Click here to access these slides
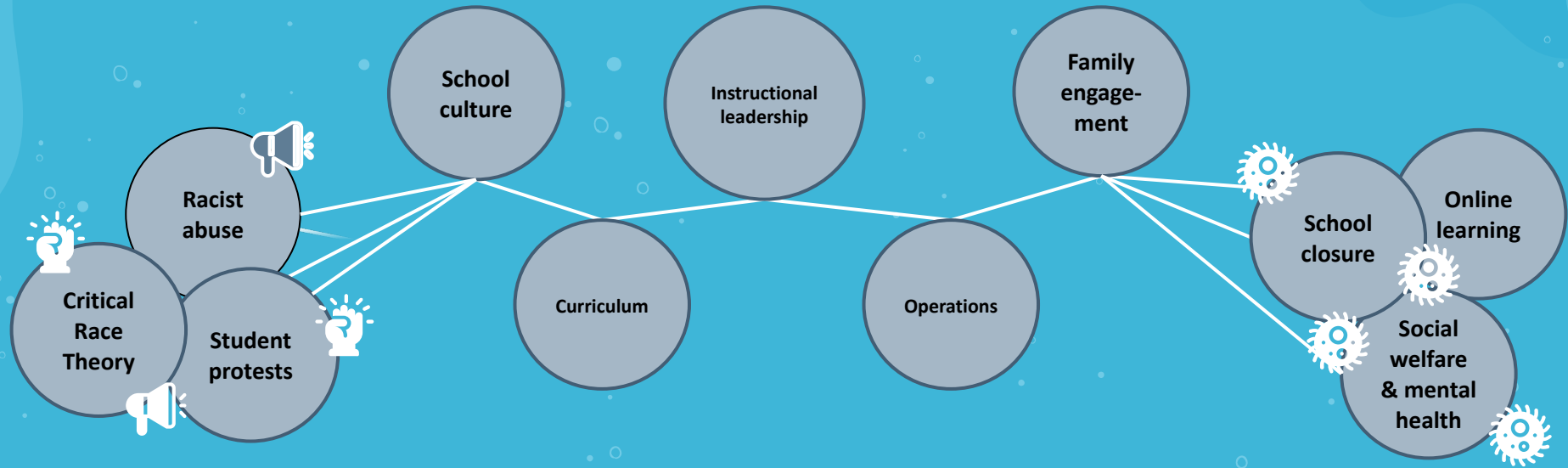
The Demands of Educational Leadership

The demands of school leadership are high in the best of times. The last few years – including the Covid pandemic and massive social movements against racism and police violence (including their backlash) – have strained even the most seasoned leaders.

The Demands of Leadership Preparation

The increasing demands on educational leaders have implications for leadership preparation programs.

To prepare and support leaders capable of managing schools and sustaining equitable systems, preparation programs must invest time and attention in leaders' capacities to tackle <u>adaptive challenges</u>.

(Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009)

Adult Development

Kegan (1982, 1994) theorized that adult development is characterized by an increasing ability to manage complexity.

Drago–Severson (2004, 2009) has documented these "ways of knowing" among school leaders.
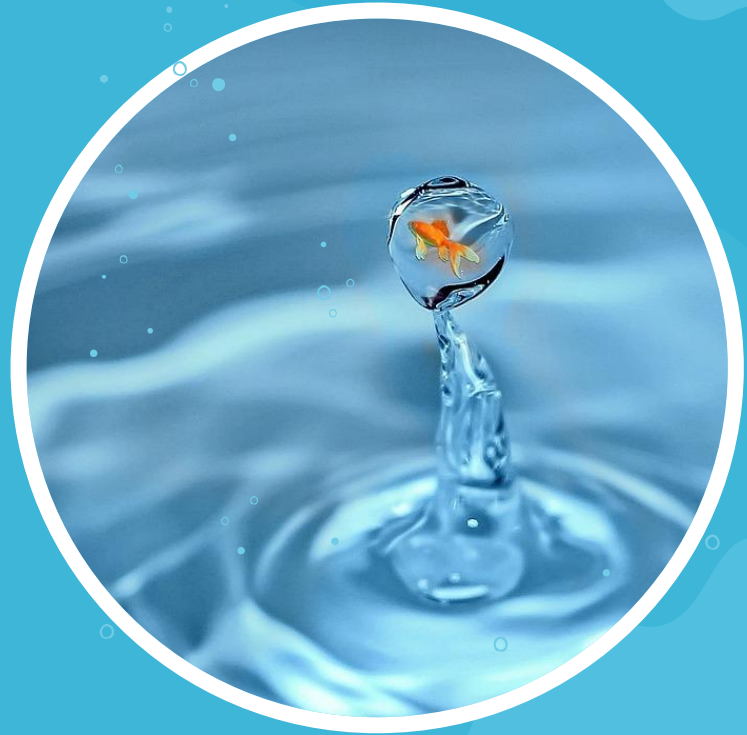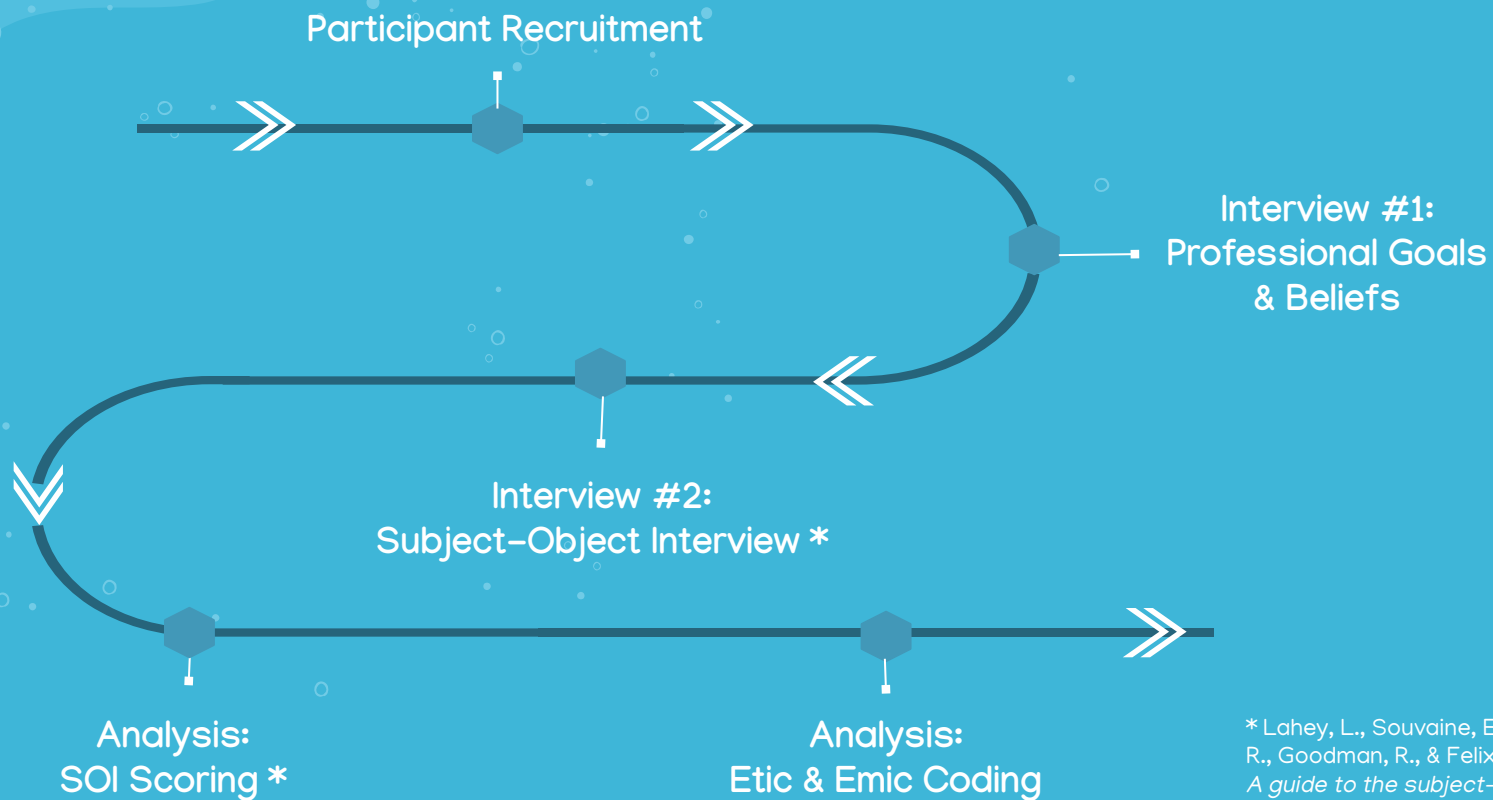
|	Sense of Self	Key Question	Relationships	Experiences of Support	Experiences of Challenge
Self–Transforming (5)	Incompleteness, continuous learning	"How can you help me grow?"	Can consider one's goals in context of broader societal goals; sees across & integrates many belief systems	Appreciates opportunities to challenge oneself, wrestle with & synthesize multiple competing notions	Committed to continual growth and sees conflict/opposition as opportunities for evolution
Self–Authoring (4)	Coherent value system	"Am I true to myself?"	Can consider other perspectives but still articulate one's own perspective and vision; Able to tolerate ambiguity	Appreciates chance to clarify and articulate own goals/vision, connect with others to clarify own goals	Feels discomfort when internal goals are challenged; competing commitments seen as challenging
Socializing (3)	Valued others	"Will you still like me?"	Can collaborate with others, with awareness of own and others' needs; able to prioritize group needs	Appreciates chance to learn with/from others; may not know what's "right" w/out consulting others	Feels discomfort with conflicting viewpoints; critique perceived as a threat to identity

Methods

Participant Recruitment

Interview #1:
Professional Goals
& Beliefs

Interview #2:
Subject–Object Interview *

Analysis:
SOI Scoring *

Analysis:
Etic & Emic Coding

*Lahey, L., Souvaine, E., Kegan,
R., Goodman, R., & Felix, S. (2011).
*A guide to the subject–object
interview: Its administration and
interpretation*. Minds at Work

Findings

Distribution of adult developmental stage (n=8)

Developmental stage (Kegan, 1994)

4(5)
4
4(3)
4/3
3/4
3(4)
3

0   1   2
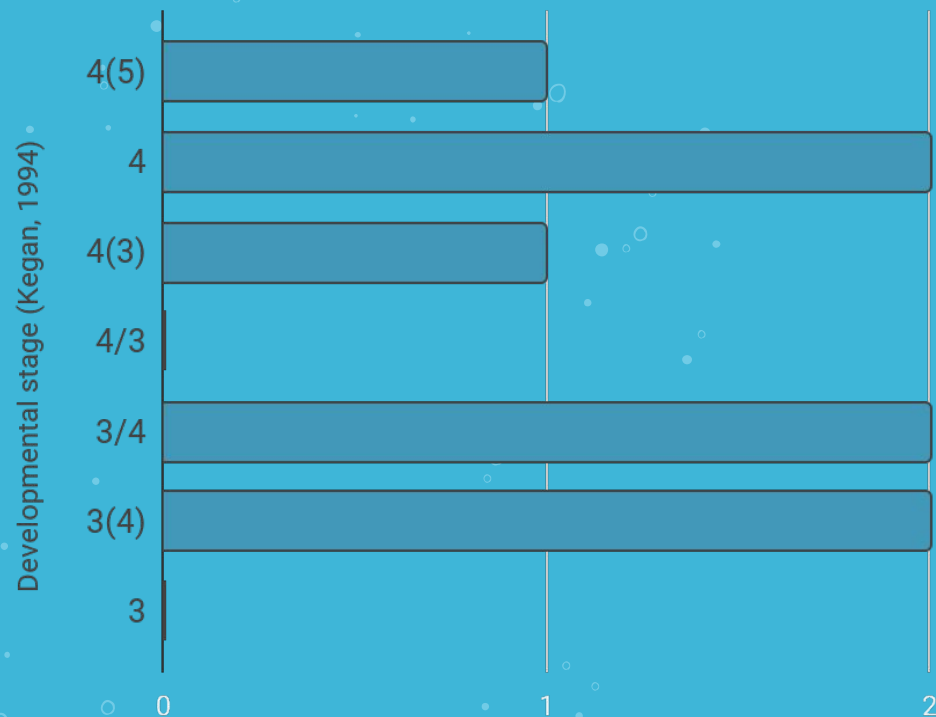
A Range of Developmental Capacities

Even though each participant completed the same program and were granted the same leadership credential, we found their developmental capacities spanned Kegan's ways of knowing

Findings

Even as participant responses fell across a range of adult development stages, the variety in the leadership skills and goals participants discussed in their professional interviews I represent key components of leadership work.

Though these different skills and stances are all key to leadership, a combination will serve leaders much more effectively than one set in isolation, pointing to the benefits of adult development across a program.

Framing Leadership

Participant 1
Stage 3(4)

"I'd say the beliefs are that leadership has too much on their plate. They are in the public eye, which we all knew. They have a lot to worry about, which we knew. The effort to create good PD is almost impossible... I feel very empathetic about [the] lack of time. I feel empathetic about the fact that <u>they are graded on the performance of students</u> without really recognizing how that student body has shifted and changed."

Participant 2
Stage 4(5)

"[The leadership program] has given me the power to ask the questions that I am asking. You know what I mean? It gave me the idea that leaders are human beings. <u>They make mistakes, and it's okay to make those mistakes</u>. We are not infallible. We are gonna have a lot of issues as leaders, and it's okay to do so."

Framing Leadership

Participant 3
Stage 3(4)

"I think the challenge will be there will be certain things I don't know how to do and being able to forgive myself for not knowing how to do them <u>because no one's ever showed me</u>."

Participant 4
Stage 4

"I look forward to tapping into what's already there. Having teachers lead meetings, that when they see a problem instead of me coming up with a way to fix it, let them figure out, and then come to me with ideas rather than me dictate, 'Oh, this is the way that we're gonna fix it,' <u>because they really have the expertise</u>. Tapping on teachers to help with the work."

Implications

For Theory, Practice, Policy, and Research

Theory: Nested Holding Environments

Instrumental

Socializing

Self-Authoring

Self-Transforming
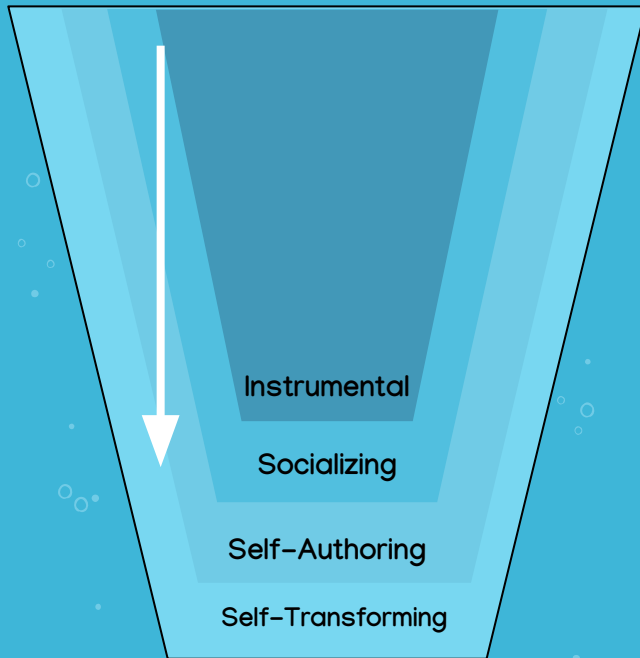
Individual development, over time, allows for greater capacity for complex thinking and increasing what can be held as object

Cohort/Group development, over time, requires "nested holding environments" to allow for simultaneous support/growth of all in the group

Self-Transforming

Self-Authoring

Socializing
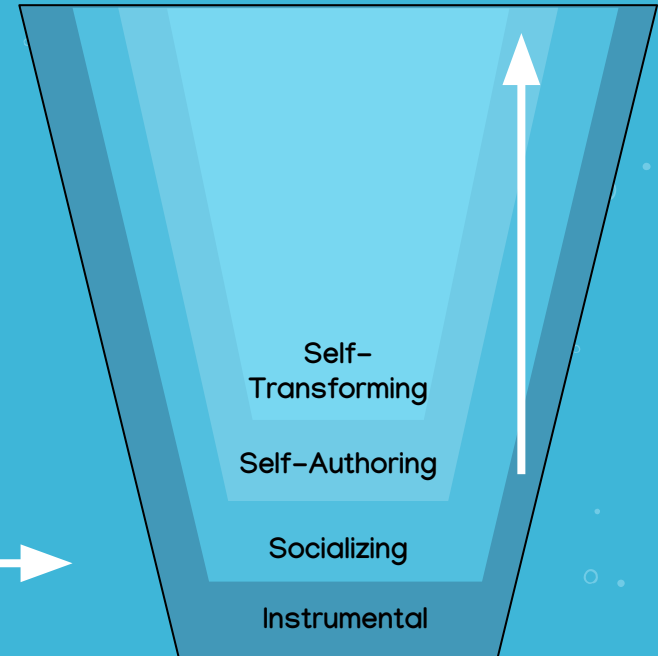
Instrumental

Practice:
Design of Leadership Programs

Program Features that Support Development

Supports

- Shared readings
- Reflective memos
- Technical leadership skills (working w/data, supervision, school budgets)

Socializing

Instrumental

"What causes people to develop? I would say, at a practical level, it is the experience of optimal conflict in the context of optimal support."

Kegan, 2003, p. 44

Nudges

- JEDI focus
- Chances to define leadership identity
- Chances to exercise agency in the field
- Questioning knowns

Self-Transforming

Self-Authoring

Cohort Based Nature

Policy: Revised (Self-Authoring/ Transforming) Standards for Leadership

2011 MA Standards	2021 Revised Standards
Managing Conflict. Employs strategies for responding to disagreement and dissent, constructively resolving conflict, and building consensus throughout a district/school community.	**Managing Conflict** a. Employs strategies when responding to disagreement and dissent that constructively resolve conflict and build consensus throughout the district/school community, while maintaining a commitment to decisions that are in the best interest of promoting racial equity and advancing student well-being b. Consistently examines and mitigates power inequities rooted in race and identity that may affect both parties in professional conflict c. Develops and nurtures a culture in which staff members continuously reflect on how their identities, biases, and practices can impact peer interactions

What capacities does this require? Minimally self-authoring?

Thanks

James Noonan, jnoonan@salemstate.edu

Jacy Ippolito, jippolito@salemstate.edu

Megin Charner-Laird, mcharnerlaird@salemstate.edu

Slides here