Whole-institution approach to social justice education for preservice teachers

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Abstract
Purpose – This study used the design process (analysis, development, and evaluation) to understand and refine the process, dimensions, and outcomes of a multi-year, whole-institution approach to social justice education for preservice teachers (PSTs) at one institution. The authors used shared governance to establish a cross-disciplinary faculty-student learning community and provided interdisciplinary social justice learning opportunities to PSTs across multiple years. These were delivered using high-impact practices such as community-engaged learning and ePortfolios.

Design/methodology/approach – The authors used formative data to examine and refine this study’s program design. The authors assessed engagement within and across the components of the whole-institution approach and the impact on, and change in, social justice learning and orientation for PSTs.

Findings – Findings showed deepened engagement within and across the components of the whole-institution approach, however, committee representation, opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, and coordinated field experiences are areas that can be strengthened. All PSTs demonstrated an understanding of the connections between annual social justice foci and teaching practices, and some documented growth in social justice awareness over time. The authors found more clarity is needed around archiving and keeping social justice event reflections in the ePortfolio each year.

Originality/value – This study adds to the existing literature by using the design process to refine the development of a whole-institution social justice education program for PSTs.

Keywords Whole-institution approach, Social justice, Learning community, Faculty, Preservice teachers

Paper type Research paper

Introduction
Social justice education provides preservice teachers (PSTs) with the awareness and knowledge to understand and address the developmental and learning needs of the increasingly diverse school-age students in the US (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2022a) and other countries (Natarajan et al., 2022) so all students can thrive and succeed (Jacobs and Perez, 2023). For this study, we define social justice awareness as the personal and interpersonal abilities of PSTs to be aware of diversity, and their comfort with that awareness (Pope et al., 2014). Social justice knowledge is defined as PSTs’ content knowledge about various racial, cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic groups. Knowledge includes understanding about constructs such as acculturation, oppression, identity, social justice, and privilege (Pope et al., 2014). Social justice skills are PSTs’ ability to relate, interact, and intervene with students whose race, home language, culture, and life experiences are different from their own (Pope et al., 2014).
Different sets of factors drive the changing student populations across national contexts, making social justice issues relating to racism, diversity, poverty, privilege, and oppression pervasive and complex in school-based settings. The factors leading to demographic changes include greater racial and ethnic diversity of students and their families (NCES, 2022a), an increase in global migration in Europe and Asia (Natarajan et al., 2022), a widening wealth gap among students and their families due to high inflation, worsening national financial conditions, disruptions from wars (World Bank, 2023), and a rapid growth of the youth population in Southeast Asia and Africa (Fengler, 2022; Salihu, 2020).

The rising pervasiveness of social justice issues in education has led a number of higher education institutions to design new approaches to social justice education (Beghetto, 2021; Mills and Ballantyne, 2010, 2016). This paper describes how one institution uses the design process (McKenney and Reeves, 2012) to refine the development of a whole-institution social justice education program (Price et al., 2021; UNESCO, 2014) to deepen engagement within and across shared governance, multiple disciplines, and community partnerships to provide school-wide, social justice learning opportunities to PSTs. These social justice learning opportunities were delivered using high-impact practices, including community-engaged learning and an ePortfolio.

**Literature review**

Across higher education disciplines, there is a general agreement on the three phases of curriculum design (Gustafson and Branch, 2002; McKenney and Reeves, 2012). At the initial analysis phase, the focus is on defining the curricular gap and ways to address the gap (McKenney and Reeves, 2012). At the development phase, the work involves exploring and refining frameworks, identifying target content, designing and improving supports, and or planning and refining measurable outcomes (Gustafson and Branch, 2002; Smith and Ragan, 1999). Formative data is collected at this phase to inform and refine the development of the programming. At the evaluation phase, summative data are collected to guide revisions and determine the impact of the curriculum (Gustafson and Branch, 2002).

Higher education institutions are tasked to find new approaches to integrate their education, research, community engagement, leadership, and influence to develop the potential of their students in addressing these challenges (Price et al., 2021; UNESCO, 2014). In the U.S., where the traditional population of PSTs often have dissimilar educational, cultural, and linguistics experiences than the students who are entering into schools and systems (NCES, 2022b), there is an urgent call for innovations (Beghetto, 2021) that will shape PSTs’ awareness, knowledge, and skills on social justice education beyond one course on social justice in teaching (e.g. Chubbuck, 2007; Hyland, 2010; Mills and Ballantyne, 2010, 2016).

**High-impact education approaches for social justice education**

There is emerging evidence that social justice learning about racism, diversity, privilege, oppression, and intercultural competence might be more powerfully taught through certain types of high-impact practices. High-impact learning processes (e.g. collaborative assignments and projects, learning communities, ePortfolios, service-learning, and community-based learning) have been shown to improve engagement and persistence of students from all types of backgrounds in learning (Kuh, 2008). These high-impact learning practices share opportunities for students to reflect and integrate learning, to discover relevance of learning through real world application, to experience diversity, to interact with faculty and peers, and to engage deeply over an extended period of time (Kuh and O’Donnell, 2013).

Lee et al. (2022) in their scoping review of teaching approaches that enhance social justice-oriented practice in graduate social work students found intergroup dialogue, community-
engaged learning, written reflection, and experiential learning to be among the more powerful approaches in teaching social justice education. There is also evidence that PSTs respond well to certain types of teaching practices of social justice education. Strategies that were used by teacher education programs to facilitate PSTs’ social justice awareness, knowledge, and skills include centralizing the lens of teacher identity, creating environments that are conducive to social justice learning, and promoting PSTs’ critical consciousness and praxis (Jacobs and Perez, 2023).

Interdisciplinary collaboration in higher education and the whole-institution approach
Global and national organizations such as UNESCO (2014) have charged higher education institutions to respond to emerging world crises using interdisciplinary and sustainable development practices. Whole-institution approaches (WIAs), which involve engagement within and across the areas of school governance, disciplines of teaching and learning, facilities and operations, and community partnerships, have emerged as the preferred systems-level change approaches (Bauer et al., 2021; Schopp et al., 2020; Žalenienė and Pereira, 2021). WIAs also emphasize the interdisciplinary design and development of content, pedagogies, and outcomes across experts from different disciplines (Žalenienė and Pereira, 2021). Emerging research in interdisciplinary design has shown that more research is needed to understand how interdisciplinary and system-level collaboration such as WIAs can be refined over time to ensure their components, activities, and outcomes meet their goals (Bopardikar et al., 2021; Mathar, 2016).

This study
This study presents an example of how formative data were used to examine and refine the development of our whole-institution approach to social justice education (Figure 1). We focused on understanding the engagement within and across the components of the whole-institution approach and the impact on, and change in, social justice learning and orientation for PSTs.

Method
We collected formative data to understand and refine the development of the whole-institution social justice program across AY 2019–2020, 2020–2021, and 2021–2022.
Data collection included a) an assessment of engagement around social justice issues within and across the areas of governance, cross-disciplinary faculty-student learning communities, University and community partners, and The Office of Clinical Experiences, and b) a qualitative analysis of PSTs’ portfolio submissions to examine social justice orientation development.

**Data collection**

Upon receipt of IRB approval, we collected two sets of formative data. First, to understand engagement within and across components of the whole-institution approach, we collected agendas and minutes from Committee meetings, the annual calendar of events, the annual syllabi statements, stakeholder attendance at events, and stakeholder suggestions for the annual focus.

Second, to understand the development of PSTs’ social justice orientations, we reviewed the final ePortfolios of the PSTs who had participated in all three years of the whole-institution social justice program. The PSTs submitted their final ePortfolios at the end of their student teaching semester. The ePortfolio’s included a resume, an educational philosophy, teaching artifacts, and an artifact to reflect the University’s mission, which states in part that “We encourage and model lifelong commitment to thinking critically, making ethical decisions, and pursuing social justice...” (Blinded for Review, 2023).

We purposively selected 23 ePortfolios from a pool of 45 ePortfolios. Each selected ePortfolio had at least one reflection on each year of the three years of the whole-institution social justice program. Of those 23 ePortfolios, we analyzed 12 to assess the impact of the initiative before determining that saturation had been reached (Fugard and Potts, 2015). Saturation was determined when we reached a “new and richly textured understanding of the experience” (Sandelowski, 1995, p. 183).

**Data analysis**

The formative data were aggregated by category (school governance, faculty-student learning community, University and community partners, and The Office of Clinical Experiences) and described below. For PSTs’ ePortfolios, we utilized qualitative content analysis to identify categories and subcategories that captured how social justice orientations were fostered by this initiative (Table 1) (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008). Content analysis was determined to be the appropriate method of analysis as this was novel research and our data set consisted of written text (Krippendorff, 2004). To determine if a preservice teacher’s educational philosophy evidenced a social justice mindset, we looked for keywords that reflected foci and/or aligned with verbiage in event reflections such as: equity, equality, access, barriers, and identity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connections between the focus and teaching practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrated growth over time</td>
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<tr>
<th>Subcategories</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of/understanding about connections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Naming specific action steps</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary of events</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deeper understanding and/or more complex analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Permeation into the educational philosophy artifact</td>
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**Table 1.** Categories and subcategories of the study

**Source(s):** Authors’ own creation
Findings

Understanding engagement within and across the components of the whole-institution approach

Our examination of the formative data showed a deepened engagement within and across the components of a whole-institution approach, however, representation, opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, and field experiences are areas that can be strengthened. Table 2 presents the key components of the whole-institution approach as they changed from year one (Y1), year two (Y2), to year three (Y3). Below we highlight the main pattern of engagement within and across the components of the whole-institution approach.

Shared governance. Governance representation on the Social Justice Committee expanded over the three years. It started with representation from only two departments in Y1 (pilot year) to school-wide (four departments) representation in Y3.

Faculty-student learning community. The number of events held increased from eight (Y1) to 18 (Y3) and included greater variety in event types and formats. Offerings included classroom-based events as well as extracurricular activities and University-wide events and, in Y2 and Y3, student and recent alumni-led events were added.

The engagement of faculty and administrators deepened over time. This change occurred during Y2 when a Qualtrics survey was sent to all full and part-time faculty, all students, both undergraduate and graduate, and all administrators, to invite them to identify key social justice topics and events for the year. The Committee grouped submissions by focus and shared options with stakeholders for a final vote. This process was repeated during Y3. Y2 was also when the Committee asked the Dean’s Office to send out a social justice statement and share a calendar of social justice events for each semester with the whole school.

University and community partners. The number of internal partners increased over time. At the start of Y2, the Committee looked across departments and programs in the School for opportunities to co-sponsor events or support relevant events that other groups were hosting. The Committee identified events that aligned with the focus and added them to the calendar. As the program expanded, the Committee sought opportunities to connect with other groups and initiatives across campus and in the local community.

The office of clinical experiences. While the Office of Clinical Experiences became involved in the initiative during Y2, due to its changing leadership and organizational structure, they focused most of their attention on managing field experiences for all PSTs and clinical experiences for other majors in the School. Finding new ways to more deeply engage the Office of Clinical Experiences stands to help facilitate stronger engagement with key stakeholder groups representing local schools and education-related organizations as part of the whole-institution approach.

Understanding the development of the PSTs’ social justice orientations

An analysis of PSTs ePortfolios (see Table 3) showed two ways that PSTs’ social justice orientations were fostered by this initiative. We found evidence of PSTs making connections between the focus and teaching practices, and we also saw PSTs demonstrate growth over time.

Evidence of connections between the focus and teaching practices. Data show that PSTs were able to reflect on high-impact events in meaningful ways. Responses ranged from demonstrating awareness and understanding to identifying specific classroom-based action-steps. Awareness and understanding (Table 3) were evidenced by acknowledgement of an issue or challenge faced by children, families, and/or communities. PSTs showed that they were thinking about how an event’s content could guide their approaches in the classroom. PSTs highlighted what they planned to be mindful of, indicating that they were able to make a connection between the focus and their teaching practices. We also saw PSTs specify the
Shared governance
- Y1. Teacher education/Special education representatives form social justice committee
  - met regularly
  - determined a focus: “Poverty and education”
- Y2. School-wide initiative began
  - increased representation with the office of clinical experiences
- Y3. School-wide initiative grew
  - increased representation with undergraduate/graduate students

Faculty-Student Learning Community
- Y1. “Poverty and Education” Focus
  - 8 events, one faculty-student co-led event
  - 100% PST participation (n = 172)
  - Faculty included a syllabus statement
- Y2. “Social and Emotional Wellness: Considering Access and Equity” Focus
  - 10 events, one alumni-led event
  - 100% PST participation (n = 120)
  - Faculty included a syllabus statement
  - Stakeholders provided ideas/feedback during focus development
- Y3. “Lifting the Mask of Institutional Bias: From Discussion to Disruption” Focus
  - 18 events, two student-led events
  - 100% PST participation (n = 125)
  - Faculty included a syllabus statement
  - Stakeholders provided ideas/feedback during focus development

University and Community Partners
- Y1. Alignment with outside partners began
  - Education Honor Society Symposium
  - University-sponsored events
- Y2. Alignment expanded
  - Faith–Justice Institute lecture series
  - School-wide “Interdisciplinary Doctorate of Education for Educational Leaders” Conference
  - University-wide “Day of Dialogue”
  - Invitation to community partners to facilitate events
- Y3. Alignments expanded further
  - Centers for Bioethics, Business Ethics, and Inclusion and Diversity
  - Community partners
  - Student organizations

Office of Clinical Experiences
- Y1. Joint decision to implement a PST ePortfolio requirement
- Y2. Representative from the Office of Clinical Experiences added
- Y3. First cohort completed ePortfolios

Formative Data Collection
- Y1. IRB approval received and data collection included
  - Committee meeting agendas and minutes
  - Calendar of events
  - Syllabi statements
  - PST event attendance (sign-in sheets)
  - Stakeholders’ ideas and feedback during focus development
  - ePortfolio reflections
- Y2. Data collection expanded to include
  - PST event attendance (Qualtrics survey)
  - Event feedback via open-ended questions on the attendance survey
- Y3. Data collection expanded to include
  - Educational philosophies

Table 2.
Key components and timeline of a whole-institution social justice program

Source(s): Authors’ own creation
### Table 3. Reflection excerpts demonstrating the spectrum of PST responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Excerpt</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflection excerpts demonstrating awareness and understanding responses</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Y1</td>
<td>Watching this film was an eye-opening experience. “Backpack Full of Cash” is a film that highlights the key differences between public schools and charter schools. It talked about the impact that children going to charter schools has on public schools and how the children left at public schools suffer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y2</td>
<td>In a year when everything is online, it may seem like we are continuously checking our phones or emails from work or school, which can be hazardous for our mental health. It is essential to set boundaries between these places. The presenters gave tips such as taking breaks when needed, meditating, exercising, and other things that may help me relax</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y3</td>
<td>It was interesting to see the contrast between the student teachers who had taught in lower-income schools and the teachers placed in affluent school districts. They faced different challenges and discussed issues facing education. This was an informative seminar where I could reflect on my own student teaching experience this semester</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Y1</td>
<td>All of his information . . . contributed to my growth and knowledge as an educator. The aspect that stuck out most to me was his explanation of how the education system tries to give a superficial fix to poverty and cultural diversity by doing things such as holiday parties or family potlucks. It is a step forward in the right direction, but it is not a fix to the problem</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y2</td>
<td>This was a safe place to explore aspects of the community and create a network of Allies. It showed the participants how to be a part of the change within discrimination and eliminate assumptions through being educated. After the training, I feel a lot more knowledgeable about the LGBTQ + community and that I am better equipped to be an ally</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y3</td>
<td>Students shared their experiences about immersing themselves with communities dealing with the immigration process. It was very moving to hear the student’s experiences and passion towards serving justice for the communities they were a part of. My biggest takeaway from this event was the importance of not giving in to assumptions and to treat people like the human beings that they are</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reflection excerpts demonstrating classroom-based action-step responses</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Y1</td>
<td>When I have my own classroom, I plan to keep non-perishable food items in my classroom in case I notice that a child is malnourished. Since students cannot reach their full academic potential if they are hungry, it is important for students to not have to worry about what they are going to eat for lunch or when they are going to eat next</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y2</td>
<td>As a teacher, it is important to make all students feel welcomed and respected and that is one idea that I will stand by as long as I am teaching. I will intentionally select activities to create connections with students and make them feel appreciated in and out of the classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y3</td>
<td>Black English is becoming more prevalent in today’s world and should be taught in the classroom along with standard English. I can incorporate Black English in the classroom by teaching students blending words and phonics sounds. It is important to include language that is used by African American students in the classroom especially if it is spoken in their homes</td>
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<td>4 Y1</td>
<td>As a future teacher, I will attend professional development. This will allow me to focus on teaching students to the best of my ability and not allow the business aspect of schooling, or what happens outside of the classroom, to overshadow the importance of high-quality teaching inside the classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y2</td>
<td>Some of these techniques that helped students cope with trauma were breathing exercises, self-journaling, art, and positive affirmations. I would use these visual tools in my classroom because they are important in creating a positive classroom community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y3</td>
<td>I will establish norms and routines [with students] in order to have difficult discussions about social justice topics that may cause some students to disagree with one another. Through my own reflection, I can remain nonpartisan and facilitate an authentic conversation where space is provided for student reflection</td>
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**Source(s):** Authors’ own creation
direct impact of event content on their future teaching practices. In these instances, they
detailed how the event would lead to an action step, marking a change in their approach to
teaching.

**Demonstrated growth over time.** Data show that PSTs’ social justice orientations evolved
over time (Table 4). Reflections on the Y1 focus, which marked PSTs’ sophomore year and the
first year of the initiative, were primarily summaries of events. In Y2 and Y3, we saw the
majority of reflections move past summaries and reactions, offering deeper understandings
and analyses of the event in relation to teaching practices. In Y2 reflections, we saw a pattern
of PSTs summarizing the events then sharing how event content might inform their own
approaches in the future. By Y3, reflections showed a deeper and more nuanced
understanding of how social justice concepts can be woven into professional teaching
practices.

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<th>Student</th>
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| 5       | Y1   | Backpack Full of Cash is a documentary that explores the growing privatization of public
         |      | schools and the resulting impact on America’s most vulnerable children. This documentary
         |      | was very interesting because the film was focused on exposing the world of corporate-
         |      | driven education reform where public education hangs in the balance |
| Y2      |      | Safe Zone training creates Allies with the skills, resources and information to be helpful and
         |      | supportive to our students. While attending this event, numerous different considerations
         |      | came to mind in order to create a dynamic with my students as well as so that I can use
         |      | knowledge and pedagogy focused around empowering and validating the lives of all of my
         |      | students |
| Y3      |      | The topic of awareness, social consciousness, inclusivity, and lived experience in education
         |      | becomes more and more prevalent as our society moves towards understanding identities
         |      | and privileges. Acknowledging where my students lie in their individual strengths and
         |      | areas of growth will help me maintain a learning environment that is grounded in seeing
         |      | themselves in their content |
| EP      |      | Every student in my classroom should see themselves in their education through their race,
         |      | gender, identity, and ethnicity. If the content doesn’t reflect the students, they will have a
         |      | harder time connecting and making connections to support their growth. These students
         |      | should feel as though they are in an environment where they are encouraged to be
         |      | themselves |

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<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Year</th>
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| 6       | Y1   | I still found this lecture on how to care for people who have been affected by traumatic life
         |      | experiences to be incredibly informative as it addressed different forms trauma can take on,
         |      | as well the various ways in which people deal with trauma. The speaker also made sure to
         |      | include many examples of prejudice members of diverse communities may encounter and
         |      | how that can contribute to trauma |
| Y2      |      | I spent a lot of time reflecting on the events that transpired this summer and how it sparked
         |      | nationwide outrage. I now understand the difference between performative activism versus
         |      | real activism, and how harmful performative activism is to the Black community. I also
         |      | understand how counterproductive the “black square” trend on Instagram was as it
         |      | actually blocked real information that people were putting on the platform from being
         |      | shared |
| Y3      |      | This event allowed me to reflect on what it means to be a teacher of students of color as a
         |      | white woman. As teachers of growing minds, it is crucial to teach students how to advocate
         |      | for themselves in ways that are nonviolent and effective. Teaching students how to use their
         |      | words to express wants and needs is a life skill |
| 5       | Y1   | While it is important for students to have an understanding of concepts, it is almost
         |      | impossible for them to succeed in an environment where they do not feel welcome. As an
         |      | educator of students, including those with special needs, it is a priority of mine that all
         |      | students feel welcome and included in our classroom, and recognize their differences not as
         |      | weaknesses, but as strengths |

*Source(s):* Authors’ own creation

**Table 4.** Reflection excerpts demonstrating growth over time, including permeation into the
educational philosophy
Interestingly, half of PSTs ($n = 6$) extended their growth trajectory even further, as shown in Table 4. This subset made direct reference to social justice, equity, or related themes in their educational philosophy artifacts. The educational philosophy artifact was a required component of the ePortfolio, however, referencing social justice concepts and/or related ideas was not.

Discussion and practical implications
We undertook a creative initiative to foster PSTs’ social justice orientations using the whole-institution approach as a guiding structure and formative data collection for the purposes of informing and refining the development of the program. We used formative data to understand the whole-institution approach social justice program in two ways: (1) To understand the engagement within and across the components of the whole-institution approach, and (2) To understand the development of the PSTs’ social justice orientations. Our findings showed a deepened engagement within and across the components of the whole-institution approach, and that social justice orientations can be fostered by blending teaching, learning, research, and University and community interaction (Bauer et al., 2021) and by integrating content, pedagogies, and outcomes across disciplines (Zaleniene and Pereira, 2021).

The program was initially developed as a systems-level change approach (Price et al., 2021; UNESCO, 2014) to social justice education for PSTs. As a system-level approach, the whole-institution approach includes components of shared governance that blends teaching, learning, research, and practice emphasizing active learning and interaction with the community (Bauer et al., 2021), the integration of content, pedagogies, and outcomes between disciplines (Zaleniene and Pereira, 2021), and the on-going monitoring and improvement of interdisciplinary program components, processes, and activities (Bopardikar et al., 2021; Mathar, 2016). Our formative data highlighted that while the whole-institution approach helped to break down “University silos” and deepen engagement within and across different components of the program, Committee representation, opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, and field experiences are areas that can be strengthened.

Our design and development of the whole-institution approach social justice program was aligned with high-impact learning practices recommended in the extant literature. Two recent meta-analyses highlighted the importance of linking experience in the field to discussions around social justice issues. Mills and Ballantyne (2016) found evidence of student growth fostered connections across courses, infused social justice into coursework, and included collaboration between PSTs, between teacher educators within courses or programs, or between teacher educators and PSTs. Jacobs and Perez (2023), recommended that teacher preparation programs desiring to improve social justice orientations facilitate theory to practice connections.

The ePortfolios offered a unique opportunity to view PST reflections across the span of three years and aligned well with the formative data collection phase of curriculum design. While we found all PSTs demonstrated an understanding of the connections between annual social justice foci and teaching practices, and some documented growth in social justice awareness over time, we also found that more clarity is needed around archiving and keeping social justice event reflections in the ePortfolio each year. PSTs who included social justice topics in their philosophies within the ePortfolio demonstrated evidence of the adoption of a social justice orientation, which was promising.

Next steps for sustained growth and anticipated challenges for the whole-institution approach
In light of the formative data collection and analysis, we foresee several ways to refine the development of the whole-institution approach social justice program and to increase the program’s overall impact. To do so, the Committee is invested in the following measures:
Faculty-student learning community. Engaging visiting faculty and part-time instructors is important. We plan to expand representation on the Social Justice Committee to include both stakeholders in order to generate greater awareness about the initiative. We recognize that one challenge will be the fact that many part-time instructors hold positions outside of the University and are not compensated for time spent outside of teaching responsibilities. To address this challenge, we can apply for internal and external professional development grants in support of faculty willing to engage with us in this work.

University and community partnerships. To ensure that additional high-impact practices, namely collaborative assignments/projects and service and community-based learning (Kuh, 2008), are being developed and utilized, we can increase interdisciplinary collaboration. We plan to hold two forums, at the start and the close of the academic year, to give those who sponsored, co-sponsored, and/or attended events the opportunity to discuss and share their experiences. We recognize that the logistics of organizing and scheduling a large event with diverse groups will be a challenge. We plan to identify a point person from each key stakeholder group (e.g. departments, programs, centers, College/Schools, etc.) to identify common times and preferred delivery methods (e.g. on campus, Zoom, off site) for the forums.

The Office of Clinical Experiences. Research identifies field experience as critical to developing social justice orientations (Lee et al., 2022). We would like to see PSTs reflecting on their experiences in the field in the context of the annual focus and, through coordinated coursework, to develop action-oriented strategies and solutions. Since the pandemic, the University has been working to re-establish partnerships with area schools. We plan to leverage our expertise (e.g. continuing education hours, professional developments, etc.) and offer non-financial resources (e.g. meeting spaces, University facilities, etc.) to support the efforts of this Office in the context of the initiative.

PST outcomes and growth. We have identified three new and/or expanded outcomes for PSTs. We would like all PSTs’ ePortfolios to incorporate reflections from every year of the program, we would like to see an increase in, and consistent evidence of, PSTs’ naming specific action steps in their event reflections, and we hope for more evidence of PSTs’ social justice orientations in the educational philosophy. While we can require PSTs to meet the first goal, we recognize that an increase in action steps and evidence of a social justice orientation in the educational philosophy may be challenges. To address these challenges, we can start by encouraging presenters to name action steps, as applicable, as part of their events.

Conclusions, limitations, and future research
This study adds to the existing literature by using the design process to refine the development of a whole-institution social justice education program for PSTs. By developing a program using a systems-level whole-institution approach, the social justice education program became interdisciplinary. Key components of the program included shared governance, the use of a faculty-student learning community to co-construct an annual focus, intentional and diverse high-impact practice offerings, and the collection of PST data for the purpose of understanding students’ transformations around social justice. Through an analysis of formative data, we developed a concrete plan for how we can continue to refine the development of the program and how we can assess and evaluate its impact going forward (Bopardikar et al., 2021).

The primary limitation of the study is that it focuses on one institution. These findings may not be representative of all institutions, even those similarly situated. However, given the localized nature of systems-level approaches, including whole-institution approaches, replication of the program across different types of institutions still stands to help accumulate evidence on the impact of this approach. An additional limitation is that elements of formative data collection (i.e. focus selection and attendance) were voluntary for
most participants. We also recognize that experiential learning is a powerful tool that can impact PSTs’ awareness, knowledge, and skills about social justice in education. This cohort had limited access to field experiences, a form of experiential learning, due to the pandemic. Future research should account for, and capitalize on, the impact of time spent in local classrooms.

References


Further reading


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