A SELF-STUDY OF STUDENT TEACHER SUPERVISION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE: SIX CASE STUDIES

DISSertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Young Ah Lee, M.Ed.

*****

The Ohio State University
2004

Dissertation Committee: Approved by

Professor Marilyn Johnston, Advisor

Professor Mary Christenson, Co-Advisor

Professor Cynthia Dillard

_________________________________

Advisor

_________________________________

Co-Advisor

Graduate Program in Education
ABSTRACT

This participatory action research is a self-study that explores and describes what learning and teaching for social justice means to preservice teachers and a university supervisor, how mutual learning or resistance occurs in the context of supervision for social justice, and what I learned, as a future teacher educator, about myself and about preparing preservice teachers to teach for social justice.

Self-study was used to improve my supervisory theories and practices so that I can be better equipped as a future teacher educator. Critically scrutinizing my own supervisory practices provided the basis for constructing suggestions for other teacher educators who strive to prepare student teachers to become social justice educators.

The perspectives that guided me in this self-study inquiry were socio-cultural theory, critical feminist perspectives, and poststructuralist theories. Data collection included interviews, observations, and documents analysis. All informal and formal conversations were audio taped and transcribed, and my participants’ course assignments, lesson plans, reflective journal writings, writings from their electronic portfolios, and e-mail messages were collected and analyzed.
From autumn quarter 2003 through spring quarter 2004, I worked with six student teachers. My differentiated supervisory approaches for social justice had varied influences on my participants’ understandings and teaching practices about social justice. However, there are still many spaces for all of us to grow. I hope this study can contribute to raising attention to the potential significance of the supervisor’s role in constructing social justice for all children.
I dedicate this work to all the women in my life.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I am thankful to my advisor, Dr. Marilyn Johnston who helped me recover and reconstruct my damaged and lost identity as an international student. When I needed a place to stay, she provided me a home, when I was hungry, she fed me, when I wanted to cry, she gave me a whole box of tissue and listened with all her ears, and when I needed to be intellectually challenged, she was always there. I also appreciate my very supportive doctoral committee, Dr. Mary Christenson and Dr. Cynthia Dillard.

I want to thank all my student teacher participants who were so patient in working with me and answering all my questions. Many thanks to my sisters in our ‘Four Sisters’ study group for supporting me mentally and physically.

Finally, I thank my family—my mother, father, older brother, older sister-in-law, two nieces, younger brother, younger sister-in-law, and the youngest niece whom I haven’t seen yet. I am thankful for their love and patient support.
VITA

July 15, 1965 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Born – Jin Hae, Korea.

1988 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . B.S. Child Study
Hyo-Sung Women’s University,
Dae-Gu, Korea.

1993 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . M.S. Child study
Hyo-Sung Women’s University
Dae-Gu, Korea.

1999 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . M.Ed. Elementary &
Early Childhood Education
Indiana State University.

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Education
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapters</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>How Should I Begin?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Research Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Why a Focus on Social Justice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Selection of Sites and Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>How Do I Tell Our Stories?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>My Dichotomous Life as a Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>What, How, and Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1</td>
<td>Research against Dichotomy But for Praxis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2</td>
<td>Research is a Historical, Political, and Social Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3</td>
<td>Research through Dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.4</td>
<td>Relationship between Power and Knowing and Being (Silence and Voice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.5</td>
<td>Multiple Ways of Knowing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.6</td>
<td>Action for Changing the World Community Together (Again Neutrality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Mode of Inquiry – Participatory Action Research Focused on Self-Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Types of Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Dealing With and Analyzing Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Ethics and Trustworthiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Can Everybody Be a Social Justice Educator?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Why Is It Important To Know Ourselves to Become a Social Justice Educator?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>What Is It Important to Know About Ourselves to Become a Social Justice Educator?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Who Are We?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1</td>
<td>Courtney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2</td>
<td>Erin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3</td>
<td>Hannah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.4</td>
<td>Jessica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.5</td>
<td>Kathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.6</td>
<td>Wendy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Can We All Become a Social Justice Educator?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>What Is Social Justice Anyway?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>What Does Social Justice Look Like to Me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>How Social Justice Can and Should Be Achieved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Themes from Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.1</td>
<td>Equality and Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.2</td>
<td>Resistance to Privilege</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.3</td>
<td>Right and Wrong/Autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.4</td>
<td>Reality Check: Match or Mismatch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>What Would Supervision for Social Justice Look Like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>The Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>“You Are a Cheerleader without Pom-pom!” (Supervisory Relationships)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Supervisory Approach for Social Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1</td>
<td>Shared Goals of Social Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2</td>
<td>Environment for Social Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.4</td>
<td>Practice for Change toward Social Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>How Did I Actually Do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Where Is Social Justice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>An Athlete in the Zone, Courtney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1.1</td>
<td>“Como Esta?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1.2</td>
<td>“Are You Guys Washing the Dishes?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>A Facilitator, Erin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.1</td>
<td>“Why?” “You Have Brown Skin.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.2</td>
<td>“You Are a Scientist!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>A Facilitator, Hannah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>A Facilitator, Jessica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.1</td>
<td>“What Can I Do With My White Children for Social Justice?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.5 An Actress, Kathy .................................................................122
6.6 A Gardener, Wendy ............................................................126
6.7 Shared Challenges: Six Case Studies .................................134

7. Learning Through Self-Study ..................................................138
   7.1 Personal Development .....................................................139
   7.2 Researcher Development .................................................140
   7.3 Supervisor Development ..................................................141
      7.3.1 Clear And Shared Goals for Social Justice ...............142
      7.3.2 Creating an Environment for Social Justice ..........145
      7.3.3 Shared Practices for Social Justice .........................149

Appendices ..............................................................................154
List of References ......................................................................158
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographic population of M.Ed. Early Childhood Education program

Demographic population of children in elementary student teaching field placements

Demographics of student teacher participants

The frequency of feedbacks on issues related to social justice
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Percentage of supervisor’s feedbacks by pedagogical categories</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Percentage of supervisor’s feedbacks by cases</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

How Should I Begin?

Introduction

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands one nation under God, *indivisible, with liberty and justice for all*.

Every morning I visit a school for my supervision position, I hear the pledge of allegiance. Standing in front of American flag to show respect, but without putting my hand on my heart, I wonder what this pledge means to the children, and how this differs from the teachers’ understandings, and to mine. What does ‘indivisible, with liberty and justice for all’ mean to children in this diverse and unique country? What does that mean to children who are from different countries with different religions and cultures? Are these just meaningless words floating in the air? What do they understand of these abstract principles of democracy? How do teachers help them to understand their responsibility for providing justice for all? Do teachers even help the children understand these principles and guide them to take action?

This research is a self-study of the supervisor’s journey. Supervisors play an important role as mediators between the university and the public schools, between theories and practice but they often feel disenfranchised in both settings. My goal in this
research was to include the supervisor’s voice (my voice) as well as my student teacher participants’ voices. As a supervisor and a researcher, I attempted to describe how supervision for social justice occurred within complex contexts working with participants who were different and similar to each other. I also tell our stories about social justice education and my attempts to facilitate all participants and readers/educators to take action on what they believe will make our society and the world to a better place.

In this chapter I define my research questions and then provide an autobiographical story to situate my rationale for doing this research. True to socio-cultural theories of learning, my culture and experiences have shaped my perspectives and attitudes and influenced the choice of my research questions. Following my narrative, I briefly describe the process of selecting the participants and the contexts where this study was situated.

Research Questions

This study examined and interpreted the understandings and practices that a university supervisor, myself, constructs to support student teachers to learn to teach for social justice. I attempted to highlight all participants’ voices in different situations and contexts by investigating three major questions:

- What does learning and teaching for social justice mean to the preservice teachers and a university supervisor?
- How does mutual learning and/or resistance occur in the context of my supervision for social justice?
  - How do I, as a university supervisor, appropriately support each individual preservice teacher with concern for social justice?
- How does supervision for social justice influence preservice teachers’ learning and teaching of young children with diverse backgrounds?

- What do I, as a future educator, learn about myself and about preparing preservice teachers to teach for social justice?

**Why a Focus on Social Justice?**

Once upon a time, there was a blue frog family: mother frog, father frog, and child frogs. The child frogs always did the opposite of what their parents said. When the parents got old and prepared for death, they expressed their dying wish considering the children’s oppositional behavior. “Please bury us by the water not in the mountain”. The children decided to listen to their parent for the first and the last time, and buried them by the water. Every time it rained, the blue frogs cried because they worried whether the water would wash out their parents’ grave.

(From an old Korean fable)

When I was very young, my mother used to call me a blue frog because I didn’t obey her, and when I grew up, she still called me a blue frog because I didn’t live in the way ‘normal girls’ lived. I don’t think I was born with ‘a bad seed’ but I was sensitive in recognizing unfairness of oppressed groups such as women, young children and old people, the poor, and people with disabilities, I sometimes aggressively expressed how I felt and what I thought.

I was born in a small town by the sea in the southern part of Korea in the summer of 1965. My position as a middle child and as the only daughter seemed to determine my life as mediator and negotiator. My mother sometimes talked about the horrible day I was born: on this hot, flooded rainy day, snails crawled on the floor and the wall. This story made me think that our family was very poor, but I didn’t grow up thinking that I was poor. I think this story reflected my mother’s strong yearning for a middle class life for us. She provided us with all sorts of private lessons to promote our high achievement in many areas--teaching music, dance, art, and sports were not popular for everybody at that
time. There were also hand-made clothes, and every day, nicely prepared meals in lunch boxes.

As I learned about my friends, who were mostly from rich families, I compared myself to them considering the different sizes of their houses and their lives. My conflicting thinking about social economic class began at this point, and I began to search for the place where I thought I really belonged by making acquaintances with people who were poor and at the same time trying to understand people who were rich.

When I was young I guess I accepted my family’s values about being a girl: I wore skirts even though they were not comfortable for playing. When my preschool teacher asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up, I answered ‘a princess’ being influenced by Disney princesses; I only played with dolls. After I entered elementary school, I observed that boys were different and treated better than girls and also my brothers were treated differently in our family. Whatever I did was not valued by my father and others, and I assumed the reason was that I was a girl. So, I tried to be like a boy. I dressed like a boy, acted like a boy, and fought and played with boys, which was unusual in my patriarchal society. I was often asked whether I was a boy or a girl (one group of people in the public bus were betting on my correct gender and asked me my gender). I didn’t realize that if I acted like a girl, I might have been loved more.

My gender struggles went into a latent period for 6 years when I entered a single sex middle school and high school because my focus was on preparation for college entrance exams, not gender issues. With regard to my major in college, because of financial issues, I had to accept my father’s suggestion that a preschool teacher was good for woman, so I decided to major in early childhood education putting aside my ambition
to become a diplomat or an architect. I tried to make money to live independently and studied again for the entrance exams to change my major and school after the first year of college, but I gradually changed my mind with the influences from my advisor and college life which was completely different from my previous life. When my academic advisor noticed my struggle to find a major that would perfectly match my aptitudes, he told me that I had strengths in studying and working with children. Such conversations gave me another perspective on my own aptitudes and I began to consider my abilities in this area.

My experience in the Catholic Church also influenced me to widen my eyes and mind. I was baptized as an infant with my mother’s desire. I went to church on and off, and when I entered college, I went to church more regularly. I went to church not because it strengthened my religious beliefs but to learn about human morality and ethics. I was surrounded by people with strong religious beliefs with Catholic principles. I looked for people who had commonalities and likemindedness toward morality and ethics. Historically, the Korean Catholic Church was developed by people who were interested in social justice. I enjoyed discussion with church members and was motivated to think, and do something, about people who were oppressed in this world.

My college, a women’s college, didn’t allow students to do anything outside of school activities, but I found one school activity that fed my soul: a book club where people read books related to social justice and discussed social, historical, and political trends in my country. I took action when I thought it was the right thing to do. The relationship with church members, meeting many different people, and increased interest in children led me to be more proactive. I started to volunteer to help disabled children in
the orphanage: once a week, I went to the center, fed them, bathed them, tried to give
them many hugs and laughs--but people working in that center didn’t want me to help in
this way. Because the center lacked staff members, increasing the children’s needs for
attention would burden their staff. I didn’t agree with their approach because the children
needed attention and affection. Such situations made me think seriously about ways to
meet the needs of all underserved children.

In the meantime, I studied hard so that I could get a teaching license, which was
only given to the top 30% of students majoring in child development. During a one-
month internship, I felt I was not prepared to be a teacher, so I decided to enter the
graduate school. But, ironically, nobody hired people with higher degrees for preschool
teachers (usually people with two year degree became preschool teachers).

I got a chance, however, to teach in college, but this job only lasted for a year
because of my unusual teaching methods: group discussions, small group activities, and
reflective journal writing for assignments, rather than lectures and testing with multiple
choice exams. I learned these more interactive teaching methods from books--readings
for college courses that included socio-cultural theories, critical theories, and feminist
theories. In typical classes, Korean students usually just memorized the information but
never put it into practice. When I started my college position I wanted to try these new
methods.

Luckily, after I was fired from the college teaching job and while I was still
grappling with career choices, a new child care movement began in Korea. I helped in the
planning stages and then was hired as a teacher. My school was called the Parent Co-op
Child Care Center. Everybody in the child care center including parents, children, cooks,
and teachers worked collaboratively and tried to build egalitarian relationships. There were many informal and formal large and small group meetings. During this period, I traveled to Japan and China and spent time visiting different child care centers gaining multiple perspectives on educating young children. I strongly believed in the philosophy and principles of the child care center, but I also experienced tensions and confusion in learning about these new ways of working with children and adults. Despite my three-years of wonderful experiences in the child care center, I felt I needed to learn more to teach young children better as well as to live with more freedom as a woman.

Long before I came to the U.S., I read books on critical theory, anthropology, feminism, postmodernism, and communalism which helped me critically examine the power relations in my life between the old and the young, women and men, the poor and the rich, and the ‘normal’ and the ‘handicaped.’ In a male dominant family and society, as the only daughter, I recognized injustices from the early years of my life. I am thankful for my consciousness about these issues, because it made my life better, but not easier. Although I tried to resist the oppression of being a woman for long time, the steady sexist conditions in Korea didn’t give me much hope for women’s freedom and justice. The wall was too thick to break through and too high to reach over.

With the long-time-secretive hope that someday I would escape from these oppressions and find a country to provide me freedom, I came to the U.S. Soon after I arrived, a driver shouted at me, “Go back to your country.” I recognized there was a different kind of oppression that I had never expected. I had to face the oppression of being an Asian lacking fluency in English. In Korea, I had never been told of or equipped to handle oppression by race or ethnicity.
In the U.S., nobody told me what to do about these issues. Nobody even paid attention to me. After several years of struggling (including classes I took, readings, and research projects) to figure our better ways of surviving as an equal human being, I slowly reconstructed my identity as a Korean living in the U.S.

Since I came to the U.S., I have been interested in multicultural education, and did a considerable amount of reading. However, it was a challenge for me as a doctoral student to work with preserve and inservice teachers. I wanted to learn how to have conversations/discussions and share ideas regarding teaching for social justice. I wanted to find ways to talk about these issues with student teachers and their mentor teacher more naturally and more comfortably.

I remember a fortune teller once told me that I would struggle between the realism and idealism for my whole life. Maybe this applies to many people, but I believe I am one of many who are committed to negotiating with others to make the world a better place for our future children.

Purpose

One day, during a study group session which I organized to learn more about a certain approach in early childhood education, our members decided to describe what kind of leader we wanted to be. My description was, I remember, gum. I wanted to help people stick together to solve social problems. As evident in my personal life history, I tend to/want to gather people together, always trying to look for and include the isolated, and help them work together. Such a tendency has undergirded my responsiveness to differences and similarities in others, yet I have also been aware that there are many challenges that are produced between different people in different contexts. That is, in
order for different people to live together everybody needs to make an effort to be aware of differences and similarities and to negotiate with each other.

How do people view ‘difference’? According to Miller and Eleveld (2000) there are distinctive differences between ‘having differences’ and ‘being different.’ Can anybody or any group of people be completely different from others? Or can anybody or any group of people be completely the same as others? Some share similar history, culture, and interests, but others don’t. When people think they are different rather than they have some differences, the differences often bring about segregation and injustice.

Thus, this study aims to examine and describe how we, all participants including myself, resist or create exclusion, segregation and injustice, and how we can recreate inclusion, desegregation, and justice related to differences and diversities. The purpose of this study is not only to describe the journey of teaching and supervising for social justice in the context of a teacher preparation program, but also to facilitate all participants to take action for social justice through continuous dialogue.

Furthermore, through this self-study I pursued social justice. I strived for my own growth as a person and a professional to become a social justice educator. I tried to reflect and reconstruct myself by searching for and practicing supervisory methodologies and relationships that were non-oppressive and just. This study provides an analysis of my supervisory practices in the context of multiple relations. This process produced multiple identities and changes in my identities—becoming myself as a person, a supervisor, and researcher.

There have been limited studies on supervisors, especially minority supervisors of color, in teacher preparation and oriented toward diversity and justice. I believe that my
experiences and perspectives on supervision and learning through and about this research for social justice will benefit all supervisors, teacher educators, and those learning to be teachers.

Selection of Sites and Participants

My primary ‘purposeful selection’ (Patton, 1990) of sites and participants was a strategy of convenience. I chose the M.Ed. program in my university because I was already committed to work as a supervisor and it gave me easy access, a useful setting for my professional and personal growth, and it was a time saving plan (Glesne, 1999). There was another reason that was very critical to me. I am an international student and I don’t have my own classroom. If I didn’t work for the program as a supervisor, I might have found research settings and participants. However, my presumption about studying American classrooms as a minority student with language barriers discouraged me from facing this challenge.

This research, thus, was situated in the context of an M.Ed. program at the Ohio State University. There were two pre-K to 3rd grade early childhood cohorts with thirty one student teachers in each group. As shown in Table 1.1, the demographic population of our M.Ed. program reflected the current teacher population in the nation. As educators we know that the sociocultural, economic, and political contexts influencing education are becoming more complex, and the student population is becoming increasingly diverse, while the teacher population has remained homogeneous in terms of gender, language, class, sexual orientation, and race.
Table 1.1: Demographic population of M.Ed. Early Childhood Education program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cohort 1</th>
<th>Cohort 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender F: M:</td>
<td>29: 2</td>
<td>27: 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Student of color</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Under 26:</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary state</td>
<td>Ohio: 29</td>
<td>Ohio: 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of Origin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 1.1 we can see that the population of the M.Ed. program is not different from the teacher population of the nation—white, young females coming from the same state where they grew up. Given the discrepancy between student and teacher populations, like many teacher education programs, our faculty in the M.Ed. program makes a huge effort to prepare student teachers to teach diverse learners and teach for social justice. For example, all student teachers are required to take either a one-week intense course on diversity and equity or a two-quarter community service learning project at a school ‘Mt. Olivet\(^1\), a primarily African American church.

In addition, the methods courses that I attended for the purpose of supervision and this research project incorporated culturally responsive pedagogy. The student teachers’

\(^1\) Mt. Olivet is community service learning project provided by one faculty in the M.Ed. program to prepare student teachers to work with diverse children.
field placements are urban, suburban, and rural areas around the city where the university is located.

Ten doctoral students--each full-time Graduate Associates (GAs), supervised six student teachers each in preschool placements during autumn and winter quarter once a week and in elementary school placements throughout the whole year. GAs and other students who were interested in teacher education met once every two weeks throughout the school year to talk about ideas, suggestions, and concerns. We also read and discussed issues related to teacher education, multicultural education, and other teacher education challenges. GAs attended the student teacher seminar once a week for three quarters, and professional development meetings to work with inservice teachers.

After I decided on the broad context for my study, the M.Ed. program, I started to think about the research setting and participants, field placements and student teachers specifically, I thought I would supervise and study whoever was assigned to me. It sounded more natural to follow the way the program worked. Moreover, I did not have any way to influence the multifaceted process of student teacher field placements or supervisor assignments. Even though I believed that my research would be useful for the supervisors and teacher educators in the program, I was not confident or comfortable enough to ask for their support in finding particular participants of my research. However, when I was assigned six students in two suburban, white, middle class schools, I was concerned. I wanted to have more variety in the schools in terms of race, language, and socio-economic status. I worried about investigating issues of social justice within such homogeneous classrooms. I also wanted my study to include teachers learning to teach in urban contexts.
I negotiated with another GA to trade three of my students in a suburban school for three of her students in an urban school. As a result of this change, as shown in Table 1.2, I had three student teachers, Courtney, Erin, and Wendy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>ESL</th>
<th>SES (Free Lunch)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Courtney</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>G: 7/B: 11</td>
<td>Non-W: 12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erin</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>G: 10/B: 3</td>
<td>Non-W: 15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendy</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>G: 5/B: 15</td>
<td>Non-W: 16</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>G: 10/B: 9</td>
<td>Non-W: 0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannah</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>G: 14/B: 8</td>
<td>Non-W: 1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>G: 14/B: 8</td>
<td>Non-W: 0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.2: Demographic population of children in elementary student teaching field placements

In this chapter, I have described the purpose of the research and the broad research context including my research questions and how I decided on my participants. I described myself as the researcher and situated this study. In the next chapter, I will explain the research perspectives and methods that guided me to find better ways to tell our stories.
CHAPTER 2

How Do I Tell Our Stories?

My Dichotomous Life as a Researcher

When did I start to do research? The answer to this question depends on how I define research. Everybody does inquiry continually in order to learn, to live with others, and to make the world a better place. But starting from the research I did for my master’s thesis in Korea, I learned that research was supported by facts using a large number of subjects and probabilities for generating generalizations. Even though I read a huge numbers of books about socio-cultural, critical, feminist, and ethnographical theories, I guess I couldn’t make the connection between the reading and the research I was doing nor see my readings as related to qualitative research. I did quantitative research because it was what my advisor asked me to do and I thought it was the only legitimate way to do research.

For my master’s thesis, I did a person to person survey with 450 college students and 300 preschool children for a year. I enjoyed meeting people, finding patterns by excluding abnormal data in the extremes, and felt good to imagine that I was able to generalize the results of the study and predict children’s behavior in any preschool classroom. However, I didn’t have a chance to utilize the research results.

When I started to work in a parent-cooperative child care center, which was a new child care movement adopting a communal system and power equalization among
parents, children and teachers, I revisited the readings I had read before in order to learn more about different ways of learning, power relations, gender equity, and community. I still didn’t make the connection between teaching based on postmodernist perspectives and research based on positivist and post-positivist perspectives. Before I came to the U.S., I made clear distinctions between a teacher and a researcher. Teachers teach children and researchers, who were professors and graduate students, did research. The roles differences between them were not interchangeable.

Dreaming of freedom and success, I came to the U.S., entered an M.Ed. program in Indiana where quantitative research was dominant. I switched my role from a teacher to a graduate student researcher. I began to recover memories about doing my research in Korea. For the required research methods course, I had a chance to review different types of research. As soon as I finished reading a brief introduction about action research, which I had never heard about before, I said out loud “this is it.” How often do teachers misunderstand their students and find the “best” technique to teach students by using their own lens or standardized lens? They evaluate the situation void of any systematic data analysis to support their choices. I thought, and still think, that action research can guide teachers to become better teachers and thus promote children’s learning.

However, doing research, especially action research in the U.S. was more complicated than in my country due to confidentiality requirements and my being an international student without my own classroom.

Fortunately, after getting my M.Ed. degree, I worked in the university child care center as an assistant teacher. I didn’t want to miss the opportunity to do my own action research. With support from the director and the chairperson in my education department,
I started to search for a research question. Although I thought everybody could be the subject for my research, I was hoping to make a contribution to some important issues. I had a lot of sympathy for an ESL (English as Second Language) child, so I decided to do my research about helping him adjust to the preschool environment. In the beginning the child cried all day, didn’t eat anything for snack or lunch, and just sat in the corner. My research documented a successful story of a child who eventually had more laughing than crying and more talking than silence. This example motivated me to do more research and search for better ways of helping children learn.

My beliefs and passion about action research were strengthened when I started my Ph.D. program where qualitative research was the dominant paradigm. Learning new things and hearing familiar theorists at the beginning of the program was exciting and challenging and as much as I could handle, but the more I learned the more I became confused. It took a while for me to understand research from postmodernist perspectives. At last I understood that how we think and learn is not different from how we do research. Postmodernism provides openings for diversity, empowerment, and emancipation. Eleven years ago when I worked on my master’s thesis, I never thought that there might be other ways to do research or that research methods were related to our world view. The many possibilities of qualitative research liberated and empowered me in both my personal and academic life. I have more choices. However, these choices have also created uncomfortableness and uncertainties due to the complexities, cacophonies, and revelations. I have been wondering where I belong more than ever before. Where am I situated within these multiple worlds?
As if Lincoln and Guba (2000) knew my struggles, they ask “Is it possible to blend elements of one paradigm into another, so that one is engaging in research that represents the best of both worldviews” (p. 174)? I don’t think it is a question of whether there is the theoretical possibility of mixing elements from different paradigms but rather that these major paradigms had already historically influenced my worldview.

For me, it was almost impossible to deconstruct my deep-rooted-positivistic-beliefs. Without warning, they permeate my thoughts and actions as if I have been brainwashed. I want to see the effects or contributions of my research. I want to see how I can help my participants, the student teachers with whom I work and the students they will eventually teach. I want them to question their beliefs, and become aware of their unconscious attitudes about inequities in society. Even though I believe/want to believe that I construct my own world view, I can’t ignore that my world view is built from pre-existing views in my social context. Yet, even though I know that my pre-existing positivist beliefs pull me back to stay in a comfort zone, I cannot stay because I am, and am becoming, a blend of multiple paradigms.

Moreover, I have had an additional challenge, so called ‘translated knowing/learning/living’ which is required for me to do research and to live in the U.S. That is, for years I tried to mimic and assimilate American culture and American ways of knowing within my Korean background. I didn’t think critically about how my ways of knowing were different from or same as American ways of knowing. I assumed that they would be different and I should follow the American way. I used an American dictionary but I couldn’t understand most of the definitions because they were different from what I previously learned with my Korean-English dictionary. When I recognized the
differences, I thought I had to choose either the Korean or the U.S. definition rather than reconstructing my ways of knowing.

I tried to translate English into Korean by using a Korean dictionary. However, when I started to have close relationships and conversations with Americans, I noticed that there were discrepancies between the meanings in the conversation and in my Korean dictionary. I learned new words with American meanings that could not be translated into Korean and Korean words that could not be translated into English. Sometimes I have a hard time communicating with Koreans and my families in Korea. I am sometimes afraid of becoming somebody else, different from who I was.

Disequilibrium between two different cultures--an existing culture and a new culture--seems to involve different abilities and identities to accommodate the new culture, not just cognitively but also emotionally as well as developing social abilities. Unlike dogs and cats who have four legs but different sounds, it is difficult to identify the similarities and differences of cultures. It doesn’t seem possible to have my own sound like a dog or a cat. After 7 years of living in the U.S. I have learned to negotiate some of the discrepancies/tensions between what I have known in my country and in the U.S. and to find my own ways to understand and to be confident in constructing my world.

*What, How, and Why?*

The purpose of this study was to share the stories of all participants including me related to teaching for social justice, and to stimulate ourselves and the readers to take action to become social justice educators. What do I need to consider in achieving such a goal? How can I achieve this goal? What perspectives and theories would help me better pull out the threads of each narrative and tell the stories? How do I, with my own beliefs
and perspectives, negotiate other perspectives of my participants and research methods within this research project?

With the hope of bringing the complexities and multiplicities of studying, learning, and teaching for social justice in teacher education program up front, here, I describe multiple concepts that I believe guided me in telling these authentic and holistic stories constructed from my data. The concepts include: (a) research against dichotomy, (b) research is a historical, political, and social construction, (c) research through dialogue, (d) relationship between power and knowing and being, (e) multiple ways of knowing, and (f) action for changing. Even though I believe these concepts are all interwoven, it is helpful to discuss them separately.

Research against Dichotomy but for Praxis

Can we clearly distinguish between personal theory and personal life, supervisory theory and supervisory practice, teaching theory and teaching practice, research theory and research practice? I believe all these relationships are intertwined because everything we do is influenced by our beliefs and theories and everything we believe and theorize is influenced by our practice and experience. In this research, I attempted to interpret what supervision and teaching for social justice looked like by adopting theories and generating my perspectives on these theories. I tried to achieve social justice by doing this research. If we try to understand other people and things with either theory or practice, or with both theory and practice but in fragmented and disconnected ways, we will be like the blind mice’s description of an elephant. Research requires a holistic and multi-faceted approach.
Praxis is defined as theoretically-infused-action (Girod, Pardales, & Cervetti, 2002), or transformative or revolutionary activity (Freire, 1970). With a strong belief that research should be led by praxis, I consciously made an effort to do the research as praxis, to fully explore my participants’ praxis, and help them to learn about teaching for social justice as praxis.

Research is an Historical, Political, and Social Construction

I believe in Vygotsky’s notion that humans are significantly influenced by the socio-cultural, or social and historical context that mediates their experience (Wertsch, 1985). Human beings are born in a socio-cultural world defined by a system of historically developed social meanings constructed in forms of symbolic discourse. The premise of Vygotsky’s theory is that the meaning of an experience must be understood with reference to the socio-cultural milieu in which the experience is embedded (Vygotsky, 1978). Contexts are not conceptualized as static givens, dictated by the social and physical environment, but as ongoing accomplishments negotiated by participants.

Such notions of knowledge construction in a social context called my attention to the isms which I tried to extract and consequently tried to help my participants to remove like spitting gum out of their mouths. However, if I am committed to socio-cultural theory, then racism, classism, sexism, and other isms are socially and historically constructed, they cannot just be eliminated as a way of changing the world. Rather they must be deconstructed and reconstructed through dialogue within social contexts. Before I deconstructed my own assumptions related to positivism, I positioned myself in a distance from myself and my participants: I asked interview questions because I was
afraid to have conversations. Reminding myself that supervision and research are social constructions, I consciously attempted to maintain an open dialogue.

I continuously asked the questions: How can I have a better understanding of my participants: What do they think? How can they learn to teach for social justice? Why do they teach in the way they teach? How do I make sense and meaning of what I learn about my participants? I don’t believe that I can transfer knowledge to them or teach them techniques to create social justice, force my participants to be receptive to my ideas, or prove a cause and effect relationship between my supervision and their teaching in terms of social justice. I believe that our learning and teaching for social justice are not separable from the sociocultural context; they are mediated through our social interaction; and they are situated in varied social contexts (Samaras, 2002).

Research through Dialogue

Since I believe people learn about others and the world through social mediation, dialogue with myself through reflective journal writing and with advisors through interactive journaling were helpful. There were also phone calls, e-mails, and conversations with participants in this project.

Dialogue has been defined in many different ways: a form of communication or relationship (Matson & Montagu, 1967), a framework for rethinking knowledge (Maranhao, 1990), and a relation between interpreter and text (Gadamer, 1982). I believe dialogue is a way of understanding and inquiring into self, others, and the world. It is difficult to make clear distinction among many terms related to dialogue such as communication, chat, discussion, and formal or informal conversation. My conceptualization of dialogue was influenced by the characteristics of dialogue described
by Anderson, Cisna and Arnett (1994) —“immediacy of presence, emergent unanticipated consequences, recognition of strange otherness, collaborative orientation, vulnerability, mutual implication, temporal flow, and genuiness and authenticity” (p. 13-15). Through the process of this research project, I tried to be conscious about such characteristics.

When I started this project, I got a classic looking diary from my advisor. I recall my resistance to revealing and tracing my path. I wrote:

What is a research journal anyway? I have more than enough work to do for my dissertation and my daily life. Why should I bother to write this stuff? What should write? How am I going to use this? (Research journal, August, 2003)

And as if I had had amnesia for months, I later wrote:

Writing a research journal was like a lighthouse to me: all kinds of different boats of my thoughts and ideas coming from different directions to the dissertation harbor. It holistically guided me to continue the process: it showed what I knew and needed to know, how I understood, how I felt, what skills I needed, and so on. (Course assignment, May, 2003)

I started to recognize that writing a research journal was not fragmented extra work, but an important part of the project. This research journal, a dialogue with myself, not only guided me but also supported my weak memory because it documented my thinking. It contains a history of my thoughts, progress, resistance, and interactions with others.

There is dialogue with my academic advisor, who is a main character in the interactive research journal, and she played multiple roles. She provided help like a walking lighthouse: when I was in the dark, she found me with a proper brightness of light, when I was about to trip over, she warned me to watch out for the obstacles, and when I was trapped in a cage of thought, she showed me the door. She wrote:
… I like the way this writing shows the tension between your previous training/sympathies and what you have learned in your doctoral program. Of course, this cannot be resolved easily either emotionally or practically, and postmodernisms are a way to help one live in these tensions--both the desire for security and the need for ambiguity and complexity sit side by side. Of course, postmodern theories don't help us with the resolution, but they do help us talk about the uncertainties and complexities which positivism tried to get rid of unsuccessfully. (E-mail message from Marilyn Johnston, advisor, December, 2003)

Our perspectives, which are shaped by our past experiences, language, and cultural lenses, limit what we are able to see at a particular moment in our personal/cultural/professional history. Dialogue especially with my advisor helped me deal with multiple, socially constructed realities that are complex and holistic, and to consider the research task as coming to understand and interpret how my various participants in a social context constructed the world around them.

This perspective was not connected to my action at the beginning of the project. The following excerpt is about my struggle to have dialogue with my participants. I wrote this after we took the test about beliefs of diversity during the first ‘pizza meeting’:

Hannah dominates our conversation. Among many topics she raised, I found one interesting thing. She asked “Why are there more minorities (African American) in poverty?” I couldn’t decide whether I can share how I think, so I asked other student teachers to share their thoughts about this issue. We had a long moment of silence. I don’t know what my role should be in this pizza meeting. What do I exactly want from this meeting? I don’t need to teach them about social justice but I can still talk about what I think about social justice and encourage them to share what they think so that they can learn from each other. (Research journal, October, 2003)

This reflection triggered me to try to develop my understandings through reciprocity, an important aspect of dialogue. I attempted to understand and learn about my participants through dialogue as much as possible, and to invite other people around
my participants--mentor teachers, colleagues, principals, and their students--into our
dialogue. However, I had to confront other obstacles which were that many of us were
not familiar with (learning through) dialogue and we were not in an equal relationship.

Relationship between Power and Knowing and Being (Silence and Voice)

Dialogue is affected by power relationships. Foucault (1978b, 1978c) posits
that power is exercised from multiple sources and assumes many forms within the
contexts of unequal relationships. Over time, the nature and quality of power changes
and is expressed in a variety of ways across contexts, with the inevitable emergence
of various forms of resistance within the relationship. Further, Foucault asserts that
multiple discourses, as well as silences, play a central role in transmitting, producing,
reinforcing, and undermining power relationships (Foucault, 1978a). I believe that
because power is everywhere, that the participants and their knowledge, assumptions,
and beliefs should be understood in relation to issues of power. In addition, my own
understandings and interpreted experiences, which are products/influences of power
relations, must be carefully examined.

For example, I was conscious of trying to balance power by positioning myself
differently in the network of multi-layered relationships. Similar to Wax’s (1971)
argument, my ‘role-constructing’ was the most uncomfortable, frustrating, and
complicating process, and it was different with each student teacher in each setting.
Because positioning is a reflexive and interactive process (Ritchie & Rogano, 2001)
rather than predetermined, it is vulnerable to many influences and continuous changes.
Furthermore, because it is a social construction process with inherent power relations, it
can imprison or liberate people, and also disempower or empower them. I often felt that
my multiple positions as a supervisor and a researcher, an Asian and a less-fluent-English speaker made my work more dynamic but also more complicated because such positions created different power relation with each participant.

Hence, it is necessary to critically examine the power relations in both micro and macro contexts and to investigate unquestioned assumptions, discourses, beliefs, and attitudes in learning and teaching for social justice (Hinchey, 1998). Along with examining the power relations, questioning and interrupting the status quo is also necessary to creating a better understanding of the world. Educators and researchers should adopt a questioning attitude toward their own assumptions about the way the world should be, or in other words, they need to cultivate their critical consciousness; then, practitioners must design their own personal praxis toward the changes they believe desirable and actually execute the identified actions.

“Critical consciousness”, for Paulo Freire (1970), was the mental habit of not taking the world for granted, for example, the habit of asking ourselves why we believe what we believe; what assumptions are guiding our actions; who benefits from the assumptions we approve; and how to change the world toward a more desirable society (Taylor, 1993). Freire believed that this kind of critical questioning should be grounded in daily experience, so that the less privileged and powerful can come to recognize what they have accepted by default because they are blinded by assumptions and cannot imagine the kind of privilege others do or do not enjoy.

*Multiple Ways of Knowing*

Interrogating how race, gender, and other aspects constitute who we are connects and conflicts with other areas of difference, and is never entirely absent from the research
process. “We must shift the role of critical intellectuals from being universalizing spokespersons to acting as cultural workers whose task is to take away the barriers that prevent people from speaking for themselves” (Lather, 1991). Research, I believe, is/should be a space where differences and commonalities of both researcher and participants are thoroughly explored and accepted. Through such research, researchers, participants, and readers become who they are.

**Action for Changing the World Community Together (Against Neutrality)**

Finally, a critical questioning of all the concepts I described above is not complete without action.

If theory unresponsive of practice is at best empty talk and at worst an academic power trip at the expense of other people, teaching without theoretical articulateness is a product of unthinking custom, accident, and the impositions of others, with no less potential (perhaps more, in fact) for taking advantage of the powerless. (Knoblauch & Brannon, 1993, p. 9)

I believe, for me, being engaged in this research project was action to become a social justice educator, and a leverage to continue to take action to change the educational contexts I encounter in my future teaching career.

In sum, no single theoretical model currently available is sufficiently powerful to provide a framework for a research agenda that takes into account all key aspects of human agency.

**Mode of Inquiry – Participatory Action Research Focused on Self-Study**

Is there one universal truth of supervision? Is there one best way of supervision for social justice? Is there one best way of learning and teaching for social justice? This research ontologically presumes that the reality of supervision is socially, culturally, politically constructed, complex and ever changing, and that there exists multiple mental
constructions that are specific and dependent for their form on the context on the participants who hold them (Guba, 1990).

Because of this ontological and epistemological nature of the interpretivist research, it was necessary to use a qualitative approach. Qualitative research allows a researcher firsthand knowledge of the social context and how participants create meaning (Butgess, 1985). Through a qualitative approach, the researcher can contextualize the supervisor and preservice teachers in their role at the university and the school sites, and explore complex learning and teaching for social justice in authentic contexts.

For a method of inquiry that satisfies perspectives with multiple concepts explained above, I chose participatory action research with a self-study focus. There are many different types of action research reflecting different research interests and research methods, such as practical action research, critical action research, collaborative action research (Mills, 2000). Among them, because participatory action research involves a spiral of self-reflective cycles of planning, action, and reflecting for change, it is critical, collaborative, and reflexive and aims to transform praxis (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). Through participatory action research, many researchers including me, systematically pursue participant involvement, social improvement, and knowledge production (Schwandt, 2001).

Additionally, self-studies provided me a more focused direction for the research, helping me study my own practice to improve my supervision. Self-study was popularized in teacher education with the appearance in the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Special Interest group (SIG) (Zeichner, 1999). However, it is not widely conducted in colleges of education because many do not consider it a
legitimate form of research. Its increasing popularity is demonstrated in the accumulated body of research discussed on the first handbook for self-study research (international handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education)

The goal of a self-study is to examine and improve one’s own understandings and practices. Research about the self creates other challenges and tensions, but I believe it is a viable way to achieve social justice in education.

Types of Data

The collection of multiple data sources paralleled the varied approach I used to support my student teachers: I used semi-structured interview questions which were basic questions I used to open up our dialogues (see Appendix A and B). I also observed and interacted with student teachers and made field notes including giving them feedback on their teaching. I also collected their reflective journals, lessons, and other documents, and recorded all our conversations. Even if I was not doing research, I would consider these procedures as a necessary process to provide support in the supervision context.

The difference between my previous supervision and current supervision with this research project is that I became more systemic and diligent in collecting, organizing, analyzing the data and planning, and acting and reflecting on my supervisory practice for social justice. I used interview, observation, and documents, and each method provided a unique means to understanding the participants. Each of them, I believe, contributed to the whole when used harmoniously with other data collection approaches and when other data collection approaches allowing through for the possibility of dissonance in the data. What my participants said, what they did, and what they wrote provided me with a holistic picture of each case.
How do people understand others? First, researchers can watch people’s action. I observed each participant once a week for 1 or 2 hours depending on each participant’s situation and needs in either their preschool or elementary school field placement setting for two quarters, autumn and winter (September through March), and once a week in elementary school for Spring quarter (April through June). My observations were not just sitting in the corner of the classroom and watching my participants, rather I observed them through interacting with and supporting them, their students, and the mentor teachers. I was cautious, however, not to intrude or intimidate them.

Most of my participants re-introduced me to their students at the beginning of the second quarter to remind the children who I was:

She is Miss Young Ah Lee. She is from the university to help me become a good teacher. She will watch me but also she will watch you, work with you, and help you if you need. (Research journal, January, 2004)

Second, researchers can talk with participants using multiple and intriguing questions. The interview helped me understand the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience (Seidman, 1998). Interviewing provided access to the context of people’s behavior and thereby provided a way for me to understand the meaning of that behavior. For this project, I used the term ‘interview’ broadly. That is, since this research is participatory action research, every time after supervision and reflection on supervision, I though about questions for the next visit.

Most of the time, our conversations/interviews were individual, but sometimes we were in a small group with other students and/or with mentor teacher. When some of them were not comfortable talking about something at school, we met in a restaurant. I
planned to have ‘pizza meetings’ on campus to try to build a community of learners, but it could not be sustained due to the participants’ overloaded schedules.

I included in my data all the questions I asked my participants and myself plus two semi-structured interviews with each participant for around 30 minutes each session. I also answered the questions for myself. The semi-structured interview questions I used for this project were focused on participants’ perception and conceptualization regarding social justice and teaching for social justice, and perception of supervisory relationships.

Finally, researchers can read their participants’ writings and scrutinize the materials they produced. Documents provided a deep understanding of the history of the participants’ changes and development (Merriam, 1988). The documents for this study came from many different sources (a) diversity story and autobiography for the method course assignments, (b) lesson plans, (c) individually written reflection journals, metaphors, images, and stories, (d) email messages, (e) reflective writings in their electronic portfolios, (f) student teacher, mentor teacher and supervisor three-way conferences for each end-of-quarter assessment, (g) my research journal and autobiography, (h) my interactive journal with my advisor, and (i) the diversity scale.

I used the diversity scale (Pohan & Aguilar, 1998)², not as a test to analyze statistically, generalize, and then predict, but to get more information about participants in multiple areas. Long before I started to think about my dissertation, I identified some tests about diversity. I was suspicious about whether it was okay for me to use them in a

² Permission to use “The Personal and Professional Beliefs about Diversity Scales: User’s Manual and Scoring Guide” developed by Pohan and Aguilar can be obtained from College of Education 5500 Campanile Dr. San Diego State University San Diego, CA 92182 (Phone) 619-594-4781
qualitative study, although I was not going to statistically analyze them. Also, it was not easy to get an ‘appropriate’ test.

Searching for a test was a meaningful learning experience. I chose on that was diverse and covered multiple topics. The participants and I took the test and discussed the items that challenged our thinking, that were confusing, or that raised different opinions. The conversation was audio taped and transcribed. This conversation helped me understand the participants and plan my supervision. The test became another tool to open up our conversations. I didn’t use the answers for this test because they were not very different across cases, but I used our conversation as data to help me understand my participants.

Autobiography was an important data source for my research. I had autobiographical data from my participants and my own autobiography. The following description was from my reflection on including autobiographical voices in the research.

Sometimes, in a tried civilization like our own, it seems there is nothing left to pursue, that we can only repeat, with less resonance, what others have said definitively before us. Autobiography, however, is an area which has been largely ignored and positively invites fresh acts of imaginative and intellectual attention. (Abbs, 1989, p. 3)

This quote, which sounds ironic, unveiled for me my subconscious rationale for including an autobiographical voice. That is, in my own autobiography, I strived against the magnetic power of positivist positions to search for something new and fresh. The solution for me was writing autobiography which I believed would highlight my ‘subjectivities.’ After I decided to include autobiography for myself and my participation, and as I learned more about qualitative research, my writing and thinking involved orchestrating everybody’s voice which then made things messier than ever before.
Among the many doubts and ambiguities, the biggest struggle which continuously emerged during the process of writing my dissertation has been a pursuit of clear communication with both myself and potential readers by inserting and creating my life story: How much of me should I include? Which part of my life should I include? What is relevant to include? Where should I put all my stories? I grappled with capturing me and my participants holistically versus creating a standard research text. I also needed to consider that I was writing in my second language which sometimes limits what one can express. Using an alternative approach to writing the dissertation, however, I feared that I had imprisoned myself in a format I could not sustain. I also worried about juggling my three roles in this dissertation: person, supervisor, and researcher. Including those three roles in my autobiography and research helped me to embrace “fresh acts of imaginative and intellectual attention” (Abbs, 1989).

My struggles with writing autobiography and the practice of coding and analyzing data, especially the data about my life, theories, and practices, brought me a whole new perspective on doing research, and changed my attitude toward writing. It empowered me to interpret the world, to generate knowledge, and to make a creation in a form of writing.

Dealing With and Analyzing Data

Since this research is participatory action research focused on self-study, it was important for me to be reflexive about emerging themes in order to plan/improve my practice. I was committed to being consistently and consciously involved in a spiral cycle of planning, acting, and reflecting. Whenever I came back from supervision and methods courses I attended, I listened to the audiotapes I recorded during our pre or post lesson conference and any other conversations, read observational field notes, and read
documents I collected from each supervisory visitation. In addition, I kept my own reflective journal about my supervision and research.

I read the data including my journal many times and started to find some patterns in my supervisory perspectives and practices and my participants’ thinking and teaching practice. I attempted to look at each case separately and also across all cases using all data sources to make connections. Such a cyclical process continued until the end of my participants’ student teaching, spring 2004.

Afterwards, using those patterns, I created a coding book and a theme chart. The coding system helped me organize, manage, and fine tune emerging themes in my various data (Anderson, K., & Nihlen, 1994). It also supported me to develop chapters and sub titles. In the beginning of the research, I used N*VIVO qualitative data coding computer software, but soon I stopped using the program because manual coding seemed more convenient to me and less demanding on my physical health.

From the data analysis, I decided that my own prior experiences, supervisory understandings, and practices for social justice, and my participants’ prior experiences, understandings, and practices for social justice were appropriate as major categories. Within these categories, our stories were developed, along with the story development for each of such categories.

Ethics and Trustworthiness

How can readers believe whether the stories I told in this research are believable or fabricated? In qualitative research, “this question becomes whether the researcher sees what she think she sees and are the findings trustworthy” (Horton, 2001, p. 96). To insure authentic stories in this study, I consistently observed participants for
extended periods of time in different contexts. I tried to tell each story with detailed descriptions of the context, their student teaching placements, and their classes at the university. I used ‘triangulation’ which refers to “a means of checking the integrity of the inferences” by collecting various types of data (Schwandt, 2001, p. 257). For a holistic description of each participant, I incorporated multiple data-collection methods—interview, observation, and documents, and various sources, utilized multiple theoretical perspectives, and continually communicated with my advisor to review the research. Whenever I had questions about my participants’ understandings and teaching practices, I asked them to explain sometimes through phone or e-mail.

In order to make this self-study research as trustworthy as possible, I tried to “balance biography and history” (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 14) because self-study is both personal and public and acknowledges not only the importance of self but also that of practice settings where the self relates to others. For this matter, my own reflective journal assisted me to manage the trustworthiness. Throughout the study I made conscious efforts to build the trustworthiness of my data.
CHAPTER 3

Can Everybody Be a Social Justice Educator?

Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher. (Palmer, 1998, p. 10)

In this chapter, as a continuation of chapter 1, I use autobiographical voices to illustrate what shaped who we are, and discuss whether we are, and if we are eligible or have the potential to become, a social justice educator. This chapter and the next chapter argue for the importance of knowing ourselves and the content of knowing ourselves as important components of becoming social justice educators. Knowing ourselves and others is a crucial part of scaffolding and assessment that provided me indicators about where we began, and that led to the question of chapter 4 to come: ‘How should I, as a supervisor, support them to become a social justice educator?’

Why Is It Important to Know Ourselves to Become a Social Justice Educator?

This question is closely related to one’s view of the world and beliefs about education. If an educator believes that there are universal truths, s/he will try to transfer generalized knowledge to the learner who comes as with a blank slate, and to help the learner be able to later withdraw the knowledge that fits a particular time and place. With these beliefs, in order to gain the best effect of education, the educator should control the impact of subjective values and diverse contexts.
However, I believe that a learner and an educator enter the institution bringing with them their beliefs, values, attitudes, and knowledge shaped by their daily experiences with others in social contexts. In most contexts, there exists power which oppresses or privileges the knowledge that some bring to the institution. Through interactions in our social contexts, we create our own lenses to look at the world and our own relationship to these power structures. As educators, we often make invisible but powerful mistakes due to not knowing who we are and using the lenses we have constructed socially but often without explicit awareness. Will I be able to know the learners and the subjects I teach if I don’t know who I am? How often was I surprised and embarrassed by the young kids when they mirrored me, as a teacher? If I didn’t know who I was, could I have recognized myself in the children’s eyes?

‘Color-blindness’ is a good example. That is, race is an influential aspect for many people of color but it is often meaningless for many white people. This situation is understandable due to the fact that many white individuals have not been taught to see that their race embeds them in a larger social system, and view themselves as raceless. They also often have experienced discrimination or racist incidents which mark their race and raise their consciousness about being “raced”. Not being able to see the self as racial may prevent him/her from seeing other’s race, which means she or he cannot see others as whole persons.

More critically, if we don’t examine the complexity of our multiple identities related to gender, race, sexuality, exceptionality, and others, we will be limited in what we can understand about who our students are. If we don’t know who we are regarding gender, race, and other aspects of self, and are not aware of assumptions, biases,
stereotypes, and attitudes toward differences that we have, we may proudly keep our colorblindness and culture-blindness, and we may become the educator who teaches injustice and retains mainstream biases by planting our own stereotypes and attitudes.

Looking at ourselves more carefully and critically not only helps us reshape our assumptions and beliefs which influence our ways of teaching and learning to teach, but this reflective process also gives voice to the complexity of identity related to multi-aspects. Examination of the self helps us to see differences and similarities in students and others. It also helps us to question injustice and domination, and to understand better how relying on one dominant way of thinking and understanding restricts possibilities leading to greater oppression of students. By reconstructing our identity with conscious self-examination, we can become more aware and responsive to biased statements and behaviors, and create curricula and classroom environments that are more just. Then we should ask, what do we need to know about ourselves?

**What Is It Important to Know About Ourselves to Become a Social Justice Educator?**

Researchers and scholars from different fields have used various approaches to define identity. The definition of identity has been evolving in response to criticisms that judgments made across all identity domains tend to be global and miss the fact that identity is typically multifaceted (McKinney & Vogel, 1987). Among those multifaceted and multidimensional aspects of identity, such as age, physical appearance, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, and race, some are more influential to identity formation at different moments or in different situations in our lives. These fluid aspects of social diversity and commonality invite misunderstandings and lack of awareness. Thus, we need to look at who we are as a social mixture of identities and the prior
experiences that have shaped our identities. Establishing one’s own identity involves nourishing a growing awareness of competencies, emotions and values, confidence in standing alone as well as bonding with others, and moving beyond intolerance toward openness and self-esteem (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

However, there are limits and challenges to unveiling ourselves. Due to the complexity of multifaceted identities, “social identity can be so ambivalent that what seems obvious to a viewer is far from obvious or simple to the self”(Adams, Jones, & Tatum, 1997). In addition, there is some resistance to how much and what part of our lives we want to examine and reveal.

Along with paradigmatic shifts and the awareness of the significance of examining the self in education, many teacher education programs have committed to adopting multiple approaches to support preservice teachers to examine and understand their own ideological assumptions and beliefs by using autobiography, reflective journal writing, and action research. Some programs focus on examining one’s identity as a teacher, while others focus on racial and cultural identity. Some have great success in developing self-knowledge, others do not provide the kinds of support needed for this kind of self-examination.

Our M.Ed. program has had a strong emphasis on reflective teaching. The student teachers need to keep a reflective learning log for three quarters of their student teaching in both preschool and elementary school settings. The instructors of the M.Ed. methods courses that I attended for the purpose of the research project and supervision started the class with sharing the student teachers’ autobiographies including social and cultural influences on their own education. The following stories of student teacher participants,
which constitute their backgrounds and experiences related to social diversity, are based on documents written for their classes, information from the diversity scale that we filled out individually then discussed as a group, writings in their electronic portfolio, and the interviews I did with each participant.

Who Are We?

Courtney

Reach high, for the stars lie hidden in your soul.
Dream deep, for every dream precedes the goal.
-Pamela Vaull Starr

Courtney is a 39 year old white female who grew up in a suburban area in Michigan with no racial or economic diversity. She had high ideals for her students and herself. She recalls that she was bored with living in the countryside and filled her imagination about the world through reading books and magazines. She said she was a good student who did well in academics and was the only one in her family who went to college. She doesn’t have many memories about elementary experiences and doesn’t think that her early school experiences had any influence on her desire to pursue a teaching licensure.

Courtney is somewhat different from other the student teachers in the program in addition to her age. She is currently pursuing both a certification in TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) and an early childhood teaching license. She is fluent in Spanish which benefited the Hispanic children in her student teaching field placement. She also joined the community service learning Mt. Olivet project to gain a better understanding of different people. She got her Bachelor’s degree in art history from the University in Michigan where she remembers more racial diversity than in Ohio in
terms of ethnicity and state of origin. After her degree, she relocated in New York City for several years, lived in Los Angeles, and then in Miami, Florida. She worked for almost 10 years in television commercials and film production, working in the art department, set decorating, set design, and prop buying.

As a freelancer, she made good money and had quite a bit of free time, which allowed her to travel all over the world. With her admiration of eastern culture and spirituality, she lived in India for 6 months with a Muslim family in Nepal, she traveled to Thailand and has been to Northern Africa, Asia, and all over Europe. Courtney says:

So that’s what I used to do. I always gravitated towards maybe the international students or someone with different backgrounds, and even now I love my ESL [English as Second Language], my TESOL classes because I love people who are different. (Interview, October 2003)

Erin

Erin considers herself bi-cultural person, being both a black woman living in America and a citizen of Bermuda. She went to high school in the U.S. and got her bachelor’s degree and continued to pursue a Master’s degree. After the end of the school year, she will be going back to Bermuda to teach in the elementary school which was already assigned for her.

According to her, such bi-cultural experiences have helped her learn to appropriately adapt to different cultural contexts as well as become tolerant of other cultures around her. Although she briefly mentioned the difficulties of being a student of color, she said that she seemed to adjust very well in both cultures. She was a cheerleader in high school and a cheerleader coach during college; she frequently visited her country and maintained close relationships with people in Bermuda. Erin explained the influences on her assumptions and beliefs:
I view myself as an individual influenced by the ecology of many contexts, circling out from my family, church affiliation, educational institutions, and finally the larger dominant culture in which I dwell. Each level of the ecology has had an influence on my beliefs and perceptions of issues surrounding sexual orientation, gender roles, attitudes towards certain racial groups and classes along with religious beliefs. While each level has influenced me, I believe that the larger dominant culture has had the most influences due to its trickling effect as it penetrates its ideas through each stage of the ecological system in which I live. (Electronic portfolio)

She is well aware that there are different types of oppressions and that she needed to be more conscious in certain areas such as homosexuality and social economic class. 

She also honestly revealed that her prejudice toward homosexuality was influenced by her father:

Starting with my family, who is deeply embedded, if not enmeshed with my church family due to my father’s role as a pastor, I hold many views that continue the cycle of oppression towards the homosexual culture. Being a Christian family, we hold firm biblical beliefs that homosexuality is not at all acceptable. I recall small jokes my father would make about men that appeared feminine. While at the time these comments seemed harmless and simply funny, I now understand the impact these little comments have made on my own views of homosexuality. …. This view is going to be the most difficult to deal with as an educator, for I know I will meet families that involve same sex relationships. (Electronic portfolio)

Coming from an upper middle class background, dealing with working class students was quite an enlightening experience. While I do have friends from the working class, my experience in working with the students in my elementary school and their families broadened my horizons and has greatly influenced my philosophical statements concerning equity and diversity. (Electronic portfolio)

Erin’s work during her undergraduate program seemed to provide her diverse experiences and to develop her consciousness of oppression. For example, during her undergraduate program she worked in preschools and elementary schools in the U.S. and during breaks, she worked at a summer camp in Bermuda since she was 17 years old. The children in the camp were hotel guests from all over the world. Some were children with disabilities. With a couple years of experiences, she started to direct a camp with
Bermudian children who went to church where her father was pastor. Erin reflected on her experiences with social diversity:

My experiences have shaped my perspective in that I view our culturally diverse society with an open mind, respecting my own culture along with others. (Diversity story a course assignment, December 2003)

Hannah

As the old man walked along the beach at dawn, he noticed a young man ahead of him picking up starfish and flinging them into the sea. Finally, he caught up with the youth, he asked him why he was doing this. The answer was that the stranded starfish would die if left until the morning sun. “But the beach goes on for miles and miles and there are millions of starfish,” countered the other. “How can your effort make any difference?” The young man looked at the starfish in his hand and threw it to safety in the waves. “It makes a difference to this one,” he said.
--- Minnesota Literacy Council (Electronic portfolio)

Hannah is a 23 year old white female who grew up in a predominantly Caucasian, middle-class, rural school district for 18 years. Throughout her K-12 school experiences, there was only one African American child and no children of Asian or Latino descent. She recalls that many people in her town were not open to accepting people of other cultures and had very negative attitudes about diversity.

Hannah describes entering a college in Ohio and working in urban elementary schools as an eye opening to the diversity that existed. She has a special education undergraduate degree. For her undergraduate degree, she did three practica including student teaching in kindergarten (1 quarter), inclusion preschool (1 quarter), and special needs 1 and 2nd grade (1 quarter). She said she felt comfortable working with special needs and disability kids. Her eagerness about getting a teaching job was exceptional:

I knew I was going to pursue the M.Ed. and I wanted to have a strong background in order to enter the program and get a job, so I got a special education degree. I wanted to join in Mt. Olivet because I think it will help me to get a job but it is going to be too much for me to handle with all the course work and student teaching. (Conversation, December 2003)
Hannah tells about her learning about diversity:

The urban elementary school I worked introduced me to holidays and family structures that were unfamiliar to me. When I was in elementary school, we would celebrate Christmas and Easter in the classroom. We made Santa Claus faces, Easter bunnies, and discussed the “meaning” of the holidays as a class. I thought that everyone celebrated Christmas and Easter and was unaware that some people did not celebrate Christmas and Easter. In the school I worked, there were students who celebrated Hanukkah and Kwanzaa, and also students who celebrated Christmas, they taught me everything from the principles of Kwanzaa, to what the Hebrew symbols meant on a dreidel. This was a great learning experience for me and changed my view of the word ‘holiday.’ (Diversity story for a course assignment, December 2003)

She continued:

Not only did I learn about different holidays, but also about different family structures. Until working at the school, I thought of a family as a mother, father, and children. While working in a K/1 classroom, I had children from bi-racial families, same sex families, children living in foster care, children with only a mother or father, and children who lived with their grandmother or grandfather. This was an interesting learning experience because I was able to see what the classroom teacher did to make each family feel included.

One very special child in my class was an African American girl who was physically and emotionally abused by her birth mother and was in and out of foster care for the first five years of her life, and was recently adopted by an amazing Caucasian couple. She had many behavior problems and often threatened to harm herself. The child was determined to be suicidal at the age of three by her psychologist. The child would say “I hate myself! I am brown and stupid! I hate you! I am going to kill myself!” These were often said on a daily basis. One day we were walking the class to art and she wrapped a jump rope around her neck and said, “I am going to kill myself!” I watched how the classroom teacher showed this child how much she cared about her and listened when this child needed to say something. (Diversity story for a course assignment, December 2003)

Hannah’s experiences with diversity was not limited to just celebrating holidays.

She was aware that there are children with diverse backgrounds who need special care to be educated better.
Jessica

Jessica is a 22 year old, middle class, white female who was raised in a small town in Ohio. She attended elementary through high school with middle-class, white students who were similar to herself.

Her parents were divorced when she was a year old, and her mother remarried shortly afterwards. She believes that this situation helped her to have close relationship with both her stepfather and her biological father and feel belongingness because she lived with two parents and two siblings. She expressed her appreciation of her mother’s caring: “My mother worked nights so she could stay at home with my siblings and I during the day” (Diversity story for a course assignment, December 2003). Jessica recalled that she was never excited about school, but she was successful and did not mind going. She attributed her success in school to her great memory: she could easily memorize time tables, spelling words, historical dates, and other concepts that were presented to her in “fill in the worksheet” form.

If I raised a question about the truth of something a teacher told me, I was told that there were no other answers especially in analyzing literature. I very rarely worked in groups, participated in discussions, made direct observations, or used manipulatives.

My education affected the way I interact with my environment. I do not feel like I really know how to solve problems and negotiate with other people. Moreover, I never learned how to ask questions or make my own decisions. I was always told what to do and how to do it, and I was prevented from knowing that there are many other people, lifestyles, and cultures in the world. Sometimes, I feel angry that I never learned about other cultures. (Conversation, November 2003)

Until Jessica entered a college in Ohio, she didn’t know much about different people and the world. Her college and work experiences helped her change her
perceptions of people who come from different parts of the country and the world, and to understand that there are some things that she has had in her life that others have not.

I realize now that even though I have had satisfying school and life experiences, others have not, due to many social injustices, which occur in various institutions in our society. In addition, I understand that schools can play a role in supporting or reducing the effects of social inequalities. (Electronic portfolio)

When I asked her for more details about her experience in the urban elementary school for her practicum, she answered:

Jessica: I don’t think I really got to see things a lot. I thought it was. I didn’t see a lot of differences; it was like the kindergarten I am in now [her student teaching field placement]. It was still, I saw the circle, mat time when they did reading things, that was kind of same thing, and then at the beginning of the day, they wrote in journals, they are still kind of same to me.

Young Ah: Do you think you can teach in an urban setting like you had for your practicum?

Jessica: I think I could. I think I am not learning where I am now, I am not learning a lot of strategies for challenging behaviors. I don’t think that is something that would affect but I wouldn’t mind working in urban but I wouldn’t worry I don’t know as much about that because I am spending time in another school. (Conversation, December 2003)

It seems to me that Jessica’s practicum experience in an urban elementary school did not help her see diverse aspects like race and socio-economic status that influence children’s learning. I wonder whether Jessica is prepared to consider the challenging behaviors in urban contexts with multiple lenses, that is, whether she would see the challenges as partly her responsibility to respond to the cultural mismatches between teachers and students.

**Kathy**

Kathy grew up in the suburbs of a large city in Ohio. She is a 22 year old, upper middle class, white female who attended Catholic schools for twelve years. She was used to going to school with peers who were similar to her in terms of their religions, race,
socioeconomic status, and appearance--wearing uniforms every day. She remembered that she was very comfortable with her surroundings. Although she lived in the suburbs, she did not believe she was completely naïve due to her volunteer work and friends from many other areas of the city, including downtown and other cities. She shared one exemplary experience:

I remember once getting onto a campus bus only to notice that I was surrounded by people of Asian and African American descent--I was the only Caucasian student on the bus. I was taken aback by this realization. Being the minority in something as trivial as a bus ride is something that others constantly experience, but it took me going to one of the finest educational institutions in the country to experience this--even if only for a few minutes. (Diversity story for a course assignment, December 2003)

Her eye-opening experience, like Hannah and Jessica, was during college and also during the First Education Experience Program (FEEP) in an urban elementary school. Kathy compared her FEEP experience with her current student teaching experience:

By comparing this behavior to the behavior of my students in my current suburban elementary school placement, I can see huge differences. I notice that there is not that big of a difference in academic abilities, but there is a big difference in behavior. The students in this city public classroom must have had feedback that their active engagement that they expressed verbally was valued, and in the suburban classroom that I have had the most recent experience with, they are aware that the teacher values quiet listening.

During one-on-one interaction with the students, they would share information about themselves and their families--like all kids do--that gave me a deeper understanding of where these kids were coming from. They would share with me their feelings of frustration with schoolwork as well as personal interests. Of me, they wanted to know what color my car was, my sister’s name and if I had a boyfriend. I soon realized how much alike all kids are. They all possess that unique innocence and curiosity that makes them so rewarding to work with. (Diversity story for a course assignment, December 2003)

Based on her experience with social diversity, she made an argument:
This experience taught me many new lessons. First of all, I learned what a vast difference a teacher may experience in one class. More importantly, how there may not only be differences among students, but between the teacher and the students. I learned that educators need to be aware of and knowledgeable cultural differences. For example, teachers should research the different ethnicities and religious celebrations of their students. These differences should be taken into account when planning curricular activities and discipline strategies. I also learned how important it is to really know and understand your students. I think this makes teaching so much more relevant and effective. This group of first graders taught me a lot. From this experience, I learned that sometimes, being the minority is a very rewarding experience. (Electronic portfolio)

Kathy seemed to consider diversity as facts and knowledge that should be studied rather than considering how diversity in this society is related to social injustice.

Wendy

Wendy who was raised in a white, working class, rural community defined herself:

I am Caucasian and therefore, a member of our society’s dominant racial group. I also am a female member of a working class family, which classifies me as a member of the minority class and gender groups. Due to my minority status, I have experienced how education can prevent or ensure success. (Diversity story for a course assignment, December 2003)

Wendy grew up in a small village with around 1200 people surrounded by fields and farms. Her family didn’t have a farm, but many relatives on both sides of her family were farmers. In high school, Wendy said that she feared attending college, mainly because she had little insight about college life and she was the first in her family to go to college. She had stereotypical expectations, which have changed. She used to think that all African Americans lived in the city and had body odor. She had had an incidence to confirm this when she visited her grandmother and took a bus to see the downtown area. This actual experience confirmed her stereotype of African Americans.
When she started attending college she worked to support herself at one of the dining halls where most employees were African America. She remembered her uncomfortableness working with them, because she had hardly ever spoken to an African American. She had some difficulty understanding Ebonics in addition to the difficulty of understanding city people’s fast speaking. Even though she had many negative experiences of name calling by the African American students due to her position as a white student, she became more comfortable talking and working with them.

Her biggest eye-opening experience, she recalled, was when she worked as a child welfare caseworker after she graduated from the college. While she was working with many different types of families from different countries with different cultural backgrounds, she recognized her own stereotypical feelings and learned from those experiences:

My country background gave me stereotypical views of African Americans that I was not aware of. Most of my views of this minority have come from the media, because a high number of representations of African Americans are negative, I had unconsciously adopted these beliefs. I also adopted the belief that whites and women are safe people because I grew up in a safe environment surrounded by whites. I experienced incidents that have proven these beliefs to be incorrect. The only times when I was in real danger were the times I was with whites and women. My life experiences have taught me that all stereotypes are wrong and people should be judged individually. (Electronic portfolio)

Wendy honestly examined her stereotypical beliefs toward African Americans and was able to provide a critical perspective on the social influences of those beliefs.

*Can We All Become a Social Justice Educator?*

As shown in Table 3.1 and the stories told above, my student teacher participants were alike and different. My participants represented the range of the wider population of the M.Ed. program in terms of race, gender, age and social economic status.
Four of the student teacher participants grew up and went to schools in Ohio. They didn’t have much experience with diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, social economic status, or exceptionality until they entered college. They shared interesting stories of experiences about their exposure to social and cultural diversity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Courtney</th>
<th>Erin</th>
<th>Hannah</th>
<th>Jessica</th>
<th>Kathy</th>
<th>Wendy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Upper Middle</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Upper Middle</td>
<td>Working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergrad</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>HDFS</td>
<td>SPED</td>
<td>HDFS</td>
<td>HDFS</td>
<td>HDFS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>E/Spanish</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: Demographics of student teacher participants
HDFS: Human development and Family Science
SPED: Special Education
E: English

Bass de Martinez (1988) confirms that diverse experiences are a crucial ingredient of teaching diverse learners: “The teachers who promote the culture and values of the school tend to do that through their own experience” (p. 10).
Furthermore, being positioned on the societal margins such as growing up in a low socio-economic family background like Wendy, or being a person of color like Erin, seemed to be a beneficial influence on becoming a social justice educator. Ooka Pang, a nationally acknowledged social justice scholar, shares her experience: “Being a multicultural education specialist is probably due to growing up in such a racist town” (Mthethwa-Sommers, August 2001, p. 136).

However, the participants’ experiences with diversity after they entered college were different, their learning from those experiences was different, and the influence of the experiences and learning on future learning to teach were different even though they went through the same teacher preparation program. Then, are prior experiences really a good indicator of becoming a social justice educator? Can we tell who is already a social justice educator, or who has the potential to become the one?

In the teaching profession, many qualities are required to be a good teacher: effective interpersonal skills for dealing with children and adults, organizational abilities, outstanding communication skills, good academic skills, clear thinking, intellectual curiosity, flexibility, perceptiveness, the ability to exercise good judgment and make decisions in a complex, rapidly changing environment, ethical behavior; and a commitment to care for each and every child. The challenge to teacher education is to determine and assess the critical and necessary preconditions for good teaching.

In addition to criteria of a good teacher, the increasing demographic mismatch between teacher and student in the U.S. has raised attention and suggested that different criteria for recruiting and selecting preservice teacher candidates should be considered, such as, self- knowledge, self-acceptance and self-analysis, community knowledge,
empathy, cultural human development, cultural conflicts, coping with violence and so on (Haberman & Post, 1998).

In contrast to the criteria suggested in the literature, teacher education programs often select their students on the basis of traditional academic criteria such as grade point average (GPA) or scores on standardized tests. Even though many teacher educators admit that such criteria exclude candidates who have great potential to teach diverse learners such as personal knowledge or skills of racial/ethnic minority communities and insights into teaching (Villegas & Clewell, 1998), lack of time and support often frustrates their using different kinds of processes and criteria.

Haberman (1991) has argued that “teacher education programs should focus more on picking the right people rather than on trying to change the wrong ones through teacher education” (p. 275). Haberman and Post (1998) add that “training is useful only for those with appropriate predispositions” (p. 103) because effective teaching, especially in urban contexts, is influenced and supported by students’ ideology, and because student teachers often bring ‘die-hard beliefs’ which cannot be changed easily within a short period of time in the teacher education program. Zeichner (1993) and other researchers (Ginsburg, 1988; Paine, 1990) indicate that teacher candidates typically view social difference as a problem reducible to individual qualities rather than as resources. Many teacher candidates neither understand the languages, cultures, or circumstances of the particular students in their classroom (McDiarmid, 1992) nor address the social, economic and political inequalities underlying many school problems (Sleeter, 1995). Even more alarming is the finding in the literature indicating that some teacher candidates assume that not all children are capable of learning (Goodlad, 1990).
Surveys consistently find that although a large proportion of white preservice teachers anticipate working with children of another cultural backgrounds, as a whole they bring very little cross-cultural background, knowledge and experience, and little awareness or understanding of discrimination. Even though most teacher education students are members of the dominant social group, the privileges of ‘whiteness’ are often not even mentioned in teacher education courses and programs.

Adapting Eriksonian terms, ‘the harmony between inner experience and outer circumstance’, Tatum (1997) illustrates that people in a dominant group, when there are no other groups that create conflicts, don’t consciously pay attention to dimensions of their own situatedness. That is, where the demographic population of our teacher education program is not much different from that of the national population of teachers: young, white, middle class, and female, teacher candidates often confirm their stereotypic beliefs during or after field experiences in diverse settings. Teacher candidates are criticized by researchers that they reshape new ideas and information to fit their beliefs, or ignoring whatever will not fit. Talk of cultural diversity in teacher education programs is typically confined to safe areas that request little reflective inquiry (Villegas, 1995; Zimpher & Ashburn, 1992).

The argument that teacher education programs should be more active in searching for student teachers and faculties of diversity is well noted (Haberman, 1989; Smith, 1989; Villegas, 1995). For example, teachers of color can be significant role models not only to students of color but also to white students in constructing images of people of color (Kane & Orsini, 2003). Preservice students of color tend to bring a greater
commitment to multicultural teaching, social justice, and providing children of color with an academically challenging curriculum (Sleeter, Torres, & Laughlin, 2004).

However, it is not easy to recruit teacher candidates with diverse backgrounds. In addition, membership in a minority group does not automatically bring openness to other forms of oppression and understanding of diversity or critical knowledge of the pedagogical implications of diversity. This is true for minority students and faculty as well.

Haberman (1989), recognizing the challenging situation of recruiting students of color, suggests age and maturity as criteria for selecting teacher candidates, but age and maturity may not be adequate for preparing teachers for the multicultural classroom due to teacher candidates’ deep rooted beliefs (Ladson-Billings, 1996).

All of my participants in this study had some exposure to diversity, and three of them identified themselves as a minority related to race, age, and/or socio-economic status within this teacher education context. Noting that it is not possible to satisfy all of the possible criteria, such indicators, nevertheless, can be a starting point for indicating potential to become a social justice educator.

There are many more factors that can influence one’s potential to be a social justice educator. For example, three participants, who positioned themselves as marginalized, expressed uncomfortable feeling about collaborating with classmates. Courtney said:

Ah, well, it’s pretty. . .it’s really different. They are not really my peer group. There’s probably 15 year difference between the average students and me. It’s like a generational difference. So that, you know, it’s little, a bit different, you know. That is a very different experiences and I have very different perspectives than a lot of them. Sometimes, I can't believe what goes on in the discussion groups. It’s very interesting. But most of them don’t realize that there’s that much
difference between us in age . . . So, I think, uh, sometimes, they are wondering, you know, where I am coming from. You know what I mean? It’s very interesting. Sometime, I keep my mouth shut. Sometimes, I don’t’ get into the discussion for those reasons, and then other times, I really feel strongly about something. (Interview, October 2003)

For Courtney, her difference in age leads to constricted interactions and a lack of empathy for the perspective and needs of the younger students in the cohort. Likewise, Erin experienced isolation and perceived racial biases that seemed to confirm her opinion of white student:

I had experienced with diversity issues in the classrooms, with some of white classmates. It will be in groups. I probably have ideas that they are ignoring me. I didn’t know if it was because I was black or what. They are like that. They were like okay, yeah, or whatever. I wasn’t valid. That didn’t just happen one time. That happened quite a lot. Stuff like that. (Conversation, November 2003)

Molly said that she was okay with working in a group but she was not comfortable when they chatted about personal lives:

Can you believe it? One of my classmates spent hundreds of dollars for her hairdo and says oh, well, it is worth it, and another student has her own personal trainer helping her lose weight. If I tell this to my mom, she’s not gonna believe it. It’s so different. (Conversation, December 2003)

Molly’s social class background gave her a different perspective on values related to money, and these experiences may have added to her stereotype about the values of those with higher socio-economic resources.

Even if we, as teacher educators, select the ‘right candidates,’ if we don’t provide the ‘right program’ with a culturally responsive approach for all student teachers in the program within a supportive learning environment, we will fail as a social justice educator. We contribute to maintaining injustice by ignoring, and thus confirming, their stereotypical beliefs and assumptions, which restrict their interactions and the development of more complex empathetic understandings.
Becoming a good teacher, a social justice teacher, is a life long process that takes time and efforts. As teacher educators, we must turn the struggles and tensions within the homogeneous contexts we face in this teacher education program into a desire and opportunity to create social justice educators. That is, even though there are challenges and limits to finding diverse, strong candidates, we must provide a communal environment where members are able to speak in multiple voices, see similarities and differences as resources, and can learn from each other.

The lenses we have developed through our own experiences influence the way we look at and understand the world and the people in the world. In turn, this is interrelated with the way we learn and teach. Developing self-knowledge has gradually received attention in teacher education programs along with change in paradigmatic perspectives such as feminism, critical theory, and postmodern theories. In this chapter, I attempted to illustrate who my student teacher participants were by focusing on their social identity and prior experiences with diversity. Everybody can and should be a social justice educator but each individual becomes one in different ways at a different pace because each individual constructs knowledge differently and they come in contact with social interactions and dialogue that are different.
CHAPTER 4

What Is Social Justice Anyway?

It has been always challenge for me to define a concept in my own words. Since I came to the U.S., I have been asked to use my own words in writing and speaking. I am not accustomed to describing things in my words. In Korea I lived by the definitions in a textbook or the definitions told to me by a person who had power. Seven years of my life in the U.S. seems not long enough for me to become completely comfortable with thinking on my own.

When I started to review the literature to clarify and develop my knowledge of social justice, I almost gave up. There were too many theories from different fields: from the hard sciences, health, psychology, architecture, sociology, anthropology, postmodern theory, and education. Recognizing that it is impossible to elucidate a definitive definition of social justice (Rizvi & Christensen, 1996), I was eventually able to use my journey of reading and inquiry to help me construct my own definition of social justice.

Researchers and scholars from various fields have attempted to define social justice. They focus on different aspects of social justice--rules, norms, attitudes, and they consider behaviors at different levels--individual, group, and nation (Moore, 2003). In this chapter, I will try to answer three major questions about justice based on my previous experiences and readings about social justice: What does social justice look like to me? How can social justice be achieved? and, “What are the goals of social justice?”
What does social justice look like to me?

Social justice is amorphous, but something we cannot live without. It is like air. Air is pervasive whether we recognize its existence or not. It reminds me of many people in my country whom I wanted to be like, and whom I called social activists: a mother who always packed two lunch boxes, one for her daughter and one for the friend of her daughter who couldn’t afford to pack a lunch; people who built a classroom to help the girls and boys who worked in the factory and wanted to get a high school diploma in 1970s; the teacher who taught students humanely; the teachers who fought for better education and lost their jobs in 1980s; people who worked for and with children with special needs; people who worked for and with the poor, and many more. Social justice can and should be in everywhere. Social action lives and happens in a multiple of ways and it changes as contexts change, but there is one goal: The goal of making a better and more just world.

Social justice, to me, is about the oppression caused by inequitable power in both personal and public relationships. This oppressive phenomenon has multiple forms related to various isms and their meanings. It changes with time, with history, and in the conceptual and institutional spaces as history unfolds. Such changes interact with our individual and group identity formation in complex ways, and also with the intersection of our multidimensional identities which are activated differently within the dynamics of different relational contexts.

Therefore, I would like to define social justice as a value-laden socially, culturally, historically, politically, and economically contextualized, relational term. Such a definition of social justice for many people would require rethinking their explanations
of social justice, the way they are accustomed to thinking about the world, and the oppression and various isms that cannot adequately describe their evolving world. A complex relational definition raises questions about how we are to recognize those isms, about what kinds of transformations are currently within the systems we are engaged in, and thus, about how we need to approach rethinking the meaning of social justice.

*How social justice can and should be achieved?*

The second question I raise in relation to my definition of social justice is how social justice can and should be achieved? Because I believe social justice is a relational term, it will/can never be achieved by one individual. Social justice begins with each individual’s commitment to being actively involved in a process of collective inquiry and negotiation of the oppression and dysconscious isms (King, 1991), but it only comes to fruition when action is taken within a community and in relation to others.

For my whole life, I have been asking questions about social justice like: “Why does being a woman make me feel wrong?” “Why are children not treated with the same respect as adults?” “Why do people with special needs live in hidden places in my country?” I have been searching for the answers and solutions to these questions without success. Fortunately, my sensitivity to inequities in some areas helped me to be aware of these issues, but unfortunately it didn’t direct me to take action. I, now, think that my sensitivity and awareness did not make me much different from others who acquiesced to the way it was and who were tolerant of the way things are. My intolerance did not make a difference.

Typically our stereotypic images become normalized without us being aware of this process. We transfer our stereotypes in messages we give our children, and they act
toward others using these stereotypes unconsciously. It is my conviction that together, we not only need to inquire into our stereotypes to undermine and work against them but also need to take conscious and deliberate action. The goal is not to achieve one-time charity, but to learn from each other and to search collectively for ways to live better together as connected members of this world.

My definition of social justice is similar to the ethic of care described below. Even before I knew about this theoretical position, I considered social justice to involve care for other human beings. For some theorists, an ethic of care is associated with feminist perspectives.

The ethic of care is socially coded as a feminine ethic, while the ethic of justice is socially coded as a masculine ethic. . . . the ethic of justice takes an abstract approach, while the ethic of care takes a contextual approach; the ethic of justice begins with an assumption of human separateness, while the ethic of care begins with an assumption of human connectedness; and the ethic of justice has some form of equality as a priority, while the ethic of care has the maintenance of relationships as a priority. (Clement, 1996, p. 3)

My definition of social justice, I believe, was influenced by my position as a woman related to issues of care, and because of that perspective, I argue that we should incorporate multiple perspectives and diverse contexts into understanding social justice.

*What is the goal of social justice?*

My third question relates to the goal that social justice should involve negotiating, rebalancing, and reconstructing power by looking at possibilities from broadened perspectives where everyone becomes a protagonist of her/his life and of this world community. This contrasts with self-centered perspectives of individuals as protagonists of their lives, but it means taking responsibilities for the self and the people in the world community. I believe this can only happen by critically inquiring into oppression and
isms in the world, by negotiating with others, and by taking action toward social justice. In this process we come to know who we are within our relationships with others and become more fully functioning competent world citizens. Feelings, knowledge, and skills are developed through this process and the goal of this process is to become social justice humans who can empower each and every individual. Empowerment, here, does not mean acquiring power by using violence or segregation from groups where the oppressor grapples for more power and the oppressed struggle to get free. It also does not mean an individualistic, self-centered, you-can-do-whatever-you-want-to-do kind of power. Social justice is relational and the goal is to change the world toward a more equitable life for everyone.

In sum, social justice is praxis related to building a world community where different people can live together by listening to each other’s voice and by searching for common ground. It is not something that the lone oppressor has to do nor can it be done solely by those who are oppressed. It is not something that happens from one time action. It requires every one of us to reconstruct our social justice lenses, and to act in the world from a social justice perspective.

The process of constructing and reconstructing my definition of social justice through a review of literature and reflecting on my prior experiences was certainly a challenge. I developed ambivalent feelings about asking my participants to define social justice. That is, defining such a complex, contextualized, multidimensional, ever-changing concept such as social justice is difficult. Many philosophers and political scientists have struggled with such definitions. I thought it would be difficult for my participants to “give a definition of their own.” Yet, I thought they might also be different
from me because they were Americans who must have defined concepts using their own words for their whole school life. With these mixed feelings, I finally decided to ask them for a definition. Interestingly, all of them answered only after a long pause, saying: I don’t know; I have no idea; I have never thought about it; I can tell you a definition I learned one when I was an undergraduate.

My grappling experience and my participants’ initial responses to a definition of social justice led me to some questioning of my own position and beliefs. As a self-study, I reflected on this situation. I noticed that I tried to secure a definition of social justice from my participants rather than getting involved in meaning making and co-constructing of our definition through active dialogue, which was my original goal for this research. I somehow forgot that my initial purpose was to create conversation moments of learning and support for each other. When a couple of my participants asked me how I defined social justice, I refused to answer because I worried that my response would influence their answers. Also, I think I was unconsciously positioning myself as a distanced objective interviewer in opposition to my declared qualitative researcher stance.

After I recognized the influence of my past positivist commitments, I could comfortably ask each participant to have conversation about social justice with me. I first asked them whether they could give me a definition of social justice. Courtney and Erin seemed to be more confident to give me their definitions than during the first interview. Next I asked them about their experiences related to social justice and shared my experiences. The rest of the participants still seemed to have difficulty giving me a definition, especially Wendy, who had not had personal experiences related to injustice.

In these interviews, I shared my experiences as a girl at school in my country and as an
Asian teacher in the preschool in the U.S. I thought that maybe by sharing my experiences it might facilitate their thinking about things in their student teaching field placements related to social justice. Eventually, I hoped, they would be able to define social justice in their own way.

Because the concept of social justice was being continually constructed and reconstructed during this research study, I recognized that my analysis of their conversations had to remain tentative and open to changes that were occurring for them and me as we talked together over time. Also, if I am committed to a postmodernist perspective, I should share each participant’s different interpretations within their contextualized contexts and acknowledge the fluidity of their understandings.

In follow-up conversations to talk about definitions of social justice, they gave me the following definitions:

Courtney: Uh, social justice, I probably would use the word ‘equality.’ Uh, you know, social justice. Everyone wants to have the same access. Let’s say education. Is there any equal access? People, um, do they have the same opportunities or are they given, are their stories being listened to, do they have access to the power structures. I think that would be considered social justice. Probably equality would be the word that I would put with social justice.

Erin: When I hear of justice, I think of the court system or something like that. I guess everybody has to have same opportunity no matter their race, their background, and people not suffering. There are some people in this world who have enormous amount of things, everything they want plus more and there are people who struggle to have something to eat. I don’t think that should be. I think everybody should have basic needs. They shouldn’t struggle to get that. Struggle to get extra stuff but not to survive. Social justice is, I think, that everybody’s needs should be met. I don’t know if that’s right.

Hannah: Equal or fair rather than equal.

Jessica: What I think of when it comes in my mind, I think of making things right, making things equal within society whether someone’s doing something wrong, happened to do something, make up for that, or whether it’s doing things just to
help other people, not feeling like you have to do it but just doing it. I guess I feel mostly that it’s making up when you do something wrong, making things right.

Kathy: When I think of justice, it is maybe equality and fairness. Social justice, I would say equality and fairness of all different types and groups of people, kids and adults, difference, ethnics and economic.

Wendy: Treat other racial people in the same manner, fairly; give them equal opportunities as everyone else.

Themes from Data

In the following, I will discuss my interpretations of their understandings around major themes highlighting similarities across the cases and also themes that were different. The themes include (a) equality and equity, (b) resistance to privilege, (c) right and (d) wrong/autonomy, and (e) reality check--match or mismatch.

Equality and Equity

The most consistent theme in the definitions of social justice from the five participants seemed to be ‘equality and fairness’, equal opportunity or equal access. It is common to see the concept of equality from an objective point of view in the literature related to social justice. There are three major theories of social justice in the literature: legal justice, which is related to what a person owes to society; commutative justice, which is related to what people owe each other; and distributive justice, which is what society owes to each person. Especially the egalitarian view of social justice developed by Rawls (1971) and the concept of distributive justice emphasize equality of basic liberties because everybody in a just society should have the same basic rights, and consequently resource redistribution becomes a moral obligation.

This type of equality in the definition of social justice appeared in the responses of my participants related to different issues. For example, Erin specifically emphasized
equal distribution of basic needs, “Social justice is, I think, that everybody’s needs should be met,” which seemed to be drawn from her experiences with her students, 90% of whom received free lunch in her student teaching field placement. Wendy stressed the teacher’s obligation to provide equal opportunity in the classroom:

When they [three-year-olds] answered the question for “the question of the day – everyday activity,” everybody is expected to give the same answer. The teacher will help some children when they need extra help but they are all expected to answer. They don’t have an option. There is a kid who used to hide and nod but the teacher made him answer or “you have to leave the group” because that’s what everybody is expected to do. So, I would say that it is socially fair. It’s also expecting them to be able to do what everybody else is doing. It is fair to them so they continue to progress. They don’t want them to be fall back because, just, you lower the expectations. (Interview, October 2003)

Wendy seemed to believe that in order to be ‘socially fair’ a teacher is obligated to make all children, without exception, do the same thing. In addition, when it came to gender issues, most of my participants brought up numeric equality; they thought they should call on boys and girls at equal frequency:

Everybody is same, boys and girls, no matter what (Erin).

I try to call on as many girls as boys (Kathy).

To me, Courtney’s definition of equal opportunity was similar but went a step further than the other participants. That is, she is, like other participants, mentioned “equal access and same opportunity for everybody”, but she included equally listening to each individual’s voice.

There were also a couple of examples of equality related to participants’ personal situations related to hiring practices.

Hannah: I think that I know that many schools have to be very diverse so they hire. I mean there is possibility that someone with a different race would get a job over me because they need diversity in their schools. So that is definitely a possibility of injustice. (Interview, October 2003)
Wendy: I think it’s gonna be really hard for me to get a job because I am white woman. I think. I don’t know. If I compete with man, because there are not many male teachers in elementary profession, they are gonna take him over me. I feel that. Maybe I am wrong. But it is not fair. I don’t know. I could be totally wrong. Maybe it’s just myth. (Interview, October 2003)

Issues related to affirmative action are often discounted if the person has a concept of justice as equality, that is, everyone should be treated the same; and this concept is even harder to affirm if the person feels that they are personally being treated unfairly.

Resistance to Privilege

In general, most of my participants constructed similar descriptions of equality: equal distribution of financial and physical resource; people should be treated equally well regardless of their differences. Does this mean people should all be treated the same way? How meaningful will it be to have equal/same opportunity or access for people who are different and have need different types of and amount of resources? In addition, how equal will it really be to have the same opportunity but the ‘opportunity’ is created for and by the dominant, ‘the oppressor’ group?

Some of my participants expressed their concerns about different treatments, but they were focused solely on individual differences in terms of academic ability:

Hannah: Like when I call on somebody, I try to call on the kids who are less advanced. And I try not to make them feel like you don’t know what they are talking about. I try to make everyone feel successful. It doesn’t work always but I try. (Interview, October 2003)

In her elementary school field placement, Kathy felt that she was trying to be fair with the children. For example, when she called on people, she tried to call on them fairly, which meant that she more frequently called on her case study student who was less advanced whenever he raised his hand because she didn’t want him to feel like his
ideas were not good enough or important enough to share. However, she felt calling on him more often than the others was not fair to other students, “just the average kind of kids.” According to her, this is the way she tried to be aware of fairness within the differences that she saw in her students yet it was also clear that trying to respond to differences was in conflict with her goal of treating all students equally.

Jessica talked about her preschool field placement where she did not see any unfairness, but in her elementary school, individual differences were not considered:

Here [the preschool] is almost like everything is equal, very equal, I don’t see anything big. I definitely see [treatment of] individual differences. In my elementary, everyone needs to be the same instead of valuing their individual differences. Here it is different (Interview, October 2003).

For me, it is important for teachers to see individual differences and incorporate them into their curriculum. Like if we look at one tree in a forest, we will get easily lost, and if we plant a tree without considering the types of woods, the tree won’t grow well. Similarly, if we only consider children’s individual differences in terms of academic ability, ignoring group identities and interactions, they won’t grow as whole persons. In addition, if we equally provide a white male dominant environment for all, some of the students won’t grow properly.

I am sometimes pessimistic about the possibility of changing the unequal distribution of resources within school districts, and hope that poorer districts can at least gain the same resources as rich districts. However, I would call that passive justice. For active justice, I believe teachers need to consider differences in needs and rights within the social context, like a five year old child in Reggio Emilia, Italy asserted: “Boys and girls think differently, and so they don’t have the same rights” (Reggio Children, 1995).

Additional explanation -- Teachers who teach children with diverse backgrounds who
think and learn differently should have easy and sufficient access to different materials.

Multiple teaching approaches and curriculum that teachers use to reach every child’s optimal learning should be supported by multiple resources.

**Right and Wrong /Autonomy**

Jessica’s definition of social justice is somewhat unique; “Do the right thing . . . when you did something wrong, try to make it up” (Interview, October 2003). Like other concepts, the judgment of right and wrong is subjective, situational, and value-oriented (Noddings, 1984). That is, if we use a blue filter, yellow, red and other colors will not pass through or will pass through and become different colors, distorted colors, and they will be treated as something to be fixed. This has been the biggest obstacle, I think, to making our world more just. Then, what did Jessica mean by doing the right thing for social justice? The following example is not enough to definitely understand how she thought about doing the “right thing,” but it gave me hope and opened up our dialogue:

> Definitely not right or not fair to exclude a certain people, definitely not fair to your children, not even if in the setting of my elementary school with all white children, I don’t think it is fair for them to exclude all different cultures because when they leave they need to work with different kinds of people with different kinds of beliefs. Who knows if they even understand that others don’t celebrate Christmas and everybody doesn’t celebrate Thanksgiving cause right now I am pretty sure that is what they think. So, definitely it’s not fair, not giving them a chance to learn about different cultures. It is the teacher’s responsibility to teach their kids that there is an all different but wonderful world out there. (Interview, October 2003)

Even though Jessica’s definition of social justice needed to be more clearly articulated, it provided me with new questions about the role of autonomy in working toward social justice. That is, Jessica used another concept of ‘autonomy’ to define social justice: “You do things, just help other people, not feeling like you have to do it but you want to do it” (Interview, October 2003). Her definition of social justice related to
autonomy intrigued because she was expressing a more social orientation toward social justice. It helped me to think about autonomy from different angle, especially in the individualistic society. Many people are autonomous in the sense that they strive for things that fit their own interests. Autonomy in the broader more social sense, however, has both internal and external characteristics and requires mediation and negotiation by people within relations in working toward social justice (Clement, 1996). Teacher educators should seriously think about how they can assist preservice teachers to raise the level of autonomy toward a more social and inclusive concept, which works toward social justice.

*Reality Check: Match or Mismatch*

Without situating social justice in a particular context, it was difficult to define social justice except in an abstract way. When I asked my participants how they could teach for social justice related to their definition, their responses were more concrete but also somewhat different from their definitions.

Courtney, Hannah, Kathy, and Wendy thought that equality/social justice was an extra area of content knowledge to be taught and could be incorporated in social studies or language arts but it was more difficult to integrate into mathematics and science. I think such phenomenon, ‘focusing on a single dimension,’ is related to their developmental stage in learning to teach. For example, Courtney said:

> I have these kids and taught them about Africa. When they go to first grade, I would like them to remember that they have prior knowledge of this, to recall their prior knowledge. (Interview, October 2003)

Courtney answered my question about what she could do to teach for social justice related to “easier” and “harder” subject matter for integration. She said she needed to
think more carefully and seriously about how she could bring social justice in her classroom.

Hannah: I think we can look at some multicultural literature, read aloud during of the day. (Interview, October 2003)

Kathy: Maybe social studies and language arts. (Interview, October 2003)

Wendy: Like social studies, maybe when there are issues that arise they can vote on them; what’s the right thing to do, when there is a dispute between the kids, you can talk out the problem. You have the right to say your feelings about the situation and you have right to respond and say your feelings about the situation. That’s how you fix the problem. (Interview, October 2003)

Unlike other participants Erin and Jessica believed that social justice can be taught in diverse ways:

Erin: I can incorporate multicultural things in classroom with language arts, maybe being careful about languages you use like, “Okay guys,” or boys become doctors and girls become nurses, you can talk about that. Try to reduce stereotypes. Have pictures of woman fire fighters and male nurses or anything like that. Social studies for different books about multicultural things, you don’t just read. Even if you are not teaching them multicultural things, having things in the classroom, things made available. (Interview, October 2003)

Jessica: Well, just everything you do, you should think about it. the books you choose to read, and kinds of books you have them read on their own, what kinds of activities you set up for them, like if you do maps, you should talk about other places in the world, what happens in these place, what kinds food different people eat, what kinds of holidays, and traditions. Even in your classroom, you can talk about different traditions and then take that up further I think. There are people in this part of country, maybe you need to read a book about it. (Interview, October 2003)

By comparison, Erin and Jessica’s social justice goals in practice were limited to teaching or introducing different cultures by using multicultural resources. Teaching different cultures is important to show every culture is valued and to increase awareness of diversities. However, my expectation of education for social justice is more inclusive, that is, teachers need to know how different socio-cultural, political, and historical
contexts interact with different ways of learning and thinking. Therefore, our teaching should be responsive and reflexive to those differences in order to promote all children’s learning.

Their understanding evolved as we worked together and there were changes on their thinking about the challenges that some of them thought an obstacle or prevented social justice such as diverse context as a necessary element for social justice and there is a certain age to learn social justice. For example, Kathy said:

I think that [it is] probably more easier if we have more diverse students like different ethnic or SES [social economic status] even academical difference doesn’t exist much here [elementary school]. (Interview, October 2003)

Hannah explained:

At their age [preschoolers] if children distinguish behavior, somebody is going to point it out to them. But, it may be possible for 2nd grade but I don’t think preschoolers, and even kindergarten and 1st grade. (Interview, October 2003)

In contrast to Hannah, Courtney and Erin strongly believed that teaching for social justice should start from at a very young age. Courtney argued:

If you teach this young age of kids, they will internalize it. As they grow up they will keep that inside of them and they will use it. Especially these young kids, they take what you give them and they internalize it. I don’t know whether they can keep that when they have classrooms not sensitive about such issues. (Interview, October 2003)

And also Erin mentioned:

I think teaching for social justice is very important because the society is so diverse like different religions, war, killing each other, not tolerant, people need to tolerant and look at each other equally no matter what the differences are. Because that starts from children and then when they grow up the world will change. (Interview, October 2003)

I tried to illustrate, in this chapter, the process of meaning making and constructing the definition of social justice including all participants’ struggles with the
complex and abstract concept of social justice. The definitions from my participants reflected differences and similarities and helped me learn about their understandings and multiple perspectives on social justice.
Chapter 5

What Would Supervision for Social Justice Look Like?

The Supervisor

It was sizzling hot August afternoon in 2000 when I received a phone call about the ‘Thursday meeting.’ Hoping my car didn’t die before until I got to the meeting place, I headed out on to find Cleveland Avenue with no air conditioner and with mixed feelings of anxiety and excitement. Although according to the secretary, it would take only 5 or 10 minutes to get there by driving, I was still on the road an hour later. There was a sign for Cleveland City but not Cleveland Avenue. I decided to turn toward Cleveland City looking for Cleveland Avenue. After driving on the high freeway for more than 20 minutes, I started to feel that I really got lost. I turned around to go home and never made it to the meeting. This experience symbolized my life in Ohio as a student and a supervisor, I thought.

Finally, when I made the second meeting, I recognized that everybody knew about my getting lost, and interestingly, I felt a connection. Such a connected feeling cleared the road so that I could take one baby step toward joining this group. I was attracted by the program coordinators’ explanation about the M.Ed. program, and the Educators for Collaborative Change (ECC) Professional Development School (PDS)

3 Thursday meeting is a name used among OSU PDS members. The group met each Thursday after school to share, and make decisions about PDS issues and problems (Johnston, 1997).
project: strong collaborative relations with schools; co-teaching methods courses; collaborative planning of program and courses; reflective teaching, and integrated curriculum, and many more (Johnston, Brosnan, Cramer, & Dove, 2000; Johnston & PDS colleagues, 1997). The attraction of working with inservice and preservice teachers, and the suggestion of different ways of thinking about working with adults changed the trajectory of my life, and refocused on the academic interests that I had held for 15 years.

However, challenges also waited for me on the road. I was like an internationally adopted baby in the world of supervision. There were no prescribed directions. I was afraid of making a mistake, and trying new things on my own was very difficult. Especially I was working with American teachers who didn’t have much experience dealing with a stumbling English-speaking Asian student. For the entire year, I tried to figure out what supervisor was, how to collaborate, what reflective teaching looked like, how to overcome the uncomfortableness of being different and being a supervisor, and how to talk about inequity and sensitive issues that I saw but others, it seemed, did not.

The most difficult task was, is, and will be building a relationship with mutually shared power that I believe is necessary to promote each other’s learning and supports each other’s growth. I couldn’t clearly grasp or describe the power dynamics in our dyad and triad relationships: student teacher, mentor teacher, and supervisor. In different moments, each person’s varied identity/identities from his/her historical, cultural, racial backgrounds interplayed. I knew such power dynamics influenced the dialogue during my supervision and recognized that I couldn’t do anything solely on my own, but I didn’t know what to do, or how to negotiate, or even how to overcome the tensions and to raise these issues in our conversations.
In the third year, just when I started to feel more comfortable about being a supervisor, our M.Ed. program including faculties, student teacher candidates, and supervisors changed. The program changed from a 1-8 certification program to two licensure programs—a preschool to grade 3 program and a middle childhood (grades 4-9) licensure programs. There was no more PDS (Professional Development School) or week-end camp for the M.Ed. students that provided community building. There were fewer opportunities for conversation and socialization between supervisors, student teachers and mentor teachers, such as mentor teacher orientations and picnics and potluck dinners with mentor teachers and student teachers.

Another recognizable change with which I struggled was negotiating the change in titles from ‘supervisor’ to ‘coach’. Now, when I reflect on the discussion about this change in title with the other supervisors, a program coordinators, and program managers, there didn’t seem to be many differences between coach that the program manager encouraged supervisors to use and the title of supervisor that I constructed. Both titles, coach and supervisor, referred to someone who cares about the holistic well-being and growth of the other person and includes being willing to give constructive critiques in teacher preparation. I felt, however, it changed completely.

The interesting but challenging discussion about my title didn’t occur with other supervisors and faculty members, but did happen particularly with one of my participant, Courtney. The conversation and negotiation between Courtney helped to make my understandings of these terms explicit:

Courtney: Supervisor, coach, or whatever.
Young Ah: What would you prefer when you call me?
Courtney: Coach.
Young Ah: Is there any reason?
Courtney: I don’t have a good impression about supervisor. They are like authoritative, judge or evaluate you….

Young Ah: That’s interesting. In my country, there are words with foreign origin like bus, taxi, etc. Coach is also a borrowed word, which has a negative meaning, authoritative and judgmental. But I learned the word supervisor here [in the U.S.] and I developed my own meaning which is I think similar to coach. But I keep resisting using the word ‘coach’.

Courtney: Really? It’s okay to use either term as long as we agree on your role.

(Interview, February 2003)

This conversation enlightened me to see the culture embedded nature of language, and the need to negotiate meanings in order to create understandings. For Courtney and many others, the title ‘coach’ seemed to help level out the power relationships, but for me, who grew up in a society where coaches were like dictators, supervisor seemed more egalitarian and collaborative. Also in my country, brother, sister, and friend were interchangeably used by persons who cared about each other’s growth and believed that critique and advice were necessary elements in their relationship. After conversation and reflection, I understood my stubbornness to keep the term ‘supervisor’ which I understood from my Korean culture, and now I was ready to negotiate with my participants’ and their different perspectives.

After three years of my supervisory journey with 23 student teachers, 32 mentor teachers, and many children in different schools and classrooms, I now know that searching for one prescribed way to do supervision is impossible, it obscures, and interferes with social justice issues. Eventually, I became more confident to co-construct our road to becoming social justice educators together.

My experiences of supervision in diverse school settings and my academic interests in diversity and equity motivated me to search for multiple approaches to support my student teachers to become social justice educators. In this chapter I will
describe what I believe supervision/teacher education for social justice should look like in general, and how I actually supervised my participants to support them to teach for social justice.

“You Are a Cheerleader Without Pom-pom! (Supervisory Relationships)”

This title was Wendy’s metaphor to describe me as a supervisor. According to her, I was one reason that she survived all the difficulties in M.Ed. program. Courtney sent me a card at the end of the program that said “thank you for helping me stay in the program” (May, 2004).

Listening to their hardships and cheering them up might be, I think, what they really need most. If I were in this M.Ed. program (I got M.Ed. from other university), I might not have survived. Even though I understood the challenges of going through this program by watching them struggle for four years, I really didn’t think that soothing and comforting them was enough to produce a social justice educator.

The primary goal of my supervision for social justice was to support student teachers to effectively teach all children by preparing them to address the substantial diversity in experiences children bring with them to school--the wide range of languages, cultures, exceptionalities, learning styles, talents, and intelligences that in turn require an equally rich and varied repertoire of teaching strategies (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1999). I wanted to raise their consciousness about oppression and encourage them to take action for social justice. I have been trying to find appropriate and responsive supervisory approaches to help student teachers learn to teach for social justice.

Traditionally in teacher education knowledge of content and methods were transmitted to student teachers, and the student teachers were sent out to practice teaching
that knowledge. I believe such a perspective of transmission and training has been an obstacle to constructing multiple and complex understandings of society and social justice. That is, the traditional view of teacher education has prevented educators from seeing social and cultural influences that shape human learning and development.

In order to support student teachers to learn to teach for social justice, it is important for teacher educators to build trust and constructive relationships not only because they can learn more effectively and transformatively through social interaction in varied socio-cultural contexts. Also they can share their fear and anger from the experience that comes from self-examination and reveal themselves to others. Hopefully this process results in new knowledge about how they can put these tensions to work in productive ways. Unlike traditional preparation in teacher education, a program based on socio-cultural perspectives guided by critical theory will try to understand each individual as a whole as well as listen to the voices of each student teacher within the community dialogue.

In spite of the significance of creating a safe and dialectic climate, building trusting relationships especially in a short period of time (one-year intense teacher education program) is a challenging task. The major difficulties of building a constructive relationship come from different cultures, the triad relationships of supervisor, mentor teacher and student teacher, and the positioning of the supervisor.

Building relationships was probably the most interesting and challenging aspect for me to look at from my own cultural lens. I think there are many reasons that I had difficulties building close relationships with Americans, mostly student teachers and
mentor teachers. These difficulties were related to our different positions, individual ideology, busy lives, and culturally different ways of building relationships.

Some teachers with whom I worked asked me about the differences between education in Korea and America. I shared with my Asian colleagues what I thought was distinctive differences between Korea and America, and sometimes complained about the differences related to building relationships. However, I was hesitant to share them with Americans because of the possibilities of overgeneralizations and feeding their stereotypes.

To me although the differences are as distinctive as different skin color between African American and Caucasian, I still wanted to make sure that the comparison I would make in the next part is my interpretation. In terms of elementary, middle and high school education, in my opinion there seemed to be more similarities than differences. While, college education was different in positive ways there was one thing that I really didn’t, and still don’t, enjoy--introducing myself in front of the whole class.

Many Koreans have strong curiosity about other’s personal life. When people meet a new person or they know each other very well, they automatically ask all kinds of questions about age, the schools people attended, jobs, relationships, parents’ job, the place where they live. Korean people endlessly ask questions to know each other better. I felt everybody knew everything about me. I didn’t try to keep things private. A public bath is a good parallel example of knowing almost everything about each other. Such analogies can be applied to any contexts in Korea, including college. Therefore, in Korea, there was no need to introduce oneself in a new university course or other social settings.
Here in the U.S., however, it was different, although this is limited by my experiences in the schools I attended. For the first session of each U.S. class, students were asked to introduce themselves in front of the all classmates. The professor asked students to share their autobiographies, although not many students shared their deep personal lives. I felt such rituals were very superficial and time wasting because I didn’t learn much about the other students from these introductions. I learned that in the U.S., I had to be careful about what and how I asked about other people’s personal life.

Why should we know about each other’s personal life? Ironically, when I was in Korea I didn’t like asking such questions because I thought the information was usually utilized in negative ways to make prejudicial judgments or it led to discriminatory treatment. When I was in elementary school, one of my friends asked me how much my father made. I answered honestly. The next morning, I heard many rumors questioning how it was possible for me to dress nicely and eat well with such low income.

However, my opinion about revealing myself has changed after I worked with Americans for several years. There are people who do use personal information inappropriately, but all different kinds of questions about the person gives a whole picture of him/her.

Nevertheless, it was challenging to work with my participants and their mentor teachers. Even though I believed that knowing each other in many aspects is significant to building a good relationship, I was not confident to apply that belief into my relationships with student teachers and mentor teachers. In an effort to create a balance between my eagerness to know who my student teachers were and my caution not to pry into their personal lives, I developed some interview questions, including demographical
questions. The interviewing felt more formal and academic. However, I experienced their resistance because most of the student teachers considered the interview to be unnecessary extra work and they were short of time. For four of my participants, a close relationship wasn’t necessary for supervision. Their explanations were related to the lack of time in the program, Courtney explained:

It’s a business relationship. It’s more like this is what I need to do. I need to meet with my supervisor. We’ll discuss it. I’ll take suggestions. I’ll think about some things but I don’t worry about it then. It’s gone. Just because--hopefully during my first year of teaching I’m going to have my mentor where I’m going to also be able to revisit things again and think more deeply again. (Interview, October 2003)

At this time the role of supervisor seemed to be of little significant to Courtney, but when I asked again about our relationship at the end of the quarter, her perception of my role had more broadened. Courtney described:

Well, I would say that Young Ah is someone who comes to visit me on a weekly basis to check my progress, to ask if I have any questions. To make sure that I’m communicating well with my mentor teacher and to discuss anything that I need to discuss. (Interview, February 2003)

Building trusting relationships with each student teacher was challenging. They also changed with time and the complexity. The triad relationships among student teacher, mentor teacher, and supervisor made the process of building relationship more challenging. When the supervisor is added to the already established relationship between mentor teacher and student teacher, then I think supervisor’s role becomes more complicate, controversial, and ambiguous. There are a few studies about relationships within the three-person triad and they focus on the interpersonal dimensions within the triad (Karmos & Jacko, 1977), but they are all from the perspectives of the cooperating teacher and student teachers.
For four years of supervision experiences, I can not remember any ‘triad’ relationship that met my idealistic expectations. Most of the student teachers seemed to build a good dyadic relationship with their mentor teachers. I think it is mainly because they spend a lot of time with their mentor teacher. The lack of time to communicate and collaborate limits the possibilities of building relationships between the supervisor and mentor teacher. When student teachers had differences and problems with their mentor teachers, they often turned to me for support. This often made our relationship stronger. Even though I knew the benefits of collaboration within the triad relationship, my efforts to build strong relationships with my participants and their mentor teachers was not completely successful.

Furthermore, there were power relations in the student teaching contexts as well as the university that created obstacles to building connected relationships. The few studies about university supervisors show that the university supervisor is often criticized for not fulfilling the role of instructional leader (Diamonti, 1977). A supervisor who is a graduate assistant in a large university has very little status (Slick, 1998) and this may impact their ability to develop their role in ways that they and the mentor teachers expect. In addition, many preservice teachers view their mentor teachers as being the most significant influence during their student teaching experience (Karmos & Jacko, 1977).

In addition, being observed and evaluated by others is not comfortable for anyone, including me. For the first quarter, most of my participants expressed that they were nervous about my visits, but as time went by and our relationship constructively developed, the nervousness gradually disappeared except for Wendy. Even though I had a close relationship with Wendy throughout the year, her anxiety never went away.
In order to check in about our relationship from my participants’ point of view, I asked them about it at the end of the first quarter. Most of them said they were comfortable working with me but they expressed this in different ways. Jessica described our relationship this way:

I like how you not always like other classmates say that their supervisors are like in their face while they are teaching. I like how you are kind of watching us but you are looking at other things. You are moving around the classroom and talking to the kids, too….You are not scaring me. (Interview, February 2004)

As I mentioned above, Jessica described anxious feelings from being observed and evaluated by others. Even though Jessica appeared emotionally stable, at the beginning of her student teaching, she kept looking at me to check what I thought of her teaching.

When I first met my 6 student teachers, I briefly explained my responsibilities and roles: assist and support. Their initial anxious behaviors, despite my explanation, guided me not to intimidate Jessica, in particular, by adjusting my physical and mental distance to her, not too close or not too far. Our interaction, given this responsiveness, seemed to promote a close relationship, and facilitated our open conversation during our post lesson conference discussions.

Like Jessica, Hannah also expressed comfortableness and often invited me to observe her more closely, and to share her stories. Hannah stated:

You are understanding. ….you are, like, easy to talk to. You know what I mean? If I feel like coming to tell you something you are not gonna, like, I need to mind my manners you know?.... I can ask questions. (Interview, February 2004)

Although she described me as a person who was easy to talk, I think she was the person who always initiated conversations and made me feel comfortable to talk with her. However, it was not easy to have constructive relationships with everybody with whom I
worked. It was a challenge to have a dynamic relationship with Kathy. She told a different story:

Young Ah: Could you describe our relationship?
Kathy: Uh, hum, well, I can think of you as a facilitator. You know, I know that you are here to support me and try to help me move on to being probably the best student teacher or best future teacher as possible, uh, I’d say, you know, (long pause).
Young Ah: Do you feel personal bonding with me? Or do you think it important to have a close relationship to learn and to teach?
Kathy: I think it’s hard to do that when, you know, you have whole class of the kids and you only got a set amount of time to talk and I think that, you know (long pause). (Conversation, March 2004)

Recognizing my concern about our relationship, Kathy sent e-mail to further explain what she thought about our relationship. She wrote:

I feel that one reason you may feel that we don’t have a very dynamic or deep relationship is because I really haven’t had that many “issues” to discuss with you. I know that a lot of other student teachers, some of yours, have had major issues with mentor teachers, placements, etc. however, working with my mentor teacher and these third graders has been a wonderful experience . . . . Nothing I couldn’t handle by myself or with my mentor teacher. (E-mail message, March 2004)

Kathy seemed to struggle to describe our relationship, and attribute our less connected relationship to the lack of time and that we didn’t have many problems to discuss. Based on my supervisory experience, problems do sometimes bring solidarity between the student teacher and a supervisor, but it was not the only way or the best way to build a relationship. Kathy didn’t seem to be aware that learning could happen through dialogue and dialogue was not always related to problems or issues. I probably should have more carefully and critically observed and discussed Kathy’s elementary field placement, which was well managed classroom with well behaving students. I could have helped Kathy question the unquestioned dominant ideologies in the classroom and the implications that all the children were being asked to learn in similar ways.
Researchers identify different outcomes when determining the success or failure of a particular supervisory practice. Russell and Spafford (1986, April), for example, argue that supervision must be aimed at producing a climate for teachers to reflect in action about their own practices. Building trusting relationships between a student teacher and a supervisor is a significant aspect of creating that climate. Especially building a climate where student teachers can have comfortable and constructive dialogue about sensitive issues of equity and social justice is closely related to an honest and connected relationship. Such a relationship is constructed multidimensionally, and influenced by multiple factors. In order to hear each other’s voice, educators need to open their eyes and minds to diversities.

My argument for a socio-cultural perspective on student teachers’ learning and about providing a safe environment for dialogue about the sensitive issues suggested to me that I needed to work on building trusting relationships. However, constructing a trusting relationship with each individual student teacher was not enough to transform their learning about the importance of human relationships in becoming a social justice educator. It is the teacher educators’ responsibility to provide the leadership to build a community based on care and trust, and to support close relationships between teacher candidates, mentor teachers, university faculties, and supervisors. There are challenges to building education for justice but also possibilities for opening dialogue to guide our actions to change the world. As a way to turn these challenges and tensions into hope, I incorporated the concept ‘community of learners’ with ‘critical inquiry-oriented supervision’ based on socio-cultural and critical theory. A description of these follows.
Supervisory Approach for Social Justice

In this part, I will describe the approaches and rationales that I originally planned for my supervision for social justice. I believe the term ‘community’ which I planned to integrate into my supervisory approach is the basis of constructing social justice. The term community has multiple meanings across the education literature. Vavrus (2002) refers to a learning community as “a group of individuals who are learning together in a supportive atmosphere toward a common purpose” (p. 142). For Sergiovanni (1993), communities are “collections of individuals who are bonded together by natural will and who are together bound to a set of shared ideals and ideas” (p. xvi). According to Wenger (1998), community is “a way of talking about the social configurations in which our enterprises are defined as worth pursing and our participation is recognizable as competence” (p. 5).

Although these three theories about community came from three people in different areas (education, sociology, and business) and the emphasis on community is slightly different, they share commonalities such as a holistic view of community (consider both physical and mental aspects of community), and similar themes (clear, shared goals, safe environment or climate, and practices for change). These shared characteristics of a community do not necessarily include social justice goals, but these theories can benefit community members whose shared goals are to become social justice teachers. The social justice community that I wanted as an alternative model of social justice supervision was characterized by the three commonly held themes of communities described above.
Shared Goals of Social Justice

First, in a broader context, each member in a teacher education program should make a commitment to make the program more coherent and connected around the joint enterprise of education for social justice so that student teachers can work toward such goals. My effort to achieve such a contribution was through continuous monitoring of the process of reaching the goals stated below. Continuous learning about social justice through readings and discussion with my advisor and regularly attending the M.Ed. method courses, Coach/GA meetings, and student teacher seminar gave me an idea about the goals for social justice. Through dialogue, I expected all participants including me to support each other:

- To reveal ourselves and to grow as whole human beings (as we are constituted by race, gender, culture, emotion, cognition, etc.) by searching silenced, oppressed, or privileged voices and reconstructing our own voices.
- To learn and to encourage ourselves to hear others’ voices by building a genuine relationships with all members in a community.
- To construct knowledge and skills and to search for multiple ways to become a social justice educator.
- To take action to make our schools and society more just for all children.

In the beginning, when I had an opportunity to explain my research project to my participants, I showed them this list at our first pizza meeting and briefly explained what I expected us to achieve through the research project. However, I didn’t consistently remind them about this list even though I based my supervision on these goals.
Second, I wanted to build, and to help my participants build, a social justice community by creating a safe environment for learning. I started by asking who we are. In order to build a community, all members need to continuously examine themselves in order to be aware of their beliefs, to explore how they think, and how what they think is different from others, and then to deconstruct these beliefs. I believe lack of self-knowledge brings about low self-confidence and high anxiety in working with differences. If we better understand ourselves and our beliefs we will be better prepared to sensitively interact with diverse children and their parents.

In addition, because of their position as students in the university, and student teachers in other teachers’ classrooms, they might feel disempowered. Even though I started with questions about identity with all my participants, the focus of my questions and the consistency of my approaches changed according to each student teacher’s needs.

That is, questions of identity were mostly asked with Wendy and Jessica. I tried to encourage them to examine how their beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions about differences might cause oppression, and how those beliefs impacted their teaching and each child’s learning. For example, Wendy, who especially had low self-confidence at the beginning, struggled to control the children who were largely students of color.

She made the kids stay still and quiet all the time so that “They all can listen better and learn better” (Conversation, October, 2003). I continuously asked her to look at herself using a variety of questions: Where did that belief come from? Was it really working better for children’s learning? What do you believe about education? What are your expectations of the children in your classroom and what will be your expectations
for children with whom you will work with in the future? What helps you learn the best? What do you believe about classroom management? (Feedback and post lesson conferences between October and April). Those questions provided Wendy and me opportunities to get to know each other, and to make meanings of justice education. During this process I hoped I could achieve what Freire (1970) believes: human beings, while part of larger ongoing creation of history, are in an evolving process of creating themselves and defining their own realities.

Social processes can be promoted and supported, as well as deterred, through interactions between dominant and silenced voices. According to Vygotsky (1978), cognition is socially mediated, or influenced by others in social interaction. An environment that promotes reciprocal interaction among schools, universities, and local and global communities and the collaboration and reappropriation of feedback from others can eventually lead to the internalization of learning and to reconstructing beliefs and attitudes toward a more just world.

I also asked questions about relationships between faculty and student teacher, student teacher and student teacher, student teacher and mentor teacher, student teacher and supervisor, student teacher and the children in their classroom, student teacher and the content/the world, the children and the world, and so on. In order to have dialogue around these questions, which I believe promotes optimal learning, it was important for me to build connected relationships.

Additionally, as an effort to support my participants to build such relationships, I often invited their mentor teachers in both preschool and elementary school settings, whenever time and situation allowed. I also asked mentor teachers to read and respond to
their student teacher’s reflective journal. The journal was a potential tool to enhance our triad communication. I asked directors in preschools and principals in elementary schools to observe and give constructive feedbacks to my participants and asked them to give me feedback and suggestions. When the situation allowed, I invited my other participants in the same school and had post-lesson conference with them as a group. We could then talk together about the students’ lessons and teaching related issues.

Every time we had a post-lesson conference together, I explained the reasons and benefits of collaboration and encouraged them to continue to collaborate in the future. I wanted to encourage them to think about all the resources they had helped them to work with particular children and to plan their lessons.

It is also vital for educators to collaborate with people from different cultures, social and economic classes, and other aspects of persons that are different from them. Meeting every child’s needs is a challenging task so educators need culturally diverse and authentic activities as well as diverse repertoires of culturally responsive teaching approaches. It will be a richer community if community members have different backgrounds and expertise and yet share common goals so that they can help and learn from each other. Delpit (1995) proposes that in order to resolve the monumental problems we face in providing a quality education for poor children and children of color, we must open ourselves to learn from others with whom we may share little understanding. Such sharing and learning can only be promoted within relationships in a secure environment where everybody’s voice is heard, and everybody freely asks questions based on respect and caring. According McLaughlin and Talvert (1993),
teachers are better able to adjust to students’ diverse needs if they work in strong professional communities that are involved in reform efforts.

For the relationship between theory and practice, I continuously reminded my participants about what we learned from method courses. It was difficult to help them know teaching as praxis. All my participants unanimously answered that they didn’t/couldn’t use much knowledge from the university classes (Conversation, November 2003). When I mentioned a topic from the class, most of them couldn’t even remember what they had learned. It seems hard for preservice teachers to make connection between theory and practice. Hence, whenever necessary, I made a copy of the articles and chapters from the courses, and facilitate a dialogue with them.

I also tried to keep in mind the nature of dialogue, which is aimed at interrupting our habitualized orientation toward the status quo. I tried to be mindful of the restraints on dialogue such as individualism and conversational narcissism, and pragmatism and the emphasis on technique (Anderson, Cissna, & Arnett, 1994a). It was the most difficult task for me to challenge their individualist ideology. I searched for critical questions to move my participants toward ‘Ah-ha moments’ and make them say, “I didn’t think about that”.

*Practice for Change toward Social Justice*

Finally, in order to build social justice community, educators need to construct practices to teaching for social justice. For example, I believe that unless we learn and think critically about history, economy, politics, society, and the world, we will pass on injustice, discrimination, and a divided world to the next generation. Most of my participants expressed their confidence about the knowledge they needed to teach in an
early childhood classroom. Their perception of the necessary knowledge to teach young children seemed to be limited, however, to basic facts like colors, shapes, number, and alphabets. These are not enough consideration of pedagogical knowledge related to teaching diverse learners. For example, as I recall, Hannah mentioned that she couldn’t understand why there were more people of color in poverty (Pizza meeting, October, 2003). I think her question was situated in a lack of historical knowledge, and this might influence her view of children of color in poverty. In order to support her, I recommended that she watch a video tape entitled ‘Race: The power of an illusion’ especially the episode “The house we live in”(Adelman, 2003).

The socio-cultural perspectives on learning and development that I adopted for this research project provided different lenses to view supervision and different supervisory strategies such as intersubjectivity, joint activity, and assisted performance. With my participants, based on socio-cultural theory, aiming at the development of critical thinking and multiple perspectives, I adopted multiple strategies to support my participants: modeling, feedback, instruction, and questioning (Gallimore & Tharp, 1990).

I thought of my inquiry-oriented supervision approach as a simple form of action research. I wanted to encourage my participants to find a question related to social justice, and together we would search for answers and alternative ways of teaching, and then implement them into their classroom with critical reflection to guide us. I thought this inquiry-oriented supervision would help us focus on a single topic and change teaching perspectives and practices related to that topic more thoroughly.
How Did I Actually Do?

All my planned approaches were in reality applied differently and reconstructed after reflection when necessary. Because each participant with their different characteristics had different dynamics with children within changing situations, I had to be more flexible and responsive to each participant and each situation in the context than I initially planned. I continually monitored the goals I set up and emphasized particular goals, listed in the previous chapter, depending on each participant’s needs. However, a focused inquiry-oriented approach to supervision didn’t work very well because their concerns emanated from multiple sources and continuously changed.

I found patterns when I analyzed my written feedback and post lesson conferences. There were different percentages for different pedagogical areas for each participant. The feedback was not always related to my participants’ problems or issues. They also included positive encouragement, active discussion related to their strongest interests like classroom management, or suggestions for alternatives for a certain situation.

Figure 5.1 shows the percentage converted from the frequency of my comments related to social justice issues in seven pedagogical categories across all six cases. The data for this figure were from my written evaluation feedback and post lesson conference discussion.

The feedback on the view of self (VS) mostly related to raising the participants’ self-confidence by encouraging them to look at themselves as persons with multiple identities. Some feedback in this category was about the participants’ assumptions in relation to their resistance to teaching about diversities and equity.
The view of children (VC) discussions were used to help the participants become aware of the importance of building good relationships with children to promote the children’s learning. I encouraged them to learn more about each child’s characteristics, backgrounds, interests and needs.

Differentiated instruction (DI) discussions focused on a related topic by asking the participants to find multiple teaching approaches to support different children’s learning needs. The highest percentage of feedback and discussions were related to classroom management (CM). Here we discussed the questions related to their beliefs about classroom management, how classroom management related to children’s learning, and what equitable learning environments looked like.
When I met with my participants as a pair or a small group, I mentioned the importance of collaboration (Co) to construct social justice classroom. I also emphasized collaboration with mentor teachers, staff members with different expertise, and parents. Even though I stressed the significance of collaboration, it has the least percentage compared to other pedagogical categories. I didn’t seem to be consistent about raising this category or it seemed less relevant to our conversations in a general way.

Like differentiated instruction, I wanted my participants to search for and construct alternative ways to assess (As) diverse learners. Differentiated instruction related to their ability to respond to the needs of individual children and so it was a topic we frequently discussed.

Finally, my feedback and post lesson conferences about curriculum (Cu) reflected my definition of curriculum, which is similar to Ayers:

Curriculum is an ongoing engagement with the problem of determining what knowledge and experiences are the most worthwhile. With each person and with each situation, that problem takes on different shadings and meanings. (Ayers, 1993, p. 85)

I wanted my participants to learn to focus on comprehensive and liberating curriculum. Because the curricula in their student teaching field placements were often narrow and prescribed, it was challenging to implement new curriculum. When trying new ideas was not possible in their current classrooms, I encouraged them to think and imagine curriculum for their future classrooms.

This table shows that all seven of the pedagogical categories were consistently discussed although the range of 9% to 20% shows some variation in the degree to which they were discussed. As will be shown in Figure 5.2, the coverage of these topics in each of the cases varied. This figure shows the percentage converted from the frequency of my
feedback and post lesson conference discussions of the social justice pedagogical strategies by cases.

The view of self (VS) category was an important topic and the basic element for social justice education to me. After I observed my student teachers, I asked them to talk about their intentions, expectations, or purposes for a certain lesson, teaching behavior, or the language they used, and then asked them to make a connection with who they are.

![Figure 5.2: Percentage of supervisor’s feedback by cases](image)

VS: View of self  C: Courtney
VC: View of child  E: Erin
DI: Differentiated instruction  H: Hannah
CM: Classroom management  J: Jessica
Co: Collaboration  K: Kathy
As: Assessment  W: Wendy
Cu: Curriculum
Relying on the literature, my assumption was that this kind of self-reflection on all other pedagogical categories was necessary to become a social justice educator. According to Parker Palmer (1998) “knowing my students and my subject depends heavily on self-knowledge” (p. 2). I believed that it was important for the student teachers to examine who they were, as well as what their assumptions and beliefs about teaching diverse learners.

All of my participants, however, didn’t seem to be accustomed to self-reflection. Their written comments in their reflective journals showed their initial hesitancy: “I haven’t done this much before,” “I don’t have time to write down my thoughts.” “I’m really not the type of person who likes to write.” Their journal writings were also not very substantial. Muffoletto (1995) argues that if teacher candidates are not taught to reflect on the curriculum they receive and reflect in action, they will disseminate it to their students, perpetuating the knowledge they hold as standardized and normalized. Such ‘standardized thought’ (p. 32) referred to by Freire (1985) creates resistance to seriously thinking about diversity and what a social justice environment could be. That is, if preservice teachers are taught without critical reflection, they will think and act in a standardized way. These arguments clearly show that reflections which guide teachers to examine their existing assumptions and to interrupt status quo are important. The frustration of encouraging them to reflect, however, led me to give up focusing on the connection between their teaching and the self.

Not only did their unfamiliarity with reflective journal writing affect their teaching and learning to teach, but also the power dynamics in their relationships with their mentor teachers. Their relationship with their mentor teacher became an obstacle to
thinking about their own beliefs and practice. Four of my participants, especially at the
beginning of their student teaching, tried to do exactly what their mentor teachers did
using the existing curriculum and this often conflicted with their preferred style or
orientation to teaching. Of course, this conformity to their mentor teachers’ ways of
doing things can be easily explained because the field placement classrooms are not their
own classrooms. However, the differences between them and their cooperating teachers
in these cases created barriers to examining their own beliefs and reflecting on teaching
practices more aliened with the M.Ed. program and/or their personal beliefs.

The data on Figure 5.2 indicates that I focused more with Jessica and Wendy than
the other students on the pedagogical category about social justice related to the view of
the self (VS). I tried to help them find their identity and to feel confident about who they
were and what they were doing. That is, for both Jessica and Wendy, although I asked
and provided feedback related to their view of self more than any others, their lack of
self-confidence and hiding/giving up on solving the conflicts between them and their
mentor teachers continued until the end of the school year. Consequently they were
hesitant to try things related to social justice.

Hannah’s case also provided evidence that differences between mentor teachers
and student teacher beliefs interfered with discussing and developing their view of the
self. Hannah’s mentor teacher was not open to Hannah trying new things in her
classroom because she did not believe that her ideas were consistent with her view of
open education. Hannah responded:

Honestly, I don’t like doing this ‘buddy writing’ every morning, but this is not my
classroom. I can’t do whatever I want to do, you know. I just do what I need to
do. (Conversation, January 2004)
The differences in beliefs resulted in an imbalance in the power relations between the student teachers and their mentor teacher and led my participants to think that who they were or what they thought was not valid. The result was that there was less support for self-reflection. Lack of reflection, regardless of the reason, I believe, prevents persons from seeing the connections between who they are and how and what they teach. I also believe that improvement of self-knowledge will help them reduce stereotypes and assumptions about diverse learners and to have better understandings of their students.

Figure 5.2 clearly shows that there was less feedback and fewer discussions during post lesson conference with Kathy. In general, I seemed to have less discussion about social justice with participants in suburban schools than with participants in urban schools. This raises the important question of whether supervisors can promote learning to teach for social justice in white, higher SES, homogeneous classrooms. In this study, it appeared that I was less successful in creating dialogue around social justice issues in these kinds of more homogeneous classrooms. However, the percentage of discussions with Erin showed that if the student teacher is aware of social justice issues, the context doesn’t matter. Erin, as we will see in the next chapter, was in a white, high SES, homogenous preschool setting and yet she continually responded to issues of social justice in our conversations and her teaching. The details of these varied influences will be described in the next chapter but the figure provides evidence that I probably should have given more feedback and promoted more discussions in order to support the goal of moving them toward becoming social justice educators. I should also have reflected more critically on my supervisory practice related to these differences.
Table 5.1 shows the frequency of feedback and post lesson conference discussions on issues related to social justice. The social justice pedagogical categories and social justice issues from Figures 5.1/5.2 and Table 5.1 were always complexly embedded and interrelated. For example, when I had conversations with Wendy focused on the view of child, they were related to both Wendy’s and children’s race or gender. When I talked with Courtney about differentiated instruction, it was mostly related to ESL children’s learning. It was useful, however, to separate these strategies and issues because it provided different and interesting stories. I could see how some topics were more frequently discussed than others.

I tried to have dialogue about multiple issues with all my participants. Most of my participants, however, were uncomfortable talking about certain issues. It seemed easier to ignore these issues. There may be many reasons for this. They were thinking about more practical issues as they were learning to teach, they had differences in beliefs from

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social justice issues</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gender</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Holidays</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Race</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Class</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Languages (ESL)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Religion</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Special Needs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1: The frequency of feedbacks on issues related to social justice
their mentor teachers, and/or the issues were not obviously apparent in their classrooms (for example, race in a white homogenous classroom).

Gender was the issue most discussed with my participants. The highest frequency of discussions related to gender may be related to the general characteristics of school contexts. That is, gender was evident in every classroom. The suburban school was homogenous in terms of race and class while two urban schools were very diverse in terms of race, class, and language, but there were gender issues in all classrooms.

However, not all of my student teacher participants were engaged in active discussions about gender. Kathy believed that there already existed gender equity in her classroom and seemed not able to see the dominance of men’s ways of knowing in the classroom culture and curricula.

It is interesting to note that the issue of ‘holidays’ was the second most popular issue we discussed. The participants were anxious to talk about holidays because this topic is frequently included in early childhood curricula. Often holidays are taught in ways that reinscribe dominant perspectives and knowledge. Talking about holidays gave me opportunities to raise questions about the perspectives of students from other cultures and religions.

For the issue of race, the conversations mostly occurred in three urban schools where children of color were dominant. I didn’t seem to find effective ways to discuss and to support my participants, especially Hannah, and Kathy, to see white as a race.

The issues of class were often discussed with the issues of race because these issues are often conflated. We need to consider the interaction of class with other microcultures such as age, gender, race, exceptionality, and so on. Poverty is most likely
to be a condition of the young, the old, minorities, women, full-time workers in the lowest-paying jobs, and the illiterate. Race and social class are inextricably meshed in reality and in the images children see. Thus, children quickly learn to associate power and privilege with white people and poverty and subordinate status with people of color (Ramsey, 1995). Talking with my participants about these issues was complex and I feel that I only partially succeeded in raising their consciousness about these issues.

Religion, as this table indicates, was seldom discussed. My participants seemed hesitant to talk about it. They seemed to think of religion as individual and private, and not something to be discussed in schools.

Special needs and ESL issues were infrequently discussed and related to two participants in two specific settings. Hannah was interested in special needs because of her undergraduate major, but it didn’t relate to any specific children in her classrooms. Courtney and I discussed ESL issues because she had second language children in her classroom.

Of course, the stories told in this study were not as simple as shown in these figures and tables. That means that the emphasis of a certain category, or, the particular nature of the conversations, especially the issues of social justice, were different according to each student teacher, the teaching context, and the subject matter they taught. The details will be described in chapter 6.

Based on my supervision experiences prior to this dissertation and learning about social justice from my research, I planned alternative approaches to help each participant become a social justice educator which I have described in this chapter. In the following chapter I will present my participants’ teaching practices related to social justice.
CHAPTER 6

Where Is Social Justice?

Did the approaches I used to supervise my participants, and my passion and commitment to prepare them to become social justice educator really work? Did teaching for social justice really happen? There are many factors that influenced improvements and/or resistance of my participants’ learning to teach for social justice. Positive influences included university courses that taught about social justice, community service learning experiences, and their concerns about social justice, yet, some course work, year-long field experiences, die-hard beliefs, and complicated networks of relationships provided counter-influences as well.

In the beginning I started my supervision with my pessimism about supporting them to become a teacher of social justice. Due to the challenges I described earlier based on my previous experiences and my low confidence to actually implement social justice supervision. I was well aware that learning to teach for social justice was a life long, complex learning process. Nevertheless, I couldn’t wait to see immediate changes in my participants’ thinking and teaching. The first two quarters were filled with frustration for both my participants and me. However, during their full time student teaching there were many signs that my participants’ teaching and understanding were changing. These changes give me hope. In this chapter, I will illustrate each participant’s learning and
teaching for social justice and discuss the challenges we all shared in working toward social justice education.

*An Athlete in the Zone, Courtney*

As an athlete in the zone I need to focus on what I am doing, totally in that moment and going with the moment, stay away from other things, let other things go in your mind. S/he needs tremendous concentration. It is a peak of their performance and their best performance. (Phone conversation, May 2004)

Courtney came to the program with mature and caring attitudes and diverse experiences. She was assigned field placements where both mentor teachers were well aware of diversities. One of her kindergarten placement classrooms was in white middle/upper middle SES (Socio-economic status), suburban area, and another kindergarten classroom was in an African American lower SES urban area. Courtney’s positive attitude and the contrasting student teaching contexts provided us lots of stories to discuss. It was easy for me to open our conversations with issues related to social justice.

As can be seen from the figure 4.2 in chapter 5, my supervisory practices with Courtney focused mostly on the view of the child, differentiated instruction, and classroom environment. Courtney had a deep understanding of the importance of all the areas related to becoming a good teacher, but she needed support to make connections between her understanding of those areas and teaching practices.

During our pre- and post-lesson conferences, three-way conferences, and informal lunch and break time conversations, we often discussed how we could diversify instructions so that all children, especially ESL children, could learn better. We talked about how worksheets could be used more meaningfully because she had conflicting
thoughts about using them. She felt it was unfair to give ESL children tests without an interpreter, and she wondered how she could supplement those assessments.

In both her student teaching field placements there were multiple sources and materials like children’s books representing diverse groups of people, so we started to discuss how such environments could promote all children’s learning and how we could move beyond displaying multiple materials. Throughout the year, she became more open to multiple ways to teach and work with children. The following two scenarios show how her understanding of diverse children’s needs was demonstrated in her teaching practice, and how she was examining her assumptions about gender equity.

“Como Esta?”

Courtney and I, often with her mentor teacher, discussed what it meant to create a good learning environment: respect who children are, listen to their voices experiencing their needs, view each child holistically—as a raced, gendered, emotional, social, cognitive, and physical being. She developed the following teaching behaviors that are reflected in my field notes during her student teaching. My notes show how she responded to individual differences and needs by providing many different kinds of activities and experiences for her students.

If I am lucky enough to be noticed by somebody inside the school through the small wicket on the door, I [Young Ah] can enter the school without ringing the bell. If not, I may need to wait at least 5 or 10 minutes after 3 or 4 times bell ringing. This inner city school with steadfastly-locked-red-brick-colored-door often reminds me the movie “Lean on me.”

However, as soon as I enter the school, my stereotypical image of urban schools quickly disappears and all my six senses come alive with curiosity, “what will the kids be doing today?” Until I get close to the kindergarten classroom and even as I enter the room, I can hardly hear any sound.

Courtney, a student teacher, checks attendance sitting close to the door, and greets the kids in English and Spanish. “Como esta?” “Good morning.” With a smile, a girl who seems very shy responds to her and they have a short
conversation in Spanish. Courtney’s mentor teacher looks busy finding materials and papers. On the carpet, a pair and a small group of the children do puzzles. In the book corner, three kids look at the book together. Next to the book corner, two kids play with play-dough. By the sensory table, two kids pour water into each other’s cups and containers. In the ‘house keeping’ area, four kids are busy playing. There are giggling and whispering everywhere.

Checking the time, Courtney lowers her body and gathers heads together, just like sharing some secrets, and tells the kids to get ready for the morning work. She approaches to a boy who is acting silly and whispers to his ear. She quietly sings a clean-up song. A Somalian kid who has been in the classroom and in the U.S. only for a month and who hardly has spoken or understood English sings the clean-up song very loudly. Courtney, with a big smile, says “You are the best singer for our clean-up song”. The boy responds to Courtney with a big smile. (Field notes, April 2004)

As I watched Courtney teach, I felt like I dug in the ground and discovered quiet but busy ants. Perhaps because of this ‘safe environment’ where the children’s different languages are valued and their voices are heard, their different interests were explored with diversified activities within connected relations with others. They were not humiliated in public about their misbehaviors. The children in this organized joyful chaos could optimize their learning. According to Adams’ (1997) definition, classroom safety is interrelated with respect and the expression of emotion. This valuing of differences, and emotions especially connected and cared feelings will lead our education to social justice.

“Are You Guys Washing the Dishes?”

I believe gender inequity is still alive and continuously evolves in different forms. My experience in the U.S. has helped me examine stereotypes of women in this country and also to reflect on my fantasy about gender equity. I see social norms and stereotypes of women in the U.S. reflected in the media but these are not as extreme as in my country. Young children in both countries are not exempt: pink versus blue, tools/blocks versus dolls. Social justice educators can start to question social norms and values by making these issues explicit and by discussing and negotiating with children the values
and norms they have constructed. In the following example in Courtney’s classroom, it is evident that gender roles were well established for these kindergarten children:

There are four boys in the housekeeping area. Two boys are sitting on the table and waiting to be served, and two boys are busy setting up the table and preparing the foods. Soon after they all pretend to eat, they start to clean up and to wash the dishes. “The boys play in the housekeeping area.” I said. “Yes, they like to play there”. There are fire fighter stuffs, too”. Courtney responded. Courtney puts the attendance sheet in the folder and goes to the boys in the housekeeping area. “Are you guys washing the dishes?” “Yep!” “I always ask guy friends to do the dishes”. “Do you have kids?” “No.” She looks at me and smiles.

After they cleaned everything, they started to wear a fire fighter helmet and take measuring tapes out. Two boys measure the dining table and say 12 inches. Courtney announces one minute remaining. Three boys put the costumes and measuring tapes away but one boy still tries to wear the helmet. (Field notes, May 2004)

As I mentioned above, it is not difficult to see the inequitable distribution and differentiated quality of teacher time and attention in many classrooms between boys and girls (Kenway & Modra, 1992). However, it is difficult for many teachers, and me, to move out of our comfort zone to examine these issues. During my supervision of student teachers the previous year, I decided to carefully look at whether gender inequity really existed in U.S. classrooms. During a classroom observation the previous year, I sat with a student teacher who was working in a small group and wrote down her interactive comments. Surprisingly, she made more positive comments and supportive comments to the boys than the girls. I shared this story with Courtney. Courtney recalls:

Because I didn’t have many gender inequity experiences of my own when I was young, the gender issue was not in my attention. I don’t know. I didn’t think much about gender equity until you raised the issue and shared the other student teacher’s story. I thought unlike race and language that gender equity was already there. Since then, I have tried to make a conscious effort like opening the housekeeping area more often, and encouraging the kids to explore multiple roles that anybody regardless of his/her gender can have by making concrete comments and asking critical questions about gender equity. (Post lesson conference, May 2004)
Courtney described how she consciously made equitable gender issues explicit in order to increase the children’s awareness of such issues. According to Cochran-Smith (2004) in order to teach for social justice teachers need to help students “name and deal with individual instances of prejudice as well as structural and institutional inequities by making these issues discussable in school” (p. 77). Teachers who model gender equity in the classroom and mediate appropriately to counteract gender bias recognize these actions as essential steps in celebrating the self-worth, abilities, and potential of all children (Fleming et al., 1997).

This particular housekeeping scene, on the other hand, has led me to wonder whether the housekeeping area in this classroom, which never changed or diversified in terms of costumes and toys and can be seen in many preschools, was actually perpetuating unexamined gender stereotypical thinking. This might be happening because many student teachers and sometimes experienced teachers do not see teaching and learning as multi-dimensional: especially the complex intersection of gender, race, culture, etc. and thus miss opportunities to use contexts like housekeeping areas for questioning and elaborating gender roles. The question of how I can support student teachers to recognize these complexities and to respond to diverse learners are issues that I will continue to think about in my future supervision.

Even though Courtney needed to broaden her perspectives and practices of social justice education, her sensitivity and responsiveness toward diversity, and her positive attitude to see race, gender, foreign languages as differences rather than as deficiency seemed to benefit the diverse learners in her classroom.
A Facilitator, Erin

I am convinced that early educators have one of the greatest influences on children’s lives. This is one of the reasons I have chosen such a great profession. I desire to have a positive influence over the lives of children, by facilitating emotional, social and cognitive growth in my future classroom. (Electronic portfolio, May 2004)

Erin is from Bermuda and wants to be called black. She was assigned two very different student teaching placements. She was the only black in her preschool placement where teachers were not active in achieving social justice but “open to everything” (Conversation, October 2003). Erin quickly built a close relationship with her preschool mentor teacher who was a white female and had an African American adopted son. She was a very supportive mentor for Erin.

She also built a good relationship with all the three and four year old children in the preschool but she expressed feeling uncomfortable interacting with some of the parents. Erin said she was very interested in issues of diversity and equity and she liked the preschool classroom because the teachers were conscious about gender equity. “When boys wear skirts, nobody makes a fun of it but teachers give positive comments” (Post lesson conference, December 2003).

As with Courtney, it was easy for me to discuss how we can bring social justice to this classroom with Erin and her preschool mentor teacher. This supportive environment seemed to facilitate Erin to incorporate diversities and equity. The following scenario in my field notes described a lesson she led about racial differences which emerged from the children’s question.

“Why?” “You Have Brown Skin.”

I [Young Ah] left my apartment early today because I wanted to talk with Erin before the children came. As soon as I finished greetings, she excitedly showed two books Shades of Black and Kaleidoscope that she was going to use for the activity. Erin explained what she was going to do. She couldn’t remember how their conversation earlier had led to talking about her race. During small group play, Erin described herself as a black person, and children poured out the questions about why she was black even though she had brown skin. She turned
the children’s question into a lesson which she was going to teach using these two books.

She starts the lesson by saying “Look at your hands and my hands, and tell me what color they are.” “Mine’s peach.” “No, pink.” “Yours are brown” “Dark brown” Children put their hands together to compare with each other. Considering the children’s understanding but not doubting their potential to learn, Erin asks “Are they all same?” “People who have skin like mine are called black or African American and people of color.” “Would you like to hear what these books say?” When she begins to read a book, all eyes were on her. After finishing the book, she asks the kids whether they have comments and questions, and then she introduces an art activity, making a mask with different skin color. (Field notes, December 2003)

She seemed to be comfortable talking about race related to different skin color with white children and teachers. After this activity, she reflected:

Erin: I think this activity helped me reduce my fear. I honestly worried about their reaction.
Young Ah: What do you think made you worry?
Erin: They are young and white. They might have misunderstanding about what I said. It is sensitive issue. But I think it went well. Don’t you think?
Young Ah: I think you did a wonderful job, and I hope you can continue to do that. But one thing I want to talk about your lesson is maybe you could have mentioned about difference doesn’t mean wrong.
Erin: Yeah, I couldn’t think that far. (Post lesson conference, January 2003)

Erin’s interests and understandings about diversity and equity seemed initially to more easily apply to her teaching practices in her preschool setting but her attempts gradually transferred to the elementary setting during her student teaching.

“You Are a Scientist!”

From the beginning of Erin’s student teaching, we had many chances to discuss issues of diversity and equity but mostly in the preschool. Our conversation in the preschool prompted her to be aware of these issues and to develop her teaching practice in the elementary school. For example, she planned and implemented social studies lessons from the first quarter, even though this was formally only an observation period for student teachers. This showed her initiative and her commitment to teaching about
diversity. At the end of her lesson plans, she always included the discussion with critical thinking questions written on her lesson plans such as: why do we need to learn about each topic in the lessons-different types of families, different roles of family members, schools, communities, people working together, people in the world, and animals; and what we can do about what we learn.

Erin was comfortable working with the first grade children in an urban school, but less comfortable with her mentor teacher. One reason, among others, that we had more active conversation and a more relaxing atmosphere in the preschool was her differing attitude toward the children compared to her mentor teacher in the elementary school.

Erin explains:

It was mid October and the first graders were sitting quietly working on a writing assignment concerning pumpkins. One of the students walked up to my mentor teacher who I will call Ms. P, and said, “Can I use it?” Ms. P. looked up at him looking irritated and snapped, “Use what!?” You say, ‘May I use the restroom?’ She told him to go ahead and then looked at me and said, “I can’t stand when they say that. Why can’t they say they need to use the restroom, not can I use “it.” That drives me crazy.”

At the time I did not understand why Ms. P. was so upset. I clearly understood what the child was asking. When the children ask me to use the restroom in that manner I think nothing of it. …..The way Ms. P. responded to the student makes me believe that either she is unaware of this cultural incongruence or she is aware and feels it is her job to bring her students up to her middle class norms. Either way, I believe my cooperating teacher is being insensitive to important cultural issues in her classroom. By her responding in the manner that she did, it tells the child, ‘How you talk at home and in your culture is not acceptable. Fix it!’

Through individuals’ daily living patterns and language the oppressed remain in the same state. I believe I see this going on in my mentor teacher. I think she has good intentions. She has been teaching at this school and with the same types of children for seventeen years. I just believe she has been so socialized into believing that the ways of life, from the largest aspects to the smallest, of the dominant culture is the standard and no matter what culture her students are from, they should conform.

I wonder if the reason many students may not be succeeding at the level that Ms. P. expects them to do with the major incongruence between the cultures. This incongruence and student-teacher interactions may be sending
implicit messages that the students are not good enough due to their way of life and communication tactics. Therefore, this feeling of inferiority carries over in their schoolwork. (Diversity story for a course assignment, December 2003)

Erin asked important questions related to the social justice issues in her elementary classroom and the differences between her ideas and her mentor teacher stimulated some of these questions. Erin gradually developed a constructive relationship with her elementary school mentor teacher. Her mentor teacher reflected:

I really want to have another student teacher. I learned a lot from her and enjoyed working with her. I have been teaching in this school for almost 17 years, and I have been doing same things for years. She brings all great ideas that I have never thought about. The biggest learning for me was her attitude toward these kids. She is very patient and optimistic. (Conversation, June 2004)

While she was working on building a professional relationship with her mentor teacher, she kept her own beliefs and interests. She developed her understandings about multicultural education and equity, and made an effort to implement her knowledge. The scenario I will present is one example of many that shows how she communicated ‘high expectation’ for all children.

“We are going to explore, today.” “Explore?” “Do you know what explore means?” “Do you know what research means?” The questions Erin asks sound a little bit challenging but they were challenging enough to promote the children’s thinking. Smiling at the crowd of raised hands, she tells them the limits for sharing. “I only need two volunteers”.

After explaining the lesson with age appropriate words, she hands out worksheets she created with the title: ‘Scientist’s Report’. The worksheet is divided by several big blank rectangles and includes research question, prediction, observation, results, and the conclusion on the match between prediction and conclusion.

“All of you are now scientists”. [The students respond:] “We are?” “Our research question is what causes the four seasons to happen.” “The moon follows the sun.” “Oh, that is an interesting idea.” “What made you think that way?” After sharing some of the kids’ ideas in order to explain how the four seasons happen, she tries to make a connection with animation which is popular with the kids by asking “Have you ever seen Dexter?” They all are eager to talk about the animation. Erin tells the kids to do pair share with an intention to give all children
an opportunity to voice their opinions. And then, with Erin’s signal for silence they return to her.

Their motivation to learn about the four seasons is already ignited and they seem ready to absorb everything. As if the kids don’t want to miss anything from what the teacher says, with their sparkling eyes, they paid attention to Erin’s explanation about the science activity. She doesn’t forget to remind the kids to work together by saying “Scientists always work together and help each other. If you need a little bit of help, please raise your hand”.

The children start to do the experiment with a flash light and Erin walks around the room and checks how they are doing and asks whether they have questions or they need help. One girl comes to Erin and shows Erin her scientist report, and says “I am a scientist.” “Yes, you are. You are a great scientist.” She smiles and goes back to her seat. (Field notes, February 2004)

For this scenario, I would like to point out two major features related to social justice. First, social justice educators are able to see their students as a whole with great potential. Ladson-Billings (1994) argues that “teachers with culturally relevant practices see teaching as digging knowledge out of students” (p. 52). While they are at school or outside of school, I believe children continuously construct knowledge with teachers, peers, and the world. Holding high expectations means holding expectations for the students’ cognitive ability but also for the child’s holistic development, which start from the children’s ideas and questions. Erin developed this lesson because she believed ‘they could do it.’ She both encouraged them and challenged them. Furthermore, she saw teaching as interactive. That is, she listened to what the child said, started from the children’s responses, and guided them to move further.

Second, “pedagogy for social justice means providing opportunities for all students to engage in significant intellectual work” (Cochran-Smith, 2004, p. 68) by using multiple ways such as making connections with animation, giving positive encouragement, designing appropriate levels of challenge for the task, and constructing hands-on activities.
Erin strived to help the students engage in learning. She had difficulties making equity and social justice issues concrete and explicit and in incorporating social justice into her teaching. By her student teaching, however, she was becoming more confident, which reflected changes in her understandings.

I have a better understanding of social justice. When you mentioned it at the beginning of the year, I was like, “What is social justice?” but now I have a better understanding of it. It is more like inclusive education, I think. Social justice education is more than just celebrating different holidays. It is all related to the actual ins and outs of every day lives, understandings how the kids think, how they learn, how they interact, social interaction, how they talk. (Interview, February 2004)

Erin demonstrated her ability to empower children by designing lessons and activities guided by children’s interests and questions. Giving the power to the children’s ideas, I believe, is important in teaching for social justice. Most importantly, Erin’s and also Courtney’s awareness that social justice is significant to teach all children learn better and live better seemed to make difference in the learning atmosphere of their classrooms.

_A Facilitator, Hannah_

Hannah appeared to be excited about being assigned in an informal education classroom in a first and second grade, mixed age group of children in a suburban area because she valued informal/open education. Her previous field teaching experiences had been in a poor African American populated school well-known for its informal/open education program. However, she struggled to build a good relationship with her mentor teacher in this elementary school and to understand a different approach to informal education.
I had previously worked with Hannah’s mentor teacher from 2001 to 2002 and built a good relationship with her through sharing our similar interest in informal school. Because of some personal issues, however, she didn’t seem to concentrate this year on teaching or mentoring. Two years ago, I saw her frequently and kindly explaining things and discussing issues with her student teacher about how children learned in her classroom in informal ways. This year, however, there was very little communication with her student teacher. Also, Hannah seemed to cling to her attitudes about informal education based on her prior teaching experience in another program, and didn’t seem open to a different approach to informal education. Hannah was very organized and liked to use worksheet type tasks. She often said, “I don’t think they are learning anything.”

Hannah felt that this classroom lacked structure because it allowed for more choices and self-initiated learning. “I want to try something I did in my previous school, but my mentor teacher doesn’t think [worksheets are a good idea]” (Conversation, January 2004).

She had good rapport with all children. She was committed to building a classroom culture where children worked together and to making everybody in the classroom visible. Every time I visited her, she reminded the children: “Today, we have my teacher, Young Ah, visiting and she is here to help me and all of you”. When there was a parent volunteer, she introduced her to everybody, and also when there was a child who was newcomer or came back from an absence, she let the kids know they were there and reminded them to help.

When I brought up the topic of incorporating a cultural component into the curriculum, our conversation typically stopped with Hannah’s frequent response “You
know I taught in a diverse classroom and I am really interested in diversity, but I am not comfortable to do that here”. Her hesitance was supported by her mentor teacher’s position. Her mentor teacher said:

This year, we don’t have anybody from different countries, and if the children are not interested in studying about different culture, we cannot force them to do that. Do you remember the Japanese girl in my classroom? We did a wonderful project about Japanese gardens and you [Young Ah] came to help us. But I heard she didn’t want to talk about Japan in her third grade classroom. (Three-way conference, December 2003)

Being in the middle of these two caused confusion for me and provided me an opportunity to think about open education and social justice education within different contexts more seriously. For me, open education had always seemed like a better place to learn about and achieve social justice, but as I learned from my experiences here, it depends on the teacher’s goals and purposes.

I continued to question Hannah by asking her to imagine her future classroom and how she would teach for social justice if she could not do that in her student teaching classroom. For example, there were many materials and resources such as books and computers, so I asked Hannah to look at the materials carefully and consider how she could make a connection to diversity or create a cultural component with a topic with which children were interested. Hannah started to introduce books about Martin Luther King, Rosa Parke, and other African American heroes and heroines in her classroom, but she didn’t get a chance, or didn’t choose, to do any actual teaching with the books. It may be Hannah was just putting out the books to please me rather than developing her own commitment to teaching for social justice.

Hannah’s student teaching experience might have been different if she had consistent and supportive guidance from her mentor teacher. However, it seemed to me
that unlike Courtney and Erin, Hannah’s diversity experiences in the previous school became an obstacle to opening her eyes and mind to different approaches. Her effort to create a caring classroom environment was a positive aspect of her effort to build a social justice climate. However, multiple perspectives and openmindedness, I believe, are important to becoming a social justice educator. Theses are not Hannah’s goals.

A Facilitator, Jessica

When I am teaching at my best I am like a facilitator. I use what the children know to teach them new skills. I don’t tell them what to do but I allow them to make their own choices. I set up the environment to be a second teacher. I allow the children to explore while I guide their exploration with questions and the appropriate time, freedom, and material. (Interview, May 2004)

It was sometimes hard for me to distinguish whether my participants just needed more experience in a particular area of teaching or whether their assumptions or beliefs were getting in the way of them thinking more deeply about issues of social justice. Of course student teachers develop better teaching practices by having more experience including a critical examination of their assumptions and beliefs. However, without consistent dialogue, it is hard to clearly and deeply learn about the student teacher and hard to support her.

Especially with Jessica, I felt, and I think both of us felt, comfortable working with each other. However, it was challenging, in the beginning, for me to help her engage in active discussion about teaching for social justice. Jessica is very quiet and calm. She often spent a whole day in the classroom without much emotional expression. There was not much laughing or smiling or much anger.

Jessica grew up, according to our conversations, by doing what her parents and teachers said to do but not learning how to make choices on her own. She appeared to do
student teaching in the same way by following the suggestions given to her by her mentor and me.

I think I am the same way with my [own] elementary experience. I don’t’ feel like I know how to make responsible decisions, I learned but I didn’t feel like I knew how to make choices, I am always like, someone else will decide, I don’t care. That’s how I feel because I have never been given opportunities to make choices or what do you want to do, I guess I would want them [her students] to learn how to make a decision, how to make an important decision, how to work with other people, how to help other people, how to talk with other people when they have a problem, tell how things make you feel which it’s also I don’t think I learned how to do. (Conversation, November 2003)

During post lesson conferences, she rarely talked and just listened to my feedback. Even though I started the conference by asking questions like: How do you think the lesson went?” “Would you do anything differently?” and “What and how will you follow up with the next lesson?” she briefly answered “I think I did well” or “I will think about it.” In her written reflective journal, there were few critical reflections on her teaching. Whenever I gave her suggestions that she thought were not in conflict with her mentor teacher’s beliefs and teaching practice, Jessica tried to apply my suggestion right away without critical consideration. When I worked with an individual child to show him multiple approaches of measuring things for their mathematics activity, Jessica mimicked the strategies that she saw me use. Such experiences with her and my perception of her motivated me to focus on helping her find her own voice as a person and a professional.

After several observations of her teaching in both preschool and elementary school settings, I recognized that she seemed more confident and comfortable working in her preschool placement, the university lab school, where children were ethnically diverse and families with higher social economic level than in her elementary school placement where children were from white middle/upper middle class backgrounds. I
decided to open up our conversation by asking her whether she recognized that she had
different attitudes in her preschool and elementary school.

Jessica: Yes, I know. I like here [the preschool] because I had my practicum here
when I was in undergraduate and I worked for work study. Here things are
a lot different than in elementary school. I like the way teachers respect
each individual difference. The children do projects based on their
interests. I think education for young children should be like this. This is
how I want to make my elementary school. I want to have children help
make some of decisions, and I want to have them do what is creative. My
elementary mentor teacher [in elementary classroom] does turkeys and she
makes a puppet, theirs [the students’ projects] look all just like that. Even
when they write, all their sentences are same. They all write the same
thing. I would want them to have different ideas. There are pictures of
Ohio State, bands and scarlet, grey and white. That’s what they are
doing.

Young Ah: Why don’t you try something you want to do?
Jessica: I don’t think I can do that. You know this is her classroom and I only
come once a week [for autumn quarter].

Young Ah: You are supposed to try new things that you believe, and your mentor
teacher will support you. And she can learn from you. Is it hard for you to
communicate with your mentor teacher?
Jessica: No, I think I can talk with her but I am not comfortable to try new things
in her classroom. (Conversation, November, 2003)

Jessica didn’t know how to manage conflicting beliefs and educational philosophy
with her mentor teacher. Further, Jessica’s mentor teacher, like many other first year
mentor teacher, was having a difficult time giving up her classroom to Jessica. She was a
very experienced teacher and seemed to have difficulty letting the student teacher take
over responsibility for the children. Jessica’s mentor teacher also seemed hesitant to
incorporate issues of diversity and equity into her teaching. During our three-way
conference, her mentor teacher said: “It is hard to include a cultural component in a
homogenous classroom like mine”.

118
A few weeks after she started her full time student teaching in her elementary school, Jessica answered my question of how she is doing about being proactive and finding her voice:

I want them [children] to make decisions on their own so that they are able to live in democratic society. I am trying to tell them, “These things you can say,” or “Try this instead” because before I saw her telling them exactly what to do. I think she [her mentor teacher] is starting to see that. She said I am trying to give them things that they can say when they have problems rather than just telling them what to do. (Conversation, February 2004)

There is evidence here that Jessica is learning how to help children find their own voices and ways to make productive decisions on their own.

I adopted a modeling approach with Jessica. Modeling is not always easy because many student teachers and teachers expect a supervisor to observe the student teacher by sitting in the corner of the classroom. In Jessica’s preschool placement, however, the teachers were happy to have me get involved with helping children and they seemed supportive and open-minded. The following example happened because of my sympathy for one child in Jessica’s preschool:

For almost 2 hours of my observation, one Asian girl plays alone; she doesn’t talk to anybody and nobody came to talk to her. My curiosity is instigated with many questions: where does she come from, how old is she, why does she play alone all the time, does she speak English or her home language, does she speak at home, and do teachers do something for her. During outside play, I asked Jessica these questions, but Jessica could only answer that she was from China and was a selective mute. I asked her to find out more information about her. (Field notes, December 2003)

[The next visit] as soon as I entered the room I quickly said hello to Jessica and I looked for the girl. In the dramatic play center, she was setting the table seemingly for the doll she was holding in her arm. Turning toward Jessica to check whether she was watching me and sent the message like I am going in with a nervous smile, and I anxiously approached the girl and said hello. She looked at me without any facial expression for seconds. “I am really hungry.” “Could you give me something to eat?” With smile she hands me a green plate. “Are these broccolis?” She nods her head. “I am really sorry but I don’t eat broccolis.” “Do
you have Chinese food?” She nods her head again and brings me several plates. “I really need coffee”. “Could you give me some coffee with milk and sugar?” I pretend to stir the coffee with a spoon and to have one sip. “Oh, it’s too hot.” “I need ice.” She pretends to put some ice into the coffee cup”.

Three girls who were watching us came to the dramatic center, and started to play. The place became too crowded. The girl pulled my sleeves and I followed her. (Field notes, December 2003)

After I played with her for a while, I asked Jessica whether we could talk. When we found a room, Jessica said, “That was amazing.” I explained my honest feeling of nervousness in approaching the child without much information about her. I said:

I am not a special education major or ESL expert. I don’t know whether my similar ethnic look helped her make a connection or maybe my attitude, but I believe that teachers need to be proactive to closely observe and support children who seem to have difficulties in their social interactions. Some children may be resistant, and teachers need to be responsive to each child’s different reaction but that doesn’t mean they don’t want any support or care. Don’t hesitate or afraid to make connections with all children. They all need a good teacher. (Conversation, December 2003)

I regretted that I didn’t ask her what she thought about that incidence, but watching how I interacted with the girl seemed to open Jessica’ eyes and mind to some issues of equity.

Jessica’s case demonstrated a gradual building of her confidence to work with, but not for, her mentor teacher and to implement what she believed, like introducing issues of race in her classroom. She also seemed to benefit from some modeling that I did with children in the classroom and she was able to then integrate those attitudes and practices into her teaching.

“What Can I Do With My White Children for Social Justice?”

The change in Jessica’s attitude toward the differences in children and their social interactions encouraged me to support her practically with some strategies. I decided to encourage her to use diverse children’s literature. “You mentioned earlier about the
unfairness of not providing diverse cultures to the children in your classroom.” I reminded her about her definition of social justice. I continued:

Why don’t we start breaking down the ‘cultural encapsulation’ in this classroom by providing the children some book displays about different culture? Do you remember the children’s books that were shared in social studies methods class? Since the classroom is quite homogeneous in terms of culture, you might need to provide clear explanations or discussions about the books you provide.
(Conversation, February, 2004)

I reminded her of Ramsey’s argument that “because young children rely on concrete experiences for their learning, the concept of diversity is most effectively conveyed through direct interactions with various materials” (Ramsey, 1987). We discussed the importance of diversity in the physical setting and how she could start by making a list of the different racial, gender, socioeconomic, disabilities, and any kinds of different groups that could be represented in props, materials, displays, and books. Shortly thereafter, she sent me this email:

I decided to do the lesson about different skin colors. I don’t’ know how these kids are going to respond, but I want to try. Do you have any suggestion? (E-mail message, April, 2004)

Jessica seemed to be excited to talk about her lesson. When I heard her ideas, I was more excited than she was. Unfortunately, due to my schedule I couldn’t observe and support her, but I gave her some books she could consider using. She proudly said the lesson went very well, and all the children loved the book I lent her, Chris Raschka’s book entitled: Yo! Yes!. This lesson appeared to be the beginning of her increased confident about who she was and her knowledge about ways to work with white children for social justice. During her student teaching, Jessica consistently displayed books and chose books containing different groups of people, cultures, and races, for example her
science lesson about hatching chicken eggs was implemented with a Chinese story about chickens and eggs.

For the few weeks of her full time student teaching, Jessica’s teaching clearly reflected more a social justice orientation and this change seemed to be apparent and consistent. However, just as she was changing and gaining more confidence, she finished with her student teaching and turned the class back over to her mentor teacher. I am concerned whether her excitement and eagerness to try things related to diversity and social justice will be sustained as she begins teaching in her own classroom.

An Actress, Kathy

When I'm teaching at my best, I feel like an actress...captivating the attention and interest of my students. (Interview, May 2004)

Kathy is white female and had field placement assignments in both a white dominant preschool and elementary school. In her third grade classroom in the elementary school, I observed frequently:

Coming back from the afternoon recess, all students sit on their seat and do the work written on the chalk board without the teachers reminding them. When a child dropped a pencil with the sound of a thunderstorm, everybody looks at her. Kathy’s mentor teacher who graduated from the same program Kathy is going three years ago sits on her desk and watches the children and Kathy. Kathy quietly walks around a room, checks each child’s work and marks on the book when s/he is finished. The children who finished their work go to the book shelf, choose a book, come back to their seat, and read the book quietly. When a child whispers to the next child, Kathy’s mentor teacher calls his name. When everybody has finished their work, Kathy starts her mathematics lesson by saying, “Now, we are going to do mathematics.” “Put away everything on your desk, and take out your Everyday Math workbook.” And then she starts to explain the math concept. (Field notes, December 2003)

Kathy’s attitude toward working in the schools was like a business encounter. She seemed to have clear role definitions for everyone, herself included, and expected little negotiation on how things were to proceed. Her attitude seemed to be: “I will do what I
need to do. You do what you need to do”. She was very polite. She seemed more individualistic than my other student teachers. I didn’t feel any hostility from her, but I didn’t feel connected, either. She expected me to be like a medical doctor: make a diagnosis and prescribe medicine and then she will choose whether to take the medicine or not.

Most of the time, she was very confident about what she was doing during the first quarter. For example:

Young Ah: What do you think about your classroom management? [I asked this question because she seemed to be struggling some during the lesson. When Kathy was teaching, the children looked more relaxed and were talking more. The children seemed to know the differences between Kathy and their regular teacher.]
Kathy: Yes. I think I am doing well, and these kids are well behaving. I don’t think I need to do much about classroom management.
Young Ah: So, do you think you are doing what you believe regarding classroom management?
Kathy: Actually, I have a little bit different opinion about classroom management than my mentor teacher. [Pause]
Young Ah: Could you tell me about the difference?
Kathy: I like the children to talk like during read aloud, they can learn from each other, but my mentor teacher doesn’t allow the kids to talk. She wants the kids to be quiet all the time. (Post lesson conference, November 2003)

Kathy’s mentor teacher seemed to respect the way she managed the classroom and wanted her to learn through experience. Kathy continued to hold her confident beliefs about classroom management until the end of the winter quarter, but as soon as her full time student teaching started, she recognized some problems with management. That is, when she took over the class, it was hard for her to get the children’s attention. Her personality and individualistic style were influences that challenged my ability to create a dialogue with her.
Another challenge for me to work in this context was that it was hard to see and talk about the issue of oppression or inequity in her classroom. I felt like I was in my elementary school in Korea. Everything seemed to go smoothly without anyone causing any problems.

From the second quarter when she started to teach mathematics, her low confidence in teaching in this content area gave me an idea. At this point in the program, she was taking the mathematics methods course and reported to me that she was not confident teaching mathematics. My approach for Kathy was to share with her about multiple and different ways of learning mathematics considering individual differences. In my feedback on her mathematics lessons, I provided the ways I would solve the problems and asked her to think about and find different ways and put them in her lesson plans. She wrote about assessment in her lesson plan:

I will constantly be assessing students throughout the lesson. While checking math boxes, I will use children’s answers as indicators of their understanding. While having students divide sections of their dry erase boards into fractions, I will have them show me (hold the up). This will allow me to assess their prior knowledge about fractions and whether they are confident working with them now. By using several methods to illustrate fractions (i.e. dry erase boards, math books and counters), I will be able to assess whether students can apply their knowledge of fractions in different contexts in different ways. Finally, while students work on pages 182-183 in their math journals, I can assess whether they need individual assistance to grasp the concept. (Lesson Plan, February 2003)

There was another moment where I could open our conversation about social justice—a lesson about local community.

Before the children come back from their lunch break, Kathy explains the social studies lesson she will do right after lunch while preparing materials. She gives me one copy of information packet titled ‘Community’. 15 pages of the packet constitute much information: what makes up community? Different communities, an urban community, rules and leaders in the community with pictures represent different racial and gender groups, and history of the community where the elementary school was located.
When the children come back, Kathy starts her lesson by introducing what the lesson is about and by asking what the children know about community. And then she asks volunteers to read a paragraph. After finishing reading a paragraph, Kathy reads the questions on separate sheets that the children need to fill out. The questions are mostly facts and years that they need to remember. After checking whether the children have questions or comments about the paragraph, she asks another volunteer to read the next paragraph. The children seemed to enjoy learning about the community where they live and their parents and grandparents lived before. (Field notes, May 2004)

My excitement before I observed her teaching the lesson faded away as the lesson began. Maybe because the way she taught the lesson seemed the same as what I learned social studies in Korea. Maybe I was disappointed because the lesson was not the same as I imagined—active and critical discussion about the community. Hoping for her to become more critical about, however, what she taught and to think about multiple ways of teaching, I asked her to talk afterwards:

Young Ah: How do you think the lesson went?
Kathy: I think it was pretty good. Most of the kids paid attention and seemed to be engaged in learning, I think.
Young Ah: Would you do it differently if you do it again?
Kathy: I don’t think so. I think the material was very helpful and educational. …what do you think?
Young Ah: I enjoyed reading the packet. There were many interesting things that I didn’t know before. And I really like the pictures you picked. I don’t know whether you chose them purposefully or not. There were diverse people. They can be little things but it is really important to let the kids know there are different people working together to make the community a better place. But I have some questions. The suburban population where your school is located is very different from an urban area in terms of race and social economic status. I think it could be a really interesting discussion. Or do you think raising those issues is not related? Maybe you can ask the kids to do research about the number of different groups of people and maybe make a chart to compare in an integration of mathematics? And discuss how such situation happened and is still happening.
Kathy: Yes, that will be a good idea. I will think about it and talk with my mentor teacher. (Post lesson conference, May 2004)
After our conversation I hoped Kathy could include some critical discussion related to her lesson, but due to lack of time, she couldn’t do it after all, according to her. Our conversation was stopped because it was almost the end of her student teaching, but I really hope that at least I helped her think more critically about one topic she taught and to incorporate different issues people are facing into her lessons in the future.

I still don’t know what I could have done to motivate Kathy to have a dialogue about social justice. When I asked her whether she could teach in racially and socio-economically diverse classroom, she answered “I think I am prepared to teach in any school even in urban schools” (Conversation, May 2004). I regretted that I didn’t even ask her what made her think that way.

*A Gardener, Wendy*

Wendy’s metaphor for herself as a teacher was a gardener.

As a gardener, you need to give the plants the right amount of water, sunshine and air, and fertilizer. These are what teachers are supposed to do, I think. (E-mail message, May 2004)

Gardeners tend their plants like teacher tend their children. Teachers manage their classrooms in ways that nurture children and help them grow. Does good classroom management make a good teacher? In my opinion, yes, but only if classroom management is understood broadly to include how teachers create a rich classroom environment for all children’s learning. However, many student teachers think only of techniques and strategies as necessary to control children’s behavior. A metaphor of a gardener is a more inclusive and holistic term for thinking about managing a classroom for learning.
Classroom management is the most popular topic or issue among student teachers especially at the beginning of their student teaching. Although all student teachers start with similar concerns about classroom management, for my participants, their learning and practice about classroom management evolved differently depending on the individual student teacher’s personality, the characteristics of their students, the relationships with their mentor teacher, and the culture of the school and classroom culture.

Wendy was a white female assigned to an urban kindergarten classroom with 80% African American children. She also volunteered to join in the community service learning project offered by one of the professors in the M.Ed. program. For Wendy, classroom management was her biggest challenge.

“M, go sit on the chair.” “L, you come sit by me.” The large group time interrupted by some kids resumes after rearrangement of seats. All children read alphabets out loud: “a, a, apple, b, b, ball” “J, leave her hair alone.” One girl starts to cry because she didn’t get a turn to say the word. Wendy ignores her and continues the alphabet. She keeps looking at me seeming to check my signal about whether she is doing right. I sent her a smile. Wendy’s mentor teacher accosts me and says “I don’t think she can see what everybody is doing during large group time. Look at that boy (lying on the carpet turning against Wendy and playing with string pulled out from the carpet). Could you talk with her about it? She is wonderful, but, …” With a frown her face, Wendy comes to me and says “Today, everybody is so wild. I don’t know why.” “I don’t think I did well”.

(Field notes, December 2003)

This is one incident from my field notes, but during most of my visits for the first two quarters, similar incidents happened frequently, and Wendy made the same kinds of negative comments about the children and her classroom management. As if she would lose control if she smiled, she rarely smiled and often verbally expressed negative feelings like “Not again”, “I don’t know why they are doing this to me.” “She is like that all the time.”
Lacking confidence, she seemed to need somebody to validate her learning and teaching. She frequently said, “I need to ask my mentor teacher about this.” By this she didn’t mean to have a conversation about the lesson but to get permission to implement what she had planned.

Her white female mentor teacher had been teaching in this urban school for almost 16 years. This was, however, her first year as a mentor teacher and she didn’t seem to know how to support Wendy appropriately. She said “I just let her do whatever she wants and needs to do” (Conversation, October 2003). She also did not explicitly mention race and the different cultures of the children in conversations with Wendy. She said “I treat them all same” (Conversation, November 2003).

Sleeter (1994) reported that a teaching force that is predominately white will likely make academic decisions through the lenses of the experiences and belief systems of white individuals, what Kincheloe, et al. (1991) call a “white interpretative filter” (p. 78). Often teachers see the color of children through stereotypes or don’t see color at all, they attempt to be color-blind. These attitudes of teachers often stem from implicit, personal racism and/or institutional racism, and often result in teachers’ low expectations for the potential and the academic achievement levels of students of color.

In the social studies class one week before Thanksgiving, when celebrating holidays became the topic of the class dissuasion, Wendy raised her hand and shared her opinion about her mentor teacher’s large group lesson about Thanksgiving in the elementary classroom:

My mentor teacher asked the kids what they do during Thanksgiving Day. Some kids said they eat pizza, chicken, and hamburger [interestingly nobody said turkey, Young Ah’s observation]. Ignoring children’s answer, she said we eat turkey and watch football. And she asked again “What do we do?” and the
children answered “We eat turkey and watch football.” (Discussion in the university class, November 2003)

On the day Wendy’s mentor teacher did the Thanksgiving Day lesson, I wrote down exactly what her mentor teacher said and wrote a question for Wendy asking her to think about what her teacher did in this lesson and what she might do differently. Even though I didn’t have a chance to discuss my question with her, I believe my feedback helped her think about this lesson about holidays. It is important to note that she was able to make some critical assessment of the lesson in class, but Wendy didn’t subsequently do anything differently about the next holiday ‘Christmas’. She merely followed her mentor teacher’s activities: making and coloring a dittoed outline of snowmen, Christmas trees, and Santa Clauses as fragmented activities void of any learning content.

Wendy expressed conflicting attitudes about hands-on experience: she was certain that children can learn better with hands-on experiences, especially for science, and yet, she feared planning and implementing hands-on activities because she assumed that the students would make a mess and the lesson would become chaotic. In December, she tried her first hands-on experience and was surprised at how well it went.

I was really scared with this project but it worked out well. I get caught up in the discipline issues. I forget what I am saying because I need a slow it down, relax on that, and so for me to write this [the sequence of the lesson with reminder of the words she will say to the children] out – it went really well. I asked them, because I told them the first rule is to only hold the ice cubes when I ask you to and when I ask you to put them in a cup you need to put them in the cup or I will just automatically take the cup from you and I am not going to tell you again and I want you to all participate. I tried to write as many details as possible. This stage I think you need to just kind of detail lesson plans. Yeah, because I figured they are going to put them in their mouth. They’re going to put them on other people. They’re going to swallow them. It could be just total chaos. And I actually had to dump the ice cubes in the container and just fill it with water because they didn’t all melt. It took longer than I expected. They
[the children] didn’t know the difference. (Post lesson conference, December 2003)

In her preschool placement, where teachers incorporated diversities such as teaching the children sign language and different cultures, Wendy seemed to make more efforts to do something about diversity. A few days before the lesson about Korea for the letter “K”, Wendy called me to help her about this lesson. She asked me to write the children’s name in Korean. I encouraged her by saying that was a great idea and I was willing to help her with anything she needed. However, right before the day of the lesson she called me again and said:

I felt frustrated because some of those kids are three and I am thinking how. I guess I don’t have enough training to know how to, because I really want to do that cultural unit on Korea. I wanted to do that, especially since I found out the one little girl is from Korea. The more I thought about it, I thought they’re not going to get this, especially like [children’s names] and some of those young, young ones. They’re not going to get that. Maybe a couple of them would kind of understand it but I thought maybe social justice would work best by just having them equally participate in games and me being a fair teacher and I thought that was the best way for me to relate social justice and I think I was taking the wrong and picking okay, cultural equality and I am thinking that’s just too big of a concept, especially for the way that it was designed there where you have a question you could talk about. (Phone conversation, January 2004)

My observations and conversations with her led me to attribute Wendy’s negative attitude toward the children in her elementary school field placement as related to race. It seems that Wendy’s attitude toward the African American principal was also quite negative in the beginning. She thought the principal was not friendly or supportive. When I suggested that she go and talk with the principal, she seemed hesitate and her negativity continued. It seemed to me that her negative feelings and attitudes may have been associated with her fear of teaching different cultures and the mismatch and lack of understanding of her own race/ethnicity and that of her children. Teachers who are
products of their own socialization within a particular culture decide what to teach and how to teach through the understandings gained from that socialization (Carpenter-LaGattuta, Summer 2002). These understandings are gained through an enculturation process that results in implicit attitudes and understandings. In cases where teachers and their students are from different cultural backgrounds, and where teachers don’t know explicitly who they are as cultural persons and who they teach, even when a common language is shared, communication and learning may be thwarted. In such situations, many teachers, especially white teachers don’t relate the problems to their race and/or to the racial mismatch (Landsman, 2001); they blame the victims who are usually students and their parents rather than seeing their own cultural perspective as putting limits on their expectations for and understandings of their students.

When her full time student teaching started and after the burden of overwhelming demands from course work and field placements teaching reduced a little, I decided to focus on helping her change her view of children of color or children in general. Every time I visited her, in order to help her see children holistically rather than see them as only knowledge receivers, I asked her to describe different children using as many aspects as possible such as his/her home culture, emotional development, friendship, and Wendy’s relationship with particular students.

Wendy’s attitude dramatically changed during the last month of her full time student teaching. I am not sure whether this was influenced by the experiences of describing individual children, the experiences in her community service learning with African American students at a local church (she mentioned that she learned a lot from the experience in this community church and the differences she saw), or being released
from the demands of M.Ed. courses. She commented on her principal’s attitude toward her “Our principal visited me today. And she watched my lesson for a while and gave me a really positive feedback” (Conversation, May 2004). The change was also evident in a typical comment she made to her students:

Wendy: I know you are getting smarter and smarter, so I decided to trick you with the most difficult question in this world. Are you ready?
Children: [Unanimously] Yes!
Wendy: Here it is.
Children: Oh, that’s too easy. Give us more difficult one.
Wendy displayed more difficult question on the board. (Field notes, April 2004)

Wendy smiled and laughed more. She included humor when she taught lessons.

She didn’t talk so much about controlling children’s behavior. She planned and implemented more hands-on activities without worrying about chaos and mess.

Hi, I was hoping you could come to watch my science lesson on animals. I have found a website, National Geographic for Kids. It shows pictures, gives all kinds of stories and provides animal sounds! I'm at the library and can't hear the sounds, but I think the kids would love it! We have computer [lab time on] Wednesdays from 10:00 am - 10:40 am. Maybe I would be allowed to use the overhead to guide the class to discussing different things about animals and listening to their sounds. This would give them a more authentic experience than just looking at photographs! I'm really excited about this! (E-mail, May 2004)

For the animal lesson, Wendy asked individual child to line up one by one. There were some wigglings and whisperings, but it seems okay for Wendy. One boy calls Wendy quietly and whispers something. Widening her eyes, Wendy responds to the boy saying “I know. I watched the lion on TV news, too.” “You know what?” “What?” “We are going to see and learn about lion, today.” “Really?” The boy responds back to Wendy with smile. (Field notes, May 2004)

Seeing this lesson was a reward for me. I couldn’t wait to have chance to talk with her and give her a big applause. After the animal lesson, I asked Wendy’s mentor teacher permission to take her outside the classroom to talk. We went to the teacher’s lounge and talked:
Young Ah: I am so proud of you. Have you noticed? I think you have changed a lot in terms of interacting with the children. You looked happy and the children looked happy. I think teaching is interactive practice.

Wendy: Thank you! I don’t know, now I really enjoy working with these children, and trying fun activities. I want to try so many things. (Post lesson conference, May 2004)

Widick, Parker and Knefelkamp (1978) suggest that the formation of identity is fostered by an environment which allows for experimentation with varied roles, the experiencing of choice, meaningful achievement, freedom from excessive anxiety, time for reflection and introspection, interaction with diverse individuals and ideas, receiving feedback and making objective self-assessments, and involvement in activities that foster self-esteem and understanding of one’s social and cultural heritage (p. 14) It seemed that Wendy’s willingness to do some experimentation during her student teaching and our conversations about these lessons resulted in an increased awareness of the students and their differences. She did not yet get to the point where she could critically question issues of social justice related to these differences, but at least she was moving forward in her recognition of differences and willing to interact in ways that supported higher expectations for her students.

Shared Challenges: Six Case Studies

Throughout the school year, there were many struggles and challenges as well as rewards in working with my six case studies. There were many challenges that I faced in my path to create supervision for social justice which included: orchestrating conflicts and differences among members within the program, especially between student teacher and mentor teacher, grappling to overcome the dialogical barriers coming from implicit assumptions and ideologies, understanding and learning about/from each individual student teacher and searching for appropriate ways to support each one of them,
continuously striving for my own personal and professional growth, and developing my knowledge about and for social justice.

In addition, within the school contexts, some of us talked about the issues of standardized tests, but we couldn’t do anything about them. For many of the student teachers, there were not many spaces to try new things or ways to liberate themselves from the sanctioned and highly prescribed curricula. The constricting walls of the institution are sometimes too high for student teachers and supervisors as outsiders to climb over.

Among all those challenges and barriers to reach toward social justice education, one thing that I made every effort to achieve with all participants, but failed in this project, was encouraging them to incorporate social action into their curriculum. In the social studies method course, the pedagogy course, and the equity and diversity course, the student teachers were exposed to the concept of social justice and social reconstructionism (Oakes & Lipton, 2003). Student teachers did drama about different types of curriculum including social action curriculum, wrote critiques and discussed multiple books and video tapes about diversity and equity, watched videotapes presenting several classrooms incorporating social action, and planned lessons including social action. Furthermore, all of my participants verbally expressed the importance of social action, but it didn’t happen in their teaching. Erin said:

I find it [social action] hard as far as time. Right now kind of with school and everything I do the best I can but I don’t think it will be difficult with them at all. I am thinking of doing pen pal writing for the extension of the lesson on the people around the world. (Conversation, December 2004)

Cognizant of the demanding situation during their field placements (autumn and winter quarters), I started in earnest to discuss integrating social action in their curriculum
as they started their full time student teaching. There were clearly lessons that could have been extended into social action. For example, Courtney’s lesson about Africa provided the children opportunities to learn about animals, arts, and children’s games in Africa. When I asked Courtney whether there are only beautiful and nice things in Africa, she said she could discuss the changes in Africa especially lack of water and food, disease in certain places, and she could plan some actions/activities to help children in Africa.

When spring started, both Erin and Wendy who were in the same school but in different grades, planned lessons about planting. I brought a book called *City Green* written by Disalvo-Ryan (1994) which was about one girl’s social action by planting flowers and vegetables in Harlem, New York to make people in the community connected. I asked them to read the book and think about whether they together could facilitate some actions to make the school or the community a better place and help the children feel like they were contributing to the community. Both of them seemed excited about including social action in their lessons, but it never happened.

In Jessica’s preschool, the curriculum was guided by children’s interests and the children’s learning and development were facilitated by teachers. One day she was helping children build houses with boxes and papers on the big table by the wall. The wall was decorated with paper trees and sky and the table was decorated with multiple materials including sand and rocks. Jessica explained to me how this project got launched: “One boy was playing with dinosaurs and the dinosaurs said [with the child’s voice] ‘I don’t have a home to stay in.’ One of the teachers suggested to him that he build a house for them. And then more children became interested in building houses for people and animals and the children started to call it a village.”
When I heard Jessica’s explanation, I could think of many possibilities to extend this project. I brought a book entitled *The Amusement Park for Birds* created by the children in Reggio Emilia, Italy and documented by the teachers. The book seemed to spark Jessica’s thinking. She excitingly said “I can find some books to show different types of houses in different countries with different materials like straws, fabrics, and woods” (Conversation, April 2004).

I asked: “Remember? It started from building a house for homeless dinosaurs. What do you think about building a house for homeless people and maybe you can discuss and plan action?” She responded: “That’s a really good idea. I want to try that in my elementary school” (Conversation, April 2004), but it didn’t happen.

Kathy told me that she was going to do lessons about recycling for Earth Day which had been planned and implemented by her mentor teacher for the last couple years. Because her class was always tightly scheduled in advance I cautiously asked her whether she could include social action in this project.

Kathy: Yes, we have field trip to recycling center. She [her mentor teacher] has been done for years.
Young Ah: No, I mean maybe you can discuss with your children about helping people recycle in their school or their community like making recycling containers or signs something like that. (Conversation, May 2004)

Even though we had a chance to discuss with her how she might include social action in her curriculum, because of her mentor teacher’s education philosophy and other reasons, she was not able to implement this idea.

I had intriguing and exciting conversations with all of my participants about social action. Unfortunately, our conversations and plans were not actualized during their full time student teaching period. It seemed like there were various factors that influenced not
putting these action plans in place. Many of them talked about time. They saw action projects as very time consuming. Also, as student teachers, they do not have open choices about what to do in the classroom. They also reported that the pressures of testing also limited their ability to add other kinds of activities to an already tight and restricted curriculum. For these several reasons, they did not feel like they could implement social action projects during their student teaching. Of course, it’s also possible that if I had been more effective as a supervisor, maybe I could have supported them better in developing social action projects in their teaching. In the next chapter, I will discussion this further.
CHAPTER 7

Learning through Self-Study

Young Ah: I don’t think I said enough about social justice.
Courtney: Oh, yes. You did enough. You mentioned diversity and social justice
every time you visited me. (Conversation, June, 2004)

So what? Are my participants going to teach their students for social justice in
their future classroom? Will they teach for social justice differently from what they did in
their student teaching placement?

I continuously asked myself about my supervision practices: Am I doing right?
What should I have done differently? What should I do next? Have I grown personally or
professionally through this project? Have my participants grown personally or
professionally? I have asked many questions I wanted to answer on my own and with
others, but I don’t feel like I have gotten enough answers. One year is not long enough to
address these questions. It is, I believe, a life-long process to become a social justice
educator and to prepare preservice teachers and support inservice teachers to become
social justice educators.

Becoming a teacher or teacher educator is a lifelong process of continuing growth
rooted in the personal. Who we are and come to be as teachers and teacher
educators is a reflection of a complex, ongoing process of interaction and
interpretation of factors, conditions, opportunities, relationships and events that
take place throughout our lives in all realms of our existence-intellectual,
physical, psychological, spiritual, political, and social (Cole & Knowles, 1995, p. 12)
In this chapter, I will describe my learning experiences as a person, a researcher, and a supervisor through this research project and provide suggestions for readers who are interested in social justice education.

**Personal Development**

Most of my participants said: “We benefit from working with you because as an international student you have had experiences with discrimination and you might be an expert on multicultural education from your study.” This comment forced me to look at myself more carefully in order to become a model of a social justice educator. Do the oppressed automatically become social activists? Do I have less fear or uncomfortableness toward males, people of other races, people with disabilities, homosexuals, the poor, and other oppressed groups of people because of my own situatedness as a minority?

After I started this research project, I tried to examine myself more seriously and honestly. Reminding myself that understanding one form of oppression does not guarantee recognition of another (Tatum, 1997), I tried to look at my assumptions as broadly as possible. In retrospect I realized that I grew up in the environment where there were discriminative attitudes toward Chinese, Japanese, and Americans demonstrated with lots of name calling. I cannot remember whether the name calling was just having fun or based on hatred, but, either way, it was a part of my life, and it may still be alive inside me.

In the beginning of the project, with my participants, colleagues, or other people in my university classes whenever I was encouraged to examine my assumptions, I tried to repress my feelings, rather than to reveal and reconstruct my beliefs. I believe it was
because of my fear of being considered a racist, sexist, or homophobic in some of my examples. It is not easy for most people, including me, to reveal themselves to themselves, let alone to others in public.

Having allies is important as a person in a minority group. In order to break our assumptions and misbeliefs, people need supportive groups with constructive relationships that allow them to reveal themselves comfortably but at the same time promote each other’s growth with genuine care.

For me, joining a study group called the ‘Four Sisters’ with three other Asian doctoral students helped me to keep exploring my identity safely. In our dialogue we could raise our confidence level and scaffold each other’s identity development. We all need to have courage to take our masks off and help each other to live as who we are.

Researcher Development

Intellectuals are no longer needed by the masses to gain knowledge: the masses know perfectly well, without illusion; they know far better than the intellectual and they are certainly capable of expressing themselves. But there exists a system of power which blocks, prohibits, and invalidates this discourse and this knowledge, a power not only found in manifest authority of censorship, but one that profoundly and subtly penetrates an entire societal network. Intellectuals are themselves agents of this system of power: the idea of their responsibility for “consciousness” and discourse forms part of the system. (Foucault, 1977, p.22)

Every research I have done was different and gave me different experiences. However, I gave power to the knowledge (dominant) or the person who generated that knowledge and who controlled me rather than gaining power myself to control/shape the knowledge. This current research helped me become who I am and gave me many opportunities to examine social norms and values imprisoned within me, and to be more conscious and critical of those norms and values.
Doing research pushed me to learn and live in my own words. During the process of collecting and analyzing data, I kept thinking that I should have done this for this student in this situation or I shouldn’t have done that for that student. During conversations with my participants, I sometimes came up with an idea or questions immediately but sometimes I couldn’t think of anything to say. All the struggles, tensions, and excitement motivated me to become a social justice educator and researcher.

**Supervisor Development**

What would a perfect supervisor for social justice look like? I would imagine that she or he is one who has strong knowledge about and for social justice, has content knowledge in all subject areas, has pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of children’s development and culture, has a background in special education as well as working with children who speak different languages, knows how to communicate with people in public schools and the university, knows what student teachers are learning at the university, and is able to help them make connection between theory and practice. Is this possible? No. All these things are important to teach diverse learners but I don’t think it is possible to achieve all of them. Because nobody can be perfect, all supervisors will have strengths in some aspects but will also need to try to become a better supervisor in other areas.

During this research project, I have tried to be critically self-reflective. Gradually I have come to gain some important self-knowledge. For example, I think I developed stranger/white anxiety after I came to the U.S. Maybe I had it before I came, but I didn’t recognize it. The numerous racist incidents I experienced in Indiana in my M.Ed.
program fed these feelings of anxiety. My opportunity to interact with white teachers was mostly in schools--as a Graduate Assistant teaching in a preschool in Indiana and as a student teacher supervisor in preschools and elementary schools in Columbus. After 7 years in the U.S. I think I finally got rid of the fear that I would be ignored by teachers and student teachers. I became more proactive in building relationships with them rather than considering myself a victim and expressing internal anger toward them. Supervision, like teaching, is an interactive process. Through supervising different student teachers and collaborating with their mentor teachers, I learned how to communicate and negotiate with different people. I grew, I believe, personally and professionally. In the next part, I will give some suggestions for teacher education in general (social justice in education won’t happen by supervisors alone) based on my research with student teaching supervision for social justice.

*Clear and Shared Goals for Social Justice*

Social justice teacher education acknowledges that people in America are multicultural, not only by racial and cultural mix but by identification with common needs, interests, and concerns. It is to this sense of identification that education must be sensitive. Baptiste and Baptiste (1979) said, “Education must function within a changing social scene that is aware of and sensitive to cultural diversity and oppression and at the same time, it must realize that all cultures interact with and may have implicit commonalities with all others” (p. 9).

Starting from such an identification of differences and similarities, all existing members of teacher education make a commitment to create common ground and a sense of common identity focusing on diversity and social justice through continuous
individual and collective inquiry: What issues do members really care about? How are the program goals connected to social justice? What are the open questions related to the goals? What kinds of influences does the program want to have on teacher candidates related to their differing histories and cultures? Addressing these types of questions will help a teacher education community develop a shared understanding of its goals, find the legitimacy of the goals in the program, and engage the passion of its members.

Program goals should neither be a fixed set of problems nor an abstract area of interest (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). The social justice teacher education community’s sense of what it is about should evolve and grow as new teacher candidates, mentor teachers, supervisors, faculties, and others pose new challenges and bring new perspectives on diversity and equity. The members of this kind of community should be able to frequently hear discussions about issues of diversity, equity and social justice, and to clearly hear questions about present policies and structures that may be inequitable (Grant & Zozakiewicz, 1995).

If members clearly articulate the teacher education institution’s social justice goals and the reasons that such goals are in the institution’s best interests with the establishment, including clear and meaningful selection criteria, and with the appropriate behavior in the search process, it may be that students with diverse backgrounds will purposefully choose this program, and the new comers who chose this program will show passion and aspiration of the program goals. Dewey (1916) states, “…what we must have in common in order to form a community, or society are aims, beliefs, aspirations, knowledge likemindeness” (p. 47).
For instance, if making teacher education a more inclusive environment is a goal, then members should have that goal reflected in their admissions criteria so that whoever is selected can support those goals. Such criteria might include items such as (a) the extent and favorability of one’s experience working and collaborating in multicultural settings, (b) experiences of being supervised or mentored by people of color, (c) living in racially-mixed communities, (d) fluency in a second language, and (e) substantial college coursework in the study of multicultural perspectives.

Sharing common goals, however, needs to be applied with caution. That is, excessive emphasis on common goals and likemindedness can marginalize and silence individual differences, but inclusiveness of diversity can also cause struggles and tensions. Although those struggles and tensions strengthen the community in order to build a constructive community, each member must work toward a balance between constructing common goals and including diversities.

Success in building such a community demands shared desired goals about educating teachers, a commitment to shared responsibility, an acknowledgement of shared expertise, the creation of a climate of mutual trust and cooperation, and a willingness to break with tradition by combining and reorganizing existing resources. (Mills, 1984; Mills & Buckley, 1992; Villegas, 1995).

As a supervisor, s/he should be proactive to get involved in the process of constructing goals that include social justice, trying to be critical in understanding existing goals, finding appropriate ways to share those goals with her/his student teachers and their mentor teachers, and encouraging them to include their voices in building goals. Providing examples from the student teachers, one student teacher said with a bit of a
negative tone, “It [diversity and equity] is this university’s thing.” Another student teacher said “I know it is what the program really wants and also I think it is important.”

Sharing goals should not be only done one time at the beginning, for example, during student orientation, but the goals should be continuously discussed and monitored. Systematic studies on teacher education evaluation with follow-up studies on graduates are critical as well if we want to understand the impact of our teacher education programs.

Creating an Environment for Social Justice

Creating an environment where all members feel like they can share common concerns and goals and their voices are valued is crucial for teacher education to attract teacher education students especially students with diverse backgrounds. Such a program will be more effective in finding candidates who enter the program with social justice goals because they will be assessed holistically. A program that addresses social justice will be more likely to retain these students in the program. Dewey supports the necessity of this kind of learning environment. For Dewey (1974), the subjectivities of students should be acknowledged within a community-of-learners context. Also the social-psychological aspects of teaching and learning must be addressed so that faculty can better and more accurately understand the students.

If social and cultural influences shape human development and cognition is a social phenomenon, as Vygotsky believed, individual learning and development should be understood and supported holistically in a context that provides authentic activities for learners. Vygotsky (Vygotsky Group, 1996) explained that people in other cultures classify and describe experience in relevant ways that may differ from his way, but their
approaches are appropriate to their environments. However, in a culturally diverse society, like the U.S., the question of which way is appropriate to whose environment must be addressed. This may be one reason that children from different cultures do not succeed because their experiences and cognitive strategies are not appropriate and appreciated in the school context. This may also explain why there is such a small number of students of color in teacher education programs. Creating social justice environments for preservice teachers from different cultures should be the starting point for recruitment and retention. It is teacher educators’ responsibility to provide the leadership to build such a community based on care and trust and on close relationships between teacher candidates, mentor teachers, and supervisors. Teacher education itself must be socially just.

There are numerous ways to create such an environment. Some things can/should be done separately but others can/should be done together. The development of community building is to make social justice teacher education more cohesive at the same time to make participants identifiable as individuals. Social justice teacher education community should be the place where each member continuously examines him/herself to aware of his or her beliefs, explore how he/she thinks and how this differs from others, deconstruct these beliefs, and then reconstruct beliefs of social justice.

These processes can be promoted and supported through meaningful interactions between dominant and silenced voices. According to Vygotsky (1978) cognition is socially mediated, or influenced by others in social interaction. Building a socially mediated environment within teacher education requires reciprocal interaction among students, schools, universities, and local and global communities. The collaboration and
reappropriation of each other’s feedback will support the internalization of learning, thinking, and knowledge and the reconstruction of beliefs and attitudes toward a more just world.

It is vital for educators to collaborate with others from both similar and different cultures. Meeting every child’s different needs is a challenging task. Educators need multiple ways to support and promote each child’s learning. Meeting diverse needs will be more effective if there are common goals where everyone can help and learn from each other. Delpit (1995) proposes that in order to resolve the monumental problems we face in providing a quality education for poor children and children of color, we must open ourselves to learn from others with whom we may share little understanding. Such sharing and learning can only be promoted within relationships in a secure environment where everybody’s voice is heard, and everybody freely asks questions based on respect and caring.

Firestone and Rosenblum (1988) suggest that teachers’ commitment to teaching all students is associated not only with teacher involvement in decision making, but also with collegiality, task variety, remuneration, sense of purpose about work, administrative support, and mutual respect (p. 298). Teachers are better able to adapt to students’ needs if they work in strong professional communities in a department, school, network, or professionals organization that are engaged in systemic reform efforts (McLaughlin & Talvert, 1993). Despite the significance of teachers’ collegial work, one study showed that 59% of those queried rated the quality of time for meeting with colleagues as “poor” or “not regularly available” (Choy et al., 1993).
A fragmented and disconnected environment is not just the characteristic of public schools but also that of many schools of education. Education schools should strive to create closer working relations among faculty and with the public schools and their associated communities.

One major benefit of establishing a community may be that members of the teacher education faculty can identify areas where change might be worthwhile, and then identify experts at their institutions who can form a cadre of available consultants for programs, institutions, and communities willing to consider making changes. These experts can be found not just inside the teacher education program but also in the community. The members in the multicultural teacher education community need to make a commitment to search for experts who can assist other members to be culturally competent.

A strong teacher education community committed to social justice would promote collaboration between faculty. For example, two or more faculty who share social justice values can share assignments between their teacher education courses, or faculty and students within a single course can restructure content and time to deepen affective and cognitive dimensions of multicultural knowledge. Moreover, teacher educators and classroom teachers can link their lessons. As a member of this community of social justice teacher education, classroom teachers, who are often lonely and isolated may then be able to work together, learn from each other, and continue their professional development. As a consequence, they will become more culturally competent mentor teachers who can support their student teachers’ competence in working with diverse children.
In the current teacher education situation, there is often a disjuncture between what happens at the university on one hand, and what happens in schools, on the other. University supervisors, while often feeling disenfranchised and disempowered within their teacher education programs, can nevertheless play a significant role in connecting the university with the schools. Here language plays a key role for student teachers in mediating the connections and interpretations about what they are learning and experiencing in both schools and universities. In this regard, a person with diverse background, as a cultural broker, should be hired as a university supervisor and s/he should be trained and supported to be the broker using active communications.

In the social justice teacher education community, university supervisors who have different interests and expertise should create spaces where they can work collaboratively and share different recourses. Such a community can be the place where each supervisor’s voice can be heard and be reflected in the teacher education curriculum.

Shared Practices for Social Justice

The social justice teacher education community has shared practices related to social justice across the whole community and with other communities as well. The social justice teacher education community doesn’t happen automatically by simply organizing a group of people with common interests. According to Wenger (1997), a community of practice is characterized by the sharing of practice, which signifies ‘doing’ in a historical and social context. Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) explain the term ‘practice’ as “a set of common approaches and shared standards that create a basis for action, communication, problem solving, performance, and accountability” (p.38). The practice described here allows for a situation where positive practices that do not fit
the predetermined framework are accepted and individual identity is maintained (Andrew, 1997). That is, even though there are already existing practices, new practices are introduced by newcomers and other individual members must be welcomed, explored, and negotiated. Wenger (1998) states, “…members gain their coherence not in and of themselves as specific activity, symbols or artifacts, but from the fact that they belong to the practice of a community pursuing an enterprise” (p. 82).

Because preservice teachers and mentor teachers do not always share common perceptions or definitions of the tasks, in a social justice teacher education community preservice teachers’ and mentor teachers’ learning takes place at the same time through the process of negotiating meanings. In a situated context, preservice teachers discuss their education courses and personal theories while they sort out what teaching and learning mean.

What kinds of approaches can teacher education share to prepare teacher candidates to become social justice educator? The establishment of a social justice teacher education community takes insightful planning, implementing, and continuous assessment. Various approaches suggested by researchers and theorists, for example, teaching from multiple perspectives, can be implemented by a teacher education community. All members in the social justice multicultural teacher education community should be included in discussions about their teacher education curriculum and instruction focusing on issues of diversity and equity in both formal and informal meetings. Villegas and Lucas (2002) suggest that when different voices are respected, members of the community learn from one another through dialogue. By listening to other members’ (teacher education colleagues, mentor teachers, supervisors, and other
members outside of the teacher education community) views on racism, classism, sexism, exceptionality, etc., teacher candidates are better able to understand the reality of teaching and learning in diverse settings. Using and sharing autobiography, self-study, and participatory and collective action research are productive practices to look at ourselves more systemically and critically and to include members into the social justice teacher education.

With those diverse practices, more comprehensive support systems across the entire program need to be in place to help preservice teachers understand and deal with the various situations better. Comprehensive support systems for teacher preparation in a form of coherent collaboration within and between communities (schools, universities, local and global communities) are needed. The Holmes model for Professional Development School (PDS) is a potential suggestive model. The Holmes Partnership has brought increased attention to both multicultural education dimensions and the creation of collaborative communities. A goal provided by this consortium is:

Actively work on equity, diversity and cultural competence in the programs of K-12 schools, higher education, and the education profession by recruiting, preparing, and sustaining faculty and students who reflect and deeply understand the implications of the rich diversity of cultural perspectives in this country and our global community (Partnership, 2000).

There are some critiques of the PDS model’s potential to address equity issues. Based on my previous experiences in PDS, it is my experience that there were more advantages than disadvantages. I believe that developing communities within a collaborative environment can play a powerful role in making a pathway to a just world.

Teacher education programs are already increasingly under pressure with all of the issues and challenges, but teacher education cannot fully function unless we seriously
discuss injustice in educational settings and make a commitment to restructure them. From now, teacher educators need to put more efforts to find solutions and alternative ways to promote social justice in our programs rather than finding more excuses or to blaming the victims.

Building a social justice teacher education community that is characterized with three elements—clearly shared goals, environment, and shared practices for social justice—is one way to improve our teacher education programs toward social justice, but it will offer a means for developing comprehensive conditions for transformation to construct social justice teacher education. A social justice teacher education community will provide an alternative approach for teachers to seriously examine and internalize social justice concepts. With the recognition that multiple perspectives are an integral part of the education of all teachers and that all teacher educators are responsible for it, all of the efforts should result in action by all aimed at positive multicultural change through a process that includes both individual and collective voices and efforts. The collections of actions will improve the education and the lives of children in this nation’s diverse society.

The questions: “Does learning to teach for social justice last long?” “Does this learning transfer to teaching other children and to other contexts?” were not answered. Yet, I believe that this is the most important question that teacher educators need to ask and try to investigate. I believe I walked the extra walk to prepare my participants to become social justice educator. I hope this extra walk helped them move toward teaching from a social justice perspective. I would like to finish this chapter with Sleeter and Grant (1988) argument:
Education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist deals…with oppression and social structural inequality based on race, social class, gender, and disability. It prepares future citizens (students) to reconstruct society so that it better serves the interests of all groups and especially those who are of color, poor, female, and/or disabled.
APENDICES
APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW ONE QUESTIONS

1. Brief description of your background (Family, childhood, work experiences, experiences with people from diverse background)
2. What kind of teacher do you want to be?
3. What does equity and social justice mean to you?
4. Have you had experiences related to social justice issue which you defined?
5. Is it important for you to learn and teach for and about social justice? Why?
6. How can we approach in our classrooms or our lives?
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW TWO QUESTIONS

1. What was the most important thing you learned from Social Studies and Pedagogy class?
2. When I raised issues of equity and social justice, how did you feel or think?
3. Has your definition of social justice/teaching diverse learners changed?
4. Has my supervision impacted on any of those changes? How?
5. Is there any difference between learning to teach subject matters and learning to teach diversity and equity/social justice?
6. What was your first impression of me?
7. Could you describe our relationship? You can use metaphor or any other ways.
8. Has our relationship changed?
9. Would it be better to learn to teach if we had different relationship?
10. Could you describe my supervision? Strengths and weaknesses?
11. What did you think when I asked you to collaborate with other colleagues?
12. What have you learned from this group discussion?
13. How my comments about collaboration (co-planning, teaching) influenced you?
14. Do you feel connection among us? How did/does this relationship affect our learning?
14. Do you think our relationship (who I am) has influenced on learning equity and social justice or vise versa? How?

15. What can we do to enhance our learning especially about social justice?
LIST OF REFERENCES


