

Creating a Personal Sociogram for Social Justice Leadership

To extend this conversation, create a personal sociogram for your social justice leadership.

With some simple supplies (small sticky notes, large poster or whiteboard, markers and pens), you can accomplish this in four steps:

Step 1—Identify members of your relational network

Consider this prompt: When I am wrestling with a decision in my educational leadership—particularly one that involves issues of equity—to whom do I turn for help, advice, direction, or feedback? In response to this prompt, generate an initial list of names. Write one name on each sticky note. Try to generate at least 10 names.

Step 2—Add two details about each member of your relational network

A) On each sticky note, add a shape to correspond with the role of the individual. For instance, put a circle for a teacher, a square for an administrator, a triangle for a central-office administrator, and a diamond for “other.” (Choose shapes and roles most salient to you.)

B) Inside each shape add a number from 1 to 4 to signify the relative strength of each relationship. Use a 1 to signify a weak relationship for a person whom you don’t talk with very often. Use a 4 to signify your strongest, most reliable and frequent contact to whom you turn for help, advice, direction, or feedback. Use a 2 or 3 to signify those in the middle of these two poles.

Each Post-it should now look something like these examples. Add more sticky notes if more names have occurred to you in this process.

[Refer to Figure 3.2]

Step 3— Arrange members of your relational network into a sociogram

In the center of a poster or whiteboard, write your name. Place and arrange the sticky notes

around you. Consider how to organize the members of your relational network. For instance, you may have people who are in different organizations, and want to cluster them by these organization. Alternately, you may want to cluster people by their different roles. Try out some different configurations and determine how you would like your sociogram to look.

Step 4— **Illustrate the relational networks on your sociogram**

Once you have settled on an arrangement, the final step is to illustrate the relational networks.

With the markers, draw two double-thick lines from yourself to anyone who you rated a 4, draw one solid line from yourself to anyone you rated a 3, a dashed line to a 2, and a faint dotted line to a 1.

[Refer to Figure 3.3]

Reflection: Stand back and look at this initial sociogram. Consider these reflection prompts:

- What do you notice about the number of individuals you have identified, the variation of roles they represent, and the relative strength of these relationships?
- Who could be added to your sociogram if you took some of the individuals on it and asked them the same question?
- What dimensions of diversity are hidden on this sociogram? (Think: How diverse is my network by race and ethnicity? By gender? By religion?)
- How has the composition of this sociogram changed over time? What would it have looked like a year ago? Five years ago? How would you like it to change in the future?

Working Theories of Action

To extend this conversation, consider how articulating working theories of action can help you leverage COPs in your context. Here are some questions to consider:

Working theories of action at the personal level:

- In your personal leadership practice, how would you describe your working theory of action in fostering your own professional growth?
- Considering the design elements of COPs, what are some strengths of this working theory of action? What are some limitations?

Working theories of action at the organizational level:

- In your school community, how would you describe your working theory of action in fostering the professional growth of your colleagues?
- Considering the design elements of COPs, what are some strengths of this working theory of action? What are some limitations?