ABSTRACT

Christina Velasco, ESPACIO SANO: HOW SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATIONAL LEADERS CULTIVATE CARING AND SHARING (Under the direction of Dr. Matthew Militello). Department of Educational Leadership, May 2021.

Healthy equitable schools need healthy social justice leaders. The study is the story of how we innovated structures and pedagogies to better support educational leaders who actively work for equity, excellence, and social justice and experience work-related stress. We learned how to co-create a sane and safe space–*Espacio Sano*–for ourselves and others. The study included four women who are school and central office leaders. Meeting monthly over an 18-month period and engaging in *testimonios* (storytelling), together we learned and practiced self-care strategies as an Equity-Centered Professional Learning Community (EC-PLC). The EC-PLC members co-constructed meeting topics and used the community learning exchange philosophy, protocols, and methodology to practice self-care as an avenue to sustaining our commitment to social justice leadership practices. As EC-PLC members shared wellness strategies and co-generated *testimonios,* artifacts, and data, we learned that all educational leaders need an *Espacio Sano* (sane space), a particular professional space that disrupts normative professional development spaces in schools and districts. In an *Espacio Sano,* the women leaders could better engage in wholehearted leadership; through *brainheart*, using their heads and hearts, they explored and expressed emotions and affirmed and validated each other. A conceptual framework, *"MeWe*: *Self-care as Collective Care,"* illustrates the relationship between *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership. The findings have implications for educational leaders who seek a better way to maintain resiliency, sustainability, and leadership learning. As they practice self-care, they can better support the social justice outcomes we seek for children, youth, and families.

ESPACIO SANO: HOW SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

CULTIVATE CARING AND SHARING

A Dissertation

Presented to

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Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

by

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CULTIVATE CARING AND SHARING

by

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DEDICATION

Con todo mi cariño, a las mujeres fuertes de mi vida:

mi madre Arcelia Piña Velasco

mi querida compañera y esposa Regina França

mi amada hija Amanda

mis hermanas Franchesca, Gabrielle, Magdalena, y Leticia

mis tías, primas, sobrinas

mis estudiantes

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I want to start off by recognizing the indigenous ways of knowing and being I learned from my students, students' families, teachers, colleagues, professors, friends, and *mi familia*. I would like to acknowledge the equity-focused educational leaders who were Co-Practitioner Researchers in this study. Your *testimonios* helped me become a better listener and your fierce dedication to social justice for the students, families, and staff of San Francisco Unified School District inspires me. Thank you for the *Espacio Sano* we created to manage our work-related stress that replenishes us so we can carry on as equity warriors and bring others along with us. Together, we turned the *Me* into a *We,* the *MeWe: Self-care as Collective Care*.

To all my cohort two ECU colleagues: I have learned so much with each of you and I am forever changed because of our three-year learning and leadership journey together. Thank you for being critical friends because this helped push and pull out my best thinking and scholarship.

Lynda Tredway, you have been part of my life and learning journey for over a decade. I have a deep appreciation for your strong modeling of blending the canonical with the non-canonical. Thank you for teaching me to how to interconnect academic works such as Dewey (1938) or Freire (1970), with the arts. Moreover, your skilled facilitation of Community Learning Exchanges and Socratic seminars transformed my leadership and teaching practices forever. Gratitude for being my teacher, coach, mentor, friend, and a *mujer fuerte.*

Dr. Matt Militello, I am deeply thankful for your genius and vision in designing and facilitating this doctoral program at ECU. Your scholarship paired with playfulness created a gracious space to learn and grow. I am deeply thankful for your guidance and support throughout this program and PAR study. I am a better writer, activist researcher, and facilitator because of the CLE axioms and ways of knowing and doing I learned from you. *Mil gracias*!

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Caring for myself is not self-indulgence it is an act of self-preservation,
and that is an act of political warfare.

—*Audre Lorde*

If we want healthy, equitable schools we need healthy, equitable leaders. I begin this study with Audre Lorde's critical declaration that social justice work requires self-care. Equity-driven school leaders' actions help sustain a positive school climate, encourage school staff, and enrich teachers' practice, all vital for safeguarding student success. School leaders have a key role in retaining effective teachers and ensuring their success in the classroom. Leaders can have a significant impact on students' experiences and accomplishments (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Robinson et al., 2008), but principal work requires a full commitment in service of students, families, and communities. And when school leaders are laser- focused on issues of equity, the work can become acutely difficult. Without a commensurate commitment to self-care, school leaders' commitments to achieving equity becomes impossible.

Because principals are *encargados* (responsible) for carrying the heavy complexities of leading a school (Sosa-Provencio, 2017), the role of the school leader can be lonely and stressful. Early in the morning or late into the evening, a school principal is often alone in the building completing documentation or preparing for the next day; they are, in the end, held accountable locally (to parents), organizationally (to the superintendent), and institutionally (to teachers). This stress can lead to turnover and burnout and poor equity outcomes for students. For principals (like me) whose students came from historically vulnerable communities, combating systemic oppression and unpacking implicit bias with individuals in our schools, a ten-hour day, takes a toll on the mind, body, and soul. Educational leaders who actively work for equity,

excellence, and social justice experience work-related stress and require spaces and strategies to support themselves and others. Self-care is necessary for equity leaders and equitable schools.

In this chapter and throughout the entire dissertation, I intermingle the two terms principal and school leader. I use the term educational leaders when referring to central office and school site leaders. I begin with the context of the issue: how principal stress leads to turnover and often burnout, how women of color are acutely impacted, and how spaces for self-care are essential. I introduce the focus of practice (FoP) aimed at these issues, discuss an overview of the challenges and assets associated with the FoP, share the significance of the FoP, provide the frameworks that guided the work, outline shared improvement goals, and discuss the theory of action. I provide an overview of the Participatory Action Research (PAR) project, including the assets and limitations of the Co-Practitioner Researchers (CPR) who I refer to as the Equity Centered-Professional Learning Community (EC-PLC) members throughout the dissertation. I conclude with an outline of the four elements of PAR: the overarching research question, aim statement, theory of action, and purpose statement. I discuss the PAR action research design in detail in Chapter 4 (Methodology). Chapter 2 reviews the extant literature, Chapter 3 portrays the context of study, and Chapter 4 provides the research design. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 document each of the PAR cycles, and Chapter 8 provides the key findings and implications for practice, policy, and research.

Context of the Issue

Principal turnover is disruptive and can lead to losses in learning for students (Béteille, et al., 2012; Levin & Bradley, 2019). In San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), the district where the study takes place, the rate of educator attrition is seven percent. Nationally, around eight percent of teachers leave the profession every year (Carver-Thomas & Darling

Hammond, 2017). The principal attrition rate is much higher. On average, 27% of principals leave their schools yearly. According to a 2014 report published by the School Leaders Network, California ranked 4th lowest for principal retention. In 2018, SFUSD had a 24% principal turnover rate, the highest in the preceding three years.

Studies on principal burnout have examined how structures and supports can help retain principals (Beausaert et al., 2016; Combs et al., 2009; DeMatthews et al., 2019; Levin & Bradley, 2019; Wells & Klocko, 2018). Although emerging studies focus on principal burnout, there is limited research about how principals attend to self-care. Specifically, there is scant research on how systems and structures support educational leaders' stamina to stay in the equity work of social justice leadership.

Many educational leaders face systemic barriers and are often silenced and unsupported in organizations. This is particularly true of women of color. According to the U.S. Department of Education, 72% of all K-12 educators in this country are women. For women of color, identities as women intersect with ethic of care as integral elements of leadership, amplifying the systemic barriers (Aguilar, 2018; Ah Nee-Benham & Cooper, 1998; Furman, 2012; Theoharis, 2009). These characteristics of women of color in educational leadership are critical to understand so that we may better support professional development and self-care in social justice educational leadership. Women educational leaders are the specific group of the study.

Supporting and sustaining principal professional practice while helping them attend to their self-care is fundamental to student success as well as to teacher and principal retention (Levine & Bradley, 2019). Providing proper supports to mitigate the harmful effects of stress is part of a holistic approach to educational leaders' personal and professional well-being (Mahfouz & Gordon, 2020; Mahfouz & Richardson, 2020). I explore the various assets and challenges

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associated with self-care for educational leaders and articulate these assets and challenges at three levels: the macro, the meso, and the micro, which is the action space for this project.

Starting from Strengths: Focus of Practice

The focus of practice (FoP) of this study was asset-driven and examined *the individual and collaborative formal and informal structures, systems, and supports to help manage work-related stress in order to fortify and sustain the work of equity, excellence, and social justice.* We used the Community Learning Exchange (CLE) axioms and pedagogies that emphasize gracious space and the collective process of putting the power into the hands of the people most impacted (Guajardo et al., 2016). Operating from this stance, I believed that educational leaders were capable of attending to self-care and discovering the answers to our concerns of managing work-related stress while actively working for equity, excellence, and social justice. In the participatory action research (PAR) as the lead researcher with four participants, women educational leaders, we worked together to understand the problem of work-related stress and how to address it so that we could be healthier and stronger leaders. In the PAR, I acted as both the researcher and a participant. We established a new place and process for reform efforts that are mindful, equity driven, research-driven, data-driven, and inclusive of the diverse voices of the SFUSD community. We focused on attending to our self-care and subscribed to this mantra: "We cultivate our resilience and become stronger so that we can help others become stronger; we cultivate our resilience so that we have energy to heal and transform the world" (Aguilar, 2018, p. 19).

Challenges and Assets

Specific challenges and assets affected how educational leaders attend to work-related stress. Understanding these challenges and assets are yin and yang; they can both impede and

fortify educational leaders and others in the work of equity, excellence, and social justice leadership. The main challenge was the growing number of job responsibilities for educational leaders. The main asset: principals are key levers in school reform. Understanding the challenges and assets at macro, meso, and micro levels provided a comprehensive perspective on the issues and better informed the FoP so we could identify root causes.

Bryk et al. (2015) affirms that "solutionitis" reforms often overlook root causes. In an effort to be more user-centered, this project used "engaging insights from the job floor [because they] can break the susceptibility to solutionitis and the prevailing one-size-fits-all approach to education reform" (Bryk et al., 2015, p. 33). I recruited four women leaders, colleagues from my school district, San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), to engage in the root cause analysis. The women represented diverse roles and experiences (school principals, a leadership coach, and an assistant superintendent) and provided multiple perspectives and knowledge. Together, we explored the various assets and challenges surrounding self-care for educational leaders. Figure 1 illustrates the initial fishbone analysis of assets and challenges of educational leaders' self-care, which we enhanced in the first cycle of inquiry. I start with the larger context at the macro level (U.S. educational system), then move into the meso level (SFUSD) and conclude at the micro level (the diverse group of women educational leaders).

Macro Level

The roles and responsibilities of a school principal include attributes that both challenge and add value to the work. The principal is increasingly viewed by the public as a manager, consistent with a business model. The role is often oversimplified by assuming that time management will provide solutions to the complexity of leading a school (Superville, 2018). In addition, the use of business models to reform school policy and practices have become more

MACRO   MESO   MICRO

Mental health   Flexibles schedules

Principal as key lever   Sabbaticals

                                Participants desire to
                                attend to self-care

Grants

Principal as equity warrior   PD for principals   FoP

Assets   Coaching for   Diverse leader voice   Understanding the
                                principals   formal and informal
                                                                                  structures, systems and
                                                                                  supports educational
                                                                                  leaders use to help
                                                                                  manage work-related
                                                                                  stress in order to fortify
Challenges   Principal preparation   and sustain themselves
              programs   Limited spaces   and others in the work
                                                                                  of equity, excellence,
                                                                                  and social justice
                                                                                  leadership.
                                           Contrived
                                           community
                                           building
              Principal as managers
                                Job demands   Only women
              Principals increased job
              responsibilities   Accountability policies   Additional
                                                             demands for
                                                             PreK & H. S.
                                                             principals   Scheduling conflicts
              Social political climate   Organizational
                                          policies &
                                          structures

Figure 1. Fishbone diagram of the macro, meso, and micro assets and challenges.

prevalent. Moreover, the complexity of the role of school leadership is weighed down by current social-political issues. As Labaree (2003) notes, "American society asks its system of education to take responsibility for remediating all of these social problems, and for the most part educators have been eager to assume the burden" (p. 447). Educators attend to more than just teaching content in schools. Teachers and educational leaders have to engage in social issues such as mental health, safety, and homelessness. Systemically, vulnerable schools are overwhelmed by supporting an increasing number of second language learners and students with trauma and chronic stress. Pre- and in-service professional development need to address how educators deal with the social issues that impact our school children. Furthermore, most principal preparation programs overlook the importance of principal wellness and vitality in the design of their programs (Furman, 2012).

The job of a principal is daunting to be sure; however, the principal has great impact on teaching and learning. The principal role, albeit large and extensive, holds a promising hope for those seeking equity because school leaders are key levers in affecting change in their communities (Bryk et al., 2010). Principals can be equity warriors for communities, especially in our current social-political climate (Rigby & Tredway, 2015). This larger context is important to understand, as it affects the meso and micro contexts of this study.

Meso Level

San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) is the meso context and has both challenges and assets. Organizational structures and policies unwittingly challenge the goal of principal wellness. The job of the principal has overwhelming demands (see Table 1). Principals must attend to many systems and operational tasks—often compliance- driven—that require

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Table 1

SFUSD Principal Job Description

Principal Understands	Principal Job Description
- Principles of child, early adolescent, and education psychology; - California Core Curriculum and Content Standards and 21st century curriculum; - Equity-centered professional learning communities; - Culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy; - Assets/Strength-based models of education through behavioral and academic Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI2) approaches; - Restorative justice/practices models to ensure and exchange student/staff well-being and safety	- Knowledge of San Francisco's urban public schools and a passionate belief in SFUSD's commitment to instructional leadership as a lever toward delivering on the SFUSD Graduate Profile; - Experience facilitating the development and implementation of the site's balanced scorecard that is aligned with the district's strategic plan; - A proven record of creating conditions for teacher effectiveness, student success, and strong homeschool partnerships; - Experience ensuring that all students receive a 21st century education that is academically rigorous, personalized, relevant, and engage while building a safe and supportive school culture. - Ability to implement the California Standards of the Teaching Profession (CSTPs) to provide formative and summative performance assessments of staff; - Ability to lead professional development and influence and motivate staff to improve their practice; - Proficiency with data and technology to inform decision and prepare a variety of reports (including student attendance,

Table 1 (continued)

Principal Understands	Principal Job Description
	• progress reports, work orders, budgets, general accounting, safety plans, surveys, etc.); • A proven record of preserving when working across multiple functions and roles within a complex organization to achieve goals; • Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to build positive working relationships with senior level district staff, colleagues, parents and community; • Strong computer skills including Google Suite and Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint)

extensive amounts of time. In addition, principals often add their own tasks and actions to the many already listed in job descriptions, such as arriving a few hours before the workday to open the school's food bank, working late or on Saturdays to support their school's sports teams, or creating and attending fundraisers to support the school's parent/teacher organization. Bureaucracies and policies stymie workflow and often cause additional stress for administrators. Principals leave their profession due to the immense list of job tasks and the inability to complete those tasks on time (Daloisio, 2017). Large organizations tend to operate in silos. The need for efficiency and reliability leads to this. SFUSD is no exception. Structurally, administrators have limited formal spaces for seeking out the support of colleagues and supervisors.

Principals meet once a month in cohorts with other principals from their respective divisions. These monthly cohort meetings are frequently filled with compliance demands, and this limits the time to collaborate with colleagues. In addition, citywide monthly administrative meetings for the entire school district are organized and facilitated by central office colleagues. The focus is on operational and managerial tasks and on our district's strategic plan. Often, citywide meetings feel disconnected and far removed from the daily work lives of school leaders. At these meetings, there are limited opportunities to build relationships. In addition, there are limited formal structures of support in place for site leaders to lean on each other to understand and complete district initiatives. Often, school leaders need to spend time outside of these meetings to complete these tasks. Furthermore, principals who are co-located, meaning that they are also managing the Pre-K programs at their schools, are tasked with even more managerial and bureaucratic duties.

SFUSD has assets and structures that support new principals' professional development. In 2018, SFUSD launched a formal system and structure to support new school leaders:

Transformative Leadership for Equity and Excellence (TLEE). It is a three-year, multi-layered support system that begins with a three-day retreat focused on community building and understanding the systems and operations of a school. Each new principal has a leadership coach, and the group meets monthly for professional development. In addition, all principals have a choice in selecting the professional development they want to engage in during the citywide monthly meetings. SFUSD provides grant opportunities for a principal to engage in professional learning communities. It offers a paid sabbatical for principals and provides mental health benefits. Principals also network with each other at monthly cohort meetings. In a district that contends with numerous state and federal pressures, there are many structures and systems in place within SFUSD that support or could support school leaders.

Micro Level

Finally, the micro level is central to this study as the work is about people; this level provides the most actionable space. Together, we named the challenges and assets in the fishbone (Figure 1). The primary challenge and asset was addressing the diverse needs of the multifaceted group composed of women educational leaders from various schools, departments, and roles. A challenge was scheduling our meetings so that all members could attend. Members of the group hold varying positions in the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), which at times impacted their freedom to fully express themselves. In addition, the group consisted of only women educational leaders, which may be viewed as limiting the study. However, as an intentional design feature, having only women leaders provided a laser focus and a unique affinity and gracious space to engage in and share ideas across roles in an Equity Centered-Professional learning Community (EC-PLC) on self-care. The EC-PLC group

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constituted the Co-Practitioner Researcher (CPR) team of the study and will be referred to as EC-PLC members in the study.

The EC-PLC provided diverse perspectives and voices of school leadership from their varying roles, an asset we identified. Chapter 3 provides contextual details about the people and places in the study. Secondly, the women in the group were interested in attending to self-care. Together, we created a new structure and new place, an *Espacio Sano* (sane space), for our group to meet and attend to self-care. An additional asset was the flexibility; central office colleagues and site principals had more autonomy over their work schedules than classroom teachers. Thus, at this micro level, filled with assets, we had the potential to engage in a change effort.

Rationale for Focus of Practice (FoP)

Historically vulnerable communities need equity-driven educational leaders. Levine and Bradley (2019) affirm that "the relationship between principal turnover and declines in student outcomes is stronger in high-poverty, low-achieving schools—the schools in which students most rely on education for their future success" (p. 3). Educational leaders work tirelessly, often at the expense of their well-being and health. Equity-driven school leaders are often unsupported and/or ill prepared to remedy the urgent and complex issues they encounter daily. In addition, high-stakes accountability policies, poor working conditions, and a lack of decision-making authority all contribute to principals leaving their jobs (Levine & Bradley, 2019). If we want to stabilize schools that serve historically vulnerable communities, we need healthy educational leaders to be supported so they may be fortified to engage in this equity work. Principals and district educational leaders are uniquely situated in their roles and responsibilities to have influence on local school reform efforts. My principal experience provided a leverage point for working with a committed group of district women educational leaders. I felt comfortable

facilitating an EC-PLC in an Espacio Sano (sane space) and utilizing the CLE axiom of honoring the wisdom of the people and the power of place (Guajardo et al., 2016). These principles allowed our group to understand the aim of the study: to *examine the extent social justice focused educational leaders support their individual and collective abilities to manage work-related stress.*

Framework for the Focus of Practice

As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands, one for helping yourself, the other for helping others.
—*Maya Angelou*

This FoP began at the micro level. I engaged with the Equity Centered-Professional Learning Community (EC-PLC) on self-care to further examine the FoP. We built the EC-PLC on a socio-cultural framework and anchored it in the core value of equity. Figure 2 expresses the elements of each structural frame that informed this study. Through this process the EC-PLC reimagined third space as understood by Hulme et al. (2009) to be a learning, knowledge creation, and dialogical space, and we intended to use it in the PAR as a new way of being and doing professional learning. In this space, we tested out strategies and processes that provided insight into how principals and district leaders use supports, structures, and resources to attend to self-care to sustain their stamina to do the work of equity and excellence in schools. And within the study, there were political, economic, psychological, and philosophical implications for our design and how we worked.

The political, economic, psychological, and philosophical meta-frameworks provided multiple lenses to situate the FoP. Although the action research project sits at the micro level, it is held in a larger global context of school reform. The fishbone illustrates the challenges and assets that emerged through my analysis of the focus of practice (see Figure 1). This illustration

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Psychological
- Stereotypes and implicit bias are common especially for women of color in leadership
- *Espacio Sano (sane space)* allows women leaders a dialogical space to speak without filters

Philosophical
- Non-White/White as well as gender male/female leadership
- The over-efforting of women leaders in male dominated district leadership cabinet
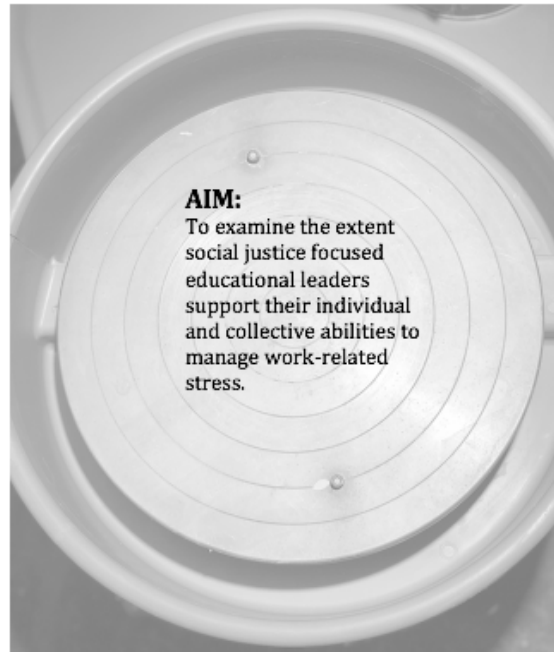
AIM:
To examine the extent social justice focused educational leaders support their individual and collective abilities to manage work-related stress.

Political
- The work of school leaders is burning out the human capital, that is a key driver in school reform
- Principalship radically reengineered

Economic
- Economic benefits of retaining and supporting school principals
- Educationalization of social problems creates a heavier load of work for site leaders to manage
- Title I school, hard to staff schools examples of place that are ripe for chronic stress and vicarious trauma

Socio-cultural
- Differences between constituents groups
- Providing diverse perspective by creating an *Espacio Sano* in a EC-PLC
- A dialogical method to attend to FoP collective self-care so that we can attend to our individual and collective self-care so that we can sustain our equity and excellence in schools

Figure 2. Frameworks impacting the focus of practice.

incorporates the conversations from the EC-PLC and constituents from the Community Learning Exchange (CLE). Current social-political, district, and group level structures, policies, and supports were concurrently assets and challenges in providing principals and district leaders the support need to help deal with work-related stress and sustain their stamina to do the work of equity and excellence in schools. As we engaged this participatory action research project, these meta-frames and questions were important.

- **Social-cultural**: How do gender and culture play roles in how leaders take care of themselves? Does an *Espacio Sano,* a resilient ecology, and EC-PLC provide gracious space for school leaders to attend to their self-care so that we can sustain our equity and excellence in schools?

- **Psychological**: How do gender stereotypes and implicit biases affect school leaders' decisions to attend to self-care? What elements need to be in place so school leaders feel safe to have an unfiltered dialogue about stress elements in the workplace?

- **Philosophical**: How do race and gender intersect in the issues of taking care of self? Do women leaders in central office positions overexert themselves in a male-dominated district leadership cabinet?

- **Political**: How is the work of school leaders burning out the human capital that is a key driver in school reform? How can professional learning for educational leaders be radically re-engineered so that self-care is an essential leadership dimension?

- **Economic**: What are the economic benefits of retaining and supporting school principals? How does educationalization of social problems create heavier loads of work for site leaders? What additional impacts does a Title I school leader have to manage?

I anchored the participatory action research (PAR) to equity and worked from the micro context. I utilized the social-cultural framework and incorporated the multiple frameworks and attended to the questions that arose in the project. This approach further clarified not only the intent of this project, but also its importance.

Significance and Implications

In addressing the focus of practice, I examined individual and collective self-care in terms of equity and excellence. Kantor and Lowe (2016) note that the on-the-ground work of school leaders is burning out the key human resource capital for school reform work, the principals, and, politically, the districts are placing more and more responsibilities and accountability demands on site principals and provide partial professional spaces to get at root causes, collaborate, and attend to the self-care. Then, I make the case that the macro policy analysis inadequately addresses the work-life balance issue of any principal. I argue that the micro level is the place where we have the potential to have a larger effect on a macro level. The implications of this project and study strike at supporting leaders at all three levels of the fishbone: they provide educational leaders strategies and structures to attend to their self-care and be resilient, they provide central office leadership new ways to restructure professional development and leadership support, and they impact the education profession by providing a new framework and possible policies to ensure that principal preparation programs provide specific training and accountability measures with appropriate training and systems to sustain them in this profession. As a result, this PAR is both timely and necessary.

This participatory action research (PAR) has the potential to inform future research on the role of the principalship in school reform efforts. Through our research, we provided insight into the formal and informal structures, strategies, and tools principals use to attend to self-care

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so that they remain engaged in the work. In addition, school districts and principal preparation programs could use our study results for professional development, tools, and structures. These would be useful at the district level and site level so principals thrive in the workplace. Furthermore, this study provides school leaders (principals and assistant superintendents) information on elements they may consider in site-based professional development so their constituents can tend to their wellness. Most importantly, this study provides insights for school leaders and the district leaders who support them, insights on how principals can attend to self-care so that they remain in the important work of equity and excellence in schools. What follows is a clear statement of what research questions about the self-care of leaders we considered in the study.

Research: Purpose, Questions, Theory, AIM, and Design

The PAR project was an exploratory journey that I engaged in with other women leaders. Together, we desired better ways to do this work. We wanted to create a sane space, a space that could support us individually and collectively. In this section, I describe the purpose of the study, the overarching research question and PAR sub-questions, the theory of action, and design of the project.

Research Purpose Statement

The purpose of this participatory action research (PAR) was to engage in iterative cycles of inquiry to increase school leaders' (principal and district office) individual and collective abilities to use self-care strategies by facilitating an EC-PLC on self-care in which we collaboratively learn from each other on how to deepen relationship, share our *testimonios* (storytelling), and employ self-care strategies. The work of school leaders is relentless and requires a full-time commitment of the mind, body, and soul in service of students, families, and

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communities. Despite the necessary services leaders provide, it is commonly understood that the principalship is a lonely and highly stressful role and can ultimately lead to burnout. This is further exacerbated when the focus is on issues of equity. Through this work, we better attended to work-related stress so that we could fortify and sustain each other in doing the work of equity, excellence, and social justice leadership. The core normative values of SFUSD were useful -- student-centered, fearless, united, social justice, and diversity-driven – and we reflected those values in this project. However, enacting these espoused values required another level of commitment, which is why I partnered with school leaders to attend to work-related stress so that we could be reinvigorated to engage in the work of equity and be able to share that with other leaders and our district. In order to achieve this, I helped create a systemic method to facilitate a monthly EC-PLC on self-care and exchange ideas and practices and co-facilitated a Community Learning Exchange (CLE) focused on self-care.

We were quite clear that the work of school reform must occur from the ground up, beginning with those closest to the problem. In this case, the EC-PLC group consisted of educational leaders (two principals, a leadership coach, and an assistant superintendent). They participated and provided input on co-planning one Community Learning Exchange (CLE) event. Chapter 4 provides specifics and details for the research design, all activities, and the data collection. Together, we crafted the topics for our meetings and shared self-care strategies with each other. Through these exchanges and processes, we co-created an *Espacio Sano* (sane space), a professional learning space, so that we could better attend to our work of equity and excellence in schools. Figure 1 illustrates the process by which the EC-PLC aimed to meet the goal of increasing educational leaders' ability to use self-care tools and strategies to better attend to work-related stress. Next, I define self-care for this study and identify the research questions.

Research Questions

In this project, I define self-care as *the practice of taking an active role in the self-preservation of one's values, well-being, and happiness, particularly under stressful working conditions.* An overarching question guides this project, rooted in the self-care of school and district leaders: To what extent do social justice focused educational leaders support their individual and collective abilities to manage work-related stress? To answer this question, a smaller, more refined, and measurable set of sub-questions guided this study:

1. What formal and informal structures, systems, and supports do educational leaders use to help them when they are dealing with work stress?

2. What leadership actions can educational leaders use to create working environments and conditions for their colleagues to attend to self-care?

3. To what extent do we transfer these learned skills, structures, and systems into district offices and other schools?

4. How do I transform my own perspectives and practices as a school leader?

Chapter 4 provides the specific research design to collect and analyze data for each of these questions. Next, I provide a brief overview of the theory of action and describe how we engaged in the PAR. The specific design of the PAR is further elucidated in Chapter 4.

Research Theory of Action

My ontology as a female school leader and activist researcher and my investigation of the extant literature on women in leadership helped me identify the needs of women school leaders. The tensions of being a social justice leader and predicaments for feminist leadership (Ah Nee-Benham & Cooper, 1998; Bass, 2012; Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984; Sosa-Provencio, 2017) led me to this theory of action. The theory of action is: *__If__* we engage in iterative cycles of inquiry

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in an Equity Centered-Professional Learning Communities (EC-PLC) to increase educational

leaders' individual and collective abilities to better attend to work-related stress by deepening

relationships in an *Espacio Sano* (sane space), utilizing *testimonios* (storytelling), and learning

and practicing self-care strategies, ***then*** school leaders can fortify and sustain their work of

equity, excellence, and social justice leadership. The theory of action needed to be tested. The

research aim and driver diagram situate the PAR.

Research Aim and Driver Diagram

The aim of this study was to *examine the extent social justice focused educational leaders*

support their individual and collective abilities to manage work-related stress. Many assets were

in place that provided an opportunity to work on the goal. For educational leaders to attend to

self-care in service of equity and excellence in school, we focused on primary and secondary

drivers illustrated in Figure 3. We created the driver diagram by tuning in to the people closest to

the problem, going to the source, and digging into root causes and assets (Bryk et al., 2010; Bryk

et al., 2015; Guajardo et al., 2016). The PAR primary drivers were: (a) Equity Centered-

Professional Learning Community of principals, coaches, assistant superintendents, and I; (b) the

Community Learning Exchange (CLE) pedagogies (c) self-care strategies and tools; (d) me as

the primary co-researcher. I thought the primary drivers would influence the PAR more than the

secondary drivers because we were closest to the issue. The secondary drivers were structures or

people who had the potential for some effect on the project: (a) other district leadership, (b) other

district resources such as school nurses, nutrition, and social workers, and (c) external

community resources that may include mental health consultants, experts on vicarious trauma,

and resources (e.g., Niroga Institute and *Onward* book) to respond to the research questions, we

PRIMARY DRIVERS
People and Process

SECONDARY DRIVERS
People and Process

The aim of the PAR is:
to examine the extent social justice focused educational leaders support their individual and collective abilities to manage work-related stress.

The goal is measured by the evidence collected, shared, and analyzed with the EC-PLC group throughout the project; over two academic years
(2019-2020 & 2020-2021).

Educational Leaders EC-PLC members will:
- Co-generate a collaborative learning space
- Engage self-care and mindfulness practices
- Engage in *testimonios* (storytelling)
- Establish monthly commitments on self-care and reflect on their self-care practices and leadership

Learning Exchange Pedagogies
Journey Lines/Circle/Storytelling
- Mesh with values and core beliefs
- Value the wisdom of place and people closest to the work
- Use *testimonios* (storytelling) as primary evidence and change tool
- Act as ongoing processes for reflection and growth

Self-Care Strategies & Tools
- Dynamic Mindfulness
- Essential oils
- Resilience resources

Activist Researcher/Leadership-me
- Acts in a dual role: facilitator and participant with an emphasis on participating with members of the EC-PLC.
- Is the lead researcher, and engages the EC-PLC in analyzing evidence
- Provides opportunities to support school leaders in agenda design and self-care strategies leaders may use at work with their constituents.

Other District leadership support the aim by:
- Discussing how to incorporate self-care strategies and resources into site meetings or at other administrative meetings

Other District resources support the aim by:
- Use of school health programs
- School social worker's expertise

External Community Resources:
- Mental health consultants
- Experts on trauma informed schools
- ECU coaches
- Niroga Institute
- *Onward* Workbook Resources
- Podcast, poetry, music, art

Figure 3. Primary and secondary drivers that influenced the action research.

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collected, shared, and analyzed evidence from and with the EC-PLC group throughout the project.

Research Design Overview

This action research project involved three cycles of iterative participatory action research or PAR (see Figure 4). I utilized a key element of the improvement science principles -- a network improvement community. In this project, we used the knowledge and wisdom that resided in the diverse women leaders to share strategies across roles and differences that helped us attend to self-care (Bryk, et al., 2015; Guajardo et al., 2016). We focused the first cycle on initiating the EC-PLC and bringing together the EC-PLC group, while, in the second and third cycles, we collected data and captured lessons learned from the previous cycles. A detailed account of the research design and methodology is in Chapter 4.

PAR Cycle One: Fall 2019

In the first PAR cycle, we established the EC-PLC group and built relational trust (Bryk et al., 2010). We focused on helping us understand each other and self-care as collective care. The EC-PLC group consisted of five women educational leaders: one elementary school principal, one high school principal, a leadership coach, an assistant superintendent, and me. All participants reviewed and signed consent forms informing them of the potential risks and benefits of participation in the study. We focused on five tasks: (a) building relational trust, (b) understanding our individual and collective self-care *testimonios* (storytelling), (c) completing a self-care questionnaire, (d) learning and practicing self-care strategies, and (e) identifying the assets and the challenges of our context.

PAR Cycle Two: Spring 2020

In PAR Cycle Two, we continued to use self-care strategies and *testimonios* (storytelling)
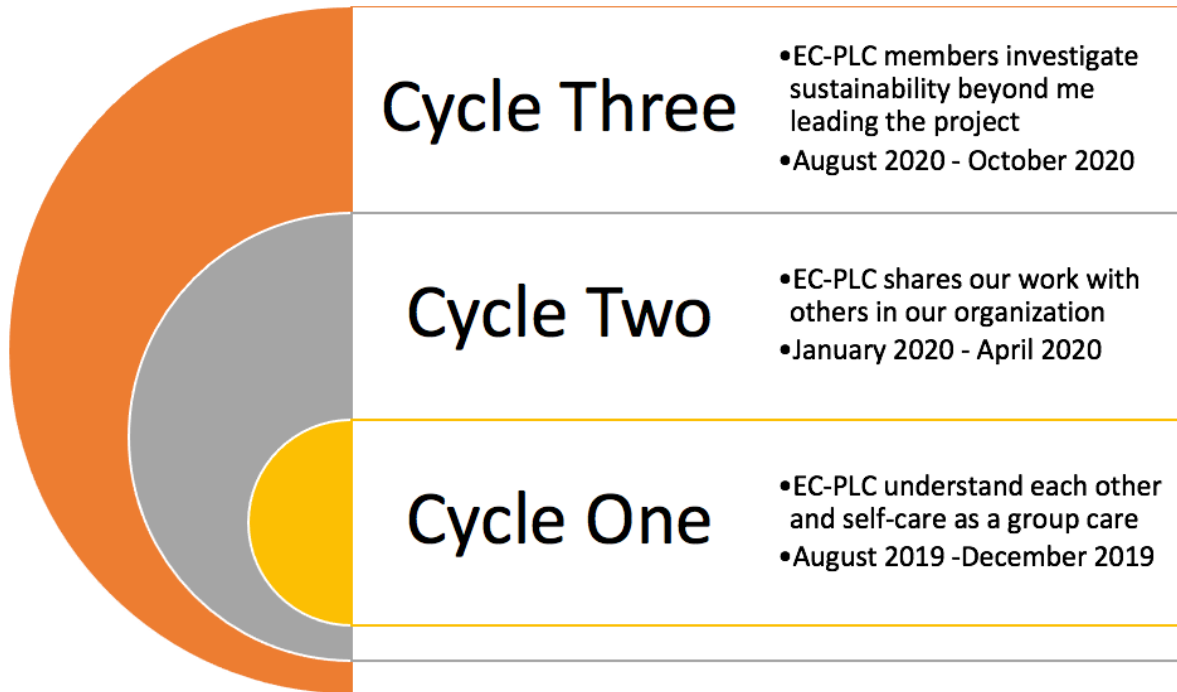
Figure 4. Cycles of inquiry.

to deepen relational trust and build our individual and collective abilities to attend to work-related stress. We took what we experienced and used in our EC-PLC and hosted a CLE to share our work with others in the organization. We focused on four tasks: (a) selecting those to be invited to participate in a CLE, (b) identifying and selecting pedagogies and practices that we could implement in the CLE, (c) observed each other's practice context (schools or departments), and (d) engaged in member checks. During each cycle, I facilitated the EC-PLC and wrote reflective memos about my growth as a leader.

PAR Cycle Three: Fall 2020

In the final PAR cycle, we focused on determining the broader transfer of the EC-PLC self-care strategies to communities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this cycle, we continued to practice self-care strategies and use *testimonios* (storytelling). We focused on three tasks: (a) interviews of EC-PLC group members, (b) completing a post self-care questionnaire, and (c) engaging in member checks. I examined meeting notes, artifacts, and interviews with EC-PLC members. Working with others in our district central office, I examined efforts of sustainability and self-care in the broader community. In addition, I reviewed any district policy changes. The EC-PLC group met to examine the findings from interviews and questionnaires and discuss any changes they saw in themselves. Concurrently, I measured and coded the transfer into my own leadership practice through the analysis of reflective and analytical memos, personal communication, and meeting notes in all three PAR cycles (Saldaña, 2016).

We engaged in a monthly EC-PLC and facilitated a Community Learning Exchange (CLE) as a methodology where educational leaders used *testimonios*, learned together, and practiced self-care strategies in an *Espacio Sano*, where we: (a) better prepared to attend to self-care and fortify ourselves to stay engaged in social justice leadership, (b) shared these self-care

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strategies with colleagues and those we supervise, and (c) facilitated the broader transfer of the EC-PLC self-care strategies to our communities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

These actions required reimagining a new way of attending to the personal and professional needs of school leaders in our educational structures. Referencing the literature of third space (Gutiérrez, 2016; Hulme et al., 2009; Pour-Khorshid, 2018; Romero, Khalif, & et al., 2016), I imagined this new way of being and doing by situating professional learning communities of networks of sustainability and self-care in a third space. Through this PAR process, our reimagined alternative professional learning space, *Espacio Sano,* became a new structural way of reinventing self-care as collective care. This space was rooted in graciousness and resiliency in order to engage the diverse voices and ideas of women leaders (Guajardo et al., 2016; Gutiérrez, 2016). In *Espacio Sano,* women educational leaders embraced their integral selves as wholehearted leaders that lead both from the head and heart, the *brainheart,* integrating the canonical and non-canonical ways of knowing and doing. Together, *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership provide a new framework, the *MeWe: Self-care as Collective Care,* that contributes to the extant literature (Bryk, et al., 2015).

Study Limitations

As an activist researcher situated in this study, I provided insights and understanding from a close perspective to the focus of practice (hunter et al., 2013). This proximity influenced my understanding of the FoP and its implications. The use of an EC-PLC group helped guard against my own biases as I had worked as a school principal for nine years and experienced both the thrills and the loneliness of the job. I used the EC-PLC to member check the data collection and analysis. This study was also delimited by the small sample size and methodology of

selecting the EC-PLC group. Another limitation is that we are only women participants all from the same urban, progressive school district.

Although the EC-PLC group in this PAR study was small in number, there is, nevertheless, power in conducting an empirical participatory action research. PAR supported us both, me, the researcher, and the participants. The results are relevant - to the local setting. This was sound and appropriate research methodology (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Furthermore, the PAR provided a sense of trustworthiness because I worked closely as an insider collaborating with insiders (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The conclusion of the study served the micro and macro contexts of the FoP. I am hopeful that the implications are useful for future researchers and practitioners.

Chapter Summary

The roles and tasks principals are required to perform are constantly growing, and the accountability demands are relentless. Nonetheless, the work of the school principal continues to be vital. In order to help sustain principals to better attend to work-related stress, this participatory action research study proposed a new space, an *Espacio Sano* (sane space), a resilient ecology that engages a group of diverse women educational leaders in an EC-PLC to practice and understand self-care tools and strategies in order to stay engaged in the work for equity and excellence in education. The three iterative cycles of inquiry guided this process. This participatory action research is both a collaborative journey and one for my own sense of self as leader.

The following chapters describe the content, context, results, and implications of this project. Chapter 2 consists of a review of the extant literature related to self-care, resilience, school leadership, and the use of an EC-PLC and CLE framework. Chapter 3 explores the

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specific context, the place, and people for the participatory action research. In Chapter 4, I

provide the research design used to engage in the project and to answer the research questions.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 document the categories, emergent themes, and findings from each cycle.

Finally, in Chapter 8, I make meaning of the key findings and provides implications for practice,

policy, and research. Together, this theory of action is examined with a group of women leaders

seeking to find another way to sustain our resiliency. This focus of practice and design provided

the time and space for such an examination.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

A Warrior, a Healer and Tao. The leader can act as a warrior or as a healer. As a warrior, the leader acts with power and decision. That is the yang or masculine aspects of leadership. Most of the time, however, the leader acts as a healer and is an open receptive, and nourishing state. That is the feminine or Yin aspect of leadership. This mixture of doing and returns to silence, returns to God. Being, doing, being then, Tao being, of warrior and healer, is both productive and potent. There is a third aspect of leadership: Tao. Periodically, the leader withdraws from the group. I withdraw in order to empty myself of what has happened, to replenish my spirit.

—Lao Tzu

Leading schools is concurrently extremely rewarding and demanding. School leaders have significant impacts on classroom teachers, the most important in-school variable for student learning (Leithwood & Jantz, 2008; Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Robinson et al., 2008). Because "school leadership has a significant effect on features of the school organization which positively influences the quality of teaching and learning" (Leithwood et al., 2020 p. 6), school leaders need to ensure equitable experiences and outcomes for the students. School leaders hold a powerful position to influence equity in schools, and they must simultaneously combat systemic oppression and unpack implicit bias in schools. This position of power makes them uniquely situated to be *equity warriors*, healers to children and families who have been historically marginalized and are vulnerable (Leverett, 2002). Equity work is as relentless as it is gratifying and requires a full-time commitment in service of students, families, and communities. However, this work can take a toll on the mind, body, and soul.

School leaders under pressure need strategies for self-care so that they will remain in the profession advising and modeling the work for future school leaders. Equity work in general, and for school leaders in particular, can often be lonely and stressful and lead to burnout. Given the often-unresponsive systemic and political context within which leaders must work, the need to

support school leaders in ways that fill the individual and collective soul is essential. Some school leaders pause and reflect on their leadership as a resiliency strategy (Aguilar, 2018; Mahfouz & Gordon, 2020). Others engage consistently in networks to make certain they can maintain their commitment (Rigby & Tredway, 2015; Theoharis, 2009). The focus of practice (FoP) is anchored in the social justice leadership (SJL) theoretical framework of "*praxis*, in the Freireian sense, involving both reflection and action" (Furman, 2012, p. 191, [italics in original]). Furman's (2012) SJL framework supports my activist researcher stance and expands the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 1 by providing an integrated understanding of both the findings and the limitations of the extant literature (Boote & Beile, 2005; hunter et al., 2013). The literature review is organized in four main sections. Sections one and two provide a context. The first section begins with research on social justice leadership (SJL) and includes the social justice leadership framework, definition, case studies, and strategies to support educational leaders. In the second section, I examine women as social justice leaders from three key angles: (a) understanding the research of how women's identities affect their leadership and self-care; (b) the ethic of care as an element of leadership for women; and (c) the co-practitioners in the (PAR) are women educational leaders. Additionally, I focus on women in leadership in and out of the field of education, including how women face barriers in the workplace and the gender differences between male and female educational leaders. I conclude with a focus on women of color in leadership that includes foundational theories of the feminist ethic and race and ethnicity in education, as the Co-Practitioner Researchers are women leaders, mostly women of color.

Sections three and four home in on self-care and *Espacio Sano* (sane space). I begin with leadership for self-care. Specifically, I address the research on principal stress, burnout, and

secondary trauma, and conclude with research on self-care strategies to fortify social justice educational leaders.

The fourth and final section focuses on a key emerging concept that is vital to this study. I use the term *Espacio Sano* (sane space). I review the literature of third space, *sitios y lenguas*, gracious space, and *testimonios* (storytelling). *Sitios y lenguas* (space and discourse) is a concept defined by Romero, Denicolo, and et al. (2016) as a decolonial tool: a site of struggle can exist within bilingual classrooms where "*sitio* are constructed as spaces that empower the student to become the subject and creator of their own knowledge" (p. 443). *Testimonio* is a pedagogical and political form of storytelling that exposes injustices and disrupts silence. Radical Latinx women of color such as Moraga and Anzaldúa (1981) and others (Romero, Khalif, & et al., 2016; Pour-Khorshid, 2018) use *testimonio* to express and theorize lived experiences navigating various forms of oppression. The use of Spanish language in the study is intentional as it better captures the meaning of the idea. In addition, the use of Spanish honors my ontology and the non-canonical learning aligned with my researcher stance (Brown & Duguid, 2000).

In approaching the literature, I was interested in two key questions: (1) What skills and dispositions should a twenty-first century educational leader possess? (2) What does it mean to be a woman in social justice leadership? The literature on educational leadership points to various answers that range from being a social justice leader, leading with a moral imperative, servant leadership, distributive leadership, and collective leadership to being an equity warrior. Figure 5 provides a visual representation of the framework of this study: The context of women as social justice leaders and the intersection of the study of self-care and *Espacio Sano* (sane space). The focus of the participatory action research lies at the point where they intersect.

Figure 5. Conceptual framework of this study: The context women as social justice leaders.

Social Justice Leadership (SJL)

SJL is dependent not only on a belief and vision of equity, not only on initiating equity-oriented changes, but also on the ability to sustain this work and sustain oneself in the process.

—George Theoharis

School leaders must understand social justice in order to lead with social justice. In a time when schools are more densely populated with historically underserved students and when market-driven approaches to running present-day schools often fail (Nasir et al., 2016), school leaders can make meaningful changes to and through social justice leadership. However, that leadership begins with a critical *praxis* of self and then moves outward (Freire, 1970; Furman 2012; Guajardo et al., 2016). Social justice leadership involves an equity vision and requires leaders to systematically and iteratively enact and sustain that vision.

Many leadership scholars have a common understanding of social justice that focuses on the experiences of marginalized groups and inequities in educational opportunities and outcomes (Blackmore, 2002; Boyles et al., 2009; Dantley & Tillman, 2010; Furman, 2012; Theoharis, 2009). I use Furman's (2012) definition of social justice leadership as, "*leadership* for social justice involves identifying and undoing the oppressive and unjust practices and replacing them with more equitable, culturally appropriate ones" (p. 194). In this section, I review the literature on social justice leadership, present Furman's (2012) social justice leadership theoretical framework and draw from social justice leadership case studies to highlight the *praxis* and strategies necessary to engage in social justice leadership.

Social Justice Leadership Framework

I begin the review of the literature by discussing the theoretical framework of social justice leadership. This framework includes the aspect of self-care and personal sustenance as a dimension of educational leadership. I use Furman's (2012) dimensions of social justice

leadership *praxis* as a cornerstone of moving from personal (inside) to ecological (outside) work social justice leaders engage in as it is most aligned with the focus of practice (FoP). Furman (2012) explicates *praxis* and defines it as:

> Praxis involves the continual, dynamic interaction among knowledge acquisition, deep reflection, and action at two levels… At the intrapersonal level, praxis involves self-knowledge, critical self-reflection, and acting to transform oneself as a leader for social justice. At the extrapersonal level, praxis involves knowing and understanding systemic social justice issues, reflecting on these issues, and taking action to address them (p. 203).

Furman (2012) suggests that social justice leadership is a nested model (see Figure 6); in the first dimensions, the person is in the center, and the other dimensions expand outward to the context for the *praxis* of social justice leadership. She states that "the nested model represents the gestalt of social justice leadership as *praxis* across multiple dimensions" (Furman, 2012, p. 204). She describes each dimension as having both reflection and action, and capacities leaders need to engage in *praxis*. At the center is the personal dimension, what researchers see as the foundation for social justice work (hooks, 1994; Khalifa, 2018). School leaders engage in an honest, deep, and critical self-reflection to "explore their values, assumptions, and biases in regard to race, class, language, sexual orientation, and so on and, in turn, how these affect their leadership practice" (Furman, 2012, p. 205). Furman (2012) suggests leaders reflect by use of guided reflection and journaling throughout their preparation and practice to help develop critical consciousness, and that they develop a leadership plan, and identify future readings in areas that will further develop the capacity for social justice leadership.

The next dimension is interpersonal. Furman (2012) states relationships have a central role in social justice work. School leaders need the knowledge of self, others, and relationship
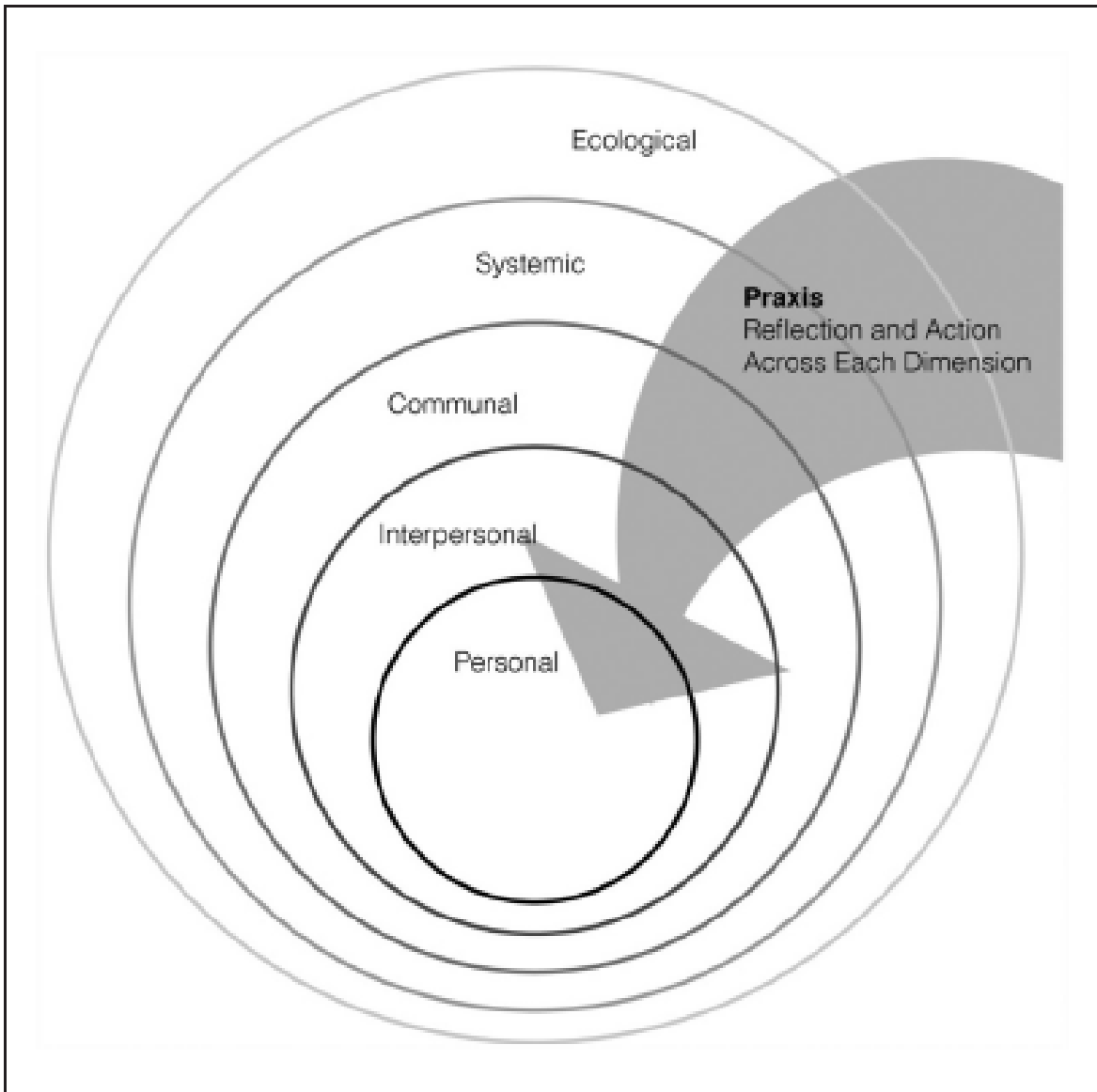
Figure 6. Furman's (2012) dimensions of social justice leadership praxis.

theories in addition to practicing active listening and clear communication to foster respect and caring. To develop these capacities, she suggests developing an ethic of care and deep listening.

The communal dimension focuses on building community across cultural groups with inclusive democratic practices. School leaders develop an in-depth knowledge of the communities and cultural groups in the school and create democratic processes of communication and decision making that specifically includes marginalized groups. Communal capacity develops through the use of deep listening, dialogue, and cross-cultural communication. Furman (2012) suggests school leaders can gain a deeper knowledge of the communities in the school by including team-building skills, auditing the school to examine inclusive instructional practices, and enhancing inclusion in school governance and decision-making.

To recognize the systemic nature of oppression and leadership responsibility in this capacity, leaders need to critically examine the school system's structures, policies, and practices for injustices and barriers to learning. When school leaders know and practice socially just teaching, they can then successfully model and engage in transformative leadership practice to change the system (Furman, 2012). Some actions in the systemic dimension include prioritizing and working towards meaningful change in spite of barriers. The action for leaders is to be engaged in guided discussions in multiple areas of difference (e.g., race, language poverty, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability), culturally relevant pedagogy, visiting schools that are successful in promoting learning for all students, and using equity auditing tools. School leaders develop these capacities for action in the systemic dimension by establishing and implementing activist action plans based on inventories (Rigby & Tredway, 2015; Skrla et al., 2004; 2009). The plans include courageous conversations about race and professional development based on socially just pedagogy (Singleton, 2015).

The last dimension, ecological, involves "acting with the knowledge that school-related social justice issues are situated within broader sociopolitical, economic, and environmental context and are interdependent with broader issues of oppression and sustainability" (Furman, 2012, p. 211). Reflection in this dimension means the school leaders are aware of and understand the role the school has in addressing these broader issues. Capacities for action in the ecological dimension include staff focusing on pedagogy of place activities that seek to reconnect the school and community as well as various forms of action inquiry (e.g., cultural journalism). Furman's (2012) conceptual framework for social justice leadership as *praxis* captures the interchange between the reflection and action needed for this work. At the intrapersonal level, *praxis* involves self-knowledge, critical self-reflection, and acting to transform oneself as a leader for social justice.

Blackmore (2002) explores the tensions in Furman's (2012) ecological dimension between the pluralism of postmodernist thinking and modernist ideas of social justice; she argues that radical shifts in school governance that stem from social, political, and economic reactions towards high-risk and low-trust society challenge past notions of leadership. Furman's use of *praxis* tethers across ecologies whereas Blackmore emphasizes social capital. Furthermore, Blackmore (2002) emphasizes:

> [s]ocially just systems of education: the three Rs: Responsibility, Recognition and Reciprocity. The [new trio of the three Rs] requires us to think about reinventing the public in ways that deal with substantive issues of social justice and care as the basis of a truly civil society. (p. 214)

Blackmore (2002) urges us to recognize difference instead of naturalizing difference. She acknowledges the reciprocity between schools and communities. To focus on the interpersonal

dimension, case studies by Rigby and Tredway (2015), Theoharis (2009), DeMatthews and Mawhinney (2014), Marshall and Oliva (2010), and Franco et al. (2011) demonstrate that school leaders who engage in critical self-reflection aimed at a personal awareness and growth as well as a heightened critical awareness of local and societal exclusion and marginalization, are committed and persistent and attend to their self-care.

Social Justice Leadership Case Studies

Rigby and Tredway (2015) conducted a qualitative study over three years using video observations of ten urban school principals in action. The study analyzed video examples of principal practices to understand precisely how leaders enacted equity. As a result, the school district used evidence from the study to develop and implement a leadership rubric for professional learning and evaluation. The principals used an equity frame to promote change in the daily work of school leaders. Successful leaders do the following: (1) enact equity explicitly, not simply implicitly, by naming specific equity actions; (2) connect micro issues to the macro structural contexts; and (3) provide specific and clear next steps. The study provides an illustration of what "enacting equity" looks like in leadership practice. The authors argue that "principals who were explicit about the equity issue and clear about next steps, whether the issue was micro or macro, would be successful equity warriors" (Rigby & Tredway, 2015, p. 335). Principals using this model were likely to disrupt historical inequities and support teachers to address equity issues in their classrooms.

Theoharis (2009) conducted a qualitative study of six public school principals who enacted leadership for social justice by raising student achievement, improving school structures, re-centering staff capacity, and strengthening school culture and community. He affirmed "the leadership traits and this broad consciousness /knowledge/skills base were central to these

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principals' work and identity as a school leader" (Theoharis, 2009, p. 149). He identified seven crucial keys for social justice leadership; I highlight two of the keys: possess core leadership traits and sustain oneself professionally and personally. He identified three common leadership traits among the principals in the study: arrogant humility, passionate vision, and tenacious commitment to justice. He shares:

> the work of these social justice leaders was quite personal. They were passionately committed to social justice, and their success in advancing social justice is at their very core; thus, resistance becomes personal and attacks not only their work but also who they are. (Theoharis, 2009, p. 111)

The principals in the study experienced conflict as they enacted social justice leadership in schools, community, and the district that had severe consequences to their well-being. Theoharis (2009) describes their personal feelings of anguish, discouragement, and threatened emotional and physical well-being as they tenaciously enact a passionate vision to achieve just schools.

When principals are faced with resistance and barriers in their pursuit toward social justice, they must use strategies both professional and personal to help them maintain both their vision and their emotional and physical well-being. Theoharis (2009) identifies six professional coping strategies: communicating purposefully and authentically, developing a supportive administrative network, working together for change, keeping their eyes on the prize, prioritizing their work, engaging in professional learning, and building relations. These are balanced with six personal coping strategies: prioritizing life outside of school, using mindful diversions, accepting outside validation, engaging in regular physical activity, providing for others, and avoiding potentially harmful behaviors. Theoharis (2009) affirms, "SJL is dependent not only on a belief and vision of equity, not only on initiating equity-oriented changes, but also

on the ability to sustain this work and sustain oneself in the process" (p. 128). Social justice leadership depends on leaders to address inequities and attend to their own care along the way.

DeMatthews and Mawhinney (2014) contribute to SJL in a cross-case study describing the challenges two principals addressed while attempting to transform their school cultures in one urban school district to embrace an inclusion model. They affirm that the leadership actions demonstrated in social justice and inclusion leadership are complementary, especially in schools and districts that suffer from unjust systems and structures that promote segregation and non-recognition of students with disabilities. DeMatthews and Mawhinney (2014) uphold Furman's (2012) intrapersonal level of the SJL framework, and assert, "social justice leadership is demonstrated through ongoing actions, skills, habits of mind, and competencies that are continually being created, questioned, and refined" (p. 847). This research revealed the actions, values, and orientations of individual leaders and the influences of conflicts and dilemmas that exist in social justice work.

The case studies and personal narratives of these two principals' work enacting SJL highlights the theory to practice in education. Co-editors Marshall and Oliva (2010) compiled a research collection on key issues in social justice. They include the works of various scholars who discuss multiple problems of social justice faced by school leaders. They emphasize the need to conceptualize and explore a social justice framework for educational leadership, both theoretically and practically. They provide an understanding of the effects of exclusion and share exercises and materials for teachers; school leaders, and educational leadership programs to promote social justice dialogue and action to create fair practices. Key chapters align with the conceptual frameworks of this study.

Dantley and Tillman (2010) emphasize moral transformative leadership and how

leaders can "serve as social activists who are committed to seeing a greater degree of democracy practiced in schools as well in society" (p. 16). The authors propose that leaders for social justice should take a moral position to "critically deconstruct and reconstruct schools and demand equitable treatment for all students" (Dantley & Tillman, 2010, p. 26). López et al. (2010) determined the effective school leadership practices in Latinx impacted schools and districts along the Texas-Mexico border. They relate how minority students are socialized and located at a bicultural rather than monocultural U.S. border. The authors focus on ways that school leaders can change their practices by engaging in opportunities that allow them to reflect on their current practices and to "identify different kinds of borders (geographic, cultural, epistemological, classed, gendered, other) that operate in [their] school or other educational unit that shape the educational experience and achieve of students" (López et al., 2010, p. 115). Merchant and Shoho (2010) share the perspectives of eight high-profile individuals who were known for being agents of social justice in the communities. According to the authors, the personal and narrative description of life events "can stimulate self-reflection and visceral reactions for readers coming to grips with marginalization and discriminatory, exclusionary practices" (Merchant & Shoho, 2010, p. 9).

Franco et al. (2011) further elaborate on other factors that influence a social justice leadership. They provide a perspective as women leaders of color to the social justice leadership framework through biographical leadership stories of three Latina superintendents who discuss personal and professional experiences with equity in education. The women speak frankly about the problems they faced as educational leaders of color and as women in charge of male-dominated institutions and describe how they dealt successfully with intransigent school trustees,

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supervisors, and co-workers. The authors use the Lindsey et al. (2009) conceptual framework for culturally proficient practices and identify four cultural proficiency areas that must be addressed to transform schools into places of equity and excellence: barriers to educational opportunity and equity; conditions that help promote success for underserved students; ways to leverage culture as an asset; and links between high-quality education for some and excellence for all learners. However, Lindsey et al. (2009) also uses the terms cultural destructiveness to talk about situations in their schools, a concept that may adversely affect teachers and drive them away from engaging in conversations so vital to the work. Attention to the differences between discourse one, a blaming and shaming discourse pattern, needs to be tempered with discourse two, which is careful to keep all persons in the conversation (Eubanks et al., 1997). Franco et al. (2011) use of these three Latina superintendent narrative stories helps move from the critical but passive consciousness of social justice theory to practical on-the-ground strategies for an activist researcher like me to be inspired by and enact.

The case studies within the social justice leadership research focused on the intrapersonal dimension of school leadership and tell a collective story of leadership in practice. The cases demonstrate how leaders enact equity and sustain and support themselves professionally and personally. School leaders are social activists and take moral positions. Social justice leaders emphasize the use of *praxis*, engage in professional learning, and build relationships.

Summary of Social Justice Leadership

In this section, I provided an overview of the framework, definition, and case studies of social justice leadership (SJL). Furman's (2012) theoretical framework is present with the school leaders in the research of case studies. The use of a SJL *praxis*, strategies, and "keys" will be acutely useful in the Community Learning Exchange (CLE) methodology of the participatory

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action research (PAR) project, in which school leaders will be asked to share their leadership experiences and *testimonios* (storytelling) and practice self-care strategies to support their ongoing work of social justice leadership. In the next section, I move from the literature of the leadership of women in and out of the field of education to specific literature on the feminist ethics of care of women of color. I begin with an overview on women in leadership for two key reasons: one, to understand the context and research of how women leaders show up to do SJL and how their identity and ethic of care are integral elements of women leadership; and two, the co-practitioners in the (PAR) are women leaders.

Women in Leadership

In reviewing the research on the integral elements of women in leadership, I describe how they practice and enact social justice leadership (SJL) and how their individual and collective identities as women intersect with ethic of care. Ah Nee-Benham and Cooper (1998) describe women in school leadership in "nested realities." They state that "although the particular form of leadership these women conceive of and enact is embedded in their personal experience, this experience is simultaneously embedded in particular social, historical, cultural, and economic milieu" (Ah Nee-Benham & Cooper, 1998, p. 141). Therefore, I reference literature on women in leadership in business, politics, and education before examining the issues of women in educational leadership, the barriers women face, the ways the gender difference plays out in leadership, the feminist ethic of care, and women of color.

Women in Business, Politics, and Education

Women remain distinctly underrepresented at the highest organizational levels (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). The most current U.S. census data indicate that women represent 50.8% of the population, 46.9% of the total employment in the US, and 51.5% of all people employed

in the "management, professional and related occupations". However, women occupy only 5.8% of Fortune 500 executive officer seats, 11% of top earner position, and 21.2% of heads of boards in the largest companies (Catalyst, 2020). Bureau of Labor Statistics data from 2018 indicate that women's earnings were 81% of men's (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019).

The numbers are more favorable in the political arena: women currently hold 127 of the 535 seats (23.7%) in the U.S. Congress, 26 (26%) seats in the U.S. Senate, and 101 (23.2%) seats in the U.S. House of Representatives (plus four non-voting delegates from American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands). In 2020, Kamala Harris, the first African American and South Asian American woman, was elected as the vice president.

In academia, 57 % of U.S. college students and 30% of college presidents are women (Education Advisory Board, 2015). Women continue to be underrepresented in district and state superintendent positions nationally. Of our nation's 13,728 superintendents, 1,984 today are women, in spite of the fact that 72% of all K-12 educators in this country are women, according to the U.S. Department of Education. In the 168-year history of the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), there has been only one female superintendent. Why are there so few women in these top positions?

Glass (2008) conducted a ten-year study of the superintendent profession. Of the 2,262 superintendents who responded to his 90-item survey, only 297 were women. Glass's analysis of this data led him to identify seven notable reasons for the low numbers of women superintendents: (1) women are poorly positioned in prior positions that normally lead to the superintendency; (2) they lack credentials and are not gaining superintendents' credentials in preparation programs; (3) they are often not as experienced nor as interested in district-wide fiscal management as men and the superintendent role requires deep knowledge of finance and

budget; (4) for personal reasons, women are not interested in the superintendency; (5) school boards are reluctant to hire women superintendents and thus invoke the "glass ceiling;" (6) women enter the field of education for different purposes or enter too late to build the appropriate resume; and (7) women may choose to enter the career of education as a career as teachers and not see themselves as administrators.

Glass (2008) contends that this last reason may be the most critical explanation, and he provides four strategies that may alter outcomes for women leaders who aspire to superintendency:

1. Change the nature of the superintendency from solo leader to distributed leadership, add central office administrators to support.

2. School boards should make it possible for women superintendents to excel in what they like to do.

3. States and higher education institutions should provide incentives to women to gain the superintendents' certificate if required and offer advancement in other forms to encourage preparation.

4. District and search firms should be rewarded by states for hiring women or minority superintendents.

In the following section, I identify further research on women leadership that highlights systemic barriers women face and strategies women school leaders use to fortify themselves in the work.

Women's Experience of Barriers in School Leadership

Leadership has been mostly a male entitlement in corporate, political, and other sectors of

society. Although women have gained more access to top and middle management positions, they remain rare as elite leaders. This phenomenon has centered on the idea of a "glass ceiling"—an intangible barrier within a hierarchy that prevents women or minorities from obtaining upper-level positions. Women are disadvantaged as leaders to take on roles that are traditionally male-dominated (Blackmore, 2002; Chin, 2004; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014).

Eagly and Karau (2002) theorize that "prejudice toward female leaders follows from the incongruity that many people perceive between the characteristics of women and the requirements of leader roles" (p. 574). Their theory extended role congruity theory (RCT) to explore the connection between gender roles and leadership roles. In a quantitative meta-analysis of forty-five studies, Eagly and Carli (2003) found "[t]his incongruity creates vulnerability whereby women encounter prejudicial reactions that restrict their access to leadership roles and negatively bias judgment of their performance as leaders" (p. 825). Eagly and Carli (2003) affirm the RCT research. The authors assert that female leaders confront a double standard in the attempt to ease role incongruity: they must behave exceptionally competently while reassuring others that they conform to expectations of proper female behavior. They suggest that women leaders take on transformational leadership because it is consistent with female gender roles of support and transactional leadership (Burns, 1978). This concept may resolve the inconsistency between the female gender role and demands of leadership roles and allow women to excel as leaders.

Paustian-Underdahl et al. (2014) expanded and updated the meta-analysis conducted by Eagly and Karau (2002) and extended Role Continuity Theory (RCT) by applying it to both men and women and examining how other theories can complement aspects of RCT. They reviewed

forty-nine years of research about the relationship between gender and leadership effectiveness within moderators both self-rated and other-rated:

> When all leadership contexts are considered, men and women do not differ in perceived leadership effectiveness. Yet, when other-ratings indicators were examined, women were rated as significantly more effective than men. In contrast, when self-ratings were examined, men rated themselves as significantly more effective than women rate themselves. (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014, p. 1129)

An analysis of the extant literature on women in leadership demonstrates that women have been viewed as having less leadership ability than men because of how society connects the leader role with perceived masculine traits: assertiveness, independence, strength, and courage. In addition, other researchers have found that women feel powerless and less influential than men do in their working situations and experience (Koeign et al., 2018; Matud, 2004).

Chin's (2004) research further identifies feminist dispositions for effective leadership. Chin affirms that a feminist approach to leadership emphasizes context but includes promoting a social agenda and defines leadership as empowerment. Blackmore (2002) extends this further and argues:

> [w]omen's styles of leadership discourses fail to undermine dominate hegemonic notions of leadership, as they can be too readily reduced to complementarity, that is, women's skills and capacities complement, but do not challenge or replace, denominate masculinist view of leadership based on rational decision making. (p. 210)

Thus, the perception of how women should behave in leadership roles conflicts with the perception of how men should occupy those roles. For example, women leaders must exhibit

enough assertiveness to be considered strong enough for the job, but not so much to be considered domineering.

Feminist Ethic of Care

In this section, I reference feminist theorists Gilligan (1982), Noddings (1984), Bass (2012), Ah Nee-Benham and Cooper (1998), and Sosa-Provencio (2017) to explore the tensions of being a social justice leader and predicaments for feminist leadership. Gilligan (1982), a feminist theorist, revolutionized the thinking in social science theory about how women's voices are heard. Gilligan (1982) conducted a qualitative study about how people make decisions about morality, based on interviews with both men and women and found that men and women use fundamentally different approaches. The male approach to morality that arose in the study is that individuals have fundamental rights and that one has to respect the rights of others (Kohlberg, 1981; Piaget, 1985). Kohlberg (1981) seminar study on fifty-five white boys does not touch on vital factors of the morality of care and the collective care responsibilities that apply to women. The female approach to morality is that people have responsibilities towards others and have an individual and collective imperative to care for others. Gilligan (1982) summarized these contrasting views by saying that male morality has a "justice orientation" and that female morality has a "responsibility orientation." Suggesting a female ethic of care and a masculine ethic of justice. Kohlberg, who was Gilligan's mentor, posited six levels of moral development in males that were primarily based on the notion of the social contract of individuals with society, but the source of the morality is in the individual and his individual accountability toward the greater good.

Despite being Kohlberg's (1981) research assistant, Gilligan argued that Kohlberg's stages of moral development were male-oriented, which limited their ability to be generalized to

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females. Gilligan (1982) moved from a technical to a moral view of leadership. She proposed a theory of stages of female moral development based on her idea of moral voices. The three stages in moral development begin with a selfish state: female children start out with a selfish orientation. In the second stage they learn that care for others is more important and selfishness is wrong, and their own interests have less value than the interest of others. In the third stage, which Gilligan (1982) terms post-conventional, women learn that it is not wrong to ignore their own interests, as it is vital to equipping themselves to care about others. Thirty years later, Gilligan (2012) looks back at her work as she reflects:

> [l]istening to women thus lead me to make a distinction I have come to see as pivotal to understanding care ethics. Within a patriarchal framework, care is a feminine ethic. Within a democratic framework, care is a human ethic. A feminist ethic of care is a different voice within a patriarchal culture because it joins reason with emotion, mind with body, self with relationships, men with women, resisting the division that maintains a patriarchal order. (p. 5)

Gilligan's (1982) work has been criticized for stereotyping women as nurturing and men as logical. It is important to note the gap in Gilligan's (1982) research; like Kohlberg, it was limited to mostly white, middle-class children and adults. The importance, however, of caring for self as a necessary condition of caring for others, cannot be overestimated, as her research indicates that women "get stuck" in stage two and take on martyr-like roles in the service professions. Aguilar (2018) affirms self-care helps cultivate group care, she asserts that "[w]e must cultivate our resilience and become stronger so that we can help others become stronger; we cultivate our resilience so that we have the energy to heal and transform the world" (p. 58).

Next, I include a broader perspective of Gilligan's (1982) ethic of care as conceptualized by Noddings (1984).

Women of Color and the Feminist Ethic of Care

Noddings (1984) sets out to develop an ethic for the moral voice Gilligan (1982) describes. Like Gilligan, Noddings (1984) is displeased with the dominant view of the moral life, as an interpretation of justice and justification: a morality rooted in reasoning that stems from hierarchical established principles. Noddings (1984) asserts the affective foundations of existence are essential, and human emotional response is a key source of ethical behavior. As Aguilar (2018) states, "it is human right to express emotions, and powerful and effective educators talk about emotions at work" (p. 58). In contrast to Gilligan (1982), Noddings' (1984) view is not from moral reasoning but from a human longing for goodness. Gilligan (1982) hints at the ethics of nonviolence in the post-conventional level of moral development, but her ethic is more universal. Noddings denies universality; her analysis makes a distinction between natural caring and ethical caring. Noddings (1984) conception for the "cared-for" occurs in a place of genuine relationship where there is a condition of receptivity and "impassioned and realistic commitment" (p. 100). Nodding (1984) posits her ethic of caring as an alternative mode in moral education and that every educational effort should be aimed at the enhancement of caring. Both Nodding (1984) and Gilligan (1982) contribute to the idea that genuine caring must somehow be completed in the cared-for. This type of ethic of care is aligned to Furman (2012) SJL framework of interpersonal dynamics that places social justice work as central to educational work.

Bass (2012) provides a perspective of how a Black feminist caring (BFC) manifests itself in educational leadership. In her qualitative case study of five African American women in a large urban school district in the U.S. Midwest, she found that intersectional identities of race,

gender, and social class and their world views fuel the African American women school leaders''
strong propensity to care. Bass (2012) writes women's "personal journeys have led them into
professional arenas where oppression has assigned them outsider-within status, referring to the
disempowerment within both professional and private societal institutions where the interactive
systems of power, race, gender, and social class limit their mobility" (p. 74). Like Noddings
(1984) and Gilligan (1982), Bass (2012) affirms women's oppressed status can increase their
sensitivity to the oppression of others and create a desire to rescue oppressed peoples; they are
morally obligated to remedy difficult situations.

Bass (2012) is aligned with both Noddings (1984) and Gilligan (1982) as she asserts
"caring out of empathy…is the way in which African American women often demonstrate care
for oppressed and disadvantaged students, due to their personal experiences and identification
with oppression" (p. 76). Bass (2012) describes school leaders as "other mothers, activist risk-
takers" (p. 73). The concept of mothering and other mothering is derived from a long history of
mothering that emerges from the historical oppression of African American people. "Hence the
role of mother is often perceived as the most honored and powerful role in the African American
community" (Bass, 2012, p. 79). Bass (2012) states, "caring trumps justice: invoking an ethic of
risk" (p. 80). The idea of an ethic of care is based on what is best for the student. School leaders
in the study acted against their self-interest in opposition to institutional injustice. Bass (2012)
shares six steps toward promoting institutional care through implementing care-promoting
policies: commit to employing caring teachers, faculty, and staff through careful hiring practices;
commit to continuous purposeful professional development that might include attention to self-
care; facilitate relationship development as a necessary precondition; establish a practice of
parent-friendly communication; involve parents and students in leadership and decision-making;

and implement culturally relevant discipline policies and procedures. These practices are aimed at fortifying the entire school community, providing support for the leader who is choosing and enacting socially just policies and practices.

Ah Nee-Benham and Cooper (1998) narrates the story of nine diverse women in school leadership, and four themes run through their stories: difference, determination, compassion, and power. Their work examines leadership through the intersection of personal and the professional experience, as "[they] believe that viewing leadership through the context of individual lives yields a richer understanding of how leadership evolves and how leaders develop among minority women educators" (Ah Nee-Benham & Cooper, 1998, p. 141). They go on to illuminate how women confront injustice as both a female and a minority. They share that all of these women leaders "attend carefully to the needs and rights of the children in their care" (Ah Nee-Benham & Cooper, 1998, p. 144). The authors argue the personal power of "love" helps redefine the practice of school leadership. They explain what *love* means:

> The women talk about love in a way that means respect, care, and responsibility without the semantic baggage .... It is a release from an objective language to a personal language about teaching, learning, and leading that empowers and accepts private and public activity of empathy and caring. (p. 141)

Ah Nee-Benham & Cooper enhance the literature on women in leadership and ethic of care. Minority woman school leaders learned (and continue to learn) how to encourage others as they encounter paradoxical messages about the purpose of schooling by placing a genuine "love" for children and for self at the center of the work (Gilligan, 1982; hooks, 1994b; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Ah Nee-Benham & Cooper (1998) add to the literature on how women school leaders enact an ethic of care with justice.

Sosa-Provencio (2017) demonstrates the concept of Mexicana/Mestiza ethic of care through *testimonios* (storytelling) of Rosa, a 6th -8th grade math teacher in a dual language charter school in a mid-size city along the U.S.-Mexico border. In these *testimonios* (storytelling) of four Mexicana/Meztiza female educators Sosa-Provencio shares the struggle, resistance, and survival that inform Mexican/Mexican American educators. Similar to Bass's (2012) concept of "mothering," Sosa-Provencio (2017) shares the concept of *Las Encargada/os*, "those entrusted to carry the weight of struggle toward transformation" (p. 653). Based on the work of Anzaldúa (1987), Sosa-Provencio (2017) elaborates, "[i]n a general sense, a person *encargada/o* is one charged with a task, though the root of this word, *cargar, to carry*, bears particular significance within the context of a critical feminist ethic where *carrying* education as a 'validation vision' to see…through the fictions of [white] supremacy by uncovering true faces, our dignity" (p. 653). This ethic of care has an "ethical urgency to carry the weight of subordination her students face as U.S. Mexicana/os" (Sosa-Provencio, 2017, p. 657). Sosa-Provencio's (2017) concept of Mexicana/Mestiza ethic of care provides an additional perspective of the feminist ethic of care.

Summary of Women in Leadership

In this section, I offered the second part of the overarching context of women as social justice leaders, first from the literature of leadership of women in and out of the field of education to the specifics of the feminist ethics of care of women of color. The overview demonstrates the importance of understanding the context and research of how women leaders show up to do social justice leadership and how their identity and ethic of care are integral elements of women leadership (see Figure 7).

Schools require a *praxis* of social justice leadership, and leaders use self-reflection and action to initiate equity-oriented changes. However, this way of leading schools is often
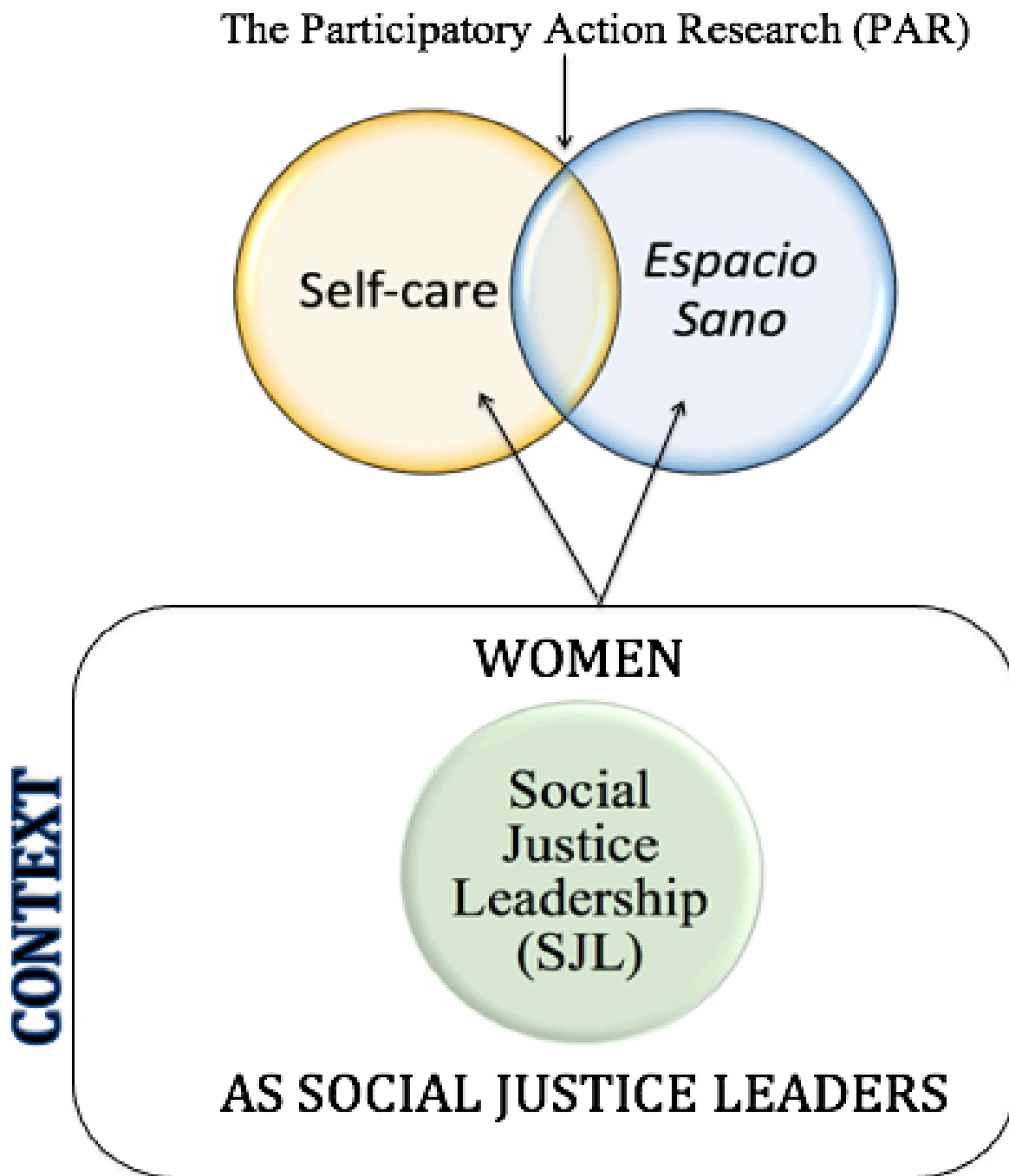
Figure 7. Conceptual framework of this study: The intersection of self-care and *Espacio Sano*.

misunderstood as giving out without taking care of self, as Gilligan (1982) reminds us, and, thus, exhausts the professional and personal self. For women, school leadership is further impacted by biased patriarchal structures and ethic of care; it is especially important to emphasize how women of color school leaders contend with yet another layer of challenges. Theoharis (2009) alluded to a crucial aspect of social justice leadership, "it is dependent on the ability to sustain this work and sustain oneself in the process" (p. 128). This statement supports the importance of fortifying leaders for the work of social justice leadership; if they are to continue to do the work, school leaders need to take care of themselves. In the next section, I examine research that helps us understand educator stress, burnout, and secondary trauma, and I employ the work of self-care and sustainability to inform the study (see Figure 7). I anchor school leadership in social justice leadership (SJL) as a leading edge of moving the largely psychological literature as well as the self–care literature to a socio-political space; this new space called the *Espacio Sano* (sane space).

Stress, Burnout, and Secondary Trauma

It's not stress that kills us; it is our reaction to it.
—Hans Selye

Schools are hubs for larger system issues and concerns. Leaders' work-related stress has intensified from the efforts to lead distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. A report from the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the Learning Policy Institute found that "forty-five percent of principals report that pandemic working conditions are accelerating their plans to leave the profession" (Maxwell, 2020, p. 2). Furthermore, the era of Trumpism has added work-related stress (Blow, 2019). Rogers et al. (2019) found schools in states where Trump was elected had increased student stress and heightened student concerns about their and their families' well-being. The report states, "72.3% of teachers surveyed agreed

that: My school leadership should provide more guidance, support, and professional development opportunities on how to promote civil exchange and greater understanding across lines of difference" (Rogers et al., 2019, p. VI).

In a federal report by the U.S. Department of Education in response to the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut that left twenty first graders and six adults dead, Shultz et al. (2013) called on school staff to consider trying to disrupt or incapacitate the shooter by using aggressive force and items in their environment, such as fire extinguishers and chairs. To add to these external stressors, ICE raids and separating children from families in detention centers has created chronic stress for students and families. The political rhetoric, changes in community policy, and the deportation of loved ones exposes students and families to fear and traumatic experiences. In addition, high-stakes testing, accountability, responding to legislative mandates, and external pressures have placed principals under inordinate stress (Wells & Klocko, 2018).

Stress

Stress is not good or bad - it's part of life. "Stress is the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it" (Selye, 1974, p. 14). Identifying and understanding elements that trigger our stress enable us to implement strategies to manage it. I use Maslach's (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) definition of burnout as a three-step process with three elements:

1. Emotional exhaustion is when "emotional resources are depleted, workers feel they are no longer able to give of themselves at the psychological level.

2. Depersonalization is identified as negative, cynical attitudes, and feelings about clients. Maslach and Jackson (1981) posit that "these negative feelings may be linked to the experience of emotional exhaustion.

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3. Decreased personal accomplishment. This condition "refers to the tendency to evaluate oneself negatively, particularly with regard to one's work with clients. (Maslach & Jackson, 1981, p. 99)

The American Institute of Stress (2001) revealed that two of the ten most stressful jobs in the modern workplace are inner-city secondary school teacher and school administrator (Sorenson, 2007). Johnson et al. (2018) also found teaching to be one of the most stressful professions, with levels of stress similar to those experienced by paramedics, police officers, and social service workers. Sorenson (2007) normative work provides a framework to effectively implement a program of stress reductions. It includes three components: (1) awareness (recognize stress indicators and the associated causes); (2) analysis (determine stress symptoms or behaviors); and (3) action (use techniques to appropriately deter the stress). He states, "stress can be minimized or reduced when the individual and school system initiate and implement certain stress management mechanisms and coping strategies" (Sorenson, 2007, p. 12). In addition to the framework, he suggests organizational approaches (set goals, participative decision-making, effective formal and informal communication, and wellness programs, both-physical and mental) can support stress reduction. The framework provides a normative contribution that may support educators in attending to stress management; however, it fails to address the social, political, gender, and hierarchical context and their impact on the organization.

A quantitative empirical study by Matud (2004) examined gender difference in stress and coping mechanisms. The study sampled 2816 residents of the Canary Islands, Spain (n = 1566 women and n = 1250 men) between the ages of 18 and 65, with different social-demographic characteristics. Matud (2004) found that women scored significantly higher than the men in

chronic stress and minor daily stressors. Gender difference appeared in 14 of the 31 items listed, with the women listing family and health-related events more frequently than the men, and the men listing relations, finance, and work-related events. The women scored significantly higher than the men on the emotional and avoidance coping styles and lower on rational and detachment coping. Men were found to have more emotional inhibition than the women and women scored significantly higher than the men on somatic symptoms and psychological distress. The results of the study suggest that women suffer more stress than men and their coping styles are more emotion-focused than men's. Other studies show women have more chronic stress than men (McDonough & Walter, 2001; Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 1999), are exposed to more daily stress associated with their routine role functioning and are more likely to report home and family life events as stressful. Women further report on stress related to gendered caring roles (Lee, 1999; Lee, 2001; Walters, 1993).

Peterson (2013) provides practitioners insights on what stressed female leaders need most in a self-reflective, practical article. She was temporarily appointed by the district superintendent to lead one of the most struggling public schools in Portland, Oregon. She describes, "the depression in the office chair matched the depression in my heart as I realized the magnitude of the work ahead" (Peterson, 2013, p. 75). Peterson sought out hope and building relations as key to transforming a school and community in distress. Peterson (2013) states, "I need to sustain my spirit and that of the students and community. I needed hope; so did my students and their families. My students needed to be cared for as human beings, not just consider test score or poverty index rates" (Peterson, 2013, p. 75). After five months of agreeing to serve as the temporary principal she reached a turning point:

I wasn't sure my sprit could thrive as I kept confronting the disparities between wealthy

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and poor schools in our district, the enormity of our education goals, and the limits of our

support and the needs of our families and the scant services available to them. (Peterson,

2013, p. 76)

She asked the superintendent to start the search for a permanent principal and met with her

community. The community asked her to stay and Peterson came back, accepted the permanent

principalship, and remained for four years. She said factors that helped her avoid burnout were

the members of her community, the support of her superintendent, and her direct supervisor,

"who regularly stopped by with a cup of coffee for me—not to monitor me or tell me what to do,

but to see how I was" (Peterson, 2013, p. 77). She states the book, *The Impossible Will Take a

Little While: A Citizen's Guide to Hope in a Time of Fear*, helped her remember how to respond

with compassion to the violence in her school, facilitated her ability to forgive people, including

herself, and to focus on hope.

Burnout

Research on principal burnout continues to draw on research from teacher burnout. Some

research indicates the conditions of the principal contribute to principal burnout (Gmelch &

Gates, 1998; Levin & Bradley, 2019; Tichatonga, 1999; Whitaker, 1996). In Australia, Beausaert

et al. (2016) conducted an empirical longitudinal study of four years (2011-2014) across four

waves in Australia's primary (n = 3572) and secondary (n = 2660) schools to understand the

effects of support on stress and burnout in school principals. They found that principals' strong

connection with their communities causes stress and the social support from colleagues was

found to be a buffer against stress and burnout. Beausaert et al. (2016) state, "[t]he results of this

study highlight the importance of having social support from colleagues to deal with the daily

burden of work and prevention of burnout in the long run" (p. 361). When principals lack or lose social support from colleagues, they will be more likely to burnout over time.

Personal characteristics such as age, gender, and years of experience have been examined related to job burnout with mixed results. Two researchers theorized that lack of experience could lead to higher levels of burnout (Callison, 1993; Linthicum, 1994). Kelley and Gill (1993), however, found that a longer tenure indicated higher burnout levels. The role of that gender plays in burnout is unclear. Although some researchers found higher rates of burnout for males (Thompson, 1985), others have reported higher rates for females (Blix et al., 1994; Kelley & Gill, 1993). According to Carruth (1997), emotional exhaustion is the key variable in impending burnout, and his study of high school principals in Los Angeles found that women experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion than men. Carruth (1997) asserts while men and women both experience burnout, women tend to be more aware of it.

Combs et al. (2009) quantitative study examined the relationship between gender, age, and years of experience for elementary principals. Their study comprised female (n=164) and male (n=82) with a mean age of 40.67 and 7.92 years of experience. The mean of the school's student population was 533 in 43% rural, 30% urban and 26% suburban areas. Combs' study found principals experience varying levels of burnout: most principals (n=147) had low levels of burnout, about a quarter of principals (n=61) experienced moderate burnout and, a smaller number of principals (n=20 principals) experienced high levels of burnout. "Principals identified with more burnout had lower levels of morale and career satisfaction. Challenges noted by principals experiencing high burnout were categorized as motivating teachers and balancing a variety of responsibilities" (Combs et al., 2009 p. 12). Such findings support the Job Demands-Response Model that postulates burnout occurs when the demands of the job exceed one's

capacity and available resources (Demerouti et al., 2001). Combs et al. (2009) concluded that gender and age were inconclusive as predictors of burnout.

Individuals suffering from burnout generally exhibit symptoms in five areas: physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). The symptoms should not be considered discrete, but multifaceted with blurred distinctions at their intersections. Brock and Grady (2002) beckon school leaders to be conscious of how we respond to stress as it affects others: "A leader who displays stress-filled behaviors creates a stress-filled school environment with high incidence of teacher burnout" (p. 111). Stress and burnout may impact health and may be transmissible, potentially negatively impacting a school community.

The understanding of burnout continues to be refined; further studies on principal burnout and secondary trauma indicate that gender does have an impact. Given the double-bind that principals operate in patriarchal structures, women feel that they need to outperform their male counterparts. This perception causes women to drive themselves often at the expense of their health. In addition, in some cases, Leitner et al. (1994) found that women feel powerless and less influential than men in their working situations and experience more burnout than men.

In a cross-cultural empirical study about what makes for greater leadership sustainability, Bottery et al. (2018) identified eight threats to sustainability that were common to principals in the U.K. and Hong Kong:

1. Damage to government/educator relationships

2. Differences in perceptions of the purpose of the leadership role

3. Increased accountability and surveillance

4. Increased use of power rather than persuasion to effect changes

5. Increasing complexity of the role

6. Growth of blame and guilt cultures

7. Excessive workload

In Bottery et al. (2018) case study of the 17 principals, they found that at the micro, meso, and macro levels these elements discourage school leaders' sustainability. They found the purpose of the role as well as the way leaders used persuasion versus power caused them stress and to burnout. Appendix D summarizes the strategies and tools they identified that helped sustain their leadership.

Secondary Trauma

Secondary trauma has been described by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) as "the emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the first-hand trauma experiences of another" (NCTSN, 2016, p. 73). Compassion fatigue has been adopted to include aspects of both secondary trauma and burnout: "feelings of hopelessness and difficulties in dealing with work or in doing your job effectively" (Stamm, 2010, p. 13). Secondary Stress Reaction encompasses vicarious trauma, secondary trauma, and compassion fatigue, and is defined as:

> [t]he emotional cost of caring: A response to the cumulative experience of empathic engagement with people who are suffering and/or struggling – the personal experience resulting from helping or wanting to help the person in need. (NCTSN, 2016, p. 73)

Examining the effects of secondary trauma for school leaders is an under-researched area. Most of the research resides in the field of human services in "helping professions" such as psychology, social work, and medicine. Principals, like those in "helping professions," spend time addressing problem-solving activities, learn about student trauma, and become frustrated and overwhelmed with the difficulty of resolving these complex problems. The exposure to

secondary trauma can take a severe emotional toll on professionals working in human service institutions (Conrad & Kellar-Guenther, 2006; Sprang et al., 2011). In addition, the NCTSN states, "[a]ny professional who works directly with traumatized children and is in a position to hear the recounting of traumatic experiences, is at risk for secondary traumatic stress. That being said, risk appears to be greater among women and among individuals who are highly empathetic by nature or have unresolved personal trauma" (NCTSN, 2016, n.d.).

DeMatthews et al. (2019) study elucidates principals reflecting a Mestiza consciousness, meaning the various equity issues confronting Mexican and Mexican American students and school leaders. The study analyzed 86 principals in one urban school district in Ciudad Juarez, Texas and investigated the burnout and secondary trauma rates of principals compared with other human services professionals. They designed a sequential mixed-method that included collective quantitative survey data along with in depth interviews of two Mexican American principals. In their study, principals "demonstrated a heartfelt commitment to addressing social justice issues in their school and community and maintained an ability to endure despite the lack of resources and support" (DeMatthews et al., 2019, p. 696). They found that although most principals reported low rates of burnout and secondary trauma, follow up interviews revealed that newer (five or fewer years of experience) principals had significant exposure to trauma. Their findings elucidate that "principals' overall years of experience was negatively correlated with burnout, while the number of years a principal spent at a particular school was positively correlated with burnout" (DeMatthews et al., 2019, p. 687). More experienced principals (five years or more) had lower levels of burnout in contrast to early career principals. The experiences attributed to compassion fatigue were acute or chronic problems outside of the principal's control (e.g., students with home-life issues in Mexico, social services lack of response, child exposed to

physical abuse, students and families in need of mental health support, students/families in need of food, housing medical attention, parents/family separated due to deportation or legal matters).

Similar to some of the unhealthy coping mechanisms found in Theoharis (2009) work on social justice leaders, one principal in the study used alcohol and worked longer hours. In addition, both principals internalized their stress "… not finding sufficient ways to process, understand or let go of trauma" (DeMatthews et al., 2019, p. 694). The study concludes, "recognizing that further research is needed in how secondary trauma and burnout impact principals as well as what support can be provided to help maintain healthy lifestyles to persist on the job" (DeMatthews et al., 2019, p. 697). In addition, they imply that district must take a proactive approach to support the mental health needs of principals and provide pre-service training on these issues. "Principals are positioned to support students, families, and counselors, but in doing so are exposed to trauma" (DeMatthews et al., 2019, p. 684). Principals require self-care so that they are able to take care of themselves and their communities.

Self-Care

Taking care of yourself doesn't mean me first, it means me too.
–L.R. Knost

Theoharis (2009) identifies professional and personal strategies that can support social justice leaders in sustaining justice and equity in schools. Theoharis' case study and the others identified in the literature (Bonomo, 2016; Bottery et al., 2018; Brock & Grady, 2002; Cabeen, 2018; Gardiner et al., 2000; Harding, 2016; Mahfouz, 2018; Wells & Klocko, 2018) are summarized in Appendix D.

Appendix D: Characteristics of Strategies and Tools for Self-Care & Sustainability is a breakdown of the literature specific to self-care in this literature review. The summary includes the purpose of the study, setting and participants, and methods and findings and is a

comprehensive summary of the literature about self-care I read, reviewed, and analyzed the strategies and tools leaders can use for sustainability.

The context of leadership matters in structuring a response to attending to school leader's sustainability and care. Bottery et al. (2018) argue, "it may then not only differ from culture to culture, but also from person to person, and it is hugely important not to impose personally held cultural assumptions about threats to leadership sustainability upon the policies and practices of others" (p.145). Furthermore, the emerging case studies on self-care and sustainability (as cited previously and summarized in Appendix D) have different purposes, use differing methods and conceptual frames, and, not surprisingly, expose different nuances of self-care and sustainability in their findings. As Brock and Grady (2002) suggest, these strategies are presented not as a cure but as a preventive measure to avoid burn out.

Taken together, the writings on self-care and sustainability—practical, normative, and empirical—bring a set of consistent patterns and common themes about the nature of self-care for leadership in schools to the surface. These themes are: appropriate time for self (your passions and family), self-efficacy, time and task management, networks and mentors, space and time to reflect, and mindfulness. In addition, some authors demonstrate how race and gender impact these strategies.

Leaders Take Time for Themselves and Family

Taking time for self is not selfish; it is a professional safeguard. Appropriating time for self and family is a strategy that keeps social justice school leaders renewed so they can re-engage in the difficult work (Bonomo, 2016; Brock & Grady, 2002; Cabeen, 2018; Theoharis, 2009). Taking time to connect to passions (such as exercise, making art, or connecting with nature) is a healthy and proactive way to attend to stress. Cabeen (2018) advises,

Build time in your calendar to commit to your passions. Attendance at school events,

field trips, and board meetings may pull us out of balance, so it's important to be

intentional about our routines. Make time for exercise and family interactions. Good

health is essential to the ability to do our job and must be a priority. (n.d.)

Cabeen (2018) suggests we conduct a "self-care check-up" if we have not made time for

ourselves. She urges educational leaders to put ourselves first on calendar because the

demanding job may consume every minute. A study by Bonomo (2016) found that establishing

boundaries, or designating times for personal and professional balance, was important to

participants/leaders. Brock and Grady (2002) recommend "escaping," on and off the job, or

scheduling a quiet time for relaxation at work each day. Theoharis (2009) reports social justice

principals in his study were able to maintain an equilibrium by prioritizing life outside of school,

using mindful diversions (e.g., reading a good book, having dinner with friends), engaging in

regular physical activity, and providing for others in a service in their community. He cautions

against potentially harmful behaviors such as working harder and drinking alcohol.

Leaders Focus on What They Can Change

Educational leaders focus on change efforts in the locus of their control. They reframe

how they address tasks and decisions (Aguilar, 2018; Daloisio, 2017; Superville, 2018). Bonomo

(2016) affirms this assertion and cautions to "prioritize one's actions and be deliberate in acting

to accomplish the most important tasks" (p. 129). In addition, the principals in Bonomo's study

used self-awareness and self-efficacy to help them achieve life balance. Brock and Grady (2002)

assert, "[I]f you can solve the situation, solve it. However, the only behavior you can change is

your own. If you don't have the power to change a situation, such as an organizational structure,

state mandates, or budget allotments, focus on what you can change" (Brock & Grady, 2002, p.

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68). Cabeen (2018) applies a mindset strategy to reframe work tasks: "[an] example, instead of writing, 'yet another parent conference,' I write, 'looking forward to creating a stronger connection with a parent through relationship-building at parent conference" (n.d.). These strategies offer insights on how we may engage differently with our work as educational leaders.

Leaders Establish Schedules and Prioritize

Not having enough time to get the job done is by far the most prevalent concern of teachers and educational leaders. Bonomo (2016) found that principals who were able to achieve personal and professional balance exercised specific strategies for time and task management, using apps, calendars, lists, and communication with constituents. Brock and Grady (2002) point to effective time management as a skill that leaders can hone to help reduce stress. Cabeen (2018) recommends building routines to help meet the challenges of the job, and Harding (2016) espouses a systemic approach to support leaders, wherein the principal's supervisors leverage the principal's time. He suggests this can be accomplished by adding flexibility to the work schedule, traveling to principal sites, creating quality collaboration time, and keeping meetings short. In addition, Harding (2016) suggests that district's adjust board agendas so that principal-related items are discussed first, systems are established to buffer demands from the board, and challenging parents are referred to district offices. These strategies support the time and task management of leaders.

Leaders Make Connections and Network

Making connections with other principals provides a support structure for educational leaders (Brock & Grady, 2002; Cabeen, 2018; Wells & Klocko, 2018). Cabeen (2018) writes,

[a]bout three years ago, I was struggling to figure out how to get it all done at school and

at home. I contacted two other principals within my district whom I had admired

throughout my career, to find out how they balanced school leadership and parenting.

What started as a dinner to help me with immediate problems became a monthly event

where we share our experiences. (p. 1)

Wells and Klocko (2018) identified how practicing mindfulness in a small group helped

principals thrive and stay in the profession. Brock and Grady (2002) assert that the use of

networks to share similar problems, ideas, and successes helped address principal stress.

Gardiner et al. (2000) studied fifty-five school administrators who were mentoring women into

school leadership and identified networking as an important support for women of color leaders.

They stress that "gaining access is probably as important for women aspirants seeking to enter an

'old boys' network, but as our protégés reported, it is even more important for person of color

who must negotiate entry into a white male-dominated hierarchy" (Gardiner et al., 2000, p. 181).

The use of small networks to share experiences and mindfulness strategies is important for

school leaders and even more vital for leaders of color.

Mentoring

Mentoring can be a vehicle for transformation and change in education leadership.

Gardiner et al. (2000) discuss the power of women supporting women. They write, "[m]entors

have the special capacity to help women to garner the political support that they need from

others, by sharing the inside information about the organization" (Gardiner et al., 2000, p. 27).

They found that the women principals in their study "don't like 'playing games' or spending

time with politics. They believed their own work as an educator and leader should be enough"

(Gardiner et al., 2000, p. 106). Blackmore (2013) argues that women need to engage in the

political arena, affirming, "[w]hile juggling internal and external organizational challenges, it

takes significant political acumen to educate for more equitable social and democratic change"

(p. 151). Mentors from inside the organization provide leaders political insights to help navigate between the local school spaces and external organizational changes.

Space and Time to Reflect

Bottery et al. (2018) assert that leaders need a space and time to reflect on problems as an element to help sustain school leaders. They used a portrait approach, in which principals had a non-judgmental space to reflect on themselves and their performance:

> The portrait approach provides such intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and professional space. It champions the need for leadership privacy and places the notion of trust center stage. It celebrates the idea that the core of educational activity and achievement is not achieved through abstract visions, strategies, or process, but through people. It provides a space where individuals can reflect upon themselves and their unique contribution the educational process. (Bottery et al., 2018, p. 45)

Self-care and social justice leadership require a safe space to first learn about one's leadership. Theoharis (2009) notes, "[a]long with taking care of self, fostering resilience is creating a place for the discussion, development, and teaching of strategies to advance justice in the face of resistance" (p. 127). In addition to providing a space and time for school leaders, building a culture of wellness is equally important. Harding (2016) writes, "[o]ur challenge is to structure the leadership role to promote life balance. By building a culture that supports life balance for our leaders, we promote sustained improvement in our schools" (Harding, 2016, p. 10). Providing a space to reflect on oneself supports individual and collective wellness.

Leaders Practice Mindfulness

Mindfulness strategies that build leaders' self-awareness appear as perhaps the most prevalent theme in the literature. Wells and Klocko (2018) write, "[m]indfulness and self-care

may support the development of resilience in principals" (p. 164). Cabeen (2018) affirms this and asserts being mindful helps build awareness of your mind and body. Mahfouz's (2018) study of thirteen principals found mindfulness practices supported school leaders' ability to develop skills such as emotion regulation and self-awareness.

The burgeoning body of work on self-care, while relatively new, can be inspiring; however, its application in the field remains frustrating in many ways. The lack of a holistic model leads to imprecision and conflicting strategies. For one thing, theorists and researchers both tend to focus on different facets of self-care and sustainability (technical skill such as time and task management, networks, mindfulness). Further, although this work has generated many normative quick fixes to leverage managerial and operational tasks and manage time more efficiently, it has produced very few specifics for its enactment. Furman (2012), Theoharis (2009), and Marshall and Oliva (2010) provide excellent starting points for analysis and design. I look specifically at professional development and supporting school leaders to delineate a conceptual space, an *Espacio Sano* (sane space), a sacred and safe place for educational leaders to develop these capacities and be a resource to one another so that they can be empowered and remain engaged in social justice leadership.

Summary of Self-Care

In this section, I described research that helps us understand educator stress, burnout, and secondary trauma, and I used the work of self-care and sustainability to inform my study. I anchor school leadership in social justice leadership as a leading edge in moving the largely psychological literature of Gilligan (1982), Bass (2012), Noddings (1984), and Sosa-Provencio (2017), as well as the self–care literature of Bottery et al. (2018), Bonomo (2016), Brock & Grady (2002), Cabeen (2018), Gardiner et al. (2000), Harding (2016), Mahfouz (2018), and

Wells and Klocko (2018), to a socio-political space—this new space called the *Espacio Sano* (sane space) (see Figure 8). Much of the extant research points to individuals building resilience. Others say that networks are critical. Either way, the self-care that individual school leaders practice may not be able to compensate for underlying structural issues of patriarchy in our educational system. Gardiner et al. (2000) suggest that women make changes to education administration from "… the borders and margins…" (p. 1). I postulate that mentoring and supporting our school leaders should occur from the inside the organization. This calls for a both/and approach to reform, a new way of attending to the personal and professional needs of school leaders in our educational structures. I suggest that this new way of being and structuring professional learning communities as networks of sustainability and self-care take place in an *Espacio Sano* (sane space). "Self-care creates the environment that not only benefits the client but also the individual clinician and the organization" (Sansbury et al., 2015, p. 120). It emerges as a structural way of reinventing self-care as *collective* care.

Espacio Sano

Keep some room in your heart for the unimaginable.
—Mary Oliver

The difficulty of defining the concept of *Espacio Sano* (sane space) is an opportunity. The concept of *Espacio Sano* (sane space), derived from multiple intersections of theory and practice, means a sane space, a sacred place, a humanizing healing space, a *sitio*, a place where school leaders openly engage in *lenguas* (discourse) using *testimonios* (storytelling) and attend to personal and professional self-care so that they can fortify themselves and each other to be social justice leaders.

In reviewing literature of World 3, third space, gracious space, *sitios, lenguas,* and discourse, social design experiment, and sacred space, capturing the essence of *Espacio Sano*

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The Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Espacio Sano

Self-care

CONTEXT

WOMEN

Social
Justice
Leadership
(SJL)

AS SOCIAL JUSTICE LEADERS
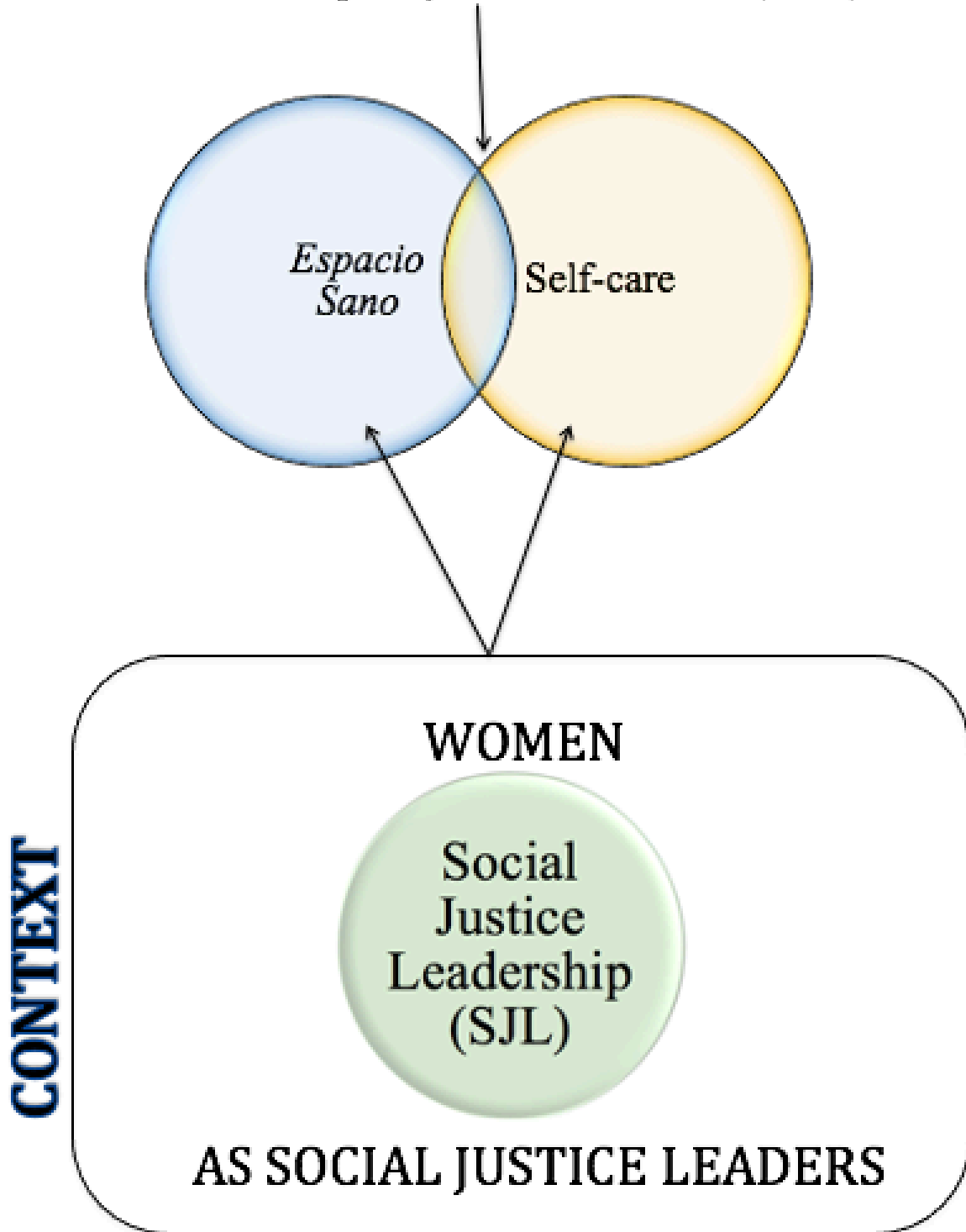
Figure 8. Conceptual framework of this study: the intersection of *Espacio Sano* and self-care.

(sane space) is problematic. First, few empirical studies use the term; second; the concept is not unidimensional, whereas I present it as three-dimensional concept.

World 3

Modern philosopher Karl Popper "proposed that the products of the human mind can be considered a third world (World 3), both autonomous of the physical world (World 1) and of the world of thought and feelings (World 2), and real because it can produce effects on both the other worlds. Popper asserted "the growth of knowledge needs not only the physical world and the world of thought processes *but also* the traditions of knowledge he will come to call World 3" (Boyd, 2016, p. 227, [italics in original]). Popper argued that (World 3) largely controls World 2 through language, theories, religion, myths, arts, and all the other public products of the human mind. Like Popper, I conceptualize this *Espacio Sano* (sane space) as a heuristic to aid the understanding of how it can provide a place for school leaders to attend to their personal and professional learning. I acknowledge that *Espacio Sano* (sane space) is an obscure term. In the next section, I refer to other scholars who contribute to this concept of third space (Gutiérrez, 2016; Hulme et al., 2009; Pour-Khorshid, 2018; Romero, Khalif, & et al., 2016) and articulate how *Espacio Sano* (sane space) is as yet not quite an imaginable place for school leaders; however, through the use of *testimonios* (storytelling), dynamic mindfulness, and self-care strategies, we can create an *Espacio Sano* with leaders to care for self and each other in the work of social justice leadership.

Third Space

A third space is defined as a place where members of a community come together through sharing stories to create a hybrid space of identity and power. Coined by Bhabba (1994) and born of sociocultural theory, the co-created space is intercultural and suggests a place where

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persons can connect, negotiate, and renew. For example, Hulme et al. (2009) used action learning in a focus group of six regional authorities and Northwest of England University to formulate responses to Every Child Matters (ECM), a 2003 United Kingdom government initiative of England and Wales. A requirement in ECM was for inter-agency and multi-professional working. Their empirical action research sought to understand to what extent the professional knowledge of practitioners involved in integrating children services influenced local policy. In addition, they sought to understand how the six authorities differing understanding of the issues involved in multi-professional working competing cultures and policy direct in each local context. They argued "this new terrain requires new forms of collaborative working and a commitment to the co-construction of knowledge" (Hulme et al., 2009, p. 539). Hulme et al. (2009) used practical concepts in thinking about learning and knowledge creation from various scholars, including the hybridity theory presented by Bhabba (1994). Savin-Baden (2008) explores learning spaces and knowledge creation with the idea of dialogic spaces and (Aoki, 1996; Bhabha, 1994) presents hybridity theory.

Bhabha (1994) developed his version of third space as a place of radical openness and hybridity. Hybridity was "…the spaces of resistance being opened at the margins of the new cultural politics" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 33). Another view came from Schön's (1987) concept of *practicum*, a setting designed to take into account "indeterminate zones of practice" characterized by uncertainty, uniqueness, and value conflict" (pp. 6-7). In addition, Hulme et al. (2009) integrate the term third space as Steiner's postulation that "language when conceived of in this way is transformative and generative" (p. 540). Furthermore, they incorporate Scharmer's (2001) concept of platforms, "where practitioners could think and develop, individually and collectively, and where the process of change could be nurtured—drawing on, but not

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constrained and dominated by—the influence of current practice or the requirements of policy to initiate 'solutions' or solve 'problems'" (p. 541). Bhabha's (1994) *hybridity* and Scharmer's (2001) *platform* in essence becomes "in-between-ness" of several different sources of knowledge.

Integrating these theories, Hulme et al. (2009) offer three applications for their study:

1. A *recognized place*, in which professionals could 'hang the confusion and chaos' of the workplace for a time while they thought through their practices.

2. A *navigational space*, a platform that allowed for travel in between and into different discourse communities and associated professional knowledges; and

3. A *conversational space*, where cultural, social, and epistemological change takes place as competing knowledges and discourses are translated, contested, and drawn closer together. (p. 541)

Hulme (2009) emphasized that their third space theory supported their approach as it placed an emphasis on "the importance of a space for dialogue between participants that is safe, secure, and supportive, space that 'stands in between' the formal areas of practice" (p. 541). A key finding in their study was "providing sufficient time and space to shift, or allow adaptation of, the perceptions of leaders for a redefining of objective realities, is an important feature of developing integrated and trans-professional approaches" (Hulme, 2009, p. 545). They found participants in the project were aware of the positive potential of this collaborative form of professional learning. They concluded the study stating that, "it is possible to develop more person-centered, integrated approaches if appropriate platforms are created for professionals to

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come together to engage in critical reflection" (Hulme, 2009, p. 547). Gracious space offers a way of engaging in a space to create the conditions for positive collaboration.

Gracious Space

Creating *Espacio Sano* (sane space) is possible through using the work of the Center for Ethical Leadership's gracious space, defined as a spirit and a setting where we invite the "stranger" and learn in public (Hughes & Grace, 2010). The idea of spirit is how we show up, the characteristics and qualities that we each embody, be it compassion, humor, curiosity, or another. Setting is the physical dimension that can support or impede the connection and work with others, and the way we endow the setting with openness – literal and figurative-- to influence participants' thinking and feelings. Inviting the stranger comes from Parker Palmer's term, "stranger," meaning an individual who is not typically involved in the conversation. This is someone with a different perspective, skin color, gender, background, or any other quality that may make them different. Inviting the stranger is being intentional about inviting difference into the space to accomplish the work. However, the stranger can be more abstract in the sense of a different idea that is possible to imagine or negotiate.

Finally, gracious space incorporates learning in public. Being in gracious space means to allow oneself to be vulnerable, to accept not knowing and being uncertain. It is in this public learning place that one lets go of the 'right way' of doing things and considers other opinions. It is being collaborative and listening deeply to the diversity in the gracious apace. Hughes (2017), one of the primary authors of gracious space, said in a TEDx Talk, "I believe we are continuing to find ways to connect, to care for each other, and be kind to each other. I believe this is the next stage of evolution. I believe gracious space is our way to get there" (n.d.). Gracious space and Community Learning Exchange (CLE) pedagogies became a part of the platform for establishing

and maintaining *Espacio Sano* (sane space) where the CPR group attended to individual and collective self-care.

The use of gracious space supports Guajardo et al.'s (2016) Community Learning Exchange (CLE) theory of change became a central vehicle for building relationships. They write, "[t]he growth and development we need best occurs when we trust each other enough, and when we challenge ourselves to live in closer alignment with our life-sustaining principles and values" (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 33). Guajardo et al. (2016) further elaborate that gracious space is not meant to be a shield, but rather a place to challenge each other. They write,

> …we strove to be very intentional about something I had heard Miguel Guajardo say, [w]e strive to create gracious space not with the goal of becoming safe and comfortable with each other, but in order to become safe and secure enough in our relationships so we can better challenge ourselves to become better friends, better neighbors, better parents, and better change agents. (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 61)

Espacio Sano (sane space) envelops gracious space. It is a sane space, a *sitio* (space) where *lenguas* (discourse), *testimonios* (storytelling), and knowledge get interpreted and disputed and we learn in public with humility.

Sitios y Lenguas

Using a Chicana feminist perspective and theories of *sitios* y *lenguas* (space and discourse), Romero, Denicolo, and et al. (2016) shift understanding of teaching and learning through a qualitative case study of a first grade Spanish /English bilingual classroom. Their study included observations of one first grade bilingual classroom in a mid-sized urban community in the midwestern United States over two years (2011-2012) and thirteen parent interviews. They examined how *sitios y lenguas* (space and discourse) functions as tools to identify ways that

home language and cultural backgrounds are valued resources for learning. Romero, Denicolo, and et al. (2016) argue that "*sitios y lenguas* as a decolonial tool and a site of struggle can exist within bilingual classrooms where *sitio* are constructed as spaces that empower the student to become the subject and creator of their own knowledge" (p. 443). The identification of *sitios* (space) helped the researchers examine how instructional practices created opportunities for *lenguas* (discourse) to emerge. They state that "*sitios y lenguas* as a theoretical lens re-conceptualizes the learning of bilingual children and the pedagogical practices of bilingual teachers" (Romero, Denicolo, & et al., 2016, p. 444).

Testimonio has been adopted by Chicana feminists and used as a method of sharing one's own story to express personal experience from a marginalized space (Latina Feminist Group, 2001; Pérez, 1999; Romero, Denicolo, & et al., 2016; Saavedra, 2011). De los Rios (2013) noted that "students were able to 'talk back' to repressive structures (i.e., racism and sexism) and 'become stronger' in dealing with these issues at home and society at large" (p. 68). Romero, Denicolo, and et al. (2016) found that "through the application of *sitios y lenguas* [to a bilingual classroom], we were able to see how the decisions and choices the teacher made positioned emergent bilingual students' voices at the center of learning" (p. 458). Romero and colleagues add to this emerging concept of *Espacio Sano* (sane space) by using a Chicana feminist epistemology. Bhabha (1994) identified third space as a place of radical openness and of resistance being opened at the borders of the new cultural politics. The concept of redesigning learning spaces to be radically open and syncretistic (blending canonical and non-canonical ways of learning) are found in the work of Gutiérrez (2008) and reveal a possibility of creating an *Espacio Sano* (sane space) in this study.

Social Design Experiment

Gutiérrez's (2016) empirical study examined how to redesign learning spaces so that non-dominant student and English Language Learner voice and knowledge is leveraged. Gutiérrez (2016) defines the "concept of *third space,* the notion of *re-mediation*, or the development of powerful literacies for students from nondominant communities" (p. 187). Gutiérrez (2016) examines the affordance of syncretic approaches to literacy. In addition, her epistemology is aligned with Chicana feminists; she takes into account the history, participants, resources, diversity, and possibilities. Gutiérrez (2016) writes, "[f]or this perspective, social transformation shifts from focus on fixing people and their communities to a focus on reorganization of systems of activity in which participants can become designers of their own futures" (p. 192). Gutiérrez (2016) and Romero, Denicolo and et al. (2016) use a cultural historical activity theory to situate themselves with constituents. Gutiérrez (2016) "seeks to transform social institutions and their practice through mutual relations of exchange with constituents as valued stakeholders and partners" (p. 192). She created a social design experiment that would, "design for resilience and sustainability across time and illustrate interventions aimed at local and institutional change…they aim at broader social change through realizations of possible futures" (Gutiérrez, 2016, p. 192). Honoring the people, the place, and seeking to transform social change through mutual exchanges may occur in a radically redesigned learning and leading space. An example of such a sacred space is demonstrated in a Pour-Khorshid (2018) study.

Sacred Space

Pour-Khorshid (2018) engaged in a qualitative ethnographic case study of a nine-member (five women, three males, and one trans-masculine) racial affinity group called H.E.L.L.A. (Healing, Empowerment, Love, Liberation, and Action) Educators of Color. Pour-

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Khorshid examined the use of a critical professional development and grassroots activism to center healing from the impact of oppression. Pour-Khorshid (2018) describes how the group explicitly centered the members' voices, needs, and collective knowledge by: "(a) the writing and sharing of *testimonies,* and (b) critical camaraderie fostered through fugitive learning" (p. 322). Through the use of testimonies "members regularly shared the difference between their complex experiences, navigating a socially stratified society. This *praxis* allowed for members to show up "whole" rather than as fragmented identities, which is how they often felt in other spaces that they navigated" (Pour-Khorshid, 2018, p. 323). One member of the Pour-Khorshid (2018) study described H.E.L.L.A. as a space where [he] could "move beyond the 'usual rules maintaining White supremacy' and 'get down' to thinking about education for a liberatory lens" (p. 235). This H.E.L.L.A. space was a critical humanizing and healing space for their sustainability. The study concluded by discussing how and why racially affinity spaces for educators of color are critical to support their personal, political, rational, and pedagogical growth, which has implications for their retention and leadership within the field.

Summary of Espacio Sano

The concept of *Espacio Sano* (sane space) is manifested in research and practice. In its infancy, the concept of *Espacio Sano* is emerging from the intersections of these theories and practices (see Figure 9). Conceptually, it means a sane space, a sacred place, a humanizing healing space. Elements of *Espacio Sano* include *sitio*, a place where school leaders use *lenguas* and *testimonios* (storytelling) to share their stories. *Espacio Sano* became a central concept and practice as we co-constructed a place of hope and possibility for professional and personal development for school leaders so that they can strengthen ourselves and each other to be social justice leaders.
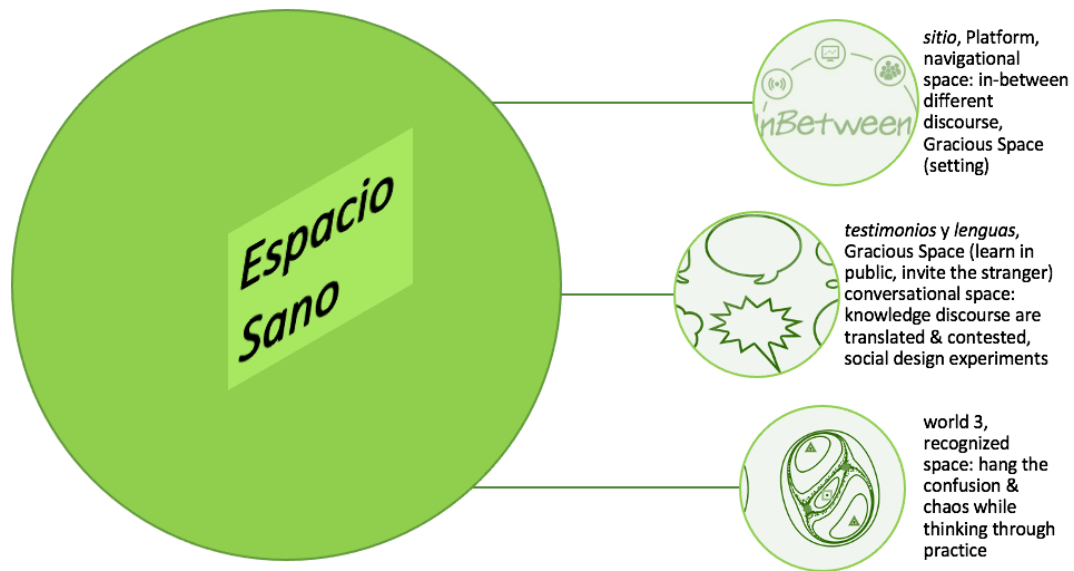
Figure 9. Espacio Sano (sane space) an emerging concept based on the intersections of these

theories and practices.

Chapter Summary

The literature review has revealed several key points. To begin, I framed the review in the social justice framework and *praxis* for school leaders. Self-care and personal sustenance are key educational leadership dimensions that are a foundation for effective leadership work.

The focus of practice (FoP) is anchored in both social justice leadership (SJL) theoretical framework of *praxis*, in the Freireian sense, involving both reflection and action" (Furman, 2012, p. 191). This framework of leadership specifically addresses how leaders' use of strategies both professionally and personally sustain them in the work. As gender and race identity factors impact leadership, an ethic of care as a moral way of leading is a critical component for understanding how women lead. However, as we understand the elements that cause educators stress and sometimes burn out, they need strategies and tools for self-care and sustainability. Lastly, *Espacio Sano* (sane space) is a conceptual understanding of how to co-create a learning network that mitigates the stress factors and, more importantly, how to find a third space in the school leadership terrain.

The nexus of the literature review is how we connect the role of social justice school leaders to gender and race and the ethic of care affect leaders' self-care and how an *Espacio Sano* may offer a space for professional and personal learning. These are multifaceted aspects of school leadership, and being intentional about the blurred distinct intersections allows us to better address the focus of practice (FoP) (see Figure 10). This study incorporates these elements and, by answering the research questions below, adds to the collective knowledge of social justice leadership, self-care, and newly imagined learning spaces for professional and personal learning. This literature review helped frame and inform the participatory action research project

Literature Map

WOMEN as Social Justice Leaders

SJL Framework
SJL Case Studies
Women in Leadership
Women in Business, Politics, and Education
Women's Expereince of Barriers in School Leadership
Feminist Ethic of Care
Women of Color & the Feminist Ethic of Care

Self-Care

Stress
Burnout
Secondary Trauma
Self-Care

Espacio Sano

World 3
Third Space
Gracious Space
Sitios y Lenguas
Testimonios
Social Design Experience
Sacred Spaces

Figure 10. Literature map.

that focuses on the overarching question: *To what extent do social justice focused educational leaders support their individual and collective abilities to manage work-related stress?*

Chapter 3 explores the context of this project in greater detail, including the people and aspects of place. The chapter details the need for increasing educational leaders' (principal and central office) ability to use self-care tools and strategies to better attend to work-related stress. In Chapter 4, research design, I explain the research design to answer the PAR research questions.

CHAPTER 3: CONTEXT OF STUDY

Your sacred space is where you can find yourself again and again.
—Joseph Campbell

This was absolutely the right place, the right group of people, and the right time to take on this focus of practice (FoP). My positions over these past three years—first on the outside and then inside of the work context—made it the right time and place. I initiated the action research project when I was on a sabbatical after a seven-year tenure as a principal at an elementary school. During my sabbatical space, I instigated a sacred space and had the opportunity to analyze the context from a unique perspective. Then I returned as a leadership coach working with fifteen new school site leaders from Pre-K to high school. During the final cycle, I began to work directly with students, teachers, and administrators at a middle school as an instructional coach. In addition, in the twenty plus years I have worked as an educator in this context, I have built relationships with the people involved in the study. Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic and political unrest amplified the need for this focus of practice (FoP).

The underlying premise for this participatory action research project was: *to engage educational leaders in an Equity Centered-Professional Learning Community (EC-PLC) on self-care to support our individual and collective abilities to sustain our work of equity and excellence*. This would take place with a set of urban school leaders. More specifically, the purpose of this study was to learn from a collective group of women leaders how we attended to self-care so that we could better attend to the equity and excellence in schools. This chapter provides an understanding of the diverse context where this project took place, the people, and the spaces we co-created that made up this participatory action research (PAR) project.

In this chapter, I begin with a description of the San Francisco Unified School District, SFUSD, as the backdrop context for this participatory action research (PAR) project. In section

one, I provide a description of the general context of San Francisco where this project took place and provide a history of SFUSD. I then describe the focus of practice (FoP) through the social-political frames at three levels: macro, meso, and micro. In section two, I review the project's Co-Practitioner Researchers (CPR) and how we engaged with each other in an Equity Centered-Professional Learning Community (EC-PLC). In section three, I focus on the specific equity conditions in my context. I describe the assets, resources, and challenges in my setting. Finally, in section four, I discuss my role in this project and how I work with the EC-PLC members as the Co-Practitioner Researchers (CPR).

The Right Place: San Francisco as a Sanctuary City

This section describes the place of this study, San Francisco, California. I then describe the specific district in which the study takes place: San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD). Finally, I describe the workspaces of the Co-Practitioners Researchers (CPR) of this PAR project: central offices (Leadership, Equity, Achievement and Design (LEAD) Transformative Leadership for Equity and Excellence (TLEE), and schools (Yerba Buena Community School and Bayside High School).

San Francisco

The setting is the San Francisco Unified School District located in San Francisco, California, a city of 881,549 people. San Francisco is the land of the Yelamu Native Americans and is currently composed of 40% (352,620) White, 35% (308,542) Asian, 15% (132,232) Latinx, 5% (44,077) African American, and less than 1% (~54) Native American. The city of San Francisco has a minority majority population (Census Reporter, 2019). It is a center for liberal activism in the United States. Politically, the city votes strongly on liberal Democratic lines. In 1989, San Francisco created a sanctuary ordinance to promote trust and cooperation by

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making sure that all residents, regardless of immigration status, feel comfortable and safe accessing city public services.

The city of San Francisco is racially segregated by neighborhood (see Figure 11). The majority of non-Latinx Whites live in the Marina or Pacific Heights neighborhoods; the Latinx population lives primarily in the Mission, Tenderloin, and Excelsior districts; the African American population live mainly in the Bayview/Hunter's Point, Visitation Valley, and Fillmore Districts; and the Asian population is concentrated in the Richmond and Sunset Districts. Many neighborhoods in the Mission and Bayview are being gentrified. Residents in these neighborhoods are being pushed out of their homes because of high rents and are relocating to the east bay. In addition, San Francisco at the time of this writing had 9,784 people who were homeless (Coalition on the Homeless, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic halted in-person instruction in all San Francisco public schools in March of 2020 and instruction at all public schools was online and remote through much of the 2021 school year. The shift to teaching online exposed many inequities in education and health, including the digital divide in our city and nation. For San Francisco Unified School District, students on the east side of the city often lacked internet connection and computers to learn remotely. Further exacerbating the problem, the Latinx and African American populations disproportionately had higher rates of COVID infection. SFUSD reflects the context of San Francisco, both assets and challenges.

Sketching the SFUSD School District Terrain

San Francisco is both a city and county; similarly, the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) is both a district and county office of education. The SFUSD was established in 1851 and has a total enrollment of approximately 54,452 students. The student populations
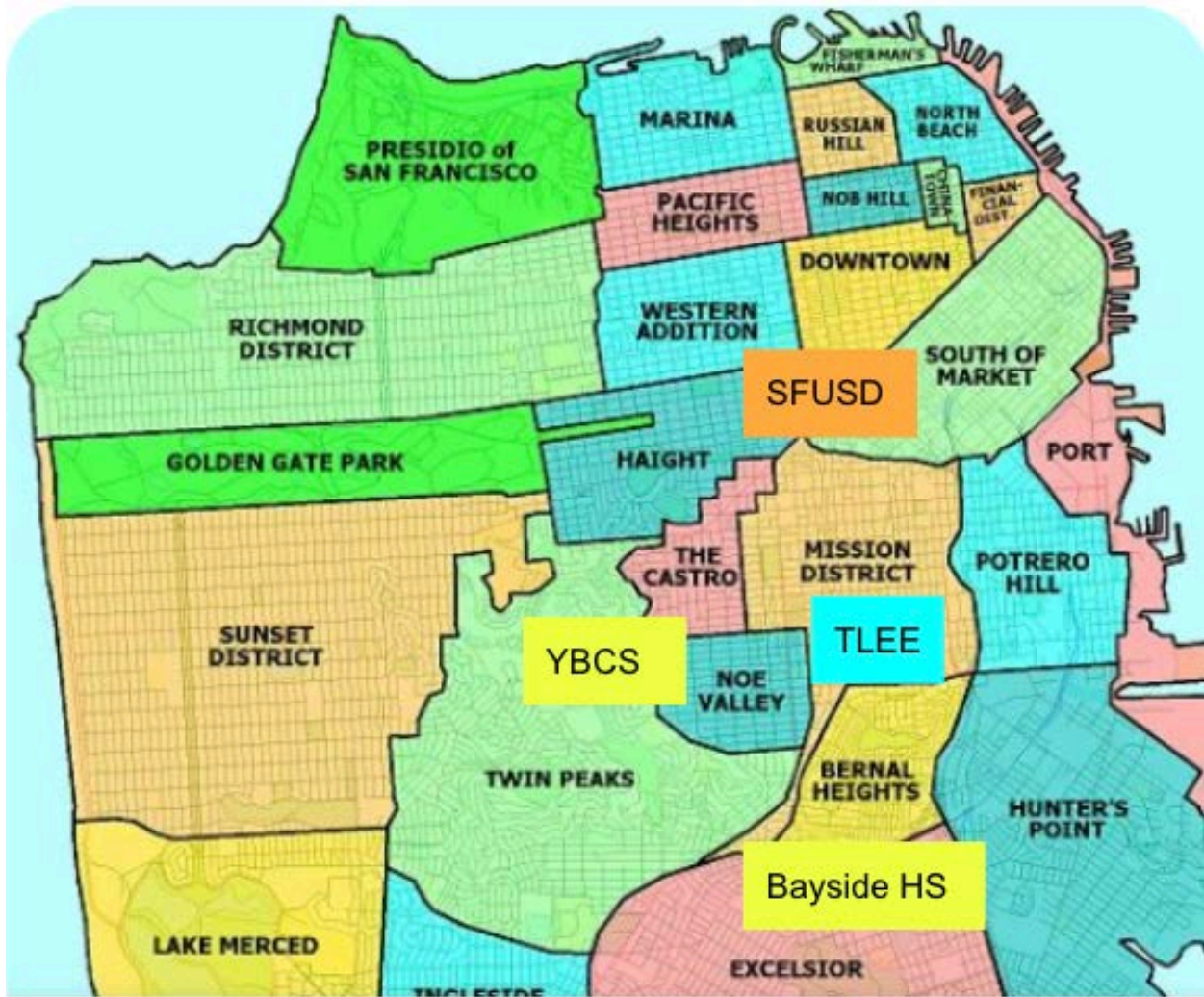
Figure 11. San Francisco neighborhoods and location of schools of PAR participants.

in SFUSD schools differ from the city's racial population: 15% (7,078) are White, 33% (19,298) are Asian, 28% (14,094) are Latinx, 6% (4,025) are African American, and less than 1% (54) are Native American (see Figure 12). There are substantially fewer White students enrolled in the public school system than there are in the city. Over half of the students enrolled in SFUSD public schools are socioeconomically disadvantaged, 24% are English Language Learners (ELL), and 14% are students receiving special education services (SpEd). The SFUSD district has 130 schools and employs a total of 9,837 staff. There are 217 TK-12 school site administrators, 198 central office certificated staff, and 3,672 TK-12 teachers. The SFUSD County of Education also oversees eleven public charter schools. Socioeconomically, over 30% of San Francisco residents enroll their children in private schools, creating additional divisions in our city.

SFUSD follows a hierarchical organizational structure. The superintendent is at the top of the structure followed by deputies and chiefs. The organization follows a firm chain of command and protocols. Historically, the SFUSD central office leadership has been androcentric, informed by leadership that is white, male white, and male norms; in its 170-year history there has only been one female superintendent.

The action research took place across diverse settings, a cross context space of central offices and school sites. The design was deliberate to embody generativity so that we could co-construct meaning dialogically (Freire, 1970). The central office departments that focus on leadership are Leadership, Equity, Achievement, and Design (LEAD) and Transformative Leadership for Equity and Excellence (TLEE). LEAD consists of the administrative office that manages school operations and is headed by assistant superintendents and supported by executive directors. TLEE is a relatively new department created by the Superintendent's office
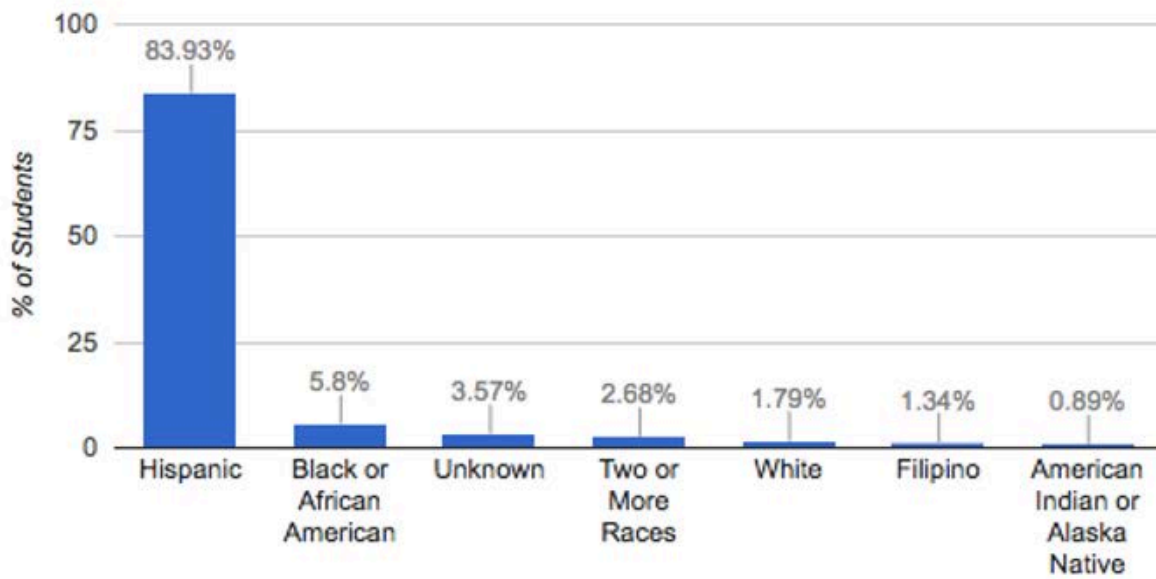
Figure 12. Racial demographics of the San Francisco Unified School District.

to support new administrators. Two school sites are also involved in this project, Yerba Buena Community School (YBCS) and Bayside High School (BHS). I describe each site in detail before introducing the persons in the next section.

Central Office: LEAD

The LEAD department has recently been reorganized. For the past twenty years, these networks and the people who supervise them have been frequently reshuffled, and this constant reshuffling has negatively impacted school leaders and school communities. Almost yearly, principals need to re-establish a relationship with central office leadership and support. Recently (2017-2018), the SFUSD Superintendent proclaimed that network cohorts would stay intact for at least three years in an attempt to stabilize this dynamic.

And assistant superintendent, support by a director, leads each of the networks for Early Education, Middle School, and High School, and five PK-8 network cohorts. Each assistant superintendent manages an average of fourteen schools; they meet with school principals in a cohort once a month as well as in city-wide quarterly meetings. The LEAD office and superintendent fellows, in conjunction with the director of Leadership Development plan city-wide administrative meetings. In my nine years of experience as a principal, these professional development events ranged from actively collaborating with other site principals to inactively "sitting and getting" professional developments. At principal cohort meetings, assistant superintendents try to create agendas tailored to principals, but these meetings are often overwhelmed by requests from other central office departments' compliance updates on systems. Still, assistant superintendents are positioned to lead and create the conditions and climate for the principals in their cohort to learn and collaborate.

Central Office: Transformative Leadership for Equity and Excellence (TLEE)

Transformative Leadership for Equity and Excellence (TLEE) is an innovative department initiated by the Leadership Development Working Group (LDWG). It began in 2017–2018 to address the issue of SFUSD's relatively high leadership turnover rate and establish a plan to leverage leadership in service of SFUSD's equity vision. TLEE's solution is: "if leaders engage in rigorous and personalized support and development during their first several years in an administrative role, they will thrive and be effective in transforming their schools into places where each and every student learns and achieves." (SFUSD, 2021b). Currently, 38 new principals and 41 assistant principals receive monthly professional development and one-on-one coaching from TLEE. Each school site has its own set of contexts and issues.

Yerba Buena Community School

Not only is San Francisco a Sanctuary City to immigrants, but also has a unique campus for newly arrived Spanish-speaking immigrant students. Yerba Buena Community School (YBCS) is located in a cross section of outer Mission and Noe Valley neighborhoods of San Francisco. There are 95 Pre-K to 5th grade students enrolled. The school principal is Claudia Valle who is in her fifth year as principal. YBCS' program design is to help Spanish speaking ELL newcomer students achieve the necessary skills and confidence. Students transfer at the end of one to two years into other SFUSD schools. YBCS has ongoing enrollment as students arrive throughout the school year. Ninety-eight per cent of all YBSC students are far below grade level in their primary language, Spanish. Many are under schooled, have interrupted and sporadic schooling, and are pre-literate.

In 2016-2017, the SFUSD school board threatened this vulnerable community by telling the school they were co-locating a charter school on the campus. The parent advocacy and

leadership of the site principal helped secure a safe space for only YBCS students and families. YBCS provides a wraparound support system to benefit students and their families so they can thrive. YBCS has a full-time parent liaison, wellness center with a half-time nurse, full time social worker, and therapist. YBCS provides extended learning from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. through the ExCEL program. ExCEL after school programs are funded by California's After School Education and Safety, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and 21st Century ASSETS grants and are enhanced by almost 5 million dollars of in-kind and cash contributions from local funders and community agencies. There is no cost to students to participate. The program provides academic, homework support, art, dance, nutrition, cooking, gardening, and performing arts. In addition, the school leverages many community resources and partnerships.

Bayside High School

Bayside High School (Bayside HS) is a comprehensive high school located in the southeast sector of San Francisco. Founded in 1963 and closed in 1980, the school reopened in 1984 as a result of a consent decree ruling between the City of San Francisco and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Bayside HS has had unexpected changes in leadership stemming from a series of first wave (Gitlin & Margonis, 1995) reforms from the central office. The previous Superintendent pulled the ten-year tenured principal out of Bayside to fill an unexpected vacancy at a new middle school. Bayside HS then moved one of their assistant principals into an interim principal role and asked Savannah Travis to step into an assistant principal role. In 2018, Savannah Travis became principal of Bayside HS, when the principal vacated to take on a supervisor position in SFUSD.

The majority of the students at Bayside HS live in Bayview/Hunters' Point, Excelsior/Outer Mission, the Portola, and Visitation Valley. Bayside HS continues to roll out and refine programs that increase its appeal and ability to best serve San Francisco families, particularly the ones who live in the neighborhoods that it serves. Even though the city demographics are shifting rapidly, the current student body of 1,180 students continues to be quite diverse: 48% Asian, 30% Latinx, 8% African American, and 4% Samoan. 66% of the students qualify for free/reduced lunch. Approximately 11% of the students have individualized education plans and 17% are classified as English language learners.

In this section, I described the structure of the district and the schools involved in the project; next I introduce in more detail the women in the project and study.

The Right People: Women Educational Leaders: EC-PLC

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.
—*Helen Keller*

The people closest to the issues are best situated to discover answers (Guajardo et al., 2016) and, working together with the women educational leaders in this PAR, we can improve our individual and collective abilities to attend to work-related stress Bryk et al. (2015) refers to participants in an improvement network as improvers; however, for the purposes of this research I refer to the members of the Co-Practitioner Researchers (CPR) as EC-PLC members. The women educational leaders in the PAR work either in the central office or a school setting. Dr. Elisha Grant, assistant superintendent, works in the Leadership, Equity, Achievement, and Design department (LEAD); Laura Voss, leadership coach, works at Transformative Leadership for Equity and Excellence (TLEE) in the central office; Principal Claudia Valle works at Yerba Buena Community School (YBCS); Principal Savannah Travis works at Bayside High School

(BHS); and I currently work at Victorious Valley Middle School (see Table 2). A fuller account of each person follows. In this section, I describe the demographic and cultural characteristics as. well as the school experiences of the major groups of people in the PAR who are assistant superintendents, principals, and coaches

Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Elisha Grant is an African American cisgender woman assistant superintendent for a network cohort of school principals. She supports seventeen schools throughout the southwest region of San Francisco. A San Francisco native, she began her career at SFUSD in 2000, first as teacher and later as an instructional coach, principal, supervisor, and executive director of the Early Education Department. As assistant superintendent, Dr. Grant's leadership extends outside of SFUSD an adjunct professor, leadership coach, city commissioner, council member, and committee chair within service organizations. Dr. Grant expressed that the central office, with its numerous departments, has the opportunity and need to align its efforts by working together. Because there are so many departments designed to serve schools and support principals, LEAD often has to serve as a buffer, negotiator, and/or custodian for schools. Dr. Grant expressed that central office meetings can be inspiring when all team members are working toward the same goals but can be frustrating when barriers are emphasized rather than possibilities. Dr. Grant is optimistic, exudes a "can-do" attitude, and is determined in her role as assistant superintendent to be an equity warrior.

Leadership Coach

Laura Voss is a White cisgender leadership coach for Transformative Leadership for Equity and Excellence (TLEE). Laura began her teaching career in 2002 immediately after completing college through the Teach for America (TFA) program during a time when teaching

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Table 2

EC-PLC Members of the PAR Project

Name	Role(s)	Department or School	Years in Education
Dr. Elisha Grant	Assistant Superintendent	Leadership, Equity Achievement, Design, (LEAD)	21
Laura Voss	Leadership coach	Transformative Leadership for Equity and Excellence, (TLEE)	19
Claudia Valle	Principal	Yerba Buena Community School, (YBCS)	25
Savannah Travis	Principal	Bayside High School	20
Christina Velasco	Activist Researcher Principal on sabbatical Leadership coach Instructional coach	ECU SFUSD Elementary TLEE Victorious Valley Middle School	24

vacancies were scarce. Laura began in a self-contained 6th grade classroom in East Palo Alto, CA, in a school that served historically vulnerable students and families. She attributes the encouragement and support from TFA coaches as key levers in supporting her when she had career challenges. During her second year as the 6th grade teacher, the school hired a new principal and assistant principal. Laura shared that, "their school leadership modeled for me what heart-centered leadership and leading with asset mindsets looked like" (L. Voss, meeting notes, September 18, 2019). The principal encouraged her to go into leadership. Laura became a TFA Corps member advisor and led a member summer institute in Los Angeles. Laura remembers, "I did not know how to lead and got a lot of feedback from colleagues" (L. Voss, meeting notes, September 18, 2019). She said she hated being a leader; however, her mentors continued to believe in her. Laura regards these school leaders as good friends. In fall of 2006, the principal of her school encouraged Laura to take a literacy coach position. Laura applied to UC Berkeley's Principal Leadership Institute, PLI, and continued to work as a literacy coach.

In 2010 Laura was hired as an assistant principal of a middle school in San Francisco. When the principal left for an assistant superintendent position, Laura was hired as principal for an additional five years. In 2018 Laura left the school site to work as a leadership coach in the TLEE department.

Laura describes her commitment to social and racial justice and her work:

"I have a fierce belief that White people can be and must be a part of the work towards racial justice. We must work deeply and closely in partnership and step up and back in different moments. But we cannot stand back and ask our colleagues of color to carry the work of undoing oppression—we have been upholding and benefiting from White Supremacy Culture for a very long time, and we, in my opinion, must be a part of

dismantling it. I believe that prioritizing my White comfort is one of the most racist

actions I can take. I try to walk into every space with an intention to notice, question, and

interrupt when I see elements of status quo thinking. Even if saying something may not

be perfectly formulated, or if I am afraid of being disliked or judged, I carry an intention

to push through. As a white woman conditioned to avoid conflict at all times, this takes

constant reminding and recentering for me. Some of the ways that I stay centered is by

engaging in White affinity spaces, journaling, reading, listening to podcasts.

My purpose is to work in affinity and across difference to continue to seek ways for

White educators to show up authentically, humbly, and in true deep partnership in the

work of undoing systemic oppression (L. Voss, meeting notes, February 1, 2021).

Principals

Claudia Valle is a Latinx cisgender principal at Yerba Buena Community School

(YBCS). Claudia began her career in education twenty-five years ago. Ms. Valle's roles in

school leadership range from classroom teacher to central office teacher on special assignment to

coach to site principal.

Claudia began her career in SFUSD in 1995 as a first-grade teacher at an elementary

school. Her principal was very supportive and encouraged her to become a math teacher leader.

Claudia then took on a teaching job at a different elementary school and taught a 3rd/4th Spanish

bilingual class. Ms. Valle felt her work environment was very cohesive and an important factor

in her professional growth. Her principal encouraged her to take on further leadership roles with

a project in the central office's Multilingual Programs Department, MPD. In 1999, Claudia had

her first son and continued to work. Three years later, in 2002, Claudia had her second son, and

she took off five years. Ms. Valle shared with our EC-PLC group, "this is when I felt I became a

decent teacher because I had time to reflect and take care of myself and not feel like a chicken without a head" (C. Valle, September 18, 2019). When Claudia returned to work in 2007, she worked part time as an elementary classroom teacher and part time at MPD. In 2013, Claudia left MPD and was hired as a program administrator in a new central office department entitled Access and Equity and worked there for three years. In 2016, Claudia became principal of YBCS. Claudia attributes colleague support and cohesive teams as well as family support as her pillars of strength and hope when she has had career challenges. Claudia is an equity leader who believes every child deserves a high-quality education regardless of their circumstances. Her own experiences in education propelled her into this profession:

> I believe each and every child deserves a quality education and a sense of belonging. This is my charge as a social justice leader. I think I recently discovered another layer of my WHY. As a child, I had to transfer from one school system to another. Upon entering this system, I felt like I wasn't smart, wasn't seen, and that I didn't belong. I think this had a profound effect on why I chose to be an educator. I want children no matter their language, culture, race and/or socio-economic status to feel like they belong when they walk into the building. I work with teachers so they can support each child to feel smart and that even if the work is hard, they will eventually learn the material or complete the task. I'd also have to say, I also went into education thinking about our future. I know the young people I work with every day, year after year, will be the ones to take care of me when I'm older. I want to be a part of what forms them to be reflective, critical thinking, kind, social justice-oriented humans (C. Valle, communication notes, January 30, 2021).

Savannah Travis is an African American cisgender woman principal at Bayside HS.

A native San Franciscan, Savannah began her career at SFUSD in 2001 when as a science teacher at the Bayside HS. Savannah worked as a science teacher for years and took on additional school leadership roles as grade level lead and department chair. Savannah returned to school to earn an MA at UC Berkeley's Principal Leadership Institute, PLI, where she was one of two black females in the program.

When Savannah's principal was unexpectedly moved to a new middle school, the assistant principal became interim principal, and Savannah was asked to become an interim assistant principal. Bayside HS created an additional assistant principal position, and Savannah remained in the position for four years. Two years ago the principal left the position and Savannah was hired as the principal of Bayside. She misses the classroom but feels supported by a network of colleagues. She stated, "a close network of friends has helped" (S. Travis, meeting notes, September 18, 2019).

Savannah began her equity work to engage more African American students in science and over the course of her career she has expanded her social justice leadership to be more comprehensive. She reflects:

I aim to help students access education for the purpose of serving their community. Education to me has the purpose to equip students with skills to advocate for themselves and others, to build and connect communities and to prosper. Students should be able to find their passion and work in service of their communities through that passion. I have always enjoyed teaching even as a high school teacher with middle school students. I have also experienced and witnessed the divide between haves and have nots when it comes to educational resources and opportunities. I initially wanted to be a role model for Black students so they can see themselves as capable students of science. I also wanted to

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help them do science and also learn the tips on how to do school successfully. I have evolved and see that my calling also includes helping students define for themselves what they are passionate about learning and determine what they want for their futures. Then we can help give them the tools to get there (S. Travis, communication notes, January 30, 2021).

Collectively the women leaders of the EC-PLC bring a rich and varied experience to the PAR. The intentional design to bring both central office leaders and school site principals together provided a comprehensive way to address the concerns of how educational leaders individually and collectively attend to work-related stress. Next, I describe the equity assets and challenges of my setting.

The Right Time: Multilayer Context

The project group is connected through an EC-PLC on self-care. The EC-PLC is a networked improvement community (NIC) on self-care (Bryk et al., 2015). The rationale for selecting only women as the Co-Partitioner Researchers (CPR) group was intentional. I set out to create a space for women educational leaders to have a sacred space to speak their truths, to learn from one another, and to be free from the androcentric systems and structures in SFUSD. Women leaders provide a unique perspective as they often have dual roles in caring both for their constituents and their families. I explain more of the methodology and selection process for the EC-PLC group in Chapter 4. Using Bryk et al.'s (2015) construct of networked communities we engaged in an intersection of central and site leadership social intelligence. The EC-PLC supported our individual and collective learning and informed us on ways to improve. The EC-PLC members have to respond within a multilayered contexts; these macro-, meso-, and micro-environments are a part of the action research context. Included in this section is a circle of

equity inventory that names the issues, assets, and challenges in the settings as it provides a comprehensive understanding of the context.

Macro Politics

The newly elected President Biden and his nominated Secretary of Education, Miguel Cardona, hold promise to restore public education and provide the needed funding, policies, and support; however, on a macro political environment, Trump was president when the PAR project began. The year Trump won the presidential election, I had a cafeteria room full of crying children. His platform of criminalizing immigrants and his threats to "build a wall" and deport them created additional layers of stress to an already historically vulnerable community of students and families at my former elementary school. Trump's administration had a detrimental effect on the lives of the students, families, and educators (Rogers et al., 2019). In addition, the appointment of Betsy DeVos as the U.S. Education Secretary led to policies that perpetuated deregulating education. For example, the Education Department safety report recommended abandoning the policy to protect children of color from excessive discipline in school. Mr. Hilary Shelton, Director of the NAACP Washington Bureau, confirmed the damage DeVos' policies had, citing the department's roll-back of many of the civil rights enforcement regulations that are crucial to making sure that every American—regardless of race, ethnicity, points of national origin, disability, or any other differences—has an opportunity to get a high-quality education. Another example occurred in September 2017 when Secretary DeVos rejected the existing Title IX guidance and issued her own interim guide on the subject. President Trump and Secretary DeVos proposed cutting $7.1 billion from the Department of Education funding with an addendum to restore $3.3 billion to private schools, further harming public schools. The projected budget for 2019 proposes the highest cuts for California with $227,942,395 in

estimated cuts to the Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants and estimated $136,586,398 in cuts to the 21st CCLC after-school program (Johnson et al., 2018). These macro policies had a direct effect on a meso level, the state and city politics, and were felt even more profoundly felt at the micro level, the schools and central offices that support historically vulnerable children and families. DeMatthews et al. (2019) write, "any individual working to help students and families dealing with trauma over a continued period of can become stressed or desensitized to people's feelings, lose a sense of hope and purpose, and be at risk of burnout" (p. 4). At the meso district level, we are influenced by other political moves and situations.

Meso Level: The SFUSD

San Francisco is a city that votes with liberal politics along democratized lines. Various voter initiatives to supplement the state and federal shortfalls were created to back SFUSD. "SFUSD faces looming budget deficits for fiscal years 2020-21 and 2021-22 of up to $84 million and $148 million, respectively, due to chronic underfunding, exacerbated by costs associated with operating schools during the COVID-19 pandemic" (SFUSD, 2020).

Over the past 14 years the city passed a number of propositions that support public education, including Proposition A that helps modernize schools; Proposition H, Public Education Enrichment Fund, PEEF, funding science, libraries arts and music. In 2014, a Proposition C passed with 70% of voters supporting continued funding for PEEF to the year 2041. In addition, voters approved two parcel taxes designed to support SFUSD: the Quality Teacher Education Act, QTEA, or Prop A, and the Living Wage for Educators Act, Prop G. Proposition G passed but is currently held up in court proceedings. In 2020, Mayor Breed of San Francisco drafted a new proposition, Prop J, to replace Prop G, and it passed with 74% of voters supporting (Ballotpedia, 2020).

SFUSD is guided by its core values: being student centered, fearless, united, and social put into action its mission that "every day we provide each and every student the quality of instruction and equitable support required to thrive in the 21st century" (SFUSD, 2020a). SFUSD created a *Local Control and Accountability Plan*, LCAP, which put its core value of student centered and social justice values in place to fund schools based on a set of contextual criterions that would equitably distribute money and resources. While the rhetoric of the school district supports social justice, rarely does that mean local control. The district operates as most school districts do – hierarchically and transactionally, deciding policies that may or may not actually benefit local schools and principals in enacting the values of justice and equity.

Meso Level Impacts Micro Level

As a result, many tensions exist between the goals in SFUSD and the organizational practices that actually interrupt or prevent our organization from achieving goals, especially at the school level. One of these tensions is demonstrated in this vignette describing how the SFUSD Superintendent and School Board identified twenty schools in which to address and interrupt the systemic oppression of African American students, a worthwhile goal, but a micropolitical effort that has had uneven results. These twenty schools have large opportunity gaps in the academic outcomes as measured by state tests, and we need to address that. But the vignette is representative of a larger micropolitical context in which we often find ourselves; these micropolitical encounters create tension and misunderstandings, especially for school site leaders working with district leaders, who have the right intention, but resort to command and control micropolitical leadership—how Ball (1987) distinguishes from interpersonal, managerial, and political leadership in organizations. While the women in this group primarily operate from interpersonal, when confronted with managerial or bureaucratic that is hierarchical and often

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viewed then as authoritarian, the clash in approaches causes stress, inappropriate adjustments, and the need for a network of support so we do not feel alone or outnumbered.

The Vignette

In the Fall of 2017, I received a personal call from the superintendent, a first in my eight years as site principal, to inform me that our school was identified as a PITCH school, an initiative between central office and schools to accelerate African American achievement. The superintendent shared that our school's name, and 19 others, would be going forward to the school board that evening. When I asked what criteria were used for selection, he replied that it was state testing data. I hung up the phone disappointed and perplexed on how this reform had happened to us rather than with us.

While this reform effort was anchored in equity, the process was faulty. Central district colleagues planned without any input from schools; we were instructed to use a specific PITCH strategy matrix. The planning occurred behind closed doors with selected district leaders, illustrating a "reformist impulse" (Labaree, 2003, p. 453) that lacks a complete analysis of the root causes or involvement of the people closest to the issues.. These constant first wave initiatives and reforms are not useful, and by design have structural limits (Gitlin & Margonis, 1995; Labaree, 2003); they represent the chronic cycle of promising reforms that fail because they do not honor the people closest to the problem and engage the "…minds and hearts of our nation's teachers and principals" (Bryk et al., 2015, p. 6). Site principals of identified schools were tasked with creating a PITCH step-by-step guide, a tool that mirrors many compliant driven tasks rather than getting at the core issue. Labaree (2003) states, "[schools] are expert at meeting our expectations of what school is rather than at implementing social goals" (p. 460). This exemplifies how SFUSD is educationalizing the social problem rather than trying to resolve it.

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This vignette provides an insight into our school district hierarchy and the politics of our reform efforts that start at the meso level and interrupt work at the micro level. It provides a perspective on the type of organizational structures and politics in place; a reform driven by formalism and political advancement rather than the engagement of all constituents to create change. These organizational practices of our school district and schools put undue stress on the persons who are responsible for enacting them – in this case, school site leaders, but also the assistant superintendent who must deliver the message and help monitor and the leadership coach who works with site leaders who are required now to shift their attention to this initiative. This experience reaffirmed the importance of leveraging those closest to the issues to find the solutions (Guajardo et al., 2016). It helped me understand how to co-establish norms and structures within our EC-PLC so that we could share openly about our work dilemmas. In addition, it reminded me to focus on actionable issues within the locus of my control. Furthermore, it reinforced the idea that our EC-PLC should deepen our thinking and help us identify a root cause first, rather than falling back on solution-driven strategies (Bryk et al., 2015).

This vignette provided an opportunity for me to have a deeper understanding of the context in which I will do my Participatory Action Research, PAR. Since the EC-PLC group consists of people from central office and school sites, it is critical to understand the variety of meso and micro dynamics that exist in each of their contexts as well as the group itself. Furthermore, it provided an opportunity for me to examine my role as a leader. Despite the issues, however, we did have a circle of equity that we could use as leverage at various places in the micro and meso contexts.

Circle of Equity Inventory

Many assets and resources were clearly available at the SFUSD and EC-PLC settings and served as leverage agents at different times in our project and study. Before the research began (October, 2018), I facilitated the first EC-PLC meeting on self-care using assets approach to the focus of practice (FoP), and we identified the following assets: a richness of setting, resources, and ripeness for change (see Figure 13). SFUSD at its core has equity grounded values of being student centered, fearless, united, diversity driven, and committed to social justice. The SFUSD strategic plan, Vision 2025, states:

> The vision shared in this document is both our response to these questions and a statement of our deep commitment to improving academic, social, and emotional outcomes for all of our students while helping to restore balance in our city in equitable and socially just ways. It is our deep belief that we have both the opportunity and the responsibility to create a new and better future for our students, our schools, and, by extension, our city—and that doing so will further position San Francisco as one of the most innovative, forward-thinking cities in the world. (SFUSD, 2021c)

This strategic plan and graduate profile aligned with an equity change effort. Another rich quality of SFUSD is that it invests in the professional development of its staff. There are resources allocated for this from city-wide Proposition A and district offices for administrators to participate in a professional development topic of their choice. Furthermore, the PAR project incorporated the experiences of women leaders from multiple settings ranging from elementary and high school to central offices. We engaged in a new possibility as a diverse, cross-pollinated
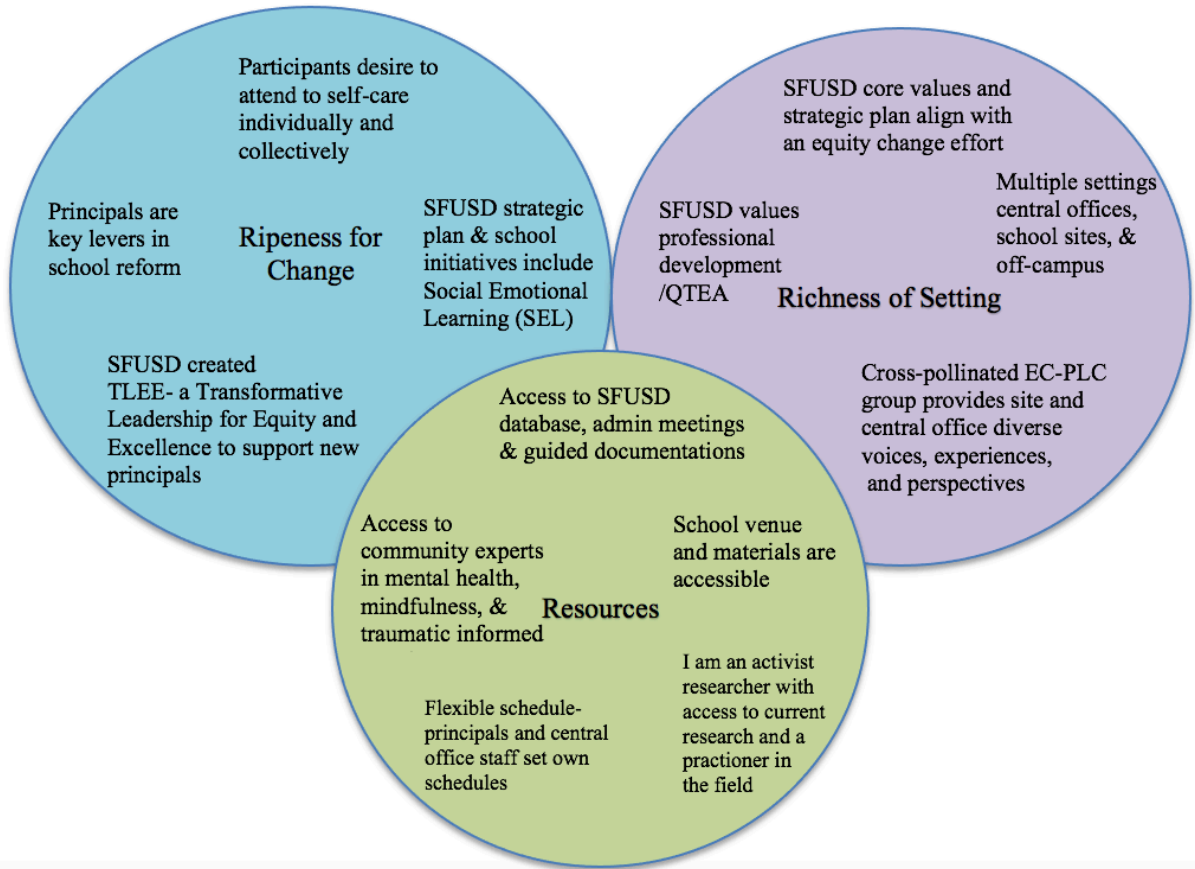
Figure 13. Circle of assets.

group of women educational leaders, using Gutiérrez's (2016) third space is reimagined with the EC-PLC group on self-care, and we were able to access the circle of assets in the district.

Thus, focus of practice (FoP) is in a setting ripe for change. In SFUSD our schools are evaluated using comprehensive data points: 60% is based on students' academic outcomes from English and Math state assessments and 40% is composed of student, staff, and family survey results, ELL reclassification, and attendance and suspension rates. In 2016, the SFUSD board passed a Safe and Supportive Schools resolution to address the disproportionality of suspensions for Black and Brown children. It included professional development and resources to implement restorative practices and has since invested more money towards social emotional learning curriculums such as Second Step. Furthermore, in 2017, Leadership Development Working Group (LDWG) and the Superintendent TLEE—a transformative leadership for equity and excellence department—to support new principals. This was in response to the resignations of approximately 30% of administrators in 2016. Finally, the women leaders in the EC-PLC group want to see a change in the FoP for themselves individually and collectively as a school district. The circle of equity is rich with multiple sources of assets.

To provide a comprehensive picture, the setting, issues, and assets/challenges facing the action research are included. The first challenge was also an asset. When I initiated the project, I was on a year sabbatical. I was not associated with a school site or central office. It was challenging not having the inside perspective of the daily cadence of school, timelines, and pressing demands, and it was challenging not knowing where and what type of work I would do when I returned the following school year. Another asset/challenge was the diverse roles of the EC-PLC women leaders. I was not anybody's supervisor nor were any of these women directly supervising each other. Though principal and central office leaders have reasonable flexibility to

organize their daily schedules, it was complicated scheduling meetings for this diverse group and scheduling conflicts were common. In addition, the EC-PLC group did not all know each other, and it required time to build relational trust and establish group norms. These issues and challenges slowed down the work but did not pose any direct threat to the action research. I intentionally identified the potential challenges as opportunities to further understand the work of being an activist researcher (hunter et al., 2013). In Chapter 1, Figure 1 provided a fishbone diagram of the macro, meso, and micro assets and challenges co-created by the EC-PLC group and in Chapter 5, we expanded our understanding of those assets and challenges. The FoP had promising conditions and settings for change with a group of equity-centered women leaders. My role as an activist researcher was essential to the PAR as I was a practitioner and member of the EC-PLC and the lead researcher.

My Role as Activist Researcher

For the past twenty-three years, I have been in various educational spaces and roles (see Figure 14 leadership journey line). I have been an educator in urban schools in San Francisco as a classroom teacher, instructional coach, and principal and leadership coach. In 2020-2021, I found myself again in direct service to students, teachers, and administrators at Victorious Valley middle school as an instructional coach. During my twenty-year tenure as an educator, I leaned on the wisdom and experience of school principals, teachers, central office leaders, and leadership coaches to guide my work. This informal network of learning from others and observing their practices helped shape my leadership. I briefly share my professional journey and how it has informed my interest in this FoP and my role in the PAR with the EC-PLC members.

My educational career began in 1997 under the principalship of a Latinx female principal. I was hired as a 5th grade bilingual teacher on an emergency credential and enrolled in a SFUSD

Figure 14. Christina's leadership journey line.

intern teacher credential program, working and studying full time. From day one, I have always been a transparent leader: For example, I invited the San Francisco Chronicle to cover a story of me, a first-year teacher's first day of school. The principal was a role model for me as a Latina school leader. She was resourceful, I learned a lot about transformational leaders and how important it is to invest in your teachers and build their leadership. I never asked how she maintained a work life balance nor how she managed to do it all; however, I do remember the long workdays. I worked at Fairmount Elementary for ten years as a bilingual teacher, and, in my eleventh year, I stepped out of the classroom to become an Instructional Reform Facilitator (IRF). I coached and facilitated professional development for teachers and began a masters and administrative credential through the Principal Leadership Institute (PLI) at UC Berkeley. That year taught me a lot about relational trust and the politics that occur outside of the classroom in schools. I learned to navigate inside the teacher circles as well as the administrative and coaches' world. I realized that learning from others in small settings was a key lever in my professional development.

After completing PLI, I was hired as principal at Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy, HMCRA, in SFUSD. Although I felt prepared and excited about taking on site leadership, there were many things I learned while on the job. I continued to use a network of colleagues to support me in my new role and leveraged my relationship with leadership coaches. The unexpected job change from HMCRA provided me an opportunity to take stock of my strengths and re-evaluate next steps. I interviewed at schools outside of SFUSD and in mid-June was hired at Bryant elementary school. Bryant became my heart school where I was privileged to lead for seven years. During my tenure, I honed my collaborative leadership skills, and finessed policies, systems, and operations to support classroom instruction. I honed facilitation skills and

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tapped into experts and resources to support the school. I leveraged community resources and co-created a community school. Throughout my tenure, collaborations across roles were helpful in gaining comprehensive insights into school reform.

The participatory action research is coming at the right time for me as a professional. As a school principal, I worked non-stop and did not practice self-care. In constantly attending to my school's constituents, I experienced compassion fatigue and secondary trauma. After seven years, I took a year sabbatical, an intentional pause, and took care of myself. Simultaneously, I began a doctoral program. I was in a fortunate position to deeply reflect on my leadership while re-engaging in educational theory and participatory action research. The doctoral program design and cohort model were key supports in this new place in my career. The many roles and experiences as an educator have deepened my knowledge and perspective. My professional and personal experiences draw me to this inquiry. I am deeply interested in understanding how we maintain social justice leadership and attend to our self-care and collective care. Furthermore, this work will propel me in the next phases of my educational journey as long as I continue to hold on to the principles and lessons I have learned.

Chapter Summary

The national socio-political setting left by the former President and Secretary of Education is dismal; yet, at a local level, there is a beacon of hope. A networked improvement community, an EC-PLC on self-care, exists in a progressive setting; it resides in the progressive city of San Francisco and the SFUSD, whose core value is social justice; and its work will continue. In the PAR project, we engaged a diverse group of women leaders ranging from school principals to assistant superintendents to individually and collectively support our abilities to use our long and strong experience in the district and leverage the assets to seek another way forward

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for ourselves and hopefully with our colleagues. The *Espacio Sano* that we created is now even more resonant and important as our fellow leaders have faced the COVID pandemic. Our emphasis on self-care when we started this project was somewhat tangential to the district agenda, but now it is front and center. The next chapter explains the design of this project and the PAR cycles the EC-PLC group engaged in to understand our goal.

CHAPTER 4: ACTION RESEARCH DESIGN

As a PAR project, your ethical basis is always to contribute
to the struggle for social justice.
— hunter et al. (2013)

As detailed in Chapter Two, social justice leadership begins with a critical *praxis* of self and then moves outward (Furman, 2012). Social justice leadership involves an equity vision, enacting and sustaining it and oneself along the way (Theoharis, 2009). In this study, I explored the tensions of being a social justice leader and predicaments for feminist leadership (Ah Nee-Benham & Cooper, 1998; Bass, 2012; Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984; Sosa-Provencio, 2017). I synthesized the literature on the characteristics of strategies and tools for self-care and sustainability (see Appendix D). Furthermore, I found a possibility of an alternative professional and personal learning space in the literature of third space (Hulme et al., 2009; Gutiérrez, 2016; Pour-Khorshid, 2018; Romero, Khalif, & et al., 2016). For nearly two years, I engaged in an Equity Centered-Professional Learning Community (EC-PLC) on self-care with four women educational leaders in our organization to explore how we individually and collectively applied our abilities to respond to work-related stress by enacting self-care for ourselves and others in service to equity, excellence, and social justice leadership. Like Sergiovanni's (1992) call for servant leadership, we held a collaborative ideal about social justice and acted as stewards of that ideal by revising our actions to meet the call to serve as social justice leadership.

Through the use of *testimonios* (storytelling) and Community Learning Exchange (CLE) axioms and pedagogies, we built an alternative learning space, an *Espacio Sano* (sane space). In *Espacio Sano,* we are both warriors to social justice leadership and healers to ourselves and our communities. It is the *me we:* self-care as collective care. It is a place where leaders are wholehearted leaders, embracing integration, both the canonical and non-canonical ways of

knowing and being. Collectively and iteratively, we enacted a radical self-care that is liberating and fundamental for ourselves and our constituents.

The purpose of the participatory action research (PAR) project was to engage in iterative cycles of inquiry to gradually increase the knowledge and capacity of four educational leaders and myself to use self-care strategies. As an activist researcher, I was committed to the ideal of social justice and the methodologies of engaging those closest to the work (Hale, 2017; Hunter et al., 2013). I facilitated a networked improvement community that we called an Equity Centered-Professional Learning Community (EC-PLC) on self-care (Bryk et al., 2015). Together, we learned from each other, deepened relationships, engaged in *testimonios*, and used self-care strategies that fortified our resilience to remain involved the work of social justice leadership. At each stage, we used evidence in short cycles of inquiry or as Bryk et al. (2015) call plan-do-study-act (PDSA) cycles. We used evidence to plan and experiment; then we analyzed those results in order to act more intentionally.

This work began with the theory of action: **If** we engage in iterative cycles of inquiry in an Equity Centered-Professional Learning Community (EC-PLC) to:

- increase educational leaders' individual and collective abilities to better attend to work- related stress,

- deepen relationships in an *Espacio Sano,*

- utilize *testimonios*, and

- learn and practice self-care strategies,

then school leaders can fortify and sustain their work of equity, excellence, and social justice leadership. The PAR included three consecutive cycles of inquiry. PAR Cycle One focused on the self and interpersonal; PAR Cycle Two continued to work on self and then moved to

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facilitating a CLE (communal); and, in PAR Cycle Three, leaders internalized self-care strategies and shared them with constituents in their workplaces (see Figure 15). Through this 18-month PAR project (August 2019–October 2020, we accomplished the goal of increasing educational leaders' individual and collective abilities to use self-care strategies.

In this chapter, I describe the methodology for the participatory action research (PAR) project and explain why it was particularly well suited to this context. The sections that follow outline the research design, methodology, and procedures of the PAR project. This section includes the research question, the selection of participants, cycles of inquiry, data collection tools, and data analysis methods. At the end of the chapter, I address validity, the role of *praxis*, reflection and action, and the limitations of this study.

Research Design

The future isn't something hidden in a corner. The future is something we build in the present.
— Paulo Freire

I employed a participatory action research (PAR) design with an equity-centered professional learning community (EC-PLC) to better understand the extent educational leaders support their individual and collective abilities to attend to work-related stress. PAR is an "insider collaboration with other insiders" research design (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 40), an approach to inquiry that involves a researcher and participants working together to understand a problematic situation and change it for the better. It has a focus on social challenges of inequity that is context-specific and driven by the needs of the participation group. My PAR comprised me, the researcher, and participants, women educational leaders, who worked together to understand the problem of work-related stress and how to change it for the better. In PAR, I am both the researcher and a participant of the study; adding the Co-Practitioner Researchers (CPR)

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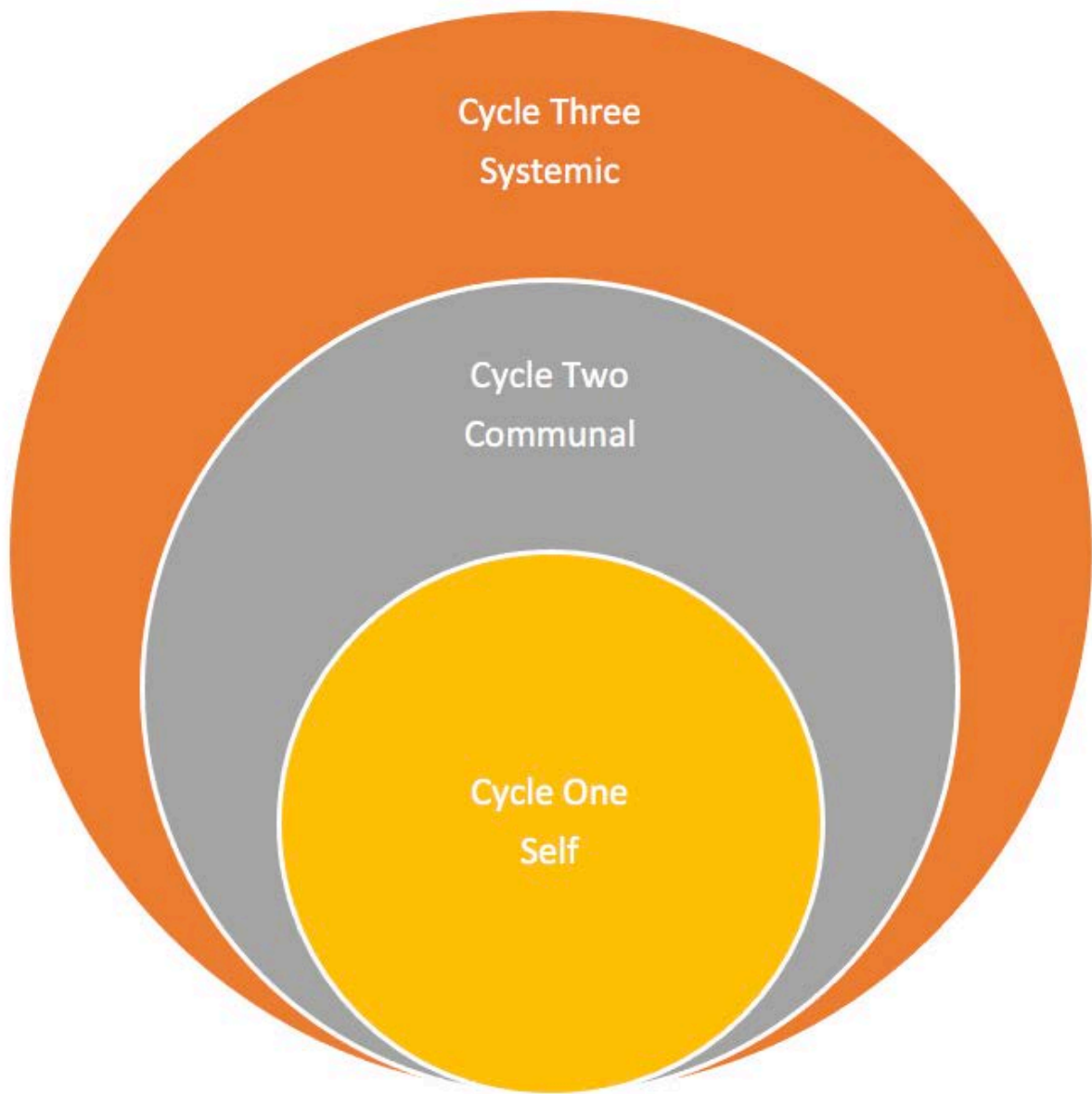
Figure 15. PAR: Three cycles of inquiry that move from self to community to systemic.

makes it participatory. I am a practitioner within the context of the setting, and I utilized established relationships with the participants in order to conduct research with them.

The use of Co-Practitioner Researchers (CPR) is an intentional part of action research design as it "is inquiry that is done *by* or *with* insiders to an organization or community but never *to* or *on* them" (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 3 [italics in original]). The CPR members in the study are referred to as EC-PLC members, but they serve the function of co-researchers. Together, we co-learned throughout the PAR process in hopes to "build a future" that is more equitable. The use of qualitative research was most fitting to the project as this PAR takes place in a natural setting, close to the EC-PLC group, and "information [is] gathered by actually talking directly to people and seeing them behave and act within their context" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 181). The EC-PLC group and I engaged in iterative cycles of inquiry (Bryk et al., 2015). As the lead researcher, I collected and analyzed data from multiple sources, consistent with the tenets of qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) offered many resources for the PAR project. On the district level, we had access to SFUSD databases, administrative meetings, and guiding documents. Until the COVID-19 pandemic, we had access to school venues and materials. We were able to host our EC-PLC self-care meetings on site and in my home. In addition to these district resources, we had access to community experts in the fields of psychology, mental health, education, yoga instruction, and community-based organizing that supported us with self-care strategies. Furthermore, as an activist researcher, I had access to current education research, databases, and pedagogies. As our EC-PLC developed, we shared additional resources and practices we learned individually and as a collective.

Research Questions

The PAR project is focused on answering one overarching question: To what extent do social justice focused educational leaders support their individual and collective abilities to manage work-related stress? The PAR sub-questions were:

1. What formal and informal structures, systems, and supports do educational leaders use to help them manage work-related stress?

2. What leadership actions can educational leaders use to create working environments and conditions for their colleagues to attend to self-care?

3. To what extent can we transfer these learned skills, structures, and systems into district offices and other schools?

4. How do I transform my perspectives and practices as a school leader?

Selecting Participants

Women of color educational leaders are an intentional part of the research design; hunter et al. (2013) are clear about the role of participants as activists:

> PAR projects founded in critical pedagogy might take up issues associated with poverty and schooling, power and knowledge in the hospital ward, the legitimation of knowledge in professional placements/internships in social work, welfare and education, young people and popular culture, public health education, community education and social change through education. (p. 40)

I was driven to research women in leadership because of the inequities that exist for women leaders. Moreover, as a result of navigating these inequities, equity-focused women of color leaders experience more stress in their work. As mentioned in Chapter 2, I used a critical pedagogy to take up issues associated with schooling, power, and knowledge.

In this study, I used feminist consciousness and critical race theory (CRT) as "CRT may inform the work of those in the cultural professionals, particularly where issues of race and ethnic could have impact" (hunter et al., 2013, p. 38). Women educational leaders composed the EC-PLC. They represented a diverse range of educational leadership roles: elementary school principal, high school assistant principal, leadership coach, and an assistant superintendent. Each member of the EC-PLC is described in Chapter 3 Table 2. The EC-PLC group consists of one elementary school principal, one high school assistant principal, a leadership coach, an assistant superintendent, and me. Consistent with the axiom that those closest to the problem are in the best position to solve it (Guajardo et al., 2016), I aimed to bring multiple educational leadership perspectives into the problem-solving process through an EC-PLC and a Community Learning Exchange (CLE) experience as well as use CLE methodologies throughout the PAR for data collection.

The selection of the women in this study based their work in social justice. As stated in Chapter 2, I use Furman's (2012) definition of social justice leadership as, "leadership for social justice involves identifying and undoing the oppressive and unjust practices and replacing them with more equitable, culturally appropriate ones" (p. 194). I purposefully selected these women leaders as Co-Practitioner Researchers based on my familiarity with their equity-focused work and my working relationships with them. I met with each prospective participant individually in a one-on-one meeting and asked her if she would consider participating in this action research project on self-care for educational leaders. All participants were informed that their participation was entirely voluntary. As the primary investigator, I held no position of authority over the participants. This purposefully selected group helped co-plan, co-facilitate, and co-

evaluate our EC-PLC on self-care and the strategies we used, and analyzed data related to changes in our practices as a result of participation.

In addition to the EC-PLC members, we utilized the CLE strategies to include a wider set of participants at a Community Learning Exchange. Each EC-PLC member invited women leaders from our school district and community-based organizations. Each selected women of color or White allies who formed part of our support networks. Fourteen women leaders from various roles inside and out of schools—teachers, school principals, support staff, and external school partners—participated in the CLE. A diverse constituent group provided their unique perspectives on these issues, intentionally inviting difference into a public learning space with humility (Guajardo et al., 2016). The EC-PLC members and participants of the CLE contributed personal viewpoints on these issues of how women leaders identify and use alternative substantive metrics to measure what is *really* going on in our schools.

Prior to the study, I obtained informed consent from participants, using a form approved by East Carolina University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix A). Participants were not given any incentives for their participation in the study.

Cycles of Inquiry

We engaged in three PAR cycles over eighteen months in order to plan, implement, reflect, and collect and analyze data to determine how EC-PLC participants effectively utilize self-care strategies and to what extent we are able to transfer these practices to our school communities and to other leaders in the district. In the research design logic model illustrated in Figure 16, I identified several sub-goals aimed at building educational leaders' capacity of use of self-care strategies. The long-term goal was to address the broader systemic impacts of

Cycle One

Cycle Two

Cycle Three

We need to understand each other and self-care as a group.

Activities
- EC-PLC
- Build knowledge of self-care strategies
- *Testimonios* (storytelling) *Self-care origin stories*
- Self-care Questionnaire-baseline (pre)
- Fishbone
- Journey Lines: *Charting your self-care story*
- Member Check

Data Collection
- Meeting agenda & minutes
- Email and personal communication
- Questionnaire responses
- Artifacts of meeting activities
- Journey Lines
- Reflective memos
- Member checks

Data Analysis
- Code and analyze questionnaire
- Code feedback from meeting minutes against social justice leadership principles, self-care, and third space frameworks

We share our work with others in our organization.

Activities
EC-PLC
- Practice self-care strategies
- *Testimonios* (storytelling)
- Community Learning Exchange (CLE)
- Observations
- Member check

Data Collection
- Observation notes
- Meeting agenda & minutes
- E-mail and personal communication
- Artifacts from CLE
- Analytical memos
- Member check

Data Analysis
- Code data to identify common themes and triangulate with artifacts and memos
- Code feedback from meeting minutes against social justice leadership principles, self-care, and third space frameworks

We investigate how to sustain the work beyond me leading this project.

Activities
- EC-PLC
- Practice self-care strategies
- *Testimonios* (storytelling)
- Interviews
- Self-Care questionnaire-(post)
- Member Check

Data Collection
- Reflective memos
- E-mail and personal communication
- Questionnaire responses
- Artifacts from meetings
- Team interview
- Member check

Data Analysis
- Group and individual member checks
- Compare data from PAR Cycle 2 and Cycle 3
- Code data and analyze against social justice leadership principles, self-care, and third space frameworks

Figure 16. Logic model: Three iterative cycles of inquiry that build on data to make decisions.

supporting leaders' individual and collective abilities to attend to work-related stress by fortifying themselves and others in the work of equity, excellence, and social justice leadership. For each goal, I collected, analyzed, and triangulated data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Patton, 1987). On-going reflective memos and the use of three PAR cycles helped measure outcomes that were intended to inform, understand, and cultivate our abilities to use self-care strategies. These cycles were iterative. As hunter et al. (2013) cautions, "[y]ou cannot predict what will happen as you implement changes in your context, and therefore, you cannot know before completing cycle one what modifications to your deliberative action plan might be needed for cycle two" (p. 64). Reflection and engaging in *praxis* (Freire, 1970) was an essential element in this study and helped inform the next cycle. The activities and research components of each cycle are described in the next section.

PAR Cycle One: Fall 2019

At the first PAR cycle, we established the EC-PLC on self-care and built relational trust (Bryk et al., 2010). Our focus was to understand each other and self-care as collective care. I obtained informed consent from the educational leaders to participate in the research study; the informed consent identified the potential risks and benefits of participating in the study. The EC-PLC met monthly with a focus on five tasks: (a) building relational trust, (b) understanding our individual and collective self-care through *testimonios,* (c) self-care pre-questionnaire, (d) learning and practicing self-care strategies, and (e) identifying the assets and the challenges of our context. Through the EC-PLC on self-care, we shared our initial understanding of self-care, used *testimonios*, individually and collaboratively learned self-care practices, and reflected. We co-developed norms and cultivated relational trust. Meeting with each EC-PLC member individually provided me the opportunity to check in and learn from each team member. PAR

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Cycle One revealed the importance of listening deeply to the EC-PLC members and helped me

be responsive to the collective needs and to hold space and time more fluidly to invite

playfulness (Nachamanovitch, 1990). Throughout each cycle, I engaged in *praxis* and wrote

reflective memos examining how my own leadership practices were impacted.

PAR Cycle Two: Spring 2020

PAR Cycle Two continued to focus on the use of self-care strategies to help our

individual and collective abilities to attend to work-related stress and we continued to use

testimonios to deepen relational trust. During this cycle, we included other women leaders in our

community and hosted a Community Learning Exchange (CLE) to share our work with others in

the organization. We focused on four tasks: (a) selecting those to be invited to participate in a

CLE, (b) identifying and selecting pedagogies and practices that we could implement in the CLE,

(c) observing each other's practice in our respective context (schools or departments), and (d)

engaging in a member check. During each cycle, I facilitated the EC-PLC and continued to

engage in *praxis* and memo about my growth as a leader.

During this cycle, the COVID-19 pandemic halted in-person instruction. The entire

school district moved to remote distance learning. The COVID-19 crisis caused a major

disruption in week 10 of PAR Cycle Two. Plans had to be adjusted. I had planned to collect more

face-to-face data but shifted to hosting EC-PLC meetings online. This rupture truly tested our

focus of practice (FoP), but we used the opportunity to creatively re-frame the work. Together

we innovated ways to continue to attend to our self-care individually and collectively through

online meetings. The EC-PLC members began to transfer what we learned about self-care to our

constituents and communities. The analysis of PAR Cycle Two data provided evidence of the

EC-PLC central story: how our individual self-care and relational trust grew to build collective care.

PAR Cycle Three: Fall 2020

In the final PAR cycle, we continued to practice individual and collective self-care. We considered the broader transfer of the EC-PLC self-care strategies to communities. We focused on four tasks: (a) interviews of EC-PLC members, (b) a self-care post questionnaire, (c) member checks, and (d) discussions about how to sustain the project beyond me. In PAR Cycle Three, the *Espacio Sano* sustained our individual and collective self-care practices. We continued to use *testimonios* and shared strategies and practices that supported our wellness and resilience. I examined meeting notes, artifacts, and interviews with EC-PLC members. The EC-PLC group met to examine the findings from interviews and questionnaires and discussed any changes they saw in themselves. The group voluntarily continued to meet beyond the conclusion of the study. Moreover, the EC-PLC members transferred what they learned about self-care to the broader community. Concurrently, I measured the transfer of my leadership practice through the analysis of the data of my reflective and analytical memos, personal communication, and meeting notes of all three PAR cycles (Saldaña, 2016).

In Chapter 2, I introduced the idea of a third space in *Espacio Sano*. Through our work together as an EC-PLC, we actualized an *Espacio Sano* as new way of being and structuring professional learning communities through networks of sustainability and self-care (Rigby & Tredway, 2015; Theoharis, 2009). I learned how to deeply listen to EC-PLC members' stories and voices, critical to co-constructing an *Espacio Sano*. EC-PLC members were able to think and develop individually and collectively and engaged in critical reflection (Hulme et al. 2009) in *Espacio Sano*.

Data Collection

This PAR project used multiple qualitative measures to collect data in three cycles (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It involved ongoing *praxis*, analysis, and collection of data, as "[a]ction needs inquiry, and inquiry needs action (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 78). In addition, we utilized the Community Learning Exchange (CLE) process to help us understand collectively how to attend to self-care as we learned about each other's experiences and stories of challenges and resilience in the workplace (Guajardo et al., 2016). I documented the data cycle by cycle— reflective memos, meeting artifacts, meeting notes, personal communication, questionnaire, interviews, and observations (see Table 3). Citations from participants are noted as person, source, date; for example (C. Valle, meeting notes, February 27, 2020).

I coded and analyzed narrative data from transcribed audio recordings, observations, meeting notes, memos, *testimonios,* interviews, and written communication. We engaged in member checks throughout the study to ensure the data was accurately recorded and that the thematic analysis was trustworthy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017). These data, once collected and analyzed, assisted in telling the story of the EC-PLC group, which helped answer the "how" and "why" questions guiding the study. To respond to the research questions, I analyzed participant testimonios, interviews, and other indicators of self-care strategies— including analysis of artifacts produced from the (CLE), self-care questionnaire results from participants, and artifacts produced by the EC-PLC members.

Testimonios

During the three PAR cycles, we used *testimonios*. *Testimonios* represent a form of narrative inquiry that uses stories to describe human experiences and provide deep insight into the beliefs and perceptions of participants (Pérez Huber, 2009). *Testimonios,* which originated in

Table 3

Key Activities and Data Collection of All Three PAR Cycles (August 2019–October 2020)

PAR CYCLE ONE (Fall 2019) (August–December 2019)	PAR CYCLE TWO (Spring 2020) (January–April 2020)	PAR CYCLE THREE (Fall 2020) (August–October 2020)
Meetings with EC-PLC in person Meeting notes One to One Meetings/Conversations Meeting notes	Meetings with EC-PLC in person Meeting notes	Meetings with EC-PLC Online Meeting notes One to One Meetings/Conversations Meeting notes
	Community Learning Exchange Meeting notes and artifacts Observations Observation notes Self-Care Story Artifact	
		Digital Communication Meeting notes and artifacts
Fishbone Artifact Self-care Questionnaire- Pre Artifacts		Self-care Questionnaire- Post Artifacts Interviews Interview notes
Written Notes or Reflective Memos Analytical Memos	Written Notes or Reflective Memos Analytical Memos	Written Notes or Reflective Memos Analytical Memos

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Latin America in human rights campaigns, offer a pedagogical and political form of storytelling that is particularly suited to expose injustices and disrupt the silence of women of color. Feminist scholars have used it a way to testify and theorize lived experiences navigating various forms of oppression (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981; Pour-Khorshid, 2018; Romero, Denicolo, & et al., 2016).

In PAR Cycle One, EC-PLC members shared their self-care origin stories, in PAR Cycle Two they charted their self-care stories as educational leaders, and in PAR Cycle Three they shared their self-care stories for our system and district (see Appendix G).

Reflective Memos

Throughout the PAR project I wrote reflective memos, including during the pre-cycle and design process. Reflective memos allowed me to document my experiences and reflections throughout the process. Creswell and Creswell (2018) identify reflexivity as a characteristic of qualitative research, noting, "[i]n qualitative research, inquirers reflect about how their role in the study and their personal background, culture, and experiences hold potential for shaping their interpretations, such as the themes they advance and the meaning they ascribe to the data" (p. 182). In addition, I wrote analytic memos that aided in my "…coding process and code choices in how the study is taking shape; and the emergent patterns, categories and subcategories, themes, and concepts in [my] data" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 44).

Meeting Artifacts

Stringer (2014) states, "researchers can obtain a great deal of significant information by reviewing documents and records" (p. 115). During each EC-PLC meeting and the CLE, I collected relevant documentation, including agendas, meeting artifacts, and all working documents used during the process.

EC-PLC Meeting Agendas and Notes

Through each cycle, I took minutes of our meetings. I triangulated these notes with the meeting agenda and feedback from the EC-PLC group at each EC-PLC meeting. In addition, I used these data and analyzed them to determine any changes for future EC-PLC meetings and as we planned for the CLE.

Email and Personal Communication

I used personal communication, emails, and text messages as another data source. These documents were gathered by directly communicating with the EC-PLC members within their context (school or department) (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Interviews

In the PAR Cycle Three, I conducted individual interviews with each EC-PLC member to garner their feedback and reflections on their leadership moves and the sustainability of the work of the EC-PLC beyond me leading this project. The purpose of the interviews was to learn what the EC-PLC members were thinking. They are the people closest to the problem and have insight and knowledge about the problem. "Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (Patton, 1990, p. 278). In addition, this process helped me reflect on my own experience and provided insights about the leadership actions I used to create working environments and conditions for colleagues to attend to self-care. The use of *praxis* aided in transferring these learned skills, structures, and systems into my workspaces (Freire, 1970). The interview protocol (see Appendix E) focused primarily on questions that address the research sub-questions related to sustainability and transfer of self-care practices in relation to the EC-PLC group. I aligned the research questions with the interview question protocol and, due to COVID-19, added additional questions (see

Appendix F). The use of a semi-structured design provided consistency in the line of questioning and provided flexibility for follow-up questions (hunter et al., 2013; Patton, 1990). The interviews were audio recorded and stored digitally in my secure online account.

Self-Care Questionnaire

I generated a self-care baseline and post questionnaire. The baseline self-care pre-questionnaire was not a typical questionnaire with Likert scale questions but rather an 8.5 x 11" paper. On one side of the paper EC-PLC members answered the following questions: *Define what self-care is? If you practice it, in which ways do you practice self-care?* On the other side of the paper EC-PLC members drew a picture of what self-care means to them and wrote a few sentences to describe their image. For the post questionnaire, EC-PLC group members used an 8.5 x 11" paper and described *what structures, systems and supports they have used to attend to work-related stress.* And, *describe what actions and structures they have put in place for their colleagues to attend to self-care.* On the other side of the paper, they drew a picture of *what this looks like in your work environment* and wrote a few sentences to describe the image. The self-care questionnaires created by me helped provide understanding of the EC-PLC members' current knowledge and practices of self-care prior to starting the PAR, as well as changes of knowledge and self-care practices over the three PAR cycles (see Appendix G).

Documents

A focus of this PAR project is to determine the transfer of this work to the EC-PLC group's working environments and colleagues. I analyzed any school or office policies that existed prior to PAR Cycle One, as well as adjustments made during the course of this project. Of particular interest were documents related to self-care and work-related stress. To my surprise, there were no current documents that explicitly called for self-care in the workplace. A

positive collateral of the COVID-19 pandemic is that the SFUSD school district began generating and sharing resources and supports for staff to attend to their self-care. Throughout all three PAR cycles, I kept track of informal observations of members of the EC-PLC group related to the research questions (see Appendix H). During the second cycle of

Observation Notes

PAR, we had planned to observe each other to gather data on sub-questions. We were not able to accomplish this as COVID-19 closed all schools and we moved instruction to remote online learning. Prior to the pandemic I was able to observe only three EC-PLC members in the contexts of their work environments. I documented the conversations and included them in the subsequent coding and analysis, explained in the next section.

Data Analysis

I conducted data analysis synchronously with data collection, meaning that the data informed the analysis and vice versa. Analyzing the data is a critical, empirical exercise. I collaborated with the EC-PLC members at the conclusion of each PAR cycle to analyze our work together using the technique known as member checking to establish trustworthiness of the evidence (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). EC-PLC members and I checked the data for accuracy.

The data analysis tools for this project were selected because they helped draw meaning within this context and are part of the natural setting. I analyzed the *testimonios,* memos, observations, meeting artifacts (EC-PLC agendas, notes, documents, and personal communication), and transcribed interviews with a general content analysis (Saldaña, 2016). Patton (1987) suggests, "[q]ualitative analysis is guided not by hypotheses but by questions, issues, and a search for patterns" (p. 15). Themes and patterns that emerged from each type of

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data source was triangulated (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Patton, 1987). I used an open coding technique. I read each of the transcripts, artifacts, and memos and used different colored highlighters to denote emerging themes and patterns for each research sub-question (Saldaña, 2016). Table 4 connects each sub-question to its data source. I triangulated the themes and patterns from artifacts with those from interviews and vice versa, and I used the most common themes and patterns to create codes. In addition, I checked it across the literature; critical pedagogy, feminist consciousness, and critical race theory (CRT) aided in generating a list of codes. Furthermore, Creswell and Creswell (2018) suggest that "[t]hen deductively, the researchers look back at their data from the themes to determine if more evidence can support each theme or whether they need to gather additional information" (p. 181). Data analysis was ongoing, and emerging themes *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership were shared with the EC-PLC members.

In the end, I used Saldaña's (2016) codes-to-theory model throughout three cycles. In Chapter 5, four categories emerged, in Chapter 6 presents emerging themes, and Chapter 7 shares the themes (findings). In the data collection and analysis section of each chapter, I discuss the different iteration for the codebook. Through this 18-month empirical study, the codebook developed and evolved (see Appendix L). Saldaña (2016) advises that coding is a process of recoding and recategorizing. He states, a "[q]ualitative inquiry demands meticulous attention to language and images, and deep reflection on the emergent patters and meaning of human experience" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 11). The use of *praxis*/reflection throughout the PAR was an essential element in the study.

Table 4

Data Collection Sources to Respond to Research Questions

Overarching Research Question:
To what extent do social justice focused educational leaders support their individual and collective abilities to manage work-related stress?

Research Question Sub-Questions	Data Source (Metrics)	Triangulated With…
What formal and informal structures, systems, and supports do educational leaders use to help them when they are dealing with work-stress?	• Observation notes • Meeting artifacts • Reflective memos	• Member check • Analytical memos • *Testimonios*
What leadership actions can educational leaders use to create working environments and conditions for their colleagues to attend to self-care?	• Meeting agendas • Artifacts from meetings	• Reflective memos • Analytical memos • Interview with CPR members
To what extent can we transfer these learned skills, structures, and systems into district offices and other schools?	• Interview with CPR team • Meeting artifacts	• Member check • Observation notes
How do I transform my perspectives and practices as a school leader?	• Meeting agendas • Artifacts from meetings	• Reflective memos • Questionnaire completed by CPR team

Praxis/The Role of Reflection

Reflection was vital to understanding how individual perspectives and practices changed over time. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the focus of practice (FoP) is anchored in the social justice leadership (SJL) theoretical framework of "*praxis*, in the Freireian sense, involving both reflection and action" (Furman, 2012, p. 191). *Praxis* was a fundamental part of this project, as it allowed the EC-PLC members to provide feedback and reflect on data before moving into the next cycle. Reflection was ongoing; the methodology I chose for the project allowed for iterative data to continuously inform the study. I used *testimonios,* memos, interviews from participants, and EC-PLC members to provide formative data to improve EC-PLC and CLEs' process. Furthermore, I reflected on my role in the study and how my ontology shapes the interpretation of themes and other meanings I may ascribe to the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Confidentiality

Confidentiality for participants and the security of data are extremely important in this study. Federal regulations required that all PAR work done with human subjects be reviewed and approved by the IRB. This research was approved through East Carolina University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix A). I had taken all the necessary course work and was CITI certified before starting the action aspect of the research (see Appendix B). The participants and the schools in the context have be given pseudonyms in order to protect their identities. In addition, all transcripts and recordings of interviews, memos, and meeting notes will be maintained in a secure, locked location. No materials will be replicated or disseminated in any way, and all of the above mentioned data will be destroyed one year after the completion of this study. I do not know of any risks (the chance of harm) associated with this research; nevertheless, participants were provided sufficient information to decide whether they were

willing to accept any potential risk before deciding to participate in the research. Furthermore, all adult participants provided an informed consent (see Appendix C) and could withdraw consent at any time. I work in the district, so confidentiality is of utmost importance.

Study Limitations

A limitation of my role is that I am a colleague and not directly responsible for any EC-PLC members. Our EC-PLC on self-care was completely voluntary. I am a constituent of the school district where my PAR project took place, and I initiated this project with some already-established ideas about prospective Co-Practitioner Researchers and the process of engaging in an EC-PLC. I worked with leadership coach, Laura Voss, in TLEE for a year (2019-2020) until my position was unexpectedly eliminated due to budget cuts. Currently, (2020-2021) I am an instructional coach at a middle school in the SFUSD district.

In addition, my role in the study, personal background, culture, and experiences hold potential for shaping the interpretations of themes I advance and the meaning I ascribe to the data. I engaged in member check with the EC-PLC group and triangulated data to safeguard against my own biases.

A delimitation of this PAR was in the selection of participants for the EC-PLC. This EC-PLC group consists exclusively of women educational leaders, the majority of whom are women of color. Issues of bias and generalizability may be present in the study due to the voluntary nature of participation because I identified the potential members of the EC-PLC group for the study and they were not randomly selected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition, my ontological and epistemological lens as a woman of color educational leader and researcher may contribute to bias. In this study, the women educational leaders met with me first one-on-one about the focus of practice (FoP) and then individually made a decision to participate. This is a small

group of four participants, which may limit the transferability of the findings. However, the EC-PLC group invited a diverse and representative sample of participants to our Community Learning Exchange (CLE).

A related limitation is that there are implicit hierarchies and standards within the school district that do not disappear when we come together. We are a group of principals, assistant superintendents, and coaches. Nevertheless, the methodology—using an EC-PLC and creating an *Espacio Sano* where EC-PLC members shared their *testimonios*—was built on the belief that all constituents have wisdom to share from their stories and deserved a safe space in which to share it. Therefore, when recruiting participants and when facilitating the EC-PLC, it was of utmost importance that the EC-PLC members and I made this principle clear and provided guidelines to create an *Espacio Sano* in which to work together on the topic.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I outlined the participatory action research design that responded to our theory of action. Over the course of three iterative PAR cycles, the participants and I engaged in an EC-PLC and co-created a plan for a CLE. Concurrently, the COVID-19 pandemic put the focus of practice (FoP) on leadership and self-care to the test. Throughout each cycle, we collected data to determine the extent to which these strategies met our goals for self-care and fortified us to stay engaged in social justice leadership. We used ongoing analyses to make decisions for future meetings and next actions.

CHAPTER 5: PAR CYCLE ONE

This simpler way summons forth what is best about us. It asks us to understand human nature differently, more optimistically. It identifies us as relative. It acknowledges that we seek after meaning. It asks us to be less serious, yet more purposeful, about our work and our lives. It does not separate play from the nature of being.

—Margaret Wheatley

A Simpler Way

The current organization of and engagement in district professional development is too bureaucratic and inconsistent. Principal meetings are packed with many topics; agendas are tightly timed and crammed with numerous objectives built on a well-worn efficiency model of scientific management (Taylor, 1911). It did not work then, and it does not work now. Unfortunately, this way of providing professional development comes at the expense of not attending to the personal self and fails to leverage collective ways of knowing. Wheatley and Kellener-Rogers (1996) entices us to look to a "simpler way," less administratively and more purposefully. She invites flexibility in the form of play and optimism. Wheatley and Kellener-Rogers emboldens us to be more purposeful about the way we go about our work and our lives. As an antidote to ineffective meeting structures, the work we engaged in as co-practitioners in the participatory action research (PAR) focused on our individual and collective assets. We intentionally concentrated on developing a "simpler way" of being effective women leaders by engaging in self-care. In our self-care Equity Centered-Professional Learning Community (EC-PLC), we became aware of being purposeful individually and collectively. The collective awareness of wellness strategies, use of time, leadership actions, and reflection supported our work and lives so that we could be heartened and strengthened in enacting social justice leadership.

In PAR Cycle One, I invited four women education leaders to become Co-Practitioner Researchers (CPR) and form an EC-PLC focused on self-care. The EC-PLC group provided

diverse perspectives and voices of school leadership from their varying roles. They represented a range of educational leadership roles: elementary school principal, high school principal, leadership coach, and assistant superintendent, who supports and supervises principals (refer to Chapter 3 to learn more about each member of the EC-PLC group). Chapter 5 narrates how we began to build collective relational trust and care, and to use wellness strategies.

The three sections of Chapter 5 are: (1) a description of activities, evidence, and processes of analysis; (2) a discussion of emergent categories; and (3) prospective implications, including how the cycles of inquiry affected my leadership. Presented in narrative fashion, the chapter includes participant roles and activities and an analysis of evidence.

PAR Cycle One Activities

In this section, I introduce PAR Cycle One and discuss three key activities, present the full set of activities for the EC-PLC, and analyze evidence I collected (see Table 5). In PAR Cycle One (Fall 2019), the EC-PLC group and I identified and co-constructed community agreements. To do so, we practiced dynamic mindfulness and shared our stories and hopes. Because Dr. Elisha Grant moved from executive director to the assistant superintendent of a cohort of seventeen schools, she was not able to regularly attend. We determined that we would meet monthly for ninety minutes. I acknowledged the need to be transparent about the work and the goal of the PAR.

PAR Cycle One included building relational trust, using self-care strategies, and sharing *testimonios*. EC-PLC members co-constructed an understanding of the assets and challenges at the three levels (macro, meso, and micro) using the fishbone diagram, used in the improvement sciences to support thinking about root cause of action research before starting cycles of inquiry (Bryk et al., 2015). To cultivate relational trust, we used *testimonios* (storytelling) to understand

Table 5

Fall 2019 Key Activities and Data Collection (August-December)

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	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12
EC-PLC Meetings (n=3)				♦		♦				♦		
One to Ones Meetings/ Conversations (n=4)	♦			♦	♦	♦						
Fishbone (n=1)				♦								
Question- naire -Pre (n=4)						♦						
Written Notes or Reflective Memos (n=12)	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦

each other's assets and hopes and established a base for our *Espacio Sano* (sane space). Aguilar (2018) states, "[k]nowing about each other's histories, backgrounds, values, beliefs, hopes and dreams, skills and abilities, and fears and concerns is important. This understanding helps cultivate empathy for each other and contextualize the behaviors of group members" (Aguilar, 2018, p. 42). Three key events informed the work ahead of us: building community, co-constructing the fishbone diagram, and completing and sharing a self-care questionnaire to understand each other's stories about stressors and attention to self-care.

Activity One: Confirming Participation

I met individually with EC-PLC members to check in with them, review the PAR project, and ask if they were still interested in participating in the PAR project prior to convening our EC-PLC. Dr. Grant responded, "having the meeting on a day when we have principal meetings would work better. I would be excited to be part of a learning community that focuses on self-care and social justice leadership" (E. Grant, meeting notes, March 25, 2019). Claudia Valle, site leader, Savannah Travis, site leader, and Laura Voss, leadership coach, said they are "still on board to participate" (C. Velasco, meeting notes, May 2, 2019).

The team preferred meeting off-campus at my home. During pre-cycle we met at Bayview High School. The change of setting to my home transformed the nature of our space. Savannah noted it was, "a more inviting and relaxing environment" (S. Travis, meeting notes, September 16, 2019). I shared my dissertation proposal poster (see Figure 17) and a movie about the focus of practice (see Figure 17).

Activity Two: Co-Constructing Meaning and Deepening the Fishbone

In the September EC-PLC meeting, we reviewed the community agreements: take care of yourself, be engaged and present, keep equity at the center, maintain double confidentiality, and
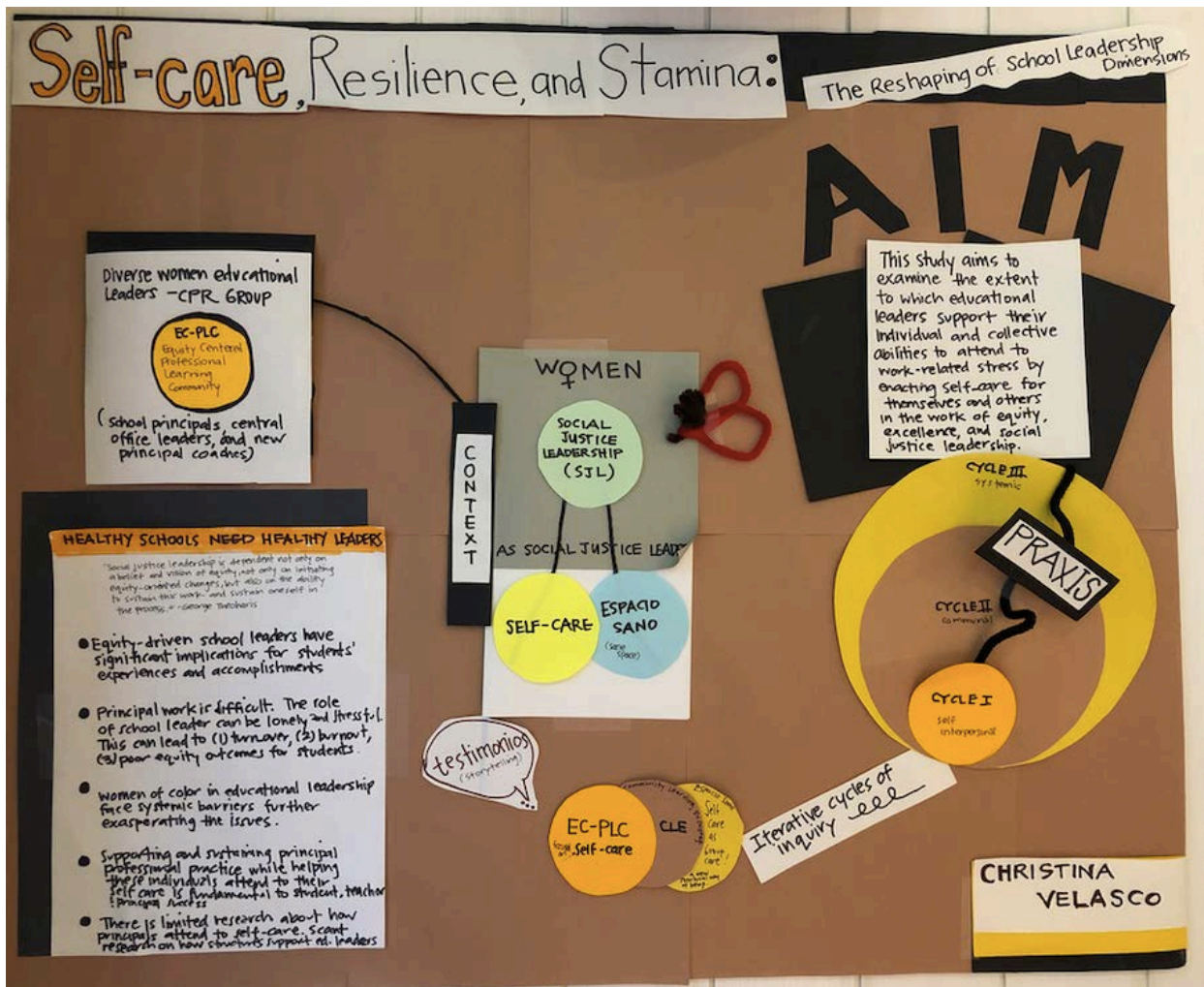
Figure 17. Dissertation proposal poster on the focus of practice.

keep a learner mindset; we kept these agreements intact. Using dynamic mindfulness, we practiced a few poses: Breath of Joy, Tree, and Belly Breaths (see Appendix I for Dynamic Mindfulness Pose Categories).

We shared *testimonios* about how we took care ourselves during summer and our self-care intentions for the school year. Savannah only had one week off during the summer, as she was busy in her new position as principal of Bayview H.S. Principal Travis stated, "[she] took the week to sleep and relax," and made an intention "to make sure [she] sleeps" (S. Travis, meeting notes, September 18, 2019). Claudia told us about her time spent in her garden and backyard and her "intention is to do yoga weekly" (C. Valle, meeting notes, September 18, 2019). I shared, "I spent my summer working on my dissertation proposal and traveled through Myanmar. My intention for self-care is exercise regularly and make pottery" (reflective memo, September 18, 2019). Leadership coach, Laura, later shared she "traveled with her family and that her intention is to attend her workout class a few times a week" (L. Voss, meeting notes, October 4, 2019).

The use of *testimonios* provided a way to build relational trust. We shared and listened to each other's stories as well as exposed injustices and disrupted silence that radical Latinx women of color (Moraga & Anzaldúa; 1981; Romero, Denicolo, & et al., 2016; Pour-Khorshid, 2018) use as a way to testify and theorize lived experiences as they navigate various forms of oppression. Furthermore, naming our intentions helped establish self-care goals and group care intentions. Knowing each other's intentions allowed us to support one another.

Collaborating and sharing input on the PAR is a fundamental part of the project because "the people closest to the issues are best situated to discover answers to local concerns" (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 25). I shared the dissertation proposal poster (see Figure 17), clarified

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the questions about the length of the project (18 months), and affirmed pseudonyms would be used. EC-PLC members enhanced the original fishbone in Chapter One by adding input from the participants to be more specific about the assets and challenges at the macro, meso, and micro level. Savannah shared, "high school principals have extra work because we need to work on weekends due to sporting and music events. We work very late because of school dances" (S. Travis, meeting notes, September 18, 2019). Claudia discussed the "high states accountability and the extra stress this places on newcomer students" (C. Valle, meeting notes, September 18, 2019). Laura mentioned, "TLEE coaching for new principals as an asset" (L. Voss, meeting notes, September 18, 2019). "We discussed our desire to have a better work-life balance. This process helped us deepen our understanding of the assets and challenges represented on the fishbone because they elements would become an ongoing part of our collective inquiry. Together, we were excited about collectively addressing our goal—to manage our work-related stress and help sustain ourselves and each other along the way" (C. Velasco, reflective memo, September 18, 2019). This fishbone process and the self-care questionnaire helped us co-define self-care (see Figure 18).

Activity Three: Self-Care Questionnaire Pre

We began the EC-PLC on self-care (October 24, 2019) with mindfulness eating and wellness. I demonstrated strategies on attending to our physical and mental well-being while eating. We practiced while enjoying a meal together. We expressed *testimonios* about what made comfort foods and home-cooked meals special. We transitioned and disclosed our greatest sources of work-related stress and how we perceived the way that stress affects our efficacy in attending to equity, excellence, and social justice. I charted while we took turns sharing our ideas. Laura stated, "People are stuck (with their mindsets) unwilling to examine their biases,
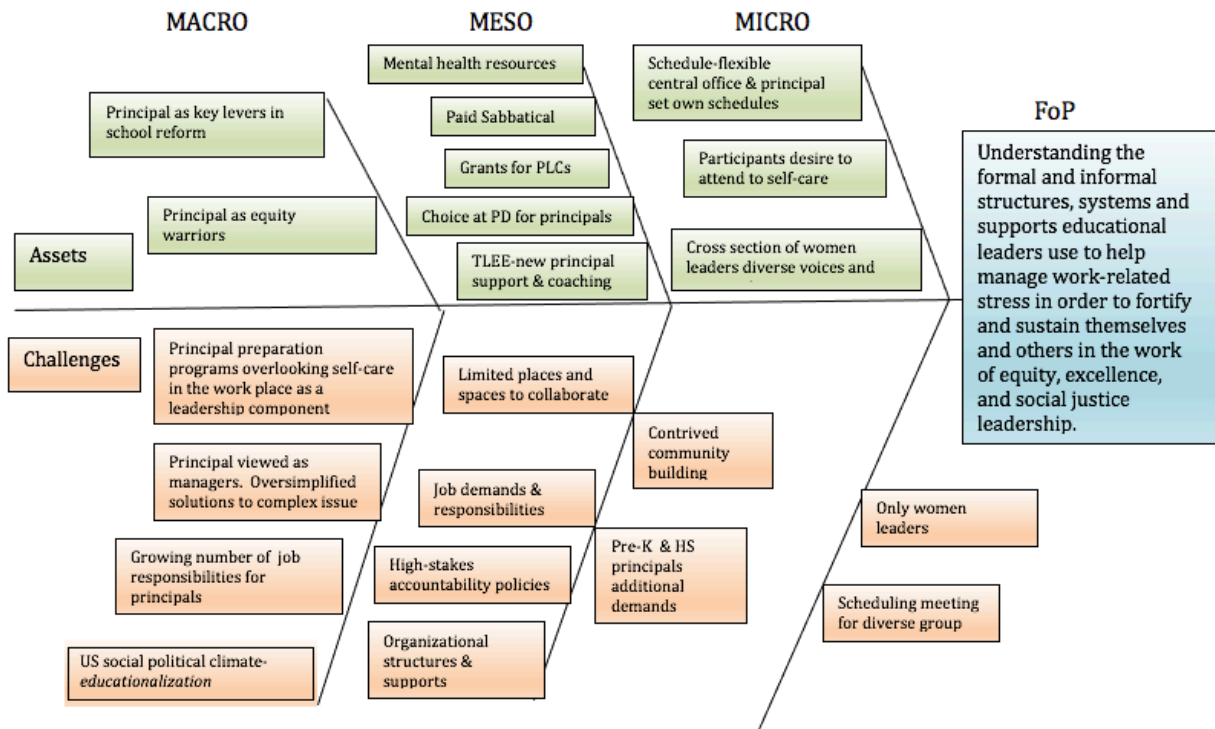
Figure 18. Expanded fishbone diagram of the macro, meso, and micro assets and challenges.

unwilling to be open to change" (L. Voss, meeting notes, October 24, 2019). Claudia and Savannah spoke about the tension amongst constituents. Claudia stated, "managing adult issues" (C. Valle, meeting notes, October 24, 2019) and Savannah added, "adults don't get along" (S. Travis, meeting notes, October 24, 2019). I added the "tensions between families and staff members are stressful" (C. Velasco, artifact, October 24, 2019). We completed a baseline questionnaire on self-care. We shared our drawings and definitions of self-care and discussed our current practices (see Figure 19 and Appendix J for Examples of Completed Self-care Questionnaires).

From the drawings and definitions, we co-constructed a collective meaning of self-care. Self-care was the ability to take care of the mental, physical, spiritual, emotional, social self. The questionnaire facilitated a shared understanding of the assets and strengths we bring individually and collectively to the EC-PLC. We concluded with our self-care commitments (see Appendix K for an Example of an EC-PLC Agenda). Cycle One activities focused on building relational trust, understanding each other, and learning and practicing self-care strategies. I collected and analyzed data, leading to a set of emerging categories.

Data Collection and Analysis

Throughout PAR Cycle One, I collected and coded meeting agendas and minutes, artifacts from activities at monthly EC-PLC meetings, questionnaire responses, and memos of my observations. I wrote analytical memos and received feedback from an ECU professor: "Individual learning and reflection with fidelity, integrity, and accountability within the PAR leads to fidelity, integrity, and accountability at the collective/group level. How will you measure or gauge the 'quality control' for your participants and their learning?" (E. McFarland, personal communication, September 29, 2019). The question resonated; I believe that the PAR project is

Figure 19. EC-PLC members work on self-care questionnaire.

not a selfish act but rather could be a new structural way of reinventing self-care as group care. We engaged in member checks throughout the PAR project to ensure the work was a collaborative leadership process (Guajardo et al., 2016). I coded multiple narrative data sources to identify codes and patterns. Common patterns served to identify emerging categories for PAR Cycle One (see Appendix L Codebook).

I began the open coding process with reviewing all data collected for PAR Cycle One. I filtered the data to determine the necessary and relevant data (Saldaña, 2016) and placed each data source into an individual table. The table had three columns: data, code, and notes (see Figure 20). I coded the data line by line. I coded one piece of data from each of the data sources: EC-PLC meeting notes, artifacts, questionnaire, memos, and analytic memos.

The first round generated an initial set of codes and emerging categories. "I deliberately search[ed] for commonalities throughout the data and employ[ed] an evolving repertoire of established codes" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 79). I then created a code book (see Appendix L Codebook) and began tallying the number of times a category showed up in the data. I used classification reason and my intuitive senses to determine which data "look[ed] alike" and "fe[lt] alike" when grouping them together (Saldaña, 2016, citing Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 347). In addition, I defined and explained each emerging category and code and analyzed all the data using this methodology. After completing the initial coding and categorizing, I reviewed the codebook (see Appendix L Codebook). I collapsed categories and tethered them together and substantiated the emerging categories with literature. Of the forty-eight categories in the code book, fourteen of them—wellness strategies, time, leadership actions, reflection, emotion, pollinating practice, prioritize, motivation, holding space, dispositions, shift, setting, supports, and agency—appeared five to sixteen times across the various artifacts. Saldaña (2016) asserts,

Artifact Stressors ID by CPR group
EC-PLC Meeting 10-24-19

Data	Codes	Notes
Not starting my evaluations (ST) Tensions between families and school (CV) Staff interpersonal relationships (new staff and tenure staff not getting along. Tensions culture of the school. (CIV) Ineffective teachers (ST) People are stuck (with their mindset) unwilling to examine their biases unwilling to be open to change (LVM) Prioritizing (daily/weekly pacing) (CIV) Negative feedback from someone you trust (LVH) Managing adult issues (LVM, CIV) Not being able to get the support wrap-around services for a student because of waitlist and bureaucracies (CV) Staff don't get along (ST)	Time: pacing Compliance: required timelines Mindset: resistance Mindset: personal biases Mindset: adult issues Tension: interpersonal relationship staff Tension: school and family Relationships: Trust issues Relationship: negative feedback Relationships: family and school Culture: resistance Culture: staff Prioritizing: compliance Time: pacing Time: schedule	POSSIBLE CATEGORIES: • Compliance • Mindset • Tension • Relationship • Culture • Prioritizing • Time

Figure 20. Example of coding process.

"once coding is applied to a datum during first cycle analysis, it is not a fixed representation but a dynamic and malleable process through which to consider and interact with further observation and ideas" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 9). After prioritizing by using insight qualitative analysis, I describe the top four categories that emerged from the PAR Cycle One data.

Emergent Categories

The data sources tell the story of four emerging categories: (1) wellness strategies; (2) time; (3) leadership actions; and (4) reflection. During the first PAR cycle, I used reflective memos, EC-PLC meeting notes, artifacts, and a questionnaire on self-care to understand the focus of practice. As the cycle unfolded, I learned to understand the concept Wheatley and Kellener-Rogers (1996) shares about a simpler way. I became aware of the need to hold space with a flexible disposition. I needed to be more responsive to EC-PLC members and my ability to attend to self-care. I learned that being more purposeful with our time and less serious about attending to pre-established objectives and agendas helped us to hold space for one another. Inviting playfulness and others' voices allowed us to better attend to our individual and collective self-care in a "simpler way" and provided an *Espacio* Sano for our EC-PLC.

Wellness Strategies

Wellness strategies are critical to sustainability of school leaders (Aguilar, 2018; Bonomo, 2016; Bottery et al., 2018; Brock & Grady, 2002; Cabeen, 2018; Gardiner et al., 2000; Harding, 2016; Mahfouz, 2018; Wells & Klocko, 2018). Learning and practicing self-care strategies helped support our EC-PLC members individually and collectively. We were intentional about sharing wellness strategies, and hoped to practice them in our respective workspaces, share them with colleagues, and see them in turn shared with students. The story of wellness strategies was obvious in multiple data points (EC-PLC meetings, memos, analytic

memos, artifacts, and questionnaire). Seven practices provided emergent categories of evidence as the building blocks of wellness strategies (total codes=80 instances and seven subcategories): (1) attention to body (35%); (2) attention to mind (19%); (3) connection with others (16%); (4) creative outlets (10%); (5) learning (10%); (6) distraction, not engaging (6%); and (7) wellness strategies used across locations (4%). Listed in the order of frequency, these codes appeared across the data that were collected in Table 6 and are illustrated in Figure 21.

As the data indicate, several sub-categories and codes in the wellness category had one or limited instances or frequency. However, because we were early in the data collection and analysis, I wanted to keep track of which codes, sub-categories, and categories emerged as the study continued – particularly if wellness strategies across locations increased.

Attention to Body

The practice of attending to our physical health and body was evidenced in six codes (n=28 or 35%) Table 6 shows the frequency of each code: sleep had a frequency of two (3%), eating healthy foods a frequency of ten (12%), exercise a frequency of four (5%), nature walks a frequency of four (5%), essential oil a frequency of six (8%), and massage a frequency of two (2%). The EC-PLC members described how they attended to self-care via these wellness strategies. Sleeping, eating healthy foods, exercise, nature walks, and using essential oils and massage supported EC-PLC members' well-being. During our meetings, I diffused essential oils and we ate healthy snacks. Savannah said, "I care for myself by sleeping" (S. Travis, artifact, October 24, 2019). Claudia drew a picture of a bed with thirty-four zees and wrote, "self-care to me is calmness-rest-fun-easy going and positive" (C. Valle, artifact, October 24, 2019). Laura wrote, "body –running, outdoor time, walks to school, vegetables/fresh foods and sleep" (L.

Figure 21. Wellness strategies category and codes.

Table 6

Wellness Strategies Category, Subcategories, Codes, and Frequency

Emerging Category	Subcategories n=7	Codes	Frequency
Wellness Strategies 80 instances	Attention to body (35%)	Sleep	2
		Healthy food	10
		Exercise	4
		Nature walk	4
		Essential oils	6
		Massage	2
	Attention to mind (19%)	Dynamic Mindfulness	9
		Breathing	1
		Writing & using Affirmations	4
		Reflections	1
	Connection to others (16%)	Time with friends and family	6
		Storytelling	5
		Connecting with other women leaders	2
	Creative outlets (10%)	Playfulness	1
		Make pottery	2
		Movie/performance	4
		Listen to music	1
	Learning (10%)	Listening & time management	5
		Sharing resources	3
	Distractions/Not Engaging (6%)	Reclusion	4
		Mindless T.V.	1
	The use of wellness strategies (4%)	Challenge	2
		Across locations	1

Voss, artifact, October 24, 2019). The EC-PLC group identified our physical health as an element of self-care.

Attention to Mind

The practice of attending to our mind was a category that was evidenced across four codes (n=15 or 19%). Table 6 shows the frequency each code; for example, dynamic mindfulness had a frequency of nine (11%), breathing a frequency of one (1%), writing and using affirmations a frequency of four (5%), and reflection a frequency of one (1%). The use of dynamic mindfulness poses, breathing, writing, using affirmations, and reflection helped center our minds and allowed members to "let go," especially of fixed mindsets.

Laura stated, "self-care involves letting go of perfectionism and following the mantra, 'Love More, Care Less'…Self-care for me involves mindfulness in the morning and throughout the day" (L. Voss, meeting notes, October 24, 2019). Laura explained the mantra was about loving herself more and caring less of what others thought of her, including her own negative self-talk. In addition, during a pre-cycle meeting (May 2, 2019), we used the strategy of sending ourselves affirming messages. Attending to our mind, centering on our purpose, and releasing false narratives helped us make space to better attend to our well-being. The EC-PLC group identified mental health as an element of self-care.

Connection with Others

The EC-PLC group shared the importance of having time to connect with others, as evidenced across three codes (n=13 or 16%). Table 6 shows time with friends had a frequency of six (8%), the use of storytelling a frequency of five (6%), and connecting with other women leaders a frequency of two (2%). EC-PLC members connected in a variety of ways: Laura shared "positive playful moments with her girls" (L. Voss, meeting artifact, October, 24, 2019); for

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Savannah it is "spending time with friends" (S. Travis, meeting artifact, October 24, 2019); and for me it is "a home cooked meal with my partner and friends" (C. Velasco, meeting artifact, October 24, 2019). Laura described self-care as a "connection and allyship with other women, moms, leaders" (L. Voss, meeting artifact, October 24, 2019). The research on self-care and leadership indicates that the use of networks and engaging with others is vital in supporting educational leaders (Brock & Grady, 2002; Cabeen, 2018; Wells & Klocko, 2018). The EC-PLC members identified connecting with others and networking as self-care.

Our EC-PLC members identified what got in the way of our self-care intentions. Time was a barrier identified in the fishbone diagram (see Figure 18), it showed up in thirteen different codes. Next, I describe three emergent practices that provided evidence as the building blocks of time: (1) how time is used and prioritized; (2) how time is measured and managed; and (3) the cadence of time (see Figure 22 and Table 7).

Creative Outlets

The EC-PLC group conveyed that creative outlets helped support stress reduction and invited wellness. Bolman and Deal (2017) state, "[m]etaphor, humor, and play loosen things up" (p. 254). The practice of creative outlets was evidenced across four codes (n=8 or 10%). Table 6 shows the frequency of each code: playfulness had a frequency of one (1%), making pottery a frequency of two (3%), watching a movie or a live performance a frequency of four (5%), and listening to music a frequency of one (1%). EC-PLC members engaged all four codes to support their well-being. I wrote, "plugging into the arts (listening to music, watching a movie, a show or making pottery)" (C. Velasco, meeting notes, October 24, 2019). Savannah and Claudia emphasized self-care being fun, easy going, and playful. Savannah stated, "fun is important. Now that I'm a principal everything is scheduled. I am going to schedule fun into my schedule"

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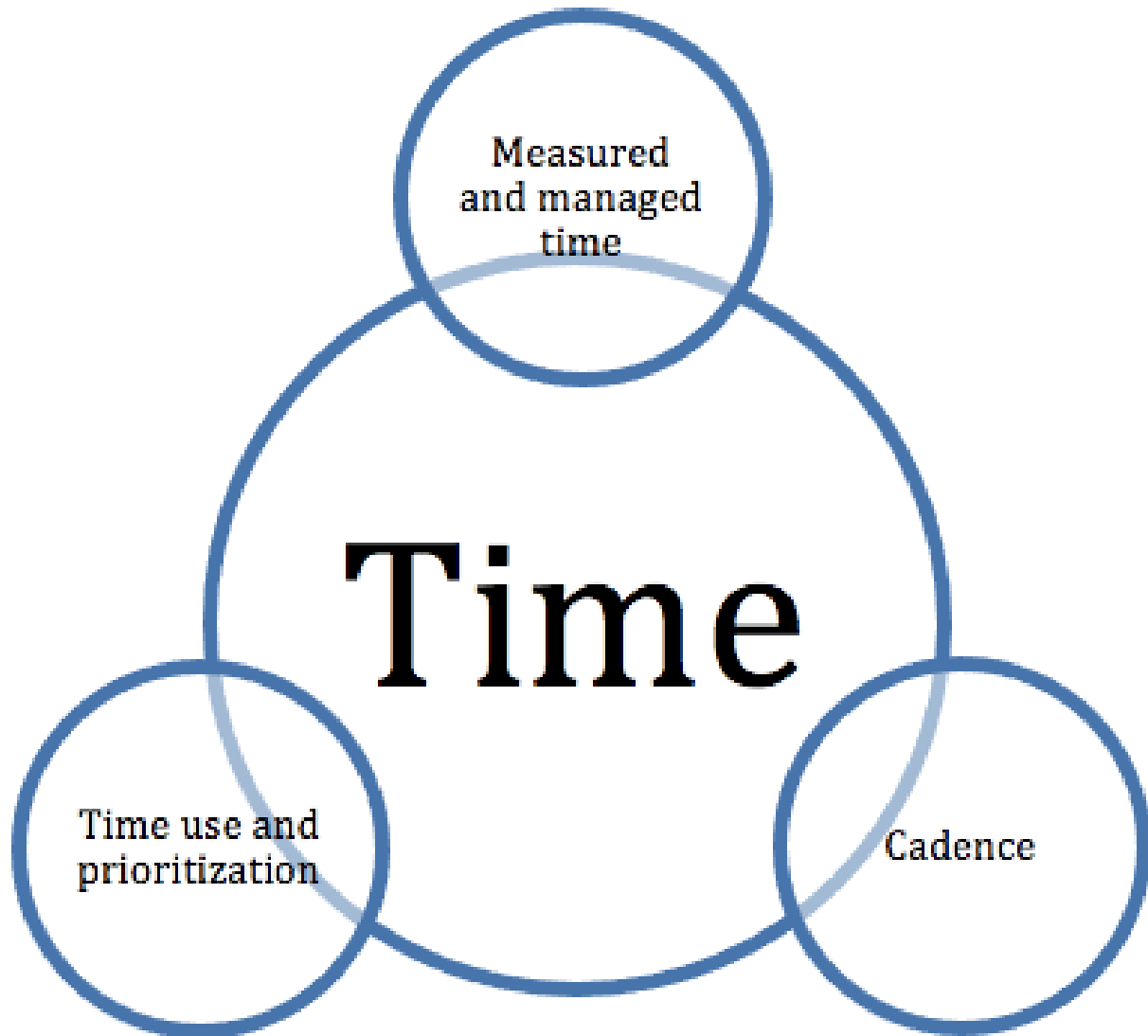
Figure 22. Time category and codes.

Table 7

Time Category, Subcategories, Codes, and Frequency

Emerging Category	Subcategories n=3	Codes	Frequency
Time 55 instances	Measured and managed time (55%)	Commodity	1
		Management	2
		Scheduled	16
		Extension	9
		Long trajectory	2
	Cadence (32%)	Pacing	10
		Leverage	3
		Interrupted	1
		Unrealistic/limited	4
	Time use & prioritization (13%)	Important things	2
		Rejuvenating activity	2
		Wellness appointments	3

(S. Travis, reflective memo, September 22, 2019). Being less serious, inviting play, and creating surfaced as elements of self-care for the EC-PLC group. Nachmanovitch (1990) affirms, "[o]ur play fosters richness of response and adaptive flexibility. This is the evolution value of play— play makes us flexible. By reinterpreting reality and begetting novelty, we keep from becoming rigid. Play enables us to rearrange our capacities and our very identity so that they can be used in unforeseen ways" (Nachmanovitch, 1990, p. 43). Our EC-PLC invited fun and learning as elements of self-care.

Learning

The EC-PLC focus on self-care created a space for members to share ideas, resources, and strategies on how to manage stress and attend to self-care. During the EC-PLC meeting (September 18, 2019) we shared expansive listening and time management strategies. Claudia was stressed about the amount of time it took her to get through hundreds of emails. Savannah shared strategies to help manage the email task and time. We exchanged wellness resources, Savannah described self-care through an OWN series, Black Women OWN the Conversation, and shared its information about stress management, healing, and wellness (S. Travis, meeting notes, September 18, 2019). I shared Ellen Langer's science of mindlessness and mindfulness podcast, *On Being*, with Krista Tippett and the podcast Goop. Learning was found in two codes (n=8 or 10%). Table 6 shows the frequency each code: listening and time management strategies had a frequency of five (6%), sharing resources a frequency of three (4%). Self-care is also group care; it incorporates learning from each other and sharing resources. EC-PLC members shared that they found it challenging to use wellness strategies.

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Distraction and Not Engaging

The practice of using distraction or choosing not to engage was evidenced across two codes, solitude and mindless television (TV) (n=5 or 6%). The act of choosing solitude showed up four times (5%) and the use of mindless TV had a frequency of one (1%). Savannah and Claudia expressed avoiding people and using reclusion as forms of self-care. Brock and Grady (2002) recommend "escaping" on and off the job or scheduling a quiet time for relaxation at work each day. Claudia disclosed, "sometimes I hide out in my office or Pre-K classroom" (C. Valle, meeting notes, September 18, 2019). Savannah shared, "sometimes [she] avoids people and purposefully goes the opposite direction then re-engages when [she] is more present" (S. Travis, meeting notes, September 18, 2019). EC-PLC members engaged in "mindless TV" to counter the constant demands on their attention (meeting notes, October 24, 2019). Savannah shared, "I find I get my energy and calm restored after I have been in solitude for a period of time" (S. Travis, meeting notes, October 24, 2019). Self-care means time alone and time to allow the mind to wander as a way to renewal.

The Use of Self-Care Strategies

The use of self-care strategies across locations was infrequently identified (n=3 or 4%). The frequency of challenged: two (3%) and across locations once (1%). EC-PLC members were challenged to attend to their well-being. Often there was a pattern of not eating healthy foods or exercising, coupled with a desire to "want to get better rest, eat healthy, and exercise" (meeting notes, October 24, 2019). Throughout Cycle One, EC-PLC members practiced self-care and pollinated wellness strategies in other places outside of our meetings.

Time

Taking time for yourself is not selfish; it is a professional safeguard. Appropriating time

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for self and family keeps social justice school leaders renewed so they can re-engage in the hard work (Bonomo, 2016; Brock & Grady, 2002; Cabeen, 2018; Theoharis, 2009). Three practices provided emergent categories of evidence as the building blocks of time strategies (see Figure 22; total codes 55 instances or frequency and three subcategories): (1) measured and managed time (55%); (2) cadence (32%); and (3) time use and prioritization (13%).

Measured and Managed Time

The manner in which time was measured and managed consists of five codes: commodity, management, scheduled, extension, and long trajectory (n=30 or 55%). Commodity had a frequency of one (2%), management a frequency of two (4%), scheduled time a frequency of sixteen (29%), extension of time a frequency of nine (16%), and measuring time in a long trajectory a frequency of two (4%). The data identified that time is both valuable and a commodity. In an analytic memo I write, "I have the agenda for our EC-PLC group meeting down to a science, leverage every minute with these leaders as time is a commodity" (C. Velasco, analytic memo, November 3, 2019). Savannah substantiates tightly managed time, "now that I became principal everything is scheduled" (S. Travis, meeting notes, September 18, 2019). Time was measured beyond a seven-hour workday. EC-PLC members discussed the job stresses as the "long workdays with evening events, games, supervision, plays, musicals, and many additional demands on our time" (S. Travis, meeting notes, September 18, 2019). The time code also incorporated the meaning of a desire to sustain a long trajectory in the career and the length of EC-PLC members' careers in education. Pacing our careers and use of time were important elements of time.

Cadence

The flow of time consisted of four codes: paced, leveraged, interrupted, and unrealistic/limited (n=18 or 32%). The pacing had an occurrence of ten (18%), leveraged a frequency of three (5%), interrupted a frequency of one (2%), and unrealistic/limited a frequency of four (7%). The modulation of time varied and is contextual. EC-PLC members described pacing and leveraging time when planning meetings. In addition, time barriers and how "workflow is constantly interrupted" for school leaders was discussed (C. Velasco, meeting notes, September 18, 2019). EC-PLC members described time as "unrealistic" and "limited" when discussing compliance tasks principals are required to complete. Savannah shared, "we are expected be in classrooms 80% of the time and do all the work. Do they take into account the start and stop of our day" (S. Travis, meeting notes, September 18, 2019)? Time scarcity and time stress appeared in the category (Strazdins et al., 2011; Whillans et al., 2017). EC-PLC members expressed that being increasingly pressed for time undermines and affects their well-being.

Time Use and Prioritization

Using and prioritizing time appeared in three codes (n=7 or 13%): things that are important, rejuvenating activities, and wellness appointments. The frequency of important things had a frequency of two (4%), time for rejuvenating activities a frequency of two (4%), and time for wellness appointments three (5%). EC-PLC members prioritized time for important things such as time with friends and family, time for rejuvenating activities, and wellness appointments. Claudia expressed, "I prioritize what is important to me" (C. Valle, meeting notes, September 18, 2019), important, rejuvenating activities, and wellness appointments. I shared "after my sabbatical I have shifted my priorities and the use of my time. I make intentional plans to visit

my parents and set aside time to have quality time with my family" (C. Velasco, reflective memo, March 11, 2018). Savannah's prioritized to "make sure to have fun and schedule time to engage more with students" (C. Velasco, reflective memo, September 22, 2019). Prioritizing time for EC-PLC members means being purposeful and intentional. Time with family, time to relax, and time to rejuvenate are essential. EC-PLC members' leadership actions emerged as a category.

Leadership Actions

Leaders are constantly making decisions and taking action; moreover, social justice leaders make equity conscious responsive decisions and encourage members in their communities. Leadership actions of EC-PLC members were anchored to core values, equity centered decision making, and the whole person. PAR Cycle One captured four emergent practices as evidence of leadership actions (total codes=51 instances and four subcategories): (1) responsiveness (53%); (2) encouraging (18%); (3) wholeness (15%); and (4) equity warrior (14%) (see Figure 23). Table 8 provides further details, subcategories, codes, and frequency).

Responsiveness

The responsiveness of a leader is composed of four codes (n=27 or 53%): responsiveness, planning, facilitation, and professional development. Personal responsiveness had a frequency of ten (20%), planning a frequency of eleven (23%), facilitation frequency of four (7%), and professional development a frequency of two (3%). Leadership actions involved a leader's awareness and responsiveness in facilitation, planning, and professional development for their constituents. "[Dr. Grant] was responsive to the principals who asked if they could have some time to attend to their wellness and self-care" (C. Velasco, reflective memo September 22, 2019). Dr. Grant established an additional hour, prior to a regularly scheduled principal cohort meeting,

Figure 23. Leadership actions category and codes.

Table 8

Leadership Actions Category, Subcategories, Codes, and Frequency

Emerging Category	Subcategories n=4	Codes	Frequency
Leadership Actions 51 instances	Responsiveness (53 %)	Personal Responsiveness	10
		Planning	11
		Facilitation	4
		Professional development	2
	Encouraging (18%)	*Encargados*	1
		Supporting	3
		Advice to use self-care strategies	3
		Coaching	2
	Wholeness (15%)	Integrity	2
		Sustain oneself	6
	Equity Warrior (14%)	Equity vision	2
		Equity oriented changes	1
		Social justice leadership	4

for staff to lead each other in wellness activities. In my role as participant and researcher, I became more responsive to the EC-PLC group. The following memo captures my thoughts:

> I am responsive to the EC-PLC group when facilitating the meeting. I share the agenda a week before we meet and ask them if for input and adjustments. I check in with the EC-PLC group during our meeting to see if we need to adjust anything or add anything to our time together. The area that I can grow is continuing to be more flexible. I am learning to lean into the group more and truly listen to how and what collectively we want to do in our EC-PLC meetings. I mentioned at the beginning I felt I had to lead this charge; it is a project I started. As time goes on and we deepen our community and collective understanding and experiences, I am learning to let go of "control" and allowing the EC-PLC members to guide the work (C. Velasco, reflective memo, November 3, 2019).

Encouraging

Encouragement from leaders entails four codes (n=9 or 18%): *encargados* or managers, supporting, coaching, and advising the use of self-care strategies. *Encargados* had a frequency of one (2%), supporting a frequency of three (6%), advising the use self-care strategies a frequency of three (6%), and coaching a frequency of two (4%). EC-PLC members encouraged each other through Sosa-Provencio's (2017) Critical Feminist Ethic: we entrusted each other and carried the weight of the struggle of social justice leadership towards transformation. We encouraged and supported each other at EC-PLC meetings, via text, email message, and at district meetings (see Figure 24). When EC-PLC member Dr. Grant could not attend EC-PLC meetings, I encouraged her to engage in self-care. "When they missed the EC-PLC meetings, I made it a point to connect with them, go to cohort meetings, and share the strategies we used and learned in the EC-PLC" (C. Velasco, reflective memo, September 27, 2019). In a reflective memo (October 6, 2019), I

Figure 24. Text messages between Claudia Valle and Christina Velasco.

write about my new role as a leadership coach and being "*encargada*, the idea of not only holding *Espacio Sano* for the EC-PLC group but also tethering things as they show up across the district" and being in charge of pollinating these practices in various spaces" (C. Velasco, reflective memo, October 6, 2019).

Wholeness

The leadership action of wholeness involves sustaining oneself and one's moral uprightness (n=8 or 15%). The code is composed of integrity, with a frequency of two (4%), and sustaining oneself (11%), with a frequency of six. During our EC-PLC, we discussed what sustains us to engage in social justice leadership, our *why*. Claudia's *why* are the newcomer students and families; Savannah's *why* are the high school students. For Laura and me our *why* are the new principals we coach and the impact they have on teachers, students, and families (meeting notes, October 24, 2019). For women of color, the intersectionality of our gender identity and our ethic of care are integral elements of our leadership actions. Gilligan's (1982) feminist ethic of care emerges in the wholeness code. Furthermore, Noddings (1984) and Bass (2012) posit women's oppressed status increases our sensitivity to the oppression of others and creates a leadership action to rescue oppressed peoples. As women leaders we carry a moral obligation to do everything in our power to remedy difficult situations, and it requires our whole selves.

Equity Warrior

Equity warrior leadership actions appeared in three codes: equity vision, equity-oriented changes, and social justice leadership (n=7 or 14%). Equity vision had a frequency of two (4%), equity-oriented changes a frequency of one (2%), and social justice leadership a frequency of four (8%). During pre-cycle, EC-PLC members related leadership self-care journeys and *why*

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(what we identify as the things that anchor us to stay engaged in social justice leadership) (meeting notes, October 28, 2018). At the December EC-PLC meeting we planned to revisit our journey lines and *testimonios* about how perceived stress affects efficacy in attending to equity excellence and social justice leadership. We were unable to meet; we will explore further at the January CLE and future EC-PLC meetings. Reflection is an integral part to our self-care. In the last section, I describe the reflection category and its codes.

Reflection

Reflection consisted of three codes (total codes= 4 instances and three subcategories): (1) action (44%); (2) transformation (38%); and (3) process (18%). Figure 25 and Table 9 provide further details on subcategories, codes, and frequency. Our EC-PLC group reflected using *testimonios*. We made commitments to self-care and directed next action steps based on our reflection. Documenting and reflecting served as a healing process. Bottery et al. (2018) assert that leaders need a space and time to reflect on problems as an element that help sustain school leaders. Claudia shared that reflection "helps her start anew" (C. Valle, meeting notes, October 24, 2019). I describe how reflection provides insight to act, "I realize in reflecting that I have agency in sharing these bright spots across departments with other assistant superintendents, school leaders, and certainly with leaders I am coaching" (C. Velasco, reflective memo, October 6, 2019). Change was tethered to reflection as thoughts and dispositions transformed our leadership actions.

Action

The three codes of action are: leadership practices, leadership actions, and past experiences (n=15 or 44%). Leadership practice occurred once (3%), leadership actions had a frequency of eleven (32%), and leaders' past experiences a frequency of three (9%). Leaders'
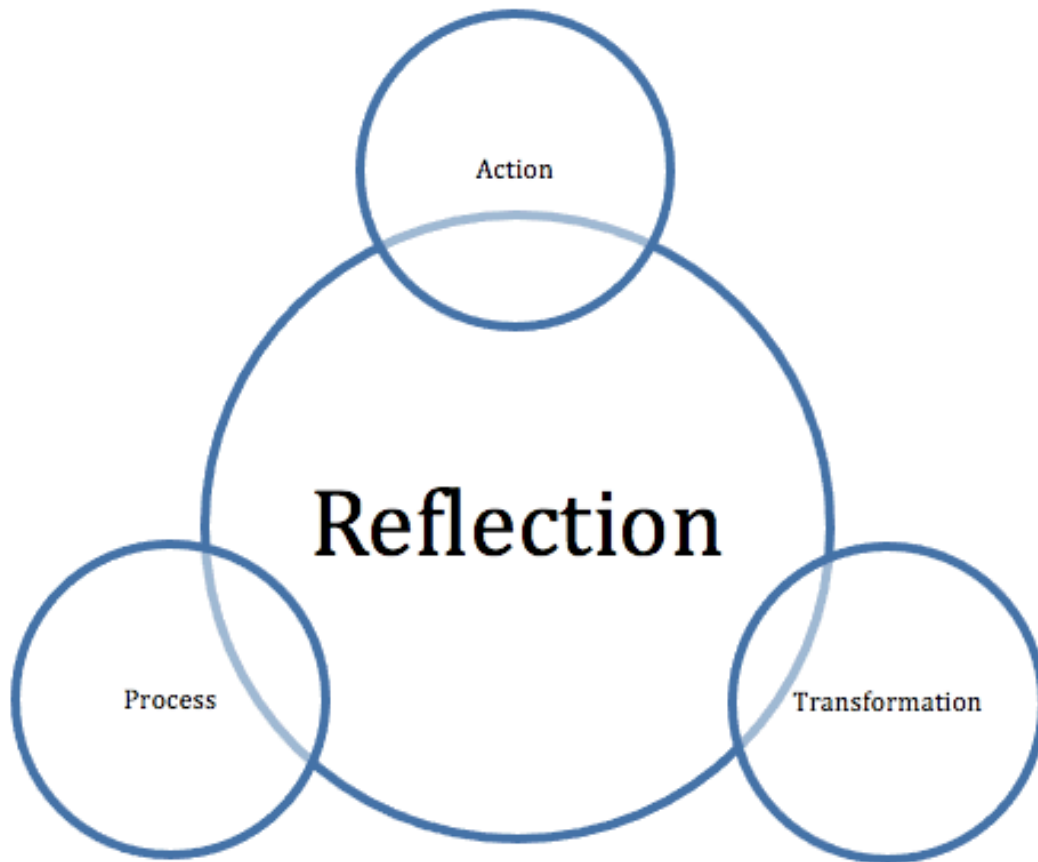
Figure 25. Reflection category and codes.

Table 9

Reflection Category, Subcategories, Codes, and Frequency

Emerging Category	Subcategories n=3	Codes	Frequency
Reflection 34 instances	Action (44%)	Leadership practice	1
		Leadership action	11
		Past experiences	3
	Transformation (38%)	Renewal	3
		Change	4
		Learning	6
	Process (18%)	Documentation	6

actions were informed by their leadership reflections, practices, and past experiences. The use of

testimonios helped honor our practices and experiences. *Testimonios* provided a method to

reflect aloud. We listened and reflected on our stories, actions, and past experiences. We engaged

in "*praxis*, in the Freireian sense, involving both reflection and action" (Furman, 2012, p. 191).

Reflective action was individual, and it helped us learn and make meaning of our next leadership

undertakings.

Transformation

Learning, changing, and renewing are identifiers for how reflection transformed our

thoughts, actions, and mindsets. Transformation had three codes (n=13 or 38%).The renewal

code had a frequency of three (9%), change a frequency of four (12%), and learning a frequency

of six (17%) (see Table 9 and Appendix L Codebook). In an analytic memo I wrote, "we are

learning how women of color in leadership show up differently than other leaders, building an

understanding and collective thinking about leadership" (C. Velasco, analytical memo,

September 1, 2019)**.** Reflection helped with transformation. Laura expressed, "having a space to

reflect helps deepen understanding and is motivating to make a change to better take care of

myself and others" (L. Voss, meeting notes, October 24, 2019).

Process

Process is defined as a practice of writing or using written documents to reflect together.

Process was composed of one code documentation, with a frequency of six (n=18%). During the

EC-PLC meetings, we co-created a list of work-related stressors (meeting notes, September 18,

2019). EC-PLC members contributed to the fishbone diagram to identify assets and challenges,

co-defined self-care, and reflected on our self-care questionnaires (meeting notes, October 24,

2019). In addition, EC-PLC members engaged in member checks for before moving into the next

cycle. The use of individual and collective reflection supports our individual and collective leadership self-care as we return to our workspaces and engage in leadership actions.

The data sources tell the story of four emerging categories: (1) wellness strategies; (2) time; (3) leadership actions; and (4) reflection (see Figure 26). These emerging categories may help inform the research and provide insight for future EC-PLC meetings and community learning exchanges. The emerging categories deepened the understanding on how to propel the PAR project forward with more purpose. Wellness strategies, time, leadership actions, and reflection illuminated the need for me to embrace simpler ways when engaging in *Espacio Sano* with the EC-PLC members.

Implications

In this section, I explore how PAR Cycle One informed the research questions. Then, I discuss how PAR Cycle One impacted my leadership. Finally, I share how analysis from PAR Cycle One guided the actions for PAR Cycle Two.

Implications for the PAR Research Questions

The categories that emerged in the cycle--wellness strategies, time, leadership actions, and reflection--are aligned to the PAR research questions. During PAR Cycle One, EC-PLC group measured the formal and informal structures supporting us when dealing with stress. We collaborated on the meaning of the assets and challenges at the macro, meso, and micro levels using the fishbone diagram. The fishbone diagram helped EC-PLC members "…organize our thinking and learning experience from the micro to the meso and on to the macro levels, or sphere, in which we experience life" (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 27). We learned about dynamic mindfulness, expansive listening, shared *testimonios*, and wellness strategies. To some extent, we

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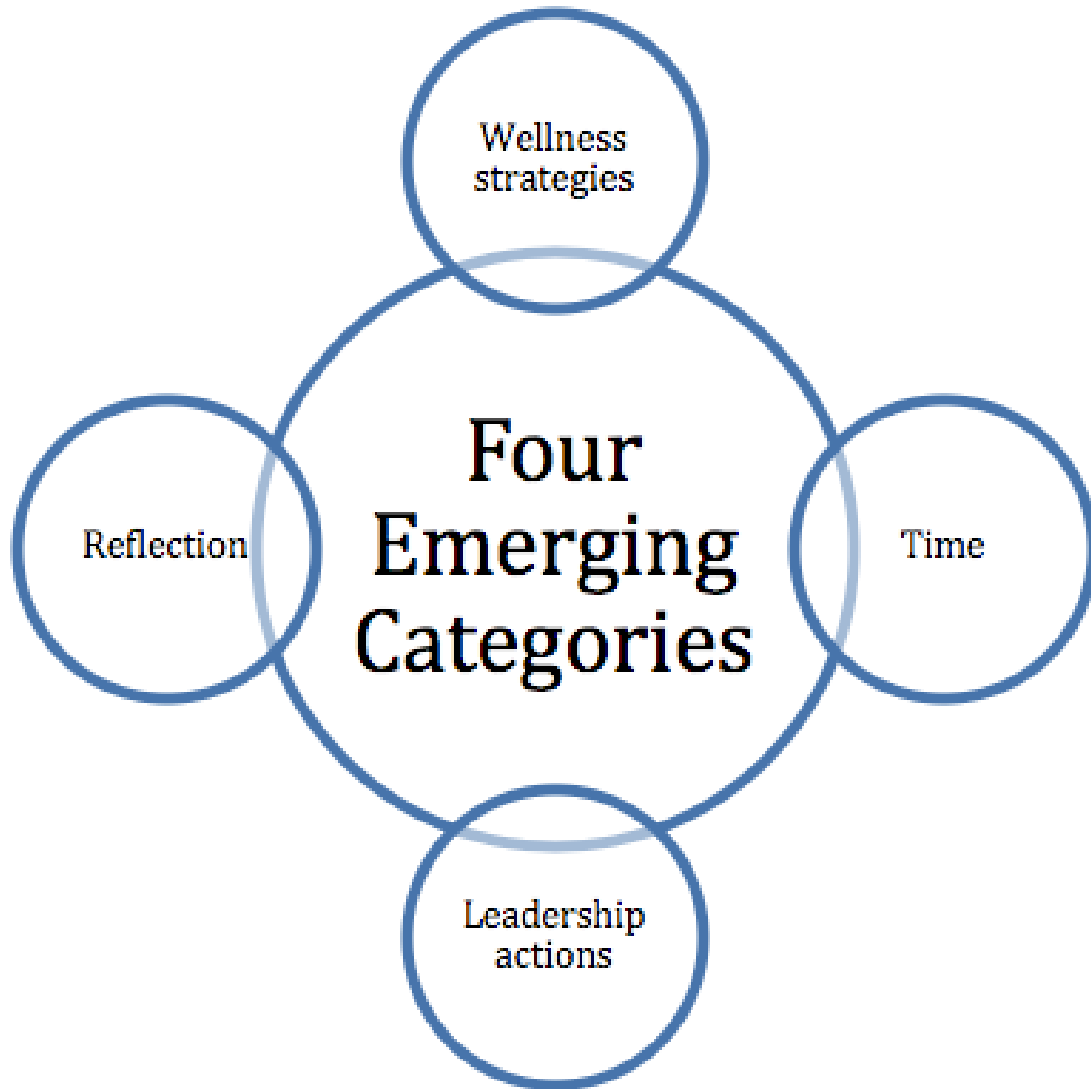
Figure 26. Four emerging categories.

began pollinating practices in our workspaces, which in turn helped create conditions to attend to self-care for colleagues and ourselves.

In PAR Cycle One, the challenges that hindered our ability to attend to self-care, as identified in the fishbone diagram (see Figure 18), emerged in meso and micro levels. Key barriers were job demands and responsibilities, specifically time spent on compliance related matters with required timelines. In addition, work events demanding our time extended late into the evenings and weekends.

Another challenge identified in the fishbone diagram was the notion of contrived community building and limited spaces to collaborate. EC-PLC members discussed the lack of supports, feeling disconnected, and meetings feeling trivial and constrained (meeting notes, September 18, 2019 and October 24, 2019). Conversely, the shift of hosting the EC-PLC meetings in an EC-PLC member's home rather than on a school campus opened a "relaxed space to be in community" (C. Valle, meeting notes, September 18, 2019). EC-PLC members identified TLEE (Transformative Leadership for Equity and Excellence) as an asset that supports new principals.

We used informal supports such as encouraging emails, text messages, and one-to-one meetings to fortify each other in and outside of our EC-PLC meetings. More importantly, we began to share these practices with other members in our community. Laura and I pollinated self-care practices with the new school leaders we coach as well as with central office colleagues. Dr. Grant utilized wellness strategies and created structured time for principals to attend to self-care during principal cohort meetings. Dr. Grant created a wellness hour, the hour before the principals' meeting she facilitates (E. Grant, meeting notes, November 14, 2019).

As a result of PAR Cycle One, however, new questions emerged:

- How is stress affecting EC-PLC members' ability to attend to equity, excellence, and social justice?

- What is our individual and collective understanding of how we have come to care for ourselves?

- How does our identity as women of color in leadership intersect with the ways we care for ourselves?

- What other stories will surface and how might our *testimonios* provide insights into our wellness journeys?

I wondered how our *why*-- stay engaged in social justice leadership that supports us individually and collectively as women of color in leadership. How will managing time and space impact our EC-PLC? How might *Espacio Sano* and the use of *testimonios* help us heal, bolster us, and move us into a direction of critical resilience and the idea of self-care as group care? I am curious to see how our mindsets may shift and what wellness strategies we lean into and learn as an EC-PLC group. Furthermore, I wonder how the work we are doing and learning in the EC-PLC can make its way into other spaces, and how the work may further impact our leadership and outcomes for our staff, students, and families.

As a researcher, I was aware that I was always looking for sightings—the moments when there is an opportunity to see how beliefs animate behaviors (McDonald, 1996). As a leader, I needed to tether those moments; I have learned that in my earlier action research in a school setting (Velasco, 2009), and I was paying attention to the epiphany experiences in which beliefs meet participant energy. How could I use that to move the work forward? Three important sightings in post PAR Cycle One provided insight and further questions as we moved into Cycle Two: (a) pollinating practices; (b) supporting others outside of the EC-PLC; and (c) extending

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learning into a larger ecology (Furman, 2012). In addition, I wanted to further examine how EC-PLC members could provide input on future meeting content and conditions. I was noticing positive shifts in EC-PLC members' dispositions, awareness, and my role in the EC-PLC.

Implications for Leadership

During Cycle One, I shifted my perspectives and practices in my role as a member of the EC-PLC and activist researcher as a result of the experiences and the *praxis* of the evidence. Participating in the EC-PLC on self-care, observing and supporting others and their attention to self-care, and submersing myself in literature focused on self-care and wellness, especially for women of color, have supported a base for my new learning. I learned more about the concept of time scarcity and how it has more negative effects on women. "Time stress is also a critical factor underlying rising rates of obesity: lacking time is a primary reason that people report failing to eat healthy foods or exercise regularly" (Whillans et al., 2017, p. 8,852). My awareness of time and setting it aside for my wellness helps me be in tune with myself and, in turn, may better support our EC-PLC group.

I learned that relinquishing former ways of holding space and facilitation and acknowledging EC-PLC members' guidance provides new possibilities in our EC-PLC. I learned to listen deeply to the EC-PLC members, to be more responsive to their stories. Co-developing makes our meetings more powerful. In an analytical memo I wrote:

> The work I am doing with the PAR is helping inform my learning and build my capacity
> as a leader in my workplace. It is helping me reflect on my role as the researcher and
> participant in the study. When I initiated the study, I felt as if I had to lead and be THE
> facilitator of our meetings. I'd have the agenda for our EC-PLC meeting down to a
> science to leverage every minute with these leaders, as time is a commodity. This mindset

created a vibe that was much like the meetings we currently have in our system of education and in our district and schools. I noticed when I changed the location to my home rather than meeting at the school site (where one participant is the school principal) I felt the group and I relax. I thoughtfully crafted an agenda which honored our time together, rather than it feeling so rushed and time bound. Our meetings began to take a softer, different shape and smoother cadence, and my leadership relaxed. I felt I was able to be more of a participant guiding the group. I attribute this to the gracious space, to *Espacio Sano*, that we are co-creating, and I attribute this to the axiom of learning and leadership as a dynamic social process and a "collective leadership process" (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 21). The EC-PLC group is shaping our time together; we are shifting and sifting to make meaning together of what matters most of our time. My perspectives and ways of working in my position as a TLEE Supervisor as I co design professional developments (PD) with colleagues for new leaders are being positively influenced (C. Velasco, reflective memo, November 3, 2019).

My memo led to this personal communication: "the double loop learning-learning from the research itself and learning from reflection about the research" (McFarland, personal communication, November 11, 2019). The double loop is reinforced by *praxis* and helped guide the work in Cycle Two. I was excited about being a moving force for change with the EC-PLC group as we planned for our next cycle; I took Dewey (1938) to heart:

> A primary responsibility of educators is that they not only be aware of the general principle of the shaping of the actual experience by environing conditions, but that they also recognize in the concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experiences lead to growth (p. 40).

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I had helped to shape and hold space in ways that solidified our relationships and energized us to move forward in our quest to take care of ourselves and others.

Implications for PAR Cycle Two

For the next cycle, I developed a deeper understanding of how stress affected leaders' efficacy in attending to equity excellence and social justice leadership. I continued to learn how being women of color in leadership affects our ability to attend to self-care. How do we use the skills we are learning in the EC-PLC and community learning exchange (CLE) to create working environments and conditions for colleagues to attend to self-care? I was interested in learning about my role in holding space for the EC-PLC group. Furthermore, how may facilitation be guided by EC-PLC members to co-construct agendas for our EC-PLC and CLE? Finally, I was interested in learning more about how my commitment to activist research epistemology would evolve and what additional double loop learning we might have in Cycle Two.

<div align="center">

Chapter Summary

</div>

From the interactions and evidence from the Cycle One, educational leaders were able to establish relational trust and share *testimonios* about their personal and professional selves. We began shared wellness strategies with each other and pollinated self-care practice into our lives and workspaces. We provided collective input around the assets and challenges in the focus of practice for the PAR project. We found that tethering practices made an impact. During the first cycle, we cultivated and deepened relational trust. I became more aware of deeply listening to EC-PLC members' voices, as we made the EC-PLC our *Espacio Sano*. Holding space and our EC-PLC meetings off-campus supported gracious space and helped in our creating an *Espacio Sano* where we could more comfortably share our stories (Guajardo et al., 2016).

I understood at a different level how listening carefully to each other's *testimonios* informed actions I might take in Cycle Two. During PAR Cycle Two, I empowered EC-PLC members to engage more actively in agenda development and EC-PLC meeting facilitation. Figure 27 illustrates the three PAR cycles; we moved from PAR Cycle One (self and the interpersonal) to PAR Cycle Two (self and the communal). At the start of the second cycle, we co-hosted a CLE and shared our work with others in the organization. We focused on four tasks: (1) selecting those to be invited to participate in a CLE, (2) identifying and selecting pedagogies and practices we could implement in the CLE, (3) observing each other's practice context (schools or departments), and (4) engaging in a member check. During Cycle Two (Spring 2020), I leaned on EC-PLC members to co-facilitate and memo about my growth as a leader. Finally, we continued to build a collective understanding of self-care strategies and use *testimonios* to deepen relational trust and our abilities to attend to work-related stress.
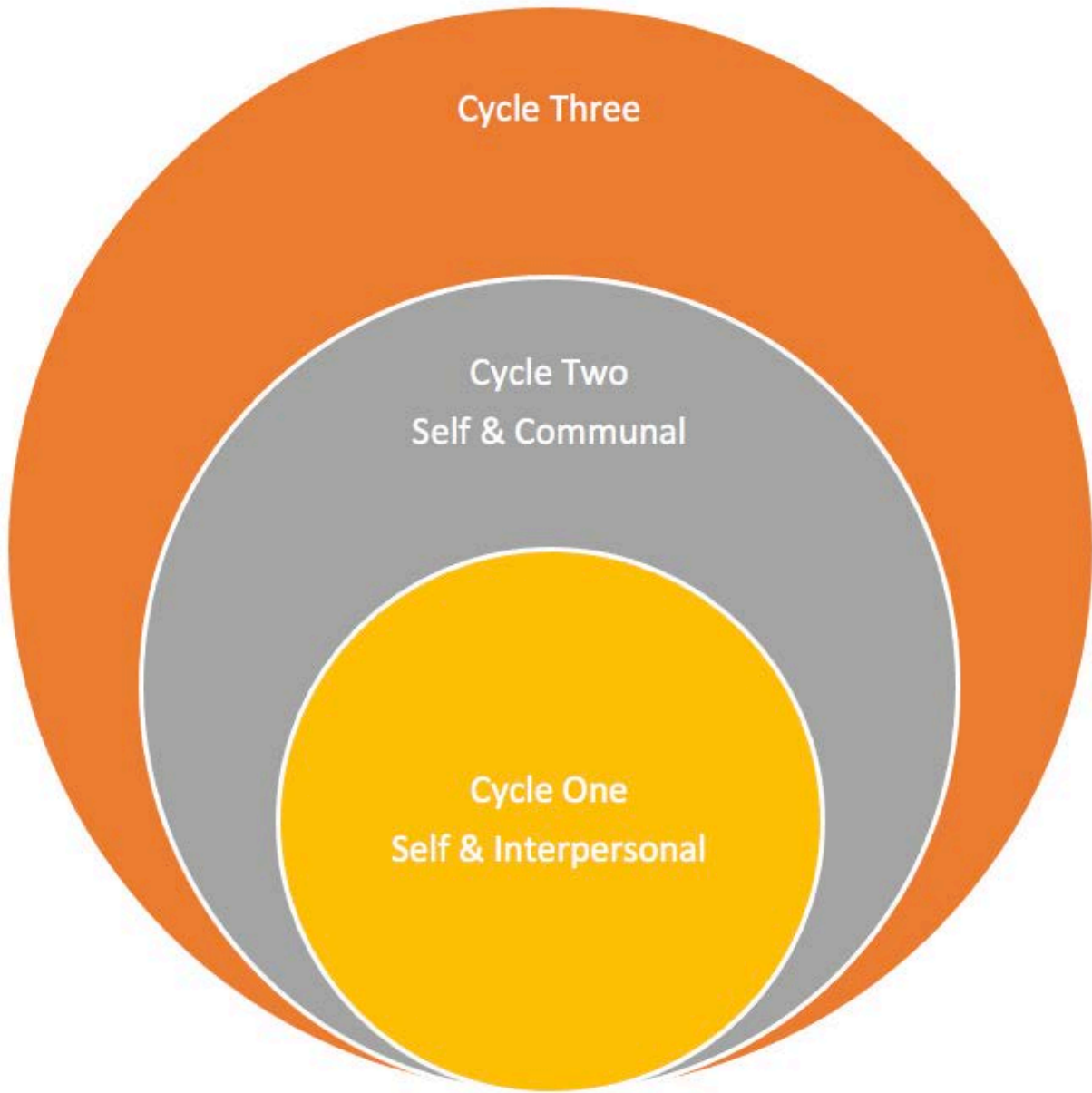
Figure 27. PAR three cycles: self & communal.

CHAPTER 6: PAR CYCLE TWO

We desperately need more leaders who are committed to courageous,
wholehearted leadership and who are self-aware enough to lead from their hearts.
—Brené Brown

Widening the Circle

The four emerging categories (wellness strategies, reflection, time, and leadership

actions) from PAR Cycle One align with the literature about self-care leadership (Aguilar, 2018;

Bonomo, 2016; Bottery et al., 2018; Brock & Grady, 2002; Cabeen, 2018; Gardiner et al., 2000;

Harding, 2016; Mahfouz, 2018; Wells & Klocko, 2018). Specifically, the extant literature cites

relational trust, reflection time and space, and the value of networking as key factors to

sustaining school leaders. The Equity Centered-Professional Learning Community (EC-PLC)

group focused on self-care, developed strong relational trust, learned and shared wellness

strategies, and supported one another. In addition, group members contributed ideas to co-

construct the meeting topics and fostered self-care as collective care. The key learnings provided

the foundation for the Community Learning Exchange (CLE) at the beginning of PAR Cycle

Two.

PAR Cycle One unveiled the importance of listening deeply to the EC-PLC members,

being responsive to the collective needs, and holding space and time more fluidly to invite

playfulness (Nachamanovitch, 1990; Safir, 2017). The EC-PLC group confirmed the importance

of listening to each other's *testimonios* (storytelling) and reflections. Informal meeting space

created a place where group members could be more vulnerable with one another. The focus of

Cycle Two is to share our learning from the EC-PLC with other members of our communities

and move our work outward.

The analysis of data from PAR Cycle Two provided evidence of the EC-PLC central story: *How our individual self-care and relational trust grew to build collective care.* In PAR Cycle Two, we had two goals. First, to widen our circle and exchange learning with other members in the community (Guajardo et al., 2016). Second, to share facilitation with EC-PLC members who took on more active roles in developing our agendas and co-facilitating our meetings. The chapter reveals both how we facilitated those goals and an analysis of the data to understand if the goals were achieved. Within the second cycle, we put the four emerging categories to the test. That is, we applied more data collection and analysis to further understand these categories.

The four sections of the chapter include: (1) PAR Cycle Two activities, (2) data collection and analysis, (3) emerging themes, and (4) implications for PAR Cycle Three. We engaged in four EC-PLC activities with the goal of sharing the learning with others. I coded the evidence of the activities and explained the emerging themes codified by the data collection of PAR Cycle Two. Two themes emerged: *Espacio Sano* (sane space) and wholehearted leadership. *Espacio Sano* is a process of creating a distinct professional space that disrupts normative professional development spaces in our district and school. Wholehearted leadership, leading with the head and heart, is imperative for women social justice leaders' ability to attend to self-care as collective care. I share leadership and PAR Cycle Three implications.

PAR Cycle Two was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The crisis had a significant impact on our school district and, as a result, on PAR Cycle Two. As the district reorganized to remote online learning, all staff attended first to student safety and well-being, including establishing locations to access food. COVID-19 responsibilities impacted the EC-PLC members, as they needed to learn and support their school communities and leaders with

developing emergency remote schooling. As with any crisis, there were opportunities to learn and grow. A collateral positive for the PAR project was reinforcing the importance of self-care. I knew the EC-PLC group needed self-care more than any other time, and the shift is reflected in the discussion of activities.

PAR Cycle Two Activities

In PAR Cycle Two (January-April 2020), we focused on self-care strategies, the use of *testimonios,* and intentional leadership actions supporting relational trust and *Espacio Sano* continued from PAR Cycle One. During the second cycle of inquiry, a new focus on transfer empowered those within the EC-PLC group to take more active roles in the development of agendas and EC-PLC meeting facilitation. As a result of that focus, the EC-PLC group transferred the practices from the intimate EC-PLC into our workspaces and shared strategies with a wider group of community members. Community members included teachers, students, school principals, support staff, and external school partners. The cycle was organized in four activities:

1. Host a CLE to share the self-care strategies and stories with others.

2. Continue to use *testimonios* and self-care strategies in our EC-PLC.

3. Observe each other in our workspaces.

4. Engage in a member check.

As stated in the introduction, however, the COVID-19 pandemic shifted some activities and data collection. COVID-19 school closures and San Francisco's order to shelter in place had unintended consequences in the ways we engaged and imparted strategies. Table 10 provides a visual account of the PAR Cycle Two data collection. The key evidence we collected and analyzed included two EC-PLC meetings, meeting minutes, observations, notes, and memos. The

Table 10

Spring 2020 Key Activities and Data Collection (January-April)

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12
Meetings with EC-PLC (n=2)	♦							♦				
Meeting with EC-PLC online (n=1)												♦
Community Learning Exchange (n=1)	♦											
Observations (n=3)	♦			♦		♦						♦
Self-Care Story (n=4)								♦				
Written Notes or Reflective Memos (n=12)	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦

cycle kicked off with a Community Learning Exchange (CLE) in January 2020. The CLE set the tone for our work and generated artifacts for analysis (poem, art collage, and performance piece).

The COVID-19 crisis caused a major disruption in week 10, and the PAR Cycle Two plans had to be adjusted. I planned to collect more face-to-face data, but shifted to hosting EC-PLC meetings online via Google meet. I coded the written documentation from emails, texts, and meeting notes to identify main ideas and common themes. I triangulated these data with reflective memos and artifacts. I detail key activities: CLE, EC-PLC meetings, and observations.

Activity One: Community Learning Exchange (CLE)

We constructed the planning and facilitation for the CLE in PAR Cycle Two. Each EC-PLC member invited women leaders from our school district and community-based organizations. We selected women of color or White allies who formed part of our support networks (see Appendix M for CLE Meeting Agenda). The EC-PLC team established the importance of holding the CLE off site as a condition of *Espacio Sano*. As a result, the CLE was held off campus at a community center.

Creating intentional space was essential in PAR Cycle Two. We organized the room with chairs in a circle and crafted an altar in the center. We used dynamic critical pedagogies such as opening circle (Guajardo et al., 2016). We began by honoring the land and the people, and a principal colleague affirmed, "circles are the space where we hold each other; it's a space of learning, it's a space for healing, and a space for indigenous ways of learning" (CLE meeting notes, January 11, 2020).

Laura, EC-PLC member and a district leadership coach, reviewed the community agreements we used in our EC-PLC with CLE additions (see Appendix M for CLE Meeting Agenda). I framed the day, "co-practitioner members and I are trying to get at the issue of self-

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care in our workplaces; we are moving from the me to the we" (C. Velasco, reflective memo, January 11, 2020). Then, I acknowledged a CLE axiom, "the people closest to the issues are best situated to discover answers to local concerns" (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 25). The fourteen women leaders from various roles inside and out of schools had experiences and stories of challenges and resilience in the workplace to impart which may help us understand collectively how to attend to self-care. We engaged in a community circle to disclose our *testimonios*.

I began the community circle with a personal talking piece, a Timex watch. I disclosed, "I picked this piece because my mom was a nurse and wears a watch to sleep" (C. Velasco, reflective memo, January 12, 2020). I then posed a question to the group: What does it mean to hold space and think about the ways we look at the metric of time today? We went around the circle and introduced ourselves: name, job, and who is the "we" for you? EC-PLC members and I learned the importance of moving, as "issues stay in our tissues," and led the group through dynamic mindfulness poses (Bose et al., 2017). To help center the mind and focus, we concluded by listening to a chime.

Next, we watched a music video of the song, *Seasons of Love*, from the musical *Rent* (Readonaliti, 2006). The participants had a copy of the song lyrics and were asked to think about: What is the most important metric in your life? We reflected silently in writing. Lydia, my ECU teacher, helped co-facilitate an inner/outer circle protocol (see Appendix N Constructive Listening Protocol). The protocol is designed to share your story and co-generate a collective story to share with the group. Lydia provided an example:

> Let me give you an example before you start writing. I always say my most important
> metric in life is the first three syllables of my daughter's voice on the phone. I know in
> those three syllables how she is. We are going through some really tough times for her...I

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know instantly when I hear, Hello Mama, things didn't go well. That has been the thing

that has informed me for forty-two years now and it's that kind of listening, the metric

that I try to take to all my work. Listening for how people really are. That's an example

of an important metric and how we hold that measure of care and each other. We got

loads of them and try to write about one and then expand in a story (CLE, meeting notes

January 11, 2020).

Lydia had us consider this way of using qualitative evidence to ask what *really* is going on in our

school and what should we do? Participants were asked to consider metrics beyond cups of

coffee or number of suspensions and dig deeper into how our core values show up (Patton,

2018). This type of evidence, the daily metrics, may provide a way to move the work forward

and do a better job. We discussed and charted attributes of the metrics from our collective

stories, and the list was used in breakout groups. Participants related what we have come to know

as important metrics to us as women leaders in self-selected breakout groups: poetry, collage/art

piece, or act it out. We spent 20 minutes in our respective groups to prepare an artifact or

performance to share. In unison, the poetry group read their collective poem:

A letter:

Dear womxn-- Hear Me

Where do we start

What you think and bring all and always matters

Wrapped around strong on our mosaic of experiences

In my maze of mind, take moments of silence and time of reflection

Strength of humanity/humility and empathy are partners

Fighting for humanity and humility

Held by the *quadrado*

Comes a clarity a mark of the ancestors' joys

Holding hope in the soul --hugs of laughter

The meness of the weness

You are the expert of you (CLE artifact, January 11, 2020).

In my group, five participants worked co-created an art piece. We cut out happy images, and images of people demonstrating connection and heart. We found words like celebration, women about women, stand up, and bold, that resonated the substantive metrics we co-generated from our stories. While collaging the piece together, we discussed the themes of women connecting, the ME WE, doing the heartwork, the interrelation between the intellect and heart, and authenticity. We entitled the art collage WooWoo to exemplify how we as women leaders lead from the heart and mind and talk about emotions at work (see Figure 28).

Finally, the performance group choreographed a silent piece. Women stood in a circle and walked around three-hundred and sixty degrees, silently acting out waking up to get into their workplaces with gestures and expressions of stress. One woman fell to the ground. The other women gathered around her and lifted her up. Women looked at each other and took a collective breath. One woman removed her scarf and placed it around the woman that fell. Then all the women gathered around in a circle and used the scarf to hold them in a close-knit standing circle. The circle got tighter and pulsed in and out like a heartbeat rhythm. Surprisingly, the song *La Vida es un Carnival* played, and the collective circle broke out and began to dance. The group invited all participants to dance with them (see Figure 29).

Figure 28. CLE art artifact.

Figure 29. CLE performance piece photos.

At the end of the presentations, participants silently reflected or talked with a partner about their experience from the CLE, how to use these strategies in our workspace, and how to change the way we do our work all the time. In a final closing circle, we confirmed our self-care commitments. We concluded the CLE with a call and response to Aguilar's (2018) resilience manifesto, and all came together for an impromptu whole group hug.

Activity Two: EC-PLC Meetings

We held two EC-PLC meetings for the EC-PLC group: off campus in February 2020 and a virtual meeting in March 2020. Originally, we planned on sharing our self-care goals, our self-care stories (from December 2019, postponed due to Claudia's medical recovery), self-care strategies on the Mood Meter, and self-care recommitments. The purpose of the March meeting was to support one another during the COVID-19 pandemic and remote schooling. We pooled strategies on setting boundaries for working from home.

I captured the sentiment of our February EC-PLC gathering, "last night the wonderful women of the EC-PLC on self-care came together for a meal and conversation at my house. It had been six weeks since we saw each other from the CLE on self-care and it felt like a reunion" (C. Velasco, reflective memo, February 29, 2020). We had dinner and expressed our self-care goals: Claudia's, elementary school principal and EC-PLC member, goal was "eating healthy and taking walks;" Laura's goal was "adjust time and establish a sleep hygiene routine;" Savannah's, high school principal and EC-PLC member, goal was to "have fun and enjoy it;" and my goal was "daily exercise and mindfulness practices" (EC-PLC meeting notes, February 27, 2020).

We carried some of the data on reflecting on our self-care stories into Cycle Two. Aguilar (2018) suggests, "[p]hysical self-care and well-being are foundational for many other habits.

When your body is cared for, you're better able to deal with emotions. Resilient people have a healthy self-perception, are committed to taking care of themselves, and accept themselves more or less as they are" (Aguilar, 2018, p. 309). We read our self-care stories. Laura co-facilitated by reading the questions from our self-care story reflections, "when you were a child, how did you see the adults around you taking care of themselves? How did your parents or guardians care for themselves?" Claudia read, "my parents travelled, and occasionally took time to rest at our country home away from the city" (C. Valle, meeting notes, February 27, 2020). Laura read

> My mother has always been obsessed with eating healthy and she imparted this habit on
> me. She grew a large garden and made most of the food we ate from this garden. As a
> child I did not like this and wanted to eat food like everybody else and have the same
> food as my friends. Now as an adult, I am deeply grateful for this value my mother
> shared with me (L. Voss, EC-PLC meeting artifact, February 27, 2020).

Savannah shared how her parents took care of themselves, "yes, having fun, eating out, going to events like plays and traveling" (S. Travis, EC-PLC meeting artifact, February 27, 2020).

Finally, I read my self-care story:

> As a child my parents took care of themselves by enjoying time with extended family.
> We would often visit aunts, uncles, and cousins' home to celebrate births, weddings, and
> anniversaries. My parents went to church as part of spiritual self-care. Individually my
> mother's self-care took place in the garden. My father enjoyed watching the Dodgers and
> having beers with work friends and family after work. Seeing my parents take care of
> themselves, especially my mother as she tended to all 10 siblings, was rare (C.Velasco,
> EC-PLC meeting artifact, February 27, 2020).

These stories revealed the beliefs and values about self-care we inherited from our families, some of which we wanted to abandon. Claudia mentioned, "I had to learn this on my own. Self-care was not part of our culture. I want to listen to my body…really listen" (C. Valle, EC-PLC meeting artifact, February 27, 2020), Savannah expressed wanting to give up the "lack of exercise" (S. Travis, EC-PLC meeting artifact, February 27, 2020). Laura declared:

> I think the idea of compartmentalizing or stuffing emotions is something I want to give up. This seems like a very White, northern European type of way of being the 'stoic person,' who does not have feelings and is strong… I am trying to embrace imperfection and being as open as possible with my own children, which is in contrast to how I was raised (L. Voss, EC-PLC meeting artifact, February 27, 2020).

I pronounced:

> I want to give up the idea that self-care is selfish. My parents never truly gave themselves time. I want to abandon the belief that self-care is about doing. I want to embrace self-care as just being. It is a vital part of life (C. Velasco, EC-PLC meeting artifact, February 27, 2020).

EC-PLC group members contributed more to the topics of our gatherings; Laura suggested the Mood Meter. I prefaced by framing:

> As leaders we are conductors of school and people. We are constantly making decisions. The energy we bring into a space may affect people's moods. As leaders we have the ability to be aware of our own emotions and moods because this impacts the people in our life (work and home). A place to register, do you want to stay in this mood, or would you shift this mood (C.Velasco, meeting notes, February 27, 2020)?

I provided EC-PLC members with a student-friendly emoji version of the Mood Meter. We decided to use the Mood Meter: Laura with her daughter, Savannah with students in her office, Claudia with her staff, and me with leaders I coach. We concluded our meeting with a commitment to our self-care and an accountability to each other and our goals.

The purpose of the March online EC-PLC meeting was "a time for us to cheer each other on. Self-care as collective care. A space for us to share strategies on how to maintain self-care in uncertain times" (C. Velasco, electronic message, March 26, 2020). During the meeting we discussed our stressors, how we are taking care of our families, our work community, and ourselves, and how we were adjusting to working from home. COVID-19 forced us to pivot our EC-PLC meetings to an online platform. In mid-March the Bay Area was mandated to shelter in place. This impacted how we met and what I intended to do in the cycle.

Moving the meeting to a virtual space created a variety of environments where we could stay connected. Claudia, outside on her deck having a glass of wine, mentioned how challenging remote schooling was for her, "it's hard since now there is all this stuff I need to attend to and prioritize. I am not getting overwhelmed by it, at least I am trying not to" (C. Valle, EC-PLC meeting notes, March 26, 2020). Laura, preparing dinner, announced her "struggle to work from home and balance the needs of [my] daughters." Savannah stressed how busy she was "working on the school site plan and budget due the next day." I emphasized "the struggle to work from home and set boundaries" (C. Velasco, meeting notes, March 26, 2020).

Dr. Grant, assistant superintendent, joined us for the first time since last year. She validated the heaviness we were all feeling. Dr. Grant stated, "this is not business as usual. We need to slow down. This has leveled the playing field. Assistant superintendents are trying to

answer it especially when your staff, leadership, cohort is asking you for clarity and you don't have the answer" (E. Grant, meeting notes, March 26, 2020).

We updated each other on our self-care goals. Claudia is practicing yoga and gaining weight as part of her cancer treatment, Savannah is enjoying food her aunt brought her and is looking forward to spring break, Laura is looking forward to the time with her family, Dr. Grant is cooking and eating three meals a day with her family and is seeking her faith to help during these times, and I am exercising and enjoying meals with my partner. Laura and Savannah left the virtual meeting early and Dr. Grant, Claudia, and I stayed on to share stories and ideas to support one another. We discussed how overwhelmed we felt responding to staff demands during an unprecedented time. Dr. Grant highlighted the unexpected ways communication is changing such as staff texting her at one in the morning. Claudia created a space for school staff to vent, and shared concerns about school closing and distance learning. We strategized on how to establish and set boundaries while working from home. Claudia "uses a feature on her phone and sets it to not disturb between 10:00pm and 7:00am." She "set daily intentions with a prioritized list and reflecting at the end of the day to prevent burnout" (C. Valle, EC-PLC meeting, March 26, 2020). I "set up a room in my home for work. When I close the door, I am done for the day" (C. Velasco, reflective memo, March 26, 2020). Dr. Grant "plans to continue to hold a space for leaders for wellness" and invited me to attend a virtual wellness cohort meeting (E. Grant, EC-PLC meeting, March 26, 2020). We concluded our virtual EC-PLC meeting and wished each other health and wellness as we continued to lead during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Activity Three: Observations

During Cycle Two, we planned to visit each other's workplace to observe the use and

sharing of self-care strategies. I was only able to observe Laura and Savannah due to the COVID-19 pandemic and school closure.

Laura enthusiastically shared Aguilar's (2018) *Resilience Manifesto* we had used at the CLE (January 2020) during a professional development for new principals (January 21, 2020). Laura engaged new school leaders in a give-one get-one strategy and directed leaders to partner up. Each person read their resilience quote and discussed what came up for them. Then they switched quotes, moved on to a new partner and repeated the process three to four times (L. Voss, observation notes, January 21, 2020). Then Laura asked:

> How might our time together help us build individual and collective resilience? Looking at our theory of action, think about how our time in PD can help us build resilience. For example, we have space to talk about emotions at work...the cultural share in December was an example of that (Laura, observation notes, January 21, 2020).

Participants engaged and were responsive; some leaders requested copies of the manifestos to share with their school staff.

I met principal Savannah in her office at school. Thirty-nine Care Bear figures sit on her windowsill near her desk. I asked her what makes her happy at school. She replied, "my tea; every day I have tea. When kids come in here, they make me happy. They look at the Care Bears." (S. Travis, Notes from Observation, February 12, 2020). Savannah pointed out an affirmation board she created stating, "*Heartwork*. Roll with it and faith it to make it." She shared that these mantras help her get through and she adds to it. Savannah pointed out an entire wall covered with pictures of former students and talked about a few them. We then left for an upcoming staff meeting. Savannah greeted students and teachers as we walked the halls (S. Travis, observation notes, February 12, 2020).

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I was unable to observe principal Claudia at her school site because of schools closing. I had hoped to observe her facilitating a staff meeting; unfortunately, I was unable to coordinate an observation. Claudia provided self-reports of transfer during conversations we exchanged in between EC-PLC meetings.

Cycle Two focused on sharing the self-care strategies, facilitation of EC-PLC meetings with others in our workplaces and in the CLE, and collection and analysis of data, leading to a set of emerging themes. Next, I describe the coding and categorizing process of the data from PAR Cycle Two.

Data Collection and Analysis

Throughout PAR Cycle Two, I collected and coded data. I coded the written documentation from emails, texts, and meeting notes to identify main ideas and common themes. I triangulated these data with my reflective memos and artifacts. From these many narrative data sources, I identified codes and patterns that served to identify emerging categories for Cycle Two (see Appendix L for the Codebook). What follows is a description of the coding process.

I engaged in an open coding process by reviewing all the data I collected for Cycle Two. The research questions helped filter data to what is necessary and relevant to the PAR (Saldaña, 2016). I placed each data source into an individual table. The table had a column for the data, a column for a code, and a column for notes. I coded the data line by line. I coded one piece of data from each data source: CLE meeting notes, artifacts, EC-PLC meetings notes, observation notes, and reflective memos. The first round generated an initial set of codes and categories. I then created a codebook (see Appendix L) and tallied the number of times a category appeared in the data. I used my classification knowledge and intuition to determine which data "looked and

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felt alike," then grouped them together (Saldaña, 2016). I defined and explained each category and code for the data outlined in Table 11.

After completing the initial coding and categorizing, I revised the codebook (see Appendix L). I collapsed categories and tethered them together and confirmed the categories with literature. The codebook shows thirty-two categories, fifty-six of which appeared five to nineteen times across the various artifacts. Saldaña (2016) asserts, "[c]oding is organic in which coding, codes, and data share each other; they are interdependent and inseparable" (p. 9). After further arrangement of discernment qualitative analysis, I moved from four categories (wellness strategies, reflection, time, and leadership actions) to the two emerging themes: *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership.

Emerging Themes

Espacio Sano is a reimagined professional learning space where women educational leaders of color and white allies feel affirmed, motivated, and held to engage in social justice leadership. *Espacio Sano* consists of five elements as evidence by the data collection: (1) space; (2) CLE axioms and pedagogies; (3) time; (4) transfer; and (5) fortified women affinity. *Espacio Sano* provides the space for EC-PLC members to show up as their integral selves, embracing both their intellect and heart, what I termed wholehearted leadership. Wholehearted leadership is comprised of seven elements: (1) substantive metrics; (2) self-care; (3) emotions; (4) leadership actions; (5) dispositions; (6) honor; and (7) core values.

Espacio Sano: New Way of Learning and Leading

In Chapter 2, I delineated a conceptual space for understanding how self-care and sustainability strategies can be situated in an *Espacio Sano* (see Figure 30). Learning and

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Table 11

Espacio Sano Emerging Theme, Categories, Codes, and Frequency

Emerging Theme	Categories n=5	Codes	Frequency
Espacio Sano 179 instances	Space (29%)	Rituals	1
		Proximity	1
		Sustainability	1
		Accessibility	1
		Episodic PD	2
		Healing	2
		Indigenous ways of learning	2
		Transformational	3
		Zoom	3
		Learning	4
		Sacred	4
		Women-affinity	5
		Espacio Sano	6
		Needed	7
		Comfortable	9
	CLE Axioms & Pedagogies (25%)	Talking piece	1
		Writing	1
		Welcome space	3
		Circle	3
		Facilitation	3
		Spirit	6
		Protocols	6
		Art Integration	8
		Storytelling/*Testimonios*	14

Table 11 (continued)

Emerging Theme	Categories n=5	Codes	Frequency
Espacio Sano 179 instances	Time (18%)	Non work hours	1
		Longevity	1
		Daily	1
		Last few years	1
		10 years	1
		17 years	1
		In a while	1
		First year	1
		Medical leave	1
		August	1
		Impermanence	1
		Beginning	2
		Ephemeral	2
		Few hours	2
		6 weeks	2
		Self-care	2
		Limit/loss	3
		Transition	3
		Pacing	6
	Transfer (16%)	Listen more	2
		More self at work	2
		Scale it	3
		Work care	11
		School care	11
	Fortified Women Affinity (12%)	Keep you going	1
		Encouragement	1
		MeWe	4
		Collectively	7
		Held you up	8

Figure 30. Espacio Sano an emerging theme.

practicing wellness strategies helped support EC-PLC members individually and collectively. Appropriating time for self and family renewed EC-PLC members and me to re-engage in the challenging work of social justice leadership. We became aware of our leadership actions, our use of time, and responsiveness in our facilitation and planning of professional development for our constituents. The EC-PLC participants used *testimonios* and reflection to nourish our actions. In addition, written reflection and documenting our stories served as a healing process. In Chapter 5, I described four categories: wellness strategies, time, leadership actions, and reflection emerged in PAR Cycle One. These categories resurfaced in PAR Cycle Two and led to these emerging themes.

As the second cycle unfolded, I could confirm the importance of being intentional and purposeful. Brown's (2010) ten guideposts of wholehearted living components were revealed in the cycle at the CLE (January 2020) and EC-PLC meetings (February 2020, March 2020). The PAR Cycle Two provided insight to different metrics women leaders used to measure what is substantive and important in social justice leadership. Furthermore, a rupture in time caused by the COVID-19 pandemic created uncertainties as well as possibilities.

The deliberate use of systems and structures both formal and informal supported educational leaders' stamina to stay in the equity work of social justice leadership (Aguilar, 2018; Ah Nee-Benham & Cooper, 1998; Furman, 2012; Theoharis, 2009). The story of *Espacio Sano* showed up across the multiple data points (EC-PLC meeting notes, Community Learning Exchange (CLE) meeting notes, CLE artifacts, observation notes, and reflective memos, to understand the focus of practice). Five emergent elements provided evidence as building blocks of *Espacio Sano* (total codes=179 and five categories):(1) space (29%); (2) CLE axioms & pedagogies (25%); (3) time (18%); (4) transfer (16%); and (5) fortified women affinity (12%).

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The codes are listed in order of highest frequency across the data collected in Table 11 and illustrated in Figure 31.

Space

Collectively creating a space is important to *Espacio Sano* and is evidenced across fifteen codes (n=51 instances or 29%). I further clustered these codes together into three sub codes: intention setting, needed space, and affinity space. Table 11 shows the frequency of each code.

Intention Setting. Creating a space with intention and purpose for a community learning exchange incorporates the concepts of gracious space (Guajardo et al., 2016). Setting the physical dimensions can support or impede the connection and work with others. Intention setting manifested in the codes: comfortable, for healing, sacred, transformational, rituals, *Espacio Sano*, and proximity. At the CLE (January 2020), I purposely set up the room with chairs in a tight circle and an altar with fresh flowers, a Timex watch (the talking piece), shells, knitted circular fabric made by my maternal grandmother, and a hot pink knitted hat (the women's march was the following week). One participant asserted, "I want to speak to proximity. When we first entered, I was like, oh wow, this space is so tiny, but it worked. Even being closer together. The closer you are to them you can see them. Proximity matters and I appreciate that" (CLE participant, meeting notes, January 11, 2020). I purposely incorporated similar elements of setting up space at the EC-PLC meetings in my home. At our February EC-PLC Laura commented, "salmon and cloth napkins, nice" (L. Voss, meeting notes, February 27, 2020)! Setting up a space with intention matters; it makes participants feel valued and welcomed. One participant, a woman of color instructional coach, affirmed:

> Thank you. Intentionality is very important coming into this space. Having an altar and
> sharing a piece of the ocean makes me feel very valued especially as a new person to this

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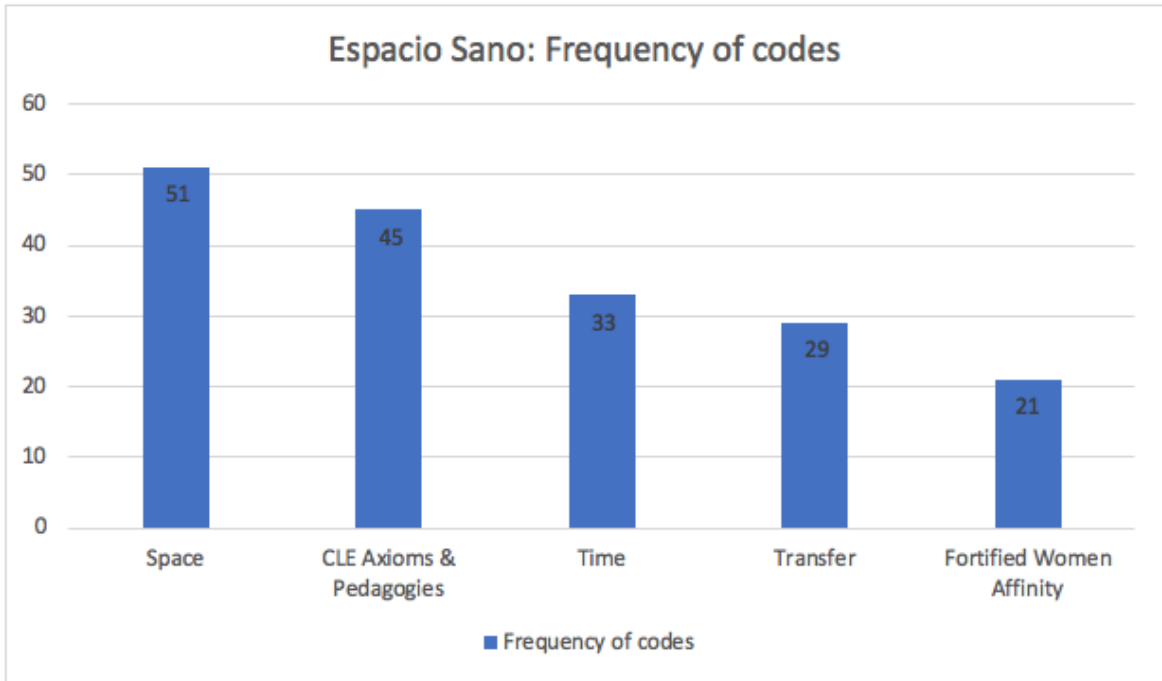
Figure 31. Espacio Sano: Frequency of codes.

group. I say this because sometimes there isn't a space where you can be yourself and be

embraced and welcomed (CLE participant, January 11, 2020).

Another contributing element to space is whom you set it for.

Affinity Space. The codes: women-affinity, indigenous ways of learning, learning, and

episodic PD contribute to the category that consists of 5 codes (n=21 or 12%). The PAR project

was designed to engage with women leaders. The EC-PLC on self-care as collective care and

CLE were deliberately designed to be spaces for women leaders to gather and learn from each

other in gender affinity. According to Peters (2016), "…we need places to go and work with

others who share similar identities…A specific benefit is that affinity groups support individuals

to find and offer mentorship to engage in discourse that is feared or not yet appropriate for mixed

groups but is still necessary to address" (p. 22). Claudia acknowledged, "it is so important we

can have spaces where we can gather as women leaders because we experience leadership

differently and our experiences in the district are different as you go up different levels" (C.

Valle, CLE meeting notes, January 11, 2020). The CLE (January 2020) composition of various

women of color leaders and White allies from the community helped affinity space and upheld

indigenous ways of learning by involving members of the community.

Creating a space for women leaders to be in affinity was appreciated. Savannah, a high

school principal and EC-PLC member, substantiated the importance of affinity space for women

leaders, "I'm here with a bunch of women, it rarely happens to be with just women in the work.

Especially as you go up the ladder in education. I'm happy to be here" (S. Travis, meeting notes,

January 11, 2020). An affinity space for women helped create a place for us to be vulnerable,

learn from each other, reflect, and process together deeply.

Needed Space. There was a plea for spaces to be and learn with each other outside of our workplaces. "This space is critically important for honest conversation and storytelling" (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 24). Needed space is made up of the codes: needed, sustainability, accessibility, and Zoom (see Table 11 for additional information on categories, and frequency). At end of our CLE (January 2020) participants desired more affinity spaces. Savannah stressed, "I think we need this space for self-care in leadership" (S. Travis, meeting notes, January 11, 2020). Another participant recognized, "this is the import kind of thing you need to keep going" (CLE participant, meeting notes, January 11, 2020). Claudia affirmed:

> It is so important we can have spaces where we can gather as women leaders because we experience leadership differently and our experiences in the district are different as you go up different levels. We need spaces where we can really focus on the heart and the *heartwork*. For me, a lot of the work comes from the heart. And there is a connection with the heart and the intellect, but the heart part comes out more. It can look very soft and yet I am not soft. You know when I come across men in the district with the personality I have, and the strength comes in they are, whoa what did she just say or just do. Having spaces for us to really be able to share the *heartwork* that builds strength and confidence is super important (C. Valle, CLE meeting notes, January 11, 2020).

This needed space, an *Espacio Sano,* is becoming a place of hope and possibility for professional and personal development, where school leaders can strengthen themselves and each other to continue to engage in social justice leadership.

CLE Axioms and Pedagogies

I have discussed the important elements of space in creating an *Espacio Sano*. CLE axioms and inclusive pedagogies are dialogical and intentional structural elements that we used

to create a new way of being and structuring professional learning communities of networks of sustainability and self-care.

The CLE axioms and pedagogies category is comprised of nine codes (n=45 or 25%). welcome space, circle, spirit, talking piece, storytelling/*testimonios*. The pedagogy category is made up of these codes, arts integration, protocols, writing, and facilitation. See Table 11 for additional information on categories and frequency). Spaces are safe and critical for authentic *testimonios*. According to Guajardo et al. (2016), "[t]his safe space allows for critical points of view to be presented; this relational space invites the storytelling process and authentic, challenging conversation to take place" (p. 24). Furthermore, the use of a community circle not only honors longtime rituals of cultures but acts as a sacred container. Guajardo et al. (2016) affirm a "[c]ircle can hold the tensions, and emotions contribute to healing and can support people to use collective energy to take action" (p. 82).

For the CLE, I used a Timex watch as the talking piece (see Figure 32). "[T]he talking piece holds great symbolic importance and warrants explanation of it selecting by the Circle convener" (Guajardo, et al., 2016, p. 83). At the beginning of our CLE community circle I opened by stating:

> You know when you dream something, you dream of these amazing, powerful, wonderful inspiring women who have held you up and kept you going, and then you see them in a room, it's beautiful to sit in a circle with you (C. Velasco, CLE meeting notes, January 11, 2020). I shared, "I chose a watch as the talking piece because it was symbolic of my mother (she always wore a watch, a habit she gained as a nurse). The watch symbolized the CLE's concept of substantive metrics we use to measure what is important to us" (C. Velasco, reflective memo, January 11, 2020).

Figure 32. Timex watch The CLE talking piece.

To complement the learning space using the CLE Axioms, intentional pedagogies and facilitation protocols were chosen. Pedagogies such as *testimonios,* appreciative listening, inner/outer circle, call and respond were supportive structures in aiding in the learning space. These pedagogies exemplified humanizing and democratic ways of being. In addition, using the arts (poetry writing, collage, and performance) provided a way to engage syncretically, using both the right and left-brain. The use of CLE Axioms and pedagogies provided structures for an *Espacio Sano*. These structures and pedagogies supported the community to lead, learn, and lean into each other.

Time

Time as a metric, how it is measured and managed, resurfaced in PAR Cycle Two. Time took on a symbolic meaning: time as ephemeral and impermanent. Time symbolized a precious resource. As physicist Albert-László Barabási writes, time is our most valuable nonrenewable resource, and if we want to treat it with respect, we need to set priorities (Wilson, 2016). Two emergent practices provided evidence for how time is leveraged and lost. Time was evidenced in nineteen codes (n=33 or 18%) (see Table 11 for additional information on categories and frequency). As Grubb (2009) would confirm, time is an abstract resource that we have to manage well in school reform settings.

A Metric of Time. The traditional metric of time takes on a different quality in *Espacio Sano*. The use of time showed up in thirteen codes: pacing, transition, frequency--weeks, hours, years, daily, in a while (see Table 11 for additional information on codes and frequency). In organizing and pacing time for the CLE meeting, we leveraged the three hours we had together. Timing supported an *Espacio Sano* -- enough time to engage and process. One Latina leadership

coach affirmed, "the pacing was just right. We had enough time to take it in, reflect and debrief the process and what it felt for us" (B. Palermo, CLE meeting notes, January 11, 2020).

Time measured the frequency in engaging with self-care strategies. Laura explains, "my metric is starting my day with time for self and ending my day with gratitude" (L. Voss, CLE meeting notes, January 11, 2020). Claudia allocated time for self and stated, "time-off for self-care, a spa day, time for lunch, time for a massage, time to sleep" (C. Valle, EC-PLC meeting notes, February 27, 2020). I captured the sentiment of using the metric of time responsively to create a relaxed setting in the EC-PLC space in a reflective memo, "I felt more and more relaxed with the group. I was trying to be responsive and not let a timed agenda dictate where to take the meeting. I listened and leaned into our stories to help guide the conversation" (C. Velasco, reflective memo, February 29, 2020). The element of time supported EC-PLC members' thought processes regarding their practices when allocated responsively.

Symbolism of Time. Codes for time as a symbol include: Longevity, first year, impermanence, ephemeral, and limits/lost. Limit/loss shows up three times; self-care two times; ephemeral two times; impermanence, first year, and longevity one time each. These codes represent how time is leveraged or lost. We discussed time as ephemeral in the CLE. The code ephemeral captured participants' yearning to sustain what was created in the space and carry it into other spaces. One member declared, "we are here, there is impermanence, peace, tranquility" (CLE participant, CLE meeting notes, January 11, 2020). Time symbolized limits and lost opportunities. We discussed how current meeting structures for leaders feel uncoordinated and how time limited our engagement. During an observation meeting with Dr. Grant, she stated, "I agree, having a more systematized way of mapping principal meetings out will support our leaders and all of those in place to support them" (E. Grant, observation notes,

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January 27, 2020). When time is intentionally paced and planned it can positively impact learning spaces and support an *Espacio Sano*.

Transfer

The category transfer emerged in five codes: work care, school care, scale it, listen more, and more of self at work (n=29 or 16%). Every CLE participant made self-care commitments at the end of the CLE as well as commitments to bring the learning into our workspaces. The code work care was a commitment "to bring humanity to each moment" (L. Voss, meeting notes, January 11, 2020), and to support adults to connect to the heart, create affinity spaces, and support colleagues with self-care goals. The code school care had a frequency of eleven (6%). School leader Savannah committed to "checking in on how people were feeling and connecting to staff," Claudia committed to "joy in my office" (C. Valle, CLE meeting notes, January 11, 2020), and another school leader pledged to use dynamic mindfulness at morning intake. I promised to share self-care practices with the leaders I coach (C. Velasco, CLE meeting notes, January 11, 2020). Barbara, a Latina executive director committed to, "creating proximity at work"(B. Palermo, CLE meeting notes, January 11, 2020). Laura affirmed the pedagogies and agenda design:

> I appreciated the unapologetic elements of art. It's so interruptive of dominant culture being this and not that. The act of having an agenda and space that has us using that other part of our brain, creative, storytelling to me is an act of interruption. Yeah, more agendas like this. Let's do it (L. Voss, meeting notes, January 11, 2020)!

The code more of self at work captured the commitment two participants made to bring more of their artistic selves to their workspaces. Lastly, the code scale it refers to the concept of bringing

a CLE to the school district and sharing these practices with more women leaders. The transfer category holds promise that self-care as collective care can reach a larger ecology.

Fortified Women Affinity

The spaces created at the CLE and EC-PLC meetings are places where women were strengthened and encouraged. The category is composed of three codes: held you up, keep you going, and collective care. The category, women affinity, is made up of the codes: *MeWe* and encouragement. The concept of being fortified by a collective showed up seven times (4%). Held you up appeared eight times (4%), and meant strengthened by each other, feeling cared for, and part of something. The code is manifested in the collective poem, in a line that reads, "held by the *quadrado,*" meaning being held by four others (CLE artifact, January 11, 2020). The concept of being revived collectively honors each member individually and as a collective; it is a *MeWe*.

During the CLE, we constructed various terms and phrases. *MeWe* showed up fifteen times across the data collection in the cycle. The *MeWe* term appeared in the opening circle of the CLE. A female instructional coach participant stated, "I am loving my experience. I guess the 'we' is the me turned upside down. You can't build a community unless you take care of yourself" (CLE participant, CLE meeting notes, January 11, 2020). The concept of *MeWe* is how women leaders hold self and others; we lean on and have others lean on us. MeWe represents collective care and surfaces in the collective poem as "the meness of the weness" (CLE artifact, January 11, 2020). Guajardo et al. (2016) describe the self-ecologies of knowing through self, organization, and community, and capture the essence of the *MeWe* third space in the collective leadership philosophy, "there is a constant balance or tension between the "I" and the "we." This is not presented as a binary but rather a space that is both "I" and "we" at once, yet still a third

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space all the time" (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 28). In *Espacio Sano* the "me we" is both; it is self-care as collective care.

The code encouragement occurred five times capturing how women encourage each other, motivate one another, and believe in the power of we. One women of color principal stated, "There is a 'we' that carries me. I think of Maya Angelou. You carry those in your rainbow to help carry you through whatever you are doing. I'm so proud you are now part of my rainbow" (CLE participant, CLE meeting notes, January 11, 2020). Another woman of color principal added, "when I think about the 'we,', I say powerful women believed in me and encouraged me and didn't let me take things that society says about my ancestors" (CLE participant, CLE Meeting notes, January 11, 2020). Being fortified in a women affinity learning space was both humanizing and healing. It inspired us to transfer what we learned and experienced in an *Espacio Sano* to our workspaces. The data communicates the story of *Espacio Sano*. The five categories—space, CLE axioms and pedagogies, time, transfer, and fortified women affinity--reveal how *Espacio Sano* allows EC-PLC members to show up intact as wholehearted leaders.

Wholehearted Leadership

Next, I describe wholehearted leadership as an emerging theme representing seven codes: (1) substantive metrics; (2) self-care; (3) emotions; (4) leadership actions; (5) dispositions; (6) honor; and (7) core values (see Figure 33). Brown (2010) asserts, "we desperately need more leaders who are committed to courageous, wholehearted leadership and who are self-aware enough to lead from their hearts, rather than unevolved leaders who lead from hurt and fear"

Figure 33. Wholehearted leadership emerging theme.

(p. 4). Similar to Brown's (2010) ten guideposts for wholehearted living, substantive metrics for wholehearted leadership are revealed in the PAR Cycle Two.

Substantive Metrics

I define substantive metrics as alternative metrics educational leaders use to measure positive school culture and climate, not the usual metrics we connote with measuring school success. Metric emerged as a code in thirty-four codes (n=200 or 46%). To understand the substantive metrics to women leaders (CLE meeting notes, January 11, 2020), we posed the question, "what is the most important metric in your life?" See Table 12 for the categories and codes. They ranged from intimacy with a frequency of nineteen to joy with a frequency of seven to infinity loop with a frequency of one. These co-generated metrics provided insight into other ways of measuring what *really* is going on in our schools and communities and how women leaders measure what is important.

Connection to Self and Others. The codes interaction, community/connection, authentic self/evolve, and intimacy measured the metric of connection to self as others. A participant of the CLE uplifts collective connection and shares:

> Intimacy and joy. Being true to us, a connection with our own humanity. When we enter
>
> our places of work, we are taught to leave that outside the door and when you enter you
>
> have to act in a certain way. How important it is to connect with humanity and bring this
>
> to our work in authentic ways (CLE participant, meeting notes, January 11, 2020).

Women connected to self and connected with others in the work in leading schools.

At the CLE (January 2020), one woman of color county of education leader shared, "I heard affirmations as us, as women, in what we do; affirmations do not always come across, we are constantly trying to lift ourselves up. This [poem] is awesome. I want to share with other women

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Table 12

Wholehearted Leadership, Substantive Metrics Category, Codes, and Frequency

Emerging Theme	Category n=7	Codes	Frequency
Wholehearted Leadership 439 instances	Substantive Metrics (46%)	Time-Timex watch	1
		Infinity Loop	1
		My daughter's voice	1
		Misperception	1
		Assumption	2
		Missing	2
		Health	2
		Selfless	2
		Traditional	2
		Witness/w/o judgment	2
		Vulnerability	2
		Forgiveness	2
		Anger	2
		Core Values	3
		Student success	3
		Fun	3
		Cognitive/intellectual	3
		Attunement	4
		Reflecting Deeply	5
		Substantive	5
		Forced/false	5
		Affirmation	6
		WooWoo	6
		Diversity	6
		Joy	7
		Body language awareness	7
		Disconnect	8
		Intentional	9
		Listening	13
		Interactions	14
		Brainheart	16
		Community/connection	17
		Authentic self/evolve	19
		Intimacy	19

I work with who need this. We need this" (CLE participant, CLE meeting notes, January 11, 2020)!

Brainheart. Women leaders emphasized engaging with our integral selves (our intellect and emotions)--the *brainheart*. The *brainheart* metric surfaced thirteen times during the CLE, in memos, and artifacts. Laura captured the concept of *brainheart* when she shared:

> They are all keywords that come into the heart: intimacy, connection, joy, and humanity. Those all live here (points to her heart). It's interesting; it's not that I don't value the brain. I also value this piece of me. When I think about the work with students, teachers, and principals when I am here [points to her heart] and when I am here [points to her head]. Maybe we are forced to be here [points to her head] more by the system and structures that exist, and we miss things like the healing place. I know both are important (L. Voss, CLE meeting notes, January 11, 2020).

Another participant added:

> The education system is set up to focus on the brain, but we know our deepest and authentic feelings come from the heart. Part of what I want to do is have the leaders I work with move their heart to connect to the brain because it is easy to compartmentalize (CLE meeting notes, January 11, 2020).

Throughout the meeting, we exchanged *testimonios* and ideas of how to connect fully with our humanity. We discussed how to counter the false dichotomy of leading from the mind or heart. Engaging with the *brainheart* and wholehearted leadership may radically open and be the syncretist (blending canonical and non-canonical ways of learning) found in Gutiérrez (2016) in *Espacio Sano*. Wholehearted leaders showed up in these spaces, as their integral selves, embracing both their intellect and heart as a form of self-care.

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Self-Care Strategies

Self-care surfaced as a code eighteen times (n=95 or 22%). Self-care strategies included using networks and professional connections with a frequency of ten, using laughter with a frequency of eight, engaging in exercise with a frequency of seven, managing time/tasks with a frequency of seven, practicing breathing exercises and using essential oils with a frequency of two (see Table 13 and Figure 34 for additional information on codes and frequency). Engaging in self-care practices, using, and sharing them with each other is an element of wholehearted leadership. At the EC-PLC meeting (February 2020) Laura and Claudia strategized on how to attend to self-care. Laura shared how she manages time to help her sleep better:

> My main thing is sleep. I am trying to work on a routine. If I pick up the kids a half-hour earlier, make dinner a half-hour earlier, then I can put them to bed earlier. I want to read and watch a TV show. One thing I have been doing for a while now is writing in my gratitude journal. It is such a habit. I will write tomorrow's to dos not to stress me out but to write positive intentions for tomorrow. I get anxiety sometimes and this helps me sleep (L. Voss, meeting notes, February 27, 2020).

Claudia shared her evening sleep strategies:

> Before I got sick, I was getting to work at 8:45a.m. I was waking up a little bit earlier and doing my meditation. I was trained with transcendental meditation and used an insight timer. I do a few with music. I put this on at night and calm myself down (C. Valle, meeting notes, February 27, 2020).

In these spaces, we shared our expertise and resources and encouraged each other to honor the commitments we made to taking care of ourselves individually and collectively. Collective care is a form of self-care. During the CLE and EC-PLC meetings we practiced dynamic mindfulness,

Table 13

Wholehearted Leadership, Self-care Category, Codes, and Frequency

Emerging Theme	Categories n=7	Codes	Frequency
Wholehearted Leadership 439 instances	Self-care (22%)	Writing	1
		Breathing	2
		Essential oils	2
		Affirmations	3
		Dynamic Mindfulness	3
		Mediation	3
		Time with family	3
		Lack of	3
		Resources	3
		Stepping back	3
		Travel	3
		Me care	3
		Sleep hygiene	6
		Eating well	6
		The Arts: performing	6
		Drawing/dancing/knitting	6
		Connection to nature	6
		Time/task management	7
		Physical	7
		Laughter	9
		Network/professional connections	10
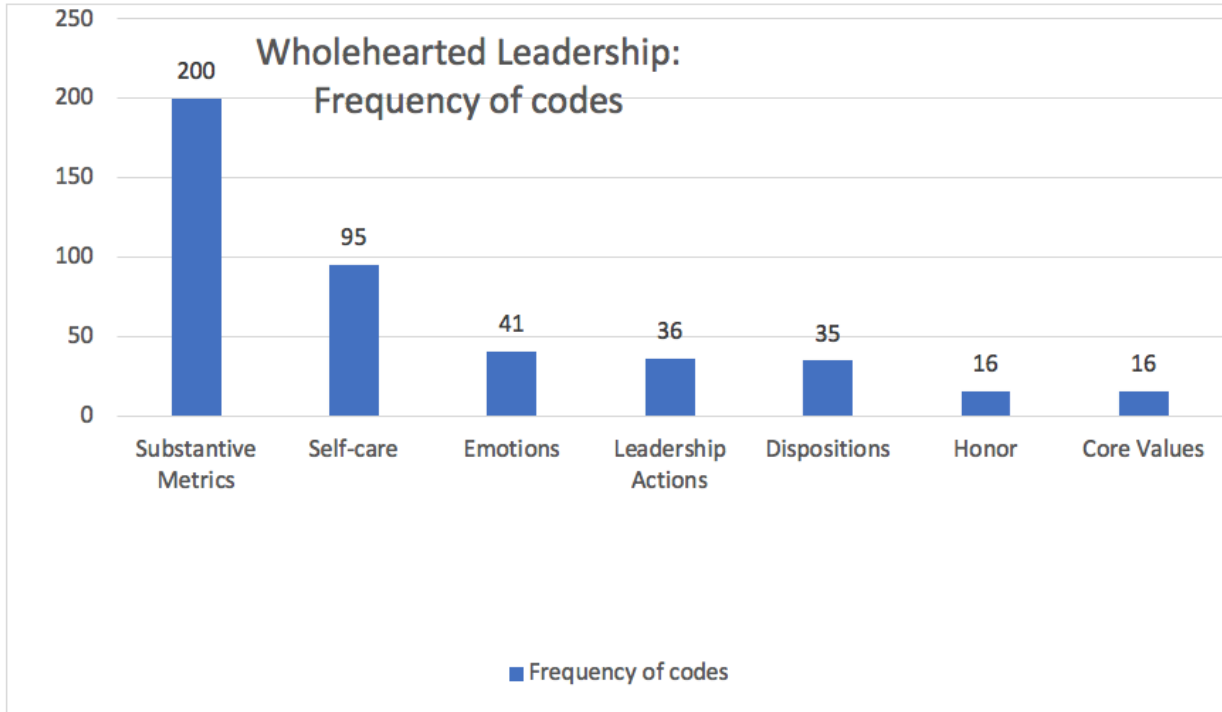
Figure 34. Wholehearted leadership: Frequency of codes.

engaged in the arts, ate healthy foods, and networked with others, transforming the self-care to collective care.

EC-PLC members supported one another, provided professional advice, affirmed each other, listened to one another, and cried with each other. It is a response of caring and being cared for, being part of something, a collective resilience. The EC-PLC group practiced collective care. One member of the EC-PLC, Claudia, has been recovering from breast cancer. Collectively we are encouraging her and each other to be well. We are intentional and purposeful in the ways we provide support. In a reflective memo, I captured the essence of a conscience collective care "I created a cheese platter in Claudia's honor. I know she loves cheese and needs to gain weight. We opened a bottle of chardonnay and toasted to her recovery. Laura arrived and gave us a big embrace" (C. Velasco, reflective memo, February 29, 2020). Affirming and holding each other up are elements of collective resilience, care, and wholehearted leadership

Emotions

Wholehearted leaders attend to feelings. Brown (2018) affirms the importance of emotions, "[t]he words we use really matter. But words like *loneliness, empathy, compassion,* are not words often discussed in our leadership training, nor are they included in our leadership literature" (Brown, 2018, p. 64). The emotions category is composed of eleven codes (n=41 or 9%): joy, stress, gratitude, frustration, happy, love, liberated, content, hope, glad, and sadness (see Table 14 for additional codes and frequency). Joy had a code frequency of sixteen and appeared twelve times in the CLE. Brown (2018) states, "when we feel joy, it is a place of incredible vulnerability; it's beautiful and fragile and deep gratitude and impermanence all wrapped up in one experience" (p. 81). EC-PLC members and the participants of the CLE were

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Table 14

Wholehearted Leadership Categories, Emotions, Leadership Actions, Dispositions, Categories, Codes, and Frequency

Emerging Theme	Categories n=7	Codes	Frequency
Wholehearted Leadership 439 instances	Emotions (9%)	Sadness	1
		Glad	1
		Hope	2
		Content	2
		Liberated	2
		Love	2
		Happy	2
		Frustrated/envy	3
		Gratitude	4
		Stress	4
		Joy	16
	Leadership Actions (8%)	Contentment	2
		In Crisis	2
		Tension	3
		Retention	4
		Be Radical	2
		Dismantle	2
		Do the Right thing	5
		Educators	1
		School Leaders	1
		Communities	1
		Students	6
		Equity Social Justice	7
	Dispositions (7%)	Care	1
		Mindset	2
		Peace	2
		Confident	3
		Cognizant	3
		Vulnerability	3
		Empathy	5
		Humor	8
		Present	8

both vulnerable and joyful. At the CLE meeting, a participant retold Laura's and her shared story:

> We had two different examples, but our metrics were the same, it was at the heart level. Strength, fear, you can do it. Feeling human interactions. Last week we received twins at the school. There was fear and assumptions about these students by some staff members and a deficit narrative. The relationship with the family seemed critical. There was a hug [by this student] in the hallway, it was that feeling of gratitude and strength (A. Sabino, CLE meeting notes, January 11, 2020).

The women in the EC-PLC group and participants of the CLE embraced wholehearted leadership characteristics and embraced joy as a leader metric. In addition, Aguilar's (2018) resilience manifestos affirm wholehearted leadership, "[p]owerful and effective educators talk about emotions at work" (p. 19). Women leaders at the CLE and EC-PLC didn't only talk about emotions: they embraced the *brainheart* wholeheartedly. Women leaders embraced dispositions to support a wholehearted mindset. During the CLE (January 2020), as part of a discussion about how leaders *really* measure what is going on in our schools as alternative substantive metrics, Savannah conveyed:

> As leaders, we are very cognizant of how we are feeling, which there is no bubble for. It is important for us to figure this out first in order to get them to do what we want them to do. Teachers, social workers need to figure out how [students] are feeling and if they are in the right space to act. I think it's interesting because it takes a lot of work to get everyone to work in this way and act. Foundational level is the heart, everyone has to have a strong foundation (S. Travis, meeting notes, January 11, 2020).

Leadership Actions

The category of leadership actions is composed of three codes (n=36 or 8%): leadership responses, activism, and our why. This category captures how educational leaders carry on with and manage the stresses of leadership work (see Table 14 for categories and frequency). At a school observation, Savannah shared:

> I am hearing from other principals how do we sustain ourselves. I am new, I don't need to hear you guys saying this when you are only doing this as a third year. I don't need to hear you say, I don't think it is sustainable. I need to hear some joy. I do not hear any joy from principals. No joy. And I am like, that's not going to be me. Yes, it's a lot of work but I am not going to be this unhappy person every day. It's not my nature and I cannot do that (S. Travis, observation notes, February 12, 2020).

Dr. Grant voiced a common frustration among assistant superintendents, "I have very limited time with leaders. When we are on site, I would love to do learning walks but I'm often there to attend to other matters, personnel issues, and issues related to Special Education" (E. Grant, observation notes, January 27, 2020). These tensions between the work one wants to engage with and the realities of multifaceted demands of the job illuminate the leadership strains as well as hope for resiliency. Leaders want to engage and be activists making changes in schools and communities.

Leaders respond with activism. The art collage and performance pieces produced in the CLE created these codes: be radical, dismantle, and do the right thing. A collective sense of taking action to live wholeheartedly was ignited at the CLE (January 2020). After reflection on the art artifact one CLE participant declared, "This is permission to disrupt, interrupt, and do the

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right thing." Another participant added, "to be radical," and another interjected, "dismantle" (CLE participants, meeting notes, January 11, 2020). Another participant shared:

> We are all the leaders of our schools fighting the good fight every day. It's been difficult facilitate conversations with their union reps. And I watch this and what they are fighting for, and what they are fighting for is for us to address the needs of their students (CLE participants, meeting notes, January 11, 2020).

Leaders engage in daily acts of social justice, exerting themselves to do right by students. The intersection *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership creates a nexus that activates social justice leadership. The nexus invites deep dialogical exchanges using *testimonios*, CLE axioms, and intentional pedagogies. The combination of holding hold a space that heals, invigorates, and allows participants to show up as their whole self in wholehearted leadership, provides fodder for liberating education and social justice leadership.

Dispositions

The dispositions category is composed of nine codes (n=35 or 7%): care, mindset, peace, confident, cognizant, vulnerability, empathy, humor, and present. Aguilar (2018) identifies twelve dispositions of resilient educators. Four dispositions--empathy, humor, self-perception (confident), and purposefulness (present)-- were part of the disposition code. The code humor appeared across the data collection in the cycle. The disposition of lightheartedness and fun were exemplified in the art collage at the CLE. During the January 11, 2020 CLE debrief a participant shared, "this is joy and a sense of importance and serious and this lightness" (CLE participants, meeting notes, January 11, 2020). Wholehearted leaders demonstrated dispositions of self-perception and purposefulness connected to joy and humor. Wholehearted leaders draw on the strengths of ancestors and their core values.

Honor

The category of honor is composed of seven codes (n=16 or 4%): students, the space, the land, native people, family, a space for women, each other, and ancestors (see Table 15). Honoring each other and ancestors materialized across three different data points. The concept of self in the ecologies of knowing includes family. "Family is the original learning exchange for us. It is the context for our learning about the self and about the social world around us" (Guajardo, et al., 2016, p. 29). During the CLE and EC-PLC, exchanging *testimonios* created intimacy and vulnerability. These exchanges helped create a sense of family. Wholehearted leaders honored where we came from and who we are individually and collectively.

Core Values

Teamwork, dignity, connect to heart, connect to work, respect, and honor are the codes that make up the category (n=16 or 4%) (see Table 15). Women leaders in the EC-PLC and CLE group engaged in courageous and difficult conversations. One central office leader participant posed a critical question:

> I kept thinking about how we measure core values. Everybody has core values in the mission and our vision but when we look at the metric it's not aligned to core values. How many kids pursue A-G requirements, how many kids are going to community college, how many kids graduate from college? That's not important. What is really important to us is how to authentically carry this in every part of our life (Meeting notes, January 11, 2020).

Leaders referenced their *why*, their motivation and core belief as to *why* they are engaged in leading. The category consists of five codes: equity/social justice, students, communities, school leaders, and educators. One participant confirmed her commitment to lead

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Table 15

Wholehearted Leadership Honor, Core Values Categories, Codes, and Frequency

Emerging Theme	Categories n=7	Codes	Frequency
Wholehearted	Honor	The Space	1
Leadership	(4%)	The Land	1
439 instances		Native people	1
		A space for women	2
		Family	2
		Each other	3
		Ancestors/Elders	6
	Core Values	Honor	1
	(4%)	Respect	1
		Connect to work	2
		Connect to heart	3
		Dignity	4
		Team work	5

wholeheartedly, "I commit to creating a sacred place to keep the humanity of the children and families I serve at the core of why I do what I do because it has been challenging for me" (meeting notes, January 11, 2020). Pour-Khorshid (2018) described H.E.L.L.A as a space where she could "move beyond the usual rules maintaining White Supremacy and 'get down' to thinking about education from a liberatory lens" (p. 235). During the CLE Savannah and Claudia partnered and shared a collective story about the substantive metric of how leaders look for interactions in their community. Savannah spoke:

> Our story is about the interactions we have with people and how that informs us. For me, it informs the culture and climate of the school I saw a student singing in the classroom because it was their teacher's birthday. Singing really loud... Using the interaction with students and teachers in the hallway to see what's the climate of the school. Similarly, Claudia used interactions with specific individuals and their lack of greetings. It can be indicator of the team in the building...Maybe it has to do with being part of the team because if you are, we greet each other. And, if a person is not, they may need some help- coaching (S. Travis, CLE Meeting notes, January 11, 2020).

The women leaders in the CLE were daring and bold. Brown (2018) affirms, "[d]aring leaders who live into their values are never silent about hard things" (p. 184). Leaders shared *testimonios* about how we noticed and measured interactions with students and staff. Core values and our *why* anchored leaders to engage in social justice leadership and social activism.

I observed wholehearted leadership at EC-PLC members' school sites and meetings during the PAR Cycle Two, and then the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted schools. San Francisco and California quickly placed a shelter in place order and closed schools. COVID-19 interrupted how we all worked and engaged with school as it impacted all of us. It may be the largest

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disruption to education in generations. It created uncertainty, broke down the home and work boundaries, and became a beacon for shifts in organizational priorities. COVID-19 pandemic shook our school district's educational organizational system to its core. It made us all vulnerable and, in some ways, leveled the organization as we all learned together how to teach and manage schools remotely. It made the work of the PAR vital for leaders. What follows is an analysis of the implications of the emerging themes to the PAR research questions, my leadership, and PAR Cycle Three.

Implications

The emerging themes *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership had implications on the PAR research questions, my leadership, and PAR Cycle Three.

Implications for the PAR Research Questions

In PAR Cycle Two, the emerging themes of *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership align to the research questions squarely. The sub question focused on the formal and informal structures, and systems that educational leaders use to help deal with work stress. In Cycle Two, we learned how *testimonios* help to deepen relational trust. We learned how the power of informal learning-affinity spaces help create a place for women leaders to feel affirmed, motivated, held, and fortified so leaders can engage actively in social justice leadership. Sub-question concerned what leadership actions can educational leaders use to create working environments and conditions for their colleague to attend to self-care. Leadership responses and the intentional use of CLE axioms and art-integrated pedagogies helped create the conditions to attend to self-care as collective care. In addition, we addressed the sub-question about how we transferred these learned skills, structures, and systems into district offices and other schools.

The learned skills and structures, such as mindfulness practices and wellness hour, transferred and appeared in other district meetings and spaces.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected all macro, meso and micro levels of the PAR, creating different stressors on leaders. Leaders needed to ensure all students had access to food, devices, and online supports. Leaders were overwhelmed and overextended with communication responsibilities to families, staff, students, and central office managers while simultaneously providing professional development on online tools to teach remotely. COVID-19 created some opportunities, such as flattening the organizational hierarchy, as we all became learners of emergency remote school. COVID-19 halted traditional ways of learning and refocused attention to the wellness of students, families, and staff. This unprecedented event raised questions about reimagining school to take care of the whole child as well as the whole staff, and to maintain self-care as collective care in the virtual online spaces. I explored these additional sub questions that are a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in PAR Cycle Three.

Implications for Leadership

Creating intentional space, pacing time in cadence for participants, and using CLE axioms and intentional pedagogies can be the conditions for an *Espacio Sano* for leaders to learn. I learned the importance of holding affinity space for women leaders to provide intimacy, allow vulnerability, and attend to the *brainheart*. During the CLE, participants expressed the need to scale the work of leadership and self-care as collective care and impart with others. Angel, an instructional coach, affirmed, "It's necessary. As you go higher there are less women leaders. Please continue to keep the vision of self-care and leadership and scale it." Savannah added:

> I would encourage you to keep it small, because there is something about the intimacy
>
> that makes it valuable to me as a new leader. I love that we started last year and stayed

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together doing it. It's nice to come to a space where you don't think about what you have to do for other people, but what you are going to do for yourself. I think we need this space for self-care in leadership ... (S. Travis, CLE meeting notes, January 11, 2020).

The emerging findings in Cycle Two affirmed my intuition: The current ways we provide professional development for leaders and teachers needs to change. In a reflective memo, I captured my thoughts after delivering a professional development to new principals. I write:

I innately feel we need to structure our professional development (PD) differently to meet the needs of our leaders. I sense this in the way leaders show up, how much they have going on in their minds, hearts, and bodies. We are intentional about creating opportunities for them to connect but I know they need more time to arrive, to empty their cups so they can be more present. I described the CLE with a work colleague. I described the structures and protocols our EC-PLC used that allowed participants to go deeper. For example, at yesterday's new principal PD the equity frame was about the assets in our buildings are our staff, and how we support and develop their capacity has great implications for our students and families. I wondered if we did a CLE with the essential question: What does seeing the adults in your building as assets mean to you? What leadership moves and mindsets do you need to see them as assets? Build them up and bring them along? I wondered, what if we began the morning in a community circle? If we started with a song like *Stand Up* from the film Harriet to anchor our work on equity for our most vulnerable students. If we did mindfulness practices to allow our minds and bodies to arrive and be more present before we launched into content. I wonder if our structures in how leaders got input moved from one hundred and ten slides

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in a slide deck to leaders sharing their stories and building off their expertise (C. Velasco, reflective memo, February 5, 2020).

These suggestions were drawn from the CLE axioms and pedagogies used at the CLE in January. I organized and experienced first-hand how intentionally creating an environment and meeting conditions provide a space to learn deeply and rejuvenate. I understood the importance of informal learning spaces and structures. The power of listening deeply and telling an integrated story, *testimonios,* helped create trust and connection across difference. The substantive metrics women leaders used to measure what's *really* going on in our schools emerged. I reimaged the professional development design we provide new principals using Heron's (1999) experiential learning cycle to make it more comprehensive with CLE axioms and integrated pedagogies incorporated. I brought these leadership learnings into PAR Cycle Three. Figure 35 illustrates the three PAR cycles; we moved from PAR Cycle Two (self and the communal) to PAR Cycle Three (self and the systemic).

Implications for Cycle Three

By analyzing the data, we could identify two emerging themes of *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership. I understood the self-care stories of the EC-PLC members; I observed ways we were incorporating self-care strategies at work. The CLE (January 2020) helped me understand the importance of holding affinity space for women leaders to attend to self-care as collective care, to engage with the *brainheart*, and the *MeWe*.

While COVID-19 exacerbated the stress school leaders confront, it also created opportunities for our school district and leaders to shift priorities from traditional metrics (benchmark assessments and standardized tests) to substantiated metrics (wellness and safety) for the members in the community. I began to observe how to integrate self-care strategies in

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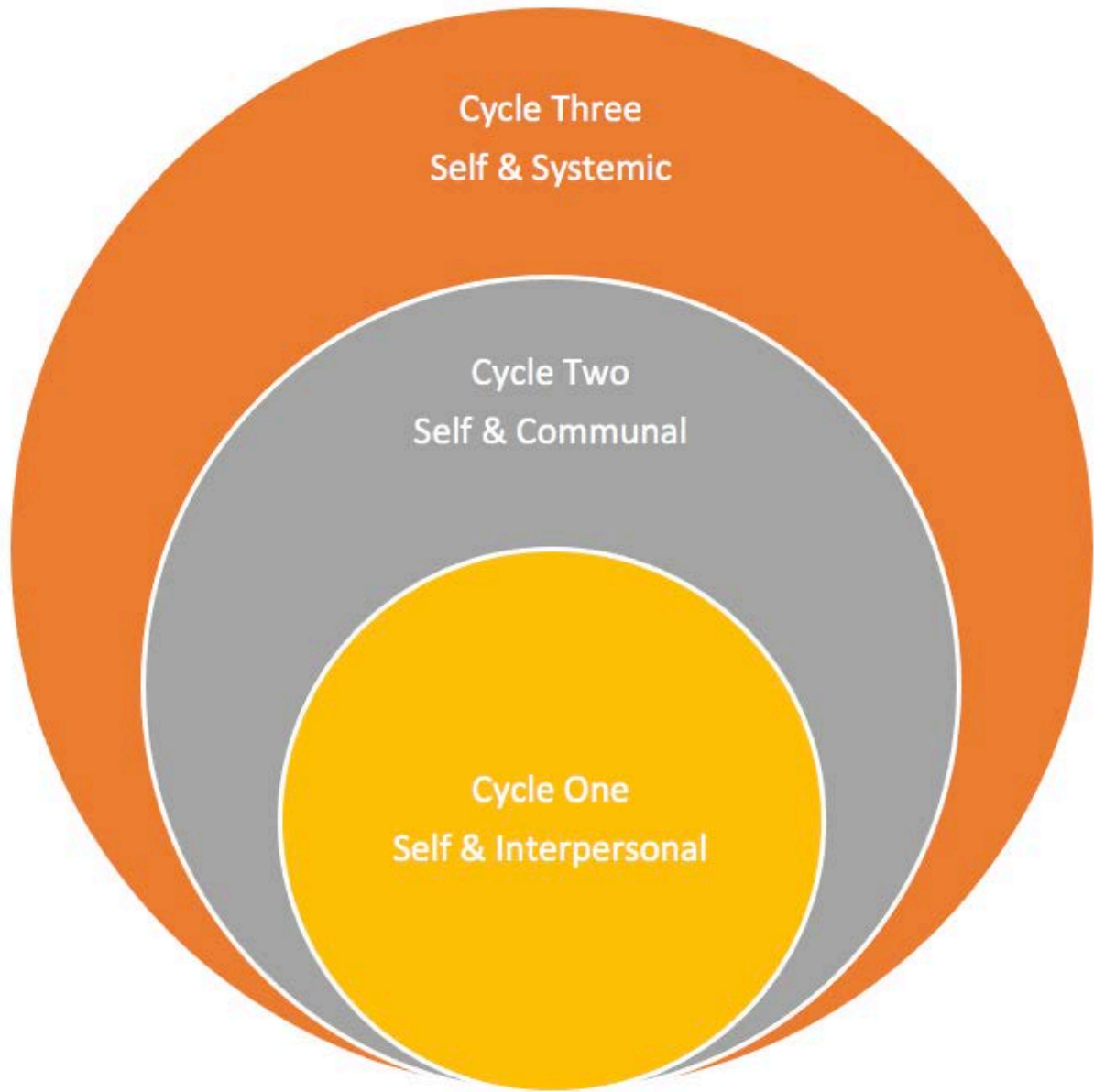
Figure 35. PAR three cycles: Self and systemic.

districtwide meetings and in my work as a leadership coach. EC-PLC members integrated these practices in their work environments.

In PAR Cycle Three, I would like to understand how EC-PLC members innovate the use of CLE axioms and pedagogies in the virtual space. These elements may help create the online sacred spaces we need to fortify ourselves for the social justice work, especially during crisis distance learning. I wanted to investigate how leaders sustained the work of self-care as collective care when I am no longer leading the PAR project. I sought to understand how we could continue to create *Espacio Sano* for our communities and remained curious about how our school district would maintain self-care as a priority as we began school in the Fall.

EC-PLC in the Virtual and Physical Plane

The use of non-canonical ways of learning and engaging helped bolster connection and inspired EC-PLC members. I asked EC-PLC members to co-develop ways we can integrate the arts or other modalities in our virtual EC-PLC meetings. Furthermore, I continued to understand how CLE axioms and pedagogies could be modified and used online in a virtual plane until we were able to convene an in-person meeting.

Transfer and Sustain

In Cycle Three of the PAR, EC-PLC members contributed meeting topics and facilitation and explored what elements (informal and formal structures and systems) transferred into our workspaces, either virtual or physical. EC-PLC members engaged in conversations on how to sustain self-care as collective care beyond me and the PAR project. I explored how I came to understand how I transformed my perspectives and practices as an educational leader.

For PAR Cycle Three, I explored the nexus between wholehearted leadership and *Espacio Sano*. I understood how COVID-19 impacted our EC-PLC members, and made

adjustments or additions needed to conduct our EC-PLC meetings. I continued to co-facilitate the EC-PLC where we shared and practiced self-care strategies and used *testimonios*. I conducted interviews with each EC-PLC member and asked them to complete a self-care questionnaire. In addition, EC-PLC members engaged in member checks individually and as a group and reviewed sections of the data and analysis to "collaboratively interrogate and discuss relevant multiple dimensions of the research issues suggested" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 37). The data from Cycle Two was compared and contrasted to the new data from Cycle Three. Finally, these data were analyzed through the lenses of social justice leadership principles, self-care, and *Espacio Sano* literature and the comprehensive codebook (see Appendix L).

Chapter Summary

The purpose of PAR Cycle Two was twofold: To engage with self-care strategies with a broader community and to collect data to analyze how the work supports leaders to use self-care strategies for themselves and their colleagues. Our EC-PLC team shared strategies with others, our school sites, and workplaces at our first PAR Cycle Two. EC-PLC members began to take an active facilitative role and our relational trust continued to develop and grow. While the COVID-19 pandemic created additional stress, we found opportunities to lead and support each other and our work communities. During the cycle, I had to pivot and create self-care opportunities online. As a result, the clear focus of Cycle Three is to continue to deepen the trust amongst the EC-PLC, integrate elements of wholehearted leadership and *Espacio Sano* into our EC-PLC meetings, and strategize about our individual and collective sustainable self-care plans. Ultimately, the goal is to transition the strategies and goals of the PAR project into the normative work of the EC-PLC members. PAR Cycle Three is designed to achieve these ends.

During PAR Cycle Three, I continued to co-create the EC-PLC space with the members.

We used pedagogies that supported the CLE axioms in an online environment and addressed a new research sub-question: How do we attend to self-care collaboration and facilitation in online spaces? In PAR Cycle Three, we furthered the data analysis toward a set of specific themes/findings. Specifically, we focused on four tasks: identify pedagogies and practices for virtual EC-PLC meetings, participate in interviews, complete a post self-care questionnaire, and engage in member checks. Finally, we continued to use *testimonios* and a construct a collective understanding of self-care strategies to manage work-related stress individually and collectively.

CHAPTER 7: PAR CYCLE THREE

Anyone who's interested in making change in the world,
also has to learn how to take care of herself, himself, theirselves.
— Angela Davis

If there was ever a time to attend to self-care as collective care, it is now. Angela Davis, activist researcher, asserts that self-care is an act of liberation. Davis (2018) states, "if we don't start practicing collective self-care now, there's no way to imagine, much less reach, a time of freedom" (Davis, 2018). She affirms that self-care can help overcome a multitude of issues, and that would apply to the COVID-19 pandemic. Self-care as collective care is evidenced throughout our 18-month journey in our Equity Centered-Professional Learning Community (EC-PLC).

In Chapter 7, I narrate and codify the two findings for the focus of practice (FoP) -- *Espacio Sano* (sane space) and wholehearted leadership. The chapter provides evidence and data on how we built our individual and collective resilience over three Participatory Action Research (PAR) cycles. Through this PAR process, EC-PLC members co-created an *Espacio Sano*, a distinct professional space that disrupts normative professional development spaces in our district and schools, where we fortified each other to engage as social justice leaders. In *Espacio Sano,* leaders are wholehearted leaders; they lead with the heart and mind, the *brainheart*, and use the substantive alternative metrics to understand what *really* is going on in our schools.

Before discussing PAR Cycle Three, I revisit key learnings from PAR Cycle Two. PAR Cycle Two strengthened the EC-PLC's understanding of the power of listening deeply and telling an integrated story. *Testimonios* (storytelling) helped deepen relational trust and built connection across difference. Together, we intentionally shaped meeting conditions to learn deeply and rejuvenate. In the affinity space for women leaders, we provided intimacy, fostered

vulnerability, and encouraged ourselves to attend to the *brainheart*. In Cycle Two, women leaders emphasized engaging with our integral selves (our intellect and emotions), and we coined the term *brainheart*. The cycle revealed alternative substantive metrics of connection, joy, and *brainheart*, not the usual metrics we connote with measuring school success, to gauge what's *really* going on in our schools. Our EC-PLC group used deliberate CLE axioms and arts-integrated pedagogies to create the conditions for *Espacio Sano* where leaders could attend to self-care as collective care. Furthermore, the self-care skills and structures, including mindfulness practices and wellness hour, transferred and appeared in other district meetings and spaces.

In the midst of the third PAR cycle, COVID-19 put the study to the different test. In PAR Cycle Three, we wanted to understand the extent to which the EC-PLC members transferred these learned skills, structures, and systems into district offices and other schools. Our EC-PLC group identified pedagogies and practices implemented in our virtual EC-PLCs. Moreover, through member checks, we investigated how emerging themes from Cycle Two and the initial coding and categories from Cycle One were confirmed. Thus, we investigated the informal and formal structures that systems leaders used to support working conditions and attend to self-care as collective care. The chapter reveals both how we facilitated that transfer and used the data to analyze if we achieved our goals. The chapter and cycle brought the two emerging findings into sharp focus and presented the opportunity to apply more data collection and analysis to solidify those themes into two key findings: *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership.

Thus, in Chapter 7, I explicate PAR Cycle Three and the journey our EC-PLC navigated to attend to self-care as collective-care during the COVID-19 pandemic. The five sections of the chapter are: (1) PAR Cycle Three activities, (2) data collection and analysis, (3) findings, (4) the

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impact of COVID-19 on this work, and (5) conclusion. We engaged in five EC-PLC activities with the goal of sustaining the self-care practices and sharing them with others with the goal of transitioning the strategies and goals of this PAR project into the normative work of the EC-PLC members.

PAR Cycle Three Activities

In PAR Cycle Three (August—October 2020), we continued to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The entire nation had restricted travel and shelter at home orders. In the uncertainty of how school would begin in the Fall, EC-PLC members had disrupted summer breaks and limited rest. In late summer (July 2020), we attended the remote district administrative institute, and that set the precedent for school starting remotely. The district focused on four learning priorities: consistent structures for support, antiracist practices, the graduate profile, and wellness and authentic partnership.

The school year began for students and teachers in remote online learning with an initial mid-September date to return to in-person instruction. Despite the uncertainties of COVID-19, we experienced a positive assurance for the PAR project; as educators, we were successfully applying the transfer of self-care as collective care into our workspaces at the end of Cycle Two and were ready to sustain that for ourselves and in other workspaces. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and leading school remotely is reflected in the discussion of the activities.

Self-care strategies, the use of *testimonios,* and intentional leadership actions supporting relational trust and *Espacio Sano* continued from PAR Cycle Two. During PAR Cycle Three, our goal for the EC-PLC group was sustain the self-care practices and share them with others and, ultimately, transition the strategies and goals of this PAR project into the normative work of the EC-PLC members. The cycle was organized in five activities:

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1. Continue to use *testimonios* and self-care strategies in our virtual EC-PLC meetings.

2. Reflect on our self-care journey and complete a post questionnaire.

3. Participate in one-on-one interviews.

4. Engage in a member check.

5. Continue using reflective memos.

The COVID-19 pandemic shifted some of the activities and data collection and had inadvertent consequences in the ways we engaged and imparted strategies. Table 16 provides a visual account of the PAR Cycle Three data collection. The key evidence collected and analyzed throughout PAR Cycle Three included three EC-PLC meetings, meeting minutes, interviews, post questionnaire, digital communication, notes, and reflective memos.

We began PAR Cycle Three with a casual virtual Zoom Happy Hour check-in in August 2020. This check-in helped anchor the ways we were attending to self-care so that we would be fortified to bring this to our virtual workspaces as collective care. I coded the written documentation from emails, texts, and meeting notes to identify main ideas and common themes. I triangulated these data with reflective memos and artifacts. In the following sections I detail each activity.

Activity One: EC-PLC Meetings

We held three, one-hour EC-PLC virtual meetings in PAR Cycle Three. I sent out an invitation stating, "a time for us to check in and cheer each other on. Self-care as collective care. A space for us to share strategies on how to maintain self-care as we launch into Distance Learning SY 20-21! Hope you can join us virtually on Google hangout!" (C. Velasco, personal communication, August 1, 2020). The first EC-PLC meeting was held the first week of August (August 5, 2020). Claudia, Laura, and I attended.

Table 16

Fall 2020 Key Activities and Data Collection (August-October)

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12
Meetings with EC-PLC (n=3)	♦				♦					♦		
Meeting/Conversations (n=6)	♦		♦		♦		♦♦			♦		
Digital communication (n=12)		♦♦	♦♦	♦	♦		♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Questionnaire- post (n=4)										♦		
Interviews (n=4)								♦	♦♦	♦		
Written Notes or Reflective Memos (n=13)	♦♦	♦	♦♦	♦	♦		♦	♦	♦♦	♦	♦	

We presented current context of what was going on for each of us at this first meeting. Claudia prepared her staff and school for the opening of school; she would be out for two weeks as she completed the last part of her breast cancer reconstructive surgery. With her family, Laura traveled back from the mid-west to San Francisco in an R.V. I attended various virtual workshops and trainings for my new coaching position at Victorious Valley Middle School. We shared our frustrations about the quantity of information coming at us, discussed the challenges and opportunities of managing and leading remotely, brainstormed ideas for online community connectors, and continued to share our self-care commitments. We held the second EC-PLC Zoom meeting at the end of August to accommodate Claudia's post-surgery (August 31, 2020), which provided opportunities to model and use some of the virtual facilitation strategies with each other. We practiced self-care strategies, shared *testimonios*, and discussed how COVID-19 was affecting us as school leaders. Furthermore, we continued to make and share self-care commitments.

In the third EC-PLC virtual meeting, at the end of September (September 28, 2020), we paused, reflected on the work we engaged in the PAR, and completed a post questionnaire (see Appendix O EC-PLC Agenda Online). We individually took time to reflect and respond to the prompts: *Describe what structures, systems, and supports you have used to manage work-related stress? Describe what actions and structures you have put in place for your colleagues to attend to self-care?* Next, we drew pictures of what this looks like in our work environment and shared our reflections and drawings (see Appendix G for Self-care Questionnaire). We discussed how the PAR impacted us and the self-care strategies we had internalized and established in our working environments. In addition, this meeting solidified our *Espacio Sano*. The EC-PLC participants expressed a desire to continue to meet monthly despite the PAR project ending.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted our EC-PLC gatherings, yet our ability to hold fast to assets and possibility during uncertain times created positive collateral opportunities. A collateral positive is our ability to seek solutions to problems, to hold on to assets during challenges, and be open to opportunities during ambiguity; it is a promising innovation (Militello et al., 2020). We were forced us to rethink and use other forms of communication to stay connected. In Cycle Three, the use of text messaging and emails increased substantially. The digital communications supported EC-PLC members between meetings, providing encouragement, solidarity, and laughter (see Figure 36) and became a form of substantive metrics we used to measure the community and connection we often had at administrator meetings, school visits, and our school buildings.

Activity Two: Questionnaire-post

During the September EC-PLC meeting, we dedicated time to pause, reflect, write, and draw about the impact of the PAR project. First, we engaged in a written reflection and described the actions and structures we put in place for our colleagues to attend to self-care. Then, we drew a picture of what this looked like in our work environment and labeled the image (see Figure 37). We modified the post questionnaire slightly to reflect schools teaching remotely, since now our work environments were entrenched in our homes. I designed the post questionnaire to show changes that occurred for EC-PLC members' ability to attend to individual self-care in addition, it measured to what extent EC-PLC members transferred these learned skills, structures, and systems to their work sites (Refer to Chapter 4 for more information on the methodology and see Appendix G for Self-care Questionnaire).
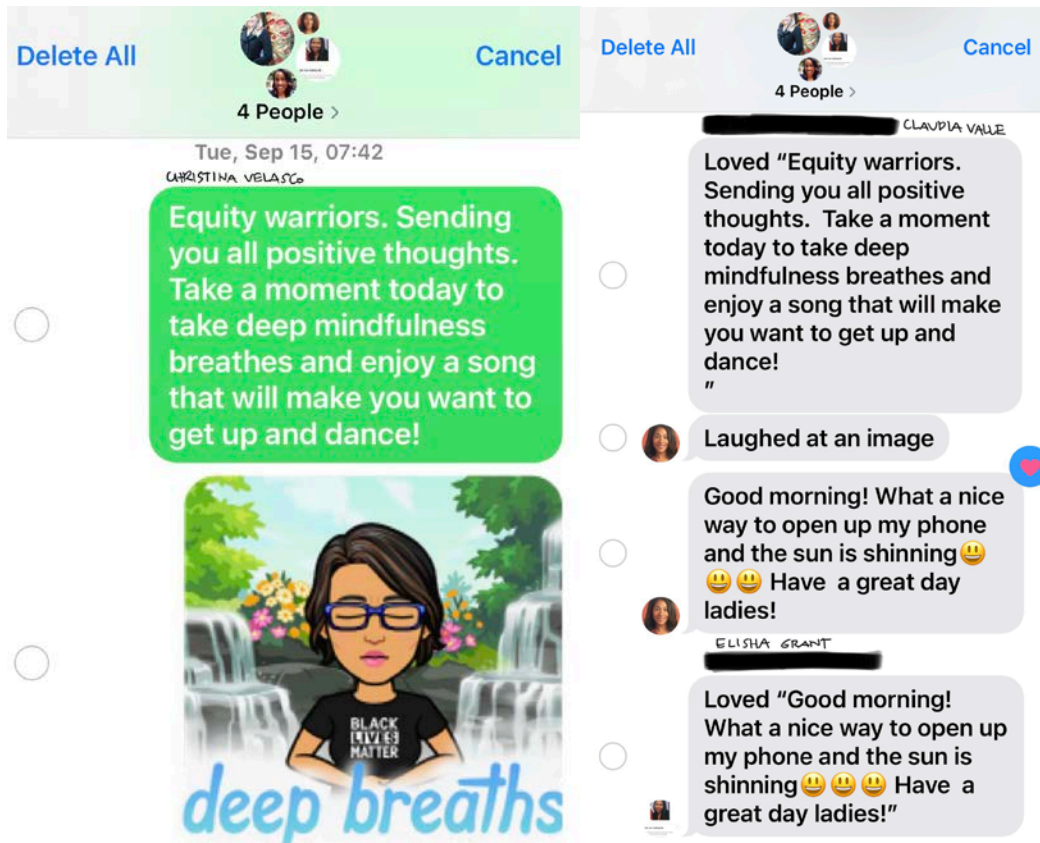
Figure 36. Encouraging text messages for self-care practices.

My mom friends help a lot – empathizing and laughter together. Our team checks in about how each other is feeling frequently and this helps too.

Plus – lying down breathing w/ my legs up for even a minute helps

– morning exercise 3x/week

– trying to stop work by 5 and walk to get the kids

– ordering a lunch delivery service so I don't have to worry about preparing healthy lunch

– gratitude journal

healthy lunch made by someone else

laugh with friends

GRATITUDE JOURNAL

DEEP BREATHS THROUGHOUT THE DAY

ahhhh deep breath

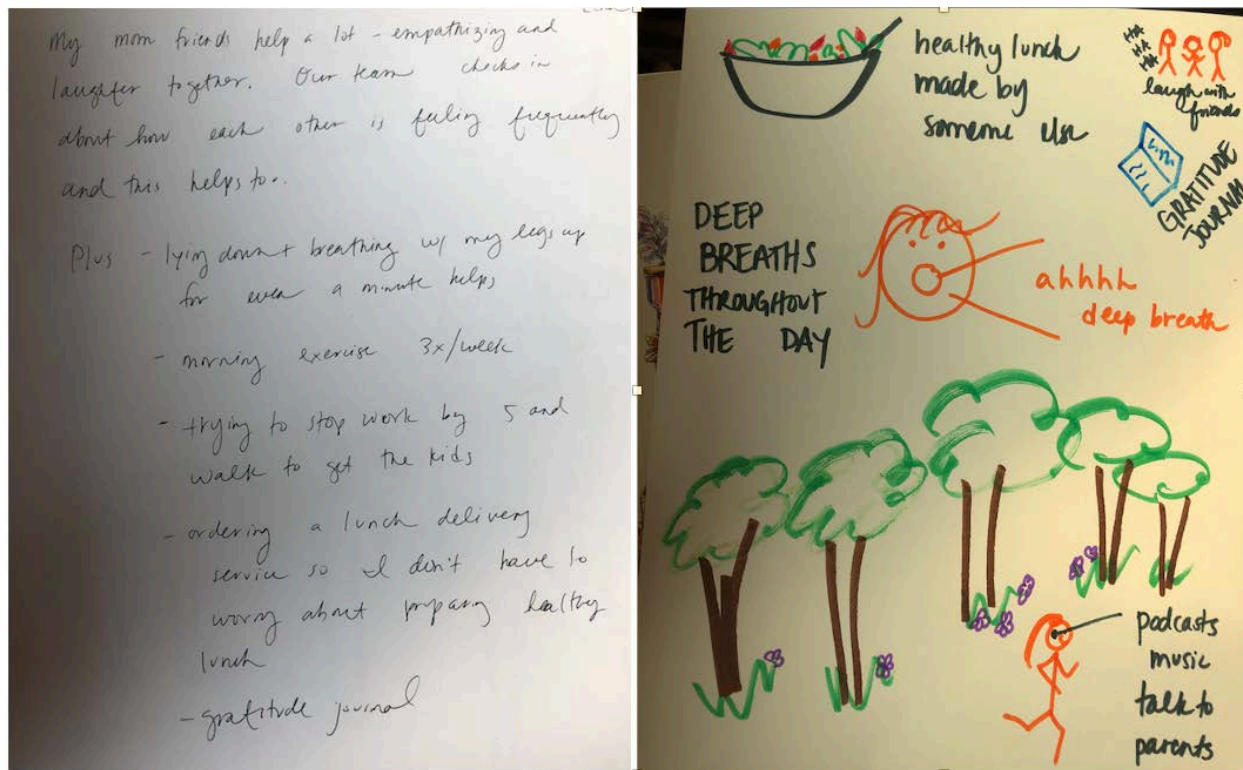podcasts music talk to parents

Figure 37. Laura's self-care questionnaire – post.

Activity Three: Interviews

I conducted individual interviews during Cycle Three. As COVID-19 and sheltering in place made group interview or focus group difficult, I altered the methodology. I consulted with group members who agreed to one-on-one interviews (see Appendix E Protocol for Interviewing and Appendix F Matrix of Interview Questions). The purpose of the interviews was to better understand each member's self-care journey, how they experienced the PAR process, and how they shared self-care strategies with others. The COVID-19 pandemic produced an additional question: What image best represents how you have felt since COVID?

Activity Four: Member Checks

We used the process of member checks individually and collectively (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I met with members individually to share the findings from PAR Cycle Two and share the activities of Cycle Three. Collectively, the EC-PLC members and I reviewed findings. I checked to see if EC-PLC members shared my perceptions and requested that they provide feedback on what resonated and ask any remaining questions.

Activity Five: Ongoing Reflective Memos

Throughout the PAR project, I have engaged in writing reflective memos. Figure 38 illustrates how I organized the reflective memo beginning from pre-cycle (August of 2018) to the present. Written reflection provided opportunities for me to regularly return to my leadership perspectives and practices. Furthermore, using written reflection allowed me to engage in *praxis* (Freire, 1970), informed my responsiveness to EC-PLC members, and helped me design agendas and craft activities for our EC-PLC and triangulate the data.

Data Collection and Analysis

I collected and coded data throughout PAR Cycle Three. I coded the written

Figure 38. Example of my reflective memo log.

documentation from emails, text messages, meeting notes, interviews to identify main ideas, and common themes. I triangulated these data with reflective memos and artifacts. The data served to solidify emerging findings (see Appendix L for the Codebook). What follows is a description of the coding process.

I engaged in an open coding process by reviewing all the data I collected for Cycle Three. The research question helped me filter the data to what is germane and relevant to the PAR (Saldaña, 2016). I placed each data source into an individual table. The table had a column for the data, a column for a code, a column for the definition/explanation of the code, and a column for the source. I coded the data line by line. I coded one piece of data from each data source: EC-PLC meeting notes, post questionnaire, interviews, text messages, and reflective memos. The first round generated new codes and categories as well as resurfaced categories and codes identified in PAR Cycle One and Cycle Two (see Appendix L Codebook), and I tallied the number of times a category appeared in the data. I used my classification knowledge, codes, and categories from the previous Cycles as well as my intuitiveness to determine which data "looked and felt alike," then grouped them together (Saldaña, 2016).

The codebook design and use has been a developmental process (see Appendix L is composed of open codes and closed codes from the literature). In my work with EC-PLC members through PAR Cycle One, Two, and Three, I synthesized and refined the codes. I learned to code specific things, I moved them to categories, and I found that this changed over time in PAR Cycles One, Two, and Three. In PAR Cycle One, for example, I had two categories, self-care and wellness strategies. In PAR Cycle Two, I collapsed these categories and renamed them self-care categories. I revised the codebook after completing the initial coding and categorizing (see Appendix L). I collapsed categories and tethered them together and confirmed

the categories with support from extant literature. The codebook shows thirty-two categories, with one hundred and twenty-seven codes appearing five to ninety-two times across the various artifacts. I cross-referenced codes and categories from Cycle One and Cycle Two. Saldaña (2016) asserts, "as you code and recode, expect, or rather, strive for, your codes and categories to become more refined and, depending on your methodological approach, more conceptual and abstract" (p. 12). After further discernment, I have two findings: *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership. Figure 39 illustrates the overall data collection and shows the analysis process.

Findings

Over 18 months and three cycles of data collection and analysis with the EC-PLC group, I can support two empirical findings, *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership. These findings build on the work of the previous cycles (see Table 17). PAR Cycle One revealed four emerging categories: wellness strategies, time, leadership actions, and reflection. PAR Cycle Two unveiled two emerging themes: *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership.

We learned in PAR Cycle Two that our meetings should be responsive to the collective needs and hold space and time more fluidly. Moreover, in Cycle Two we uplifted the importance of inviting fun and playfulness (Nachamanovitch, 1990). The EC-PLC group confirmed the significance of listening to each other's *testimonios* and reflections; these are foundational to creating an *Espacio Sano*. In PAR Cycle Two, we established the meaning of alternative substantive metrics women leaders use to gauge what's *really* going on in schools. Emotions and dispositions are essential elements to wholehearted leadership.

In PAR Cycle Three, we had two goals: to sustain the self-care practices we had learned in our EC-PLC and transition the strategies and goals of the PAR project into the normative work of the EC-PLC members. Moreover, the purpose of the cycle was to put the two emerging

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PAR Cycle One August 2019 - December 2019 Coding to Categories	PAR Cycle Two January 2020 - April 2020 Emerging Theme	PAR Cycle Three August 2020 - October 2020 Findings
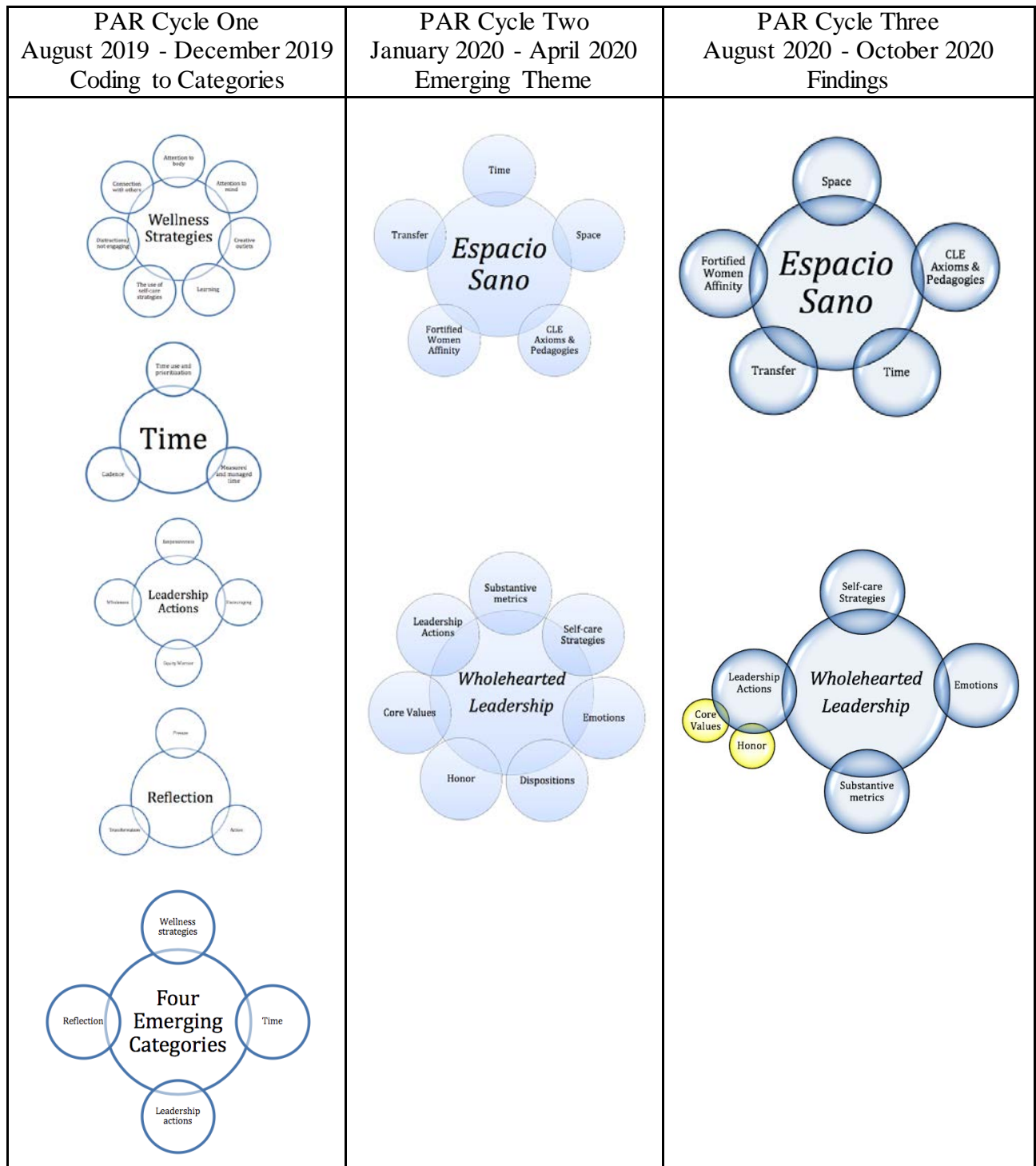
Figure 39. Timeline and illustration of overall data collection of the PAR.

themes from Chapter 6 to the test, that is, to apply more empirical data collection and analysis to further understand these findings. In the chapter discussion, I revealed how I facilitated and analyzed the data to achieve these goals and purpose. *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership, emerging findings from PAR Cycle Two, are substantiated by the data in PAR Cycle Three. Furthermore, the analysis of data from PAR Cycle Three provides evidence of how the convergence of *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership leverages self-care and helps collectively build collective care. I intentionally included complete excerpts of the *testimonios* in the narrative in this chapter. *Testimonios* originated in the social justice movement in Latin America to add credulity to the experiences of those individuals and groups who were marginalized (Pérez Huber, 2009). I wanted to achieve a level of authenticity of women's voices and ensure that our stories become a part of the larger narrative of ensuring self-care and collective care.

Espacio Sano

We knew that *Espacio Sano* meant a third space to dialogue and reimagine learning, and to engage in knowledge creation that fostered our ability to practice self-care for the larger purpose of collective care. Our evidence expanded that definition in our context to mean a healing and sacred space that strengthens and sustains -- a place of hope and possibility where leaders attend to their professional and personal development and where school leaders can fortify themselves and each other so that they can continue the work of social justice in their work contexts. In PAR Cycle Three, the emerging themes from PAR Cycle Two are substantiated across the data of the three PAR cycles and, for Espacio Sano evidence, I point to five themes (total codes=1,031 instances): (1) space (30%); (2) CLE axioms and pedagogies (26%); (3) time (24%); (4) transfer (12%); and (5) fortified women affinity (8%). The themes are

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listed in order of highest frequency across the data collection in Table 17 and illustrated in Figure 40. What follows is an explanation of these themes that are the foundation of *Espacio Sano*.

Space

Creating and maintaining space continued to be an essential component of *Espacio Sano* in PAR Cycle Three. The space code appeared 301 times over the three PAR cycles. Consistent with PAR Cycle Two, I clustered the space codes into three categories: intention setting (n=157 or 15%), needed space (n=88 or 9%), and affinity space (n=56 or 6%). Table 17 is representative of data from all three cycles. It is organized by findings, themes, and categories, and shows the frequency of each code; Figure 41 represents the evidence in a graph.

Intention Space. Setting the physical dimension can support or impede the connection and work with others. During our in-person meetings in PAR Cycle One and Two, setting up the meetings space was purposeful and supported us in building relational trust. Claudia affirms this in a personal communication, "I miss our in-person gatherings. Christina always creates such a warm pleasant space that feels intentional to getting us to feel comfortable. I look forward to our gatherings for our *espacio sano*" (C. Valle, personal communication, November 11, 2020). In PAR Cycle Three, COVID-19 forced us to create our meetings virtually. The element of gracious space (Hughes & Grace, 2010) and setting up the space for connection and community carried over to the virtual platform. Intention manifested in codes as connected community, virtual, boundaries, play space, calm/quiet, and episodic. The connected community code appeared 42 times in PAR Cycle Three. A collateral positive was that leaders established boundaries and intentional spaces for work and home (see Figure 42). We carried fun and playfulness over from PAR Cycle Two. Savannah distinguishes a work and play space:

This is my workspace. What I can see. I am sitting on my yoga ball. I have my monitor

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Figure 40. *Espacio Sano* is represented by five themes.

Table 17

Espacio Sano Finding: Themes, Categories, Codes, and Frequency for All PAR Cycles

Finding	Themes	Categories	Codes	Frequency PAR Cycle 1	PAR Cycle 2	PAR Cycle 3	Total Frequency for all PAR Cycles
Espacio Sano 1,031 instances	Space (30%)	Intention Setting (15%)	Connected community	23	31	42	96
			Virtual	0	3	15	18
			Boundaries	0	0	18	18
			Play space	6	0	12	18
			Calm/quiet	2	0	3	5
			Episodic	0	2	0	2
		Needed Space (9%)	Learning	1	6	13	20
			Workspace: home	0	0	24	24
			Sustainable	0	2	10	12
			Isolation	4	0	8	12
			No boundaries	0	0	11	11
			Work site	0	0	9	9
		Affinity Space (6%)	Women affinity	19	27	10	56
	CLE Axioms & Pedagogies (26%)	*Testimonios* (9%)	*Testimonios*/storytelling	3	14	78	95
		Gracious Space (8%)	Welcome space	16	13	42	71
			Spirit	1	6	0	7
		Pedagogies (18%)	Circle	1	3	0	4
			Talking piece	1	1	0	2

Table 17 (continued)

Finding	Themes	Categories	Codes	Frequency PAR Cycle 1	PAR Cycle 2	PAR Cycle 3	Total Frequency for all PAR Cycles
Espacio Sano	CLE Axioms & Pedagogies		Facilitation	7	3	50	60
			Online	0	0	10	10
		Pedagogy	Arts integration	6	8	9	23
1,031 instances	Time (24%)	Metric of Time (15%)	Established/set aside	13	9	76	98
			Pacing	12	6	6	24
			Beginning of year	0	3	16	19
			Early morning	0	0	7	7
			Summer break	0	0	4	4
		Time Limits (7%)	Change of routine	14	0	17	31
			Limited/No break	8	3	8	19
			Conflict	6	1	5	12
			Medical leave	3	1	6	10
		Leverage Time (2%)	Lunch time	0	0	12	12
			Leverage EC-PLC	3	0	8	11
	Transfer (12%)	Transferring (12%)	Work setting	14	29	39	82
			Resources	0	3	39	42
			Home setting	0	0	4	4
	Fortified Women Affinity (8%)	Fortified (8%)	Keep you going	13	16	32	51
			Women Affinity	2	20	10	32
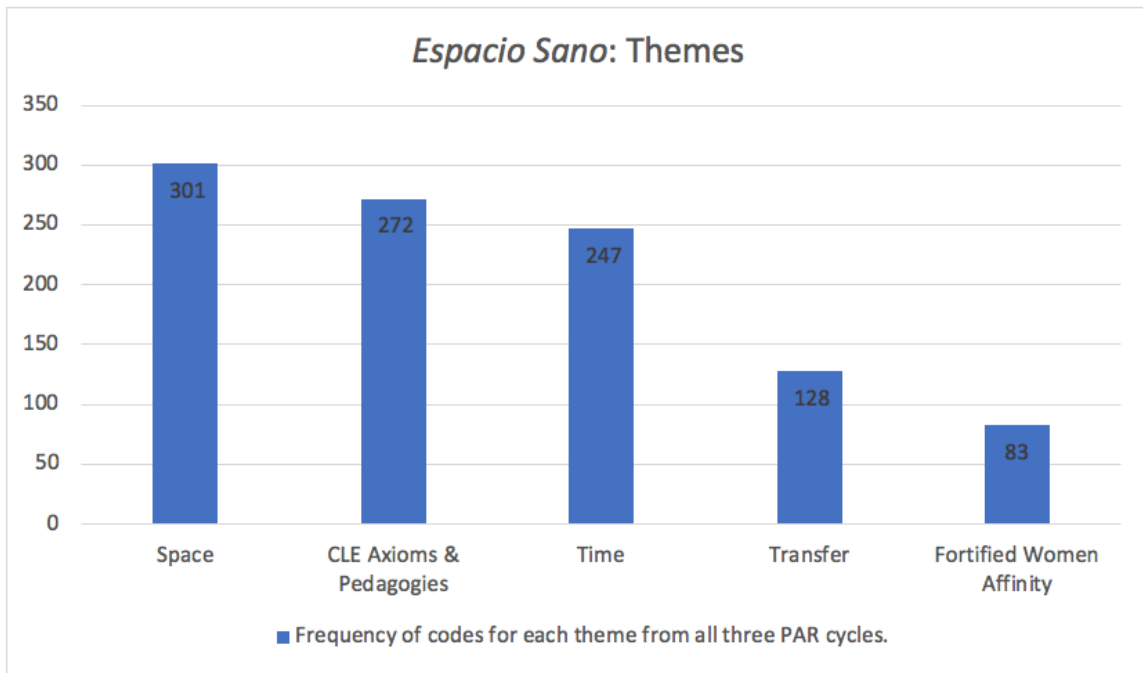
Figure 41. Espacio Sano: Themes and frequency of codes.
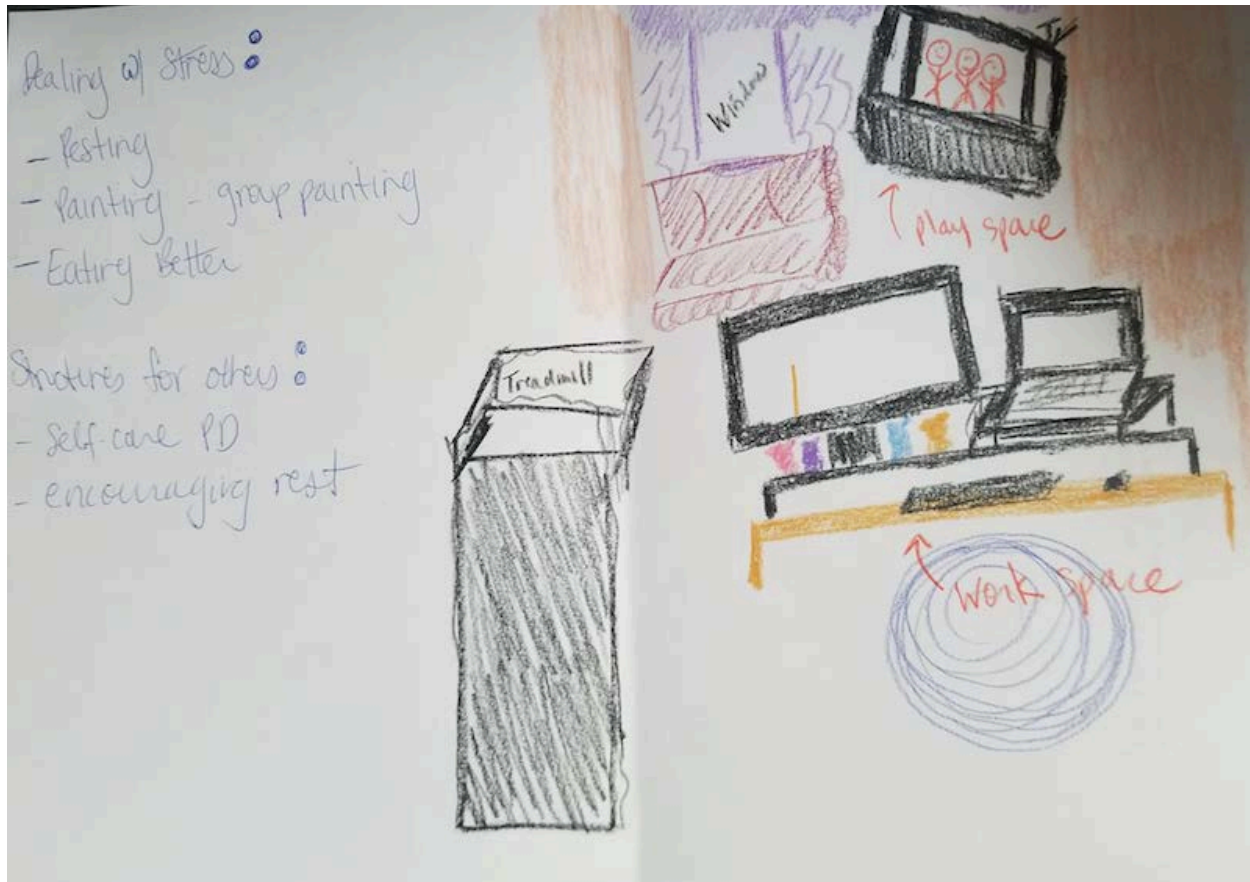
Figure 42. Savannah's self-care questionnaire-post illustrates her work and play space.

and laptop screen. I have my little care bears; they are all here keeping me company. My little water basketball game. This is my dining room table; these are all of my plants. Next door is my living room, my TV, my play space. I stop working go to the other room and relax (S. Travis, post questionnaire, September 28, 2020).

The daily challenge of leading during a pandemic was exhausting and draining. We invited calm and quiet into our spaces because of our daily online work. There were challenges to working from our home spaces that came with COVID-19. Space at times felt chaotic for EC-PLC members during this PAR Cycle Three. Leaders felt isolated. For one EC-PLC member, Laura, it was challenging to find boundaries. She discussed the challenges of working from home and supporting her daughters with distance learning:

I don't have a workspace because I wander throughout the space. I wander around the house, it's a mess trying to homeschool…My workspace though, I don't know what to do about that. I don't know, I have to roam. If I am in a meeting, I'm listening but I need to upload a Seesaw. It's chaos (L. Voss, post questionnaire, September 28, 2020).

Needed Space. Space is required and needed by leaders. Sustaining a space emerged in PAR Cycle Two at the CLE (January 2020). Leaders shared the need for a space for self-care in leadership and the importance of keeping it going. The need for space to tell our *testimonios*, listen to each other, process, and take care of ourselves and each other continued in PAR Cycle Three. In addition, COVID-19 limited our ability to be in different spaces and forced us all to work from home. The needed space category is made up of the codes: learning, workspace, home, sustainable, isolation, no boundaries, and work site. The codes for the needed space category appeared 75 times in PAR Cycle Three.

All EC-PLC members shared the desire to keep meeting after the PAR. During our one-on-one interview Claudia shared her need for space, "I hope that we continue because it's an opportunity to really talk about self-care. We don't talk about taking care of ourselves in any other professional space" (C. Valle, interview notes, September 22, 2020). Laura shared how our EC-PLC space was unique, "a collective coming together for self-care. That's not really a common thing, we don't really do that as educators. I've never actually been a part of a group in education that's sole purpose is wellness" (L. Voss, interview notes, September 25, 2020). Dr. Grant expressed the need to create space for the school leaders she supervises, "maybe we need to create a space where people can be calm. And maybe it's a space where they can just have helping trios" (E. Grant, interview notes, September 29, 2020). This needed space became a place for us to pause and attend to self-care and each other so we can continue to grow as leaders. The fact that the space was only for women further sustained and reinvigorated us.

Affinity Space. In the PAR project, we deliberately designed the space to engage with women leaders. In this affinity space, we can focus together as women on how our identity intersects with parts of our role as educational leaders. The women affinity category consists of the code women affinity and appears ten times in PAR Cycle Three and 56 times across the three PAR cycles. Affinity space provided space for women to engage as our full selves; reveal our intellect and emotions ("the brainheart"), be vulnerable, and hold each other up. Savannah shared her desire for affinity space:

> I think, especially as a new principal, it's nice to have the support of other women who are leaders. Just to know, we're all struggling through it, you know we're all being challenged by it. And we all have similar deficits in taking care of ourselves so we can figure that out. Okay, I'm not the only one that's not necessarily having the best self-care

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moment but we all collectively know we should have better self-care (S. Travis, interview notes, October 2, 2020).

Claudia spoke to the connection we created in the space:

> The fact that it is a group of all women leaders provides an affinity and closeness. I rarely get to be in community with women leaders and women leaders of color. This is a space, I am finding with the years in my career, that I crave and need more and more of (C. Valle, personal communication, November 11, 2020).

Laura described our women affinity EC-PLC on self-care:

> I think we brought together an organic group of women leaders and we do explicit self-care …strategies to take care of ourselves…We break bread together, we share laughter together, we share Claudia going through her surgery. In the act of gathering and sharing that is in of itself an act of self-care (L. Voss, September 25, 2020).

I described how affinity space is a safe and brave space:

> It's great to be part of our EC-PLC … to connect with colleagues and friends and share our stories of how our work is affecting us. It is a place where we can all land and feel safe and brave enough to share what's really happening as well as a place to share strategies (C. Velasco, reflective memo, September 28, 2020).

An affinity space for women leaders provided a place to bring our whole self. In affinity space we are seen, heard, understood, held, inspired, and heartened. As women we co-created an *Espacio Sano,* engaged in *testimonios,* and used CLE axioms and pedagogies.

CLE Axioms and Pedagogies

In PAR Cycle Three, we continued to use dialogical and deliberate structural elements to create a new way of being and structing professional learning communities of networks of

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sustainability and self-care. EC-PLC members were sustained and encouraged by inclusive pedagogies and CLE axioms--conversation and dialogue are critical for relationships and pedagogy, local knowledge and action, and learning as leadership and action (Guajardo et al., 2016).

The CLE axioms and pedagogies theme is composed of three categories: *testimonios* (storytelling), gracious space (Hughes & Grace, 2010), and pedagogies. CLE axioms consist of three reoccurring codes across the three PAR cycles: *testimonios,* welcome space, and spirit. The pedagogy codes are: circle, talking piece, facilitation, online, and arts integration. These codes appeared 272 times over the three PAR cycles. See Table 17 for additional information on themes, categories, and frequency. The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to shelter in place, yet the relational trust we established allowed us to continue to share openly in the virtual spaces. The power of our stories individually and collectively deepened our trust and helped propel. *Testimonios*, elements of gracious space, and purposeful pedagogies helped maintain an *Espacio Sano.*

Testimonios. Over the course of the PAR, EC-PLC members listened and shared *testimonios.* Hearing and knowing each other's stories deepened our relational trust. The *testimonios* code appeared 95 times in all three PAR Cycles. The code grew five times, from fourteen in PAR Cycle Two to seventy-eight times in PAR Cycle Three. Deliberately crafting a prompt and holding space for us to tell and listen to each other's stories was vital throughout our EC-PLC meetings. *Testimonios* was especially helpful during the COVID-19 pandemic because we were all learning how to manage and support school in distance learning. During the August EC-PLC meeting Savannah responded to the prompt, *how has COVID affected you and your work as a school leader?*

In the last two weeks, I've had to talk teachers down. They have very high expectations, what they're doing, and they're still imagining and thinking about all the things they were able to do in the physical space, but not necessarily online learning and with time limitations…I think it's really important for me as a leader to let them know that they can take a break, or they can give themselves a pass. 'You're going to do things differently, it will look different for you and your kids, you probably won't do that activity the same way'… I think teachers have been struggling with how to be okay with the fact that they can't do it the same and still be thoughtful about their craft as a teacher…they're trying to balance all these things, and it's already taking its toll on them. Which, again, as a leader, I'm going to tell them, it's okay. It's okay. I know it's hard (S. Travis, meeting notes, August 31, 2020).

The co-created EC-PLC was a brave, authentic, and healing space where we could continue to be vulnerable with each other and share our challenges as well as our successes. Listening to each other's *testimonios* validated and fortified us (Pérez-Huber, 2009). We were able to share our stories because we co-created a gracious space (Hughes & Grace, 2010) where we felt welcomed, where we brought our whole self.

Gracious Space. Gracious space is an approach to relationships that creates opportunities for deeper understanding and encourages the creative potential of diverse views (Hughes & Grace, 2010). Gracious space is a welcomed space that is safe and invites critical points of view. It is a relational space that invites *testimonios*. Welcome space code appeared 71 times in all three PAR Cycles. The code grew from thirteen in PAR Cycle Two to forty-two times in PAR Cycle Three (see Table 18). During PAR Cycle One and PAR Cycle Two our EC-PLC meetings took place away from our work sites at and in my home. Our gracious space was deliberately a

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woman's space. Healthy snacks, soft lighting, and music created a welcome space which in turn provided comfort and familiarity. Honoring the place and people in the space, elements of gracious space helped us experience deeper community, connection, and vulnerability.

During the middle of Cycle Two and PAR Cycle Three our meeting space shifted dramatically to the online platform because of COVID-19. More than ever, sustaining a gracious space online was important since all EC-PLC members spend their time facilitating and attending online meetings. We sustained a gracious space because we trusted each other, and we honored one another and the time we had together.

Spirit. Spirit is an element of gracious space. It is evoking the wisdom and presence of ancestors and important people. The spirit code appeared seven times in all three PAR Cycles. The code grew from one in PAR Cycle One to six in PAR Cycle Two. In PAR Cycle Three, the virtual plane initially was a barrier to evoking our ancestors and was not explicitly used. Over time and with increased experience with online EC-PLC meetings, I can see how to better integrate this in future online meetings.

Circle Pedagogy. In PAR Cycle One, we began our meetings in a community circle, and, in PAR Cycle Two, we began and ended our Community Learning Exchange in a circle. In PAR Cycle Three, we did not sit in a circle but around the dinner table. The code for circles appeared four times in all three PAR cycles. The code grew from one in PAR Cycle One to three in PAR Cycle Two and was not used in PAR Cycle Three because of the online nature of our meetings. Talking piece was used in PAR Cycle One and Two during our community circles. The code showed up two times in all three PAR cycles. Conversations in and out of these circles helped us cross boundaries, develop, and learn together (Guajardo et al., 2016).

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Facilitation Pedagogy. PAR Cycle One and PAR Cycle Two provided essential insight on how facilitation matters in creating an *Espacio Sano*. Facilitation was flexible, responsive, and adjustable to meet the needs of the group and helped sustain EC-PLC members engagement. In addition, facilitation that invited humor, fun, and integrated arts supported our meetings. Facilitation appears 60 times in all three PAR cycles, seven times in PAR Cycle One, three times in PAR Cycle Two, and 50 times in PAR Cycle Three. As an activist researcher, I shared and used the learning from PAR Cycles during EC-PLC meetings and work meetings. Facilitation proved to make a difference.

In the COVID 19 shifts, EC-PLC members and I had to transfer what we had learned about in-person meeting facilitation and convert it to the online platform. Online facilitation code only appeared in PAR Cycle Three. We applied the CLE axioms previously mentioned. We worked together as an EC-PLC to discover ways to engage participants that exhibited Zoom fatigue. We deliberately used the arts, realia, and other modalities to support engagement during our meetings.

Arts Integration Pedagogy. The use of music or art to stimulate thinking supports an *Espacio Sano*. In PAR Cycle Two, engaging with art and expressing ourselves through creative mediums was liberating and invigorating. In PAR Cycle Three, we continued to use drawing and images to help express ourselves and capture our ideas. The art integration code appears 23 times over all three PAR cycles (see Table 17) -- six times in first cycle, eight times in second cycle, and nine times in third cycle. The CLE axioms and pedagogies not only transferred across PAR Cycles, they transferred into our personal and professional settings. The theme of space is closely connected to the theme of time as it relates to *Espacio Sano*. Next, time as a category evolved across the three PAR cycles and was elevated to a theme.

Time

How we measured, managed, and protected time continued to emerge in PAR Cycle Three. Time continued be an essential component of *Espacio Sano*. The use of time showed up in eleven codes 247 times over the three PAR cycles (see Table 17). As in PAR Cycle Two, I clustered the time theme into three categories: time as a metric, time limits, and leveraging time.

A Metric of Time. The traditional metric of time continued to take on a different quality in *Espacio Sano*. The categories of the codes were: established/set aside, pacing, beginning of year, and early morning (see Table 17). In PAR Cycle Three, the code establishing and setting time aside for self-care and to accomplish work tasks was prevalent, appearing 76 times. PAR Cycle Three began in August at the beginning of a new school year during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Grant shared how she re-established her schedule during distance learning to prioritize and protect time:

> I really got into my routine and have stuck to it. In terms of maintaining my sanity because I know I need it. And so even when trying to schedule a meeting at eight I thought oh, let's shoot for nine, because I want to protect that time where I actually have devotion with my family who are across the nation. That's a priority, unless it was emergency of course. I'm going to respond, but nine times out of ten it isn't, and I protect that time (E. Grant, interview notes, September 29, 2020).

Leaders in our EC-PLC learned to revisit the metric of time, prioritize and protect time, yet nonetheless, leading remote schools presented challenges.

Time Limits. The nature of working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges as our sense of time shifted, our work hours increased, and communication changed. This category is composed of the codes change of routine, limited/no break, conflict,

and medical leave. The time limit codes appear 36 in PAR Cycle Three (see Table 17). Work tasks and managerial and operational issues continued during remote online learning; however, there were limitations to the work that could be completed in the day. Leaders initially worked longer hours late into the night because they were working from home. Other leaders had conflict with staff communicating at inappropriate times, such as well after midnight. Working online and managing back-to-back meetings on Zoom often led to no breaks. The new way of working presented conflicts as now every meeting needed to be scheduled. Claudia took a medical leave to complete the final part of her breast cancer reconstructive surgery; this limited the time she had to set up the opening of school in the fall. This PAR project taught us how to better prioritize and manage our time. We learned to leverage the limited time we had together.

Leveraging Time. The element of leveraging time carried over from PAR Cycle Two. The category is composed of the codes lunch time and leverage EC-PLC and have a collective frequency of 20 (see Table 17). In PAR Cycle Three, our EC-PLC sessions were condensed to one hour because we met online on Zoom after a full day of working online. We leveraged our time and paced responsively to the needs of the group. In a reflective memo I captured these changes:

> The process of *Espacio Sano* from PAR Cycle One and Cycle Two EP-PLC monthly
> meetings in my home have moved to the digital space of Zoom happy hour meetings. Our
> meetings are condensed. We continue to check in with each other, support our self-care
> goals, and share strategies but the *testimonios* feel abridged. I attribute that to the digital
> format; a sense of intimacy gets lost in this format. I attribute it to our Zoom fatigue,
> most of us are in Zoom meetings all day...What has been a surprise and delight is the in-
> between EC-PLC meeting text messages from the group. As we continue to work

remotely, I will continue to practice self-care strategies: setting 20-minute timers for

visual and brain-breaks, listening to music, exercising, connecting with friends and

families (via phone), and enjoying the surprise messages I get from EC-PLC members. I

will continue to practice integration and remain open and curious about the possibilities

in this rupture in time (C. Velasco, reflective memo, September 13, 2020).

The PAR project in essence leveraged time for our EC-PLC group. We made the most of the

limited time we had. We listened and helped each other get through unexpected challenges as

well as celebrated our successes and innovations.

Time continues to be an integral element of *Espacio Sano,* and understanding it helped

provide insight to EC-PLC members. We learned that time--intentional preserved, paced, and

leveraged--supports EC-PLC members and sustains an *Espacio Sano.* The learning we

experienced in our EC-PLC about space, time, pedagogies, and our *Espacio Sano* professional

space transferred within our group as well as into our schools and district offices. Next, is an

explanation of the transfer theme and categories.

Transfer

A goal in PAR Cycle Three was to examine the extent to which we transferred the skills,

structures, and systems of self-care into our lives and workspaces. EC-PLC members internalized

self-care strategies and shared resources both with each other and in the work and home settings.

The theme of transfer settled on three codes: work setting, resources, and home setting. The data

reveals how the leaders transferred this work and modeled this work for their work settings.

Work Setting. Over the course of the PAR, EC-PLC members internalized self-care

practices and shared them with constituents. In PAR Cycle Three, this work setting code grew to

a frequency of 39 and, over the three cycles, has a total frequency of 82 (see Table 17). Dr. Grant, assistant superintendent, formed a wellness hour for the principals she supports:

> For me the benefit of participating has actually been so beautiful because not only have you helped me with some ideas that I'm actually implementing to help site leaders, you are helping me to stay conscious of their well-being… how do I message it in a way to keep the humanity? I am still aware of all the things that they're dealing with and let them know they have to be done but I'm very aware of the messaging and how I can support them (E. Grant, interview notes, September 29, 2020).

During an interview, Dr. Grant shared about the ripple effect self-care practices are having on school principals she supervises:

> I was inspired by your work and making it a priority for my cohort. And it's nice because then they start doing little things for their school. A principal sent me a package in the mail, a care package with different types of tea for relaxation, lotion, and bath salts; it was something she sent all the teachers. So, you know it's having a ripple effect… it's really nice that some of the things that we're trying out there they are trying out too (E. Grant, interview notes, September 29, 2020).

Leaders in our EC-PLC learned and internalized self-care practices and then shared them with other educators. Savannah discussed how strategies from our EC-PLC supported her staff:

> Yeah, I think the fill your cup activity was good, we did that. We also did mindfulness shake out when we count (one or two people does count down). When we were in the building last year, I was using that. I used it at least twice with staff members and they liked it (S. Travis, interview notes, October 2, 2020).

Claudia provided her teachers with self-care resources at the beginning of the year. She gave each teacher a yoga mat (Figure 43). Claudia describes the professional development (PD) plan she set out for her staff:

> Our community school's coordinator connected us with Teach Well… They come in once a month, do a presentation around a topic around wellness... it really is for the adults to learn these skills like self-regulation and things like that. At the first staff meeting of the month we'll cover twenty minutes, then work in grade levels. Teams will get a facilitated conversation. It's an opportunity for them to process and think about what they're learning, and to reflect and talk (C. Valle, interview notes, September 22, 2020). Conversely, Laura describes an internal conflict a leader experienced when taking care of themselves:

Urgency is real, we need to prioritize and provide schools with spaces where kids can learn, I get that, but I think that people mistake that urgency and skip past the humanity piece. For me it's like a feeling of guilt right like, oh, I can take care of myself. I was just meeting with the principal before our meeting. He was saying his self-care is better during the pandemic and he said I feel guilty. And I told him, Okay, you said the word guilty, tell me why. And we just kind of broke it down, he was totally acknowledging that he works better now, he's more effective at his job because he takes care of himself. I said okay, then you think you feel guilty that you're effective at your job? He's like, that would make sense. Okay, good point (L. Voss, interview notes, September 25, 2020).

EC-PLC members shared strategies with each other and with their constituents. The resources we shared with each other in our EC-PLC transferred regularly and consistently into our workspaces.
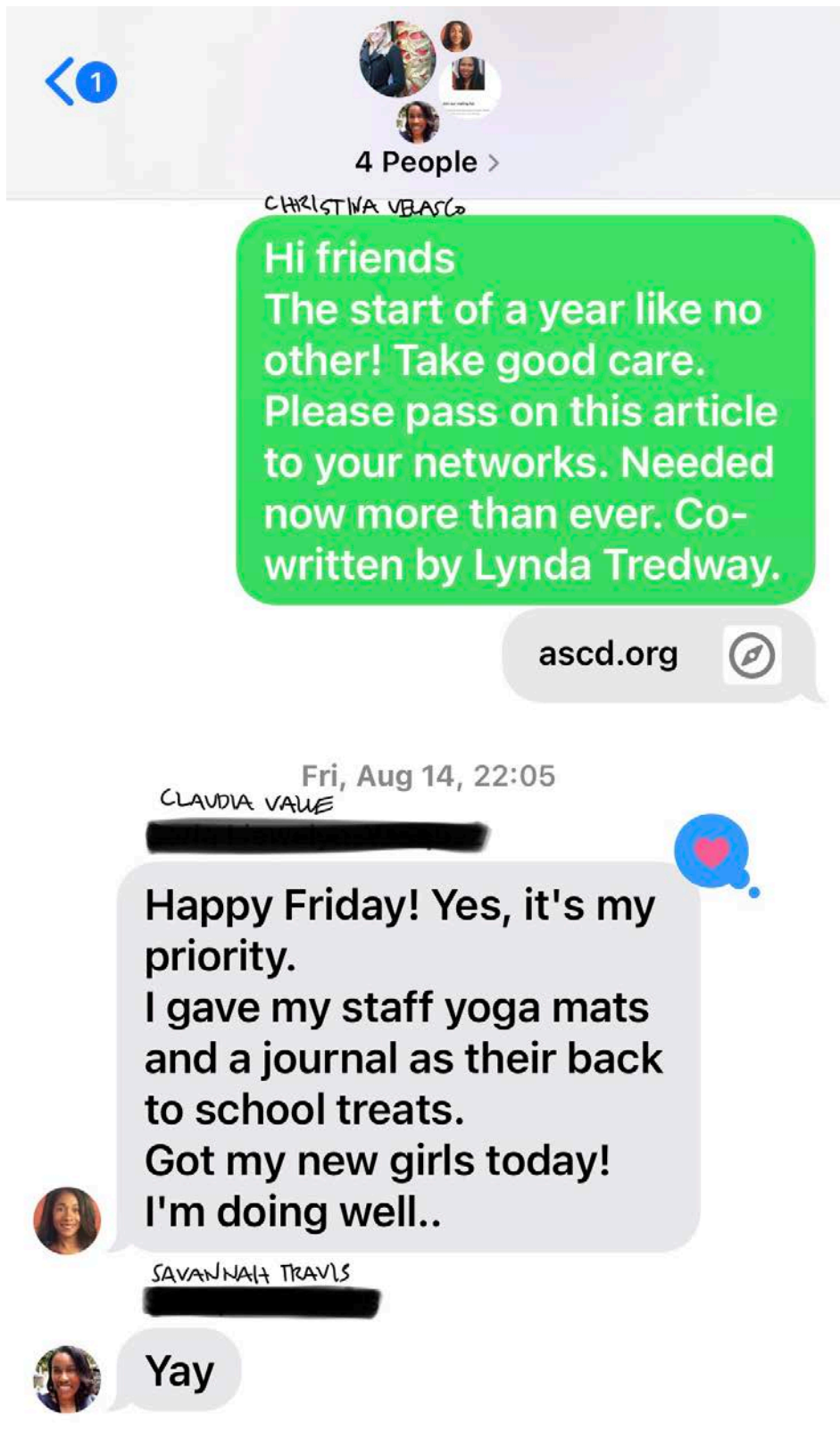
Figure 43. Text message: Sharing resources, health updates, and celebrations.

Resources. Sharing resources and strategies about self-care and how to maintain an *Espacio Sano* occurred throughout the PAR project. Resources code appears 42 times in PAR Cycle Three. Resources includes: strategies for online facilitation, articles, videos, and books. Exchanging ideas and resources to support self-care and our constituents was a common practice in our EC-PLC. As we prepared to begin a new school year, we engaged in conversations about community connectors. Laura provided an example when she described how an identity wave activity supported building community:

> I felt we could build a real sense of community in the Zoom world, we did one of my favorite activities, the Identity Wave. Everybody gets two minutes. How do you identify? And you can answer that any way you want. We went around and all in all sixteen people were in tears. My eyes were glued, that was an hour long, I didn't even notice! Like you said Christina, different fun connectors, keep people moving, lots of breakout groups, varying the structure, putting on music during quiet writing time and breaks (L. Voss, EC-PLC meeting notes, August 3, 2020).

In a conversation with Dr. Grant. I share a resource that principal Savannah shared with me, *The Complete Book of Questions* by Poole (2003)," the source for the prompts she uses as her professional development connectors" (C. Velasco, interview notes, September 29, 2020). Throughout the project we shared articles, podcasts, and creative activities. In addition, I shared research articles and strategies I was learning:

> I read an article about principal wellness, the latest one entitled: *The pandemic may drive principals to quit* (Maxwell, 2020). I can send you. You know how important it is that you are well so that you can keep taking care of others, right? That's so critical in our profession; it's only a layer, you're modeling for teachers so that they model for students.

It is important we keep taking care of ourselves (C. Velasco, meeting notes, August 3, 2020).

If work setting matters, home setting matters just as much. The learning and resources we experienced in our EC-PLC was shared in our work settings and with our constituents. EC-PLC resources and strategies made their way into our home settings, too. We shared strategies with our friends and family members.

Home Setting. In PAR Cycle Three, our homes became our work settings. EC-PLC members carried on with self-care strategies in these spaces. Laura intentionally took stretch and breathing breaks. Savannah, Dr. Grant, and I clearly defined markers for workspace and play space. Claudia set up elements that helped her attend to self-care in her home office:

I have my desk. I have my yoga mat. Post it's on the wall. My aromatherapy, my favorite is the rose, it smells good and calms me down. I can get off the chair and lie down on the floor on my yoga mat. The rest of the time I go upstairs (C. Valle, post questionnaire, September 28, 2020).

I shared with Dr. Grant how I engage my partner in what I'm learning:

I'm reading this book by Menakem (2017), *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized trauma and the pathway to mending our hearts and bodies*. I like reading it out loud with my partner...it's telling the story about us, especially as women of color. You know how I've shared what BK Bose says, 'issues stay in your tissues,' unless you move them out of your body, whether that's through meditation, exercise, prayer songs, like move it out of your body. Well, this book discusses how issues stay in our tissues and how to attend to racialized trauma (C. Velasco, interview notes, September 22, 2020).

In PAR Cycle Three, we transitioned the strategies and goals of this PAR project into the normative work of the EC-PLC members. This transfer occurred because leaders internalized self-care strategies. They experienced first-hand how this supported their leadership and each other. The transfer was aided by the collective space the women in the EC-PLC generated. The fact that we were a women affinity group supported our *Espacio Sano*.

Fortified Women Affinity

The intentional space crafted at the CLE (January 2020) and EC-PLC strengthened and encouraged the women. The fortified women affinity theme is composed of two codes: fortified: keep you going, and affinity: women. The codes for this theme appear 83 times over the three PAR cycles (see Table 17). The women in our EC-PLC were affirmed and fortified in the space. *Espacio Sano* creates a space for women to be in a collective space, a term we co-created in PAR Cycle Two as a *MeWe* space. In this space we motivated and fortified each other.

Fortify: We Keep You Going. In PAR Cycle Three, we used text messages to motivate each other (see Figure 44). In conversations and personal communication EC-PLC members discussed how they felt affirmed in the space. Claudia shared:

It is most definitely an *espacio sano*! I feel safe to talk with this group. I never feel judged but supported and listened to. This is not a common space, professionally. We support each other and listen. It's a space where I feel I can where I show up and be accepted just as I am. I hope the other leaders feel the same. We laugh and have fun. We can talk about the roles of a woman leader outside of work. It is so fortifying (C. Valle, personal communication, November 11, 2020).

Laura acknowledged how our EC-PLC supported her to attend to self-care: I think it's cool how you brought us together. Sometimes as leaders were so busy I would think, oh well it just doesn't

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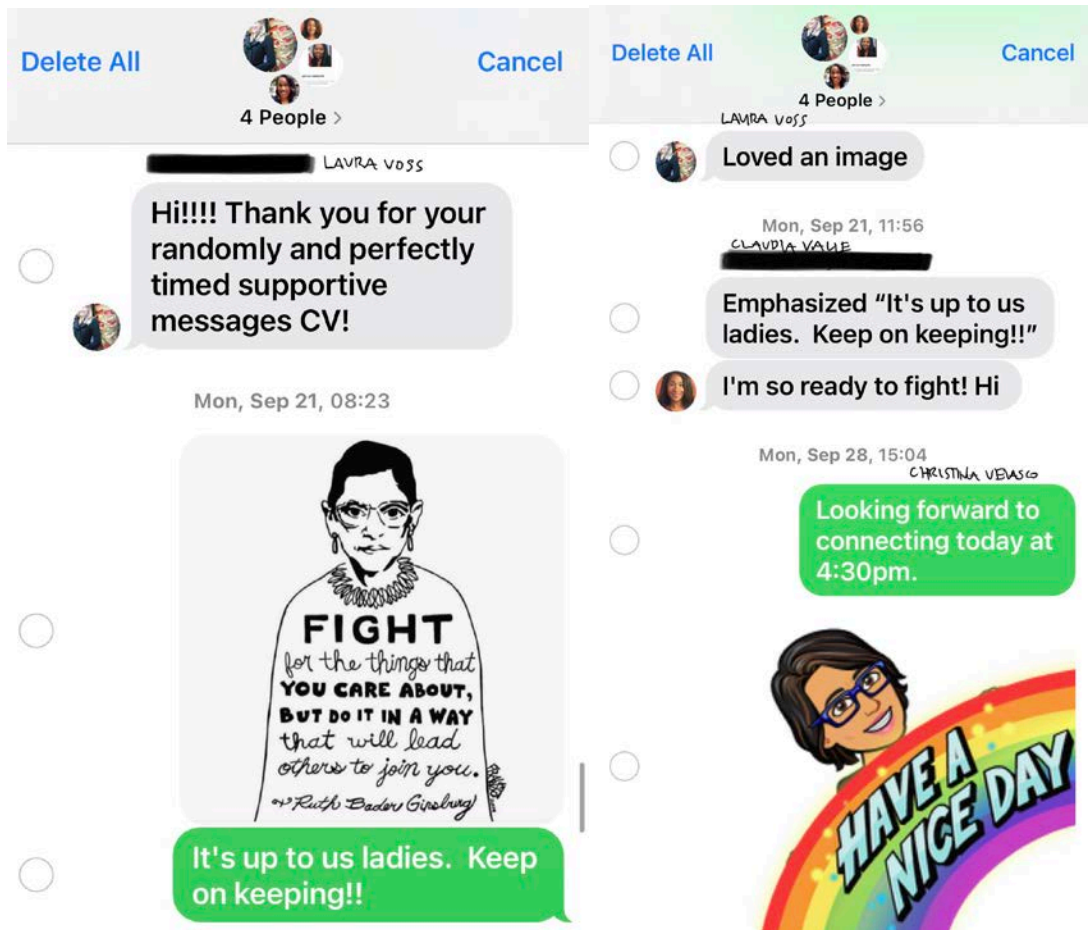
Figure 44. Text messages: Remembering our heroes.

have any other purpose besides wellness, but it wouldn't happen, people never prioritizing it. Your courageous act of creating a group of women like this affirms me not feeling apologetic for taking a moment to have mindfulness or to address self-care (L. Voss, meeting notes, September 25, 2020).

In our women only EC-PLC we created an accepting space to take care of ourselves and each other. Having a self-care space and a space for only women leaders was validating.

Affinity: We Belong. The intentional design to create space for women leaders to attend to self-care helped create conditions for us to be vulnerable and upheld. Savannah described our EC-PLC:

> I would say it's about women in leadership coming together to discuss their challenges in leadership we share and have in common. We share strategies on how to de-stress while being an educational leader and sustain the work and themselves in the work (S. Travis, interview notes, October 2, 2020).

Dr. Grant attested, "I have felt supported in the space because I am with other equity-centered educational leaders who are experiencing similar dilemmas" (E. Grant, personal correspondence, November 18, 2020). Together we learned and shared stories and strategies to attend to our personal and professional self-care and in turn we were able to transition self-care practices in our workspaces. A woman only space supported our EC-PLC members to attend to the brain and heart, to be safe and brave. Together women needed a space to be vulnerable and strong. A women affinity space is powerful and important to an *Espacio Sano*.

Summary of Espacio Sano

In this section, I provided evidence with a set of themes that fortified the finding of *Espacio Sano*: space, time, CLE axioms and pedagogies, transfer, and fortified women affinity.

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Across the evidence from the three PAR cycles, following the Saldaña (2016) heuristic of building evidence, this finding emerged first from codes and then categories that supported themes. Intentionally creating and maintaining space are essential components of *Espacio Sano*. *Espacio Sano* is a place of hope and possibility where leaders attend to their professional and personal development and where school leaders can fortify themselves and each other. *Espacio Sano* provides a place where leaders can cultivate self-care, deepen their dispositions, express their emotions, curate substantive alternative metrics, and collaborate on leadership actions. In *Espacio Sano*, women leaders can be and become wholehearted leaders.

Wholehearted Leadership

Wholehearted leaders recognize that the imperative of taking care of themselves so that they are prepared to better take care of others. In PAR Cycle Three, the four emerging themes and three categories are substantiated across the data (total codes =1,557 instances). The themes constitute 96% of the instances and there are three categories that constitute 4% that were emerging themes in PAR Cycle Two but did not yet emerge as themes that we want to keep paying attention to. The following are themes that are included in this finding: (1) self-care strategies (58%); (2) emotions (15%); (3) substantive metrics (20%); and (4) leadership actions (7%). The following categories: core values and honor require further investigation are included as satellites to leadership actions (see Figure 45). Core values and honor came up across all three PAR cycles and very strongly in PAR Cycle Two, perhaps because of the Community Learning Exchange (CLE) but did not persist as much in PAR Cycle Three because we were not able to host an additional CLE due to COVID-19 Core values and honor are important categories for us hold on to because they are a backdrop to wholehearted leadership. The four themes are the foundations of wholehearted leadership and are listed in order of highest frequency. Table 18
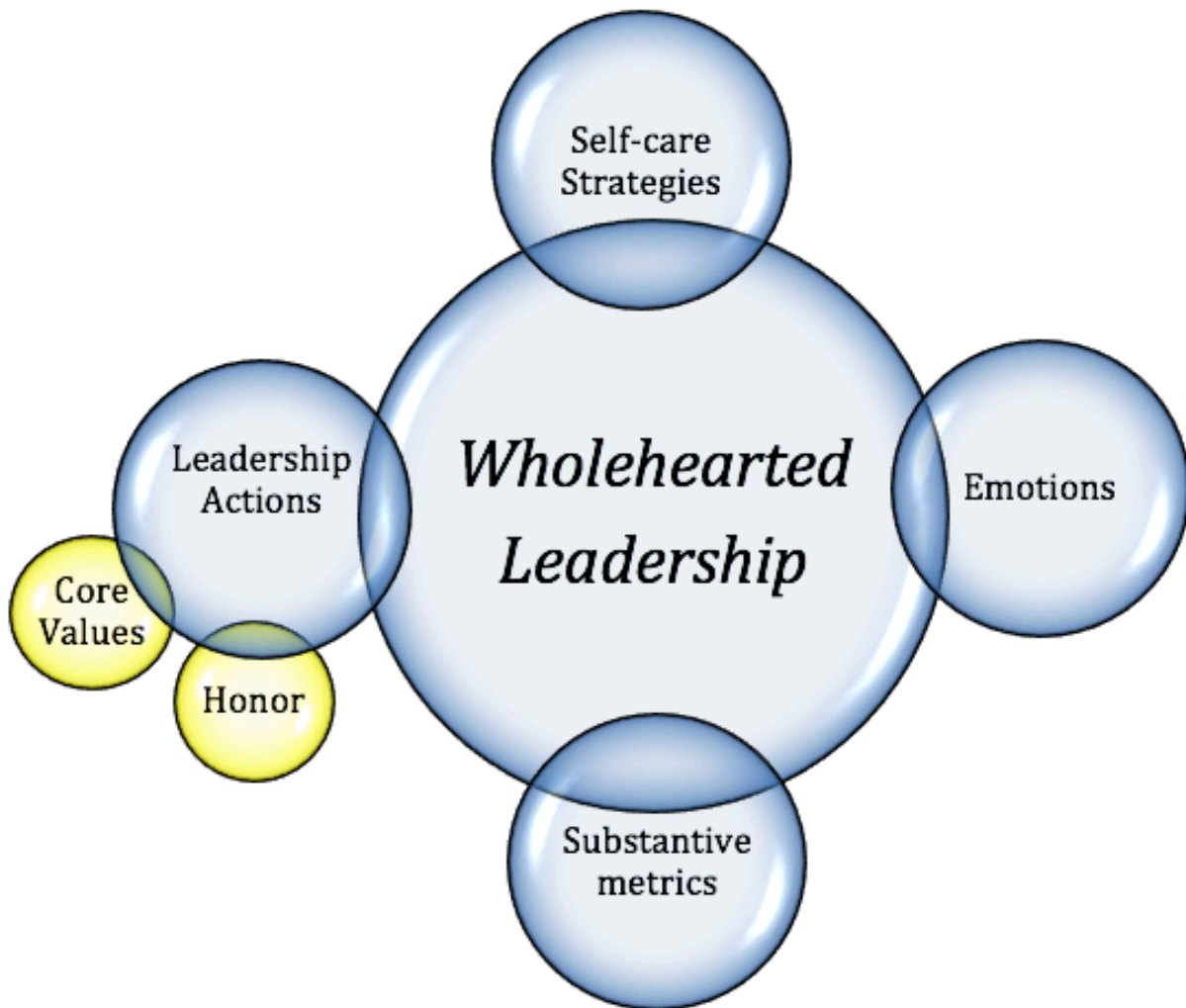
Figure 45. Wholehearted leadership finding.

Table 18.

Wholehearted Leadership Finding, Themes, Categories, Codes, Frequency, and Total for all PAR Cycles

Finding	Themes	Categories n=7	Codes	Frequency PAR Cycle 1	PAR Cycle 2	PAR Cycle 3	Total Frequency for all PAR Cycles
Wholehearted Leadership 1,557 instances	Self-care (58%)	Physical (14%)	Exercising	7	7	42	56
			Eating well	6	10	30	46
			Breathing	1	5	29	35
			Sleeping	2	6	21	29
			Aromatherapy/oils	6	2	9	17
			Health appointments	11	1	5	17
			Traveling	0	3	7	10
			Drinking wine	0	0	6	6
			Hot springs/massage	2	0	2	4
		Emotional regulation (9%)	Laughing/humor	5	8	92	105
			Affirmations	3	3	24	30
		Social (15%)	Networking professionally	2	10	69	81
			Strategies	0	3	72	75
			Integrating Art	7	3	50	60
			Connecting with friends	6	3	11	20
		Mental/intellectual (12%)	Creating/ art	4	6	35	45
			Creating boundaries	4	6	31	41
			Self-care intention	6	2	25	33
			Meditation/D-Mind	3	9	19	31
			Using Brain breaks	4	3	12	19
			Managing time/tasks	2	7	10	19

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Table 18 (continued)

Finding	Themes	Categories n=7	Codes	Frequency PAR Cycle 1	PAR Cycle 2	PAR Cycle 3	Total Frequency for all PAR Cycles
Wholehearted Leadership 1,557 instances	Self-care (55%)	Mental/intellectual (5%)	Journal writing	1	1	17	19
			Reflecting	5	1	13	19
			Watching mindless T.V.	5	1	9	15
			Listening to podcasts	3	2	7	12
			Unplugging technology	4	3	1	8
			Using Self-care kits	0	0	2	2
		Spiritual (3%)	Connecting with nature	4	3	20	27
			Devotion/church	2	4	8	14
		Absence (>1%)	Lack of self-care	2	3	0	5
	Emotions (14%)	Comfortable (8%)	Content/happy	2	21	30	53
			Laughter	2	8	35	45
			Calm	2	2	7	11
			Hope	2	2	1	5
			Love	1	2	2	5
			Not feeling guilty	0	0	1	1
			Proud	0	0	1	1
		Uncomfortable (6%)	Stressed	6	6	29	41
			Worried/anxious	6	3	17	26
			Frustrated	2	3	17	22
			Apathy	1	8	3	12
			Disappointed	1	1	5	7
			Guilt	0	0	3	3

Table 18 (continued)

Finding	Themes	Categories n=7	Codes	Frequency PAR Cycle 1	PAR Cycle 2	PAR Cycle 3	Total Frequency for all PAR Cycles
Wholehearted Leadership							
	Substantive Metric (20%)	Connection (7%)	Community/	6	17	52	75
			Intimacy	3	19	10	32
		Joy (3%)	Fun	2	3	25	30
			Joy	1	7	7	15
		Brainheart (4%)	Brainheart	2	16	6	24
			Traditional	5	2	16	23
			Woo woo	1	6	7	14
		Disposition (6%)	Empathy	7	5	25	37
			Motivation	16	9	5	30
			Mindset	8	2	11	21
			Care	1	1	5	7
	Leadership Actions (7%)	Actions (7%)	Listening Leader	10	13	44	67
			Perspective/journey	1	4	20	25
			Policy	3	3	19	25
		Core Values (3%)	Our Why	15	34	18	67
		Honor (1%)	Honor	1	17	2	20

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provides the overall data collection and shows the analysis process from PAR Cycle One to PAR Cycle Two to PAR Cycle Three and is illustrated in Figure 45. The frequency of codes for wholehearted leadership finding is illustrated in Figure 46. What follows is an explanation of these themes and categories and how they uphold the wholehearted leadership finding.

Self-Care Strategies

Self-care as collective care is a core element of wholehearted leadership. Throughout the PAR project, we focused on self-care strategies that were fundamental for our EC-PLC meetings. We mutually identified self-care to include multiple dimensions: physical, emotional, social, spiritual, mental, and intellectual. Together, we named barriers to attending to our self-care and used a set of practices in our meeting such as dynamic mindfulness to begin to break down these barriers. In PAR Cycle Two, we built on breathing and mindfulness self-care strategies and incorporated Aguilar's (2018) resilience manifesto. We integrated these practices and shared them at a Community Learning Exchange (January 2020). In PAR Cycle Three, we internalized self-care strategies and shared them in our workplaces. The self-care theme appeared thirty codes with a total frequency of 900 over the three PAR cycles. I clustered the thirty codes into five categories: physical, emotional regulation, social, mental/intellectual, and spiritual. However, we want to stress that we engage in self-care as an individual and collective practice so that we have the energy to focus on social justice leadership and hold space for students, families, teachers, and other leaders to fully engage in the work of equity.

Physical. Wholehearted leaders attend to their physical self-care. In this dataset**,** the physical category had a frequency of 220 codes over the three PAR cycles (see Table 18). During our meetings, we would check in on each other and review the self-care commitments we made. Laura shared that she was eating healthy and saving time by using Thistle, a food delivery
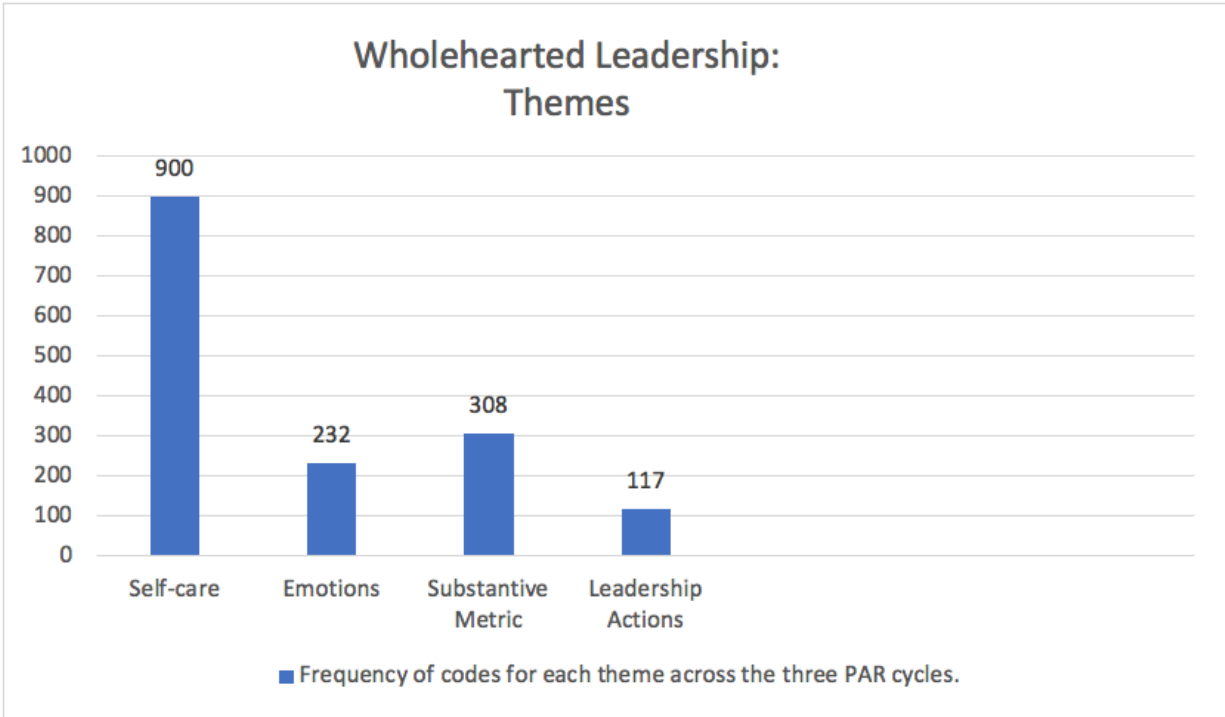
Figure 46. Wholehearted leadership finding: Themes and frequency of codes.

service. "It's better than going to take out I think every day. It's like getting healthier stuff, it's organic, has fresh vegetables, a little bit of pork or chicken or whatever meat you want" (L. Voss, meeting notes, September 25, 2020). I shared, "my goal is to keep exercising daily because I get stressed out and start over working and don't exercise" (C. Velasco, meeting notes, September 25, 2020). Savannah added she takes care of herself by, "scheduling screen breaks every 30 minutes" (S. Travis, meeting notes, September 25, 2020). In PAR Cycle Three, we learned about sleep hygiene and how essential oils and breathing support relaxation and rest (EC-PLC meeting August 31, 2020). During our last EC-PLC meeting (September 25, 2020), I shared breathing techniques I learned from a YouTube video (Rockwood, 2018). Throughout the PAR, EC-PLC members became more aware of our physical self-care and learned how emotions and stress affect our wellness.

Emotional Regulation. Wholehearted leaders talk about their emotions and provide space for others to do so. Leaders experienced many emotions in the PAR process, which are discussed in the theme emotions. Emotional regulation focused primarily on two areas; laughing/humor and feeling affirmed a combined frequency of 135 codes over the three PAR cycles (see Table 18). The element of humor increased from eight in PAR Cycle Two to ninety-two in PAR Cycle Three. We needed laughter to help us heal and get through challenges and the political climate and uncertainties of distance schooling.

The members of the EC-PLC invited fun, humor, and laughter into our spaces. This emotion helped us pivot from challenges and frustrations to possibilities. Savannah shares an example of how we made light of distance schooling:

I talked to the clerks last week and asked them if they wanted to do a Zoom so people could come and say hi to them. You know people usually walk past their offices all the

time and say what's up and talk to them. Now because they are down and very isolated, they have no visits with anyone right now, so they agreed (S. Travis, meeting notes, September 25, 2020).

Laura added humor, "I get some work done. And now they're like, can somebody just interrupt me once? Tell me the copier is not working or something" (L. Voss, meeting notes, September 25, 2020), and we all burst out laughing. We often asked each other to keep the humor going in between meetings. I shared, "you need to send me a joke Laura, remember you were going to send me something to make me laugh and connect with friends. Humor is my self-care strategy for this week" (C. Velasco, meeting notes, September 25, 2020). Later Laura expressed, "I like when you all send funny things, good inspirational quotes, little things to the group" (L. Voss, meeting notes, September 25, 2020). EC-PLC members invite fun and humor to our gatherings. They are wholehearted leaders not afraid to talk about their emotions at work. They are wholehearted leaders who affirm one another.

Affirmations were an important element in our EC-PLC. We exchanged many *testimonios* and often after sharing something that was challenging, unsettling, or successful we provided praise and affirmation to each other. In a conversation about the tensions of leading schools remotely and the impact of stress in our home lives, Laura satirically shared, "all sunshine today. We're all in a good mood." And I reply:

> It's ok we don't need to be in a good mood. I've had these moments too. I just come into
> this little home office because I'm stressed, they're stressed, it's not a good day, we are
> not our best person. It happens. (C. Velasco, meeting notes, September 25, 2020).

Then later I affirm, "the good thing is we have this time for us. And it's okay we show up how we need to show up into this space and be real" (C. Velasco, meeting notes, September 25,

2020). Later in this meeting Savannah shared the art she has been painting and is affirmed by Claudia, "wow that's so pretty," Laura, "that's beautiful," and me "that's awesome!" (C. Valle and L. Voss, meeting notes, September 25, 2020). Expressing our emotions, inviting humor, and affirming each other are components of our heart-centered leadership. EC-PLC members' connection with others in social networks supported their self-care.

Social. Maintaining connection with friends and networks is a key attribute of wholehearted leadership. Connecting and networking formally and informally are mechanisms that support and sustain wholehearted leaders to attend to self-care (Theoharis, 2009). The category is composed of the codes networking professionally, strategies, integrating art, and connecting with friends. The theme had a frequency of 236 codes over the three PAR cycles (see Table 18). Savannah shared how school staff support each other:

> I have people at school that help my perspective and who I check in with and they check in with me about self-care, making sure that we're okay. So I feel like I still have those people that can encourage and support me in that way (S. Travis, interview notes, October 2, 2020).

EC-PLC members discussed connecting with friends as form of self-care. Laura shared how a "mom's group" supports her as she navigates working from home and assisting her two young daughters with distance learning (L. Voss, interview notes, September 29, 2020). I shared how social networks support me, "Fridays are family friend day with our bubble friend...last week we went to the beach. It's every Friday and I look forward to it, I worked really hard all week" (C. Velasco, meeting notes, September 25, 2020). Savannah socially networks with friends to paint online. She shared, "we do it as a group; a YouTube video on painting, it's pretty fun" (S. Travis, meeting notes, September 25, 2020). Claudia finds "support in her yoga group"

(C. Valle, personal communication, September 22, 2020). We do the work in community and network across personal and professional spaces to create strong webs.

Mental/Intellectual. Wholehearted leaders attend to their mental and intellectual self-care. Throughout the PAR, we learned and internalized mindfulness strategies. The mental/intellectual category has twelve codes with a total frequency of 188 over the three PAR cycles (see Table 18). Mindfulness breathing is a pronounced self-care strategy all EC-PLC members use regularly. We learned and shared various brain break strategies to combat the fatigue of day long Zoom meetings on the computer. This code captures self-care strategies we used to escape such as mindless television, travel, and unplugging from technology. Laura and Claudia write in journals, Savannah and I engage in mindless television. Throughout the PAR we became more aware of screen time and formed habits to create boundaries and unplug. Savannah shared, "my TV…play space, stop working, go to the other room and relax… I'm watching *90-day fiancé*. It never fails" (S. Travis, post questionnaire, September 29, 2020). Escaping and releasing our minds provided us relief from the daily stress of the work.

Spiritual. Wholehearted leaders attend to their spiritual wellness. Nurturing our spirit had a vast span from walks in nature as a form of spiritual practice to daily devotions. The category includes spiritual and connection with nature codes with a frequency of 41 codes over the three cycles (see Table 18). Savannah nurtured her spirit attending church. Dr. Grant engaged in a daily devotion with her family. She said:

> devotion with my family who were across the nation, that's a priority…we are all
>
> connected to each other, we're sharing a spirit of gratitude and supporting one another,
>
> giving each other encouragement and I so need that. And it feels good to my soul so then

I can go and support and help motivate folks to press through (E. Grant, interview notes,

September 29, 2020).

Connection to nature was a form of spiritual practice for many of us. Laura ran in the park,

Savannah walked around the lake, I took walks on the beach, and Claudia gardened. She shared,

"I have my garden. I have a raised bed…I have tomatoes, squash… trying to grow stuff. It's been

fun… I hang out with my dog. And I'll go on a walk" (C. Valle, meeting notes, September 25,

2020). Our spiritual practices provided us support individually and collectively. It allowed us to

show up and be present for each other. And when we were challenged, we used mindfulness and

breathing strategies to support us.

Self-care strategies are fundamental and a core element of wholehearted leadership. We

began the PAR learning about self-care (the physical, emotional, social, mental/intellectual, and

spiritual) and strategies to incorporate into our lives. Along the way, EC-PLC members shared

strategies with each other, and we internalized them into a practice. Attending to our individual

self-care allowed us to be well and to share self-care strategies with members in our

communities. Wholehearted leaders practice self-care as collective care.

Emotions

Wholehearted leaders attend to their feelings and support others as well. The EC-PLC

members not only talked about emotions at work, they learned about their emotions and engaged

in practices to help respond to them. During my interview with Laura, she shared:

My husband was telling me, 'you talk about your feelings all the time in your work.' He

works in the corporate world and they never talk about that. I'm like 'yeah, you have to,'

and he's like 'how do you even do your work?' It's just so funny. And I'm like, we do (L

Voss, interview notes, September 25, 2020).

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The emotion theme appeared 232 times across the three PAR cycles. Aguilar (2018) states, "emotions are a reaction to something that happens, and they play an important role in conveying information to our bodies and direction to our actions" (p. 50). For this section, I cluster the 13 codes into two categories, comfortable emotions and uncomfortable emotions (Aguilar, 2018). For comfortable emotions I included: content/happy, laughter, calm, hope, love, not guilty, and proud. For uncomfortable emotions I clustered: stressed, worried/anxious, frustrated, disappointed, guilty, and apathy (see Table 18).

Comfortable Emotions. The emotions of feeling content/happy, humorous, calm, hopeful, love, not guilty, and proud had a total frequency of 121 over the three PAR cycles. Earlier I discussed how humor was used by EC-PLC members as a self-care strategy that helped get us through challenging situations. The emotions of happiness and laughter were prevalent and were present to counter the uncomfortable emotions we experienced (see Table 18).

Uncomfortable Emotions. The emotions of stressed, worried/anxious, frustrated, disappointed, guilt, and apathy had a total frequency of 111 over the three PAR cycles. EC-PLC members often shared about the stress teachers were feeling. Claudia shared the tension she felt in trying to alleviate teacher stress:

> Two teachers last week had to go to the hospital because they had heart palpitations; they're all stressed out. I'm like, chill, I had to have a little heart to heart with the whole staff on Thursday about their sense of urgency. I'm not putting any of this stuff on you guys. I don't know why you're feeling like this. They are all stressed out (C. Valle, meeting notes, September 25, 2020).

Savannah provides another example of the stress teachers were feeling:

They talk about their own lesson planning. They are always planning for the next day, for the next Zoom and how they can make lessons engaging or how to grade. Being on the computer is stressing them out, they are on the computer for everything (S. Travis, interview notes, October 2, 2020).

I shared the stress and fatigue teachers at my school were feeling and asked the group to think of ways to support:

Teachers are really stressed and tired. Some of them are disgruntled. So thinking about them, they need to be celebrated, uplifted, connected, filled with love, and just thinking about anything we all have to share that might support this (C. Velasco, meeting notes, September 25, 2020)

EC-PLC site leaders shared how frustrated and disappointed they felt with how the central office was carrying on as if circumstances were normal even though we were all experiencing something unprecedented in remote distance schooling. Claudia shared, "there's so much they're laying on us. And it's like this is not important. I've got teachers who are sick, I got families who are being affected" (C. Valle, meeting notes, September 25, 2020).

The EC-PLC members learned to understand their emotions and how to respond to others. EC-PLC members leveraged humor to counterbalance the stress and uncomfortable feelings they were experiencing. Wholehearted leaders understand and talk about emotions because it supports a collective resilience. Wholehearted leaders use alternative measures to gauge what is *really* going on in our schools. These are substantive metrics, not the traditional metrics that we connote with school success.

Substantive Metrics

I define substantive metrics as alternative metrics educational leaders use to measure positive school culture and climate, not the usual metrics we connote with measuring school success. In PAR Cycle Two, we devoted the Community Learning Exchange (CLE) to understanding how we measure success in our schools and revealed alternative metrics (January 2020). The evidence clearly indicated to the EC-PLC group that other metrics—connection, joy, and *brainheart*—are essential, and appeared across all three PAR cycles. The total frequency of their codes is 263 over the three PAR cycles (see Table 18).

Connection. The codes community and intimacy compose the connection metric and continued into PAR Cycle Three. The relational trust EC-PLC members built-in the previous two cycles set a foundation of connection even though we no longer were able met in person. Claudia shared how connection is a substantive metric that tells her how strong her community is:

> I met with the support staff and we talked primarily about culture and climate. How we foster culture and climate (that warmth you feel when you come into the school), how are we going to do that virtually (C. Valle, meeting notes, August 3, 2020)?

Later Claudia provided how they accomplished this. She said, "for three weeks, every week teachers are calling and talking to the kids, and just connecting. That was for me, that sense of connection. That is really important because we are really one strong community" (C. Valle, interview notes, September 22, 2020).

At the central office level, Dr. Grant wrestled with how to help the school leaders she supervises feel connected in their virtual space:

> How we do that in this virtual space, I think the director and I got to kind of figure that out. We are trying to put together a wellness package, where we would find some pens

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and journals, then we're trying to get custom made masks… But trying to figure out how can we reach out and touch someone that way (E. Grant, interview notes, September 25, 2020).

Feeling connected and in community are substantive metrics that mattered even more in distance schooling. EC-PLC members use joy and fun as substantive metrics to gauge the culture of the school.

Joy. EC-PLC members shared and invited joy into our meetings. We crafted structures that celebrated and invited fun into our professional development (PD) meetings. The codes fun and joy compose the joy category. The total frequency of their codes is 45 over the three PAR cycles (see Table 18). Savannah thrives on fun and intentionally created opportunities for her staff to celebrate each other during staff professional developments (PD):

We have our regular PD every Tuesday, and we do celebrations and announcements. Teachers put all their celebrations in the chat, and I call their name so they can say which is good. I think that builds connection. They get to celebrate each other, and other people need to hear it and I think that's great (S. Travis, interview notes, October 2, 2020).

EC-PLC members invited fun connectors that staff could engage in virtually. Claudia hosted a *cafecito* (a virtual coffee hour with the teachers) and "played the Latino Card Revoked; it was really fun and really funny" (C. Valle, meeting notes, September 25, 2020). Laura shared she and a colleague used a similar card game to invite fun and connection for the principal PD she facilities. Savannah shared that "one of the PD was just fun…there was a variety of choices staff had in break out rooms" (S. Travis, meeting notes, September 25, 2020). Wholehearted leaders engaged with the heart, emotion, and intellect to support each other and our constituents.

Inviting fun and creating joyful moments with each other during our EC-PLC were substantive metrics to help communities stay together and feel connected.

Brainheart. In PAR Cycle Two, women leaders underscored engaging with our integral selves (our intellect and emotions)—the *brainheart*. Wholehearted leaders lead with their intellect and heart. The *brainheart* category originated from the code brainheart and then other codes appeared woo woo, a response to the organizational taboos, traditional. The frequency of these three codes was 61 times over the three PAR cycles (see Table 18). Traditional code refers to the how we dampen our emotions at work to appear stoic. The code surfaced as a counter to the ways women leaders discussed how we talk about emotions at work. Over time, we began to think more about how to challenge these taboos in our organization. Laura shared: "the more we talk about it and elevate it and make it as important as the other things we do, because it is. Then it just becomes less taboo or less like woo woo, like you're out there" (L. Voss, interview notes, September 25, 2020). I reflected on Laura's idea:

> We talk about it at our community exchange like people saying like that's too woo woo, we don't talk about feeling at work. Now it is especially important to have space to talk about our feelings. We are coaching leaders, so we create spaces for folks to say, hey I'm feeling blank about that, and then we have an opportunity to learn more about what's really going on (C. Velasco, interview notes, September 25, 2020).

Throughout PAR Cycle Three, we discussed how we connect fully with our humanity and how important it was that we connect with the humanity in others. Dr. Grant captures the concept of *brainheart* here:

> You know, it's not just the instructional leadership and the operational managerial inclusiveness that bring people together. But you have to maintain the humanity and the

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well-being of both of the folks that lead with and for yourself so that you can have a full

enough cup to pour into others. And I think carrying that message is important (E. Grant,

interview notes, September 22, 2020).

Substantive metrics, connection, joy, and *brainheart* are metrics that could help us better

understand our schools and communities. Wholehearted leaders use substantive metrics and

embrace their integral selves in leading schools. Educational leaders demonstrate wholehearted

leadership, they listen to their communities, reflect, and construct policy to support their

constituents.

Dispositions. Key dispositions support educators to be resilient (Aguilar, 2018). In PAR

Cycle Two, four dispositions--empathy, humor, self-perception, and purposeful--were present. In

PAR Cycle Three, empathy, motivation, mindset, and care emerged as codes. The total

frequency of their codes is 95 over the three PAR cycles (see Table 18). "Empathy is an

emotional state essential to forming healthy relationships and communities" (Aguilar, 2018, p.

121). In our EC-PLC we empathized with each other. In a conversation with Laura I shared:

Give yourself grace too. I mean you're trying to manage so much from the team… you

have little ones, you know that still need you for a lot, and, like you were saying, you

know when is the time that you're most optimal, in terms of your schedule and your kids

(C. Velasco, interview notes, September 25, 202).

We demonstrated empathy five times more than in previous cycles. I attribute this to our EC-

PLC healthy relationships and the need to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. EC-PLC

members demonstrated an awareness for their constituents. Wholehearted leaders are anchored in

their core values and honor the wisdom of the people closets to the issues (Guajardo et al., 2016).

Leadership Moves

The PAR set out to examine what actions educational leaders use can create working environments and conditions for their colleagues to attend to self-care. Leadership action is clustered into three categories: listening leader, perspective/journey, and policy. The frequency of these combined codes occurred 117 times over the three PAR cycles (see Table 18). Throughout the PAR cycles, EC-PLC members took time to engage in *praxis* and learned to listen to themselves and their constituents. We created policies and practices to support self-care in our workplaces.

Listening Leader. The use of *testimonios* in the PAR project helped us all hone our listening skills in our EC-PLC and propelled us to be the wholehearted leaders who listen carefully to our constituents. The listening leader category appeared 67 times across the three PAR cycles. For example, Dr. Grant learned to listen to the leaders she supports:

> I'm learning more and more from the group and just from this project that holding space for folks and saying I'm going to honor you and I'm going to honor that y'all want half an hour before a meeting, the breakout room is open (E. Grant, interview notes September 29, 2020).

I shared with her how I am learning to hone my listening skills:

> I've been reading Shane Safir's book, *Listening Leader*…. I feel like this is a place where I have to come in as a listening leader and really understand the context for myself. I can imagine if you have principals that are new to their communities and this is the first way they're meeting staff, online, you miss a lot. What's resonating is Safir's (2017) idea of 90/10, listen for ninety percent of the time and talk ten percent. I know I need to listen

and if I don't have trust with these folks, I'm not going to move the most perfect agenda

forward… (C. Velasco, interview notes, September 29, 2020).

Site leaders often felt sandwiched between their school communities and central office pressures.

They needed to listen deeply and make leadership decisions. Savannah shared how she

experienced this middle manager pressure and crafted a leadership response that reflected being

a listening leader:

> Everybody wants middle management to make all the decisions right now, I feel top
>
> down and bottom up…I can expect this from the teachers because one teacher was like
>
> 'can you make the decision for us' because they don't have the capacity to think about
>
> anything else right now. Normally they want buy-in, transparency, and to share their
>
> opinions, right now, nope, they are saying just make the decision Travis... They are
>
> stressed out and they have no capacity for anything else right now (S. Travis, meeting
>
> notes, September 25, 2020).

Reflection was a practiced individually and collectively through writing or *testimonios* that

helped us gain perspective on our leadership journeys.

Perspective/Journey. Throughout the PAR cycles and at our EC-PLC meetings, we

learned to reflect. I internalized this practice as part of the PAR by writing 131 reflective memos

131 that I analyzed. The act of writing and reflecting is a healing practice for me. Returning to

reflective memos supported the triangulation of PAR data but, more importantly, provided me

the evidence to see how I gained perspective and growth over these past eighteen months.

The educational leaders in the EC-PLC reflect on their practices (meeting notes,

September 25, 2020). At our EC-PLC, we created space to reflect and share our *testimonios*

(storytelling) so that we can learn about our leadership and help each other. Claudia captures this

sentiment: "This community has helped to sustain me as we can talk about what we are doing...we can be critical friends and yet still support each other" (C. Valle, personal communication, November 11, 2020). The use of *praxis* (Freire, 1970; Furman, 2012) and telling our individual and collective stories helped inform the wholehearted leadership actions we would make towards policy.

Policy. Wholehearted leaders create site policies that demonstrated flexibility and responsiveness to their constituents. Claudia created a policy where teachers' weekly schedules needed to include self-care. Claudia shares how she conveyed this to her staff:

> The most important thing for you to do right now is to take care of yourself. I want to see that in your schedules, where you take care of yourself. And connect with your families. Don't worry so much about the content of what you're teaching right now; you're just really taking care of your students and your families (C. Valle, interview notes, September 22, 2020).

Dr. Grant created wellness hour for the principals she supported. Savannah provided flexibility in content delivery. Laura began coaching sessions with the question, *what are you celebrating today*? I helped establish check-in times for our teachers weekly. Listening and being responsive to our constituents are evidence of wholehearted leadership.

Wholehearted leaders' actions of listening and engaging in *praxis* supported their journey and helped make policies and establish working environments to leverage self-care as collective care. Wholehearted leaders are aware of and work on their dispositions to support building and maintaining relationships. Wholehearted leaders use dispositions like empathy and are motivated by caring mindsets to support their communities.

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While these four themes from the evidence contribute to our understanding of wholehearted leadership, other codes represent evidence that is worth considering briefly. I would suggest that these are critical components of wholehearted leadership and may require further inquiry: core values and honor.

Core values appears eighteen times and honor two times in PAR Cycle Three (see Table 18). Leaders' actions are anchored, and decisions are filtered and motivated by these core values. Earlier I shared Dr. Grant's core value of the importance of devotion to her well-being, that it allowed her to 'pour into others.' Claudia emphasized the importance of 'connecting with each student' to 'maintain a strong community. Laura describes how wellness is a personal value, "I personally believe you can't really take care of others if you don't care for yourself (L. Voss, interview notes, September 25, 2020). In a reflective memo I capture how coming back to my why and core values help anchor me:

> What has remained constant: core values, attending to self-care as collective care, connection with family and friends, learning and sharing this information with others, my activism and why I do the work of social justice education…To honor spoken communication and stories. To honor different ways of knowing and validating these into spaces where these voices are lifted up. My perspective, what really matters has not been altered: people, relationships, justice, equity. These core values continue to be solidified during these uncertain times (C. Velasco, reflective memo, July 14, 2020).

Core values allow leaders to be resilient and aid us in our decision making. Wholehearted leaders honor their constituents and are driven by equity to create the conditions, practices, and policies that will uphold them. Love (2019) urges us to interrogate "habits and practices that protect those

systems" of oppression by fostering the "interior work of silence, meditation, inner wisdom, and deep joy that is inextricably linked to the outer work of social change" (p. 118).

Summary of Wholehearted Leadership

In this section, I provided evidence with a set of themes that fortified the finding of wholehearted leadership: self-care strategies, emotions, substantive metrics, and leadership moves (see Figure 44). For each of the themes, I found categories across the three PAR cycles. Wholehearted leaders learn and attend to their physical, emotional, social, mental/intellectual, and spiritual self-care. Wholehearted leaders talk about emotions at work and address uncomfortable emotions so they can be responsive and not reactive to their constituents. Wholehearted leaders use alternative substantive metrics: connection, joy, and *brainheart* to measure what is *really* going on in our schools. They are listening leaders who intentionally use *praxis* to make equity centered decisions. Wholehearted leaders are in touch with the humanity of others and develop their dispositions. They honor themselves and their communities and enact practices and policies to support and nurture community.

The Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the entire world, caused millions of deaths, and created many uncertainties (Centers for Disease and Prevention, 2020). We wear masks, practice social distancing, wash hands, and close schools to protect ourselves and others from spreading this deadly disease, evidence of self-care as collective care. Educators, families, and society are learning to live, learn, and do business differently. We continued to lead wholeheartedly and continued creating an *Espacio Sano* in virtual meetings.

The COVID-19 pandemic became a hurdle in the PAR as it shifted some of the activities and data collection and disrupted the ways we engaged and imparted strategies. However, the

pandemic elevated the importance of self-care as especially critical. By caring for myself, I was able to continue to gather empirical evidence and maintain the authenticity of participatory research. COVID-19 became an unexpected point for data collection in the PAR. It began as a category in PAR Cycle Two and surfaced frequently in PAR Cycle Three, generating two categories: challenges (48%) and collateral positives (52%), (total codes=486 and two categories) with a total frequency of 486 codes in Cycle Two and Cycle Three (see Table 19). COVID-19 upended the focus of practice (FoP) in real time. The EC-PLC group and I had to respond to challenges and engage in opportunities as they arose.

Challenges

Leading schools during the pandemic continues to be unprecedented. At the end of PAR Cycle Two, I documented and described how leaders in the EC-PLC experienced school shutdowns (March 2020) and operated in crisis distance learning. In PAR Cycle Three, EC-PLC members were more familiar with remote online learning, but many unknowns lingered when school began in Fall of 2020. Leaders, children, families, and our communities continued to be faced with challenges. Many students continued to need access to computers and hot spots. Many families in our schools needed food and housing. Leaders were assessing these needs while simultaneously learning how to open schools remotely.

Initially, it felt chaotic. An MOU with the teachers' union and the school district had not been finalized prior to school starting. Trying to secure school schedules and create familiar structures was a challenge. We were all learning what benchmarks would need to be met before school would open for in person learning. I asked EC-PLC members to use an image to describe what it feels like to lead during the COVID-19 pandemic. Carla described leading during COVID-19:

Table 19

COVID-19 Themes, Categories, Codes, Frequency, and Total for all PAR Cycles

Theme	Categories n=2	Codes	Frequency PAR Cycle 1	PAR Cycle 2	PAR Cycle 3	Total Frequency for all PAR Cycles
COVID-19 486 instances	Challenges (48%)	Attendance	0	0	2	2
		Challenge	0	0	89	89
		Curriculum/pedagogy	0	0	10	10
		Digital divide	0	0	11	11
		Fatigue	0	0	12	12
		Panic/urgency	0	0	6	6
		School closure	0	1	17	18
		Social distancing	0	0	10	10
		Stress	0	0	29	29
		Technology challenges	0	0	7	7
		Work from home negatives	0	2	27	29
		Zoom fatigue	0	0	9	9
	Collateral positives (52%)	Awareness	0	0	14	14
		Communication	0	0	12	12
		Connectors	0	0	24	24
		Gratitude	0	0	16	16
		Innovation/reimagine	0	1	53	54
		Snacking	0	0	1	1
		Social justice leadership	0	0	40	40
		Technology skills	0	0	25	25
		Text messaging	0	0	19	19
		Work from home positives	0	0	49	49

Since COVID to now, I would say it would be a tulip, because tulips when you first get them are closed up, right. As they get older and start maturing, they start opening and opening and opening. Then the petals fall off. So, like the beginning of COVID it was like, 'Oh, shit, I don't know what to do. I'm opening up more and learning to be more and more open. I'm open even more than before looking at things completely differently. I would say a tulip (C. Valle, interview notes, September 22, 2020).

Laura described leading through COVID as feeling like Jell-O with an open heart:

Maybe I'm moving under water like Jell-O or something because there's so much coming at us and one feels like uhh...I also feel a sense of like it sounds really cheesy, but I'm just gonna say it, but I feel like expansion of love in my heart (L. Voss, interview notes, September 25, 2020).

Dr. Grant described leading during COVID-19 like balancing on a moving train:

I'm picturing a moving train. I had expressed a lot of stuff going on, just like constant movement. … get into it, dance in it. I think you just have to … get into the groove of it and try to ride that wave; just keep moving forward (E. Grant, interview notes, September 29, 2020).

Savannah described leading during the pandemic as being a turtle that went in and out of her shell:

You know, I live alone. So I would like my own little space and feel all safe and secure. And then every now and then pop my head out. Like to go to the grocery store. Or if you do stuff at work like Chromebook pick up. Then go back into my little shell. Even over the summer, I feel like I poke my head out a little bit and then go back inside (S. Travis, interview notes, October 2, 2020).

I describe it as feeling like a caged bird. Figure 47 illustrates the various ways we experienced and expressed our images of COVID-19. Stress, isolation, panic, and urgency initially prevailed. Savannah shared how leaving her home to go to a work site supported her:

> Today I saw people, I was here yesterday, it was just a few people but like just driving to work I think it's gonna help me be more productive in this space. I think I'm productive at home too. But it's like there's no boundaries; I can be productive till nine o'clock at home (S. Travis, interview notes, October 2, 2020).

We were all learning to work from our homes, establish routines, and set boundaries. Fatigue and Zoom fatigue set in. EC-PLC members and I discussed ways that we could help keep our communities connected, calm, and well as discussed in previous sections. Along with these challenges COVID-19 provided opportunities for leaders to reimagine how school and learning could take place. To the EC-PLC members COVID-19 conjured up images of a tulip, Jell-O, a moving train, a turtle, and a caged bird. We faced challenges and we sought out opportunities and found collateral positives during these uncertain times.

Collateral Positives

However, COVID-19 provided opportunities. It required leaders to innovate, which required flexibility and innovation. EC-PLC members experienced a collateral positive because of COVID-19; they learned to establish clearer work and non-work boundaries. Claudia shared how she established boundaries:

> It's like, I'm taking care of myself. I'm not going to stay late, I'm going to be very aware, like today I left at a quarter to four, I said, I have to go, I have a happy hour. And yesterday, I was there until 5:30 but I didn't work when I came home (C. Valle, meeting notes, August 3, 2020).

"balancing on a moving train"
Dr. Elisha Grant

"a turtle"
Savannah Travis

Coronavirus
(COVID-19)

"a caged bird"
Christina Velasco

"jello"
Laura Voss

"tulip"
Claudia Valle
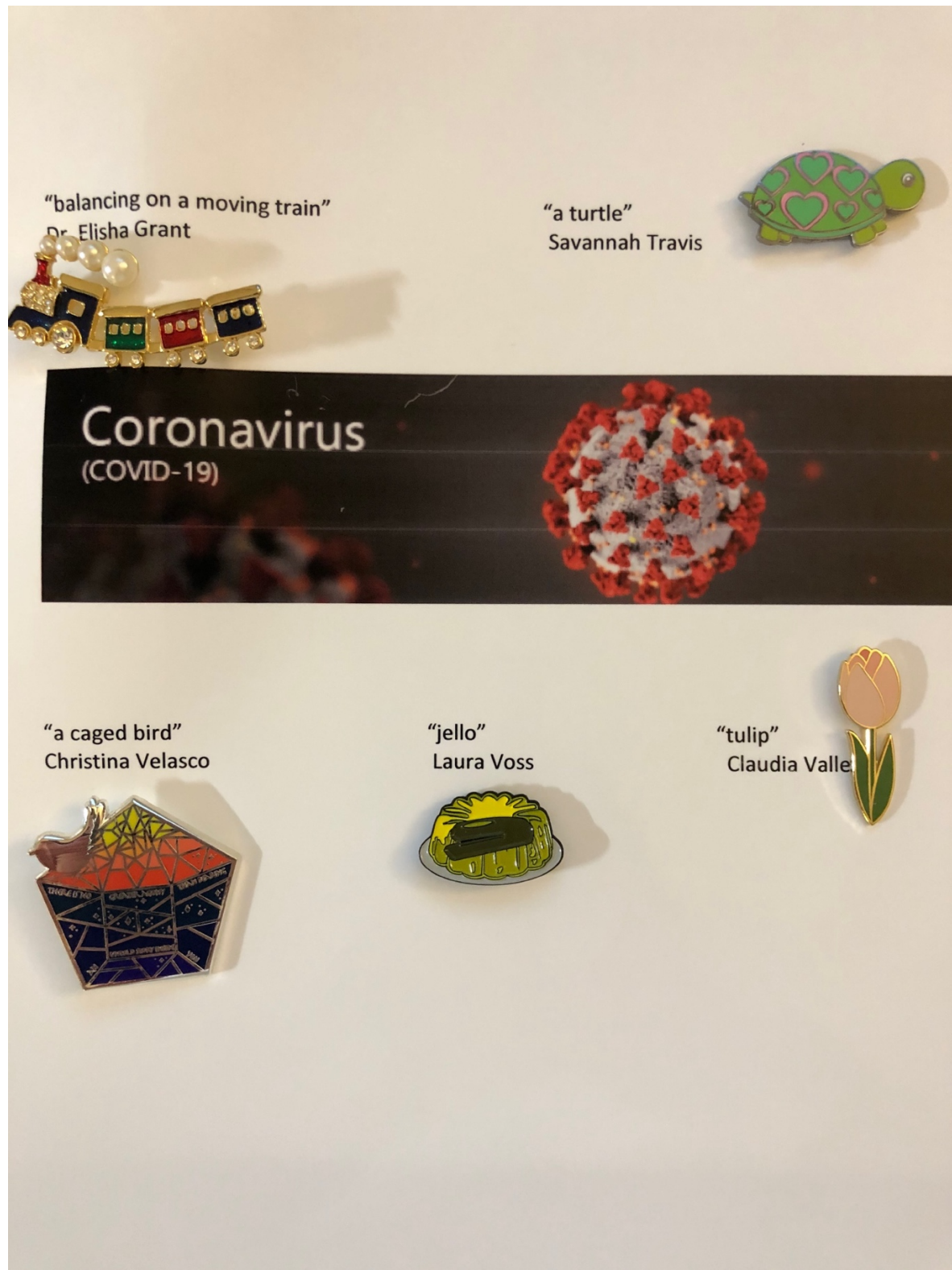
Figure 47. EC-PLC members images of what leading through COVID-19 felt like.

A spirit of gratitude and appreciation was commonplace with members in the EC-PLC. Earlier I discussed how working from home was a challenge for Laura, but it became an opportunity. She shared:

> Just being this close to my family. And just feeling like…I mean, I've never been able to spend this time with my children and being able to kind of see and watch them learn and interact with their peers online (L. Voss, interview notes, September 25, 2020).

In PAR Cycle Three, our EC-PLC traversed challenges and created opportunities to attend to self-care as collective-care during the COVID-19 pandemic. As leaders during the COVID-19 pandemic, our EC-PLC leaned into each other in the *Espacio Sano* (sane space) we co-created so we could lead wholeheartedly.

Summary of the Impact of COVID-19

In this section, I explained the impact of COVID-19 and shared categories that emerged (see Table 19). I discussed how the COVID-19 pandemic became a temporary hurdle in the PAR and how it altered the study to some degree as well as present opportunities. The wholehearted leaders' disposition of flexibility and care supported them to hold on to hope and possibility during these uncertain times.

Chapter Summary

Through this 18-month PAR journey, *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership findings emerged as a result of the activities and analysis of evidence in which EC-PLC self-care group engaged. The activities that supported our individual and collective self-care practices. We fortified each other and shared what we learned with others in the normative work. *Espacio Sano* is a sane space, a distinct professional space that disrupts normative professional development spaces in our district and school. *Espacio Sano* is a place where the women leaders gather in

affinity and fortify each other to engage as social justice leaders. The type of *Espacio Sano* that we intentionally crafted honors the participants and uses CLE axioms and pedagogies and *testimonios* to support engagement. *Espacio Sano* reinvigorated us and gave us tools to transfer into other spaces. In *Espacio Sano,* leaders are wholehearted leaders who lead with the heart and mind, the *brainheart.*

Wholehearted leaders take care of themselves so they can better support others. Wholehearted leaders talk and learn about how emotions affect them so they can be responsive to their communities. Wholehearted leaders use substantive alternative metrics to understand what *really* is going on in our schools such as connection, joy, and *brainheart.* They are action-oriented leaders who learn to listen deeply and enact practices and policies that are aligned to their core values and honor the constituents in their community.

When *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership work in conjunction with each other they create a nexus. The nexus emboldens *Self-care as Collective Care,* the *MeWe.* This nexus encompasses the African philosophy of Ubuntu: I am because you are. "Ubuntu is a Zulu word which serves as the spiritual foundation of African societies…Ubuntu articulates basic respect and compassion for others" (Matshe, 2013, p. 18). It is in this spirit, the *MeWe* represents the combination of holding space for one self and others. These space provides fodder for liberating education and social justice leadership. It is a symbiotic relationship: *Espacio Sano* is created because of wholehearted leaders, and we have wholehearted leaders because we create *Espacio Sano.*

One of the purposes of Chapter 8 is to further explore the nexus of *MeWe.* I discuss how we moved from a theory of action to an enacted theory, I connect the findings to the research,

and detail the implications, recommendations of the PAR project. I describe how I transformed

my perspectives and practices as a leader.

CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

You can't erase what you know, and you can't forget who you are.

—Sandra Cisneros

I open and conclude the participatory action research (PAR) project with *mi testimonio* (my story). Sandra Cisneros captures what this journey has been for me as an activist researcher. I honor my ontology—a Latina first generation bilingual educator, grandmother, mother, wife, daughter, sister, and aunt—as well as the contributions I make to the collective knowledge about educational leadership and self-care. Throughout the PAR journey, I followed the guidelines of the formal, canonical ways of engaging in this research: Institutional Review Board, American Psychological Association guidelines, extant literature, and guidance from advisors. However, I concurrently engaged with informal, non-canonical ways of knowing; I used normative writings (often not acknowledged in academia), poetry, songs, podcasts, and art. I followed my head and heart, the *brainheart*, to capture the stories of the EC-PLC members and our communities to guide the work. My leadership and facilitation of learning was transformed when I harnessed both the canonical and non-canonical ways of knowing and doing, learning and being (Bateson, 1994). Together they supported me -- and this project -- and helped expand and deepen my leadership development.

In my role as a public-school educator and activist researcher, I partnered with four women educational leaders in the San Francisco Unified School District in the Bay Area of California using an Equity Centered-Professional Learning Community (EC-PLC) as Co-Practitioner Researchers (CPR). The operating theory of action was: If we engage in iterative cycles of inquiry in an EC-PLC to increase educational leaders' individual and collective abilities to better manage stress by deepening relationships, then school leaders can fortify and sustain their work of equity, excellence, and social justice leadership. We relied on the following

to accomplish our goal: co-creating and using *Espacio Sano* (sane space), engaging in

testimonios (storytelling), and learning and practicing self-care strategies.

The members of the EC-PLC collaborated with me to increase our individual and

collective abilities to use self-care strategies. Through this process, we created an *Espacio Sano*,

a distinct professional learning space, in which and through which we practiced self-care

strategies and deepened relationships. The EC-PLC of two school principals, an assistant

superintendent, a leadership coach, and me (refer to Chapter 3 to learn more about each member

of the EC-PLC group), who had diverse roles and experiences in our school district, provided

multiple perspectives and knowledge for the project. The participatory action research project

(PAR) was situated at the micro level, but resonates in a larger context of school reform. Current

social-political, district, and group structures, policies, and supports challenged the ability to

provide principals and district leaders support. However, as we learned in the PAR, in addition to

the typical support, leaders need other supports to deal with work-related stress so they can

sustain their stamina and well-being to do the work of equity and excellence in schools.

Given the often-unresponsive systemic and political context within which leaders must

work, the need to support educational leaders in ways that fill the individual and collective soul

is even more essential. The focus of practice (FoP) was anchored in equity and a social justice

leadership (SJL) theoretical framework of "*praxis*," reflection and action (Freire, 1970). The

focus of practice was put to the test as we all learned to lead schools in remote online learning

due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Collectively, as an EC-PLC, we were able to use reflection and

action to see if leadership could look and feel different. Together we expanded some important

elements of leadership practices that can be authentically dynamic. Figure 48 represents a

graphic model of the entire process from theory of action to an enacted theory. While Figure 48

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Test out strategies and processes that may provide insight into how │
│ principals and district leaders use supports, structures, and resources to │
│ manage their self-care to do the work of equity and excellence in schools │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Theory of Action:
- increase educational leaders' individual and collective abilities to attend to work-related stress
- deepen relationships in an alternative third space
- use *testimonios* (storytelling)
- learn and practice self-care strategies

Ways of Knowing
Literature frames:
- *Social Justice Leaders*
- *Women of Color Feminist Ethic of Care*
- *Self-care*
- *Third Space*

PRAXIS

Ways of Doing
Practice frames:
Alternative professional space-third space
Collaborative engagement
CLE axioms and pedagogies

PAR CYCLE ONE: Self & Interpersonal
PAR CYCLE TWO: Self & Communal
PAR CYCLE THREE: Self & Systemic

PRAXIS   CONTEXT   PRAXIS

PRAXIS

An Enacted Theory
Espacio Sano and Wholehearted Leadership
- *Testimonios*, integrated stories
- Gracious space
- Substantive alternative metrics
- *brainheart*
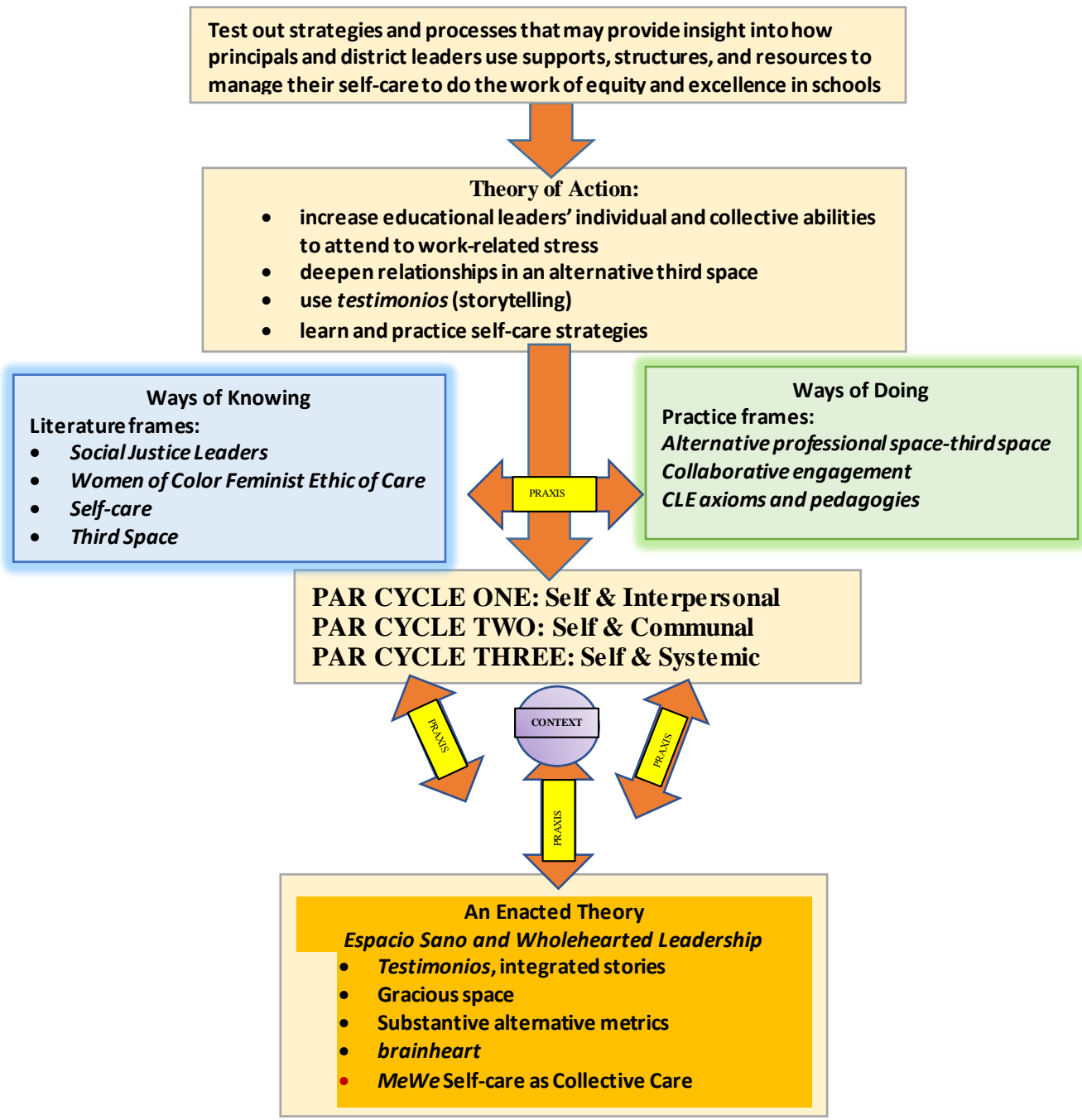- *MeWe* Self-care as Collective Care

Figure 48. PAR conceptual framework: From theory of action to an enacted theory.

is limited to a linear model, on paper, this work has by no means been a linear endeavor. The figure provides a summary of the whole study; the first two boxes represent Chapter 1, naming and framing the focus of practice and setting the stage for the PAR. The blue box on the left represents the ways of knowing, the literature, and the green box on the right represents the ways of doing, the practices in Chapter 2. The purple circle represents the context of the study, found in Chapter 3. The three orange double sided arrows represent the use of *praxis* throughout the PAR, a key element of the methodology in Chapter 4. The next box represents the three PAR cycles of inquiry from Chapters 5, 6, and 7. The last orange box represents the enacted theory and two findings.

For eighteen months we engaged in an Equity-Centered Learning Community (EC-PLC) on self-care, we created an *Espacio Sano* to explore how we could individually and collectively attend to work-related stress and remain resilient socially justice leaders. Next, I provide a brief overview of the themes and findings that emerged through PAR Cycles One, Two, and Three. I share the data sources and methods used to analyze the information that guided our actions as an EC-PLC. See Table 20 for the list of the data collected across an 18-month journey in three PAR cycles. The iterative evidence from the three cycles informed the findings I make in this chapter.

In PAR Cycle One, the EC-PLC members began understanding each other and self-care as a group. We established relational trust by sharing *testimonios* about our personal and professional selves at our monthly EC-PLC meetings. We co-constructed the meaning of self-care and used self-care strategies with each other. We provided collective input about the assets and challenges in the focus of practice for the PAR project (see Figure 18 in Chapter 5, fishbone diagram of the macro, meso, and micro-FoP assets and challenges).

Throughout PAR Cycle One, I collected and coded meeting notes, meeting artifact

Table 20

Key Activities, Data Collection, and Frequency of All Three PAR Cycles (August 2019 - October 2020)

	PAR CYCLE ONE (Fall 2019) (Aug-Dec, 2019) Week 1-12	PAR CYCLE TWO (Spring 2020) (Jan-Apr, 2020) Week 1-12	PAR CYCLE THREE (Fall 2020) (Aug-Oct, 2020) Week 1-12
Meetings with EC-PLC (n=5)	♦　♦　　♦　♦	♦	
Meeting with EC-PLC online (n=4)			♦ ♦　　♦　　　♦
One to One Meetings/ Conversations (n=10)	♦　♦ ♦ ♦		♦　♦　♦　♦ ♦ 　　　　　♦
Community Learning Exchange (n=1)		♦	
Observations (n=4)		♦　♦　♦　　♦	
Self-Care Story (n=4)		♦	
Digital Communication (n=12)			♦ ♦ ♦ ♦　♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦
Fishbone (n=1)	♦		

Table 21 (continued)

	PAR CYCLE ONE (Fall 2019) (Aug-Dec, 2019) Week 1-12	PAR CYCLE TWO (Spring 2020) (Jan-Apr, 2020) Week 1-12	PAR CYCLE THREE (Fall 2020) (Aug-Oct, 2020) Week 1-12
Questionnaire- (n=8)	♦		♦
Interviews (n=4)			♦ ♦ ♦ ♦
Written Notes or Reflective Memos (n=37)	♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦	♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦	♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

reflective memos, and questionnaire responses (see Table 20). I coded these data to identify four emerging categories: wellness strategies, time, leadership actions, and reflection. We learned that hosting our EC-PLC meetings off-campus supported an *Espacio Sano* because it provided members comfort and a safe space to share our stories. As an activist researcher, I learned to deeply listen to EC-PLC members' stories and voices to co-construct an *Espacio Sano*.

In PAR Cycle Two, EC-PLC members continued to develop and practice self-care and took an active co-facilitative role, and our relational trust grew during this cycle. The cycle served a dual purpose: EC-PLC members engaged with self-care strategies with a broader community, and I collected data and analyzed how the work supported leaders to use self-care strategies for themselves and their colleagues. The Community Learning Exchange (CLE) provided a broader *Espacio Sano* to learn and engage with other women leaders in from our communities. Data from PAR Cycle Two corresponded and extended the evidence from Cycle One. I consolidated previously identified codes in categories and two themes evolved: *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership. Meeting notes from the CLE, observations, artifacts from the CLE, and self-care stories served as a data source to verify key findings. Toward the end of the cycle, COVID-19 pandemic created a disruption and additional stressors. We found opportunities to lead and support each other and our work communities. During the cycle, I pivoted, and we created self-care opportunities online.

In PAR Cycle Three, we investigated how to sustain the work beyond me leading this project; implemented in our virtual EC-PLC that helped maintain our *Espacio Sano*. We engaged in activities that supported our individual and collective self-care practices and built our individual and collective resilience. EC-PLC members transferred what we cultivated to others in

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their workplaces. Through the three PAR cycles, we fortified findings about ourselves about to provide evidence *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership

In this chapter, I summarize those findings through the lenses of the extant literature and present a framework based on research and evidence. I then discuss the implications and recommendations for future practice, policy, and research. I conclude with my leadership journey throughout the PAR, *mi testimonio* (my story).

Discussion of Findings

The PAR cycles mirrored the social justice framework of Furman (2012). That is, we began PAR Cycle One examining ourselves; in PAR Cycle Two; we moved into working with constituents in our community; and, in PAR Cycle Three, we examined how to sustain and transfer the work. "The nested model represents the gestalt of social justice leadership as *praxis* across multiple dimensions" (Furman, 2012, p. 204). At the inner level, the person and personal and interpersonal is in the center; as the circle expands outward, the personal becomes more communal to move toward the outer circle of systemic. Furman's model (2012) had a prognostication for the PAR study (see Figure 49). Thus, I examine the PAR findings using her model as well as the extant literature as foils to re-analyze the data. PAR Cycle One focused on the self and interpersonal dimension. The EC-PLC members began understanding each other and self-care as a group. We established relational trust by sharing *testimonios* about our personal and professional selves at our monthly EC-PLC meetings (see Figure 49).

In PAR Cycle Two, we focused on the communal dimension (Furman, 2012) (see Figure 49). EC-PLC members continued to work on self-care and took active co-facilitative roles. The
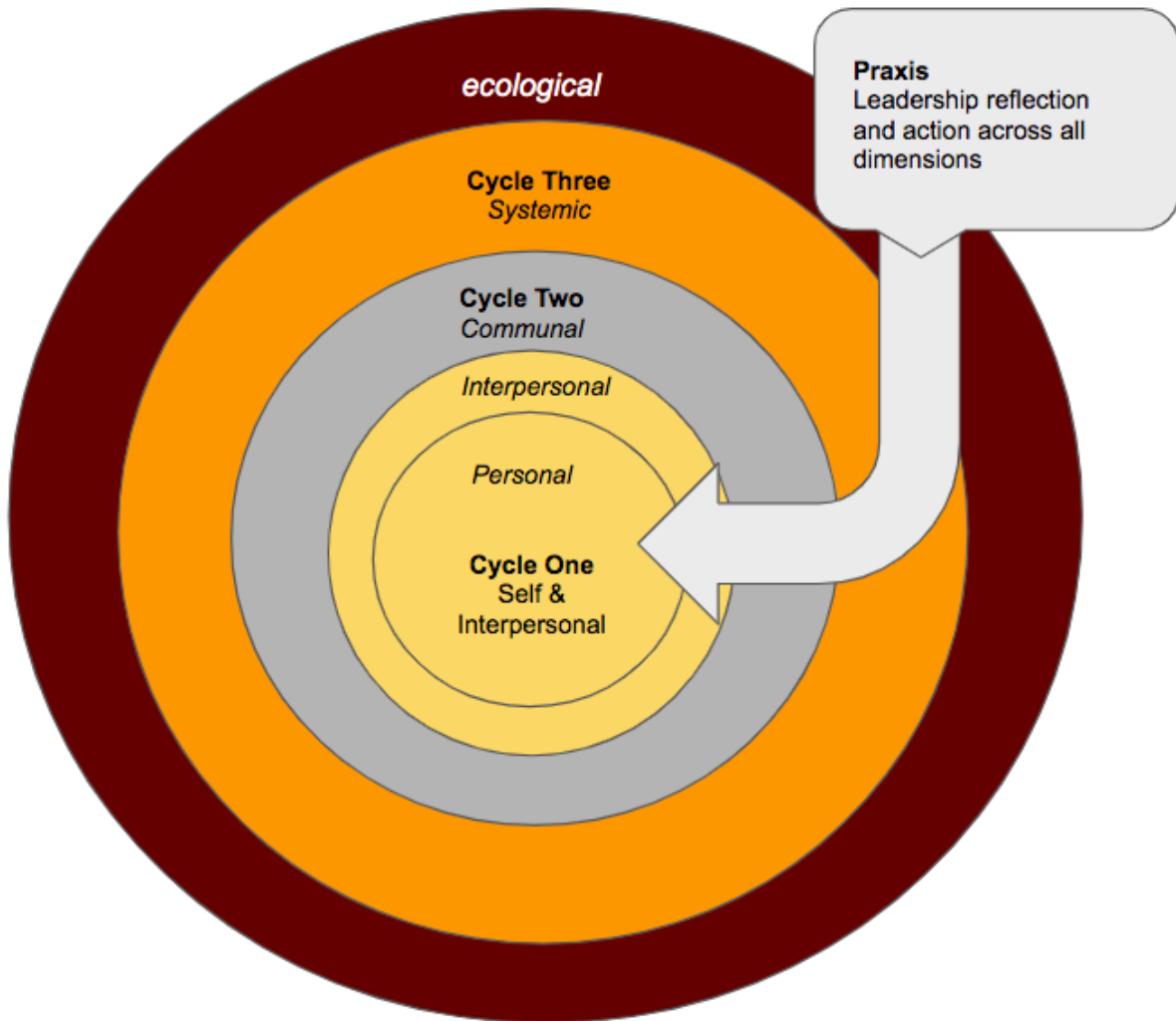
Figure 49. PAR cycles aligned with Furman (2012) social justice ecology.

purposeful design of our activities and my facilitation supported increased relational trust as EC-PLC members engaged with self-care strategies within a broader community. We built community across diverse groups of women leaders at our Community Learning Exchange (CLE) and used CLE axioms (Guajardo et al., 2016), and practiced inclusive democratic practices. We integrated *testimonios,* listened deeply, and had dialogue across race and roles.

Finally, in PAR Cycle Three, we focused on the systemic dimension (Furman, 2012). We investigated how to sustain the work beyond me facilitating this project and inquiry; our ultimate goal was transitioning the strategies and goals of the PAR project into the normative work of the EC-PLC members and beyond to other leaders. The EC-PLC members prioritized and worked toward meaningful change. They hosted a wellness hour for staff and integrated self-care practices into their work environments with their staff (see Figure 49).

The context of the PAR is situated within the broader sociopolitical, economic, and environmental scope. Our schools and communities addressed the issues of the COVID-19 pandemic and the socio-political climate of Trumpism and police brutality. We were "acting with the knowledge that school-related social justice issues are situated within a broader sociopolitical, economic, and environmental context and are interdependent with broader issues of oppression and sustainability" (Furman, 2012, p. 211). The PAR people and place matter. Our abilities to care for ourselves and our collective care were vital to a critical resilience we needed to sustain our equity work.

Furman's (2012) conceptual framework for social justice leadership captures the interchange between the reflection and action, *praxis*, so vital to the work. At the intrapersonal level, *praxis* involved self-knowledge, critical self-reflection, and acting to transform oneself as a leader for social justice. Throughout the PAR project, the wholehearted leaders in the EC-PLC

engaged in *praxis*, action, and reflection. The act of *praxis* across the three PAR cycles was an essential element that tethered and heartened the learning for the EC-PLC and me (Freire, 1970; Furman, 2012). Reflection and action took place during our EC-PLC meetings, the CLE, and in writing reflective memos regularly about the work. *Praxis* was critical from working from the *Me* of self-care to the *We* of collective care. Furthermore, as a result of the PAR process, we produced a new framework to engage leaders.

The focus of practice, that is, the topic and inquiry that guided this project, was to explore the extent that educational leaders supported their individual and collective abilities to attend to work-related stress by fortifying themselves and others in the work of equity, excellence, and social justice leadership. We found that *Espacio Sano,* an affinity space and responsive ways to engage to share *testimonios* and listen deeply to others provided a place for school leaders to attend to their personal and professional learning. Using CLE axioms and equity-centered pedagogies deepened relational trust among EC-PLC members and transferred into our work spaces.

Furthermore, we learned that women educational leaders are safe and brave enough to be vulnerable and fierce in an *Espacio Sano*. In this space, we emerged as wholehearted leaders embracing our integral selves in leading schools; we can lead with both intellect and heart, the *brainheart*. We learned wholehearted leaders attended to their mental, intellectual, spiritual, and physical self-care. Wholehearted leaders remained connected with friends and networks. Wholehearted leaders understood and talked about emotions and provided spaces for others to do so, because it supported a collective resilience. Wholehearted leaders used alternative measures to gauge what is *really* going on in our schools. Wholehearted leaders practice self-care as collective care. When space and time are established and crafted by those who inhabit them,

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transformation happens. I re-analyze the two major findings through the lenses of the literature (see Chapter 2): *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership.

Espacio Sano: A Healing Space

The COVID-19 pandemic amplified the need for self-care. Before COVID-19, self-care was sporadic at best; the crisis illuminated the need for care of self. Therefore, from the onset of the study, I conceptualized a third space as a heuristic to aid the understanding how *Espacio Sano* could provide a place for school leaders to attend to their personal and professional learning. *Espacio Sano* manifested in research and practice from the intersections of these theories: Gracious space; a sacred place; a humanizing healing space, a *sitio*; a place where school leaders use *lenguas* (discourse) and *testimonios* (see Figure 9 in Chapter 2). Together, we established space for telling our self-care stories and exchanging ideas on how to care for ourselves and our constituents remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study's finding of *Espacio Sano* aligns and is supported by the literature of third space (Gutiérrez, 2016; Hulme et al., 2009; Pour-Khorshid, 2018; Romero, Khalif, & et al., 2016) and contributes to the dialogic spaces of Aoki (1996) and Bhabha (1994). In *Espacio Sano,* the dialogical and liberating practice of *testimonios* and deliberate structural elements of CLE axioms and pedagogies were used. The literature specifically states people need spaces

> Where practitioners could think and develop, individually and collectively, and where the
> process of change could be nurtured, drawing on, but not constrained and dominated
> by—the influence of current practice or the requirements of policy to initiate 'solutions'
> or solve 'problems'. (Hulme et al., 2009, p. 541)

We found this third space to be a more complex *Espacio Sano* with third space attributes. For educational leaders, it was a sacred humanizing space for professional and personal learning.

We revisited questions about what formal and informal structures and systems best supported self-care, and we found that educational leaders did not have any formal professional spaces that are explicitly designed to attend to self-care. Having formal structures might make *Espacio Sano* more accepted, but people still seek out authentic informal alternatives. The EC-PLC on self-care was an informal part of our SFUSD organization; the four women leaders who joined me in investigating a different way to attend to work-related stress became an EC-PLC working in an ambiguous context. We were figuring out how to learn and practice strategies that could support our critical resilience so that we would stay engaged in the work of leading for equity, excellence, and social justice (Theoharis, 2009). This informal professional development had a fragmented perspective, as it "focuses on multiplicities of interpretation that do not coalesce into the collectivity-wide consensus characteristics of the integration view and that do not create the subculture consensus that is the focus of the differentiation perspective" (Martin, 2002, p. 107). Through this PAR process, the EC-PLC members and I co-created an *Espacio Sano,* and it reinvigorated us individually and collectively. Participants were able to think and develop individually and collectively and engage in critical reflection (Hulme et al., 2009). We believe that *Espacio Sano* needs to be formalized in leadership structures in schools and districts. "Formalization, hence, works to legitimize inequalities in hierarchies" (Scott & Davis, 2007, p. 39). The intentional use of CLE axioms and pedagogies supported this space (Guajardo et al., 2016). Below I highlight the elements of *Espacio Sano* that aligned with the literature, CLE axioms and pedagogies, place and time, and the fortified affinity space.

CLE Axioms and Pedagogies

Within *Espacio Sano,* we purposefully created a new way of being and structuring professional learning communities of networks of sustainability and self-care (Rigby & Tredway,

2015; Theoharis, 2009). *Espacio Sano* honored the participants and used CLE axioms and pedagogies and *testimonios* to support our engagement and leverage our time. *Espacio Sano* used CLE methodology that emphasizes gracious space (Hughes & Grace, 2010) and the collective process of putting the power back into the hands of the people most impacted, our educational leaders (Guajardo et al., 2016). For our EC-PLC, by using gracious space, we created the space and the "power to transform us individually and collectively" (Hughes et al., 2011, p. 190). The gracious space approach to relationships provided opportunities for deeper understanding and encouraged diverse views (Hughes & Grace, 2010). We drew journey lines; we drew how we enacted self-care practices in our home work spaces; and we shared our leadership *testimonios*, all affirming that "those closest to the issue are best situated to discover answers to local concerns" (Guajardo, et al., 2016, p. 25). At the Community Learning Exchange (CLE), we created performance pieces, poetry, and an art collage about self-care as collective care that liberated us, stimulated thinking, and supported our *Espacio Sano* (see the performance piece pictures and art collage in Chapter 6, Figures 28 and 29).

Our use of *testimonios* exposed injustices and disrupted the silence radical women of color use to testify and theorize lived experiences navigating various forms of oppression (Guajardo et al., 2016; Landrum et al., 2019; Militello & Guajardo, 2013; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981; Pour-Khorshid, 2018; Romero, Khalif, & et al., 2016). In other words, *testimonios* liberated and empowered the group. Educational leaders in the PAR reflected, shared, and listened to each other's stories, which, in turn, supported our individual and collective leadership. Guajardo et al.(2016) assert, "storytelling begets trust; trust begets healthy relationships; healthy relationships beget effective organizations; and effective organizations beget strong

communities" (p. 33). Integrating *testimonios* deepened relational trust in our EC-PLC and began to positively influence our communities.

The Power of Place and Leveraged Time

Sharing and listening to each other's *testimonios* required intentionally preserved, paced, and leveraged time. In *Espacio Sano,* we collectively named the need for a designated space and time. The third space concept of *sitios y lenguas* (space and discourse) (Romero, Denicolo, et al., 2016) is a decolonizing tool because "*sitios* are constructed as spaces that empower the student to become the subject and creator of their own knowledge" (Romero, Denicolo, et al., 2016, p. 443). For the EC-PLC, place was both a location and a process: "The understanding of the histories and dynamics of a place is a process worth learning about itself, and that process can only be learned and the skills that support that learning only developed from the real contexts of real places" (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 35). The *Espacio Sano* professional space became a vibrant learning space within our group, and members transferred the processes into our schools and district offices.

Fortified Women Affinity

The study was deliberately designed to create space for women leaders to attend to self-care; for women, school leadership is further impacted by biased patriarchal structures that do not always value the ethic of care (Ah Nee-Benham & Cooper, 1998; Bass, 2012; Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984; Sosa-Provencio, 2017). The study aligns with these models of feminist ethic of care and how women and women of color need space to acknowledge commonalities of oppression. All participants affirmed the value of being in affinity space as it provided intimacy and a unique place for them to bring their whole selves into a professional space and allowed them to "engage in discourse that is feared or not yet appropriate for mixed groups but is still

necessary to address" (Peters, 2016, p. 22). Together, women needed a space to be vulnerable and strong; *Espacio Sano* provided the space for us to explore the tensions of being a social justice leader and the predicaments for feminist leadership. A women affinity space helped fortify the educational leaders and is a powerful and essential aspect to an *Espacio Sano*. In *Espacio Sano*, the wholehearted leadership of women educational leaders flourished.

Wholehearted Leaders are Social Justice Leaders

The study aligned squarely with Furman's (2012) ecological model of social justice leadership (see Figure 49) and the CLE ecologies of knowing (Guajardo et al., 2016). Throughout the project, we engaged in *praxis* in and across each dimension (Freire, 1970; Furman, 2012). The EC-PLC members and I first developed our understanding and integrated self-care practices at the personal and intrapersonal level. Then we moved to the communal ecology, where we shared our learning with members in our community. Finally, we extended this to the systemic ecology where we enacted leadership actions to create practices and policies in our workspaces in our district.

Our identification of wholehearted leadership contributes to the literature on social justice networks for women leaders. The themes—self-care strategies, emotions, substantive metrics, and leadership actions—contribute to how women educational leaders attend to their self-care so that they may be better equipped to enact social justice leadership. Over the course of the eighteen-month project, EC-PLC members learned to first attend to our individual and collective self-care so we could best support our communities.

Self-Care Strategies

Healthy equitable schools need healthy social justice leaders; however, educational leaders do not have explicit spaces, resources, and practices to attend to individual and collective

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self-care. In the careful examination of the extant literature on self-care and sustainability—practical, normative, and empirical, there are consistent patterns about the nature of self-care for leadership in schools. The themes are appropriate time for self (your passions and family), self-efficacy, time and task management, networks and mentors, space and time to reflect, and mindfulness (Bonomo, 2016; Bottery, 2018; Brock, 2002; Cabeen, 2018; Gardiner, 2000; Harding, 2016; Mahfouz, 2018; Wells & Klocko, 2018) (see Appendix D for additional information on the characteristics of strategies and tools for self-care and sustainability). Self-care in this PAR utilized mindfulness self-care strategies with educators in a manner similar to Mahfouz and Gordon (2020) and Mahfouz & Richardson (2020).

Claudia Valle, a school principal from our EC-PLC, captures the spirit of *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership and the impact of the *MeWe*, self-care as collective care:

> Self-care is important. I think as a leader, you really have to be attending to self-care in order to continue to grow and improve in whatever leadership area that you want to improve in, and it is an opportunity to do some self-reflection, which we need to grow as leaders. I think we should always be striving to grow and get better, it helps improve our leadership, if we're learning how to grow and we're doing that with others going in a similar direction (C. Valle, interview notes, September 22, 2020).

Self-care as collective care is a core element of wholehearted leadership. School leaders mutually identified self-care to include multiple dimensions: physical, emotional, social, spiritual, mental, and intellectual. Throughout the project, mindfulness and breathing strategies were key practices that supported our wellness (Bose et al., 2017). The EC-PLC members committed to meeting monthly and appropriated time for us to share *testimonios*, learn practice, and reflect on self-care strategies. We stimulated each other and used self-care strategies to

transform our self-efficacy and became better equipped to manage our emotions, time, and tasks in our leadership work.

Emotions

Leaders' emotions are essential components of wholehearted leadership. Talking about emotions at work is often viewed as *woo woo*, or a taboo that is devalued in society. "But emotions are *the* most powerful force inside the workplace" (Brackett, 2019, p. 219 [italics in the original]). The participants in the study talked and learned about how emotions affect them and provided spaces for members of their community to learn and process emotions. In the PAR, members of the EC-PLC followed Aguilar's (2018) resilience manifesto, "[p]owerful and effective educators talk about emotions at work," and developed their social-emotional competencies to best serve their constituents (p. 19). By focusing on principals' social-emotional competencies improved "principals' leadership skills, relations, and self-care, and increased self-awareness, ability to regulate emotions, self-management, and self-compassion after completing the CARE program" (Mahfouz & Gordon, 2020, p. 3). Wholehearted leaders of the EC-PLC were unabashed to talk about emotions; in fact, we embraced emotions and developed skills to increase our awareness and regulate them.

Substantive Metrics

Wholehearted leaders used alternative metrics—connection, joy, and *brainheart*—to understand what *really* is going on in our schools. Substantive metrics are micro-narratives and street data of authentic, practical, and essential experiences that we should document and analyze (Snowden 2009; Safir, 2017; Safir & Dugan, 2021) and provide other ways of *knowing* that complement the literature on school success. As a result, they provide the alternative metrics to understand what *really* is going on in schools at the emotional and personal levels. These metrics

offer critical measurements to understand the elements that are often overlooked by education reforms like Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). These substantive metrics include connection, joy, and *brainheart* and offer alternative leadership functions to counter the "masculinist view of leadership based on rational decision making" (Blackmore, 2002, p. 210). Integrating the cognitive with the affective by using both sides of the brain (Hammond, 2019) allowed for depth in learning in our EC-PLC. Because wholehearted leaders lead with the *brainheart*, these metrics provide a holistic approach to understanding the micro interactions and cultures of school communities. Furthermore, *brainheart* aligns with Noddings' (1984) assertion that affective foundations of existence are essential, and human emotional response is a key source of ethical behavior. As a result, they provided alternative metrics for understanding what *really* is going on in schools. The PAR revealed the importance of alternative substantive metrics, although there is scant literature about this finding, and it merits further investigation as does the concept of transfer of learning in the field.

Transfer

Throughout these three PAR cycles the EC-PLC members built and internalized self-care strategies and transferred their knowledge and skills to their communities, which appeared as evidence in both findings. Transfer occurred in content as educational leaders transferred self-care strategies and resources from our EC-PLC to themselves and in leadership actions when educational leaders transferred self-care strategies and resources from our EC-PLC to their communities.

Transfer of Self-Care: Ways of Knowing

The educational leaders of this study learned, shared, and internalized self-care practices. EC-PLC members and I were motivated to learn self-care practices to support us with work-

related stress. Motivation to learn supports transfer (Schwartz & Bransford, 1999). In *Espacio Sano,* we built our awareness of self-care skills, emotions, and dispositions. Using *testimonios* and *praxis* we built self-awareness. Bransford et al. (2000) affirm that "[t]ransfer can be improved by helping [leaders] become more aware of themselves as learners who actively monitor their learning strategies and resources and their readiness" (p. 67).

COVID-19 accelerated the need to do this work and EC-PLC members and I transferred what we had learned about in person EC-PLC meetings to the online platform. "Transfer is best viewed as an active, dynamic process rather than a passive end product of a particular set of learning experiences" (Bransford et al., 2000, p. 53). We made meaning together that supported our individual and collective abilities to transfer the knowledge of practice into our workplaces.

Transfer Leadership Actions: Ways of Doing

Leaders gained perspective of their leadership by engaging in *praxis* regularly (Freire, 1970). The act of pausing to reflect before acting supported equity-centered decisions and actions. The CLE axioms and pedagogies transferred across PAR Cycles and into our personal and professional settings. The pedagogical use of *testimonios* in the PAR project helped hone our listening skills as leaders and propelled us to be wholehearted leaders to our constituents. Safir's, (2017) work on listening as a way to gather data to leverage multiple forms of alternative substantive data is central to this finding, as she describes:

> listening allows us to practice two elements of mindfulness: awareness and attention to the present moment by observing one's thoughts, feelings, and sensations without judgment and with acceptance of what is happening in that moment. At the same time, mindfulness enhances listening. (pp. 22-23)

Sharing our stories with each other helped us better listen to one another and, in turn, honed our skills so we could be mindfully listening to our constituents.

Furthermore, the use of *praxis* (Freire, 1970; Furman, 2012) and telling our individual and collective stories helped inform the wholehearted leadership actions toward changing policy. As a result, educational leaders in the study created policies and practices in their communities. Leaders and teachers began engaging in self-care strategies with their staff and students. When educational leaders engage in praxis in a community of care, they are better equipped to lead toward social justice.

MeWe: Self-Care as Collective Care Framework

The learning from the PAR study over these last eighteen months included an in-depth literature review, engagement in an empirical study with a CPR group that resulted in a set of findings, as well as a consistent set of reflections, resulting in a robust PAR project. I found the end only the beginning. The PAR process helped visualize how to conduct this work in practice and how to utilize it as a framework for future studies. Initially, I had trouble with the process being overly linear (see Figure 48), an issue I investigated with the EC-PLC the exploration through the PAR process liberated me offer a new structure and symbol, the *MeWe* infinity sign (see Figure 50). Because the infinity sign is continuous, not one-directional nor linear, it actually exemplifies the PAR process, which "…is a messy, iterative and generative approach that is constantly being made and remade with diverse place-based contexts" (hunter et al., 2013, p. 26). Doing action research was messy, but the yield was great; we together developed a better understanding of the formal and informal ways of knowing and doing (Bateson, 1994).

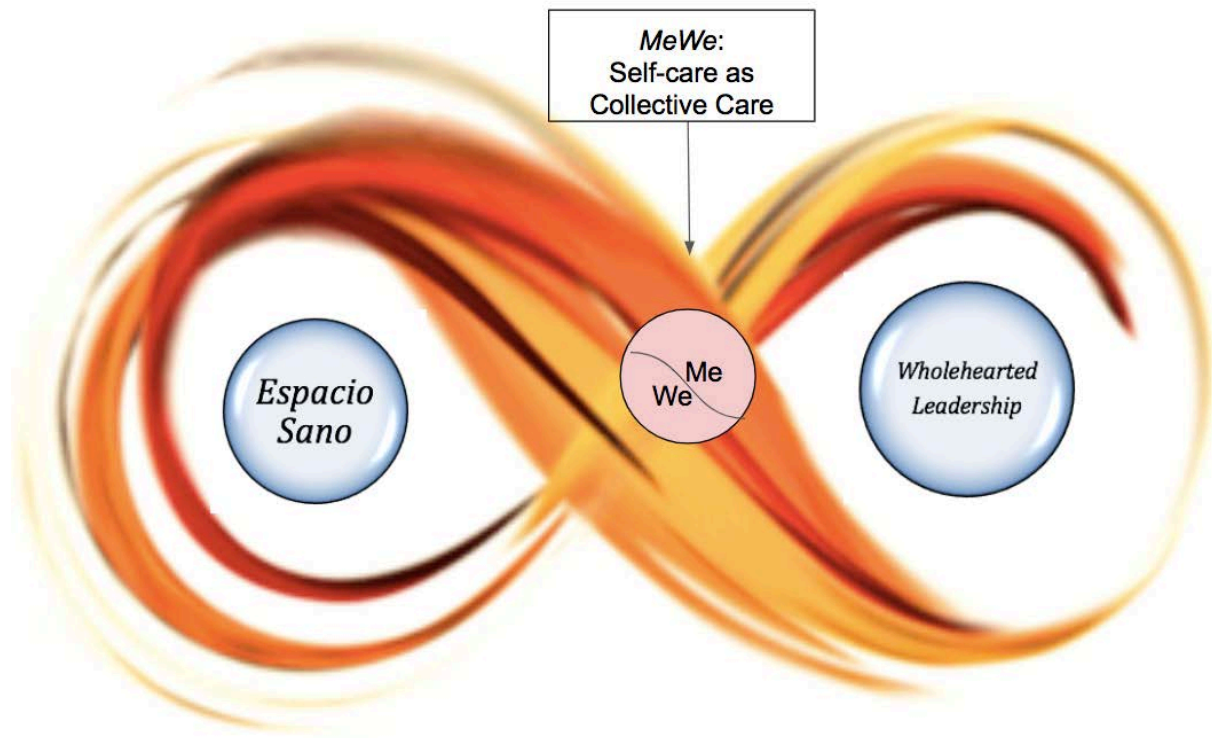In equity centered spaces, we need both formal and informal doing and learning. I use the

Figure 50. *MeWe*: *Self-care as Collective Care* conceptual framework.

infinity sign to represent this dichotomy. The English word for infinity derives from the Latin word *infinitas* meaning boundlessness (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Moreover, the infinity symbol is often associated with mindfulness as a reminder to anchor our minds to the present and keep it from wandering to the past and future (Bose et al., 2017). Some scholars limit their ways of knowing to theorizing on the social justice leadership or third space; I paired theory with action and introduced ways of doing by engaging collaboration, third spaces, and facilitative pedagogies. By tethering the canonical ways of knowing with ways of doing to the non-canonical ways of knowing and by using dynamic mindfulness and art within our EC-PLC and other spaces, we authorized multi-dimensional ways of acting, being, and learning (Velasco, 2009). In the *MeWe*: *Self-care as Collective Care,* we pair theory with action.

Espacio Sano and wholehearted leadership form a symbiotic relationship. *Espacio Sano* is nurtured by wholehearted leaders, and we create wholehearted leaders because we have an *Espacio Sano*. *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership work in unison and create a nexus. The nexus emboldens *Self-care as Collective Care,* the *MeWe* (see Figure 50). The *MeWe* is the "in-between-ness" of several sources of knowledge (Bhabha, 1994; Scharmer, 2001), a place of collective resistance and resilience, a place where wholehearted leaders practice self-care as collective care. Davis (2018) asserts that self-care is as an act of liberation; it is radical self-care. It is fundamental that we take care of ourselves so that we can be better equipped to take care of others.

The *MeWe*: *Self-care as Collective Care* debunks the either/or thinking of the professional or the personal, the brain or the heart, the warrior or the healer, the outer work or the inner work, the canonical or the non-canonical of white supremacy culture (Jones & Okun, 2016), and embraces both/and (Eubanks et al., 1997). Transformation happens in the revolution

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of the *Me* turned upside down to form *We*. The intersection of the *Me* with *We* becomes a platform "where practitioners could think and develop, individually and collectively, and where the process of change could be nurtured, drawing on, but not constrained and dominated by, the influence of current practice or the requirements of policy to initiate 'solutions' or solve 'problems'" (Hulme et al., 2009, p. 541). In the *MeWe*: *Self-care as Collective Care*, it is both/and. It is both professional and personal, *brainheart*, the outer and inner work, the canonical and non-canonical integrated. The *MeWe*: *Self-care as Collective Care* is as much about developing knowledge and claiming power as it is about embracing our vulnerability and uncertainty individually and collectively. In Western societies, too often dichotomies exist between the me and we, the individual and collective. *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership approach learning with non-Western features where the fine lines between individual and collective blend. I experienced and witnessed the power of the *We* in this work of self-care as collective care.

A re-informed theory of action: **if** we engage in integrative cycles of inquiry in an Equity Centered-Professional Learning Community (EC-PLC) to increase to educational leaders individual and collective abilities to manage work-related stress by utilizing *testimonios,* self-care strategies, and ongoing *praxis* to co-create *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership, **then** educational leaders can fortify and sustain their work of equity, excellence, and social justice leadership. As a result, we then reach Furman's (2012) ecological dimension and the *MeWe*: *Self-care as Collective Care* framework contributes to the literature on social justice leadership and self-care. In the implications section, I return to this framework in both practice and future research.

Implications

The findings suggest implications for practice, policy, and research. First, this study has practical implications. At the current micro level, school leaders should co-create *Espacio Sano* with their community and in their context. By using *testimonios* and *praxis* in personal and professional spaces, school leaders could decide with teachers how to proceed as long as school leaders are listening leaders (Safir, 2017) and responsive to the needs of their constituents. Leaders need to provide choice and opportunities to be in affinity groups—gender, racial, or experience—to deepen the relational trust of the group.

School leaders, however, can create routines or policies that include self-care as an essential element to teaching and learning for adults and students. As EC-PLC principal Claudia Valle did, leaders can support teachers by providing dedicated time to self-care in weekly work schedules and providing opportunities to integrate self-care practices in the workplace. These practices sustain the members of the community and build the critical resilience the *MeWe*: *Self-care as Collective Care*. The conceptual framework *MeWe*: *Self-care as Collective Care* is critical because it bridges the research on social justice leadership and self-care with the practitioners in our schools.

At the meso level, central office leadership can redesign the professional development structure and provide choice and agency for school leaders. Restructuring professional development to include Equity Centered-Professional Learning Communities (EC-PLC) around self-care is fundamental to the sustainability of the principalship, particularly to new leaders who may have developed poor coping mechanisms at pre-service (Mahfouz & Richardson, 2020). Similar to one participant in the study, assistant superintendent Dr. Grant, other superintendents can provide a wellness hour as part of their monthly principal meetings so that all leaders in our

district have a space to learn and practice self-care strategies. Districts might be better off with leaders who understand and promulgate an ethic of care. This may have the potential to better prepare, sustain, and retain our leaders in our schools. SFUSD can be a "[p]rogressive organization that give[s] power to employees as well as invest in their development" (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 149).

The work of self-care and social justice leadership is best integrated into our daily work. I offer practices school leaders and central office leaders can implement to support a self-care as collective care resilience.

- Dynamic Mindfulness Before, During, and After Work: Dynamic mindfulness is a practice to engage in any time of the day; it can build critical resilience. Build-in mindfulness practices at staff and a restorative meeting, and certainly before attending to an urgent incident. Close the office door and take deep grounding breaths. Six minutes of mindfulness a day makes a positive difference and helps reduce stress (Bose et al., 2017). Dynamic mindfulness is a necessary self-care tool that can be taken anywhere and used any time. Be intentional about setting time for you outside of work to take care of yourself. Establish routines to attend to self-care (mental, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual). Invest in yourself so you can better invest in others.

- Leverage Networks and Co-create an *Espacio Sano*: The work does not have to be lonely; stay connected and hold each other up. Lean in and let others help. Make time to share *testimonios* and support each other by problem-solving. Network with colleagues inside and outside principal meetings. Hold meetings off campus and

make space for affinity groups. Create spaces on the school site where teachers and staff also have an *Espacio Sano*.

- Make *Praxis* a Daily Practice: Create and maintain a habit to reflect daily. Keep a journal; reflect on your leadership actions, feelings, and dispositions. Intentionally pause before making decisions and take actions that are informed by reflection.

- Engage your community in a Community Learning Exchange (CLE): Build agency with families, students, and staff so they all participate in advocating for changes they need in the community and school. Host and facilitate a community learning exchange using CLE axioms allowing those closest to the issue help you find the solution (Guajardo et al., 2016). CLEs are about engaging pedagogies and accessing multiple, cross generational voices. Host a CLE with other principals, staff, and central office departments to explore ways to advocate for working conditions that support the operational and managerial tasks and issues that consume so much time.

- Laughter and Appreciation Go a Long Way: Compliments and appreciations are often few and far between from supervisors and central office colleagues. Send positive affirmations to yourself like, *I am dedicated and work hard. Be gentle with yourself!* Set up technology to support. Set a reminder on your phone to send an inspirational quote daily, weekly, and especially in challenging times like school Halloween, Valentine's Day activities, and evaluation and budget deadlines. Appreciate others and share compliments with your staff and community. This will help build and maintain healthy relationships, shift mindsets and assistance in staying asset focused (Howells, 2013).

These offerings may seem geared to our basic human needs; they are not noble nor groundbreaking, but they are necessary and critical for leadership sustainability. Education leaders would be well advised to create new habits and ways of knowing and doing to attend to your self-care so that you can in turn provide these opportunities for the staff and students in your community (Theoharis, 2009).

Finally, the findings point out that policymakers and reformers should be aware of the alternative substantive metrics educational leaders use to measure what's *really* going on in our schools. Current principal preparation programs assume leaders should be able to manage their social emotional learning (SEL) and know how to practice self-care in professional spaces. Leadership preparation programs should include explicit instruction on self-care strategies and prepare leaders to document and analyze changes in people and school climate. In addition, Mahfouz and Gordon (2020) conveyed that improvements in leadership skills, relations, and self-care resulted from using the Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) mindfulness-based professional development. To achieve healthy schools, we need to explicitly support their health and well-being, and this explicit teaching should take place in leadership preparation programs.

Furthermore, California can adopt leadership self-care as a standard in the California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSEL). This supports the accountability of these leadership elements as an explicit part of leadership preparation programs and clear credential professional developments. If there is an expectation to engage in self-care and leaders are provided an authentic professional development, practices, and spaces there is a much better chance of implementation with fidelity. The formalization of self-care in leadership preparation programs legitimizes it (Scott & Davis, 2007). Furthermore, the state can adopt self-care as part

of the California standards of the teaching profession (CSTP) and require teachers and leaders to understand and infuse social emotional curriculum and self-care practices as part of their daily curriculum. Moreover, proactive policy that provides all levels of the education organization to attend to self-care needs to be written to help prevent burnout and teacher and leadership turnover. Policies should be enacted that pay and provide incentives to educators to engage in mindfulness and professional learning communities. Districts should include exercise subscriptions and mindfulness applications as part of our health plans. Wellness should be a priority so that we create healthy organizations and healthy leaders.

Espacio Sano and wholehearted leadership findings add to the literature on social justice leadership. The findings help to extend networked improvement communities by demonstrating how they can be supplemented based on other theories in the literature, as well as how the theory can be applied to both female and male leaders (Bryk et al., 2015). Together *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership provide an innovative needed third space that is both radical, resistant, and resilient of the new cultural politics (Bhabha, 1994). Although this study focused solely on women in leadership, it produced a process (codes, methodology, and pedagogies) that can be used with a different set of participants to further investigate how leaders attend to self-care (see Appendix L for the Codebook). Researchers can use the codes in different settings and the framework can be used to analyze a different data set. For example, a future study can use the *MeWe*: *Self-care as Collective Care* framework to study how male educational leaders attend to self-care, what alternative substantive metrics they use to identify what *really* goes on in school, and how they demonstrate wholehearted leadership. In addition, a study can focus solely on central office leaders and study the impact it has on them individually and to what extent they transfer the learned skills, structures, and systems into other offices and schools.

The setting for this PAR is large urban district, but future studies can investigate what results would look like in a rural setting. Researchers could employ additional methodologies such as a large-scale survey to understand the landscape of self-care across a wide range of leaders. This was an 18-month three PAR cycle study. A longitudinal study could be done to follow a cohort of leaders from a principal preparation program through their first five years. But all of these efforts should include the *testimonios* of the participants, and I now turn to mine about my leadership journey.

My Leadership Journey for Development

Through the Participatory Action Research (PAR) leadership growth journey, I traversed various professional roles and places. Leadership learning took place on two levels, within the PAR itself and across the overall PAR process. Throughout the PAR project and three-year doctoral program, I learned and practiced self-care as collective care, engaged in *praxis*, learned more about myself as an activist researcher, and how my professional and personal self are tightly interwoven. I gained a perspective of interconnectedness between my ways of knowing and being throughout the entire process. Figure 51 represents me and the inter-connectedness of my ontology – the canonical ways of knowing on the left and the non-canonical ways of knowing and doing on the right; it is an image of *mi testimonio* (my story).

On the left, I included images of the formal canonical ways of engaging in this research: American Psychological Association (APA) guide; extant literature Dewey, Freire, Gillian, Aguilar, Brown, Theoharis, Nachmanovitch, Guajardo and colleagues; photos of my advisors; and logos of the universities I attended. On the right are images of non-canonical ways of knowing and doing: my family; *mujeres fuertes* (strong women) in my life—mother, aunt,

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Figure 51. Mi testimonio: The integration of the canonical and non-canonical.

partner, sisters, friends. I include images of my pottery and photography and places that inspired and taught me, including Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Brazil, and the ocean. I am in the center, the *MeWe,* with a picture of a mantra: may you have the courage to break the patterns in your life that are no longer serving you. Transformation from the *Me* to the *We* transpired when I harnessed both the canonical and non-canonical ways of knowing and doing. Together, they supported me and this project and helped deepen my leadership development.

During Cycle One, I applied what I learned about self-care from the academic canon and from non-canonical ways, indigenous ways of knowing and shared strategies with EC-PLC members and the new school leaders I coached. I began with wellness practices I internalized during my sabbatical. Throughout the PAR, we learned more self-care practices (mood meter, sleep hygiene, dynamic mindfulness eating, *testimonios*) and shared them with other leaders. The EC-PLC encouraged us individually and collectively when we experienced the disequilibrium of work-life stresses. One EC-PLC school leader shared "I appreciate the space because it was a place just for us. It's unlike other meetings where we are asked to do things or turn something in" (S. Travis, meeting notes, October 2, 2020). It inspired me to stay on track with the project because I believed the PAR had implications to support other women leaders far beyond our EC-PLC group.

My initial role was to create the agenda and facilitate meetings. During the pre-cycle of the PAR, I used normative professional development practices to design the agenda and manage time. Over the course of the project, and through the learning of the CLE (January 2020) and findings of PAR Cycle One and Two, I became a responsive facilitator. I integrated the CLE axioms and pedagogies I learned and made intentional leadership moves to create an *Espacio Sano*. EC-PLC members shared, "this space provided us an organic group for women leaders

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attending to self-care. The collective coming together. We do both explicitly self-care strategies

and the act of gathering and sharing is an act of self-care" (L. Voss, meeting notes, September

25, 2020). Over time, members of the EC-PLC contributed to shaping the agenda, shared

wellness practices, and told stories that helped fortify each other. In a reflective memo I wrote:

> I found a rhythm that supported a daily routine...It was an amazing gift to fully engage
>
> my creative side of my brain with the intellectual side simultaneously. Taking care of
>
> myself better prepared me to be fully present and responsive to the EC-PLC members as I
>
> came into our meetings renewed and energized (C. Velasco, reflective memo, July 20,
>
> 2020).

During Cycles One and Two, I shifted my perspectives and practices in my role as a

member of the EC-PLC and activist researcher as a result of the experiences and evidence.

Participating in the EC-PLC on self-care, observing and supporting others and their attention to

self-care, and submerging myself in literature focused on self-care and wellness, especially for

women of color, supported a base for my new learning. I understood more about the concept of

time scarcity and how it more negatively affects women. This awareness helped me prioritize

and set time aside for wellness so that I could be in tune with myself and, in turn, better support

our EC-PLC group. As I shifted how to hold space and facilitate, I acknowledged EC-PLC

members' guidance and we co-developed agendas.

During Cycle Two, I set up intentional space, paced time in cadence for participants, used

CLE axioms, *testimonios*, and intentional pedagogies (integrating art, poetry, self-care strategies,

and collective commitments) to establish conditions for an *Espacio Sano* for leaders. I learned

about the importance of holding an affinity space for women leaders that provided intimacy and

a place to be vulnerable to attend to the *brainheart*. During the CLE (January 2020), participants expressed the need to scale the project and impart with others.

I organized and experienced first-hand how creating conditions for *Espacio Sano* can provide space to learn deeply and rejuvenate us. I realized the power of listening deeply and telling an integrated story. *Testimonios* helped create trust and connection across differences. I discovered the usefulness of alternative substantive metrics. We introduced new principals to Heron's (1999) experiential learning cycle to be more comprehensive and incorporated CLE axioms and integrated pedagogies used in the January CLEs.

For the final PAR Cycle Three, I sought out communities and EC-PLC members to find ways for us to maintain the work beyond the PAR. hunter et al. (2013) state, "action research is a research approach that works with a community on a common topic of interest, that is, engaging the community in finding answers and applying those answers to a point of concern" (p. 26). The EC-PLC members internalized this work and shared them with their communities. I was inspired by our individual and collective resiliency, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic and distance learning, and as we continued to meet beyond the last cycle of inquiry. I held onto the radical hope (Lear, 2006) that the future holds endless possibilities to continue to innovate *Espacio Sano* throughout our district and schools.

 The three-year PAR journey allowed me to further develop my leadership perspectives and practices. My identity, job, roles, and responsibilities are recurring themes throughout the PAR and leadership journey. During past three years, I held various positions. I began the doctoral program in June of 2018 while simultaneously starting a year-long sabbatical. The program modeled CLE axioms, dynamic mindfulness, how to integrate art, and a focus on equity that I shared with the EC-PLC members and colleagues. The sabbatical provided the space for

me to reflect and heal; to deliberately give to myself so that I could re-engage and give back to the profession. In the beginning of this journey, I found it to be problematic to let go and not feel guilty, I wrote:

> It is difficult for me to adjust to not being at a school site or working. I am so accustomed to having everything on my calendar and full days with back-to-back meetings... I am beginning to slowly get into a rhythm and cadence. I am releasing the guilt I feel for not being at my former school. I will honor the balance of giving myself grace to take it easy, to enjoy a slower pace of life, to create, make things... I am learning how to balance new things now; I am creating new routines: pacing out my readings, writing papers, and thinking about the focus of practice for graduate school (C. Velasco, reflective memo, September 4, 2018).

In the first few months of the sabbatical, I focused on self-care: It took me many months to unravel the complexity of how my identity is so closely tied to my leadership work. In the first year (2018-2019), I was an outsider/insider working with various women school leaders in an Equity Centered-Professional Learning Community (EC-PLC) on self-care. In the second year (2019-2020), I began a new position as a leadership coach; this position challenged me to uphold my core values and preserve the self-care practices I learned. As a result, I learned to be a listening leader, became responsive to the group, and facilitated meetings in a relaxed environment. During the third year (2020-2021), I became an instructional coach at a middle school. I am leading while on the inside as I support an entire school community by coaching teachers, supporting the administration in sharing instructional leadership, and advising students, albeit remotely (Grubb & Tredway, 2010). As I note in a memo:

Instructional coaching provides avenues for me to navigate between administration, teachers, students, and families. I deeply appreciate the direct contact with students and families as the co-facilitator of the seventh-grade newcomer advisory… Moreover, it provides me insights and opportunities to listen closely to the voices of students and families so we may design policies and instruction to best engage our students across a virtual platform (C. Velasco, reflective memo, September 18, 2020).

After the first day of school I wrote, "this year I will show up as a listening leader, I will lead from the inside out. I continue to practice dynamic mindfulness and wholehearted leadership, and share these practices with others" (C. Velasco, reflective memo, September 11, 2020).

This leadership journey shifted my perspective and practices. I am forever a feminist activist researcher, navigating between theory to practice daily. I approach the literature with a critical *praxis* as well as a practical lens, regularly delve into evidence to engage in conversations and help make decisions, use alternative substantive metrics, and code data to find patterns and themes. I am using coding to analyze meeting note, facilitating by using CLE axioms and arts integrated pedagogies to help teachers interrogate their grading policies, and using self-care in all meeting.

Through this doctoral journey, I intentionally leaned into women scholars and learned that self-care is an integral part of work and life, the personal and professional self, a woman's ethic of caring (Gilligan, 1982). I learned that my core values help me set boundaries (Aguilar, 2019). I learned about integration (Brown, 2010) and leading with your *brainheart* as a wholehearted leader. I continue to hone my listening leader skills so that I truly hear students, teachers, and families (Safir, 2017). Moreover, I leveraged normative literature and indigenous ways of knowing as they are equally important and often overlooked in academia. Through this

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journey, I learned to integrate the canonical and non-canonical ways of knowing and doing, a holistic approach to understanding issues I plan to use in future. I learned to practice *praxis* and that we can have both/and theory and action.

In future practice, my ways of doing and knowing are forever informed by this important work and the lessons I learned about myself and others in this collaborative PAR. I plan to share these findings with central office colleagues in my school district and utilize *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership in my formal work settings. I will continue to engage in an EC-PLC with the women of the PAR project and share practices to encourage *Espacio Sano* with others.

Conclusion

Loving ourselves is frontline social justice work.
—Valarie Saur

Through the course of this PAR, we tested how our theories of a different kind of leadership could work in practice. In fact, *Espacio Sano* and wholehearted leadership are important tools to practice self-care, deepen relationships, and sustain educational leaders to remain engaged in social justice leadership. And, we came to know definitely that loving ourselves, so we love and care for each other and others is frontline social justice work.

Our EC-PLC of women leaders deepened and developed wholehearted leadership. We embraced the *brainheart* and unabashedly talked about emotions at work. We learned, shared, and practiced self-care strategies, used alternative substantive metrics to understand what *really* is going on in our schools, and took leadership action to sustain our collective learning. The *MeWe*: *Self-care as Collective Care* is a contribution that was not part of the original research question but is a new framework that can push this work forward in both practice and research. I take care of *Me* so that *We* can better take care of others. In the *MeWe*: *Self-care as Collective Care* leaders embrace integration, both the canonical and non-canonical ways of knowing and

being. Collectively, we enacted a radical self-care that is liberating and fundamental. The *MeWe*: *Self-care as Collective Care* framework is reconceptualized as a promising third space for personal and professional learning.

As a personal journey and a journey with others, the collective findings reaffirmed the importance of interconnectedness and the integration of both the ways of knowing and ways of doing, the *MeWe*: *Self-care as Collective Care*. It is not an end in itself. Audre Lorde clearly states that caring for oneself is not selfish but an act of self-preservation and an act of political warfare. Sandra Cisneros reminds us that we can't erase what we know nor forget who we are. Bettina Love quoting the work of AlliesforChange beacons us to "[d]o the interior work of silence, meditation, inner wisdom, and deep joy that is inextricably linked to the outer work of social change." When we honor and take care of ourselves, we are better equipped to engage with others, strengthen each other, and bring our best selves *a la lucha para la justicia*.

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APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board
4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building· Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284** ·
rede.ecu.edu/umcirb/

Notification of Amendment Approval

From: Social/Behavioral IRB
To: Christina Velasco
CC: Matthew Militello
Date: 12/8/2020
Re: Ame1_UMCIRB 19-001603
          UMCIRB 19-001603
          Self-care, Resilience, and Stamina: The Reshaping of School Leadership Dimensions

Your Amendment has been reviewed and approved using expedited review on 12/4/2020. It was the determination of the UMCIRB Chairperson (or designee) that this revision does not impact the overall risk/benefit ratio of the study and is appropriate for the population and procedures proposed.

Please note that any further changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a Final Report application to the UMCIRB prior to the Expected End Date provided in the IRB application. If the study is not completed by this date, an Amendment will need to be submitted to extend the Expected End Date. The investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

Approved consent documents with the IRB approval date stamped on the document should be used to consent participants (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the study workspace).

The approval includes the following items:

Description
The study date is being extended until June 2021. No further data will be collected--only data analysis.

For research studies where a waiver or alteration of HIPAA Authorization has been approved, the IRB states that each of the waiver criteria in 45 CFR 164.512(i)(1)(i)(A) and (2)(i) through (v) have been met. Additionally, the elements of PHI to be collected as described in items 1 and 2 of the Application for Waiver of Authorization have been determined to be the minimal necessary for the specified research.

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

IRB00000705 East Carolina U IRB #1 (Biomedical) IORG0000418
IRB00003781 East Carolina U IRB #2 (Behavioral/SS) IORG0000418

APPENDIX B: CITI TRAINING CERTIFICATION OF COMPLETION

401e-aec7-d575f31bc7a6-29889267

Informed Consent to Participate in Research

Information to consider before taking part in research that has no more than minimal risk.

Title of Research Study: Self-care, Resilience and Stamina: The Reshaping of School Leadership Dimensions

Principal Investigator: Christina Velasco, under the guidance of Dr. Matthew Militello
Institution, Department or Division: College of Education
Address: 220 Ragsdale, ECU, Greenville, NC 27858
Telephone #: (919) 518-4008

Researchers at East Carolina University (ECU) study issues related to society, health problems, environmental problems, behavior problems and the human condition. To do this, we need the help of volunteers who are willing to take part in research.

Why am I being invited to take part in this research?

The purpose of this participatory action research project is to engage in iterative cycles of inquiry to increase school leaders (principal and district office) individual and collective abilities to use self-care strategies by facilitating Equity-Center Professional Learning Community (EC-PLC) on self-care in which we collaboratively learn from each other on how to deepen relationship, share our *testimonios* (storytelling*)* and self-care strategies. As a result, we will better attend to work-related stress so that they may be fortified and sustained in doing the work of equity, excellence, and social justice leadership. The decision to take part in this research is yours to make. By doing this research, we hope to learn how educational leaders support their individual and collective abilities to attend to work-related stress by fortifying themselves and others in the work of equity, excellence and social justice leadership.

If you volunteer to take part in this research, you will be one of about 6 people to do so.

Are there reasons I should not take part in this research?
There are no known reasons for why you should not participate in this research study.

What other choices do I have if I do not take part in this research?
You can choose not to participate.
Where is the research going to take place and how long will it last?
The research will be conducted at a school in San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD). The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is approximately 90 minutes a month. You will also be invited to participate in a learning exchange once per semester

for 2 hours; this will occur over the time of 18 months (Fall 2019, Spring 2020, Fall 2020 and Spring 2021).

What will I be asked to do?
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:
- Participate in an Equity-Centered Professional Learning Community (EC-PLC) for 90 minutes a month.
- Complete a pre-study and post-study questionnaire focused on educational leaders actions and decisions to use self-care strategies for work-related stress.
- Participate in Community Learning Exchange once per semester for two hours over the course of 18 months (Fall 2019, Spring 2020, Fall 2020 and Spring 2021).
- Participate in an interview focused on educational leaders actions and decisions to use self-care strategies for work-related stress.

Interviews will be audio/video recorded. If you want to participate in an interview but do not want to be audio recorded, the interviewer will turn off the audio recorder. If you want to participate in a Community Learning Exchange but do not want to be video recorded, you will be able to sit out of the field of view of the video camera and still be audio recorded. The participants and the schools in the context will be given pseudonyms in order to protect their identities. In addition, all transcripts and recordings of interviews, memos, and meeting notes will be maintained in a secure, locked location. No materials will be replicated or disseminated in any way, and all of the above mentioned data will be destroyed one year after the completion of this study.

What might I experience if I take part in the research?
We do not know of any risks (the chance of harm) associated with this research. Any risks that may occur with this research are no more than what you would experience in everyday life. We do not know if you will benefit from taking part in this study. There may not be any personal benefit to you, but the information gained by doing this research may help others in the future.

Will I be paid for taking part in this research?
We will not be able to pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study.

Will it cost me to take part in this research?
It will not cost you any money to be part of the research.

Who will know that I took part in this research and learn personal information about me?
ECU and the people and organizations listed below may know that you took part in this research and may see information about you that is normally kept private. With your permission, these people may use your private information to do this research:
- Any agency of the federal, state, or local government that regulates human research. This includes the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the North Carolina Department of Health, and the Office for Human Research Protections.
- The University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) and its staff have responsibility for overseeing your welfare during this research and may need to see research records that identify you.

How will you keep the information you collect about me secure? How long will you keep it?
The information in the study will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the data collection and data analysis process. Consent forms and data from surveys, interviews, and focus groups will be maintained in a secure, locked location and will be stored for a minimum of three years after completion of the study. No reference will be made in oral or written reports that could link you to the study.

What if I decide I don't want to continue in this research?
You can stop at any time after it has already started. There will be no consequences if you stop and you will not be criticized. You will not lose any benefits that you normally receive.

Who should I contact if I have questions?
The people conducting this study will be able to answer any questions concerning this research, now or in the future. You may contact the principal investigator, Christina Velasco, at phone number 415-505-4098.

If you have questions about your rights as someone taking part in research, you may call the Office of Research Integrity & Compliance (ORIC) at phone number 252-744-2914 (days, 8:00 am-5:00 pm). If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, you may call the Director for Human Research Protections, at 252-744-2914

I have decided I want to take part in this research. What should I do now?
The person obtaining informed consent will ask you to read the following and if you agree, you should sign this form:

- I have read (or had read to me) all of the above information.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about things in this research I did not understand and have received satisfactory answers.
- I know that I can stop taking part in this study at any time.
- By signing this informed consent form, I am not giving up any of my rights.
- I have been given a copy of this consent document, and it is mine to keep.

_____   _____

Participant's Name (PRINT)   **Signature**   **Date**
     Person Obtaining Informed Consent: I have conducted the initial informed consent

process. I have orally reviewed the contents of the consent document with the person who has

signed above, and answered all of the person's questions about the research.

_____

Person Obtaining Consent (PRINT)   **Signature**   **Date**

APPENDIX D: CHARACTERISTICS OF STRATEGIES AND TOOLS FOR SELF-CARE & SUSTAINABILITY

Study	Purpose	Setting and Participants	Methods	Findings
Bottery, Ping-Man, & Nagai (2018)- Qualitative case study	Explores leadership sustainability cross culturally	24 principals in the UK & 24 principals in Hong Kong	Portrait methodology/ Interviews	School Leaders may be sustained if systems honor their individuality Sustainability may have different roots in different cultures Leaders need a space and time to reflect on problems
Bonomo (2016)- Qualitative	Understand how these female principals defined their roles in order to obtain personal and professional balance	5 female elementary principals in Indiana	Interviews with school principals	For personal and professional balance leaders: utilized self-efficacy exercised strategies for time and task management applied support from others appropriated time for self & family
Brock & Grady (2002)- Normative Qualitative	Explains a principal's guide to addressing issues related to stress and burnout	Principals in the U.S.	Interviews with school principals	Leader focus on what they can change Establish priorities & schedules Share leadership Effective time management and interpersonal skills Use a network of people to share similar problems, ideas and success

Characteristics of Strategies and Tools for Self-Care & Sustainability

Study	Purpose	Setting and Participants	Methods	Findings
Cabeen (2018)-Qualitative biographical study	Explores what systems of support principals establish to help meet the challenges of the job	One school principal	Self-reflection	School leaders can: • read to learn • build routines with time set aside for your passions (family, exercise) • reflect and reframe challenges and list items of gratitude • be mindful-build awareness of your mind and body.
Gardiner, Enomoto & Grogan (2000)-Qualitative case study	Explore mentoring relationships that support women of color leaders and if mentoring is a gendered and racialized practice	51 female and 5 male administrators in three states: Maryland, Virginia and Washington	Interviews	Mentoring can be a vehicle for transforming and change in educational leadership Networking Women supporting women
Harding (2016)-Qualitative biographical study	Explores how leader supervisors can help School leaders find life balance and burnout	Principals in California	Self-reflective	Systems approach to support leaders from District supervisors by: Restructure the leadership role build a culture of sustainability leverage principal's time (add flexible work schedule, adjust board agendas so principal related items are discussed first, travel to principal's sites)

Characteristics of Strategies and Tools for Self-Care & Sustainability

Study	Purpose	Setting and Participants	Methods	Findings
Harding (2016)- Qualitative biographical study (continued)	Explores how leader supervisors can help School leaders find life balance and burnout	Principals in California	Self-reflective	create quality collaboration time buffer demands from board create system to have difficult people referred to the district office provide coaches pay for leadership programs
Mahfouz (2018)- Qualitative Case study	Explores how CARE, a mindfulness-based PD supports school leaders	13 principals in rural clusters of central Pennsylvania	Interviews and observational notes	C.A.R.E. professional development is efficacious in high-poverty, high risk settings Mindfulness practice supports principal's ability to develop skills (e.g. emotion regulation, self-awareness, promotes care and compassion)
Wells (2018)- Empirical study	Understand what elements and qualities help principals thrive and stay in the profession	Aspiring and practicing administrators Midwest from 2009-2012	Surveys	Reviewed program designed to mediate physician stress to offer model that can be used with school principals Found an 8-week program, 2.5 hours a week helped physicians be fully present vs. traditional professional learning focused on skills mindfulness practice written narratives of their experiences work in small groups

Introduction

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedules to meet with me today. I appreciate your willingness to participate in this interview. I will limit the time to one hour.

My name is Christina Velasco. I will serve as the moderator for the interview. I am conducting research as a graduate student at East Carolina University. The interview is part of a study to assess the extent educational leaders support their individual and collective abilities to attend to work-related stress by fortifying themselves and others in the work of equity, excellence, and social justice leadership. I am looking to attain the educational leaders story and discover how you attend to self-care. I want to talk with you about your personal experience as an educational leader. Therefore, I will be asking you about you're the formal and informal structures, systems and supports you use to help your daily with work-stress. What leadership actions you create in your work environment and conditions for your colleagues to attend to self-care and your thoughts on how you think we transfer these learned skills, structures and systems into district and other schools.

Disclosures:

- Your participation in the study is <u>voluntary.</u> It is your decision whether or not to participate and you may elect to stop participating in the interview at any time.
- The interview will be <u>digitally recorded</u> in order to capture a comprehensive record of our conversation. All information collected will be kept <u>confidential.</u> Any information collected during the session that may identify any participant will only be disclosed with your prior permission. A coding system will be used in the management and analysis of the interview data with no names or school identifiers associated with any of the recorded discussion.
- The interview will be conducted using a semi-structured and informal format. Several questions will be asked about both the individual knowledge and skills gained, and the organization practices used.
- The interview will last <u>approximately sixty minutes.</u>

Interview Questions

TURN RECORDER ON AND STATE THE FOLLOWING:

    a. **"This is Christina Velasco, interviewing (*Participant Code*) on *(Date)* for Espacio Sano: How Social Justice Educational Leaders Cultivate Caring and Sharing.**

    1. Tell me about your education journey from early schooling to now.

Possible follow up question: How long have you been a principal and at what schools?

2. Describe the formal and informal structures, systems, and supports you use to help you when you are dealing with work-stress?

3. Describe what leadership actions and conditions you have created in your work environment for your colleagues to attend to self-care?

4. What methods or strategies could our school district implement to help support your individual and our collective abilities to attend to work-related stress?

5. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Next Steps in the Process

Now that the formal interview process has concluded, the next step in this process is for me to spend time writing notes based on our time together and transcribing the recording. After transcribing the interview and rereading, I will reach out to you in order to clarify information from the interview or ask follow-up questions based on the information you shared. Would you prefer that I follow up in person or on the phone? Do you have time now to look at your calendar to set up a follow up or would you prefer that I email you? If time allows now, (set it up). Additionally, I will be analyzing the transcripts from multiple educational leaders in hopes of discovering factors that support educational leaders to attend to work-related stress and hope to ascertain strategies that school district can use to support educational leaders. I will share the transcript to you for your review before I use it in my study.

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX F: MATRIX OF INTERVIEW PROTOCOL TO RESEARCH QUESTION

Educational Leader Interview Question	Overarching question To what extent do social justice focused educational leaders support their individual and collective abilities to manage work-related stress?	Research Sub Question 1 What formal and informal structures, systems, and supports do educational leaders use to help them when they are dealing with work-related stress?	Research Sub Question 2 What leadership actions can educational leaders use to create working environments and conditions for their colleagues to attend to self-care?	Research Sub Question 3 To what extent do we transfer these learned skills, structures, and systems into district offices and other schools?
PRE				
a) Tell me about your education journey from early schooling to now? Possible follow up question: How long have you been a principal and at what schools?	X			
b) Define self-care. Draw a picture of what self-care means and write a few sentences. If you practice it, in which ways do you practice self-care?		X		

c) Describe what leadership actions and conditions you have created in your work environment for your colleagues to attend to self-care?			X	
d) What methods or strategies could our school district implement to help support your individual and our collective abilities to attend to work-related stress?			X	
Is there anything else you would like to add?				
POST				
a) Provide an image that best represents how you have felt since COVID. What have you done to care for others? What self-care has (or has not) looked like for you?	X			
b) How would you describe our EC-PLC self-care as collective care to other principals?		X		
c) Describe how the EC-PLC has or has not affirmed, motivated, or fortified you?	X			
d) Who are the community members you have			X	

shared these strategies with?				
e) How have you used this work with others, facilitated it, or used the strategies from the EC-PLC?			X	
f) How has moving our EC-PLC to a virtual space affected our distinct professional space, *Espacio Sano?*		X		
g) What has this work meant to you? How has it impacted you and the work you do with others?			X	
h) How will you sustain the work of self-care as collective care when I am no longer leading the PAR project?				X
i) How we can continue to create *Espacio Sano* for our communities? What message would you have for our central office leadership, state, and federal level leadership regarding maintaining self-care as a priority ?				X

APPENDIX G: SELF-CARE QUESTIONNAIRE

Self-Care Pre Questionnaire

Procedure:

Use an 8.5 x 11" paper.

On side one: define what self-care is. If you practice it, in which ways do you practice self-care?

On side two: draw a picture of what self-care means to you. Write a few sentences to describe your image.

Self-Care Post Questionnaire

Procedure:
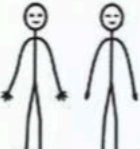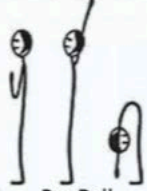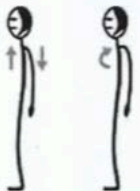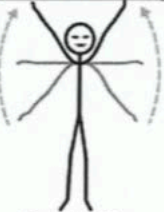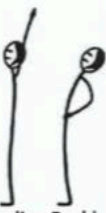
Use an 8.5 x 11" paper.

On side one: describe what structures, systems and supports you have used to attend to work-related stress.

Describe what actions and structures you have put in place for your colleagues to attend to self-care.

On side two: draw a picture of what this looks like in your work environment. Write a few sentences to describe your image.

APPENDIX H: OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Observer:_____

Observation Notes

Date	
School/Department	
Time	
Observation (Educational Leaders or Meeting) [CODE]	

Demographics	
Context of Setting	

Time	Selective Verbatim Notes of Observation	Annotations and Codes

APPENDIX I: DYNAMIC MINDFULNESS POSE CATEGORIES

Dynamic Mindfulness Pose Categories

CALMING	RELAXING	ENERGIZING	FOCUSING	RELEASE EXCESS ENERGY
Sun Breaths	Rag Doll	Star Gazer	Bird	Shake-out
Shoulder movements	Belly Breath	Breath of Joy	Tree	Eagle
Mountain	Seated Twist	Standing Backbend	Side Warrior	Chair Jumps
Forwad Warrior	4:8 Breaths	Trunk Twists	Crescent Moon	Dancer

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APPENDIX J: EXAMPLES OF COMPLETED SELF-CARE QUESTIONNAIRE
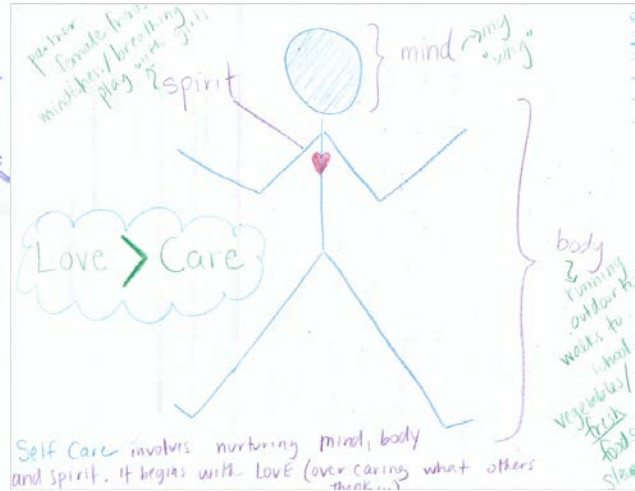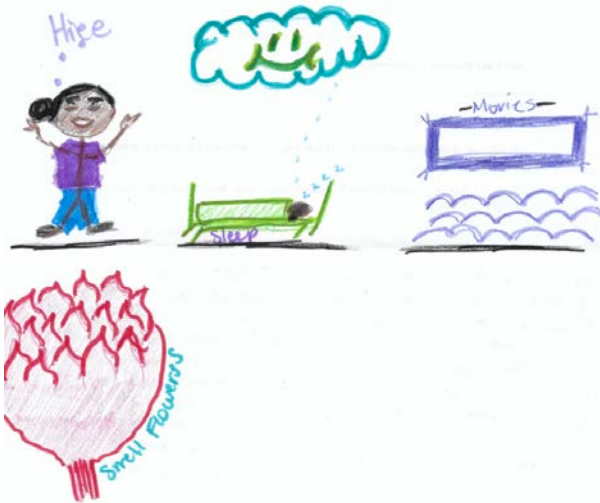
Self-Care Baseline Questionnaire

Procedure:

Use a 4 x 6 index card.

On side one: define what self-care is. If you practice it, in which ways do you practice self-care?

On side two: draw a picture of what self-care means to you. Write a few sentences to describe your image.

Self care is things we do for ourselves to take care of ourselves. Self-care can be emotional, physical and mental in nature. I practice self care by removing myself from or avoiding people. I find that I get my energy and calam restored after I have been solitude for a period of time. More specifically, I care for myself my sleeping and mindlessly watching good garbage on TV. I also care for myself by spending time with friends, watching movies and eating good food. One thing I need to do better at is in regards to physical self-care. I need to exercise and take my vitaments and eat right. But I am good at the sleeping part.

Self-Care Baseline Questionnaire

Procedure:

Use a 4 x 6 index card.

On side one: define what self-care is. If you practice it, in which ways do you practice self-care?

On side two: draw a picture of what self-care means to you. Write a few sentences to describe your image.

Self care is prioritizing your mind, body and spirit so that you have energy to give to others, shine light and positivity to others, contribute, etc. Self care involves letting go of perfectionism and following the mantra "Love More, Care Less"... Self care for me involves mindfulness in the morning + throughout the day, breathing, remembering my "why". Exercising, being outside, positive playful moments with my girls, sleep, communication w/ my husband, connection and allyship with other women, moms, leaders. Eating a ton of fresh vegetable forward foods.

APPENDIX K: EXAMPLE OF AN EC-PLC AGENDA

Equity Center Professional Learning Community- Self- Care
October 24, 2019 @ Christina's Home

Intended Outcomes:
- Build and deepen relational trust across difference
- Participate in an Equity Centered Professional Learning Community
- Define Self-care and how we practice it individually and collectively
- Learn and practice strategies for Dynamic Mindfulness
- *Testimonios:* Share a personal story and listen and learn from each other's stories
- Complete a Self-Care Baseline Questionnaire
- Make a commitment to yourself around self-care

Community Agreements:
- Take care of yourself
- Be engaged & present
- Keep equity at the center
- Double confidentiality
- Learner mindset

Time	Activity
5:00	<u>Opening Routines</u> - Welcome - Equity Frame: Self-care as group care- collectively support, network - Community Building: Eating well. Taking care of our selves at work - Review Community Agreements - Agenda/Outcomes
5:20	*<u>Mindfulness Eating and Wellness</u>* What is your comfort food? Describe a family home cooked meal and what made it special. <u>Dynamic Mindfulness</u>
5:40	*<u>Testimonios (storytelling)</u>* <u>Appreciative Listening</u> "Listening is about being present, not just about being quiet." Krista Tippett Prompt: Describe your greatest sources of work-related stress. How do you perceive this stress affecting your efficacy in attending to equity focused leadership?
6:00	<u>Self-Care Baseline Questionnaire</u> Complete baseline questionnaire on self-care. Share our definition and images of self-care. Begin to co-construct this meaning together. <u>Logistics</u> When can we meet monthly? Schedule Our Community Learning Exchange(CLE) 1/11/2020 or 1/25/2020
6:20	<u>Closing Circle</u> - What is a learning you are taking away today? - What are you committing to do this month for your self-care? - Appreciations
6:30	<u>Adjourn</u>

APPENDIX L: CODEBOOK

POSSIBLE THEME	CATEGORY	CODE CYCLE 1	DEFINITION/EXPLANATION	SOURCE	EC-PLC	REFLECTIVE MEMOS	ANALYTICAL MEMOS	ARTIFACTS	QUESTIONNAIRE PRE	TOTAL
	Agency	activist researcher	Name inequities and be in a position in the District to be an activist researching other ways to be a social justice leader	OPEN CODING		/	///			4
	Agency	co-create spaces	Help co-create spaces with CPR members to help each other work on things that stress us out, to tell the story we want to tell and self-direct the problems or ideas we want to explore	OPEN CODING		///	/			4
	Agency	leadership coach	Position as a leadership coach to newly hired administrators in the District has poised the leadership coach to provide opportunities to guide and support others	OPEN CODING			/			
	Agency	self care collective care	Help co-create an environment where we care for ourselves while caring for others simultaneously.	OPEN CODING		//	///			6
	Agency	tether the work to our why	Ability to intentionally connect the discussion and work we are creating in CPR group to our WHY (social justice leadership, historically vulnerable students and families, new comers...)	OPEN CODING		//	/			3
	Attendance	partial	members of the community are missing/did not attend meeting	OPEN CODING	/	/				2
	Attendance	fully attend	members of the community are present and fully present	OPEN CODING	/	//				3
	Attendance	conflict	member of the community missed because their District job had two back to back meeting	OPEN CODING	/	//	//			5
	Awareness	improve physical health	Conscious of the state of physical health and amount of exercise and healthy eating one experiences	OPEN CODING					/	1
	Awareness	sleeping	Conscious of the state of rest and amount of sleep one experiences	OPEN CODING					/	1
	Collective input	artifacts	CPR group provides input on FOP, CLE, artifacts	OPEN CODING	/	/				2
	Collective input	leadership learning	Learning as a result of collaborating with CPR members, reflection (praxis) and understanding leadership actions; one is able to adjustments PD plan for future leadership meetings	OPEN CODING			////			5
	Collective input	meeting content	CPR group contributes to content of EC-PLC & CLE meetings	OPEN CODING		//	//// ////			11
	Collective input	meeting conditions	CPR group makes agreements to the use of time and frequency of EC-PLC meetings	OPEN CODING		///	//// ///			11
	Collaboration	one to one	CPR member and I meet to discuss PAR and contribute ideas & information to project	OPEN CODING			///			4
	Collaboration	on topics	principals collaborate on topics at PDs and principal meetings	OPEN CODING		/			/	2
	Commitment	affirmed participation	Members have affirmed their commitment to participating in the PAR	OPEN CODING			/			
	Compliance	Required Timelines	District imposed documentation, UESF, Title 9 paperwork	OPEN CODING	/	/		//		4
	Consequences	turnover	Leaders are stresses and not attending to their self-care and as a effect they leave their job	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Consequences	burnout	Leaders are stresses and not attending to their wellbeing and as a effect they burnout	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Consequences	poor equity outcomes for students	Leaders are stresses and not attending to their wellbeing and as a consequence students have poor outcomes	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Critical Resilience	self-care as group care	the ability to attend to self-care and as a result of one's well being you can show up and support others in a collective care	OPEN CODING		/	////			6
	Curiosity	CPR member	Curious to know more about CPR members and their commitments	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Curiosity	job-position changes	How CRP members new positions impact their attention to self care	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Curiosity	leadership actions	How leadership actions impact the disruption of inequity	OPEN CODING			//			2
	Culture	Resistance	staff members demonstrate a refusal to comply or accept change a leader is proposing	OPEN CODING				/		1
	Culture	Staff	Staff members lack relational trust	OPEN CODING				/		1
	Data	memo	Reflective memo about research work and questions	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Disposition	calm	showing a peaceful tranquil manner	OPEN CODING					//	2
	Disposition	curious	showing an active desire to know or learn something, inquisitive	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Disposition	easygoing	showing a relaxed and tolerant manner, not prone to rigid rules of temper	OPEN CODING					///	3
	Disposition	energetic	showing great vitality, activity	OPEN CODING					//	2
	Disposition	shine light	appear animate or bright	OPEN CODING					/	1
	Disposition	positive	showing a good, affirmative and optimistic presence	OPEN CODING					///	3
	Disposition	happy	showing pleasure or contentment, cheerful	OPEN CODING					//	2
	Disposition	healthy	appearing to be in good health	OPEN CODING				/		1
	Disposition	patient	showing acceptance or tolerance to problems without being annoyed or anxious	OPEN CODING				/		1
	Disposition	attentive	the state of being attentive/present; active expression of love and action (fully there)	OPEN CODING			///		/	5
	Disposition	supportive	showing encouragement or emotional help	OPEN CODING				/		1
	Disposition	resilient	showing the ability to have stamina and fortitude and recover quickly from a difficult condition or situation	OPEN CODING			/		/	2

POSSIBLE THEME	CATEGORY	CODE CYCLE 1	DEFINITION/EXPLANATION	SOURCE	EC-PLC	REFLECTIVE MEMOS	ANALYTICAL MEMOS	ARTIFACTS	QUESTIONNAIRE PRE	TOTAL
	Disposition	resourceful	having the ability to find clever ways, resources, and tools to overcome difficulties or figure out a solution	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Disposition	active	engaging in physical energetic pursuits	OPEN CODING						1
	Disposition	rigid/serious	showing a serious demeanor, not able to adapt or change	OPEN CODING			//			2
	Disposition	vulnerable	show yourself without holding back, open	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Environment	relaxed setting	Location of meeting or event at CPR member home	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Emotion	affirmed/validated	affirm or recognize the worth of a person feelings	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Emotion	discouraged	Feeling disheartened, a loss of confidence or enthusiasm	OPEN CODING		/				1
	Emotion	hope	Feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen	OPEN CODING			//			2
	Emotion	inspired	Feeling excited and encourage, to breathe life into	OPEN CODING		/				1
	Emotion	excited	Feeling enthusiastic, joy, exhilaration	OPEN CODING		//				2
	Emotion	exhaustion	Feeling tired, and in need of rest; sleep	OPEN CODING		///				3
	Emotion	fear	Feeling scared that someone or something is dangerous or will cause pain/threat	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Emotion	shocked	Feeling surprised and upset	OPEN CODING	/	/				2
	Emotion	safe	Feeling free from harm or hurt; feeling supported	OPEN CODING	/	//				3
	Emotion	sane	Feeling clear minded a ease,	OPEN CODING		/				1
	Emotion	relaxed	Feeling at ease, comfortable	OPEN CODING	/	//	///			6
	Emotion	relieved	Feeling a release of worry	OPEN CODING		/				1
	Emotion	peaceful	Feeling safe and relaxed, calm and tranquil	OPEN CODING		/		/		2
	Emotion	love	Feeling a strong and constant affection for a person/ deep affection	OPEN CODING		/				1
	Emotion	worried/nervous	Feeling mentally concerned, anxious about what is happening or might happen	OPEN CODING		////	//			6
	Emotion	frustrated	Feeling angry or annoyed because you are unable to do something	OPEN CODING			//			2
	Emotion	empathy	Ability to sense and identify other person's (CPR members) emotions	OPEN CODING		/				1
	Health	breast cancer	a cancer that forms in the cells of the breasts	OPEN CODING	/	//				3
	Health	eat right	eating healthy and nutrition whole foods	OPEN CODING					/	1
	Health	exercise	attending to our physical health; running, walking,	OPEN CODING	/				//	3
	Health	rest	cease from movement in order to relax and refresh oneself	OPEN CODING					//	2
	Health	take vitamin	attending to our physical health taking supplemental vitamins	OPEN CODING					/	1
	Health	boost oxytocin	Engaging in activities that help boost oxytocin (telling someone a story for 8 minutes)	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Holding Space	Self	Creating a space for myself to attend to self-care in a collective setting with CPR members	OPEN CODING		/	///			4
	Holding Space	CPR group	Creating a space for CPR members to attend to self-care in a collective setting; we are holding gracious space for members to have a voice	OPEN CODING		/	/////			8
	Intention	fun	CPR members set an aim on maintaining grounded in our WHY (FUN and joyful work environment)we do the work	OPEN CODING		/				1
	Intention	focus on students	CPR members set an aim on maintaining grounded in our WHY (focus on student outcomes) we do the work	OPEN CODING		/				1
	Intention	colleagues/principals	CPR members set an aim on maintaining grounded in our WHY (supporting new principals and colleagues take care of themselves to stay engaged in the Social Justice work).	OPEN CODING		/				1
	Intention	stay grounded in our why	CPR members set an aim on maintaining grounded in our WHY (social justice leadership) we do the work	OPEN CODING		/				1
	Job	change position	transition to new position within the school district	OPEN CODING			//			2
	Engagement	social activism	engage in social activism	OPEN CODING					/	1
	Engagement	SJ education	education toward equity and excellence in education especially for the historically vulnerable students	OPEN CODING		//			/	3
	Epistemology	Women's moral leadership	feminist ways of knowing on women's moral leadership and greater freedoms as moral imperatives	OPEN CODING Gilligan (1982)			/			1
	Epistemology	women of color encargadas	feminist and indigenous ways of knowing on women's moral leadership and greater freedoms as moral imperatives	OPEN CODING Sosa-Provencio (2017)			/			1
	Leadership Action	advise the use self-care strategies	Leader advises to colleagues the use of self-care strategies while attending to the social justice leadership work	OPEN CODING			///			3
	Leadership Action	responsiveness	Responding to principal requests to attend to wellness and self-care	OPEN CODING	/	//	///// //			10
	Leadership Action	coaching	Leader provides coaching to a member of their school/work community	OPEN CODING			//			2
	Leadership Action	facilitation	CPR member facilitates a process in our group that helps build relational trust	OPEN CODING		/	///			4
	Leadership Action	planning	Leader planning a EC-PLC meeting for CPR group	OPEN CODING		//	//// //			11

POSSIBLE THEME	CATEGORY	CODE CYCLE 1	DEFINITION/EXPLANATION	SOURCE	EC-PLC	REFLECTIVE MEMOS	ANALYTICAL MEMOS	ARTIFACTS	QUESTIONNAIRE PRE	TOTAL
	Leadership Action	professional development	Leader plans and facilitates professional development for their school/department constituents	OPEN CODING			//			2
	Leadership Action	social justice work	combating systemic oppression and unpacking bias in our communities, interrupting issues of hegemony	OPEN CODING			///			4
	Leadership Action	supporting	Leader supports other members of their work community	OPEN CODING			/		//	3
	Leadership Action	sustain oneself	Leader uses and models of self-care strategies and advises colleagues to use of self-care strategies while attending to the social justice leadership work community	OPEN CODING			///// /			6
	Leadership Action	equity vision	Leader holds an equity vision for the school.	OPEN CODING			//			2
	Leadership Action	equity oriented changes	Leader implements changes to support equity especially for the historically vulnerable students	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Leadership Action	encargados	(responsible) leaders carry the weight and responsibility of combating systemic oppressive systems	OPEN CODING Sosa-Provencio (2017)			/			1
	Leadership Action	integrity	model what we teach in PDs, District Values	OPEN CODING		/	/			2
	Metaphor	infinity symbol	a figure eight on its side, the infinity symbol represent a sense of simplicity and balance, love.	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Methodology	CLE	The use of Community Learning Exchanges to share strategies and learn from other women leaders	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Methodology	storytelling	The use of testimonios (storytelling) to support CPR relational trust and understand each other's story as a means to attend to self-care as group care	OPEN CODING			//			2
	Methodology	self care strategies	The use of self-care strategies (dynamic mindfulness, mindfulness eating, stress and time management)	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Methodology	iterative	Uses 3 cycles of inquiry	OPEN CODING			//			2
	Mindset	fixed	Ascribing to the organizational culture's status quo- established set of attitudes and ways of being and doing	OPEN CODING			//	/		3
	Mindset	growth	Ascribing to a flexible and more organic way, set of attitudes and ways of being and doing	OPEN CODING				//		2
	Mindset	resistance	Staff's unwilling to examine their biases	OPEN CODING				/		1
	Mindset	self-care as group care	Ascribing to belief that when one attends to their self-care it provides opportunities, dispositions and abilities to help attend and be responsive to a collective care	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Mindset	personal bias	Staff bias on which members they prefer to work with	OPEN CODING				/		1
	Mindset	adult issues	Staff members are unwilling to open to change	OPEN CODING				/		1
	Motivation	FUN	CPR member focus on creating FUN during work week helps her get through the work	OPEN CODING		/				1
	Motivation	students	CPR members focus on historically most vulnerable students helps the get through the work	OPEN CODING		/////	/			8
	Motivation	colleagues/community	CPR members focus on connecting with colleagues in their work community	OPEN CODING		/////				6
	Motivation	challenged	motivation to attend to self care is challenged	OPEN CODING		/				1
	Nexus	self-care and praxis	The connection between taking care of one self and reflecting on how self-care impact the collective work, social justice work and collective care	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Nexus	personal and professional self	The connection between taking care of one self at the personal level (mental, physical, spiritual) and how this impacts one's professional self	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Organizational culture	tightly packed agendas	District meetings that are tightly packet with content and limited time to process and collaborate	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Outcome	build relational trust	As a result of collective input on meeting conditions and content CPR members build relational trust	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Outcome	ground us in the space	As a result of collective on meeting conditions and content (opening routines & connectors) CPR members feel grounded in the space to be more present	OPEN CODING Hughes (2010)			///			4
	Outcome	take risks	As a result of collective on meeting conditions and content (norms) CPR members take risks	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Outcome	new learning opportunity	CPR ECPLC space provides new learning opportunities that occur organically	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Pause	respite	relief from day to day activities	OPEN CODING	/				/	2
Transfer	Pollinating practices	central office	Spreading and sharing self-care, wellness strategies with central office colleagues	OPEN CODING		/////	///// //			13
	Pollinating practices	outside of District	self care strategies share with community outside of the School District ie UCEA conference	OPEN CODING		//				2
	Pollinating practices	principal meeting	Spreading self care strategies at principal meeting (principals leading principals, TLEE new admin, Cohort meetings)	OPEN CODING		///	///// /////			13
	Pollinating practices	schools	Spreading and sharing self-care, wellness strategies with colleagues in the school settings	OPEN CODING		//	/			3

POSSIBLE THEME	CATEGORY	CODE CYCLE 1	DEFINITION/EXPLANATION	SOURCE	EC-PLC	REFLECTIVE MEMOS	ANALYTICAL MEMOS	ARTIFACTS	QUESTIONNAIRE PRE	TOTAL
	Possibilities	central office supports	CPR group brainstorms ideas of how central office can support our leadership and lessen workload by centralizing and having designated personnel for compliance driven workload.	OPEN CODING	/	/		/		3
	Possibilities	organizational structures	CPR group brainstorms ideas on how the SFUSD organization can streamlines structures to lessen the workload	OPEN CODING	/	/				2
	Possibilities	organizational systems	CPR group brainstormed ideas on how SFUSD can centrally manage spam and block junk mail to support email & mail task management	OPEN CODING		/				1
	Possibilities	reinvent	Reinvent the way we can attend to self-care in our workplaces. Self-care as group care	OPEN CODING		///				3
	Possibilities	cultivate creativity	Create more opportunities to be creative in existing structures in our work environments and SFUSD Organization	OPEN CODING		/				1
	Possibilities	CPR members lead	How if and when CPR members take on designing future meetings	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Possibilities	use technology to connect	Utilize technology and application to engage in conversations and exchange ideas (flipgrid, zoom, whatsapp)	OPEN CODING			/			1
Time	Prioritize	compliance	Arrange time and tasks with compliance/required timelines first	OPEN CODING				/		1
	Prioritize	students/classroom visits	CPR member reorganizes work tasks and places student and classroom visits first on their schedule	OPEN CODING		///	//		/	7
	Prioritize	dates with partner	CPR member reorganizes work tasks and places time with significant other (partner, wife, husband) first	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Prioritize	family	CPR member reorganizes work tasks and places time with family members first	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Prioritize	financial	CPR member reorganizes work tasks and places finances first	OPEN CODING					/	1
	Prioritize	emotions	CPR member reorganizes work tasks and places emotional well-being first	OPEN CODING					/	1
	Prioritize	health	CPR member reorganizes work tasks and places health first	OPEN CODING		//	///		/	7
	Relational trust	storytelling	CPR member establish relational trust through telling and hearing each other's stories	OPEN CODING Romero (2016) Romero (2018)			/			1
	Relational trust	social events	CPR member establish relational trust through social events and gatherings	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Relationship	lack of trust	Staff have not established relational trust with each other	OPEN CODING				//		2
	Relationship	relational trust	CPR members established relational trust with each other through spending and engaging with each other at meetings, one to one meetings, and working alongside each other	OPEN CODING			///			3
	Relationship	negative feedback	Staff you trust provide another staff member negative feedback	OPEN CODING		/		/		2
	Relationships	family and school	Relationships among family/guardians and school personnel	OPEN CODING				/		1
PRAXIS	Reflection	change	Reflection provides insight to make a change/shift	OPEN CODING Freire (1970)			////			4
PRAXIS	Reflection	past experience	Reflect on past experiences	OPEN CODING		/	//			3
PRAXIS	Reflection	leadership actions	reflect on a leadership action of attending to self-care in CPR group leads to actions in other work spaces	OPEN CODING			//// //// /			11
PRAXIS	Reflection	learning	Reflection provides new understanding or strategy that is a result of our meeting together	OPEN CODING Freire (1970)			//// /			6
	Reflection	documentation	written, use of technology or verbally recoded	OPEN CODING			////			6
	Reflection	renewal	reflection to provide a renewal and a fresh restart	OPEN CODING						1
Space	Ritual	appreciation	The use of celebrating and inviting appreciations at the end of our meeting	OPEN CODING Guajardo (2016)			/			1
	Ritual	connector	use of intentional opening questions to begin storytelling that helps build relational trust with members at a meeting	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Ritual	community circle	The use of a closing circle at the beginning or end of a meeting	OPEN CODING Bose (2017)			/			1
	Ritual	dynamic mindfulness	The use of dynamic mindfulness as a ritual at CPR & CLE meetings	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Ritual	imaginal	The use of a poem, quote, image to provoke a story and help us reflect on our self	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Ritual	self reflection	the use of reflection as a ritual in our meetings	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Ritual	commitment	Setting and intention and commitment to self-care at the end of the meeting	OPEN CODING			//			2
	Self-care	emotional	taking care of one's emotional state of being	OPEN CODING					/	1
	Self-care	physical	taking care of one's physical health and well being	OPEN CODING					///	3
	Self-care	mental	taking care of one's mental health and well being	OPEN CODING			/		///	4
	Self-care	spiritual	taking care of one's spiritual health and well being	OPEN CODING					//	2
Space	Setting	spiritual	physical location provides a space for spiritual connection to transpire	OPEN CODING		/				1
	Setting	physical/space	physical location of our CPR meeting. off site at Non SFUSD location	OPEN CODING	/	////	////			11

POSSIBLE THEME	CATEGORY	CODE CYCLE 1	DEFINITION/EXPLANATION	SOURCE	EC-PLC	REFLECTIVE MEMOS	ANALYTICAL MEMOS	ARTIFACTS	QUESTIONNAIRE PRE	TOTAL
Transformation	Shift	location/space	change of physical location of our CPR meeting from school site to off site location	OPEN CODING			//			2
	Shift	facilitation:rigid to free play	leadership/facilitation from rigid, contrived and/or constrained to an agenda to more organic and flexible	OPEN CODING			//// /			6
	Shift	facilitation: facilitator to participant guide	Change of role from the facilitator of a meeting to a participant guide of the meeting	OPEN CODING			///			3
	Shift	time: contrived to leveraged	A shift of how we use the time in our meeting to make meaning together and prioritize from a rigid fixed agenda to a more fluid and responsive one to the members in the meeting	OPEN CODING			//			2
	Shift	lack of self care to wellness	A shift of how members of a team worked through lunch and did not take breaks to members of a team taking breaks, using dynamic mindfulness, eating healthy snacks	OPEN CODING			//			2
	Structure	informal meeting	Informal meeting, optional attendance required	OPEN CODING	/	/				2
	Structure	formal meeting	District meeting structure, optional attendance required	OPEN CODING	/	/		//		4
	Stress	work related	Excessive amount of workload, tasks with limited time creates stress	OPEN CODING		/	///			4
	Stress	self induced	Creating a personal narrative of perfectionism creates stress	OPEN CODING		//				2
	Supports	disconnected/trivial	meeting topics and presentations feel disconnected from the real work at school sites.	OPEN CODING				///		3
	Supports	constrained	meeting structures and presentations leave little room for flexibility and dynamic of group, inflexible and responsive to members in the meeting, inorganic	OPEN CODING		/		/		2
	Supports	not user friendly	IT supports are not user friendly (Edjoin, synergy, webage)	OPEN CODING				//		2
	Supports	meaningful	CPR members express the meetings, structure, resource provided was meaningful and a practical use of time	OPEN CODING		/	///			4
	Supports	verbal encouragement	CPR member express verbal encouragement to another CPR members to attend to self care	OPEN CODING	/	////	///			9
	Supports	thought partnership	CPR member receives support from another person (outside of group)	OPEN CODING		///				4
	Tension	interpersonal relationships/staff	A conflict amongst staff members in a school/work environment	OPEN CODING				/		1
	Tension	school and family	A conflict between school personnel and a student's family/guardian member	OPEN CODING				/		1
	Tension	work & wellness	A conflict between what one wants to engage in a wellness strategy and limited time because of work responsibilities	OPEN CODING		/				1
	Tethering	across places	Ability to anchor wellness strategies and self care practices from across the SFUSD District and share them with various constituents.	OPEN CODING		//	/			3
	Time	commodity	time is a limited resource,	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Time	pacing	Making time for self, intentionally slowing down the cadence of the day, week or a meeting	OPEN CODING	/	///	////	/		10
	Time	fixed	Specific amount of time allocated (ex. 8 minutes) or specific year	OPEN CODING			//// /////			13
	Time	interrupted	Workflow is stop and go.	OPEN CODING				/		1
	Time	wellness appointments	Making time for health appointment, wellness appointments	OPEN CODING	/	//				3
	Time	leveraged	The manner in which time is utilized is prioritized by the CPR members or constituents involved in that meeting with a fixed amount of time allocated	OPEN CODING			///			3
	Time	schedule	Calendar meetings and schedule everything including future events.	OPEN CODING	/	////	///// //	/		16
	Time	extension	Time extends way beyond a 7 hour work day. Late evening events or weekend events.	OPEN CODING	/	////		//		8
	Time	friends and family	Time spent with friends and family to support self-care and rejuvenation	OPEN CODING	/	/				2
	Time	management	Time managed and prioritized	OPEN CODING		//				2
	Time	Renewing activity	Time spent on a renewing or grounding activity. pottery.	OPEN CODING	/	/				2
	Time	long trajectory	Looking at the long term path of someone's career	OPEN CODING	/	/				2
	Time	unrealistic/limited	Time allocation in classrooms (80%) of the time does not appear realistic with the many other job responsibilities a principal must attend to, time set aside for meeting is tightly paced and limits the level of interactions with participants	OPEN CODING			///	/		4
	Transparency	PAR & CPR role	fully disclose the PAR project and roles and responsibilities of CPR group	OPEN CODING		/				1
	Wellness Strategies	essential oils	Leaders learn about and made essential oil rollers to support work related stress	OPEN CODING	/	/	///			6
	Wellness Strategies	massage	District leader is organizing professional mini massages for her principals	OPEN CODING	/	/				2
	Wellness Strategies	time management	strategies to manage emails, documentation, tasks	OPEN CODING	/	///	/			5
	Wellness Strategies	solitude	removing oneself from people or avoiding people,restored energy and calm after some time of being alone	OPEN CODING		/	/		//	4
	Wellness Strategies	sleeping	strategies to manage better sleep	OPEN CODING					//	2
	Wellness Strategies	breathing	strategies to practice deep breathing	OPEN CODING					/	1
	Wellness Strategies	mindless TV	strategies to support relaxation	OPEN CODING					/	1

POSSIBLE THEME	CATEGORY	CODE CYCLE 1	DEFINITION/EXPLANATION	SOURCE	EC-PLC	REFLECTIVE MEMOS	ANALYTICAL MEMOS	ARTIFACTS	QUESTIONNAIRE PRE	TOTAL
	Wellness Strategies	Dynamic mindfulness	strategies to practice active movements, deep breathing, centering the mind	OPEN CODING		/	//// /		//	9
	Wellness Strategies	time with friends/family	activities that help members rejuvenate and ground themselves	OPEN CODING		///			///	6
	Wellness Strategies	watching movies	activities that help members attend to self care	OPEN CODING		/			//	3
	Wellness Strategies	eating healthy food	strategies to support healthy eating, mindfulness eating	OPEN CODING		//	////		///	10
	Wellness Strategies	letting go	Letting go of perfectionism	OPEN CODING					/	1
	Wellness Strategies	Mantra/Affirmations	strategies to use mantras and affirmations, positive self talk; mindset-changing phases, mindset as a stress management tool	OPEN CODING			//		/	3
	Wellness Strategies	Reflection	Using reflection to anchor to the WHY of our work	OPEN CODING		/				1
	Wellness Strategies	exercising	activities that help members attend to physical & mental health	OPEN CODING		/	/		//	4
	Wellness Strategies	playfulness	activities that help invite fun and free play	OPEN CODING					/	1
	Wellness Strategies	connection with other women leaders/collective care	connection and allyship with other women, leaders, moms	OPEN CODING					//	2
	Wellness Strategies	walks in nature	activities that help members attend to physical & mental health	OPEN CODING			///		/	4
	Wellness Strategies	expansive listening	activities that help members attend to leadership skills	OPEN CODING			///			4
	Wellness Strategies	listening to music	activities that help members rejuvenate and ground themselves	OPEN CODING					/	1
	Wellness Strategies	making pottery	activities that help members rejuvenate and ground themselves	OPEN CODING		/	/		/	3
	Wellness Strategies	attending a performance	activities that help members rejuvenate and ground themselves	OPEN CODING					/	1
	Wellness Strategies	listening to podcast	activity that helps members learn, rejuvenate and ground themselves (On Being, GOOP)	OPEN CODING			/		/	2
	Wellness Strategies	storytelling	Sharing stories of self-care and wellness with each other	OPEN CODING			///		/	5
	Wellness Strategies	watching TV show on wellness	activity that helps members learn, rejuvenate and ground themselves (OWN-Wellness focused TV series or documentary or show)	OPEN CODING				/		1
	Wellness Strategies	challenged	not engaging in wellness strategies, engaging in unhealthy eating, not exercising,	OPEN CODING		//				2
	Wellness Strategies	across locations	the use of wellness strategies across locations throughout the day	OPEN CODING			/			1

POSSIBLE THEME	CATEGORY	CODES CYCLE 2	DEFINITION/EXPLANATION	SOURCE	CLE	EC-PLC	MEMOS	ARTIFACTS	OBSERVATION	TOTAL
social activism	Activism	do the right thing	disrupt and interrupt, fighting for humanity and humility	OPEN CODING	///			//		5
	Activism	be radical	the action a person who advocates thorough or complete political or social reform	OPEN CODING Davis	/			/		2
	Activism	dismantle	the action to take a structure to pieces	OPEN CODING	/			/		2
	CLE Axiom	welcome space	A space that is safe and invites critical points of view, a relational space that invites *testimonios* (stories)	CLE AXIOM Guajardo et.al. (2016)	///					3
	CLE Axiom	Circle	ancient tradition of cultures and communities to proceed space for possibilities, connection and understanding. opening and closing circles.	CLE AXIOM Guajardo et.al.	///					3
	CLE Axiom	Spirit	evoking the wisdom and presence of ancestors and important people	CLE AXIOM Guajardo et.al.	/////					6
	CLE Axiom	talking piece	object of importance to the circle convener used to identify who is speaking in the circle	CLE AXIOM Guajardo et.al.	/					1
collective story	CLE Axiom	storytelling/testimonios	telling our story, telling a collective story, turn the me in to the we, hold the story hold the space, *testimonio the we story, integrated story*	CLE AXIOM Guajardo et.al.	//////	///	////			14
	Collective care	bring a teacher back	the idea of holding and hoping for healing of a member of the community so that more can learn and benefit of her teaching, feeling cared for/part of something	OPEN CODING	//					2
	Collective care	support/resilience	collective is nourishing and supportive, uplifts you, professional advice, listens to you, cries with you	OPEN CODING	//////	////	///	//	/	17
	Connection	hug/smile	communication smile, hug	OPEN CODING	//			/		3
	Connection	stay connected	Stay connected despite all the stress	OPEN CODING	//					2
	Core Values	team work	sense of belonging, being togethers,	OPEN CODING	////			/		5
	Core Values	dignity	the state of being worthy of respect	OPEN CODING	//	/		/		4
	Core Values	honor	high respect, great esteem	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Core Values	respect	a feeling of deep admiration of a person or something elicited by their qualities or achievements	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Core Values	connect to heart	values that are connected to a person's' heart, emotional self	OPEN CODING	/			//		3
	Core Values	connect to work	values that are connected to the mission and vision of one's work	OPEN CODING	/	/				2
	COVID-19	inverse work life	the unexpected phenomena to shelter in place and have to work from home	OPEN CODING		/	/			2
	COVID-19	school closure	the unexpected phenomena to close schools and provide distance learning through remote schooling	OPEN CODING			/			1
	COVID-19	reimagine	the possibilities to reconsider other ways to engage in school/learning as a result of Covid-19 and emergency remote schooling	OPEN CODING			/			1
	CPR	member checks	feedback from CPR members to help improve the internal validity, of the PAR.		/	//	/			4
	Disposition	care	the provision of what is necessary for the health and protection of someone	Open coding Aguilar, E.	/					1
	Disposition	confident	feeling self-assured	Open coding Aguilar, E.	/	/		/		3
	Disposition	humor	the quality of being amusing	Open coding Aguilar, E.	//	/	/	//	//	8
	Disposition	cognizant	having knowledge and being aware of, clarity	Open coding Aguilar, E.	//			/		3
	Disposition	empathy	the ability to understand the feelings of another	Open coding Aguilar, E.	////				/	5
	Disposition	present	state of being present and grounded	Open coding Aguilar, E.	/////	//				8
	Disposition	mindset	similar mindset to help solve the problems of today	Open coding Aguilar, E.	/	/				2
	Disposition	vulnerability	breaking down barriers and holding ourselves collectively	Open coding Aguilar, E.	//		/			3
emotional intelligence	Disposition	peace	freedom from disturbance/tranquility	Open coding Aguilar, E.	//					2
	Emotion	sadness	a feeling of being sad/ unhappy	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Emotion	glad	a feeling of being happy, pleased	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Emotion	gratitude	a feeling of being thankful, readiness to return kindness	OPEN CODING	////					4
	Emotion	hope	a feeling or expectation for a certain thing to happen	OPEN CODING			/			2
	Emotion	content	a feeling of being happy	OPEN CODING	/		/			2
	Emotion	liberated	a feeling sense of freedom from convention	OPEN CODING	//					2
	Emotion	love	an intense feeling of deep affection	OPEN CODING	//					2
	Emotion	stress	individual and collective stress, overwhelmed	OPEN CODING	//		/	/		4
	Emotion	frustration/envy	a feeling of being annoyed or upset especially because of an inability to achieve/change something	OPEN CODING			/		//	3
	Emotion	joy	feeling elated about the work of school leadership that is driven by students and the community	OPEN CODING	///////////		/	//	/	16

Theme	Category	Code	Definition	Source	Tallies	Count
	Emotion	happy	a feeling of pleasure/contentment	OPEN CODING	//	2
	Fortified	held you up	strengthen by each other, feeling cared for/part of something, "held by the quadrado"	OPEN CODING	////// /	8
	Fortified	keep you going	encouraged and motivate each other	OPEN CODING	/	1
	Fortified	collectively	holding ourselves collectively in a way that we can really see our strengths and staff connected despite all the stress, leaning more on people to celebrate and struggle with, **show up for others**	OPEN CODING	///// /	7
	Honor	each other	to pay high respect to each other	OPEN CODING	/ / /	3
	Honor	the space	to pay high respect to the physical space	OPEN CODING	/	1
	Honor	the land	the pay high respect to the land	OPEN CODING	/	1
	Honor	native people	to pay high respect to the native peoples	OPEN CODING	/	1
	Honor	ancestors/elders	grandmother, grandfather	OPEN CODING	//// /	6
	Honor	a space for women	to pay high respect to a space for women	OPEN CODING	/ /	2
	Honor	family	to pay high respect to family	OPEN CODING	//	2
	Honor	students	to pay high respect to students	OPEN CODING	/	1
	Metric	affirmation	affirming each other, validation, feel valued	OPEN CODING	/// / / /	6
	Metric	attunement-witnessing	being present in my body so that one can deeply see, hear and feel the other person, humility	OPEN CODING	//// /	5
	Metric	time-Timex watch	talking piece used to measure who who speaking in the circle, symbolic importance to the convener of the circle	OPEN CODING	/	1
	Metric	anger, stress, fear, optimism,	anger, stress,	OPEN CODING	///	3
	Metric	infinity loop	continue endlessly	OPEN CODING	/	1
	Metric	intentional	the fact of being deliberate or purposive, paying attention	OPEN CODING	////// //	9
	Metric	my daughter's voice	the idea of listening to the first 3 syllables a person utters to gauge how they are doing	OPEN CODING	/	1
	Metric	listening	listening to how people really are, listen to the story, deep listening, listen with ear and heart	OPEN CODING	///////// / /	13
	Metric	authentic self/evolve	authentic feelings come from the heart, authorship of self knowledge, expert of you, be yourself	OPEN CODING	/////////// // //	19
	Metric	cognitive/intellectuals	measure what we think, rationalize, "knowledge to say I don't know"	OPEN CODING	////	4
wholehearted leadership practice integration	Metric	brainheart	brain and heart connection, healing place, heart/intellect	OPEN CODING	/////////// // /	16
	Metric	community/connection	being held by incredible people I work with and relations with families and children, how we hold and measure care and each other	OPEN CODING	//////// // // /	17
	Metric	core values	what really is important to us	OPEN CODING	///	3
	Metric	disconnect	lack of connection to students, feeling like part of a cog in the school machine, miss things when sep heart and mind, compartmentalize, unlearn, system that can be inhumane so many times, misalignment to core values	OPEN CODING	///// //	8
	Metric	assumption	deficient mindset	OPEN CODING	/ /	2
	Metric	missing	cultural piece missing	OPEN CODING	/ /	2
	Metric	misperception	misalignment to core values	OPEN CODING	/	1
	Metric	student success	the core value of the work is about kids success and how I impact their future	OPEN CODING	// /	3
	Metric	fun		OPEN CODING	// /	3
	Metric	health	how do I feel?	OPEN CODING	/ /	2
	Metric	intimacy	closeness and connection, humanity, see people deeply, look for what's underneath	OPEN CODING	/////////// / // /	19
	Metric	joy	feeling of great pleasure and happiness	OPEN CODING	//// //	7
	Metric	selfless	concerned more with the wishes of other than with one's on, unselfish	OPEN CODING	//	2
	Metric	body language awareness	non verbal communication to understand the climate and culture	OPEN CODING	////// /	7
	Metric	reflecting deeply	digging deep	OPEN CODING	/// /	5
	Metric	interactions	with students, staff, gauging the pulse of the room, teachers in the hallways, students singing, or the lack of interactions, greetings, joy walks	OPEN CODING	////////// ////	14
	Metric	substantive	the idea of a metric as something tied to core values and beliefs, substantive metrics that hold us together rather than "standardized" metrics SBAC scores, attendance, ex. relationships over compliance, qualitative data-daily evidence from interactions meetings, notes, agendas, heart bubble vs. bubble in test, new metric for leader evaluation?, how do you measure relationships	OPEN CODING	/// / /	5
	Metric	traditional	benchmarks, standardized tests, A-G, Kids going to community college, kids graduate.	OPEN CODING	/ /	2
	Metric	witness w/o judgement	the ability to witness without judgement allows for non judgement	OPEN CODING	//	2
	Metric	woo woo	talking about feelings and the heart, vulnerability; heart space, heart sharing	OPEN CODING	/// / /	6
	Metric	forced/false	forced to be in the mind/false dichotomy head vs. heart	OPEN CODING	////	5
	Metric	vulnerability	the quality of being exposed to harm either emotionally or physically	OPEN CODING	//	2
	Metric	forgiveness	forgive others, forgive self;	OPEN CODING	//	2
	Metric	diversity	different shapes, people, strengths, mosaic of experiences	OPEN CODING	/// ///	6
	Organization structure	hegemony -	structural dynamics, WSC white male dominated ways of being, push back positionality lack of human relationship	Gilligan, Bolman & Deal 2017,	////	5
	Organization theory	political	fragmentation	Martin, 2002	// ///	5

	Organization theory	alignment	coordination and collaboration across central offices	Martin, 2002			//		////	6
	Pedagogy	arts integration	the use of music to stimulate thinking and access different ways of knowing	OPEN CODING	///		////	/		8
	Pedagogy	writing	the use of writing to stimulate thinking and capture ideas	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Pedagogy	protocols	inner/outer circle, call & response, give one -get one	OPEN CODING	//		//	/	/	6
	Pedagogy	facilitation	the action of facilitating a meeting	OPEN CODING		//	/			3
	Relationship	Familiarity	worked with a lot of people in the room	OPEN CODING	/					1
humanity	Relationship	family & children	children and parents in our communities, children and people of color	OPEN CODING	/////		//			8
	Relationship	family members	mother/daughter, aunt/niece, partner	OPEN CODING	//////					6
	Relationship	intimacy	closeness, close familiarity	OPEN CODING	//		/			3
	Resident	elder	Resident elder to the group	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Resident	local	Native San Franciscan	OPEN CODING	//					2
relationship	Role	acting principal	the role of a substitute principal	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Role	former principal	previously a principal of a student (IIS- university level)	OPEN CODING	/					1
Relationship to our WHY?	Role	former student	previously a student at one of the CLE members schools	OPEN CODING	////					4
	Self-care	affirmations	the use of positive messages to mantras to get at positive thinking	OPEN CODING	//			/		3
	Self-care	breathing	the act of taking mindfulness breaths	OPEN CODING		//				2
	Self-care	dynamic mindfulness	Dynamic Mindfulness is an evidence-based, trauma-informed program that strengthens stress resilience and social-emotional learning. Mindful action, breathing, and centering are its key elements. Niroga Institute	OPEN CODING	/	//				3
	Self-care	me care	self-preservation. me care taking care of yourself as a act of self-preservation and radical self	OPEN CODING	////	//				6
	Self-care	meditation	The action or practice of meditating	OPEN CODING	//		/			3
	Self-care	laughter	The use of humor to self-sooth, heal	OPEN CODING	//	/		//		8
	Self-care	time with family	spending quality time with family members	OPEN CODING	///					3
	Self-care	time/task management	take care of myself by setting boundaries with time, stop filling time with things to do, prioritization of work/tasks	OPEN CODING	///	//	//			7
	Self-care	physical	exercise: long runs, walks, weekend workouts, yoga, sleep	OPEN CODING	///	//	/			7
	Self-care	sleep hygiene	gratitude journaling, read a poem before going to sleep, sleep in	OPEN CODING	////	//				6
	Self-care	eating well	food with friends, food by family	OPEN CODING	//	/	/		//	6
	Self-care	writing	The action of writing to relieve stress, self-sooth, renew	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Self-care	the arts-dancing,drawing, knitting	engaging in an art form like dancing, singing, drawing, knitting to experience fun and happiness, listen to music	OPEN CODING	////	/				6
	Self-care	connection to nature	walks on the beach, among the trees, hikes	OPEN CODING	////	/				6
	Self-care	essential oils	The use of essential oils to relieve stress, self-sooth and renew	OPEN CODING	/	/				2
	Self-care	lack of	the lack of self-care routines, eating in office	OPEN CODING	/	/		/		3
	Self-care	resources	insight timer app, mood meter-the action to reflect on one's mood to help develop self-awareness	OPEN CODING	//	/				3
	Self-care	stepping back	mentally withdraw from a situation to consider it objectively	OPEN CODING	//			/		3
	Self-care	travel	The use of travel to escape, relieve stress and renew	OPEN CODING	//	/				3
	Self-care	network/professional connection	professional relationships and connections formed in our work environments	OPEN CODING	///	/////			//	10
	Social justice	advocacy	public support for a policy in education for historically vulnerable students	OPEN CODING	/	/		/	/	4
	Space	comfortable	informal space, care bears, plants, outside space, space away from office/school	OPEN CODING	//	/////			//	9
	Space	learning	leadership learning, agency, choice	OPEN CODING	/	/	//			4
	Space	episodic PD	social emotional learning PD flavor of the month	OPEN CODING	/	/				2
	Space	for healing	affinity spaces, heart work	OPEN CODING	//					2
	Space	indigenous ways of learning	process that involves all members of the community	CLE AXIOM Guajardo et al.	/		/			2
	Space	women-affinity	space where women leader gather and learn from each other	OPEN CODING	/////					5
	Space	sacred	an altar (centerpiece), beautiful	OPEN CODING	//		/		/	4
Espacio Sano	Space	transformational	a place where we could take risks, be vulnerable and evolve full self emotions, feelings and cognition	OPEN CODING	/		/		/	3
	Space	rituals	a cultural share	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Space	needed	needs a space for self care in leadership, needs space for women in leadership to gather, in pods, affinity	OPEN CODING	////		///			7
	Space	Espacio Sano	space to experience deeper community, connection, vulnerability	OPEN CODING	/		/////			6
	Space	zoom	virtual space, third space,	OPEN CODING Hulme et al. (2009)		//	/			3
	Space	proximity	closeness	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Space	sustainability	how do we sustain spaces like the CLE in our workspaces	OPEN CODING	/					1

Category	Code	Subcode	Description	Coding	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	Count
	Space	accessibility	how do we make it accessible for people	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Strategy	text	shared a learning from a book that supports women leadership in the workplace	OPEN CODING	//	/	/			4
	Stress	breaking point	building crescendo breaks	OPEN CODING	/			/		2
	Stress	challenge	a lot of loss	OPEN CODING	/			/		2
	Stress	work related	union reps and principal tensions	OPEN CODING	/			/		2
Teacher student relationship	Teacher	resident elder	Resident elder, former teacher, dance teacher	OPEN CODING	///					3
	Time	non work hours	1 am, staff members communicating requesting support at 1am via text	OPEN CODING			/			1
	Time	beginning	where do we start	OPEN CODING	/		/			2
	Time	ephemeral	short lived, non renewable	OPEN CODING	/		/			2
	Time	limits/loss	having limited time with a constituent, off-sites, uncoordinated meetings	OPEN CODING	/				//	3
	Time	longevity	long life	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Time	daily	occurring every day	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Time	few hours	occurring every few hours	OPEN CODING	/		/			2
	Time	6 weeks	occurring every 6 weeks	OPEN CODING	/		/			2
	Time	last few years	occurring within the last few years	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Time	10 years	occurring after 10 years	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Time	17 years	occurring at 17 years	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Time	in a while	occurring within a period of time	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Time	transition	to be in between work, new changes	OPEN CODING	//		/			3
	Time	first year	occurring within the first year	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Time	medical leave	taking time away from work to attend to medical health/healing	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Time	August	occurring at the beginning of school starting	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Time	impermanence	the state of lasting only a period of time	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Time	self care	time set aside for self-care activities/practices	OPEN CODING	/		/			2
	Time	pacing	slow down, just right, too long	OPEN CODING	//		////			6
	Transfer	school care	morning intake, joy in my office, how people are feeling, connection to staff, empathy for community, with adults in coaching	OPEN CODING	////	///	///		/	11
	Transfer	work care	affinity spaces, humanity in each moment, experiences for adults to connect to the heart, resilience manifesto, self-care goals with school leaders	OPEN CODING	///////		/	/	//	11
	Transfer	more of self to work	artistic self	OPEN CODING	//					2
	Transfer	listen more	listen more to leaders and people, help them solve their own problems	OPEN CODING	//					2
	Transfer	scale it	share these practices with others in the organization	OPEN CODING	//				/	3
	Ubuntu	I am because we are	sum of all our our parts?, united	OPEN CODING	//					2
	Women affinity	me we	women leaders hold self and others, lean on and have others lean on you; reciprocity "meness/weness"	OPEN CODING Peters (2016)	///////	/	//	//		15
	Women affinity	amazing, wonderful inspiring, powerful	women that encourage, inspire and motivate us, believed in us	OPEN CODING	////	/				5
Leadership	Work	contentment	the state of happiness and satisfaction about one's job/work	OPEN CODING	/				/	2
Leadership	Work	tension	compliance (SpEd, personnel issue) vs substantive work (learning walks)	OPEN CODING	/				//	3
Leadership	Work	retention	the continued possession of one's job	OPEN CODING	/		/		//	4
Leadership	Work	in crisis	a time of intense difficulty, uncertain and danger, covid-19	OPEN CODING					//	2
	work ethic	non stop	a lot of work,	OPEN CODING	/	/			/	3
AGENCY?	Our why	equity /social justice	Ability to intentionally connect the discussion and work we are creating in our group to our WHY social justice leadership	OPEN CODING	///////					7
	Our why	students	Ability to intentionally connect the discussion and work we are creating in our group to our WHY (historically vulnerable students and families, new comers...)	OPEN CODING	//////					6
	Our why	educators	Ability to intentionally connect the discussion and work we are creating in our group to our WHY (our teachers)	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Our why	school leaders	Ability to intentionally connect the discussion and work we are creating in our group to our WHY (our school leaders)	OPEN CODING	/					1
	Our why	communities	Ability to intentionally connect the discussion and work we are creating in our group to our WHY (our communities)	OPEN CODING	/					1

FINDINGS	POSSIBLE THEMES	CATEGORY	CODE CYCLE 3	DEFINITION/ EXPLANATION	SOURCE	EC-PLC	QUESTION NAIRE- post	INTERVIEWS	TEXT MESSAGES	MEMOS	TOTAL
wholehearted leadership		activist researcher	theory to practice//pracitce to theory	using my insider/outsider experience and knowledge to help support the PAR and members of te ECPLC	OPEN CODING	///// ///// ///// /		///// ///// ///// ///// ///// ///// ///// /////		///// /////	65
wholehearted leadership		activist researcher	Canonical	use literature, articles in academia to share with leader	OPEN CODING	/		///// ///// /	////	///// ///// // /	29
		activist researcher	member checks	feedback from CPR members to help improve the internal validity, of the PAR.	CYCLE 1	///		///		/	7
wholehearted leadership		activist researcher	Non canonical	use of normative works, podcast, to share with leaders	OPEN CODING Gutiérrez (2016)	//	//	///// /////	////	/	18
	wellness strategies	awareness	improve physical health	Conscious of the state of physical health and amount of exercise and healthy eating one experiences	CYCLE 1	/////					5
		communication	lack of communication/response	unresponsive, delayed communication from supervisor	OPEN CODING	//		//		/	5
Espacio Sano	collective story	CLE Axiom	storytelling/testimonios	telling our story, telling a collective story, turn the me in to the we, hold the story hold the space, testimonio the we story, integrated story	CYCLE 2 Guajardo et al (2016)	///// ///// ///// ///// /////		///// ///// ///// ///// ///// ///// ///// ///// ///// /		///// //	78
Espacio Sano		collective care	support/resilience	collective is nourishing and supportive, uplifts you, professional advice, listens to you, cries with you	CYCLE 2	///// ///// ///// ///// /////		///// ///// ///// ///// ////	/////	///// ///// / //	67
	Wellness strategies	consequences	burnout	Leaders are stresses and not attending to their wellbeing (not exercising, not eating well) and as a effect they burnout	CYCLE 1	/		////		///// /	11
		context	political climate	current political climate, police brutality,	CYCLE 2			//		///	5
wholehearted leadership		Core Values	respect	a feeling of deep admiration of a person or something elicited by their qualities or achievements	CYCLE 2			//		/	3
wholehearted leadership		Core Values	wellness					/		/	2
		COVID-19	attendance	student attendance impacted negatively. Students are not attending zoom classes because they don't have the tech or tech skills.	OPEN CODING	/				/	2
	collateral positives	COVID-19	awareness	as a result of COVID-19 become aware of screen time	OPEN CODING	//		///// ///// /		/	14

FINDINGS	POSSIBLE THEMES	CATEGORY	CODE CYCLE 3	DEFINITION/ EXPLANATION	SOURCE	EC-PLC	QUESTION NAIRE-post	INTERVIEWS	TEXT MESSAGES	MEMOS	TOTAL
		COVID-19	digital divide	as a result of COVID-19 the exposure to students digital divide lack of tech skills	OPEN CODING	/////		///		///	11
		COVID-19	challenge	as a result of COVID-19 systems, teaching, practices have been challenging to students, staff/teachers, administrators, and families during distance learning; parents as teachers/ AP teachers reconciling content and delivery of instruction DL		///// ///// ///// ///// ///// ///// /		///// //// ///// ///// ///// //// //// ///// //	/	///// //// ////	89
		COVID-19	communication	communication with students or families via phone call to support during distance learning as a direct result of COVID 19	OPEN CODING	///// /////		////		/	12
		COVID-19	content/curriculum/. pedagogy	AP teachers reconciling content and delivery of instruction DL	OPEN CODING	/////		// /		//	10
		COVID-19	fatigue	feeling extremely tired and exhausted after a short period of working (only week 2)	OPEN CODING	///		///// ///		/	12
wholehearted leadership	collateral positives	COVID-19	gratitude	appreciative of one's health, resources in this pandemic.	OPEN CODING	///// /		///// //	//	/	16
	collateral positives	COVID-19	text messaging	text message to share strategies, encouragement, humor	OPEN CODING	////	/	///	///// ///// /		19
	collateral positives	COVID-19	connectors	online activities to connect with one another	OPEN CODING	///// ///// ///		///// // /		///	24
	collateral positives	COVID-19	innovation/reimagine	an opportunity to create a different system or policy as a result of COVID-19 and distance learning, curriculum adjustments	OPEN CODING	///// ///// ///// ///// ///// /		///// ///// //// /		///// ///// //	53
		COVID-19	school closure	the unexpected phenomena to close schools and provide distance learning through remote schooling	PAR CYCLE TWO	/////		///// //	///	//	17

FINDINGS	POSSIBLE THEMES	CATEGORY	CODE CYCLE 3	DEFINITION/ EXPLANATION	SOURCE	EC-PLC	QUESTION NAIRE- post	INTERVIEWS	TEXT MESSAGES	MEMOS	TOTAL
	collateral positives	COVID-19	social justice leadership	as a result of COVID-19 leadership actions that support students, families, staff to have access and resources (wifi hotspots, laptops, school supplies) to be able to succeed during distance learning and beyond. The master schedule and individual student schedules are created to support students to easily access their classes during distance learning	OPEN CODING	///// ///// ///// ///// /		///// ///// /////	/	////	40
		COVID-19	social distancing	state regulations to socially distance as a direct result of the COVID19 pandemic	OPEN CODING	///		///// //			10
		COVID-19	stress	stress as a direct result of COVID-19, uncertainty, impact on daily life	OPEN CODING	///// ///// /////		///// ///// ///// ///	/		29
		COVID-19	panic/urgency	a sense of urgency to address the academic needs of students as a direct result of the COVID-19, teachers feeling panic that they will not be able to cover content and support student learning	OPEN CODING	//		////			6
		COVID-19	snacking	snacking as a result of COVID in between meetings /classes	OPEN CODING	/					1
	collateral positives	COVID-19	tech skills	tech skills acquired, honed as a direct result of COVID (use of ZOOM, slide decks)	OPEN CODING	///// ///// ////		///// /		//// /	25
		COVID-19	tech challenges	spotty wifi, zoom issues	OPEN CODING	//// ///					7
		COVID-19	work from home negatives	working from home as a interference, intrusive blends boundaries. **irregular sleep**	OPEN CODING	///// ///// ///// ////		///// /////			27
	collateral positives	COVID-19	work from home positive	working from home as an opportunity, positive, mobility	OPEN CODING	///// ///// ///// ///// ///// ///// ///// ////		///// //		///	49
		COVID-19	ZOOM fatigue	energy drained as a direct result of being online working.	OPEN CODING	///		/////		/	9
wholehearted leadership		Disposition	care	the provision of what is necessary for the health and protection of someone	CYCLE 2 Aguilar, E.			///		//	5
wholehearted leadership		Disposition	empathy	the ability to understand the feelings of another	CYCLE 2 Aguilar, E.	///// ///// /////	/	///// //	/	/	25
wholehearted leadership		Disposition	humble	leadership showing a modest or low estimate of one's own importance	OPEN CODING	//				///	5

FINDINGS	POSSIBLE THEMES	CATEGORY	CODE CYCLE 3	DEFINITION/ EXPLANATION	SOURCE	EC-PLC	QUESTION NAIRE- post	INTERVIEWS	TEXT MESSAGES	MEMOS	TOTAL
wholehearted leadership		Disposition	mindset	similar mindset to help solve the problems of today	Open coding Aguilar, E.	/////		////		//	11
wholehearted leadership		disposition	motivated	motive to do something	OPEN CODING	/		///		/	5
		Identity	imposter syndrome	a psychological pattern in which an individual doubts their skills, talents or accomplishments and has a persistent internalized fear of being exposed as a "fraud"	OPEN CODING	/				//	3
		Identity	professional self	role as a teacher	OPEN CODING	///// /		//		///// ////	17
		Identity	working mother	multitasking, work and care for children and spouse.	OPEN CODING Gilligan (1982)			/////			4
wholehearted leadership		Emotion	apathy	lack of concern	OPEN CODING			///			3
wholehearted leadership		Emotion	angry/frustration	a feeling of being annoyed or upset especially because of an inability to achieve/change something	CYCLE 1& 2	///// //		///// ////		/	17
wholehearted leadership	collateral positives	Emotion	calm	not showing or feeling nervousness, anger or other strong emotions	OPEN CODING	//		/////			7
wholehearted leadership		Emotion	content/happy/excited	a feeling of being happy, a feeling very enthusiastic, enliven	CYCLE 2	///// ///// ///// ////		/////	/////	/	30
wholehearted leadership		Emotion	disappointed	sad or displeased because someone or something has failed to meet expectations	OPEN CODING	//		///			5
wholehearted leadership		Emotion	guilt	justly chargeable with or responsible for a usually grave breach of conduct or a crime	OPEN CODING Brown (2010)			// /			3
wholehearted leadership		Emotion	not guilty	unashamed/	OPEN CODING			/			1
wholehearted leadership		Emotion	hope	a feeling or expectation for a certain thing to happen	CYCLE 2			/			1
wholehearted leadership		Emotion	love	an intense feeling of deep affection	CYCLE 2	//					2
wholehearted leadership		Emotion	laughter	an expression of emotion that is ubiquitous in social life	CYCLE 2	///// ///// ///// ///// /	/	///// ///// ///			35
wholehearted leadership		Emotion	proud	a feeling deep pleasure as a soul of one own achievement	OPEN CODING	/					1
wholehearted leadership		Emotion	worried/anxious	feeling concerned and worried	CYCLE 1 &2	///// ////		///// ///			17
		Fortified	keep you going	encouraged and motivate each other	CYCLE 2	///// //	/	///// ///	///// //	///// ///	32
wholehearted leadership		Honor	each other	to pay high respect to each other	CYCLE 2	/		/			2

FINDINGS	POSSIBLE THEMES	CATEGORY	CODE CYCLE 3	DEFINITION/ EXPLANATION	SOURCE	EC-PLC	QUESTIONNAIRE-post	INTERVIEWS	TEXT MESSAGES	MEMOS	TOTAL
wholehearted leadership		Leadership Action	encargados	(responsible) leaders carry the weight and responsibility of combating systemic oppressive systems	CYCLE 1			/////	/	////	10
wholehearted leadership		Leadership action	capacity, job demands	Leader overextends themselves to comply and complete work related tasks, compliance, job demands; oversaturated	OPEN CODING	///// ///// ///// ///		///// /////			28
wholehearted leadership	collateral positives	Leadership action	towards/staff/teachers	regularly transparent communication to staff/teachers. Communicate directly to staff take care of yourself	OPEN CODING (Grubb & Tredway (2010)	///// ///// /	/	///// ///// ///// //		//	31
wholehearted leadership	collateral positives	Leadership action	flexibility	school leaders suggest adjustments flexibility to curriculum design	OPEN CODING	///// ///// //		///// ///// ///// //		///	32
wholehearted leadership	collateral positives	Leadership action	optimism	school leader models and messages optimistic messages to support climate and culture of community, creates opportunities to celebrate and spotlight staff	OPEN CODING	///// ///		///// /////	/		19
Espacio Sano	transfer	Leadership action	toward families/students	communicate with families to attend to self care	OPEN CODING	///// /		///		/.	10
wholehearted leadership		Leadership action	distributive leadership	site leader shares leadership responsibilities with other members of the school community	OPEN CODING	///					3
wholehearted leadership		Leadership action	listening leader	principal affirms teachers, acknowledges the challenge of DL/ affirms teachers/ models strategies	OPEN CODING Safir (2017)	///// ///// ///// ///// /	/	///// ///// /////		///// //	44
wholehearted leadership		Leadership action	perspective// journey	leader a point of view on leading and managing school and community is aware, changes, altered by use of praxis	OPEN CODING	/////		///// //		///// ///	20
wholehearted leadership		Leadership action	policy	creating a school policy for staff to attend to self-care, self care packages	OPEN CODING	/////		///// ///// //		//	19
wholehearted leadership			affirmation	expressing verbal praise to each other.	OPEN CODING	///// ///// ///// ///// ///// ///// ///// /////		///// ///// ///// ///// ///// ///// ///// /////	///// ///// //	/	91
wholehearted leadership		Metric	community/connection	being held by incredible people I work with and relations with families and children, how we hold and measure care and each other	CYCLE 2	///// ///// ///// //		///// ///// ///// ///// ///// /////	//	////	52

FINDINGS	POSSIBLE THEMES	CATEGORY	CODE CYCLE 3	DEFINITION/ EXPLANATION	SOURCE	EC-PLC	QUESTION NAIRE- post	INTERVIEWS	TEXT MESSAGES	MEMOS	TOTAL
wholehearted leadership		Metric	joy	feeling of great pleasure and happiness. feeling elated about the work of school leadership that is driven by students and the community	CYCLE 2	////		/		//	7
wholehearted leadership		Metric	substantive	the idea of a metric as something tied to core values and beliefs, substantive metrics that hold us together rather than "standardized" metrics SBAC scores, attendance, ex. relationships over compliance, qualitative data-daily evidence from interactions meetings, notes, agendas, heart bubble vs. bubble in test, new metric for leader evaluation?, how do you measure relationships/warm school environment	OPEN CODING	////		///// /		///// //// ///	24
wholehearted leadership		Metric	brainheart	brain and heart connection, healing place, heart/intellect	CYCLE 2 Borwn (2018)	////		//			6
wholehearted leadership		Metric	traditional	benchmarks, standardized tests, A-G, Kids going to community college, kids graduate.	OPEN CODING	/////		///// /		/////	16
wholehearted leadership		Metric	fun	a way to measure one's well being	CYCLE 2	///// ////	/	///// //// ////		//	25
wholehearted leadership		Metric	intimacy	closeness and connection, humanity, see people deeply, look for what's underneath	CYCLE 2	/		////	/	////	10
wholehearted leadership		Metric	woo woo	talking about feelings and the heart, vulnerability; heart space, heart sharing	CYCLE 2	//		////		/	7
		Mood	energy level	a temporary state of mind	OPEN CODING	/////	/	/			7
Espacio Sano		Nexus	self-care and praxis	The connection between taking care of one self and reflecting on how self-care impact the collective work, social justice work and collective care	CYCLE 1	/				///	4
		Organizational Theory	fragmentation/silo	The systemic structure and systems of an organization create separation and breakdown in the organization.	CYCLE 2 Martin (2002)			//		/	3
		Organizational	resources/supports	resources and supports provided to school sites from central offices		/		///// //// ///// //	/	//	16

FINDINGS	POSSIBLE THEMES	CATEGORY	CODE CYCLE 3	DEFINITION/ EXPLANATION	SOURCE	EC-PLC	QUESTION NAIRE- post	INTERVIEWS	TEXT MESSAGES	MEMOS	TOTAL
		Organization structure	hegemony -	structural dynamics, WSC white male dominated ways of being, push back positionality lack of human relationship	CYCLE 2	/		/////		//	8
		Organization	policy	policy enacted during COVID pandemic and school closure that supported or challenged eductors, (e.g. United Administrators email hours 8am-5pm)	OPEN CODING	///		///// ///			11
wholehearted leadership		Our why	equity /social justice	Ability to intentionally connect the discussion and work we are creating in our group to our WHY social justice leadership	CYCLE 2	///		////		//// //	13
Espacio Sano		Pedagogy	arts integration	the use of music/art to stimulate thinking and access different ways of knowing	CYCLE 2	///// ////					9
Espacio Sano		Pedagogy	facilitation	the action of facilitating a meeting and being responsive to the group. model facilitation	CYCLE 2	///// ///// ///// ///// /////		///// ///// ///		//	50
Espacio Sano		Pedagogy	online facilitation	use of slide deck/zoom	OPEN CODING	///// /	/	//		/	10
		Relationship	family members	mother/daughter, aunt/niece, partner	CYCLE 2	///// ///// ///// /	//	///// ///// ///// ///	/		37
wholehearted leadership		Relationship	intimacy	closeness, close familiarity	CYCLE 2			/////			5
Espacio Sano		Relationship	relational trust	CPR/work members established relational trust with each other through spending and engaging with each other at meetings, one to one meetings, and working alongside each other	CYCLE 1	//				/ //	5
		Role	coach	Role to support teacher and administration	OPEN CODING	///// /		/		///// ////	16
wholehearted leadership		Self-care	aromatherapy/essential oils	The use of essential oils to relieve stress, self-sooth and renew	CYCLE 1 & CYCLE 2	////	/	////			9
wholehearted leadership		Self-care	affirmations/mantras	the use of positive messages to mantras to get at positive thinking	CYCLE 1 & CYCLE 2	///// //		/////. ///// ////	//	/	24
wholehearted leadership	collateral positives	self-care	brain breaks	taking time to relax cognitive load, especially from the being online/ZOOM meetings	OPEN CODING	///// //	///	//			12
wholehearted leadership		Self-care	breathing	using breathing techniques to pause, ground, rejuvenate	CYCLE 1 & CYCLE 2	///// ////	/////	///// ///// ///		//	29
wholehearted leadership		Self-care	boundaries	using established boundaries to set aside time to care of self	CYCLE 2	///// /////	/	///// ///// ///// ///	/	/	31
wholehearted leadership		Self-care	connection to nature	flowers, walks, among the trees, hikes, plants/garden	CYCLE 1 & CYCLE 2	///// ///// ///	////	//		/	20

FINDINGS	POSSIBLE THEMES	CATEGORY	CODE CYCLE 3	DEFINITION/ EXPLANATION	SOURCE	EC-PLC	QUESTION NAIRE-post	INTERVIEWS	TEXT MESSAGES	MEMOS	TOTAL
wholehearted leadership		self-care	connect with friends	communicating and spending time with friends as a source of self-care and rejuvenation	CYCLE 1 & CYCLE 2	/////	//	////			11
wholehearted leadership		self-care	eating well	food with friends, food by family	CYCLE 1 & CYCLE 2	///// ///// //	////	///// //			23
wholehearted leadership		self-care	health	physical health, medical appointments	CYCLE 1 & CYCLE 2	////			/		5
wholehearted leadership		self-care	hot spring	using hot springs as a form of relaxation and self -care	OPEN CODING			/		/	2
wholehearted leadership		self-care	intention	making commitment to self around self-care practice	CYCLE 1 & CYCLE 2	///// ///// /		///// ////		/	22
wholehearted leadership		self-care	journal	journaling as a means to attend to self-care	CYCLE 2	//	//				4
wholehearted leadership	obligation and routine	self-care	the arts-dancing,drawing, knitting	engaging in an art form like dancing, **singing**, drawing, knitting zen coloring to experience fun and happiness, listen to music	CYCLE 2	///// ///// //// ////		///// //// //		////	35
wholehearted leadership		self-care	laughter/humor/goofiness	The use of humor to self-sooth, heal	CYCLE 2	///// ///// ///// ///// ///// ///// ///// ///	//	///// /// ///// /// ///// ///// //	//// ////		92
wholehearted leadership		self-care	meditation/mindfulness	The action or practice of meditating	CYCLE 1 & CYCLE 2	////	/	///// ////	/	///	19
wholehearted leadership		self-care	network/professional connection	professional relationships and connections formed in our work environments	OPEN CODING	///// ///// //	//	///// //// // ///// //// //	//// /	///// ///// ///	69
wholehearted leadership	collateral positives	self-care	packets/kits	customized self-care items curated for staff to promote and provide self-care	OPEN CODING	//					2
wholehearted leadership		self-care	physical	exercising: running, walking on the treadmill, walking outside, yoga, stretching	CYCLE 1 & CYCLE 2	///// ///// ///// ///// /	///// /////	///// ////	/	//	42
wholehearted leadership		self-care	podcast	Listening to podcast as a form of self-care	OPEN CODING	//	//	/	/	/	7
wholehearted leadership		self-care	practice	self care as practice not an obligation	OPEN CODING	//		/			3
wholehearted leadership		self-care	reflection	self care as a practice to pause and reflect	OPEN CODING	///// //		//	/	///	13
wholehearted leadership		self-care	sleep hygiene/rest	gratitude journaling, read a poem before going to sleep, sleep in	OPEN CODING	///// /////	///	///// ///			21
wholehearted leadership		self-care	spiritual	taking care of one's spiritual health and well being	CYCLE 1	/		//// //		/	8

FINDINGS	POSSIBLE THEMES	CATEGORY	CODE CYCLE 3	DEFINITION/ EXPLANATION	SOURCE	EC-PLC	QUESTION NAIRE-post	INTERVIEWS	TEXT MESSAGES	MEMOS	TOTAL
Espacio Sano		space	women-affinity	space where women leader gather and learn from each other	CYCLE 1 & CYCLE 2			////	/	/////	10
Espacio Sano		space	work site	physical work site/school	OPEN CODING	////		/////			9
Espacio Sano	collateral positives	space	work space at home	space designated in one's home to establish work space	OPEN CODING	///// ///// / //		///// ///// /			24
Espacio Sano		Time	abrupt	unexpected time	OPEN CODING			///// /			6
	COVID-19	Time	no break	back to back meetings	OPEN CODING	///		/////			8
		Time	early morning	start work early in the morning	OPEN CODING	/		///			4
Espacio Sano		Time	Beginning of year	beginning of the school year	OPEN CODING	///// //		/	//	///// /	16
		Time	Break	summer break	OPEN CODING			///		/	4
Espacio Sano		Time	change	change of routine/time	OPEN CODING	/////		///// ///// /		//	17
Espacio Sano	COVID-19	Time	condensed	delivering instruction in a limited time 120 min a day vs. 7 hour (420 minutes daily)/time to deliver a PD reduced to 3 hour vs. 7 hours	OPEN CODING	///		////			7
Espacio Sano		Time	conflict	scheduling conflict with time for meetings	OPEN CODING	///			//		5
Espacio Sano	collateral positives	Time	established days/set aside/calendared	set aside specific time or days. time set aside for self-care activities/practices	OPEN CODING	///// ///// ///// ///// ///// ///// /	///// /	///// ///// ///// ///// ///	/	//// /	71
		Time	early start	start time for school	OPEN CODING	///					3
Espacio Sano		Time	frequently	time set regularly, habitually	OPEN CODING		/	//			3
Espacio Sano		Time	end of the day	time that marks the end of a work day	OPEN CODING	/		/			2
Espacio Sano		Time	lunch time	30 min lunch break	OPEN CODING	///// ///	//	//			12
Espacio Sano		Time	ECPLC meeting	time to have our ECPLC meeting	OPEN CODING	////		//	//		8
Espacio Sano		Time	medical leave	taking time away from work to attend to medical health/healing	CYCLE 2	///// /					6
Espacio Sano		TIme	overdue	past due deadline	OPEN CODING	/					1
Espacio Sano		Time	pacing	slow down, just right, too long	CYCLE 2	////		/		/	6
Espacio Sano	collateral positives	Time	saved economized	saving time by using systems, resources (order lunch vs. make lunch) no commuting	OPEN CODING	/	/	/			3
Espacio Sano		Time	weekend	saturday/sunday	OPEN CODING			///			3
		Trauma	racialized trauma	the mental and emotional injury caused by encounters with racial bias and ethnic discrimination, racism, and hate crimes	Resmaa Menakem (2017)	/		//		///	6
Espacio Sano		Transfer	resources/practices	Sharing resources or practices from a previous PD, meeting, learning changemakers	CYCLE 1 & CYCLE 2	///// ///// ///// /	/	///// ///// /	///// //	////	39

FINDINGS	POSSIBLE THEMES	CATEGORY	CODE CYCLE 3	DEFINITION/ EXPLANATION	SOURCE	EC-PLC	QUESTION NAIRE - post	INTERVIEWS	TEXT MESSAGES	MEMOS	TOTAL
Espacio Sano		Transfer	work setting	using self care strategies in the work space	CYCLE 1 & CYCLE 2	///// //	///	///// //// ///// ///// /////		////	39
Espacio Sano		Transfer	home setting	using self care strategies at home with family members	OPEN CODING	//		/		/	4
		Work	retention	the continued possession of one's job	CYCLE 2			/			1
	Leadership	Work	tension	compliance (SpEd, personnel issue) vs substantive work (learning walks)	CYCLE 2	///// /////		/////		/	16

APPENDIX M: CLE MEETING AGENDA

Community Learning Exchange
Women Leaders: Self-Care as Collective Care
January 11, 2020
Dr. George W. Davis Senior Center
1753 Carroll Ave. San Francisco, CA 94124
Participant Agenda

Community Agreements:
· Take care of yourself
· Be engaged & present
· Keep equity at the center
· Double confidentiality
· Learner mindset
· *Speak your truth*
· *Share the talk space equitably*
· *Communicate honestly and openly in order to cultivate our collective learning*

COMMUNITY LEARNING EXCHANGE PRINCIPLES/AXIOMS:

1. **Learning and leadership are dynamic social processes.**
2. **Conversations are critical and central pedagogical processes.**
3. **The people closest to the issues are best situated to discover answers to local concerns.**
4. **Crossing boundaries enriches the development and educational processes.**
5. **Hope and change are built on assets and dreams of locals and their communities.**

INTENDED OUTCOMES:
We will…
- Build and deepen relational trust across difference
- Participate in Community Learning Exchange's practices of reflection, dialogue, & action.
- Practice Dynamic Mindfulness wellness routine
- Use *testimonios* (storytelling) to share how we individually & collectively attend to self-care
- Use protocols that could be transferred to our work in schools
- Make a commitment to yourself around self-care

Time	Minutes	Activity
9:00	35	Community Circle, Dynamic Mindfulness
9:35	45	*Season of Love* -Inside/Outside Circle
10:20	30	Breakout Groups
10:50	20	Share Out
11:10	15	Silent write or Learning walk
11:25	20	Closing Circle
11:45	15	Debrief & ONWARD!
12:00	Adjourn	

From the musical RENT **"Seasons of Love"** By Jonathan Larson He received three posthumous Tony Awards and posthumous Pulitzer Prize for Drama for RENT

Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes.

Five hundred twenty-five thousand moments so dear.

five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes.

How do you measure,

Measure a year?

In daylights?

In sunsets?

In midnights?

In cups of coffee?

In inches, in miles, in laughter, in strife?

In five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes.

How do you measure a year in a life?

How about love?

How about love?

How about love?

Measure in love...

Seasons of love...

Seasons of love...

Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes.

Five hundred twenty-five thousand journeys to plan.

Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes.

How do you measure a life of a woman or a man?

In truths that she learned,

or in times that he cried?

In bridges he burned,

or the way that she died?

It's time now to sing out,

though the story never ends.

Let's celebrate remember a year in a life

of friends

Remember the love...

(Oh, you've got to you've got to remember the love)

Remember the love...

(You know the love is a gift from up above)

Remember the love...

(Share love, give love, spray love, measure your life in love.)

Seasons of love...

Seasons of love...

Read more: <u>RENT - Seasons Of Love Lyrics | MetroLyrics</u>

APPENDIX N: CONSTRUCTIVIST LISTENING PROTOCOL

Constructivist Listening Protocol
Framing:

Emotional distress interferes with intelligent thinking and caring behavior. Constructivist Listening creates space to acknowledge and heal from emotional distress in service of transformative action in schools.

Underlying Assumptions:

Constructivist Listening is for the benefit of the *talker*.	Cognitive and affective processing = increased understanding
People are capable of solving their own problems given the right conditions	

Constructivist Listening: Agreement

Ears - to hear
Eyes - to see
Undivided attention - to focus
Mind - to think
Heart - to feel

I agree to <u>listen</u> to and <u>think</u> about you in exchange for you doing the same for me.

Constructivist Listening

Each person:

- has equal time to talk.
- does not interrupt, give advice or break in with a personal story.
- agrees that confidentiality is maintained.
- does not criticize or complain about others during their time to talk.

APPENDIX O: EXAMPLE OF EC-PLC AGENDA (ONLINE)

Equity Center Professional Learning Community- Self- Care as Collective Care. HAPPY HOUR

September 28, 2020 @ Zoom meeting

Intended Outcomes:
- Deepen relational trust across difference
- Participate in an Equity Centered Professional Learning Community
- Learn and practice strategies for self-care: Self-care routines during Breathing: Water, Whiskey, Coffee Breathing
- Share strategies on how to help keep our communities connected
- *Complete a self-care post questionnaire and share our self-care images & stories*
- Make a commitment to yourself around self-care

> **Community Agreements:**
> - Take care of yourself
> - Be engaged & present
> - Keep equity at the center
> - Double confidentiality
> - Learner mindset

Time	Activity
4:30	**Opening Routines.** Claudia - Connector: *Tragos*
4:40	**Wellness Strategies:** Christina Breathing: Water, Whiskey, Coffee Breathing by Lucas Rockwood - TedTalk
4:50	**Self-Care Post-Questionnaire:** All **On side One**: Describe what structures, systems, and supports you have used to attend to work related stress? Describe what actions and structures you have put in place for your colleagues to attend to self-care. **On side One**: Draw a picture of what this looks like in your work environment. Write a few sentences to describe your image.
5:25	**Crowdsourcing strategies** All How to build community/connection during distance learning - Ideas for wellness kits/care packages for staff:
5:30	**Adjourn** PAR beyond Christina. What do you all want to do?

Jam board:

Provide an image representation that best represents how you have felt since COVID.

What have you done to care for others?

What self-care (has (or has not) looked like for you?