

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303327855>

# Social Justice Teacher Education

Chapter · January 2009

---

CITATIONS

8

---

READS

5,695

2 authors, including:



**Kenneth M. Zeichner**

University of Washington Seattle

246 PUBLICATIONS 23,593 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



SCOPE Case Studies, Stanford University [View project](#)



Language teacher education in response to local needs [View project](#)

## 39 Social Justice Teacher Education

*Morva McDonald and Kenneth M. Zeichner*

Increasingly, teacher education programs of all stripes claim to prepare teachers from a social justice perspective. For example, a self-proclaimed liberal teacher education program aims to prepare teachers from a social justice perspective—one in which they become “aware of the ways schools may reproduce hierarchies based on race, class, gender, and sexuality. Awareness should lead to action as teachers embrace their roles as student advocates and active community members.”<sup>1</sup> Likewise, a Christian-centered program also aims to prepare teachers to promote justice<sup>2</sup> and develop a commitment to “providing a classroom where their students learn about and experience compassion and justice.” This program acknowledges that such an effort requires “students’ commitment, reflection, discernment and hard work, and above all, the transforming power of God’s spirit.” Although the social justice emphasis in these two programs may not necessarily conflict, the lack of clarity in the field at large about what constitutes social justice teacher education, and the lack of knowledge regarding the practices that support such an effort make it possible for institutions with differing perspectives, political agendas, and strategies to lay claim to the same vision of teacher preparation.

Ambiguous definitions are not new to teacher education. For example, beginning in the 1980s, many teacher education programs began to adopt the rhetoric of preparing teachers to be reflective practitioners. These efforts often remain symbolic and signal to administrators, accrediting agencies, students, and the public the innovative, state of the art practice of the program (Valli, 1992; Zeichner & Liston, 1996). In many cases however, programs adopt the notion of “reflective practice” to name existing practices and do not substantially challenge the status quo of program structures, curriculum, or pedagogy.<sup>3</sup>

Social justice teacher education may follow a similar path. On this path, programs will highlight a social justice mission, adopt the language of social justice in conceptual frameworks, program descriptions, and course syllabi, and perhaps tinker with course content, pedagogy, or field placements. A program may, for example, adopt a social justice mission to signal their explicit intention to prepare teachers to work with students from diverse backgrounds. In many ways, the term *social justice* will simply highlight existing practices such as a course on multicultural education or placements with students in diverse schools, and may do so without significantly considering how such offerings support a programmatic social justice mission. Previous trends in teacher education reform suggest that social justice efforts will largely remain symbolic and fall short of fundamentally changing the content, structure, and quality of teacher preparation (Grant & Secada, 1990).

If social justice teacher education is to become more than rhetoric and more than merely a celebration of diversity, we argue that it must strive to take a different path. On this path, teacher educators would be challenged to further conceptualize social justice

teacher education, to negotiate difficult political differences both within and outside the teacher education community, and to develop and identify specific program practices that prepare teachers to teach from a social justice perspective. This path requires both a fundamental rethinking of program content and structure, and an expanded notion of who the relevant participants are in such redesign efforts. Social justice redesign efforts, if they are to embody a democratic process consistent with a social justice mission, must look to all those concerned with improving children's educational opportunities, including K-12 educators, college and university faculty and staff, community members, and parents to participate and make decisions about how teachers are prepared. While it is not necessarily true that socially just decisions will emerge from these inclusive and democratic deliberations (Zeichner, 1991), we believe that you cannot have a social justice oriented program without such inclusive social relations.

Implementing social justice teacher education that challenges oppressive social, political, and economic structures will be particularly difficult given the current political climate of the United States as well as the climate surrounding teacher education. Increasingly, schools of education and in particular teacher education programs are increasingly under attack and asked to substantiate their contribution to improving K-12 students' academic achievement as the warrant for their existence. This may not be an unreasonable standard, however, in the current atmosphere in which scores on standardized achievement tests are the sole measure of learning, producing such evidence will require a tremendous amount of resources and will likely lead teacher educators to focus on the narrower, more technical aspects of teacher preparation than those like social justice that demand prospective teachers to consider broader educational aims and purposes (Sleeter, 2007). Additionally, K-12 educators—critical partners of teacher education programs—are also under increased pressure as a result of high stakes accountability and in many cases are less likely to engage in the seemingly ambiguous work of social justice. Despite these conditions, we find teacher education programs across the country negotiating this difficult terrain and attempting to prepare teachers from a social justice perspective.

In this chapter, we aim to support the work of social justice teacher education. In the first section, we identify connections between multicultural teacher education and social justice teacher education, as well as distinctions that may refine the conception and implementation of social justice teacher education. In the second section, we consider two perspectives on social justice and explore how they might frame the efforts of teacher educators. We also argue that social justice teacher education programs might benefit from connecting their work with other social movements locally, nationally, and/or globally and provide some historical and international examples of such efforts. In the final section, we identify program policies and practices that would enable programs to implement a social justice orientation and offer brief descriptions of programs making such strides. These are not meant as proscriptions, but rather as examples of what is and could be in teacher education.

### **Multicultural and Social Justice Teacher Education**

Social justice teacher education in part grows out of almost 30 years of effort within teacher education to include multicultural education. Since 1978, NCATE has required programs to include multicultural education as part of the preservice curriculum and over 80% of institutions reviewed by NCATE from 1988 to 1993 incorporated multicultural education into the curriculum (Gollnick, 1995).<sup>4</sup> The majority of efforts in multicultural teacher education have focused on preparing teachers to improve the educational oppor-

tunities and experiences of students of color, low-income students, and more recently, English language learners (Lucas & Grinberg, in press). Social justice teacher education shares this goal, but differs from the implementation of multicultural education on two fronts—one conceptual and one structural (Feiman-Nemser, 1990; Tom, 1997).<sup>5</sup> Below, we highlight these conceptual and structural differences.

### *Conceptual Distinctions*

Conceptually, social justice teacher education shifts the focus from issues of cultural diversity to issues of social justice, making social change and activism central to the vision of teaching and learning promoted. Social justice programs explicitly attend to societal structures that perpetuate injustice, and they attempt to prepare teachers to take both individual and collective action toward mitigating oppression. Although multicultural education is not a monolithic movement, the predominant practice of multicultural education tends to celebrate cultural diversity and the experience of the individual while paying less attention to societal structures and institutionalized oppression (Kailin, 2002). Many scholars, including individuals committed to antiracist education, have voiced strong critiques of this predominant notion of multicultural education (e.g., Mattai, 1992; McCarthy, 1988; Olneck, 1990). For example, Mattai and Olneck both suggest that multicultural education gives priority to the individual and the concept of culture over the institutionalized relationships among groups. As a result, some forms of multicultural education do not pay adequate attention to issues such as institutional racism or classism. Additionally, multicultural education as typically implemented focuses on content, values, and beliefs and remains disconnected from social activism aimed at changing the institutional structures that lead to inequity (Kailin, 2002; Sleeter, 1996).

Some strands of multicultural education do emphasize notions of justice and social activism and we suggest that social justice teacher education build on and expand these notions, particularly as they are enacted in practice. Banks (2002) identifies four approaches to multicultural education: contributions, additive, transformative, and social action. The transformative and social action approaches move beyond a celebratory notion of diversity to one that focuses on change and action. The transformative approach insists that the internal structure of the content and course material must be changed to include the experiences, perspectives, and knowledge of diverse groups, and the social action approach extends the transformative approach by requiring students to partake in social action—to actually engage in efforts of social change. Similarly, Sleeter and Grant (1993) identify five perspectives of multicultural education including one—education that is multicultural and reconstructionist—that reflects a social justice emphasis and challenges institutionalized forms of oppression. Others identify reconstructionist traditions within teacher education more generally that incorporate notions of justice (e.g., Grant & Secada, 1990; Liston & Zeichner, 1991). The more justice-oriented traditions—from Banks' social action approach to reconstructionist teacher education—have existed on the periphery of most efforts within teacher education, including those focused on multicultural teacher education. Sleeter reminds us, however, of the importance of justice being central to multicultural education:

...multicultural education came out of the civil rights movement. It wasn't just about, "let me get to know something about your food and I'll share some of my food." The primary issue was one of access to a quality education. If we're not dealing with questions of why access is continually important, and if we're not dealing with issues like why we have so much poverty amid so much wealth, we're not dealing with the core

issues of multiculturalism. I know it may sound trite, but the central issue remains one of justice. (Sleeter, 2000–2001)

Social justice teacher education, as an extension of the social action approaches within multicultural education, aims to heed Sleeter's call, taking a perspective on justice in which both celebrating diversity and attending to structural inequities are central themes in the preparation of teachers. In addition to refocusing the conceptual foundation of programs, this effort will require redesigning the structural components in order to come to terms with the roadblocks encountered in the implementation of multicultural teacher education.

### *Structural Challenges*

The history of multicultural teacher education highlights a number of challenges that social justice teacher education will likely face and need to overcome. The implementation of multicultural education within teacher education has been constrained by the fragmented structure of programs (Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004; Goodlad, 1990; Grant, 1994; Grant & Secada, 1990; Howey & Zimpher, 1987), which is, in part, the consequence of the culture and reward structure of higher education. As a result, the majority of programs respond to demands to address the increasing diversity of students by adding on a single course in multicultural foundations or requiring a placement in schools serving learners from diverse backgrounds<sup>6</sup> (Banks, 1995; Gay, 1994; Goodwin, 1997b; Grant, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Research suggests that add-on efforts have had a limited impact on prospective teachers' beliefs and attitudes about and practices with students of color, low-income students, and English language learners (Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Tom, 1997; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Rarely, however, have programs integrated multicultural content across the curriculum.

As currently implemented, issues such as race, class, and language diversity are primarily addressed in foundations courses, perhaps providing prospective teachers with important conceptual knowledge of teaching students from diverse backgrounds, but with few strategies for enacting that knowledge in their classroom practice (McDonald, 2005). As a result, this add-on approach maintains a dangerous dichotomy—a separation between preparing teachers with subject matter and pedagogical content knowledge and preparing them with knowledge of students from diverse backgrounds and commitments to social justice (Grossman, McDonald, Hammerness, & Ronfeldt, 2008). Lessons from practice teach that such dichotomies are false and in fact, that providing students traditionally disadvantaged by the system with high quality opportunities to learn requires teachers who can integrate subject matter expertise with knowledge of and commitments to social justice (e.g., Gutstein, 2003; Lee, 2001; Moses & Cobb, 2001).

The implementation pitfalls of multicultural teacher education provide a number of lessons for social justice teacher education programs. Such programs must take up the challenge of clarifying the vision(s) of justice orienting their work, which will require grappling with differing political views of social justice and teacher education both amongst program faculty and with other members of the community. Teacher educators must also fundamentally change the structure of programs that tend to marginalize concerns for justice and diversity and separate such foundational concerns from the actual practice of teaching. Such efforts will require a rethinking of existing program policies and practices, and potentially will require changing them in order to unseat the strongholds in teacher education that resist efforts at integration.

## Connecting with Other Efforts

As suggested in the introduction, social justice efforts within teacher education programs have remained largely unarticulated, despite the rise in the number of programs that claim a social justice orientation. In this section, we examine ways in which social justice teacher education might consider conceptions of social justice based in other fields as well as how it might connect to other types of social movements in an effort to better clarify the work of social justice in teacher education.

### *Conceptual Possibilities*

What individual programs mean when they suggest they prepare teachers from a social justice perspective is, in most cases, left implicit and as a result open to a broad array of interpretations. In this section, we suggest social justice teacher education would benefit from (1) considering how individuals in other disciplines such as philosophy, political science, or sociology have conceptualized notions of justice and (2) connecting with other social movements aimed at achieving justice.

Social justice efforts, as articulated in teacher education, generally draw from the conceptual work of multicultural education, and link to the larger goal of preparing teachers to work with students from diverse backgrounds.<sup>7</sup> In some cases, the move toward implementing social justice relies on teacher educators' conceptions of what constitutes social justice and rarely draws explicitly from broader theories of justice (McDonald, forthcoming). This lack of connection to other work regarding conceptions of justice perhaps constrains teacher educators and programs as they strive to develop missions and visions that include ideas of justice.

Differing conceptions of justice establish different kinds of aims, goals, and strategies. Dominant distributional theories of justice suggest that a primary means of achieving justice is to fairly distribute goods such as economic wealth, social position, and access to opportunity (Sturman, 1997). A central tenet of this concept is to slice the pie into equal parts, with the aim of giving everyone the same size piece, particularly if doing so leads to the greatest benefit of the most disadvantaged (Rawls, 1971). Critics argue, however, that distributional theories overemphasize individuals as independent of institutional arrangements and social structures, thereby overlooking the vast ways in which both individuals and social groups encounter oppression (Young, 1991).

A teacher education program that conceptualizes justice as distributed might for example focus prospective teachers' attention on ensuring that students have equal opportunities to participate or equal access to class materials and resources. For example, prospective teachers might learn to label Popsicle sticks with each student's name and then draw a stick to call on students to ensure fairness. From this perspective, equality is achieved by evenly distributing resources. Likewise, this conception would downplay the potential impact of a student's status in an oppressed group; for example, the impact of the student's race on his or her classroom experiences and levels of achievement. In some ways, this conception of justice maps fairly easily onto dominant conceptions of teaching in which the primary goal is to address the needs of the individual learner. Returning to our earlier discussion of multicultural education, this conception of justice reflects the philosophical perspective of predominant approaches to multicultural education (Banks, 2002; Sleeter, 1996).

Teacher educators could look to other perspectives on justice to challenge a distributional view and shift the focus away from the individual and toward a greater understanding and awareness of how institutional arrangements and social structures shape

the opportunities available to individuals. This shift would address many of the critiques of multicultural education discussed earlier. For example, teacher educators might consider the perspective of Young (1990) who suggests that a concept of distribution cannot be accurately applied to nonmaterial goods. Simply put, one cannot divide respect, honor, or power. From this perspective, an individual's affiliation with particular social groups often significantly shapes his or her access to and experiences of nonmaterial and material goods. Such affiliations constrain and enable people's ability to participate in determining their actions and their ability to develop and exercise their capacities. Thus, addressing injustice requires developing respect for group differences without reaffirming or reestablishing aspects of oppression.

A teacher education program conceptualizing justice in this way, then, would provide prospective teachers with opportunities to think about how social structures such as race and racism, class and classism, shape the experiences of individual students. It would also suggest that justice within the context of a classroom may require teachers to attend to students' needs differentially—that, in fact, being just is not simply a matter of divvying up the pie evenly, but rather taking into consideration which individuals at the table might need more pie, or a different pie entirely, in order to be successful.

As suggested, the underlying conceptions of justice either explicitly or implicitly at play in a teacher education program work to frame the decisions and actions of the participating individuals. Drawing from more general theories and perspectives of justice might help teacher educators to clarify program aims and goals. From this standpoint, teacher educators would be challenged to discuss the following questions: Is justice about providing equal opportunity, but not necessarily equal outcomes? Is it about recognizing how individuals' connections to oppressed groups shape their experiences? Is it about reducing the impact of oppression? Does it require connecting to other efforts, within and outside of education, aimed at minimizing the affects of oppression? To answer these questions, teacher educators might benefit from grappling with theories of justice and their underlying assumptions. These efforts would also help the field of teacher education clarify the ambiguity present in current discussions of what constitutes social justice teacher education.

### *Connecting to Social Movements*

Teacher education programs have a unique opportunity to improve the educational opportunities of students; however, they cannot go it alone. Social justice teacher education efforts must join with other levels of the educational system as well as organizations in the public and private sector to improve the educational opportunities and current realities of students of color, low-income students, and English language learners, and their families. Recent social justice efforts within education generally and teacher education more specifically have been isolated from other movements aimed at achieving justice, such as those focused on economic equality, political justice, neighborhood renewal, or health care reform. To some extent, envisioning social justice teacher education as part of other efforts aimed at improving the conditions of students' lives requires a reframing of the problem. The disparity in educational opportunities and outcomes between students of color, low-income students, or English language learners is not simply a result of an unjust educational system, but of a whole network of injustices that disadvantage such students and restrict their opportunities both in and out of school (Anyon, 2005; Children's Defense Fund, 2005). From this perspective, low achieving schools and low achieving students and their families are embedded in a broader social structure—one that requires change on economic and political fronts in order to improve the realities for many students and their families.

*Examples of Programs Connected to Broader Social Justice Movements*

One might argue that teacher education has enough already on its plate and that programs cannot join, in any practical sense, the efforts of other justice movements. However, historical and international examples offer some possibilities. Below we briefly describe three such possibilities: New College (1932–1939), The Putney School (1950–1964), and the Landless Workers Movement teacher education program in Brazil.

*New College (1932–1939)*

New College, an experimental teacher education program at Teachers College Columbia, aimed to move beyond the experiences provided by most colleges and normal schools.<sup>8</sup> According to Kirkpatrick, “ordinary college and normal schools can hardly have any other result than turning out teachers ignorant in our social situation and with no intelligent concern about it” (as quoted in Liston & Zeichner, 1991, p.29). A primary goal of New College was to counteract this complacency and prepare teachers to be leaders of societal reconstruction. New College faculty believed that a fundamental aspect of professional preparation was the broadening of prospective teachers’ understanding of their role so that they would begin to view their job in light of broader societal needs and problems. New College set out to prepare teachers with this perspective through a number of activities. For example, teachers were expected to live and work for a summer at a student-operated farm in North Carolina, work in industry for a term, and to study and travel abroad for at least a summer. Teachers also had multiple opportunities to debate political issues with students and faculty in organized assemblies. In the end, program faculty strived to ensure that no student was allowed to graduate if he or she remained politically illiterate or indifferent.

*The Putney School (1950–1964)*

The Putney Graduate School of Education (1950–1964) a small school affiliated with the Putney School of Putney, Vermont aimed to support its students to develop commitments to social justice, racial equality, and environmental sustainability (Rodgers, 2006). Rodgers writes that “through a program that included living together in a mixed-race residence, studying and meeting leading voices in the Civil Rights movement, travelling together in a van over a period of several weeks to various sites of civil action in the deep South, and reflecting regularly on all these experiences, the program aimed to graduate ‘transformed’ individuals, ready to act in the world to change it” (1267). Students were challenged to connect educational issues with civil rights issues and to connect their individual actions and efforts to broader social action.<sup>9</sup> Notably, the Putney School helped reframe students’ views of education as solely work within classrooms to an understanding of how classroom life could relate to other concerns such as civil rights and racial justice.

*Teacher Education in the Landless Workers Movement in Brazil*

The Landless Workers Movement (MST)—one of the most important social movements in contemporary Latin America—struggles for social and economic justice in addition to agrarian reform. Diniz-Pereira (2005) points out that the MST views the struggle for land and economic justice as requiring an emphasis on education.<sup>10</sup> Three main principles ground the work of MST teacher education: technical and professional education,



political preparation, and cultural preparation. Similar to the Putney School, political preparation emphasizes the development of an historical and class consciousness to support teachers in understanding how their practices connect to larger societal change efforts. Moreover, cultural preparation emphasizes developing teachers' ability to organize and build a culture of cooperation and solidarity (Diniz-Pereira, 2005). During the program, teachers increase their involvement in the community in an effort to learn more about the life conditions of the encampment and to develop a deeper commitment to the goals of the movement and the community (Diniz-Pereira, 2005).

All three examples suggest ways in which teacher education programs might work in conjunction with broader social movements. Notably, in each example, programs explicitly challenged teachers to expand their understanding of the current realities of students' lives and their role as teachers, and to become politically active by participating directly with efforts beyond classroom and school walls. These cases illustrate possibilities for how programs today might reorganize the structures, pedagogy, and curriculum to better provide prospective teachers with opportunities to develop the knowledge, practices, and dispositions necessary to work for social justice. Some might argue that these cases are exceptional, their efforts enabled by their time period or context, and that they illustrate practices difficult to replicate in the current context of U.S. teacher education. However, a number of programs across the U.S. currently employ a wide array of practices that one might characterize as supporting social justice, even though a limitation of such efforts is that they rarely connect to broader social movements. In the following section, we highlight specific practices to offer examples of the range of ways in which teacher education programs strive to address social justice.

### **Practices in Social Justice Teacher Education**

Two types of strategies have been commonly reported in the literature on teacher education programs that claim to be driven by social justice goals: First, are the efforts by teacher educators to recruit more students and faculty of color. The second set of strategies is concerned with the social relations, instructional, strategies, and structures within programs.

#### ***Admissions and Recruitment***

First, the goal of recruiting more students and faculty of color into teacher education programs has been defended on the grounds that a more diverse teaching force is needed in order to provide an increasingly diverse public school population with a high quality education. This view stems from a desire to provide all students with teachers of color as role models and provide more equitable outcomes to students in terms of learning and graduation rates. It has also been asserted that diverse cohorts of teacher education students and faculty will create the learning conditions needed to educate teachers to be successful in today's public schools (Sleeter, 2007). Two general approaches have been utilized to recruit more diverse teacher education student cohorts. One type of intervention has involved changing admission requirements for traditional undergraduate and postgraduate college and university-based programs away from a system that relies exclusively on academic criteria to one that maintains high academic standards but is also more holistic, taking into account a variety of personal factors and life experiences.

A second approach to recruiting more teachers of color has been to create various types of alternative teacher education programs that focus on teaching in high needs urban and rural areas. These programs are structured in ways to make it attractive to

prospective teachers of color and offer supports that make it more likely that students will complete the programs once admitted. One prominent example of such efforts was the Dewitt Wallace–Reader’s Digest Fund programs that were initiated at over 40 sites in the United States in the late 1990s (Clewell & Villegas, 2001).

Another strategy for recruiting more students of color into teacher education programs is for four-year colleges and universities to initiate articulation agreements with two-year community colleges and technical colleges, which traditionally have enrolled more than one half of all racial/ethnic minority students who are in higher education (Villegas & Lucas, 2004). These agreements are designed to ease the transition of students from the two-year colleges into teacher education programs in colleges and universities and to support students to successfully complete these programs. Despite the above mentioned efforts, the U.S. teaching force remains predominately White and monolingual English speaking (Wirt et al. 2005; Zumwalt & Craig, 2005).

Along with the goal of creating more ethnic–racial diversity in teacher education student cohorts, a number of the changes in admissions policies in teacher education programs with a social justice focus have been aimed at recruiting students who are disposed toward becoming successful teachers who work for social justice. Recognizing the limited power of preservice teacher education to influence prospective teachers’ worldviews and commitments toward equity and social justice (Haberman & Post, 1992), teacher educators sometimes choose to work with prospective teachers with whom they think they might be able to make a difference. This pragmatic stance of choosing to work with prospective teachers who arrive wanting to learn how to teach for social justice, and showing some potential to teach in this way, is supported by the evidence on teacher learning (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005).

In addition, a number of institutions across the United States have instituted policies that especially try to recruit faculty of color to campuses, and education units have utilized these policies to attempt to bring more faculty of color into their teacher education programs. These efforts have sometimes been part of more general efforts on some campuses to improve the climate and concrete support regarding diversity in all aspects of campus life (Melnick & Zeichner, 1997).

### *In-Program Initiatives*

In addition to recruitment and admissions strategies, there are a number of actions that teacher educators have taken within their programs to further their social justice goals. One strategy, developed in the face of recent state mandates of performance-based assessment in teacher education programs, has been to modify and sharpen standards and assessments to explicitly reflect a commitment to social justice goals. Even in some programs that identify themselves as working toward social justice goals, the standards and assessments are often very generic and a social justice focus is not evident.

Evergreen State College is one example of a program with standards and assessments that explicitly reflect a commitment to social justice goals (Vavrus, 2002). For example, one of the standards for student teachers at Evergreen is concerned with assessing knowledge of multicultural, antibias curriculum planning. Different levels of development on this standard are identified, ranging from curriculum plans which do not incorporate multicultural perspectives and advance antibias goals to those which transform the conventional curriculum with multicultural and antibias goals (see Vavrus, 2002, p. 47). This explicit incorporation of social justice elements into the assessments that are used in the program reinforces the message that these are areas of importance for prospective teachers.

Probably the most common approach that can be found in the social justice teacher education literature is the required courses and parts of courses that focus on social justice issues. These courses go beyond the celebration of diversity to address such issues as racism and White and English language privilege (e.g., McIntyre, 2002) and, in some cases, focus on the development of various elements of “equity pedagogy” (Banks, 2003). A variety of instructional strategies and course assignments have been employed inside these courses such as story telling, autobiography, dialogue journals, literature, films, portfolios, and case studies (e.g., Florio Ruane, 2001; Garmon, 1998; Gomez, 1996; Noordhoff & Kleinfeld, 1993; Obidah, 2000; Pleasants, Johnson & Trent, 1998). It is important to note that all of these instructional strategies can be used to work toward other visions of teaching and learning, and they are not in and of themselves evidence that a program is attempting to prepare teachers to teach for social justice.

One goal that is often present in the use of these various instructional strategies in teacher education courses is to expand the sociocultural consciousness of prospective teachers, to help them understand that “one’s worldview is not universal but is profoundly influenced by a variety of factors, chief among them race/ethnicity, social class and gender” (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p. 27). It has often been argued that achieving this greater understanding of one’s self as a cultural being is a key aspect of preparing teachers to teach for social justice. In addition to this and other aspects of personal growth<sup>11</sup> that are sought in course-based efforts, teacher educators also focus on preparing teachers to be able to develop culturally relevant curriculum and use teaching and assessment practices that are sensitive to cultural variations and enable all students to demonstrate what they know and can do (Goodwin, 1997a; Irvine & Armento, 2001; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Another important element in social justice teacher education practices is the field experiences that are provided for prospective teachers in schools and communities. Although research is largely inconclusive about the characteristics of these school-based experiences that further the goal of preparing teachers to teach for social justice, it is clear from studies to date that it is the particular quality of these experiences that matters rather than merely placing student teachers in schools with diverse learners (Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Lane, Lacefield-Parachini, & Isken, 2003). These experiences can sometimes serve to strengthen and reinforce negative stereotypes held by student teachers rather than challenging them (Haberman & Post, 1992).

In addition, some programs have begun to incorporate community-based field experiences that focus on helping student teachers learn about the funds of knowledge and structures and social networks that exist in the communities where their pupils live. Although some of this work has focused on community experience as service learning (Boyle-Baise, 2002) and on the service element as a way to develop the cultural teaching competence of prospective teachers, there are a number of examples that position prospective teachers more as learners in communities, focusing on how these experiences support the preparation of teachers who teach for social justice (Boyle-Baise & McIntyre, in press). Sometimes these experiences are linked to particular courses, engage prospective teachers in a form of participatory action research in communities or employ adults in communities to educate prospective teachers about particular aspects of community life (e.g., Buck & Sylvester, 2005; Burant & Kirby, 2002; Mahan, 1982; McIntyre, 2003; Seidel & Friend, 2002). Sometimes community experience for prospective teachers includes a cultural immersion experience of a semester or longer (Zeichner & Melnick, 1996). In one case, the focus of contact with community members in teacher education was on educating university teacher educators about particular communities so that they could incorporate this knowledge into the teaching of their campus courses (Koerner & Abdul-Tawwab, 2006). The assumption in many of these community-based

teacher education efforts is that prospective teachers will see communities and neighborhoods as potential resources in their teaching and that teachers will see themselves as part of the communities in which they work (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

This last example raises the general issue of whose voices and knowledge need to be present in a teacher education program that claims to prepare teachers to teach for social justice. We have been quite critical of the tendency of so called social justice oriented teacher education programs that either exclude or marginalize the voices of K-12 teachers and community members in the teacher education process and have argued that these elitist social relations are a direct contradiction of the values that underlie any conception of social justice (e.g., Zeichner, 2006). It seems to us that by definition a social justice oriented teacher education program needs to include the genuine participation of K-12 teachers and community members in addition to college and university faculty and staff.

A key issue in understanding the efforts of teacher educators to incorporate teaching for social justice into a preservice teacher education program is the extent to which this goal has been infused throughout a program. This issue includes who on the teacher education faculty is engaged in this work (Moule, 2005). Recent research has indicated that the impact of teacher education programs on prospective teachers is much more powerful when there is a unified vision of teaching and learning that permeates a program than when attention to a goal exists in only some program components (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Infusion of social justice into the teacher education curriculum includes attention to the general education and content preparation of teachers in addition to professional education courses. For example, various campuses across the country have implemented ethnic studies and international/global requirements that are intended to contribute to enhancing the cultural competence of students.

In her study of two elementary teacher education programs in California that emphasize teaching for social justice, McDonald (2005) developed a framework for understanding the nature and quality of the infusion of social justice issues into a teacher education program. She found that opportunities to learn about teaching for social justice in these programs varied in terms of their emphasis on conceptual and practical tools.<sup>12</sup> In addition, she identified four types of teachers' learning opportunities related to social justice. These included opportunities to focus on individuals as independent of their affiliations with broader social groups; individuals as identified by membership in an educational category (e.g., special education student); individuals as identified by their membership in an oppressed group (e.g., their status as influenced by race, ethnicity, gender, class, or sexual orientation); and justice as attending to issues of oppression embedded in institutional structures. McDonald employed this framework to illuminate the specific nature of the attention to preparing teachers for social justice in each program and offers some potential for helping teacher educators think about the meaning of social justice in their own and others' programs.

Another important issue that has emerged in the literature on preparing teachers to work for social justice is that it tends to emphasize the preparation of White monolingual English teachers to teach students of color, while the preparation needs of prospective teachers of color are not adequately addressed (Montecinos, 2004; Sleeter, 2000–2001). This lack of attention to the backgrounds and cultures of prospective teachers of color and their needs for a culturally responsive education for teaching is often a direct contradiction of what teacher educators are encouraging their students to do in elementary and secondary schools and serves to weaken the impact of teacher education (Zeichner, 2003).

A final issue that has emerged in the literature on social justice teacher education is the lack of attention in many areas of the United States outside of English as a second

language (ESL) and bilingual teacher education programs to preparing teachers to teach English language learners. This lack of attention is evidenced by the lack of research on the preparation of teachers to teach English language learners (Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Lucas & Grinberg, in press) and by follow up surveys of teacher education program graduates even in so called exemplary programs (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

In sum, a variety of practices have emerged in programs that claim to focus on preparing teachers to teach for social justice that include both recruitment and admissions efforts and efforts within programs to develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will enable teachers to teach for social justice. A number of issues have arisen in these efforts to implement social justice teacher education programs including the nature and degree to which social justice is infused throughout a program, who carries out the teacher education effort (just university academics or also teachers and community members), whether the preparation takes into account the background and experiences of all teacher candidates or focuses solely on preparing White teachers to teach students of color, and finally whether language diversity is addressed, in addition to other forms of diversity. In addition to such issues, the array of practices employed by programs suggests that attending to issues of social justice requires a programmatic investment—one that examines and likely reforms policies related to recruitment, admissions, and standards for prospective teachers as well as practices associated with the curriculum and pedagogy of courses and field placement experiences. Without such investment, efforts to address social justice will likely become peripheral to the core work of teacher preparation.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, we have argued that social justice teacher education must learn from the history of other reform and redesign efforts in teacher education. First, social justice teacher education programs and the field of teacher education at large must explicitly grapple with the following questions: What is social justice teacher education? What are the program structures, policies, and practices that constitute social justice teacher education? As other teacher education reform efforts suggest, without the consideration of such questions, programs will likely simply adopt the label of social justice without challenging or changing existing practices. In addition, the ambiguity in terms of the concept and practice of social justice teacher education will allow a wide range of programs, some with very different agendas to lay claim to such a vision of teacher preparation.

We are not arguing that the field of teacher education should develop a prescriptive or narrow notion of social justice teacher education given that the context of individual programs and the communities in which they are situated will inform the nature of the work. However, we do urge teacher educators engaged in such work to challenge themselves and the field to develop a range of conceptions and practices that would provide some guidance in terms of the vision of teaching and learning and the practices of such a reform effort. The practices described above are a start in this direction, but further documentation and research of such efforts is critical to the ongoing development and conceptualization of social justice teacher education.

Finally, we argue that social justice teacher education programs may benefit from looking beyond conceptions of multicultural teacher education as typically implemented toward conceptions of justice as described by those in other fields. As we suggested, the conception(s) of justice a teacher education program adopts frames the work of teacher preparation and influences how prospective teachers develop ideas and practices associ-

ated with equity and justice. Social justice teacher education must also learn from the implementation pitfalls of multicultural teacher education and strive to overcome the barriers of program fragmentation and marginalization. This, as indicated above, requires a programmatic investment in social justice teacher education and cannot rest solely on the shoulders of individual teacher educators or on the backs of specific courses in multicultural education. The goal of preparing teachers to engage in efforts of justice, in addressing the inequities of the educational system, and in improving the living conditions and life opportunities for many students of color, low income students, and English language learners requires programs to fully and intentionally engage in redesigning programs at all levels, from policies to practices.

## Notes

1. These descriptions of programs' conceptual frameworks come from documents submitted to the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE; 2001). We would like to thank Art Wise of NCATE for allowing us to review a wide range of conceptual frameworks submitted by teacher education programs.
2. In this chapter we use the term *social justice* interchangeably with *justice*. We recognize that in the field of teacher education *social justice* is the more common term while scholars in the fields of political science and philosophy, for example, more commonly use the term *justice*.
3. Other innovative practices in teacher education such as professional development school partnerships have also lacked clarification regarding the conceptual and practical dimensions of what might constitute such a partnership. Ultimately, this lack of clarity has diminished the fundamental value of this concept and in many cases, left existing practices with K-12 schools unchanged.
4. Gollnick (1995) noted that NCATE accredited only 500 out of a total of 1,200 teacher education programs, but that these 500 programs prepared over 70% of the teachers entering teaching.
5. Feiman-Nemser (1990) and Tom (1997) suggest that teacher education programs engaged in redesign efforts must consider conceptual and structural reform. Conceptual reform requires the development of a vision of teaching and learning that gives direction to the practical activities of teacher education. Structural reform refers to a program's efforts to redesign the procedures and process for carrying out the preparation of prospective teachers, such as the course sequence and types and duration of field placements.
6. A major reason that teacher education programs remain fragmented is because of the institutional reward structures in colleges and universities that do not value the extra work it takes to develop greater program coherence.
7. While the focus in social reconstructionist oriented programs has been on preparing teachers to teach in schools attended by underserved students, the social justice work of teachers is important in schools serving students of all backgrounds.
8. All of the information regarding New College comes from Liston and Zeichner (1991).
9. For a full description of the Putney School see Rodgers (2006).
10. For a full description of the Landless Workers Movement's teacher education efforts see Diniz-Pereira (2005).
11. Other examples of personal growth goals that are sometimes sought include developing high expectations of teachers for the learning of all students, prejudice reduction, and dealing with the lack of awareness of White and English language privilege (Hollins & Guzman, 2005).
12. Conceptual tools (e.g., scaffolding) embody particular pedagogical strategies and practical tools (e.g., teaching methods for scaffolding instruction for English language learners) are the representation of more general concepts.

## References

- Anyon, J. (2005). *Radical possibilities: Public policy, urban education, and a new social movement*. New York: Taylor & Francis.
- Banks, J. (1995). Multicultural education: Historical development, dimensions, and practice. In J. Banks & C. Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (pp. 3–24). New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan.
- Banks, J. (2002). *An introduction to multicultural education* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Banks, J. (2003). Multicultural education: Characteristics and goals. In J. Banks & C. Banks (Eds.), *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives* (pp. 3–30). New York: Wiley.
- Boyle-Baise, L. (2002). *Multicultural service learning: Educating teachers in diverse communities*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Boyle-Baise, L., & McIntyre, J. (in press). What kind of experience? Preparing teachers in PDS or community settings? In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Nemser, & J. McIntyre (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education* (3rd ed., pp. ). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Buck, P., & Sylvester, P. S. (2005). Preservice teachers enter urban communities: Coupling funds of knowledge research with critical pedagogy in teachers' education. In N. Gonzalez, L. Moll, & C. Amanti (Eds.), *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities, and classrooms* (pp. 213–232). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Burant, T., & Kirby, D. (2002). Beyond classroom early field experiences: Understanding an educative practicum in an urban community. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 18, 561–575.
- Children's Defense Fund. (2005). *The state of America's children*. Washington, D.C.: Author.
- Clewell, C. B., & Villegas, A. M. (2001). *Ahead of the class: A handbook for preparing new teachers from new sources: Design lessons from the Dewitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund's Pathways to Teaching initiatives*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.
- Cochran-Smith, M., Davis, D., & Fries, M. K. (2004). Multicultural teacher education: Research, practice, and policy. In J. Banks & C. M. Banks (Eds.), *The handbook of research on multicultural education* (2nd ed., pp. 931–975). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). *Powerful teacher education programs: Lessons from exemplary programs*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Diniz-Pereira, J. (2005). Teacher education for social transformation and its links to progressive social movements: The case of the Landless Workers Movement in Brazil. *Journal of Critical Education Policy Studies*, 3 (2). Available online at <http://www.jceps.com>
- Feiman-Nemser, S. (1990). Teacher preparation: Structural and conceptual analysis. In R. Houston, M. Haberman, & J. Sikulka (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education* (pp. 212–233). New York: Macmillan.
- Florio-Ruane, S. (2001). *Teacher education and the cultural imagination*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Garmon, M. A. (1998). Using dialogue journals to promote student learning in a multicultural teacher education course. *Remedial and Special Education*, 19(1), 32–45.
- Gay, G. (1994). *NCREL monograph: A synthesis of scholarship in multicultural education*. Naperville, IL: North Central Regional Education Laboratory.
- Gollnick, D. (1995). National and state initiatives for multicultural education. In J. Banks & C. Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (pp. 44–64). New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Gomez, M.L. (1996) Telling stories of our teaching: Reflecting on our practices. *Action in Teacher Education*, 28(3), 1–12.
- Goodlad, J. (1990). *Teachers for our nation's schools*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Goodwin, A. L. (1997a). (Ed.). *Assessment for equity and inclusion*. New York: Routledge.
- Goodwin, A. L. (1997b). Historical and contemporary perspectives on multicultural teacher education: Past lessons, new directions. In J. King, E. Hollins, & W. Hayman (Eds.), *Preparing teachers for cultural diversity*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Grant, C. (1994). Best practices in teacher education for urban schools: Lessons from the multicultural teacher education literature. *Action in Teacher Education*, 16(3), 2–18.

- Grant, C., & Secada, W. (1990). Preparing teachers for diversity. In R. Houston, M. Haberman, & J. Sikula (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education* (pp. 403–422). New York: Macmillan.
- Grossman, P., McDonald, M., Hammerness, K., & Ronfeldt, M. (2008). Dismantling dichotomies in teacher education. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, J. McIntyre, & K. Demers (Eds.), *The handbook of teacher education: A project of the Association of Teacher Educators* (3rd ed., pp. 243–24873). New York: Macmillan.
- Gutstein, E. (2003). Teaching and learning mathematics for social justice in an urban, Latino school. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, 34(1), 37–37 33
- Hammerness, K., Darling-Hammond, L., & Bransford, J. (2005) How teachers learn and develop. In L. Darling-Hammond & J. Bransford (Eds), *Preparing teachers for a changing world* (pp. 358–389). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Hollins, E., & Guzman, M. T. (2005). Research on preparing teachers for diverse populations. In M. Cochran-Smith & K. Zeichner (Eds.), *Studying teacher education* (pp. 477–548). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Kailin, J. (2002). *Antiracist education*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Koerner, M., & Abdul-Tawwab, N. (2006). Using community as a resource for teacher education: A case study. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 39, 37–46.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African-American children*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Multicultural teacher education: Research, practice, and policy. In J. Banks & C. Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (pp. 747–759). New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan.
- Lane, S., Lacefield-Parachini, N., & Isken J. (2003). Developing novice teachers as change agents: Student teacher placements against the grain. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 30(2), 55–68.
- Lee, C. (2001). Is October Brown Chinese? A cultural modeling activity system for underachieving students. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(1), 97–141.
- Liston, D., & Zeichner, K. (1991). *Teacher education and the social conditions of schooling*. New York: Routledge.
- Lucas, T., & Grinberg, J. (in press). Responding to the linguistic reality of mainstream classrooms: Preparing all teachers to teach English language learners. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Nemser, J. McIntyre, & K. Demers (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education* (3rd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Mahan, J. (1982). Community involvement components in culturally oriented teacher preparation. *Education*, 103(2), 163–172.
- Mattai, P. R. (1992). Rethinking *multicultural education: Has it lost its focus or is it being mis-used?* *Journal of Negro Education*, 67(1), 65–77.
- McCarthy, C. (1994). Multicultural discourses and curriculum reform: A critical perspective. *Educational Theory*, 44(4), 81–98.
- McDonald, M. (2005). The integration of social justice in teacher education: Dimensions of prospective teachers' opportunities to learn. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 56(5), 418–435.
- McDonald, M. (2007). The joint enterprise of social justice teacher education. *Teachers College Record*, 109(8), 2047–2081.
- McIntyre, A. (2003). Participatory action research and urban education: Reshaping the teacher preparation process. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 36(1), 28–39.
- Melnick, S., & Zeichner, K. (1997). Teacher education for cultural diversity: Enhancing the capacity of teacher education institutions to address diversity issues. In J. King, E. Hollins, & W. Hayman (Eds.), *Meeting the challenge of diversity in teacher preparation* (pp. 23–39). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Montecinos, C. (2004). Paradoxes in multicultural teacher education research: Students of color positioned as objects while ignored as subjects. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 17(2), 167–181.
- Moses, R., & Cobb, P. (2001). *Radical equations: Math literacy and civil rights*. Boston: Beacon Press



- Moule, J. (2005). Implementing a social justice perspective: Invisible burden for faculty of color. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 32(4), 23–42.
- National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. (2001). *Standards for professional development schools*. Washington, D.C.: Author.
- Noordoff, K., & Kleinfeld, J. (1993). Preparing teachers for multicultural classrooms. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 91(1), 27–39
- Obidah, J. (2000). Mediating boundaries of race, class and professional authority as a critical multiculturalist. *Teachers College Record*, 102(6), 1035–1060.
- Olneck, M. (1990). The recurring dream: Symbolism and ideology in intercultural and multicultural education. *American Journal of Education*, 98, 147–183
- Pleasant, H., Johnson, C., & Trent, S. (1998). Reflecting, reconceptualizing and revising: The evolution of a portfolio assignment in a multicultural teacher education class. *Remedial & Special Education*, 19(1), 46–58.
- Rawls, J. (1971). *A theory of justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Rodgers, C. (2006). “The turning of one’s soul”—Learning to teach for social justice: The Putney graduate school of teacher education (1950–1964). *Teachers College Record*, 108(7), 1266–1295.
- Seidel, B., & Friend, G. (2002). Leaving authority at the door: Equal status community-based experiences and the preparation of teachers for diverse classrooms. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 18, 421–433.
- Sleeter, C. E. (1996). *Multicultural education as social activism*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Sleeter, C. E. (2000–2001). Diversity vs. white privilege. *Rethinking Schools*, 15,
- Sleeter, C. E. (2007, April). *Equity, democracy, and neo-liberal assaults on teacher education*. Vice presidential address presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago.
- Sleeter, C. E., & Grant, C. (1993). *Making choices for multicultural education: Five approaches to race, class, and gender* (2nd ed.). New York: Merrill.
- Sturman, A. (1997). *Social justice in education* (Vol. 40). Melbourne, Australia: The Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Tom, A. (1997). *Redesigning teacher education*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Valli, L. (1992). *Reflective teacher education: Cases and critiques*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Vavrus, M. (2002). *Transforming the multicultural education of teachers: Theory, research, and practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Villegas, A. M., & Lucas, T. (2002). *Educating culturally responsive teachers*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Villegas, A. M., & Lucas, T. (2004). Diversifying the teacher workforce: A retrospective and prospective analysis. In M. Smylie & D. Miretzky (Eds.), *Developing the teacher workforce* (pp. 70–104). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wirt, J. G., Choy, S., Rooney, P., Hussar, W., Povasnik, S., & Hampden-Thompson, G. (2005). *The condition of education*. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics.
- Young, I. M. (1990). *Justice and the politics of difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Zeichner, K. (1991). Contradictions and tensions in the professionalization of teaching and the democratization of schools. *Teachers College Record*, 92(3), 363–379.
- Zeichner, K. (2003). The adequacies and inadequacies of three current strategies to recruit, prepare and retain the best teachers for all students. *Teachers College Record*, 105(3), 490–515.
- Zeichner, K. (2006). Reflections of a university teacher educator on the future of college and university-based teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 57(3), 326–340.
- Zeichner, K., & Liston, D. P. (1996). *Reflective teaching: An introduction*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Zeichner, K., & Melnick, S. (1996). The role of community field experiences in preparing teachers for cultural diversity. In K. Zeichner, S. Melnick, & M. L. Gomez (Eds.), *Currents of reform in preservice teacher education* (pp. 176–196). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Zumwalt, K., & Craig, E. (2005). Teachers’ characteristics: Research on the demographic profile. In M. Cochran-Smith & K. Zeichner (Eds.), *Studying teacher education* (pp. 111–156). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.