. She acknowledged, "the PYP Learner Profile has given us a shared language for what is expected, and how we operate at our school. Every child is aware of what we expect." She added that,

Many of the students in marginalized groups at our school are often transient. They've been to three or four other schools that don't have that shared language about behavior and how you work and learn. When they come here, we implement the Learner Profile, and our community learning framework, they are taken in, and see this is how we do things, and this is what we expect, and we're going to love you.

Principal 3 talked about the combined power of their community learning framework and the Learner Profile. She exclaimed, “I have seen lives change, some of our most challenging children are no longer the same people they were when they came through the door based on the implementation of our community learning framework that includes the learning profile!”

Coordinator 2 also discussed her school’s community learning framework. She stated, “I think the other thing that's helped us was making a community learning framework and having input from all the staff on what does discipline look like here and what our discipline plan was going to be.”

Principal 3 a discussed a school-wide initiative she felt was effective in helping her staff create a supportive environment for students. She discussed her school’s two-year implementation of a structured social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum and how they are now beginning to work on restorative practices. Principal 3 described these combined practices as being effective for her school by saying, “I think that SEL and restorative practices work has given teachers and administrators, everybody who works with children, the ability to see some of our more difficult students, their problems and sometimes their behaviors through a different lens.” She expressed her belief that the SEL and restorative practices work has changed “the way we look at, not just the child, but the families and how we support them.”

Principal 3 explained how SEL and restorative practices has changed their support of students and families, she expounded by saying, “We now seek to find the root cause and the underlying issue of the behaviors and issues that we see, and remove whatever barrier, or provide whatever supports are needed so that child and that family can have success.”

Coordinator 2 also mentioned student behavior when discussing why she viewed their culturally responsive book study as effective. She stated, “We’ve seen a decrease in behavior referrals and changes in the types of referrals, I believe because of this book study. Last year I think almost all our behavior referrals were male,

and this year that's not the case.” Relationships were at the core of Coordinator 1’s discussion on her school’s effective practices. Coordinator 1 said,

“I think building relationships and making sure students and parents are comfortable helped us. I think it's important that students know that they can trust administrators, and they can come to us for things that they may need. I think it's also important for parents to feel like they can come talk to us, and share what they are going through, and feel that we understand, we get it.”

Coordinator 1 also shared her belief in the importance of fostering relationships outside of the schoolhouse. She explained by saying, “I like building relationships outside of the school. Students and families love to see you in the community and know you care about what’s going on in their community. It matters, it goes a long way.” Coordinator 1 connected “being human” with her success at her school. She stated, “Being human, I think it helps, that's my approach, just being human. I meet people where they are. It doesn't matter to me who you are I can relate to all people and I think that's important.”

#### **Comparison of SJIL effective practices by leader group.**

After categorizing the effective SJIL practices identified by the leaders and making connections to the three domains of the SJIL framework to which these practices correlated, the researcher conducted a cross-analysis to compare the effective SJIL practices by leader group (see Table 6). Scholars acknowledge that effective leadership in a school includes multiple leaders (Hallinger & Lee, 2012; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, Patten & Jantzi, 2010; Robinson et al., 2008). According to the IB, principals and IB coordinators are both considered pedagogical leaders, but have varying responsibilities for programme implementation (IBO, 2009b). Typically, principals are most often responsible for complete oversight of a school

including instruction, facilities, operations, personnel, and finance. The instructional focus of most school principals includes leading and supporting the teaching and learning, assessment, and evaluation, while in most schools, IB coordinators are mainly responsible for leading and supporting the teaching and learning, like the work of an instructional coach. The differences in responsibilities of principals and coordinators, thus the leadership context, result in these leaders working to accomplish the mission and vision of the school through different perspectives. The results of the cross-analysis by leader group further demonstrates that the context of a leader influences how they enact SJIL.

Table 6

*Comparison of Effective Social Justice Instructional Leadership Practices by Leader Group*

Sites	Principal		IB Coordinator	
	Effective Practice Themes	SJIL Dimension	Effective Practice Themes	SJIL Dimension
School 1	Educating Parents; Educating Local Governance Team	Building Capacity	Building Relationships; Being Human	Supportive Organization
School 2	Culturally Responsive Culture; Data Driving the Focus, Work and Learning for All; Equity Focus; Inclusion for All	Learning Experiences	Culturally Responsive Culture	Learning Experiences
	Data Driving the Focus, Work and Learning for All	Building Capacity	Community Learning Framework; Culturally Responsive Culture	Supportive Organization
	Culturally Responsive Culture; Equity Focus	Supportive Organization		
School 3	Community Learning Framework; Implementing Learner Profile; Restorative Practices; Social Emotional Learning	Supportive Organization	Inclusion for All	Learning Experiences
			Educating Parents	Building Capacity

The effective practices shared by the leaders of School 1 aligned to different SJIL domains. The practices shared by Principal 1 focused more on building capacity, while the practices discussed by the Coordinator 1 centered on developing a supportive organization. Both School 2 leaders discussed their work with developing School 2 as a supportive organization for all stakeholders and around providing students with access to high-quality learning experiences. Although both leaders had a high level of alignment of their practices, Principal 2's effective practices focused highly on data, equity, and building the capacity of all stakeholders. Like the practices of School 1's leaders, the effective practices shared by the leaders of School 3 correlated to different dimensions of the SJIL framework. All the effective practices shared by Principal 3 corresponded to the supportive organization domain of the SJIL framework and the practices listed by Coordinator 3 align with the learning experiences and building capacity domains of the SJIL framework.

The responses of the principals and coordinators indicate partial alignment in the practices that both groups of leaders found effective with most responses of both groups aligning with the supportive organization domain of the SJIL framework. Although the effective practices identified by the principals and coordinators demonstrated some consensus of thought, the effective practices shared by both groups also highlighted some divergence of focus. While the effective practices shared by both groups aligned to the SJIL domain of supportive organization, the principals' answers underscored the fact that the principals focused more using data to building capacity, while IB coordinators' replies accentuated the fact that the IB coordinators worked centered more on practices designed to provide high quality learning experiences to all students.

## Challenges to SJIL and Mitigating Strategies

There are many challenges that leaders encounter when serving as instructional leaders with a social justice perspective. Challenges prevalent in the literature include issues associated with the laws and regulations, politics and bureaucracy, attitudes and beliefs of parents and staff, insufficient support, social pressures as well as a lack of time, resources and capacity (DeMatthews, 2016; Slater et al., 2014; Theoharis, 2007). The findings of this study support the findings in the literature. Analysis of the In Vivo and descriptive codes from the interview responses related to challenges to SJIL the leaders encountered revealed three major themes: adult mindset and beliefs, capacity and knowledge, and funding, resources and support (see Table 7). After analyzing the In Vivo and descriptive codes associated with the strategies the leaders used to mitigate the effects of the challenges to SJIL, the codes were categorized based on the themes related to the categories of challenges the leaders reported (see Table 8).

Table 7

*Challenges to Social Justice Instructional Leadership by Theme*

Challenge Theme	Challenges
Adult Mindsets and Beliefs	accepting responsibility for all students; adult mindsets; beliefs about IB; buy-in on giving students second chances; comfortable with mediocre; getting teachers to be honest about biases; making excuses for the data; not understanding the importance of the work; separatism for students with different learning needs; status quo; teachers struggle with restorative justice
Capacity and Knowledge	don't understand importance of maintaining relationships; teachers not knowing how to support students with issues
Funding, Resources and Support	budgeting issues; district funding; funding positions based on size; limited partner support; limited staff; limited staff for scheduling; no bilingual staff; resources to support parents with language needs; staffing issues; student basic needs, like being safe, having shelter, and clothing and food; funding based on definitions of disability

SJIL Challenge Themes	Mitigating Strategies
Adult Mindset and Beliefs	building capacity through intensive support; critical conversations about fit for school; implementation as example; implementing inclusion; parent education; professional development; restorative practices with teachers; strategic hiring
Capacity and Knowledge	strategic support; targeted professional development based on wants, needs and data
Funding, Resources, and Support	strategic use of budget for staffing; outreach; partnering with organizations for wrap-around services; using building and district language personnel; soliciting financial support

### **Adult mindset and beliefs.**

The first theme that emerged from the data regarding challenges that the PYP leaders encountered when implementing SJIL was adult mindset and beliefs. The challenging adult mindsets and beliefs referenced in the literature and frequently echoed in the findings for this inquiry include educators and parents with low expectations and a deficit mindset, people resisting change and wanting to maintain the status quo, obstructive staff attitudes and beliefs, narrow-minded and privileged educators and parents, and resistance to supportive and inclusive practices (DeMatthews, 2016; Slater et al., 2014; Theoharis, 2007). Principal 3 shared her challenge with implementing restorative practices. She said,

A major challenge is adult beliefs and getting adults to buy into and see that children are people, and just like you would want somebody to give you opportunities after you messed up, we have to do the same thing for children.

Coordinator 2 also discussed challenges regarding restorative practices. She disclosed that,

We still have teachers that struggle with restorative justice. When a child does something wrong, they want that child to hurt immediately. They need it to sting. They need us to

fly in and suspend the child. I think that's one challenge, and it's not everyone, but the ones that are struggling with it are really struggling with it.

Coordinator 1 identified adult mindsets around personal performance as a challenge. Coordinator 1 reflected, "One thing I think that keeps us from growing is I just sometimes feel that a lot of us are comfortable with mediocre." She stated that it was difficult to motivate people who are satisfied with being average. She stressed, "I'm going to be the best, that's me. I don't know any other way, besides being great at what I do. A lot of people do not come with that and so it's hard for me to motivate them." Coordinator 2 also shared a challenge around personal performance. She reflected on their work with culturally responsive teaching and said, "I think just getting teachers to be honest about their bias and why they do some of the things they do has been hard." Principal 2 and Coordinator 2 agreed that getting teachers to accept responsibility and be accountable for all their students was a challenge that they worked to overcome related to moving to inclusion for all. When discussing inclusion, Principal 2 stated, "That's been a huge mindset shift for the community to understand why we would be doing that, and how is that good for all kids." Coordinator 2 shared their old way of operating, she shared,

In the past, when certain students were being pulled out, we did feel like they were being marginalized. Homeroom teachers were not internalizing that, these are my students.

They were like, they go down the hall for this; or such and such is going to handle that, she's the ESOL teacher; or I'm not the special ed teacher, they're going to do that.

Principal 2 concurred in her statement that, "Teachers used to be able to say I don't know, they do that in the intervention class or, I don't know they do that in ESOL. That has changed with inclusion." Coordinator 2 expounded on their challenge around this issue when she stated,

I think one of the biggest challenges from the teacher end is trying to explain away data based on race, or socioeconomic, or language. Instead of just confronting the data and seeing what they can do to move it. I think one of the big barriers is people not wanting to believe the data, or trying to explain it away, or making excuses. We've been like, they're students here. What do you mean, what are we going to do about them? We're going to instruct them and teach them.

The leaders at School 2 explained that they also encountered challenges with parent mindsets and beliefs around inclusion for all. Principal 2 discussed previous conversations with long-term School 2 parents who are just now experiencing inclusion. She shared that parents have asked “We’ve never had ‘these kids’ in class with our children before and now they are, isn't that interrupting my child's education, and isn't that a problem for my child?” Coordinator 2 confirmed that they had to work to change the beliefs of some parents of special education students as well. She stated that convincing parents was “a big fight” because of what some parents believed. She shared that some parents believed that “Well, if my kid is special ed, then they should get pulled out for a certain amount of minutes a day, and that's the only way that they can learn.” Coordinator 2 made clear that the issues they encountered around inclusion was not confined to special education and language learners but included gifted education as well. She explained, “It was the same with gifted. We are phasing out our pull-out gifted program as well. We've had to do a lot of work to educate parents about why that's really not the best model.” Principal 1 shared her challenge with the beliefs of stakeholders outside of the school and made a connection to funding and resources. She stressed,

The teachers who are here for the most part understand what needs to be done, how it needs to be done. But when it's people that are outside of the school house, outside of

education or just outside of the building, they may be let's say in finance and budget, but they've never worked in a school. So that's a barrier, getting people to understand why the things we need and ask for are necessary.

Principal 3 also experienced a challenge with beliefs about IB. She said, "I just think that a lot of times people see IB, the PYP and the learning profile as something just for a specific group of students."

### **Overcoming adult mindset and beliefs challenges.**

The leaders interviewed for this study utilized a variety of strategies to overcome or mitigate the effects of the challenges to SJIL they faced including, but not limited to, utilizing strategic hiring practices, providing intensive support, implementing targeted professional learning, and educating parents. Principal 3 talked about being deliberate in looking for teachers who believe in the goals of the school. She said,

When I'm hiring teachers and staff members I want to make sure that they share the belief that every child that they come in contact with is going to have access to a quality education. I want people who believe that parents and families should be a part of the process.

Providing support to teachers in undertaking change was a common thread through all the schools, which several leaders also connected to building capacity and knowledge. Coordinator 2 shared an experience with one teacher,

We even have a teacher this year that we've had to provide some really intensive support because of the things that we saw happening in her classroom. In spite of the book study, in spite of all this work that we're doing. For about two months we had an admin rotation in there just because some of the things we heard she was saying to the kids.

Coordinator 1 shared, “I know teaching is difficult, but every day is a new day. I try to work with certain teachers to help them see how it looks and that you got to do a little bit more.” Principal 1 discussed the issues around their work with restorative practices. When asked how she was mitigating the issues, she said, “we are still overcoming teacher beliefs around restorative practices.” She explained that her counselor working with teachers to help them understand the benefit. She said, “I find the counselor doing restorative circles with not just children who have had child/child conflict but with teachers who have had child/teacher conflicts and getting the teacher to open up and understand.” Principal 3 shared that they are “continuing to provide professional development in the area of restorative practices to teachers.” Principal 2 and 3 lamented that in some instances they had to have critical conversations with teachers about their school philosophy and their practices in an effort to help teachers see that they were not a good fit for their school. Principal 2 shared, “There are a few who are just not understanding the importance of our work. Those few are beginning to realize that they are not a fit for this environment.” She added that, “A few resisters have learned that they have to dig in and do it or they’re going to feel uncomfortable as everyone else around them is doing the work and feeling good about it.” Principal 3 added to this thread when she stated that she has had to have conversations with staff about their fit for School 3. She said,

I have had to say, this is our philosophy here. I accept you might have a different philosophy and invite you to find a school that has a philosophy more in line with your belief, if what we are doing is not really what you believe is best for children.

The leaders at School 2 discussed their work on changing teachers’ mindsets about accepting responsibility and being accountable when working with special populations. Principal 2 talked about the role of inclusion in increasing teacher accountability for their data. She shared,

“Inclusion has helped change the conversation about data. Now, teachers have to be accountable for all of the data for all of their students.” Coordinator 2 agreed with Principal 2. She reported, “We have almost eliminated pull-outs. We bring supports to the students in the classrooms. By putting everyone back in the classrooms, when teachers talk about their kids, they have to plan for everybody, because they're all theirs, all day.” Coordinator 2 also talked about using parent education to work to change parent mindsets on how special populations learn. She described their work with parents,

We had to do a lot of parent nights, question sessions and forums to make them understand why those changes were happening, and why it's a better fit for children. We really had to do some training around what co-teach models are with our parents of special education and gifted students.

Principal 3 expressed that many educators and parents in her district believe that IB is for a certain type of student. When Principal 3 was asked how she aspires to change that belief, she said, “I hope that with our implementation we're able to continue to show that it's not and this type of leadership, these type of school practices, are good for all students and work for everybody.”

### **Capacity and knowledge.**

Capacity and knowledge emerged from the data as a second theme regarding challenges that the PYP leaders encountered when implementing SJIL which supports the findings in previous studies (Costello, 2015; DeMatthews, 2016; Hallinger, 2005). The leaders in this study identified several different capacity and knowledge issues including lack of understanding of the importance of relationships and teachers not having the knowledge of how to work with students living in poverty or students with special learning needs. Principal 1 discussed the importance of

building and maintaining relationships when supporting students with special learning needs, she shared, “We’ve worked hard to build relationships between homeroom teachers and co-teachers, and it made for a really great inclusive environment, and so it’s hard when we have to start from scratch with new support staff.” She conveyed her struggle with support personnel being moved and reassigned by the district. She shared, “It’s difficult when people outside of the building don’t realize how important it is to keep relationships together, and that’s very frustrating.” Principal 1 reflected on why the lack of understanding of the importance of relationships was a challenge, she stated,

This year we have a new ELL teacher, the new person is great, but there is relationship that has to be rebuilt. Homeroom teachers have trust issues because those are their babies, and so they have to get to know this teacher and see what she's about, and see if she's going to give the kids the same level instruction as the last teacher? So that just makes for a hurdle.

Coordinator 3 discussed a challenge she has encountered regarding capacity and knowledge. She shared, "A challenge is teachers not knowing or not understanding what they need to do for our children, or needs related to children living in poverty, or what children who have special needs require and how they can help them." Principal 3 corroborated Coordinator 3's challenge. When she said, “In hiring, we always look for people who will be open to learn and grow and don't feel like they already know it all and know everything that's best for children. It can be hard to find those people.”

### **Overcoming capacity and knowledge challenge.**

The leaders in this study identified providing support and specific professional learning as strategies implemented to overcome or mitigate the effects of capacity and knowledge

challenges in their school. Coordinator 3 shared, “I go in and try to support these teachers, or I ask, let's say the Special Ed teachers, to come in and support them in that area.” Both School 3 leaders discussed the importance of professional learning in overcoming the capacity and knowledge issue. Coordinator 3 shared, “Some people, need a lot of PD, just to learn effective ways to support students with various needs.” Principal 3 explained School 3’s approach to professional learning in detail. She shared,

We present quality learning opportunities in areas that they want to learn more about, areas that the data indicates we need to know more about, but also what my instructional leadership team observes and sees as areas of concern based on our school focus. When requiring and recommending PD for teachers, we present the data to them showing why this particular area should be an area of focus and why we should all continue to learn more around it.

Principal 3 also stressed the importance of teachers’ mindsets when overcoming the capacity and knowledge barrier. She stated, “Teachers are the key to successful targeted PD, they have to an openness to learn.”

#### **Funding, resources and support.**

The final theme that emerged from the data regarding challenges that the PYP leaders encountered when implementing SJIL was funding, resources, and support. The findings in this section support previous findings from other research studies (DeMatthews, 2016; Theoharis, 2007). Principal 3 shared her challenge around support from the community. Principal 3 state, “We're not in a community where community partners just readily come in and say, "Hey, I want to help.” We have some partner support, but not the same level as other schools who same the same type of children.” Principal 3 explained that because of the type of community her school

was in, she felt it looked to people on the outside, that her students were not as needy. She shared why this was a challenge, “My school is small, so my budget and staff are small, having financial and human resource support from additional partners would be a huge help to us in supporting our at-risk students.” Principal 1 also shared how limited funds, resources, and support impact her ability to serve her neediest students. Principal 1 said, “A big challenge is the budgeting issue. You're trying to do what you can with what is often a very tight budget.” Principal 1 described a budget and human resource challenge with support parents whose home language is not English. She explained,

We have a small group of students that are English language learners, and we don't always have the resources we need for that parent engagement, and culturally just learning how to engage the parents in the school. We don't have any Spanish-speaking bilingual teachers, parent liaison, secretary or anyone, so communicating with parents that English isn't their first language, is a barrier, and it's a barrier that we don't have the funding to even have someone maybe part-time or on call.

Principal 1 shared that limited human resources also impacted how language learners were served School 1. She said, “Our ELL students are served through inclusion, but the time the teacher spends here decreased this year, though the number of students didn't. We've had to make changes to serve the same number of students with fewer teacher hours.” School 2 also encountered challenges related to serving language learners. Principal 2 shared,

Inclusion and ELL is a little harder, it's harder for us specifically here only because of staffing issues. I've worked that into our next year's budget. We have a mixed-model right now. We have more pull out than I'd like with our ELL still right now, we're about half way there, but my goal is to get more of that support pushed in into the classroom.

Principal 3 shared that an additional challenge they face at School 3 when serving students who are living in poverty. She stated, “One challenge when working with economically disadvantaged children is making sure they have the basic needs met before they get here, like being safe and having shelter and clothing and food.” Principal 3 went on to explain that it was important for students to have their basic needs met so that they are ready and available to learn.

Findings in the SJIL literature suggest that SJIL school leaders face challenges in meeting the individual needs of their students because of state education policy as well as district policies and mandates (Angelle, Arlestig and Norberg, 2015; Blackmore, 2002; Capper & Young, 2014). Principal 3 described several funding, resources, and support challenges faced at School 3 due to state and or district policies on staff funding allocations and students with disabilities. Principal 3 stated, “The state does not fund a full-time counselor, based on my school size, but we need a full-time counselor.” She went on to explain, “Our counselor is a key part of our work with restorative practices, social emotional learning, and making sure students have the wrap-around services they need to be successful. We need a full-time counselor.” Principal 3 shared,

I think the largest barrier for me when serving my students with disabilities is district funding. If I believe, and the data shows, that a child would be best served with a one to one paraprofessional or in a smaller environment, getting the district to provide the funds to provide the person to do that is often a barrier. I have been told, no we're not going to fund that. You have to figure out the best way or another way to serve that child.

The last funding, resource and support barrier Principal 3 discussed related to state policy.

Principal 3 stated,

Another barrier for me is what the state considers a disability. There are emotional and mental things that impact learning that I feel requires specialized instruction, but the state

doesn't recognize those things as a disability, which means we receive no funding to support those students.

**Overcoming Funding, resources and support challenges.**

Strategic use of budgets, outreach and soliciting financial support, and partnering with organizations for wrap-around services were a few strategies employed by the PYP principals to overcome or mitigate the funding, resources, and support challenges they encountered when trying to serve their students. Principal 3 shared,

We have sacrificed in other area of the school, so we can free up a lot of full-time space in our budget to have teachers and staff members in place to provide extra support. That looks like an RTI specialist, that looks like a reading specialist, a math specialist, people in the building who can, during the day, provide the necessary supports to students once it's been identified that it's needed.

Principal 3 described other ways that she strategically staffed School 3 to meet the needs of students who experience psychological or other issues that prevent them from achieving, but who are not served through the special education services. She explained,

I use my general ed funding to increase support staff, like paras, to go into classrooms to reduce the class size and provide specialized attention and instruction for those students, even though they have not been identified or are not able to be identified as special ed.

Principal 3 also discussed developing relationships with organizations to provide supports for students and families. She stated, "We've built relationships with organizations who provide services for students who have emotional and mental difficulties. These groups work with the students, families and sometimes teachers to provide counseling, support strategies, and even

medical attention if needed.” Making sure students had their basic needs met was another challenge encountered at School 3. Principal 3 stressed,

Our students can't be at their best and ready to learn if their basic needs haven't been met. They are negatively impacted at school if they are hungry, or don't have clean clothes, or are waking up somewhere different every day. We've put things in place here with our social worker and partnered with organizations who provide wraparound services to make sure that we account for that and make up for that as well.

Principal 1 talked about her challenge with supporting parents who require language assistance and strategies she used to mitigate that challenge. She shared, “We engage our French language department when possible, but we also rely on the district department that provides interpreters and translations.” She seeking additional funding is another strategy Principal 1 is using to support families with language barriers. She stated, “We're looking for ways that we can get support financially to make it more personal when a parent comes, because our second language parent and student population is continually increasing.” Limited partner support was a challenged that Principal 3 faced while trying to serve the most at-risk students at School 3.

Principal 3 admitted that she has not completely overcome this challenge and that it is a work in progress. She stated,

We're not in a community where community partners just readily come in and say, hey, I want to help. In order to engage them, I have to reach out. I do a lot of outreach to let them know we're back here, to let them know that we need their support and to encourage them to become involved in developing the lives of children.

## Discussion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the practices and challenges of social justice instructional leadership in PYP schools. As part of this investigation, the researcher sought to discover the SJIL practices that leaders perceived as effective in providing institutional access, educational equity and academic success for students in traditionally marginalized groups. The researcher also sought to understand the challenges that PYP leaders encountered when implementing SJIL practices and learn how the leaders mitigated the challenges they faced. In addition to discovering the answers to the research questions, the researcher intended for this investigation to contribute to the scholarly literature on SJIL and leadership in the context of PYP schools. To accomplish the goals of this inquiry, the researcher conducted interviews with six PYP leaders including principals and IB coordinators from three school in one southeast, urban district. Various documents from the three schools were examined as part of the analysis. The social justice and instructional leadership literature and the SJIL conceptual framework provided scholarly support of the methodology and guided the data analysis used to complete this inquiry. The subsequent paragraphs include a summary of the findings related to the research questions, as well as, implications, limitations, and suggestions for future inquiry.

The first research question of this study asked: What are the effective social justice instructional leadership behaviors of school leaders in International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme schools? The SJIL framework includes five domains in which school leaders enact social justice instructional leadership to increase institutional access, educational equity, and academic success for students in traditionally marginalized groups (DeMatthews, Edwards and Rincones, 2016; Hitt and Tucker, 2016; Theoharis, 2007). The five domains of the SJIL framework are (a) establishing vision to promote a safe and inclusive environment, (b)

facilitating high-quality learning experiences with an engaging curriculum that includes multiple perspectives, (c) building capacity of the entire school community to positively impact achievement, (d) creating a supportive organization for all stakeholders, and (e) collaboration with external partners for innovation, support, and resources. The findings of this investigation indicate that while the leaders enacted practices under all five domains of the SJIL, the practices they perceived as most effective related to three SJIL domains: facilitating high-quality learning experiences, building capacity of the entire school community, and creating a supportive organization.

Research question two of this study asked: What are challenges and barriers leaders in PYP schools encounter when implementing social justice instructional leadership? An extensive review of the literature found that challenges associated with the attitudes and beliefs of parents, laws and regulations, politics and bureaucracy, insufficient support, social pressures as well as a lack of time, resources and capacity negatively impact leaders' ability to implement SJIL practices (DeMatthews, 2016; Slater et al., 2014; Theoharis, 2007). The findings in this investigation support the research that school leaders encounter challenges related to adult mindsets and beliefs, capacity and knowledge, and funding resources, and support when implementing practices to support students in traditionally marginalized groups. The results of this investigation also found that leaders implemented a variety of strategies to overcome or mitigate the effects of the challenges they encountered including: building capacity of all stakeholders, implementing inclusion for all, educating parents on goals and data, utilizing restorative practices, strategic hiring and support, leading critical conversations about job placement, and purposeful and creative budgeting.

## **Implications**

Findings from this study provide evidence of the effective social justice instructional leadership behaviors of school leaders in IB PYP schools, in one urban district. The effective SJIL practice identified by leaders in this study includes implementing strategies to develop a school environment that is culturally responsive, has an equity focus, and provides access to learning in inclusive and diverse settings. Building a data driven culture and educating parents and local governance teams were also perceived as effective SJIL practices by leaders.

Additional effective SJIL practices shared in findings of this work include building relationships, implementation of a learning framework, and implemented practices such as the IB Learner Profile, social-emotional learning, and restorative justice. The findings of this exploration confirm that SJIL leaders encountered challenges and barriers related to adult mindsets and beliefs, capacity and knowledge issues, and funding, resource and support concerns encounter and used a variety of strategies to overcome or mitigate the challenges they faced. Based on the findings from this inquiry and previous research studies, social justice instructional leadership implications exist for school leaders, educational leadership development providers, and state and district policymakers.

### **Theoretical implications.**

The social justice instructional leadership conceptual framework guided this inquiry by providing a structure for analyzing practices that school leaders in PYP schools enact to ensure institutional access, educational equity, and academic success for students in traditionally marginalized groups. The five domains of the SJIL framework are (a) establishing vision to promote a safe and inclusive environment, (b) facilitating high-quality learning experiences with an engaging curriculum that includes multiple perspectives, (c) building capacity of the entire

school community to positively impact achievement, (d) creating a supportive organization for all stakeholders, and (e) collaboration with external partners for innovation, support, and resources. The findings of this investigation indicate that the leaders enacted practices under all five domains of the SJIL, but the practices they perceived as most effective related to the SJIL domains of facilitating high-quality learning experiences, building capacity of the entire school community, and creating a supportive organization.

Many researchers have investigated the link between instructional leadership and student achievement and found that leaders impact student achievement indirectly through specific actions (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Robinson et al., 2008). While researchers have linked instructional leadership to student achievement few if any studies link social justice leadership or social justice instructional leadership to student achievement. According to the available literature, social justice instructional leadership involves relationship building (Furman, 2012), creating a climate of belonging, and promoting inclusion, access, and opportunity for all (Theoharis, 2009), fostering a positive learning climate (Hallinger, 2003), developing a supportive learning organization, and building professional capacity (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Robinson et al., 2008). Many of the SJIL practices have a positive correlation to improved student outcomes. The findings of this study suggest that social justice instructional leadership actions taken by school leaders that have an indirect and positive impact on the social-emotional and academic growth of students in traditionally marginalized groups as well as family engagement include developing a culturally responsive environment, providing access to learning in inclusive and diverse settings, building a data driven culture, fostering relationships, and educating stakeholders do. SJIL actions such as implementation of a learning framework, the IB Learner Profile, social-emotional learning, and

restorative practices also proved to have a positive impact on the social-emotional and academic growth of students in traditionally marginalized groups in the schools highlighted in this study.

Studies on social justice leadership and instructional leadership are prevalent, though few discuss the challenges that leaders encounter and how leaders overcome the challenges they encounter when implementing SJIL. The findings of this investigation add to the scholarly literature in the fields of social justice and instructional leadership and support the research that leaders encounter challenges and barriers related to mindsets and beliefs, finances, resources, support, capacity, and policy (Angelle et al., 2015; Costello. 2015; DeMatthews, 2016; Louis & Robinson, 2012; Slater et al., 2014; Theoharis, 2007). For the purposes of this inquiry, the challenges experienced by the PYP leaders as they worked to support traditionally marginalized students were classified into three major themes: adult mindset and beliefs, capacity and knowledge, and funding, resources and support. In addition to identifying the barriers the participating leaders encountered while implementing SJIL, the results of this study also outline the strategies that the participating PYP leaders utilized to overcome or mitigate the challenges that they encountered. The leaders interviewed for this inquiry reported employing a diverse set of strategies to overcome or mitigate the SJIL challenges they encountered including strategic hiring practices, providing intensive support, implementing targeted professional learning, and educating parents. The leaders in this investigation also strategically used school budgets, solicited support through outreach, and partnered with organizations for wrap-around services to overcome or mitigate the challenges they encountered when trying to serve their neediest students.

In addition to adding to the literature on SJIL, the concepts presented in this investigation can serve as a guide for leaders who wish to lead through SJIL. The findings present concrete

practices that leaders can enact to change how their schools support students in traditionally marginalized groups. The findings of this study also provide future SJIL leaders with potential strategies for overcoming roadblocks that they may encounter when implementing SJIL.

### **Practical implications.**

The theoretical implications of this investigation's findings lead to practical implications for school administrators. Numerous research studies have confirmed that the work of school leaders is essential as the work that school leaders do has an indirect but significant effect on learner outcomes, especially directed at developing the school mission, setting academic expectations, creating a supportive instructional organization, and ensuring all students have the time and opportunity to learn. (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Leithwood & Mascal, 2008; Robinson et al., 2008). It is critical that to put systems, protocols, and practices in place to promote a safe, orderly, and inclusive environment, and ensure that students have access to a curriculum that is multifaceted and engaging (Rigby, 2014; Ylimaki, 2012). SJIL requires school leaders be strategic in hiring, coaching, and building capacity to select, support, and develop teachers who have the capacity and the desire to support their SJIL leaders in developing an inclusive, diverse, and supportive school culture that promotes institutional access, educational equity, and academic success for all students. Educational leaders must also purposefully choose and implement teaching resources, instructional practices, and discipline protocols to ensure that all students and families feel represented, supported, and valued.

In addition to practical implications for school leaders, the findings of this inquiry have practical implications for providers of school leadership development. Current educational leadership research suggests that pre-service leaders are ill-prepared to tackle the political,

economic, cultural, and social challenges that social justice and instructional leaders often face when advocating for students to create schools that support the achievement of all children (Jean-Marie et al., 2009). Results of studies on educational leader preparation programs indicated the need for more programs to include courses and activities that will equip leaders with the knowledge and skills needed to lead through social justice (Capper et al., 2006). Educational leadership development providers must make social justice leadership a priority by developing belief statements about the importance of SJIL and weaving SJIL practices, methodologies, and competencies throughout leadership programs. Leadership development programs help rising leaders shape and refine their leadership identities. The work of school leaders matter as the work that they do has an indirect but significant effect on learner outcomes (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Robinson et al., 2008). Consequently, leaders have an obligation to lead their schools through the work of becoming safe, inclusive environments that provide all students with institutional access, educational equity, and academic success. If leaders have an obligation to lead through SJIL, then then purveyors of educational leadership training have an obligation to develop leaders who have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to lead through SJIL.

### **Policy implications.**

If school leaders are to truly lead the work of the ensuring that students in historically marginalized groups achieve at a rate equal to their peers, then state and district policymakers must begin to investigate, plan, and implement funding formulas that consider more than school size or poverty rates to fund education. Findings in the SJIL literature and this study suggest that SJIL school leaders face challenges in meeting the individual needs of their students because of state education policy as well as district policies and mandates (Angelle, Arlestig and Norberg,

2015; Blackmore, 2002; Capper & Young, 2014). Providing intensive academic, health and wellbeing, and familial supports to students is costly. From a policy perception, a change in education funding formulas based on the needs of students will position districts and schools for success by enabling schools to serve their neediest children with fewer issues related to funding, resource, and support barriers.

States and school districts across the U.S. are now implementing school funding and budgeting based on specific student needs. Student-driven funding is a burgeoning innovative method for funding districts and schools and has various titles including Weighted Student Funding (WSF), Student-Based Budgeting (SBB), Student-centered Funding (SCF), and Fair Student Funding (FSF) (Joseph, 2016; Rosenberg, Gordon & Hsu, 2014). WSF promotes equity, transparency, flexibility, and school choice, in addition to giving school leaders more decision-making authority (Joseph, 2016; Shambaugh, Chambers & DeLancey, 2008).

WSF models are being used at the state-level in numerous states including California, Nevada, and New York (Shambaugh et al., 2008). Individual school districts in Denver, Houston, Baltimore, Cincinnati, and Cleveland are implementing WSF budgeting. In fact, in 2016, Joseph reported that 30 districts in states spanning the U.S. are now implementing WSF and providing schools with budgets based on specific student needs. Even the federal government is jumping into the WSF arena. According to the US Department of Education's website (2018) it is now accepting applications from school district that want to participate in the federal Student-centered Funding (SCF) pilot. Authorization for the federal SCF initiative is granted under ESEA Section 1501 (US Department of Education, 2018). The federal SCF is intended to provide "local educational agencies with flexibility to consolidate eligible Federal funds and State and local education funding in order to create a single school funding system

based on weighted per-pupil allocations for low-income and otherwise disadvantaged students” (US Department of Education, 2018). A maximum of 50 districts will have the option of participating in the pilot cohort, with national expansion cleared for the 2019–2020 school year (Joseph, 2016).

WSF systems, use a combination funding structures to determine how much funding each school receives, which is fundamentally different from the traditional funding model, which distributes resources to schools in the form of staff and dollars designated for specific programs (Rosenberg et al., 2014). Funding in WSF models equals dollars, not resource and staffing allocations, as in traditional budget structures. The WSF funding structure involves a base funding amount being allocated to each student. Then weights, which equate to additional funds, are allocated based on students with characteristics, such students living in poverty, students identified as having a disability, students who are English language learners (Joseph, 2016; Rosenberg et a., 2014; Shambaugh et al., 2008).

WSF models are designed to reduce school funding inequities, provide schools with financial decision-making authority, and remove financial barriers that prevent schools from serving their neediest students (Thomas Ford Institute, 2006). WSF does promise the elimination of all barriers that cause inequity in schools, nor does implementation guarantee academic success for all schools and students. WSF is a “system where funding follows each child according to his/her needs and school leaders are given the autonomy to make decisions” (Thomas Ford Institute, 2006, p. 59). The Thomas Ford Institute (2006) believed that WSF can help U.S. schools,

Demolish many of the barriers to equity already in place and create a brand new school financing system, one in which schools compete to hire the best teachers and to attract the

hardest to educate students, and in which they are free to try new and dynamic solutions to ensure that all of their students succeed (p. 59).

### **Limitations and Biases**

The scope of this study included a group of traditional, public elementary schools from one urban district in the southeastern United States. This inquiry focused on PYP leaders from three schools in the targeted school district. The findings of this study will be generalizable to similar elementary schools that have adopted PYP.

One limitation of the study is that the data collected as a part of this qualitative study are from schools in one urban school district in the southeast U.S. A decision was made by the researcher to use schools in one district to reduce the time and travel needed to conduct this study. Limiting the study to one district also allowed for comparisons across schools because although each school leader had different experiences because of their individual context, some experiences should be the same based on the context of the district. One final limitation is that the study only included the experiences of six PYP leaders. Even though the number of leaders involved in this study was small, the structure of the PYP, the process of PYP implementation, and the monitoring and evaluation by IB ensures that leaders in all PYP schools operate according to the philosophy and guidelines of the PYP, and thus they should possess similar SJIL characteristics.

This study utilized multiple sources of data to examine the SJIL practices of PYP leaders and to determine the challenges these leaders experienced while serving students in marginalized groups. The qualitative data gathered from a document analysis will serve as a source of corroboration to the data gathered during the interviews. Additionally, the nature of the PYP provides a measure of assurance that leaders in PYP have similar SJIL practices. Thus, the

findings of this can be generalized to similar leaders in elementary schools that have adopted PYP.

To create a trustworthy study, Creswell (2003) suggests, the researcher reflect on and create an open and honest dialogue with the reader to clarify the potential biases that the researcher brings to the study. The researcher's familiarity and experience with the PYP are both a potential bias and a source of strength. The researcher has 14 years of experience working in PYP settings. The researcher has served as a teacher, PYP coordinator, and an assistant principal in PYP schools. The researcher believes in the philosophy of the IB and has witnessed the culture, teaching, and learning transform because of the PYP. As an experienced PYP practitioner and leader, the researcher understands some of the successes and difficulties a PYP school and leader may face. The investigator's knowledge and understanding of the PYP also helped the researcher to recognize when to probe for deeper answers and what types of documents, especially PYP specific documents, would be helpful to analyze when looking SJIL practices. Although personal bias cannot be completely removed, researchers can work to diminish its effect on the quality of their study. Recording each interview and having them professionally transcribed helped guarantee that the words and phrases on the written the interview transcripts were those of the participant and not interpreted, paraphrased, or summarized by the researcher. Before beginning the data analysis, each participant was asked to read the interview transcript to check for accuracy and to ensure that the correct intent and experiences were captured (Seidman. 2006).

### **Suggestions for Future Inquiry**

This qualitative work focused on the experiences of elementary school leaders in one urban district in the southeastern U.S. All the leaders in this study work at traditional public schools authorized to offer the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme. Educational leadership researchers recommend that future studies explore the practices and experiences of school administrators in the context of their leadership and diverse settings (Brooks, 2009; Jean-Marie et al., 2009; Rigby, 2016). Scholars of educational leadership also recommend that researchers work to refine theories of social justice leadership through the examination of the practices and challenges of educational leaders with social justice tendencies (Brooks et al., 2008; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014).

Future researchers can continue to expand the literature on social justice instructional leadership by expanding scope of this inquiry in three ways. This exploration was conducted in with six leaders, in three elementary PYP schools, in an urban district in the southeastern U.S. Future investigators can deepen the social justice instructional leadership literature by expanding the scope of this study to include more than three schools and incorporating the collective experiences of more than six leaders. Another approach that could be utilized to expand the scope of this study is the replication this study in schools within different classifications of communities including urban, suburban, and rural to determine if the practices and challenges brought forth in this work transfer to schools in different community contexts. A final strategy a researcher could employ augment the social justice instructional leadership literature is to reproduce this study in schools with diverse school types or structures comprising public, charter, and private schools or encompassing elementary, middle, and high schools.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative multiple instrumental case study was to investigate the practices and challenges of social justice instructional leadership in PYP schools. As part of this investigation, the researcher sought to discover the SJIL practices that leaders perceived as effective in providing institutional access, educational equity and academic success for students in traditionally marginalized groups. The researcher also sought to understand the challenges that PYP leaders encountered when implementing SJIL practices and learn how the leaders mitigated the challenges they faced. Findings from this study provide evidence of the effective social justice instructional leadership behaviors of school leaders in IB PYP schools, in one urban district. The effective SJIL practice identified by leaders in this study includes creating a culturally responsive culture and maintaining an equity focus, implementing inclusion for all to ensure that students have access to high-quality learning experiences in inclusive and diverse settings. To build capacity, study participants worked to develop a school culture in which data drives the mission and vision, the teaching, and learning for all, including educating parents and local governance teams. Other effective SJIL practices evidenced through this study's findings, include building relationships within and outside of the school building, utilizing a community learning framework, and implementing practices such as the IB Learner Profile, social-emotional learning, and restorative practices to develop a supportive learning environment for all.

This investigation's results confirm the types of challenges and barriers leaders encounter when implementing social justice instructional leadership and the strategies school leaders utilize to overcome or mitigate the challenges they may face. More specifically, leaders who implement SJIL practices encounter must work to overcome adult mindsets and beliefs, capacity and knowledge issues, and funding, resource and support concerns. Leaders employed a range of

strategies to overcome or mitigate the effects of the challenges they encountered including: building capacity, hiring strategically, providing targets support and professional learning, and holding critical conversations about problems of practice. Leaders also implemented inclusion for all, parent education protocols, restorative practices to combat barriers to SJIL.

In addition to answering the two research questions, the results of this investigation also fill gaps in the literature as identified by previous researchers. Rigby (2016) contends that the backgrounds, experiences, values and networks of principals influence their work as instructional leaders and recommends that future studies on instructional leadership address how the context, experiences, and beliefs of principals influence their instructional leadership actions. Brooks (2009) and Jean-Marie et al. (2009) also urged researchers to conduct more investigations on the practices and experiences of school administrators in the context of their leadership and diverse settings. This study sought to answer the call of these esteemed researchers through the examination of social justice instructional leadership practices of school leaders through three specific contexts: (1) urban school situated in the southeastern U.S, (2) elementary schools in one urban district, and (3) schools authorized to offer the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme schools. The findings highlight some of the practices and challenges experienced by leaders in these contexts including behaviors and challenges associated with promoting change to ensure cultural relevancy, increase inclusion and diversity, meet the needs of immigrant students and families, and support students dealing with issues that are often prevalent in urban areas including poverty, trauma, and transiency.

DeMatthews and Mawhinney (2014) recommend that researchers further develop the literature related to social justice leadership by investigating the personal commitments and practices of leaders with social justice tendencies as well as how those practices establish

socially just schools. Brooks et al. (2008) reinforced the recommendation of fellow researchers by suggesting an increased focus on exploring social justice in educational settings and developing, analyzing, and honing theories that may lay a foundation for future research on social justice. In addition to conceptualizing theories of social justice and instructional, the literature for these areas include studies that describe the challenges and barriers that social justice and instructional leaders face (DeMatthews, 2016; Hallinger, 2005; Slater et al., 2014; Theoharis, 2007), but few provide specific examples of how leaders overcame these challenges. The outcomes of this qualitative exploration fill the gaps in the literature by expanding the literature on social justice and instructional leadership, as well as, adding to the collective knowledgebase on practices and challenges leaders encounter when implement social justice instructional leadership practices to ensure institutional access, educational equity, and academic success for all students.

The literature is sparse in the field of leadership in international education and requires further inquiry due to the continued rise of the number of international educational institutions (Dolby & Rahman 2008; Hallinger et al., 2011; Hayden & Thompson, 2008; Riesbeck, 2008; Walker & Cheng, 2009). The educational research literature is even more limited when narrowed down to leadership in international schools implementing IB programs and more specifically, the Primary Years Program (Nichols, 2010). In 2016, Dabrowski compiled and an annotated bibliography of 117 studies related to IB, of those only 14 related specifically to the PYP, which illustrates the limited amount of research available on the PYP. The conclusions of this study highlight the leadership experiences of six leaders from three schools authorized to offer the PYP, a framework for international education in elementary schools. Thus, the completion of this investigation adds to the literature on leadership in both international and PYP schools.

The findings of this study also illuminate SJIL implications for state and district policymakers, school leaders, and providers of educational leadership development. State and district policymakers must begin to investigate, plan, and implement funding formulas that consider more than school size or the number of students who are living in poverty to fund education. Providing specialized education is expensive. Providing wraparound services to students who live in poverty, and need extensive support is expensive. Providing intense remediation to students who are well below their academic level is expensive. Funding districts and schools based on need will set them up for success by enabling schools to serve their neediest children with fewer issues related to funding, resource, and support barriers. School leaders must be strategic in hiring, coaching, and building the capacity of the teaching staff to facilitate the development of a school culture access, equity, and success for all students, especially those in traditionally marginalized groups. Educational leaders must also purposeful choose and implement teaching resources, instructional practices, and discipline protocols to ensure that all students and families feel represented, supported, and valued. Leadership development providers must make social justice leadership a priority. Rising leaders gain their leadership identity, an understanding of the goals of leadership, and best practices for leadership implementation primarily through formal and informal leadership pathways. If schools are to blossom as havens of institutional access, educational equity, and academic success for all students, especially students in traditionally marginalized groups, then leadership development providers have a moral imperative to make instructional leadership through a social justice lens a priority.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### Recruitment Email

Greetings School Leader,

My name is Ovura (Thea) Murphy and I am a graduate student at Georgia State University. I am conducting a study on the practice and challenges of social justice instructional leadership in IB PYP Schools, and I am interested in learning about your experiences related to actions taken by you and other leaders in your school to improve the educational equity, academic success, and institutional access for traditionally marginalized students and families. Atlanta Public School has approved this research for the 2017-2018 school year. Attached to this email is copy of the research approval.

I am recruiting nine educators who are principals, assistant principals, and IB coordinators of PYP World Schools to participate in this study. Participation will take approximately 90 minutes of your time over three days. Participation activities will include completing a brief demographic survey, participation in one 60-minute interview, and the collection of school documents related to marginalized student groups. While there is no compensation for participation, you will help me gain insights into the leadership practices of PYP leaders and the challenges these leaders face as they work to create a learning environment that supports all students.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please click the participation link below. If you want more information, please contact me via email at [ocrosby@student.gsu.edu](mailto:ocrosby@student.gsu.edu) or via phone at (404) 375-2866. Thank you for your time and consideration.

[I am interested in participating.](#)

Sincerely,

Ovura (Thea) Murphy  
EdD Leadership Candidate  
Georgia State University  
College of Education and Human Development

## Appendix B

### Participant Demographic Survey

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Social Justice Instructional Leadership research project is to identify effective social justice instructional leadership practices behaviors of leaders in IB PYP. This study will also examine the influence of the social justice instructional leadership practices on the achievement of PYP students in traditionally marginalized groups that include Black, Hispanic, Limited English Proficient Students, and Students with Disabilities.

**Directions:** If you are willing to participate in this research study, please fill out this form to the best of your knowledge. All information will be kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used in all reports written as a part of this study. If you choose to participate and later change your mind, you have the right to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

1. First Name and Last Name \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender (*Please check one*): Female  Male  Other  \_\_\_\_\_
3. How do you identify your ethnic and racial background (*Make a selection in both A and B*):
  - A. Are You Hispanic or Latino? Yes  No
  - B. What is your racial category? (*Select all that apply*)
 

American Indian or Alaska Native <input type="checkbox"/>	Asian <input type="checkbox"/>	Black or African American <input type="checkbox"/>
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/>	White <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/> _____
4. What is the title of your position as an educator? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Indicate your years of experience: Educator \_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_ PYP \_\_\_\_
7. How would you describe your leadership style or philosophy? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. What is your preferred contact information? Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### Informed Consent

Georgia State University  
Department of Educational Policy Studies  
Informed Consent

Title: The Practice and Challenges of Social Justice Instructional Leadership in International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme Schools

Principal Investigator: Dr. Yin-Ying Wang

Student Principal Investigator: Ovura T. Murphy

#### I. Purpose:

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to examine the effective social justice instructional leadership practices of leaders in schools implementing the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme in an urban school district in the southeastern United States. You are invited to participate because you are a principal, assistant principal, or coordinator in an authorized International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) school. Nine participants will be recruited for this study. Participation will require 90 minutes of your time over the course of three days during the 2017-2018 academic year.

#### II. Procedures:

As part of the screening process for this study, you will be asked to complete an online five-minute demographic survey. If you qualify to participate in this study, you will be asked to part in one 60-minute in person interview with a member of the study team. The interview will be audio recorded in a quiet, private location convenient to you at a mutually agreed upon time. The first two interview questions seek to discover how leaders establish the school mission and vision and support a high-quality learning experience. The next three questions seek to find out how leaders

build the capacity of the school community, create and maintain a supportive school, and collaborate with outside partners. The sixth interview question seeks to discover the social justice instructional leadership practices leaders have found most effective in improving educational equity, academic success, and institutional access for traditionally marginalized students and families. The seventh interview question seeks to learn about the challenges of implementing social justice instructional leadership as well as how leaders overcome these challenges. The final question asks you to share additional thoughts or comments regarding the social justice instructional leadership at your school. Finally, you will be asked to provide school documents related to policies, procedures, and professional learning.

### III. Risks:

In this study, you will not have any more risks than you would in a normal day of life.

### IV. Benefits:

There is no direct benefit to participants in this study. Although, leaders who participate in this study will gain insight into their leadership through reflection, which will allow them to recognize ways they are improving equity, success, and access for students and families and identify opportunities for growth. The researcher hopes to gain information about the social justice instructional leadership practices of leaders in IB PYP schools, the challenges they face when serving marginalized students and the strategies they use to overcome those challenges, which may be of benefit to districts, PYP leaders, prospective IB leaders as well as other members of society

### V. Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:

Participation in research is voluntary. You do not have to be in this study. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time. You may skip questions

or stop participating at any time. Whatever you decide, you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

## VII. Confidentiality:

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. Dr. Yin-yang Wang, the principal investigator, will have access to the information you provide. Information may also be shared with those who make sure the study is done correctly (GSU Institutional Review Board, the Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP)). We will use pseudonyms for all participants and schools rather than actual names on study records. The information and documents you provide will be stored on an encrypted, password protected, storage device. All study data including the key code will be destroyed three years after the study closure. The key to identify the research participants and schools will be stored separately from the data to protect privacy. The demographic survey will be collected online and data sent over the Internet may not be secure. For screening purposes, your name will be collected as a part of the demographic survey, but IP addresses will not be collected. Your name and other facts that might point to you, your school, or your school system will not appear when we present this study or publish its results. The findings will be summarized and reported in group form. You will not be identified personally.

Audio recordings of the interviews will be done using a digital audio recorder. Upon completion of interviews, data will be uploaded from the recorder onto a password-protected computer for transcription purposes. Once uploaded, data on the recorder will be erased.

## VIII. Contact Persons:

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about this study, contact Dr. Yinying Wang and Ovura (Thea) Murphy at 404-375-2866 or [ocrosby@student.gsu.edu](mailto:ocrosby@student.gsu.edu). You can also call if you think

you have been harmed by the study. Call Susan Vogtner in the Georgia State University Office of Research Integrity at 404-413-3513 or svogtner1@gsu.edu if you want to talk to someone who is not part of the study team. You can talk about questions, concerns, offer input, obtain information, or suggestions about the study. You can also call Susan Vogtner if you have questions or concerns about your rights in this study.

IX. Copy of Consent Form to Participant:

Please print a copy of this screen for your records.

If you agree to participate in this research and be audio recorded, please click the continue button.

(Continue)

## Appendix D

### Interview Protocol Questions for School Leaders

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Social Justice Instructional Leadership research project is to identify effective social justice instructional leadership practices behaviors of leaders in IB PYP. This study will also examine the influence of the social justice instructional leadership practices on the achievement of PYP students in traditionally marginalized groups that include Black, Hispanic, Limited English Proficient Students, and Students with Disabilities.

1. As a leader of a PYP school, how did you establish school the mission and vision to promote a safe, orderly, supportive, and inclusive learning environment for all stakeholders and how do you communicate the mission and vision with stakeholders?
  - a. Probe for steps taken to establish mission and vision
  - b. Probe for steps taken to ensure that a safe, orderly, and inclusive environment for all stakeholders
  - c. Probe for who was involved and if and how feedback is received
  - d. Probe for details of including who, when, methods, how often, languages
  - e. Probe for how often and how the mission and vision are revised
2. As a leader of a PYP school how do you facilitate a high-quality learning experience in your school to ensure that all students have access to a curriculum that is engaging and includes multiple perspectives, so all students achieve, including those in historically marginalized groups?
  - a. Probe for definition of quality learning experience
  - b. Probe for ways to ensure all students have access
  - c. Probe for how learning experiences are monitored and improved

- d. Probe for how curriculum is engaging and includes multiple perspectives
3. As a leader of a PYP school, how do you building the capacity of the entire school community in order utilize multiple sources and types of data to reflect on and enhance the mission, support, and teaching and learning of the school to impact student achievement in a positive way?
- a. Probe for definition of building capacity
  - b. Probe for techniques for building capacity
  - c. Probe for frequency and dissemination of knowledge
  - d. Probe for use of data and by whom
  - e. Probe for communication of data and to whom
4. As a leader of a PYP school, how do you create and maintain a supportive organization for learning that meets the needs of all of its stakeholders?
- a. Probe for definition of supportive learning organization
  - b. Probe for beliefs of which stakeholders the organization should support
  - c. Probe for strategies to ensure organization meets the needs of all stakeholders
5. As a leader of a PYP school, how do you collaborate with external partners as a source of innovation, support, and resources?
- a. Probe for types of external partners
  - b. Probe for how partners support innovation
  - c. Probe for how partners support school mission, vision, and programs
  - d. Probe for types of resources provided by partners
  - e. Probe for communication with partners

6. As a leader of a PYP school, what social justice instructional leadership practices have you found most effective in improving educational equity, academic success, and institutional access for students and families who have been traditionally marginalized?
  - a. Probe for what prior practice looked like
  - b. Probe for what makes practice effective
  - c. Probe for data used to gauge effectiveness
  
7. As a leader of a PYP school, what are some challenges and barriers to implementation of social justice instructional leadership?
  - a. Probe for challenges and barriers for minority groups
  - b. Probe for challenges and barriers for students with disabilities
  - c. Probe for challenges and barriers for linguistically diverse students
  - d. Probe for challenges and barriers for economically disadvantaged students
  - e. Political challenges
  - f. Budget challenges
  - g. Policy challenges
  - h. Community challenges
  
8. Are there any other thoughts or comments you would like to share with me regarding the social justice instructional leadership as it relates to your school?

## Appendix E

### SJIL in PYP Schools Codebook

#### Category: SJIL Practices

*Code: Mission*

Subcode: Making it Visual

*Code: Learning Experience*

Subcode: Culturally Responsive

Subcode: Data Driving Focus, Work, and Learning

Subcode: Equity Focus

Subcode: Inclusion for All

Subcode: Instructional Resources

Subcode: Experiences

Subcode: Planning

Subcode: Student Learning

*Code: Building Capacity*

Subcode: Data Driving Work and Focus

Subcode: Educating Local Governance Team

Subcode: Educating Parents

Subcode: Managing Change

Subcode: Parent Learning

Subcode: Professional Learning

Subcode: Shared Language

Subcode: Stakeholder Learning

*Code: Supportive Organization*

Subcode: Being Human

Subcode: Building Relationships

Subcode: Communicate to Stakeholders

Subcode: Community Learning Framework

Subcode: Community

Subcode: Culturally Responsive

Subcode: Equity Focus

Subcode: Inclusive Environment

Subcode: Learner Profile

Subcode: Professional Learning Communities

Subcode: Restorative Practices

Subcode: Social Emotional Learning

Subcode: Stakeholder Involvement

Subcode: Student Discipline

Subcode: Supporting Linguistically Diverse Stakeholders

Subcode: Translation

Subcode: Types of Support

Subcode: Welcoming Environment

*Code: Partners*

Subcode: Collaboration with Partners

Subcode: Parents as Partners

**Category: Most Effective Practice**

*Code: Building Relationships and Being Human*

*Code: Community Learning Framework*

*Code: Culturally Responsive Culture and Equity Focus*

*Code: Data Driving the Focus, Work and Learning for All*

*Code: Educating Parents and Local Governance Team*

*Code: Implementing Learner Profile*

*Code: Inclusion*

*Code: Social Emotional Learning and Restorative Practices*

**Category: Barriers***Code: Adult Mindset and Beliefs*

Subcode: Accepting Responsibility for All Students

Subcode: Beliefs about IB

Subcode: Comfortable with Mediocrity

Subcode: Excuses about Data

Subcode: Honesty about Biases

Subcode: Lack of Understanding about Importance of Work

Subcode: Separatism

Subcode: Status Quo

Subcode: Struggle with Restorative Practices

*Code: Capacity and Knowledge*

Subcode: Importance of Relationships

Subcode: Supporting Students with Learning Differences

*Code: Funding and Resources*

Subcode: Basic Needs

Subcode: Budgeting

Subcode: District Funding

Subcode: Limited Partner Support

Subcode: Multiple Languages

Subcode: Personnel and Scheduling

Subcode: Resources to Support Parents

Subcode: State Rules and Policy

*Code: Overcoming Barriers*

Subcode: Building Relationships

Subcode: Career Counselling

Subcode: District Support

Subcode: Implementation as Evidence

Subcode: Inclusion to Increase Accountability

Subcode: Increasing Parent Understanding

Subcode: Intensive and Strategic Support

Subcode: Parent Education

Subcode: Professional Development

Subcode: Outreach for Student Services and Financial Support

Subcode: Restorative Practices

Subcode: Strategic Budgeting

Subcode: Strategic Hiring

Subcode: Support Staff

Subcode: Targeted Learning and Support for Staff

Subcode: Utilizing Building and District Personnel

Subcode: Wraparound Services