

# 11 Teacher capacity and social justice in teacher education

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is “the great equalizer of the conditions of man,” declared Horace Mann, in his annual report to the Massachusetts State Board of Education in 1848 (Cremin, 1957). Mann, who became known as the father of the American common school, believed public education could be transformed into a powerful instrument for social unity by providing all children with a common set of values and skills.

More than 150 years later, Mann’s vision of education as an equalizer has not been realized in the United States, despite the multitude of federal, state, and local policies devoted to achieving this goal. Today in a nation where power and privilege in our society remain stratified by race, gender, and socio-economic status, we are engaged in an ongoing debate about what constitutes educational policies based on equality, equity or social justice.

In this chapter we discuss social justice and teacher capacity, an amalgam of teachers’ knowledge, skills and dispositions, by posing and answering three questions. How should education professionals define the concept of social justice? What is the relationship between teacher capacity and social justice? What are teacher educators doing in scholarship and practice to bring about social justice? Our purpose is to provide teacher educators with an overview of the concepts of social justice and teacher capacity, so they may understand the relationship between the two and consider how well they are contributing to Horace Mann’s vision of education as the “great equalizer.”

We draw on literature from the field of teacher education, but also borrow from the literature of moral and political philosophy as well as social policy. In addition, we examine a particular body of teacher education literature—articles from four journals that focus on social justice over the past three decades—in order to identify the characteristic practices associated with social justice efforts in education

The chapter is organized around three major ideas each of which are presented in the following three sections: (1) an overview of the history and evolution of the concept of social justice; (2) an examination of the relationship between teacher capacity and the implementation of social justice; and (3) a review of the literature from four journals to examine how educators are currently attempting to implement social justice.

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

The term social justice was first used by Luigi Taparelli d Azeglio, an Italian Catholic scholar, in his *Theoretical Treatise on Natural Right Based on Fact*, published during the

period from 1840–1843. However, it was John Stuart Mill who, according to Michael Novak (2000), gave this “anthropomorphic approach to social questions almost canonical status for modern thinkers” when, in 1863, he wrote in *Utilitarianism* that:

Society should treat all equally well who have deserved equally well of it, that is, who have deserved equally well absolutely. This is the highest abstract standard of social and distributive justice; towards which all institutions, and the efforts of all virtuous citizens, should be made in the utmost degree to converge.

Although Mill’s ideas about social justice held sway for decades, in the aftermath of World War II, scholars began to re-examine the concept of social justice. This came after it was apparent that Mills’ ideas about “the greatest good for the greatest number” could be twisted or abused to lead to a “tyranny of the majority” such as Nazi Germany’s mistreatment of the Jews and the United States’ mistreatment of African Americans. One of the most important and influential modern examinations of the concept of social justice is John Rawls’ *A Theory of Justice* (1971), which is credited with re-awakening an interest in political philosophy in the United States.

Rawls (1971) writes that, “Justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought.” He asserts that, “Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override” (p. 3). Writing about the enduring significance of Rawls’ work, Martha Nussbaum (2001) asserts that:

The intuitive idea from which Rawls’s theory starts is simple and profound: “Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override.” In other words, the pursuit of a greater social good should not make us mar the lives of individuals by abridging their basic rights and entitlements. In particular, Rawls is concerned with the many ways in which attributes that have no moral worth—like class, race, and sex—frequently deform people’s prospects in life. Even if racism and sexism could be shown to maximize social utility, he says, they would still violate our basic sense of fairness.

(p. 3)

During the 1950s and 1960s, when Rawls was starting his academic career, major social justice events and movements for civil rights were taking place in the United States. These had significant implications for education, as well as for the kinds of teacher capacity necessary for dealing with these issues.

Although President Harry S. Truman’s 1945 creation of the President’s Committee on Civil Rights and the subsequent desegregation of the United States armed forces were among the first postwar steps toward making social justice a reality, the most important public policy changes arose in 1954 with the Supreme Court’s unanimous decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954). The decision struck down the separate but equal doctrine of *Plessey v. Ferguson*. Chief Justice Earl Warren, delivering the opinion of the court wrote:

Does segregation of children in public school solely on the basis of race, even though, the physical facilities and other “tangible” factors may be equal, deprive the children of equal education opportunity? We believe it does.

In the aftermath of the *Brown* decision, the Civil Rights Movement became a major

force in reshaping the philosophy, implementation, and practice of social justice in the United States. Events such as the following propelled the Civil Rights Movement:

- The brutal death of Emmett Till in Mississippi in August 1955, and the acquittal by an all-White jury of the two men who were arrested for the murder and who subsequently boasted about committing the murder in a *Look* magazine interview.
- Rosa Parks' decision on December 1, 1955 not to surrender her seat to a White man on the Montgomery bus. This led to a boycott which did not end until the buses were desegregated more than a year later.
- President Eisenhower's decision to send in federal troops to intervene on behalf of the students who were trying to integrate Little Rock High School.
- The 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery march for voting rights.

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s was followed by the second wave of the feminist movement, Chicano and American Indian movements, the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act, and the gay rights movement, all of which sought increased social justice. For example, the feminist movement of the 1970s, like the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s included actions for social justice at the federal, state and local levels in such areas as employment and education.

Since the publication of *A Theory of Justice*, there has been an ongoing debate and discussion about the meaning of social justice. In his article "Defining Social Justice" Michael Novak takes note of the work of British born economist and political philosopher Friedrich Hayek's assertion that social justice is a mirage:

Hayek points out that whole books and treatises have been written about social justice without ever offering a definition of it. It is allowed to float in the air as if everyone will recognize an instance of it when it appears.

(Novak, p. 11)

Novak continues his observations about the difficulty of defining social justice by further reference to Hayek's assertions that social justice is a mirage:

Hayek points out another defect of twentieth-century theories of social justice. Most authors assert that they use it to designate a virtue (a moral virtue, by their account). But most of the descriptions they attach to it appertain to impersonal states of affairs: high unemployment, or inequality of incomes or lack of a living wage are cited as instances of social injustice. Hayek goes to the heart of the matter: social justice is either a virtue or it is not. If it is, it can properly be ascribed only to the reflective and deliberate acts of individual persons. Most who use the term, however, ascribe it not to individuals but to social systems. They use "social justice" to denote a regulative principle of order; again, their focus is not virtue but power.

Goodlad (2002) is among a number of scholars (e.g. North, in press; Sturman, 1997) who contend that social justice is a contested and normative concept and that theoreticians and policymakers use the term to mean different things (e.g. equal opportunity, equity). Bell (1997), for example, defines social justice as both a process and a goal. The goal of social justice is full participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes "a vision of society . . . [where] members are physically and psychologically safe and secure" (p. 3).

Barry (2005) argues that "social justice is, and is normally understood to be, a question

of equal opportunities” (p. 7). In addition, he contends, “Social justice is about the treatment of inequalities of all kinds” (p. 10). Smith’s (1994) argument about social justice, while somewhat similar to Barry’s, employs the concept of fairness and equity. In addition, Smith is concerned with both fairness in the distribution of outcomes and how distributive injustices come about:

The term social justice is taken to embrace both fairness and equity in the distribution of a wide range of attributes, which need not be confined to material things. Although the primary focus is on attributes, which have an immediate bearing on people’s well-being or the quality of their lives, our conception of social justice goes beyond patterns of distribution, general and spatial, to incorporate attributes relevant to how these come about. While fairness is sometimes applied to procedures and justice to outcomes (Barry, 1989), we are concerned with both. Preference for the term social justice rather than justice in general is explained not by preoccupation with the distribution of attributes which might be labeled as social, but by a concern with something which happens socially among people in a society . . . Thus the meaning of socially justice adopted here is simultaneously distributional and relational.

(p. 26)

According to Young (1990), “social justice aims for the elimination of institutionalized domination and oppression” (p. 15). She believes that social justice should facilitate: (1) “developing and exercising one’s capacity and expressing one’s experiences” and (2) “participating in and determining one’s action” (p. 37).

Fraser (1997) introduces the “recognition” of “culturally defined groups” into the social justice discourse and contends that social justice must be defined within a dualistic framework. She claims that both economic redistribution and recognition must be of concern when discussing equality:

Many actors appear to be moving away from a socialist political imaginary, in which the central problem of justice is redistribution to a “postsocialist” political imaginary, in which the central problem of justice is recognition. With this shift, the most salient social movements are no longer economically defined “classes” who are struggling to defend their “interest,” end “exploitation,” and win “redistribution.” Instead, they are culturally defined “groups” or “communities of value” who are struggling to defend their “identities,” end “cultural domination,” and win “recognition.”

(pp. 8, 9)

## TRACING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHIFTING DEFINITIONS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THEIR ROLE IN TEACHER EDUCATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER CAPACITY

### Social justice and teacher education

Implicitly and explicitly, the various civil right movements of the 1960s and 1970s raised fundamental questions about teacher capacity and spoke to the necessity of embedding social justice issues within the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of teacher education programs, as well as the scholarship and actions of teacher educators.

Two ideas a reader of the social justice literature may come away with are: (1) changes in society (e.g. the social inclusion of groups of people of color and other marginalized groups, the Civil Movements, progress toward gender equity, technological advances) over the past sixty years continue to affect the ways social justice is defined, policies are written and implemented, and the ways people accept and act on a particular meanings of social justice; and (2) Rawls' notion of social justice as fairness holds an influential position in social justices discourses and, therefore, may be a useful tool for teacher educators to use as they examine both their scholarship and practice and teacher education program policies and practices.

It is important to locate social justice within the theories that are being used. Theoretical perspectives allow us to ask different questions about social injustices and contribute to a deeper understanding of justice or injustice concerning, for example, the distribution of attributes and resources or the recognition of culturally defined groups. More specifically, for instance, feminist theories, with their attention to how gender plays a role in shaping human consciousness and patriarchy functions within educational systems, ask somewhat different questions from those of post-colonial theories that focus on explaining the role of colonialism in persistent relations of domination and subordination in a multicultural, democratic society.

Since the publication of Rawls' book in 1971, social justice has been reinterpreted in light of the contemporary theories of equality, participation, and recognition (Miller, p. 2). Arguably, these theories became major criteria for addressing public policy in the 1960s. The passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965, for example, illustrates how these theories informed a political action aimed at correcting a failing education system for poor children. This legislation was based upon the theories of: (1) equality (i.e. equal opportunity); (2) participation (e.g. Latino children enjoying the privileges of public education, where their home language (Spanish) was the language of instruction and bilingual policies were in place to maintain the language); and (3) recognition (e.g. awareness of Asian American, Native American, and African children "as somebody").

Similarly, theories of equality, participation, and recognition influenced the funding of Head Start programs. Poor students and/or students of color were recognized and given access to an enriched social environment, where they received health and social services and education (Illinois Head Start Association, 2006). Likewise, the 1965 funding of Teacher Corps to prepare teachers for urban and rural schools and to improve home-school relationships was also a social justice act based on theories of equality, participation, and recognition. Teacher Corps recognized parents as a significant stakeholder in the education of their children, and they (parents and care-givers) were encouraged to participate in developing school policy and procedures that affected students in the school community.

Additionally, the reauthorization of ESEA in 2001, also known as *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* legitimates this legislation in terms of equality, participation, and recognition. As the authors of *NCLB* state, "In America, no child should be left behind. Every child should be educated to his or her potential" (p. 3) *NCLB* is largely aimed at inner city students and is, in theory, supposed to empower parents and bring about an increase in teacher/school accountability for students' academic performance.

Over the past two decades, teacher educators have increasingly focused attention on how teachers' knowledge, skills and dispositions relate to social justice. For example, Giroux (1992), Kumashiro (2002), and Cochran-Smith (2003) each describe a different approach, idea or method for integrating social justice into teacher capacity and many of their claims address power and the distribution of resources. Giroux (1992) focuses on

teacher pedagogy, Kumashiro (2002) takes a more global view of education, and Cochran-Smith (2003) speaks about teacher preparation.

In the early 1990s, Giroux (1992) argued for a pedagogy that would help teachers gain the capacity to teach for social justice:

Learning to teach that is premised on a stance for social justice recognizes the importance of social justice pedagogy. This social justice pedagogy refers to a deliberate attempt to construct authentic conditions through which educators and students can think critically about what stands as knowledge, how knowledge is produced, and how knowledge is transformed by a particular relationship between the self, others, and the larger world.

(p. 99)

Giroux (1992) went on to assert that:

A social justice stance is, in part, a disposition through which teachers reflect upon their own actions and those presented by others. Rather than passively accepting information or embracing a false consciousness, teachers take a much more active role in leading, learning, and reflecting upon their relationship with their practice and the social context in which the practice is situated.

(p. 99)

Kumashiro (2002) advocates “anti-oppressive education,” that is based on four approaches to education. The first approach includes developing education for the Other, by making schools helpful, safe spaces for all students. The second approach is education about the Other. This approach seeks “to enrich all students’ understanding of different ways of being” (p. 42). The third approach, education that is critical of privileging and “othering,” advocates “a critical awareness of oppressive structures and ideologies, and strategies to change them” (p. 45). The fourth approach promotes an education that changes students and society. This approach argues for “curricular and pedagogical reforms that help to address the complexities of anti-oppressive education by developing such notions as partiality, resistance, crisis, and unknowability as they apply to teaching and learning” (p. 68).

Cochran-Smith (2003) argues for a major overhauling of university-based teacher education programs that prepare teachers. She makes a strong case for a *new* teacher education, one that works both to challenge historical ideological underpinnings of traditional programs and to situate knowledge about culture and racism at the forefront of the teacher education curriculum. Included in this re-imagining of teacher education is teaching for social justice as an imperative and outcome of learning to teach as well as understanding the importance of valuing the cultural knowledge of local communities.

Although attention to social justice has increased over the past two decades, it has been more in name than substance. Zeichner (2006) states, “It has come to the point that the term social justice in teacher education is so commonly used now by colleges and university teacher educators that it is difficult to find a teacher education program in the United States that does not claim to have a program that prepares teachers for social justice” (p. 328). Additionally, he reports that except for greater attention being given to the role of communities in the preparation of teachers most of the work toward social justice in the United States seems to focus on classroom-based activities of individual teacher. Zeichner’s comment suggests that a number of problems and challenges are facing teacher education programs, such as the seriousness with which programs address

the conceptual underpinnings and context of social justice. We need to examine if and how social justice is defined in teacher education programs as well as the conceptual tools being used to assess how well programs are meeting social justice goals.

### **Defining teacher capacity in addition to knowledge, skills and dispositions**

Conceptions of teacher capacity that include attention to the dimensions of knowledge, skills, and dispositions are evolving and expanding, as McDiarmid & Clevenger-Bright (this volume) point out. Part of the growing conception of teacher capacity includes the dimension “views of self,” described as “their beliefs about their role in classroom activity, and the persona they adopt in the classroom” (O’Day *et al.*, 1995; CPRE Policy Brief, 1995). All of these dimensions are “interdependent and interactive” (O’Day *et al.*, 1995).

According to the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2003), teacher capacity involves candidates’ “knowledge, skills, and dispositions.” However, NCATE goes on to link the quality of disposition, to for example, professionalism in working with students, families, and communities. Target performance for the teacher disposition standard involves candidates working “with students, families, and communities in ways that reflect the dispositions expected of professional educators as delineated by the institutions as well as professional and state standards.” Target performance is therefore realized when candidates’ views of self include acknowledging that their own “dispositions may need to be adjusted” and they are able to “develop plans to do so.” Significantly, this performance standard suggests that institutions should define and standardize teacher disposition.

However, NCATE places the onus of delineating the teacher dispositions that “help all students learn” on the unit (college, department, programs), which may be influenced by professional and state standards but not necessarily by theories of social justice. Calling attention to this procedure, Cochran-Smith (2004) declares, “It is not clear . . . whether this emerging professional image also includes images of the teacher as activist, as agent for social change, or as ally in antiracist initiatives” (p. 117). She further argues, “As we construct the outcomes question in teacher education, we need to clarify and interrogate what it means to teach ‘all students’ well and/or what it means to adjust teaching practices according to the needs and interests of ‘all children’ ” (p. 117). Cochran-Smith’s questions go to the core of discussing the relationship between social justice and teacher capacity, and education as “the great equalizer of the conditions of man.”

Although discussions of teacher capacity generally refer to knowledge, skills, and dispositions, Freire (1998) lists other “essential qualities of progressive teachers” (p. 45). He warns that his list, which includes humility, lovingness, courage, tolerance, decisiveness, security, the tension between patience and impatience, verbal parsimony, competence, and the joy of living, is not exhaustive and that these qualities must develop over time. These qualities are less present in the literature where the focus is on teacher capacity without attention to social justice.

### **Historical tracing: teacher capacity and social justice**

For years, the explicit and implicit thinking regarding the issue of teacher capacity often centered on the capacity of White teachers to teach White students without much attention to the racism embedded within this thinking. When the question of teacher capacity began to include the teaching of Black students, questions of race (and racism) became more visible.

An earlier formulation of the teacher capacity question was thus, “Can/should White teachers teach Black children; and if so, what are the knowledge, skills, and implicit disposition they have (or need to have) other than the color of their skin?” Mabee (1979) in *Black Education in New York State* argued that there was considerable debate among African Americans in New York throughout most of the nineteenth century over whether Whites should teach in Black schools. A reading of Mabee’s text shows that the enduring question about teacher capacity, in relation to the White Quaker woman who taught the children of Frederick Douglas in Rochester, New York, was one of skin color. In other words, at that time many Whites did not believe that a White person should teach Black children.

Mabee (1979) additionally argues that there was debate over who should teach Black students within the Black community. Here again teacher capacity was related to the color of a teacher’s skin and Whites’ dispositions toward Blacks. Mabee claims that Blacks were by no means united on calls for Black teachers in Black schools. For example, the *Christian Recorder*, a publication of the African Methodist Church, argued that for Blacks’ demands for Black teachers for their children strengthened “the color line,” which was in fact the “death line” for Blacks. Moreover, school officials often believed that Black parents preferred White teachers. In Brooklyn in 1863, when attendance at a Black school dropped, a White school board member declared that it would improve attendance at the school if it had a White teacher because Black parents preferred White teachers. Lending support to this belief, a Black school principal explained that some Black parents thought White teachers would prepare the community for the abolishment of Black schools (p. 95).

Nevertheless, some Blacks were not in favor of White teachers because they believed that White teachers did not have the capacity (i.e. dispositions) to do well by Black students. Mabee (1979) writes:

Early in the nineteenth century, William Hamilton a Black carpenter argued that White teachers did not expect enough of Black pupils. Hamilton states, “It has been the policy of White men,” he said in an address to Black youths in 1827, “to give you a high opinion of your advancement when you have made but smattering attainments. They know that a little education is necessary for better accomplishing the menial services you are in the habit of performing for them. They do not wish you to be equal with them—much less superior . . . They will take care that you do not rise above mediocrity.”

(Hamilton, quoted in Mabee 1997, p. 95)

Note that teacher capacity as modeled from Mabee’s book is about White and Black teachers teaching Black students and not about Black teachers teaching White students, which suggests that the answer to the enduring question about what teachers need to know, care about, and be able to do (i.e. knowledge, skills and dispositions) needs to be critiqued for its racist origins.

The skin color of teachers, along with their racialized experience and positionality, was further acknowledged in an observation made by Phillips (1940) when he drew on a 1936 study to argue that the qualification most needed by secondary teachers was social intelligence. However, he also pointed out additional qualifications that African American teachers needed, besides social intelligence. Accordingly, Phillips (1940) suggested that Negro [sic] secondary teachers should possess three additional qualifications: (1) “knowledge of the history of one’s race, and understanding of the problems of one’s racial group”; (2) “keen insight into the current social, economic, and political issues in



relation to the problems peculiar to minority groups, vocational opportunities for one's group, and a willingness to assume educational leadership"; and (3) full appreciation of "the fact that his [sic] responsibility reaches far beyond the confines of his classroom" (p. 485). The term *social intelligence* and the additional qualities Phillips lists integrated social consciousness into the discussions of teacher capacity.

Since Phillips wrote this piece in 1940, the framing of teacher capacity is no longer explicitly situated within a legally racially segregated society where teachers are predominately concerned about teaching students of their own racial group and/or teaching minority group students to model the dominant social group. As noted above, the Civil Rights Movements of the 1960s and 1970s spoke to the necessity of embedding social justice issues within the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of teacher education programs, as well as the scholarship and actions of teacher educators. The Civil Rights Movements (1) stimulated the rise of recognition and redistribution theories (Fraser, 1997); (2) played a major role in generating several theories and activities that placed race, class, gender, and other social and political inequities within the teacher capacity discourse; (3) acknowledged that White teachers had a responsibility to teach racially diverse groups of students in a manner that respected and promoted each group's culture each student's self-identity; and (4) advocated that teachers of color accept responsibility for creating "an educational experience powerful and enduring enough to breach the walls of oppression and open pathways to freedom" (Ayers, 1997).

The Civil Rights Movement also generated the reform of curriculum materials so they were more racially inclusive and gender fair and addressed historical inaccuracies and omissions, particularly in terms of teachers' knowledge of the history and culture of students of color and other marginalized students (Sleeter and Grant, 1991). Additionally, instructional materials were developed that addressed the teaching skills, dispositions, and strategies that teachers needed to successfully teach students of color and other marginalized students (Grant & Sleeter, 2003). In addition to developing a more culturally inclusive and relevant curriculum, consultants and speakers provided teachers with a realistic assessment of the challenges they faced, the knowledge, skills and disposition they needed to have, and the changes that were needed in the education system and within them as individuals.

When writer James Baldwin spoke to a group of 200 New York teachers in 1963, he took a view of teacher capacity that drew on social justice and was set within social justice theories of equality, participation, and recognition. Baldwin began his "Talk to Teachers" by claiming "[We] are living through a very dangerous time." He then defined how equality, participation and recognition in U.S. society were denied to Blacks:

[A]ny Negro who is born in this country and undergoes the American educational system runs the risk of becoming schizophrenic. On the one hand he is born in the shadow of the stars and stripes and he is assured it represents a nation which has never lost a war. He pledges allegiance to that flag which guarantees "liberty and justice for all." He is a part of a country in which anyone can become president, and so forth. But on the other hand he is also assured by his country and his countrymen that he has never contributed anything to civilization—that his past is nothing more than a record of humiliations gladly endured.

(p. 326)

In concluding his remarks, Baldwin declared, "I began by saying that one of the paradoxes of education was that precisely at the point when you begin to develop a conscience, you must find yourself at war with your society. It is your responsibility to

change society if you think of yourself as an educated person” (p. 331). He cautioned the teachers, “[Y]ou will meet the most fantastic, the most brutal, and the most determined resistance” since “what societies really, ideally want is a citizenry which will simply obey the rules of society” (p. 331). Baldwin’s comments about education and society find expression in questions about the kinds of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and views of self that are required to participate in an improved and more desirable form of social life. Notions of teacher capacity need to attend to the same questions.

Baldwin’s metaphor of “a dangerous time” was revisited by Ladson-Billings (1999) when she reminded educators that destabilizing dominant discourses of prospective teachers is “dangerous work” (p. 240). Ladson-Billings’ comment—made 36 years after Baldwin’s scathing commentary—continues to raise questions about both the knowledge, skills and dispositions that participation in an improved and more desirable form of social life requires for groups of people who have historically been marginalized, and the teacher capacity needed to develop those knowledge, skills, and dispositions. The metaphors “dangerous time” and “dangerous work” also call attention to issues of power and privilege, which are the center of the social justice relationship to teacher capacity. Walker (2003) reminds us that a social justice discourse in education needs to allow teacher educators to ascertain how power (e.g. pedagogical and institutional) and resources (e.g. material, opportunity and outcomes) are distributed to individuals and social groups.

### Conceptual tools for the adjudication of actions

Meaning(s), theories, and understandings of the context of social justice are important, but separately or collectively they are not enough. Scholars such as O’Neil (1996) demand conceptual tools for adjudication of action that include principles/criteria for the construction of institutions and practices *and* evaluations of those constructions. Regarding the latter, O’Neil (1996) states, “Just institutions and practices provide the specifications for judging the justice of particular acts or decisions” (p. 182).

Similarly, Walker (2003) wants educators to do more than provide a definition of social justice. She argues that educators need conceptual tools that will tell us how well we are doing. Are our actions moving us closer to social justice or further away? As Walker states, “We need a theory of principles of justice which enables us to adjudicate between our actions so that we can say with some confidence this action is more just than that” (p. 169). Using the making of a quilt as a metaphor for actions for social justice, Walker states,

Patchwork actions, the individual pieces of cloth, however bright and lively, are just bits of cloth. Only when we stitch the piece (our actions) together to make a quilt do the patterns emerge and transform the pieces into something new; we need to know what we are trying to make and to be able to judge whether we have made it well.

(p. 169)

To illustrate her idea of such a conceptual tool, Walker (2003) suggests using Nussbaum’s (2000) “Capabilities Approach.” In *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*, Nussbaum identifies ten capabilities: (1) life; (2) bodily health; (3) bodily integrity; (4) senses, imagination, thought; (5) emotion; (6) practical reason; (7) affiliation; (8) other species; (9) play; and (10) control over one’s environment (pp. 78–80). She claims these capabilities are essential to the flourishing life of an individual but are not limited to the capacity for economic participation. She also focuses on

personal and interpersonal development, as well as wider environmental, political, and social contexts and interactions. Walker (2003) argues that although Nussbaum's approach offers only one way to assess how well we are doing, it frames education within social justice and serves as a good starting place. Walker (2003) is worth quoting at length at this point:

The attraction for education in the capabilities approach is fivefold. First, its emphasis on the flourishing of each and every person and hence a challenge, for example, to university "drop out" statistics which say nothing useful about individual experiences of higher education, even while glossing over success for many. Secondly, the approach points to what "people are actually able to do and to be" (Nussbaum, 2000, p. 5). As a social practice education is fundamentally about what we learn to be as much as about what knowledge we acquire. It is, above all, a domain of activity requiring thinking and judgment not only about what has been done but as a guide to future action. Thirdly, many if not all, of the ten capabilities advocated by Nussbaum point at least in some way to educational conditions and practices. To which stories of educational practice might we point to show capability development (interruption, disruption, transformation) and capability deformation (reproduction)? Finally, this approach suggests a view of (higher) education as more than education for economic development, and incorporates an implicit view of education both as and for democratic citizenship, and understanding and solidarity under conditions of cultural difference and diversity.

(p. 170)

The development of conceptual tools for adjudication of action criteria which can help to determine whether or not program policies acknowledge and tackle lack of recognition, exclusion and the powerlessness associated with race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, language, religion and other cultural and social differences. In other words, teacher educators will need to ask: "Does program policy seek to enhance the life opportunities for teacher education students who are disadvantaged by cultural and economic differences, including any differences associated with the stigma of being included in the program because they are from a group of people who are historically, economically and/or socially disadvantaged?"

Pitt (1998) contends that program policies should address the ways education and the disadvantage of not attending and/or earning a university degree are implicated as causes or consequences in social justice. In addition, university policy and procedures should not compound the challenge of receiving a college education and should, instead, facilitate a teacher education program that enhances the life chances for people who are disadvantaged (and come to the university disadvantaged) because of major obstacles in society.

In summary, Pitt (1995) argues that criteria for assessing social justice in teacher education programs should include policies that address structural disadvantages, such as the distribution of education goods like knowledge, skills and dispositions; recognize the ideology underlying the prevailing economic discourse(s) (e.g. market place economy); and acknowledge (i.e. respect and affirm) cultural differences. Further, program policies must indicate who is responsible for seeing that students receive policy entitlements and who and what office are responsible for distributing the resources needed for implementation and executing that implementation.

Not nailing down the evaluation tools for how well a teacher education program is establishing and developing a relationship between social justice and teacher capacity undercuts an analysis and interpretation of the two concepts. In addition, the lack of an

evaluation framework may leave teacher candidates and teacher educators conflicted about their actions for social justice. For example, many teacher candidates regularly undertake activities in their programs in the name of social justice. However, accountability measures (e.g. high-stake tests) may confuse their understanding of social justice. Here we are reminded of Walker's (2003) statement, "We need a theory or principles of justice which enables us to adjudicate between our actions so that we can say with some confidence this action is more just than that" (p. 169). When teacher candidates hear citizens who take action for certain social and political causes (e.g. immigration, homelessness, poverty) refer to their genre of work as "social justice," will they understand social justice and its relationship to teacher capacity differently or more fully? Will teacher candidates' understanding of social justice be related to equality, participation, recognition and/or access? When some less well-off and/or non-White students are allowed to enter the teacher education program, but a White, middle-class friend is not admitted, will the teacher candidate and her friends view the admittance of the student from a systemically/historically disadvantaged group as an act of social justice? Will the teacher candidates appeal to a meritocratic argument and become conflicted about the meaning of social justice? In other words, will they see a contradiction between Rawls' (1971) principles that the most deprived and needy should receive the greater attention and/but that those with talent and potential should be educated to their highest capacity? Will they understand social justice as "the obligation to help those less advantaged" for the benefit of the whole (Rawls, 1971, pp. 100–101)?

Institutions that claim they are using social justice to inform teacher candidates' knowledge, skills and dispositions must spell out their meaning of social justice, and conceptual tools which will adjudicate the actions of the teacher candidates and teacher educators involved should be in place and functioning.

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE IN TEACHER EDUCATION: WHAT DO JOURNAL ARTICLES SAY?**

### **Reviewing teacher education journals**

One way scholars keep up with the development of their field is by reading the journals in their area. Articles published in refereed journals are not only fundamental to promotion and tenure of professors, they also inform scholars about the history of the field, ongoing changes and emerging concepts, and current problems and issues. Journal publications present the latest research and scholarship in a timely manner. In addition, journal articles serve as curriculum material for both graduate and undergraduate programs. To examine when, how, and to what extent social justice has become associated with teacher education and the preparation of teacher candidates in the United States, we reviewed articles in four teacher education journals: *Action in Teacher Education*, *Equity and Excellence*, *Journal of Teacher Education*, and *Teacher Education Quarterly* published between 1985 and 2006.

Our review identifies characteristics and/or characteristic practices discussed in the articles that are associated with social justice (teacher) education. In addition, the review explores the meaning assigned to social justice, the theoretical lenses in use, the conceptual tools used to evaluate social justice in teacher education programs, and the context in which social justice is discussed. Our search of the four journals yielded 39 articles published between 1991 and 2005 that used the term "social justice" in their title or abstract. Before the 1990s, education journals published few, if any, articles using the

term social justice in their discussion of teacher education. Social justice began to become popular in the 1990s because, according to North (in press), the highly publicized war over the meaning of terms like multiculturalism, encouraged “educational researchers like Griffith (1998) to intentionally use social justice to describe the subject and methodology of their work.” North goes on to say that Griffiths believed that since “social justice was not appearing frequently in academic or media and popular culture outlets, it had not yet, suffered the kind of attack that more well known terms have” (Griffiths, 1998, p. 85).

In these 39 articles, we note that authors writing about social justice generally do not offer a definition. An exception appears in an article by Carlisle, Jackson, and George (2006) who define social justice education “as the conscious and reflexive blend of content and process intended to enhance equity across multiple social identity groups (e.g. race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability), foster critical perspectives, and promote social action” (p. 57). The authors outline five principles of social justice education in schools based on their work at an elementary school. They also discuss equity-oriented models that have demonstrated academic outcomes, current research related to student achievement and a systems approach to bringing social justice education to school communities.

Another exception is a study of faculty members’ and administrators’ understandings of social justice at Boston College (Zollers *et al.*, 2000). When the participants met to investigate their shared understandings of social justice, all embraced the goal to teach for social justice. However, they had a range of definitions. The authors noticed that there were divergent categories related to equity and fairness, institutional versus individual understandings of injustice, and individuals’ responsibility to advocate for social justice.

The 39 articles use a range of perspectives to address social justice within teacher education. In addition, while authors are more frequently offering start-up approaches, plans or methods for implementing social justice in teacher education programs, these approaches are not accompanied by benchmarks, staffing needs, and/or conceptual tools for the adjudication of actions. On the other hand, scholars who invoke social justice as central to their scholarship often share a similar vision or perspective and address it similarly. These scholars generally describe social justice as an ethic, concern, sense or orientation. Within these descriptions, a meaning of social justice is sometimes given, and sometimes implied, but is not usually fully articulated. McLaren and Fishchman (1998), for example, refer to an ethic of social justice. According to Murrell (2006), social justice indicates a disposition toward recognizing and eradicating all forms of oppression and differential treatment extant in the practices and policies of institutions, as well as an appeal to participatory democracy as a means of realizing social justice. Garmon (2004) argues that a “sense of social justice is a commitment to equity and equality for all people in society” (p. 206). According to Nieto (2000), a concern for social justice is an ideology and pedagogy which takes into account individuals and institutions. Nieto (2000) argues that teacher education programs need to “(a) take a stand on social justice and diversity, (b) make social justice ubiquitous in teacher education, and (c) promote teaching as a life-long journey of transformation” (p. 182). Nieto also claims that social justice is an individual, collective, and institutional journey that involves self-identity awareness, learning with students, developing meaningful relationships, developing multilingual/multicultural knowledge, challenging racism and other biases, having a critical stance, and working with a community of critical friends (p. 5).

As we reviewed these articles, we come away with the idea that teachers’ “capacities” suggests a kind of “package” of understandings, skills, and commitments (or knowledge, skills and dispositions)—a much broader notion than just “what do teachers need to

know?” or just what “skill” they should have. When social justice is embedded within or connected to teacher capacity, it should include the characteristics that Nieto (2000) articulates and those which emerge in our content analysis of the journal articles. These characteristic practices include: (1) critical pedagogy, (2) community and collaboration, (3) reflection, (4) social (critical) consciousness, (5) social change and change agents, (6) culture and identity and (7) analysis of power.

### **The role of critical pedagogy**

Several articles argued that by using critical pedagogy, teachers and teacher educators are encouraged to understand social justice and/or work toward it. According to Beyer (2001), one reason for advocating critical pedagogy is to “focus on the social dimensions and consequences of educational practice, the ideological meaning of texts and experiences, the power relations in schools and other institutions, and the need to integrate theory and practice in new ways” (p. 155). Nieto (2000) argues that the reason a program should adopt critical pedagogy is to help prospective teachers develop a critical stance to challenge racism and other biases. McLaren and Fischman (1998) state that teacher education programs should be “committed to the development of critical epistemologies, ethics of caring, compassion, and solidarity” (p. 131), strive to heighten students’ understandings of social relations of production, and consider alternatives to existing structural arrangements that are conducive to economic inequality and exploitation.

Although there is an emphasis on critical pedagogy in teacher education programs and professional development within this literature, there is little attention to how teachers translate critical pedagogy into P-12 classroom practice. Ball (2000) recognizes this problem and suggests that researchers should attempt to “extrapolate the tenets of critical pedagogy from the interactive classroom practices of those teachers who attempt to operationalize such a philosophy in their day-to-day teaching” (p. 1007). Similarly, Hoffman-Kipp suggests that more attention be paid to the “actual activities in which teachers engage both from a process and content point of view” (p. 28).

Whereas these authors persuasively advocate for the use of “critical pedagogy,” the argument is constructed as a general call and not a call for pedagogy based upon a particular critical theory or combination of critical theories. Critical theories and the pedagogies they foster differ somewhat in purpose and focus. For example, both Black feminist theory and pedagogy and social/radical feminist theory and pedagogy challenge male domination and female oppression. However, Black feminist theory and pedagogy challenge perspectives and practices among White feminists that marginalize or exclude Black women. Black feminist theory has a different purpose and focus than social/radical feminist theory and pedagogy that mainly challenges male supremacy or patriarchy (Welch, 2001). Although most if not all critical theories and pedagogies may be employed in a teacher education program that advocates social justice, what teacher candidates learn or take away from the program may differ in accordance with the theories employed and the pedagogy taught and demonstrated. The intention here is not to advocate for a particular theory and/or pedagogy but to call attention to the differences within the same genre of theories and the pedagogies they foster and to ask, when teacher educators or teacher education programs say our program uses “critical theory,” have they said enough about their purposes and foci and nature of the pedagogy they use?

### Community and collaboration

Many of the articles reviewed contend that community and collaboration are as significant to social justice as ideology and practice. Although working with others suggests a general practice, the articles argue that the terms and phrases such as “community of learners,” “communities of practice,” “collective action” and “collaboration” imply solidarity or working together (Cochran-Smith, 2001; Garmon, 2004; Glass & Wong, 2003; Greenman & Dieckmann, 2004; Hoffman-Kipp, 2003; Jennings, 1995; Johnson, 2002; Kurth-Schai, 1991; Lane, Laceyfield-Parachini, & Isken, 2003; McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2001; McLaren & Fischman, 1998; Merryfield, 2001; Morrell, 2003; Moscovici, 2003; Murrell, 2006; Nieto, 2000; Quartz & TEP Research Group, 2003; Rios *et al.*, 1997). According to several articles, a community of practice is a site of learning and action where participants engage in a joint enterprise to develop a whole repertoire of activities, common stories, and ways of speaking and acting for social justice. This endeavor diminishes the borders between community and school, as well as between virtual spaces and physical spaces in education enabling other social arenas to incite new ways of relating and inciting solidarity that is characterized by conviviality and criticality.

Wenger (1998) argues that communities of practice constitute reality in a particular manner and encourages specialized ways of acting and thinking. The community approach to teaching and learning for social justice suggests replacing the image of teachers working alone to images of teachers collaborating with(in) and across communities of practice or communities of learners (broadly defined), thereby challenging the narratives of individual heroism. Addressing the significance of a community of learners or the importance of a team effort in developing pedagogy for social justice, Quartz and the TEP Research group (2003) state:

The real heroes of urban schools are those who figure out ways to stay connected to their profession, their pursuit of social justice, their colleagues, their students, and their communities. These heroes are not born; they emerge from an extensive network of supports and a solid understanding of pedagogy.

(p. 105)

In addition, some of the articles offered suggestions for working together, including joining organizations, working with community members and forming critical friendship circles and/or inquiry groups.

The idea of collaborative support (Weinstein *et al.*, 2004; Luna *et al.*, 2004) figures strongly in these articles. Collaborative support tends to occur in reciprocal relationships that are beneficial and supportive to teachers (Garmon, 2004) and the community or group in which they participate. In Luna *et al.*'s (2004) article, a participant in an inquiry group describes the concept of “support” as it was experienced in his/her group: “Support in our group had more to do with being listened to, challenged, and validated as we took risks in our classrooms and in our lives (p. 79).” Other collaborative efforts mentioned include capitalizing on parents’ strengths (Cooper, 2003) and participating as members in social movements (McLaren & Fischman, 1998; Hoffman & Kipp, 2003) by linking/connecting individual efforts for change to collective and institutional changes (Nieto, 2000). Merryfield (2001), among others, argues that models and ways of creating communities and collaborating must be continually interrogated, critiqued, and reformed.

Overall, the articles contend that community and collaboration, both of which are

fundamental elements of social change, require collective action in solidarity. What is somewhat missing from the articles is attention to the effects of unequal power relations in communities and other social networks where power can undermine the struggle for social justice.

### The role of reflection

Some articles suggest reflection as a practice for social justice (Lane *et al.*, 2003; Morrell, 2003; Glass & Wong, 2003). Glass and Wong (2003) argue that engaged pedagogy involves continuous critical reflection and professional development, linked to classroom and school-level reform. They contend that the presence of teaching candidates as observers in classrooms forces guiding teachers to critically reflect on their own practice. Similarly, Morrell (2003) reports that conversations between teachers in a professional development research seminar and six other professionals “forced teachers to reflect more fully on their own practice as they witnessed others in action” (p. 95).

However, across most of these articles, reflection is presented as an unproblematic practice that teacher education and professional development programs expect their students to develop. The common assumptions are: reflection will occur through a critical lens that takes social justice concerns into consideration; reflection and subsequent changes in thinking are guided by particular motivations and interests which spawn questions; and reflection influences and is influenced by the processes involved in dialogical teaching, identity and cultural formation, and collaboration.

### The role of social (critical) consciousness

Multiple types of consciousness are discussed across the articles with numerous references to Paulo Freire’s (1970/1974/2000) concept “*conscientização*.” This represents the *development* of the awakening of critical awareness, which “must grow out of a critical educational effort based on favorable historical conditions” (Freire, 1974, p. 15). An assumption underlying the call for critical consciousness is that educators who “develop high levels of critical social consciousness are likely to begin their teaching careers attentive to their role in redressing social injustice” (Jennings, 1995, 243). Jennings (1995) adds that although this assumption awaits systematic investigation, it has “enough face validity to suggest that the development of critical social consciousness deserves the attention of teacher educators who take seriously the links between affirming diversity and educating for social justice” (p. 243).

Jennings (1995) also examines critical social consciousness through the lens of developmental psychology and argues that “because critical social consciousness involves a developmental process related to identity and cognitive growth, those students who find the examination of oppression threatening must themselves be respected as being in process without being patronized” (p. 248). Jennings therefore suggests that teacher educators have a goal of keeping “resistant students” engaged in the classroom dialogues as part of the process of sensitizing them to issues of social justice and diversity. His reference to dispositions (e.g. sensitizing, resistant) within the context of raising student critical social consciousness integrates teacher capacity and social justice

Within this literature base, minimum consideration is given to the consciousness of P-12 students. Exceptions include Beyer (2001) who suggests that teachers should use their knowledge of social inequality to raise student consciousness, Glass & Wong (2003) who argue that students should understand that race, class, and linguistic discrimination persists even for the most educated members of their communities, and Ríos *et al.* (1997)



who argue for a social justice approach at the middle school level that raises students' consciousness. Ríos *et al.*'s (1997) argument for a social justice curriculum which takes students' lives into account and facilitates classroom critique is consistent with the ideas articulated in the Rethinking Schools article by Bob Peterson (1994): "Teaching for Social Justice: One Teacher's Journey." Peterson lists the following goals of a social justice classroom: a curriculum grounded in the lives of the students, dialogue, a questioning/problem posing approach, an emphasis on critiquing bias and attitudes, and the teaching of activism for social justice.

What remains to be examined in this genre of research is the impact that teachers who exhibit a high level of critical social consciousness have on student performance. Furthermore, the articles that include suggestions for classroom teachers and the development of social (critical) consciousness often fail to include the following characteristics, suggested in the other articles, that are essential to the preparation of teachers for social justice education: analysis of power, (self) reflective practice, and collaboration/community. In addition, this literature does not include discussions of critical consciousness and teacher capacity, especially teachers' knowledge and skills.

### Social change and change agents

A thread throughout the articles is the need to reform education so that it becomes a system that embodies and promotes social justice in all of its components. This reform effort would be proactive, responsive to change, and demonstrate a commitment to the struggle for social justice (e.g. Wallace, 2000). A common perspective in this social justice discourse is that no one is completely outside the social system and that practices and people are not neutral. Additionally, a prominent claim is that teachers should become agents for social change or activists. Cochran-Smith (2001), for example, offered the following statement in an editorial, "Learning to Teach Against the (New) Grain":

A major goal of the project of teacher education for social change has been helping prospective teachers think deeply about and deliberately claim the role of educator as well as activist based on political consciousness and ideological commitment to combating the inequities of American life.

(p. 3)

An example of a teacher candidate performing as a change agent is illustrated in an article by Lane *et al.* (2003). They investigated how the teacher education program at U.C.L.A.-Center X develops their students as change agents during their student teaching. Student teachers in the study were given the charge to "reform the schools while learning how to teach children in urban schools" (p. 65). Lane *et al.* conclude that student teachers became change agents by having an impact on the practice of their guiding teachers. This approach challenges traditional student teacher placements, most of which do not emphasize the role of the student teacher as an agent for social change.

Another central message in this literature is that social justice includes supporting students in understanding and transforming their own positions in society and as citizens in a democracy. Nevertheless, there is little attention given to student agency and, more specifically, possibilities for students to negotiate the forces that work to regulate their positionalities and the subsequent material effects of this regulation. Linking positionality and agency makes different questions available. For instance, what possibilities can be created to maintain or access that would improve the quality of life given the way we are situated within matrices of positionalities by those with the influence to

shape public sentiment and therefore societal perceptions of our gender(s) race(s), sexuality, etc.

McLaren and Farahmandapur (2001) describe agency as “a form of intellectual labor and concrete social practice—in short, a critical praxis” (p. 149). Their discussion includes attention to students in general, not just preservice or inservice teachers as learners, and how the legacies of historical conditions, and not just one’s subjectivity, determine subject positions. They state, “We need to identify the historical determinations of domination and oppression as part of the struggles to develop concrete practices of counter representation” (p. 146). However most of the discussions of teachers as change agents in this body of literature do not relate the idea of *change agent* to particular knowledge, skills, or dispositions. Moreover, attention to student agency and, more specifically, student resistance is minimal (exceptions are Cooper, 2003; McCall & Andringa, 1997; Pohan & Mathison, 1999).

### Culture and identity

Social justice and multicultural education discourses largely overlap in this literature. Perhaps this is so because proponents of multicultural education, especially those who espouse social reconstructionist multicultural education (Martin, 2005; Martin & Van Gunten, 2002; McCall & Andringa, 1997), connect social justice to teacher education and education more generally. Beyer (2001) uses both terms when discussing teachers: “Teachers who embody these orientations [social justice and multicultural education] will intervene in the lives of their students so as to help them construct futures that are personally rewarding, socially responsible, and morally compelling” (p. 156). In a number of articles, social justice is described as a goal of multicultural education (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Ríos *et al.*, 1997; Martin & Van Gunten, 2002). Zeichner (2003) argues that multicultural education can function as an approach with similar and overlapping goals of social justice education and, at times, it and diversity are used synonymously in education with the term social justice.

Martin and Van Gunten (2002) suggest that teachers use multicultural education that is social reconstructionist, an approach that shares many of the same concerns as critical theory, to examine their own positionalities. Cooper (2003) supports the idea of “teacher education programs training social justice educators to be knowledgeable about the positionality of the students and families they serve” (p. 102). She adds, “I stress the need for teachers to recognize schools as sites of political resistance, which they must work to improve” (p. 102).

In this strand of literature, there are some salient conversations about diversity/equity that include culture identity. The argument is that these concepts are intertwined and that our ways of being in the world (including the classroom) are not isolated from how we activate or alter our roles. McLaren and Fischman (1998) argue there is an absence of the “construction of identity” and “critical citizenship” in teacher education discussions and suggest that these absences diminish “the capacity of teacher education programs to participate in the formation of teachers as critical agents of social justice” (p. 125). Three years later, McLaren and Faramandapur (2001) state that “critical pedagogy has, of late, drifted dangerously toward the cultural terrain of identity politics in which class is reduced to an effect rather than understood as a cause” (p. 136). These two articles were indicators of an increase in attention to identity and culture in teacher education reform and the need for teachers, teacher education programs, and professional development to consider how class, identity, and culture influences teacher education. The arguments in these articles have resulted in research studies that examine how teachers’ identity affects

their ability to work toward social justice goals (Garmon, 2004; Martin & Van Gunten, 2002; Johnson, 2002). However, these articles also introduce a concern that the way identity has been introduced is problematic in that it frequently ignores the need for economic redistribution—not just group recognition—when discussing equality. Fraser (1997) argues that identity politics should not eclipse the need for economic redistribution.

### Relations of power

A few of the articles we reviewed discussed teachers in relation to the effects of power. For three consecutive years, Moscovici (2003) examined how teachers working on emergency permits used inquiry to understand their positions of power, the effect of these power positions on classroom practice, and how they might change their practice as a result of knowledge gained through inquiry. In addition, the teachers in the study were encouraged to examine their own power positions in the classroom using critical theory and concepts of power by Yukl (1989) and Foucault (1979). Moscovici (2003) reports, “As a result of their own personal analyses, many of the teachers in the study changed their practices to encourage their students to participate in scientific inquiries and become skeptics” (p. 47).

The argument made in this literature is that by understanding the effects of power, educators can move from a focus on individual psychological factors to larger societal factors that affect social relations, including the extent to which they can transcend the constraints that impinge on their ability to prepare students for socially-conscious (critical) citizenship. Cooper (2003) points to the significance of teachers’ understanding of the effects of power when she writes, “Educators who do not recognize the power they possess are likely to abuse it or fail to maximize it for their students’ benefit” (p. 104).

## DISCUSSION

Several significant observations came out of reviewing the journal articles. We found overlaps and gaps between the key themes and the characteristic practices that we identified in the review. Similarly, we found overlaps and gaps between the characteristic practices and the “principles of practice” of classroom based pedagogy for social justice that Cochran-Smith (1999) outlines (e.g. communities of learning, dialogic and multi-culturally sensitive classrooms, knowledge).

In reviewing research between 1992 and 2002, Wiedeman (2002) identified key themes that define teacher education for social justice as: (1) diversity and difference, (2) multicultural education, (3) critical theory, (4) critical multiculturalism, (5) care theory, (6) antiracist education and (7) critical race theory. Identifying the general themes, principles, and/or characteristic practices of social justice in teacher education, classroom contexts, and education contributes to developing a deeper understanding of relationship between teacher capacity and social justice.

Across the articles, there is an emphasis on dialogue as central to the development of communities and an indication of learning, reflection, and social-consciousness. Yet none of the studies we reviewed explain how dialogue is interpreted, or if discourse analysis or some other form of analysis was used to analyze the relationship between dialogue and practice. Often, the studies do not reveal the source of the participants’ statements, such as whether they are excerpted from dialogues generated during interviews or reflections on dialogues recorded in journals. Thus, educators and students have little information

to guide their understanding about how dialogue shaped community building in the context of the studies.

Research focusing on social justice in teacher education may help to redefine teacher capacity by communicating a changing expectation in teacher education, one that can be recognized through the identification, promotion, and integration of these characteristic practices. Together, these characteristic practices support a conceptual orientation that moves teacher educators toward developing their capacity to approach education in ways that integrate social justice theories and practices.

There is a limited amount of empirical research that examines the classroom practices of teachers who claim to work toward social justice and/or the practices of those who were prepared in teacher education programs or professional development programs where social justice is the conceptual orientation (Hollins & Torres-Guzman, 2005). Exceptions to this pattern were Hoffman-Kipp's (2003) and Moscovici's (2003) studies. Although, Moscovici reports that teachers' practice changed after they analyzed their power positions, the author does not provide evidence of this change.

Moreover, because this body of research lacks attention to definition, context, and assessment, it tends to contribute to the gap in the literature on the impact that teacher education for social justice and/or specific characteristic practices have on student performance. Three exceptions are the articles by Murrell (2006) who focuses on the assessment of teacher practice as social justice education; Brown (2004) who reviews measures used to assess preservice leaders' beliefs, attitudes, and values regarding issues of diversity, social justice and equity; and Carlisle *et al.* (2006) who focus on the assessment of teacher education programs.

Furthermore, when the qualities associated with teacher capacity are included in social justice discourses, they are usually not central or explicit, but implied or assumed. We wish to note that although we discuss the often cited characteristics associated with social justice literature separately, they overlap and interrelate in the articles. Usually multiple characteristic practices are present, as one might expect given the complexities of learning and teaching. Neither we nor the authors of these articles suggest that these characteristic practices should be developed in isolation from one another, positioned hierarchically in practice or policy, or developed by one person or program without a network of support. The characteristics and practices of one's teaching and one's ways of being a teacher inform, support, and challenge one another. Together, they can serve as a guide in the continuous processes of re(de)fining the teacher characteristics associated with social justice and posing further questions about one's actions in particular contexts.

Our reading of the literature confirms our idea that teacher "capacities" is best understood as a package of understandings, skills and commitments. It is a broader notion than simply "what teachers need to know," what "skills" they should have or be seeking to learn, or what "dispositions" they should have or be seeking to acquire. We want to stress here that this "package" of teacher capacity also needs to include conceptual tools for the adjudication of actions for social justice.

## CONCLUSIONS

Social justice is a well-intended idea in the teacher education literature and a popular slogan among teacher educators. However, a definition of social justice is rarely included in teacher education policy statements, practices, or the expectations for teacher candidates. To reiterate Hayek's observation, "It is allowed to float in the air as if everyone will

recognize an instance of it when it appears” (quoted in Novak, p. 1). By not defining social justice and addressing what it means, or by narrowly defining social justice in relation to teacher candidates’ knowledge, skills, and disposition, teacher educators’ and teacher candidates’ actions in the name of social justice are often superficial, ineffective and unformed.

The theoretical framing of social justice lacks craftsmanship and is often reduced to employing one of many concepts—including equality, equal opportunity and sometimes equity—without elaborating their meanings, putting them in context, noting the differences between and among these concepts and/or acknowledging that they have different implications for education policies and procedures (North (in press); Secada, 1989; Sturman, 1997). A well established tradition in social science scholarship is to acknowledge the theoretical shoulders upon which one’s own work stands. This kind of historical acknowledgment is not found in most of the articles on social justice we reviewed, which contributes to the confusion over the meaning and theoretical framing of social justice.

The literature is also silent about the assessment of social justice in teacher education programs. Very little discussion is offered about the extent to which social justice principles and practices are being used. Observations such as Walker’s (2003) about the necessity of evaluative conceptual tools for social justice should force the question: “Are our actions moving us closer to social justice or further away?” However, judging claims about social justice and teacher capacity in teacher education rarely occurs. Zeichner (2006) makes clear that such conceptual tools are needed when he reminds us that everyone in teacher education these days claims to be working for social justice.

There is some acknowledgement of the context in which education is taking place (e.g. rapid fire technological innovation, globalization, economic imperatives, and accountability measures) during discussions of social justice and teacher capacity. For the most part, a language of economic and U.S competitiveness is inherent in the discussion along with some acknowledgment that preparing students of color and poor students to take their place within a global society is important.

There is very little discussion that connects social justice and teacher capacity to the good of society, unless the discussions connect to the political economy and social cohesion. An exception is Britzman’s (2000) discussion of capacity, knowledge, and social concerns. She asks, “What inhibits our capacity to respond ethically to others, to learn something from people we will never meet and to be affected by histories that we many never live?” (p. 2002). Instead, the focus is on the changing relation between local and global, and thinking globally becomes the major goal. It is this context which fosters the creation of hyper-individuals “who place value on individual rights, competition and individual achievement” (Pitts, 1998, p. 2).

Finally, we have entered the moment in which teacher education and social justice are sharing a discursive space in mainstream teacher education. The increasing number of statements about the importance of social justice in the focus and scope of major teacher education journals and books, publication of articles that explicitly refer to social justice and number of teacher education programs and professional development programs that endeavor to prepare teachers for social justice are indicative of the increasing focus on social justice in teacher education.

The development of social justice discourse(s) in teacher education appears to be due to the increasing public awareness of and rallying against long standing inequities in areas like academic achievement, school funding, faculty and staff hiring procedures, and the allocation and types of resources. Also contributing to the development of social justice discourses in teacher education is the rising recognition and acknowledgment of

the complexity of education, as communicated by a growing community of scholars across the field of education. Still, as Nieto (2000) laments, we are faced with the “the sluggish pace with which teacher education programs are addressing social justice and equity” (p. 181). Thus, if we return to Horace Mann’s statement that “Education, then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the great equalizer of the conditions of man,—the balance-wheel of the social machinery,” and we consider the efforts thus far to embed social justice in the development of teacher capacity, we have to admit that much, much work remains to be done.

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