TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

DISSERTATION

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

By

Sung Choon Park, M.Ed.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
2008

Doctoral Examination Committee:

Dr. Cynthia Tyson, Advisor

Dr. Merry Merryfield

Dr. Antoinette Errante

Approved by

____________________________

Advisor

College of Education and Human Ecology
ABSTRACT

Social justice discourses have been approached in two distinctive ways. One is the logocentric approach that begins deductively with an ideal concept of social justice, and the other is the grounded approach that focuses inductively on concrete examples of social injustice. Accordingly, when researchers and educators deal with social justice issues, they are inevitably engaged in a cacophony of onto-epistemological issues between the reality of social injustice and the orientation to social justice. Although there is an increasing body of research on social justice education, it is notable that few researchers have conducted research on how teachers understand social justice and how it is related to their pedagogical practices.

I conducted a qualitative study to investigate how teachers understood social injustice and constructed a concept of social justice and how it was related to their pedagogical practices for social justice. In order to conduct a study in a socially just way I made consistent efforts to bring social justice issues into methodology. My study is based on an assumption that research is trustworthy when it authorizes the power of participants who bring knowledge into the study (Foucault, 1984). I also paid special attentions to my writing as an ethical re-presentation of what I learned about and from social justice educators. In this study I presented the findings both in their individual and collective voices.
My participants consisted of eight community-nominated teachers in K-12 educational settings. The process of community nomination was not only to limit my power as a researcher, but also to authorize the community in selecting participants. My role as a researcher was not to take “the imperialist position” (Smith & Deemer, 2000, p. 890), but to build a new community of social justice educators. I was then able to “walk into” the community and “work with” participants. Data collected from each teacher consisted of 5 semi-structured 25-55 minute-long interviews, 8-11 classroom observations, 1-2 school or community observations and my reflective journals for a period of 15 weeks. I made an inductive, constant and comparative data analysis until patterns emerged (Merriam, 1998).

The primary findings from the study revealed that teachers constructed a dialectical concept of social justice by prioritizing experiential and empathic knowledge over the logical idea of social justice. In addition, their pedagogical practices revealed that teachers centered on empirical knowledge of social injustice from everyday lives, understood teaching as social action for challenging social injustice, and implemented community-based projects by enhancing students’ critical consciousness, empathic awareness, and the sense of social agency. This study implies that teachers’ understanding of social injustice is essential in teaching for social justice.
Dedicated to my MOTHER who \textit{hoped} to be a teacher
Vita

1971 ......................................................Born in Samchuk, South Korea

1994 ...................................................... B. A. Seoul National University
                              Seoul, Korea

1995 – 1996 .............................................Graduate Teaching Associate
                              Seoul, Korea

1996 ...................................................... M. Ed. Seoul National University
                              Seoul, Korea

2001 ......................................................Lecture, Sook-Myung Women’s University
                              Seoul, Korea

                              The Ohio State University

PUBLICATIONS

social justice. In E. Heilman (Ed.). **Social Studies and Diversity Teacher**
Education: What We Do and Why We Do It. New York, Routledge.

Theory. In J. Arthur, I. Davies, & C. Hahn (Eds.). **Handbook of education for**
citizenship and democracy (pp. 29-39). Thousand Oaks: CA, SAGE.

for the Social Studies.

FIELD OF STUDY

Major Field: Education
    Social Studies and Global Education
    Social Justice Education
    Qualitative Research
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapters</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vita</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of tables</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology and Research Design</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms in the Study</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theories of Social Justice</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logocentric Theory of Justice</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grounded Theory of Social Justice</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemological Criteria of Social Injustice</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential Knowledge</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathic Knowledge</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice as Deconstructive Moral Formation</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deconstructive Necessary Reversal</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructive Moral Formation</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogies for Social Justice</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Multicultural Pedagogies</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive, Affective and Action Components</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toward Socially Just Research</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ontological Restoration of Social Injustice into Research .................................................. 64
Epistemological Resistance to the World of Oppression .............................................. 67
Methodological Action for Empowerment ................................................................. 74
Situating Myself Methodologically ................................................................. 77
Research design ..................................................................................................... 80
Participants .......................................................................................................... 80
Community Nomination ......................................................................................... 82
Data Collection ..................................................................................................... 86
Data Analysis ......................................................................................................... 93
Writing and Ethical Re-presentation ..................................................................... 95
Establishment of Trustworthiness ......................................................................... 97

4. LEARNING ABOUT SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATORS: IN THEIR OWN VOICES ............................................. 101
Introduction .......................................................................................................... 101
Charo’s Biography ................................................................................................. 103
Ellen’s Biography .................................................................................................. 108
Helen’s Biography ................................................................................................. 115
Hriso’s Biography .................................................................................................. 120
Jean’s Biography .................................................................................................. 125
Martha’s Biography ................................................................................................. 131
Tom’s Biography .................................................................................................. 135
Troy’s Biography .................................................................................................. 141

5. LEARNING FROM SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATORS: FINDINGS IN COLLECTIVE VOICES ............................................................. 147
Introduction .......................................................................................................... 147
Everyone Experiences It. .......................................................................................... 149
Unequal Diversity and Diverse Inequality .......................................................... 149
Powerlessness and Privilege .................................................................................. 152
We Step into Other People’s Shoes. ......................................................................... 156
Empathy: Through and Beyond Experience ....................................................... 156
Empathic Distress and Anger ................................................................................ 158
You Have To Feel It. ............................................................................................... 163
Authenticity in Identifying Social Injustice .......................................................... 163
Feeling from Social Injustice Toward Social Justice ............................................ 166
What in the World Is Social Justice? ..................................................................... 169
Social Justice as Goal and Process ..................................................................... 169
Dialectical Conceptualization of Social Justice .................................................. 173
List of tables

TABLES

2.1 Two approaches to social justice ...................................................... 29
2. 2 Strategy of deconstruction and social justice education ..................... 40
3. 1 Interview date and time................................................................. 90
3. 2 Observation dates........................................................................... 92
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

“Is our place just here? Is there justice here? If not, how can we fix it?” (Charo on Feb 28, 2007) “We see so much injustice. I faced it. Everyone faces it” (Troy on February 27, 2007). “If you skip social injustice, you wouldn’t have any reason to teach for social justice” (Helen on May 22, 2007). “I think that others may see social injustices just as clearly as I do. They don’t feel compelled to do anything about it though. I see it as my responsibility” (Ellen on May 16, 2007). These are quotes from my participants who are community-nominated social justice educators. Not surprisingly, they are experts in teaching about social injustice in their pedagogical practices for social justice.

Researchers and educators are inevitably engaged in a cacophony of ontological issues when they deal with social justice issues. In other words, we examine epistemological orientation to social justice in an ontologically unjust world. Accordingly, social justice has been examined in its relation to dehumanization, oppression, and domination (Freire, 1970; Young, 1990; Collins, 1991, 1998; Adams et al., 1997, 2000). For example, feminist researchers conduct research for the purpose
of correcting the invisibility and distortion of female experience in an already gendered society (Lather, 1988, 2004; Reinharz, 1992).

There is an increasing body of research on social justice education (Adams et al., 1997, 2000; Bigelow & Peterson, 2002; Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Tyson, 2002; Gutstein & Peterson, 2005; Wade, 2007). However, it is important to note that few researchers conduct research on how teachers perceive teaching for social justice, and how it is related to their pedagogical practices. In this study, I investigate teachers’ ontological understandings of social injustice, epistemological orientations to social justice, and pedagogical practices for social justice.

There are two clear and distinct theoretical approaches to social justice discourses. One is a deductive approach that employs an ideal concept of justice. The other is an inductive approach that begins with socially unjust realities. I call the former a logocentric approach and the latter a grounded approach. The logocentric approach begins with an ideal concept of social justice and then applies it to the socially unjust reality in a procedural way (Rawls, 1971, 1993; Barry, 1989; Ekanga, 2005; Alexander, 2005). The grounded approach focuses on concrete examples of social injustice and aims for a socially just world by challenging social structure and institutional injustices (Freire, 1970; Young, 1990; Adams et al., 1997; Collins, 1998; Wade, 2007).
John Rawls’s (1971) theory of justice, a logocentric approach, has been extensively employed in the field of social sciences including education. It is built on the concept of the Original Position that is “a purely hypothetical situation characterized so as to lead to a certain conception of justice” (Rawls, 1971, p. 12). When his theory is applied to education, school becomes “an institution with a basic function of maintaining and transmitting … the consensual values of society” (Kohlberg, 1967, p. 165). Justice is understood as “the basic valuing process that underlies each person’s capacity for moral judgment” (Power, Higgins, and Kohlberg, 1989, p. 15).

This concept of justice ignores the ontological reality of social injustice that takes place behind the veil of ignorance (Du Bois, 1903/1989). According to the grounded theorists, the necessity of teaching for social justice emerges from historical and current examples of social injustices (Tyson & Park, 2006, 2008). Researchers reveal social injustices by showing diverse inequalities and unequal diversities. For example, race/racism is a central form of oppression (Omi & Winant, 1993; Bell, 1992; Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001); Socio-economic status reproduces the hierarchical structure and consolidates the status quo (NCES, 2001, Wirt, et al., 2005; Giroux & McLaren, 1989; Bowles & Gintis, 1989; Finn, 1999); Masculinity constrains on femininity (Collins, 1991, 1998; Hooks, 1994; Harding, 1987; Olsen, 2000); Homophobia causes social stigmatization (Gamson,
2000; Kitzinger, 2004; Kiersky, 2004); and ableism oppresses people who have mental, emotional, and physical disabilities (Pugach & Seidl, 1996, 1998; Rausher & McClintock, 1997; Chouinard & Crooks, 2005).

Social injustice is prevalent in cultural, historical, economical, social, political, and ideological dimensions. Therefore, constraints on social justice have been explained with concepts such as structural violence (Galtung, 1975), hegemony (Gramsci, 1975), and the culture of power (Delpit, 1988). Furthermore, social injustice has been explained either by constructing an account of a separate system of oppression for each oppressed group such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, anti-Semitism, ableism, classism, and also in multiple issues (Adams et al., 1997, 2000), or by describing criteria for determining whether individuals and groups are oppressed (Young, 1990; Bell, 1997).

Due to the uncompromisable approaches of social justice discourses, the task of defining social justice is a “formidable challenge” (Wade, 2007, p. 4). It is full of “complex, frequently contradictory, and relational aspects” (North, 2006, p. 528). Although it is true, I attempt to address both social justice and social injustice within a theoretical framework by employing Derrida’s concept of differéance and his strategies of deconstruction. Social justice is neither an a priori concept nor a hypothetical algorithm. Instead, it is a dialectical concept in its relation to social injustice. Social justice is a possibility of deconstruction (Derrida, 1992).
Derrida (1982), a poststructural linguist, utilizes the concept of differance, which “unceasingly dislocates itself in a chain of differing and deferring substitutions” (p. 26). In other words, the meaning of a word is “constantly deferred because the word can have meaning only in relation to its difference from other words within a given system of language” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 291). Consequently, “any positive representation of a concept in language … rests on the negative representation of its ‘opposite’” (Cheek, 2000, p. 416).

In this context, the concept of social justice relies on its relation to the opposite – social injustice. Not only does the concept of differance disentangle the paradox of addressing both social injustice and social justice, but it also makes social justice education both a process and a goal (Bell, 1997). In his book Of Grammatology, Derrida (1976) deconstructs the hierarchy between the written being (writing) and the being written (speech) by focusing on the binary opposition, showing how these opposites are hierarchically related, subverting the hierarchy temporarily, and then seeing the concepts in non-hierarchical meanings. Social justice researchers and educators prioritize social injustice, privilege the voices of the oppressed, and examine both social justice and social injustice.

In my study, I privilege experiential knowledge of social injustice because it is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding social injustice (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). There are three criteria used for experiential knowledge of
social injustice: historicity (Freire, 1970/2003; Giroux, 1994), positionality (Collins, 1991; Richardson, 2000), and lived experiences (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Merryfield, 1998, 2000a). Empathic knowledge is also important because it is a way of seeing through and beyond experiences of social injustice (Noddings, 1984; Hoffman, 1990, 2000). In particular, empathic distress and empathy-based anger extend experiential knowledge and evoke emotional responses (Vitaglione and Barnett, 2003; Hoffman, 2000).

In the center of my study are critical theory and poststructuralism. Critical theory is powerful in disrupting and challenging the status quo, which enables me to investigate teachers’ understanding of social injustice. Poststructuralism enables me to validate teachers’ complex epistemologies to social justice. As a critical poststructuralist, I believe that language is not a neutral conduit of reflecting the world, but it is a critical apparatus to construct a new reality (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000; Richardson, 2000). A hybridity of these two theories contributes to deconstruct the oppressive nature of the world and, at the same time, construct a socially just world.

Teaching for social justice is a political and moral project. It aims for a necessary deconstructive reversal and a constructive moral formation. The deconstruction of social injustice and construction of social justice are inseparable projects. Based on Derrida’s (1992) view of justice as a possibility of deconstruction,
social justice education becomes both a process and a goal. The possibility of social justice is increased by what Bigelow et al.’s (2000) calls “a rainbow of resistance.” In the process of permanent liberation, there is a call for the coalition of all people (Freire, 1970/2003). According to Bell (1997), social justice education as a process is “democratic and participatory, inclusive and affirming of human agency and human capacities for working collaboratively to create change” (p. 4). Social justice education as a goal gives “full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs” (p. 3). Teaching for social justice has the potential to “prepare citizens who are sophisticated in their understanding of diversity and group interaction, able to critically evaluate social institutions, and committed to working democratically with diverse others” (Adams et al., 1997, p. xv).

My study is grounded on a postmodern proposition that any approach is always unjust unless it filters through the lenses of those who experience social injustices in their everyday lives. The underlying assumption is that teaching for social justice begins with teachers’ solid understanding of social injustice. In other words, the teachers’ experiential and empathic knowledge of social injustice is essential to teaching for social justice, and consequently implementing it in their pedagogical practices for social justice.
Research Questions

In my study I investigate eight teachers’ perceptions of teaching for social justice by examining their knowledge of social injustice, their attitudes toward social justice, and their pedagogical practices for social justice. This research is an investigation of teachers’ onto-epistemological assumptions of the world, through which I examine their pedagogical practices. This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of teachers’ understandings of social injustice?
2. How do teachers construct the concept of social justice?
3. What are the characteristics of their pedagogical practices for social justice?

Methodology and Research Design

A Qualitative Inquiry

My study employs a qualitative inquiry approach. It allows me to make sense of the complexities in teachers’ perceptions of teaching for social justice in the natural settings. I choose qualitative methods over quantitative methods “because they are more adaptive to dealing with … multiple realities; because such methods expose more directly the nature of the transaction between investigator and respondent … and hence make easier an assessment of the extent to which the phenomenon is described in terms of … the investigator’s own posture; and because qualitative methods are
more sensitive to and adaptable to the many mutually shaping influences and value patterns that may be encountered” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 40). Employing critical theory and poststructuralism, I aim to challenge the logocentric notion and approach to social justice and advocate a grounded approach to social justice. While the former is more challenging issues of power (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000), the latter is more engaged in advocating new meanings through reflexive multiple voices and writings (Richardson, 2000).

I aim to conduct research in a socially just way. For this purpose, I reflect critically on power relationships between the researcher and the participants, which enables me to build a community of social justice educators. To create my pool of participants, I selected teachers through community nominations. Not only does this limit my power, but also authorizes the community in the process of selecting participants (Foster, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1995). My role as a researcher is not to take “the imperialist position” (Smith & Deemer, 2000, p. 890), but to build a new community of social justice educators. I am then able to “walk into” the community and “work with” participants. My study deploys critical literary devices to “re-create lived experience and evoke emotional responses” (Richardson, 2000, p. 931).

In addition, my study aims to be a “catalyst to support and complement larger struggles for liberation” (Tyson, 2006, p. 49). In my efforts of building socially just methodology, I reflect on Patricia Hill Collins’s (1998) epistemological criteria for
critical social theory in her book Fighting words: Black Women and the Search for Justice: 1) Does it speak the truth to people about the reality of their lives, 2) Does it equip people to resist oppression? And 3) Does it move people to struggle? (p. 198 – 199). My study advocates “varying degrees of social action, from the overturning of specific unjust practices to radical transformation of entire societies” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 174). During the course of the study, the research design is constantly evolving in accordance with the effort to carry out a socially just project.

Participants

Participants in this study were “holders and creators of knowledge” (Delgado Bernal, 2002, p. 107). Therefore, the decision to participate in my study was not to be a passive informant, but to be a new knowledge creator. Because of this, I intended not only to deconstruct the power relationship between the selector and the selected, but also to construct a we-context (Fontanna & Frey, 000; Errante, 1998). Strictly speaking, the community nomination was not for the selection of participants, but for the selection of research and a researcher. Consequently, “the line between researcher and subject is blurred, and control over representation is increasingly shared” (Gergen & Gergen, 2000, p. 1035).

For a period of three weeks beginning January 25, 2007 to February 15, 2007, I asked 35 educational professionals to recommend to me teachers who they thought
were teaching for social justice. The community consisted of teachers, administrators, and professors who worked in the Professional Development School Network or taught social justice oriented courses at a teacher education institution. In considering names of social justice educators, nominators were asked to consider curricula work, mentoring relationships, and community projects. I did not provide any exclusive criteria such as race, gender, or teaching subject because my study was not for exclusion, but for inclusion. After the community nomination process, they volunteered to contribute to an effort for social justice education and research. My participants consisted of eight teachers at eight different schools from five school districts and one charter school. These schools were widely spread in the metropolitan area in the Midwest (See Chapter 3).

Data Collection

Data collection in this study aims to accumulate both knowledge of social injustice and pedagogical practices for social justice. It is to open time-space for moral sense of social justice by privileging participants’ marginalized experiences. Data in this study aims to change the world instead of describe it (Popkewitz, 1998; Tyson, 2003a). Before data collection, all participants were given my autobiography, information on the study, and all semi-structured interview questions. Data collected from each teacher consisted of 5 semi-structured 25-55 minute-long interviews, 9-11
classroom observations, 1-2 school or community observations, and my research reflective journals from February until June 2007.

Interviewing was essential to this study because it enabled me to obtain descriptions of participants’ onto-epistemological assumptions of teaching for social justice (Kvale, 1996; Fontana & Frey, 2000). It was the process of restoring experiential knowledge of social injustice and constructing their perceptions of social justice. Interviews were conducted with open-ended and semi-structured questions. The themes for the individual interviews are: 1) background information about the participants and the settings, 2) experiences of social injustice, 3) understandings of social justice, 4) pedagogies of social justice education, and 5) social justice projects (See Appendix A for interview questions).

Observations in my study made it possible to understand “the inponderabilia of actual life” which is “a series of phenomena of great importance which cannot possibly be recorded by questioning or computing documents but have to be observed in their full actuality” (Malinowski, 1922/1961, p. 18). In order to build ethnographic authority my observation notes were thickly described for “fairly accurate renditions of what I see, hear, feel, taste, and so on” (Richardson, 2000, p. 941). My observations had three different settings: classroom, school, and community. My observations were inevitably time- and context-dependent (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
Researcher reflective journals were voice recorded or written in order to connect myself with the people interviewed and the world observed. My reflective writing included “uncensored feeling statements about the research, the people I am talking to, my doubts, my anxieties, my pleasures” (Richardson, 2000, p. 941). My journals contained substantial data “through and beyond social scientific naturalisms” (Richardson, 2000, p. 930).

Data Analysis

This study employed the constant comparative analysis method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Patton, 1990; Merriam, 1998). According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993), it “combines inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison of all social incidents observed and coded” (p. 256). Throughout the period of data collection and analysis I lived, played, and conversed with data persistently going back and forth when patterns emerged. There were on-going interactions between researcher and participants and, at the same time, between the people in the research and the world around them. I coded data into categories both manually and electronically. Both methods have their advantages. Analyzing data manually enhanced my continual interactions with data, on the other hand, using Nvivo 7.0, a qualitative software program was an efficient way to negotiate the data coding and
retrieving processes. The two separate processes of analysis were useful in producing additional comparison and building credibility with the multiple check processes.

Writing and Ethical Re-presentation

The experiences of the participants were unfolded to me through verbal and non-verbal presentations of their own worlds. Therefore, while I was writing, I constantly reflected on the question, “Can [I] ever hope to speak authentically of the experience of the Other, or an Other?” (Lincoln and Denzin, 2000, p. 1050) I considered my writing as an ethical re-presentation of what I learned about my participants and from my participants. I especially felt the weight of this responsibility because they sometimes brought up emotional and painful feelings from their own lives, and the lives of their loved ones during interviews.

My writing resulted from constant reflections on the “questions of responsibility-for-whom will, and should, forever be paramount” (Fine, et al., 2000, p. 125). I paid special attentions to the nature of narrative, my role in storytelling, and ethics of speaking about others. This research was based on feminist communitarian ethics in which multivocal and cross-cultural representation, moral discernment, and resistance and empowerment were critical (Christians, 2000).
Significance of the Study

In this study I investigate a rarely researched area in social justice education – teachers’ perceptions of teaching for social justice. The significance of this study is found in its theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical implications of social justice education. Theoretically, it is a hybrid of critical theory and poststructuralism, through which I accounted for ontological understandings of social injustice and epistemological orientations to social justice. Social justice is neither an a priori concept nor a hypothetical algorithm. Instead, it is a dialectical concept in its relation to social injustice. Social justice research not only deconstructs the oppressive nature of the world, but it also reconstructs a socially just world. I went beyond the textual deconstruction and aimed to deconstruct the oppressive nature of the world by making intertextual connections between the text and the world (Freire, 1970/2003, Tyson, 2002). It is not a logocentric but a grounded approach to social justice.

I aligned my methodology with teachers’ ontologically understandings of social injustice to their epistemological orientations to social justice. In bridging a “socially just” methodology with “socially unjust” ontology, I employed Derrida’s concept of “differance.” According to Derrida, it “makes the opposition of presence and absence possible” (1976, p. 143) and “unceasingly dislocates itself in a chain of differing and deferring substitutions” (1982, p. 26). Not only does the concept of differance disentangle the paradox of addressing both social injustice and social justice,
but also it makes social justice education both a process and a goal. My study politicized methodological considerations of value-laden research. I proposed two basic principles or guidelines for a socially just methodology: A necessary deconstructive reversal and a constructive moral formation.

Pedagogically, the results of this study could contribute to social justice education by relating teachers’ understanding of social injustice to their pedagogical practices for social justice. Most of all, the teachers’ solid understanding of social injustice were essential to teaching for social justice. Teachers brought their experiential and empathic knowledge of social injustice into their lessons and interviews. They built socially just classroom environments, developed socially just curriculum, and empowered students by providing more voices and more power. They result from experiential and empathic knowledge of social injustice.

**Limitations of the study**

The limitations of this study are associated with a qualitative inquiry approach. The eight participants in this study are neither representatives of all American teachers nor of all social justice educators. Due to my situationality in a Midwestern metropolitan in the mid 2000s and my positionality as a doctoral student in a teacher education institution, the processes of nominating communities and selecting participants are time- and context-dependent. Regardless of my efforts to build
trustworthiness in this study, it cannot be generalized. My situatedness in this study can be viewed as potential source for biases and another limitation of my study. However, my study is also benefited from my insider-outsider perspective into social justice education in American schools (See chapter 3).

**Terms in the Study**

It is critical to clarify the elusive terms because language does not reflect social reality, but produces meaning and creates social reality (Nieto, 2000; Richardson, 2000). First, I use the term teaching for social justice for all educational efforts in unveiling the world of oppression and transforming it into a just world for the purpose of empowering all peoples. Teaching for social justice is used interchangeably with social justice education. The term social justice is not a conceptual invention, but a binary opposition to concrete realities of social injustice. The meaning of social justice is never present in itself but always deferred, delayed and put off within a non-hierarchical structure of difference between social justice and social injustice (Derrida, 1976; Powell, 1997). Thus, the terms social justice and teaching for social justice are differentiated from those in the logocentric approach (Young, 1990).

Second, the terms social injustice and oppression are used interchangeably. While the concept of social injustice is closer to an ontological reality of the world, the concept of oppression is more proximate to an epistemological process of knowing the
unjust world. However, epistemology and ontology are not separable in a world where socially unjust realities are continuously uncovered through complex epistemologies of the marginalized people.

Third, I reject using the terms people of color and minorities. Instead, I use the terms marginalized people and the oppressed. The term people of color has been used improperly not only because it excludes “white” as a kind of color, but also because it misleads people not to see the color-based privileges. The term minority is a “pejorative classification” (Nieto, 2000, p. 28) and, at the same time, it is applicable only to a parochial context. For example, Asians do not belong to the minority category in the global context, and the ratio of majority to minority is changing rapidly (the U.S. Department of Commerce, 1996). Instead, the term marginalization or oppression shows the processes of decentering certain groups of people in a non-hierarchical structure. Otherwise, with special attention to historical and cultural contexts I follow common usage of terms that scholars and researchers have used.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

In this chapter I review literature in social justice and its relationship to pedagogical practices. The literature reviewed in this chapter is in accordance with my research questions. I begin with identifying two approaches to social justice discourses. While the logocentrical approach focuses on an ideal and hypothetical concept of justice in a deductive way, the grounded approach begins with examples of social injustice and aims inductively to build a socially just world.

I then explore epistemological criteria of social injustice by examining experiential and empathic knowledge. Experiential knowledge of social injustice is based on historicity, positionality and lived experiences. Privileging experiential knowledge is not only an ontological restoration of the socially unjust reality, but also an epistemological resistance to the oppressive nature of the world. In addition, although empathic knowledge of social injustice is not sufficient, it is necessary for people from mainstream cultures to understand social injustice by taking the marginalized people’s perspectives.
Next, I approach social justice as both a deconstructive necessary reversal and a constructive moral formation. Deconstruction of social injustice and construction of social justice are interconnected projects. Social justice becomes both process and goal based on Derrida’s view of justice as a possibility of deconstruction and Freire’s concept of praxis. Social justice is a political and moral project for empowerment.

Finally, I review critical multicultural pedagogies such as culturally relevant teaching, Critical Race Theory and critical pedagogies. I also examine cognitive, affective and action components in social justice education. Social justice educators aim to increase students’ understandings of, attitudes toward and action for social justice. Teaching for social justice is a critical social project for transformation and empowerment.

**Theories of Social Justice**

**Logocentric Theory of Justice**

Justice is one of the most fundamental concepts in ethics, politics and education. Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle understand justice as social order and geometric proportion of equality. Plato’s theory of justice goes beyond specific examples of justice such as “speaking the truth and repaying what one has borrowed” (331d) and “treating friends well and enemies badly” (332d). In *Republic*, he illustrates the principle of order and unity in society (Shields, 1941). In
Nicomachean Ethics Aristotle talks about justice by addressing goodness and badness. According to him, “Goodness is one, but badness manifold” (p. 65). He argues that what each person receives is directly proportional to his or her merit. Traditional theorists of justice explain multiple realities with an overarching concept of justice.

Within Eurowestern philosophical tradition, the concept of justice has been explained through “the common good” (Bobhouse, 1922), “equality” (Frankena, 1962), “fairness” (Rawls, 1971, 1993) and “impartiality, choice and reciprocity” (Barry, 1989). According to Bobhouse (1922) justice is “purely dependent on, or derivative from, the Common Good” (p. 119). By negating typical utilitarian and meritarian approaches to justice, William Frankena (1962) holds the conception of social justice as “the equal treatment of all persons, except as inequality is required by relevant – that is, just-making – considerations or principles” (p. 13).

A modern political philosopher Brian Barry (1989) finds two features of common ground between Plato’s and modern theories of justice. “First, they have in common the idea that questions of justice arise when there is a conflict of interest between different people or groups of people. Second, they also share the idea that justice is what everyone could in principle reach a rational agreement on” (p. 7). However, he distinguishes “justice as impartiality” from “justice as mutual advantage” (Barry, p. 8). Rejecting Plato’s justice as “simply rational prudence pursued in contexts where the cooperation … of other people is a condition of our being able to
get what we want” (Barry, 1989, p. 6–7), he advocates Rawls’s (1971) theory of justice that is context-free and impartial to everyone under the veil of ignorance. According to Barry (1989), “justice should be the content of an agreement that would be reached by rational people under conditions that do not allow for bargaining power to be translated into advantage” (p. 7).

Although I recognize Rawls’s and Barry’s efforts of building a general theory of justice that applies to everyone in any society, I argue that their theories of justice are not different from traditional Eurowestern theories of justice. It is because, as Barry (1989) says, both theories are interested in “the defensibility of unequal relations between people” (Barry, 1989, p. 3). The concept of justice cannot defense the complexity and totality of social injustice. For this reason, I regard all these theoretical approaches as logocentric theories of justice because they focus on a fabricated, hypothetical idealist concept of justice in explaining socially unjust reality.

It is John Rawls (1971, 1993) who theorizes justice as fairness in institutional contexts within political liberalism. The two principles of justice are:

a. “Each person has an equal right to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties which is compatible with a similar scheme of all.”
b. “Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions. First, they must be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; and second, they must be to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society” (Rawls, 1993, p. 291).
He strongly believes that the two principles of justice are “perfectly credible” (Rawls, 1971, p. 183). Based on Kant’s view of means/ends, he favors the two principles of justice over the utilitarian principle of average utility. He utilizes the concept of the original position in order to “set up a fair procedure so that any principles agreed to will be just” and to “use the notion of pure procedural justice as a basis of justice” (Rawls, 1971, p. 136). It is a device “where free and rational individuals arrive to an agreement for the implementation of principles of justice” (Ekanga, 2005, p. 34). According to Rawls (1993), the original position is a prerequisite because “the conditions for a fair agreement on the principles of political justice between free and equal persons must eliminate the bargaining advantages that inevitably arise within the background institutions of any society from cumulative social, historical, and natural tendencies” (Rawls, 1993, p. 23).

There are two exemplary applications of Rawls’s theory of justice to socially unjust reality. One is Alexander’s (2005) investigation of racial issues in the United States. Based on his understanding of justice as “the allocation of recourses and burdens fairly” (p. 120), he insists that African Americans receive less justice compared with other racial groups of people. The other is Ekanga’s (2005) examination of the relevance of Rawls’s justice to three African countries. His study focuses on the means of distributing scarce resources and ameliorating the situation of the least advantaged. Although both applications of Rawls’s theory of justice to
African Americans and to African countries have significant meanings in procedural and distributive issues, it tends to “ignore the social structure and institutional context” (Young, 1990, p. 15).

The logocentric emphasis on the concept of justice shows an example of how a binary set of justice and injustice serves for hierarchy in language and reality (Derrida, 1976, 1978). It comes from the “Eurocentric, Enlightenment paradigm” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 159). The preference of the conceptual justice comes from logocentricity. However, considering all forms of oppression take place in socially unjust realities, Rawls’s theory of justice built on the concept of “under the veil of ignorance” cannot address socially unjust realities what Du Bois (1903/1989) called “behind the veil of ignorance” in which all forms of oppression take place.

According to Collins (1991), “[the] attempt to adopt an impartial and universal perspective on reality leaves behind the particular perspectives from which it begins, and reconstructs them as mere appearances as opposed to the reality that objective reason apprehends” (p. 102). “The ideal of impartiality is an idealist fiction. It is impossible to adopt an unsituated moral point of view, and if a point of view is situated, then it cannot be universal, it cannot stand apart from and understand all points of view” (p. 104).
Grounded Theory of Social Justice

A grounded theory of justice begins with socially unjust realities per se. It moves people to struggle “not just because they either think justice is logical or see pragmatic reasons for pursuing it, but because they believe that achieving it is the right thing to do” (Collins, 1998, p. 244). This approach to social justice is to “first focus on what is wrong before embarking upon a program based on what is right” (Simon, 1995, p. 24). Social injustice is not abnormality or breakdown of justice (Shklar, 1990). Necessity of social justice does not come from aberration of social justice but from clear presence of social injustice. According to a political philosopher Thomas Simon (1995), injustice takes priority over justice.

The unjust reality of the world has been explained with the concepts such as hegemony, structural violence, culture of power, etc. For example, hegemony is the “spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group” (Gramsci, 1975, p. 12). Although it was originally used to explain why the working class wasn’t necessarily revolutionary from a Marxist perspective, the meaning is now extended to culture. Johan Galtung (1975) used the notion of structural violence that constrains on human potential caused by economic and political structure. Culture of power also enacts in a classroom and prevents unprivileged children from mainstream culture
Unequal diversity and diverse inequalities have been revealed through cultural incongruities among different racial, ethnic, gender, and language groups of people. According to Gay (2000) the greatest of all obstacles to diversity is mainstream ethnocentrism. The imposition of Eurocentric values and orientation is “morally suspect and pedagogically unsound” (p. 208). Asante (1992) ruthlessly criticizes the discovery mentality of ethnocentrism because it ignores “historicity of the indigenous people” (p. 157). Young (1990) calls ethnocentrism cultural imperialism that “involves the universalization of a dominant group’s experience and culture, and its establishments as the norm” (p. 59). A chief consequence of cultural ethnocentrism is the feelings of marginalization among Latino/a students (Zanger, 1993; Nieto, 2001), African American students (Delpit, 1988; Lee & Slaughter-Defoe, 2000), American Indian students (Klug & Whitfield, 2003; Mohatt & Erickson, 1981), Asian American students (Terinashi, 2002), and immigrant children (Olneck, 2001).

Diversity should be “culturally validating and affirming” (Gay, 2000, p. 29). However, guided by a model of deficiency, social scientists and educators repeatedly attempted to assimilate and acculturate marginalized people to the mainstream culture (Yosso, 2002; Ford et al., 2000; Gay, 2000; Olneck, 2001; Giroux, 1999; Howard, 2003; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002a). The idea of assimilation
exposes the arbitrariness of group-based social distinctions, presents a standard of equality and justice, and maximizes personal choice (Young, 1990). Although diversity has been emphasized for its contribution to social justice, cultural mismatches between mainstream and marginalized cultures illustrate the existing prevalence of social injustice (Banks & Banks, 2001; Nieto, 2000).

Social injustice has been theorized either by constructing an account of separate system of oppression for each oppressed group such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, anti-Semitism, ableism, classism and multiple issues (Adams et al., 1997, 2000), or by describing criteria for determining whether individuals and groups are oppressed (Young, 1990; Bell, 1997).

First, each form of oppression is defined as following: racism is “the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominance” (Lorde, 1992, p. 496), sexism is “the cultural, institutional, and individual set of belief and practices that privilege men, subordinate women, and denigrate values and practices associated with women” (Goodman & Schapiro, 1997, p. 117), heterosexism is “the individual, institutional, and societal/cultural beliefs and practices based on the belief that heterosexuality is the only normal and acceptable sexual orientation” (Griffin & Harro, 1997, p. 146), classism is “the institutional, cultural, and individual set of practices and beliefs that assign differential value to people according to their socio-economic class; and an economic system which creates excessive inequality and
causes basic human needs to go unmet” (Yeskel & Leondar-Wright, 1997, p. 238), and ableism that is “a pervasive system of discrimination and exclusion that oppresses people who have mental, emotional, and physical disabilities” (Rauscher & McClintock, 1997, p. 198).

Second, Young (1990) moves from a conception of justice to the oppressive nature of the world. Oppression refers to “the vast and deep injustices some groups suffer as a consequence of often unconscious assumptions and reactions of well-meaning people in … the normal processes of everyday life” (Young, 1990, p. 41). She characterizes five faces of oppression as exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. Bell (1997) also explains features of oppression by describing its pervasive, restricting, hierarchical, complex, multiple, cross-cutting, and internalized characteristics.

A grounded theory of justice is both political and moral. Young (1990) understands that the concept of justice coincides with the concept of the political. Social justice concerns the degree to which a society contains and supports the institutional conditions necessary to oppose oppression and domination. Her theory of justice is a political project of challenging institutional constraints on self-development and self-determination. Collins (1998) sees justice as “specific cultural material for exploring [the] more general question of moral authority for struggle” (p. 199). This approach to justice brings moral commitment to the struggle (Bell, 1997;
Applebaum, 2004). The following table shows differences between logocentric theories of justice and grounded theories of justice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Logocentric</th>
<th>Grounded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approach</strong></td>
<td>Deductive</td>
<td>Inductive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Starting point</strong></td>
<td>Ideal concept of justice</td>
<td>Concrete examples of injustice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main concept</strong></td>
<td>Fairness and impartiality</td>
<td>Oppression and domination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emphasis</strong></td>
<td>Redistribution / Procedure</td>
<td>Resistance / Recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td>Universal and culturally</td>
<td>Historically and culturally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>neutral</td>
<td>specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perspective</strong></td>
<td>Everyone’s perspective</td>
<td>Perspectives of the oppressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Representative Theorists</strong></td>
<td>Rawls (1971)</td>
<td>Young (1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theoretical background</strong></td>
<td>Political liberalism</td>
<td>Postmodern critical theories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2.1 Two approaches to social justice**

**Epistemological Criteria of Social Injustice**

Alternative knowledge claims are routinely ignored, discredited, or simply absorbed and marginalized in existing paradigms (Collins, 1991). However, experiential knowledge of marginalized people is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding and analyzing social injustice (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). The epistemologies of emancipation problematize dominant ideology by crystallizing multifaceted oppression from the oppressed perspectives (Schurich & Young, 1997; Tyson, 1998, 2006; Parker & Lynn, 2002). It is especially important because teaching for social justice “is not solely based on victimization, but also on struggle and survival” (Tyson, 1998, p. 22).
Privileging the experiential knowledge is not only an ontological restoration of oppression, but also an epistemological resistance to domination. According to Parker and Lynn (2002), traditional educational research “(a) ignored historically marginalized groups by simply not addressing their concerns, (b) relied heavily on genetic or biological determinist perspectives to explain away complex social educational problems, or (c) epiphenomenized or de-emphasized race by arguing that the problems minority students experience in schools can be understood via class or gender analyses that do not fully take race, culture, language, and immigrant status into account” (Parker & Lynn, 2002, p. 13).

The realization of social justice epistemologies begins with Du Bois’s (1903/1989) concept of double consciousness and Freire’s (1970/2003) concept of conscientization. These concepts are linked to the oppressive nature of the world. Scholars propose an epistemological shift from the racially biased epistemologies to racially grounded epistemologies (Scheurich & Young, 1997, Tyson, 1998, Miller, 2001). Feminist scholars emphasize women’s ways of knowing by challenging masculinity (Harding, 1987; Lather, 1988; Reinharz, 1992; Olesen, 2000). However, race and gender cannot be separate from each other. Delgado Bernal (2002) proposes critical raced-gendered epistemologies that “offer unique ways of knowing and understanding the world based on the various raced and gendered experiences of people of color” (p. 107). The intersectionality of race and gender has been expressed

The complexity of oppression inevitably involves complex systems of knowing both within a group of people and across groups of people. On one hand, epistemologies even in one form of oppression are not simple but complex. Carbado (2002) calls it “comparative inter-racialization,” which is “an examination of the different ways in which people who are perceived to be members of the same racial group are racialized” (p. 189). On the other hand, epistemologies of marginalized people become more complex when race, gender, class, physical abilities, ethnicity and other forms of subordination co-exist in the intersection of systemic oppression.

Young (1990) shows a double problem in constructing an account of separate systems of oppression for each oppressed group. “On the one hand, this way of conceiving oppression fails to accommodate the similarities and overlaps in the oppressions of different groups. On the other hand, it falsely represents the situation of all group members as the same” (p. 64). Instead of describing epistemologies of marginalized people based on each form of oppression or its intersectionality with other forms of oppression, in what follows I review epistemological criteria of experiential and empathic knowledge of social injustice.
**Experiential Knowledge**

According to Freire (1970/2003) the concrete reality of oppression is never subjective. Experiential knowledge of social injustice endows the oppressed with the authority of identifying social injustices. As the holder and creator of experiential knowledge, the oppressed deconstruct the realities of social injustice and construct the sense of social justice by telling their lived experiences of being oppressed (Fernandez, 2002; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Yosso, 2002; Matsuda, 1991; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002b). Historicity, positionality, and lived experiences are inseparably interconnected to one another in experiencing power structures. Any of the three criteria is essential to identifying experiential knowledge of social injustice.

**Historicity.** Epistemologies of social injustice take “people’s historicity as their starting point” (Freire, 1970/2003, p. 84). Different groups of people do not think and interpret realities in the same way because of their different historical and cultural backgrounds (Standfield, 1985; Scheurich & Young, 1997; Epstein, 1998; Giroux, 1994). Historicity asks the oppressed to challenge the dominant Eurocentric epistemology. It also asks the oppressors to conceive of themselves as members of a race, to recognize the privileges attached to the color of white, and to realize their complicity in the world of oppression (Dalton, 1995, Sleeter, 1993; hooks, 1992; Roediger, 1991; McIntosh, 1992; Giroux, 1997; Applebaum, 2003, 2004).
In the center of historicity is what Tyson (1998, 2006) calls the specificity of oppression. Epistemologies for social justice shift the lens of historical perception from the visible to the invisible, from the powerful to the powerless (Lintner, 2004; Epstein, 1998). According to Delgado Bernal (1998) it is “cultural intuition” that extends one’s personal experience to include collective experience and community memory” (p. 563). The oppressed have the expertise in identifying and analyzing social injustice because their history itself is the process of being marginalized, silenced and distorted. Historicity endows marginalized people with human agency against domination.

Positionality. Positionality is more situational than historical. It enables us to understand the world “from particular positions at specific times” (Richardson, 2000, p. 929). By explaining Black feminist thoughts, Collins (1991) sees positionality as “being simultaneously a member of a group and yet standing apart from it” (p. 207). It creates “a new angle of vision on the process of suppression” (p. 11-12). Therefore, those who have the same or similar collective experience and community memory do not necessarily develop the same epistemologies. Unlike the macro level historicity, positionality explains epistemologies at micro levels such as subjectivity (Peshkin, 1988), evolving selves (Kegan, 1982), racial identity formation (Cross, 1991; Tatum, 1997; Bennett, 1993), and social identity development (Hardiman & Jackson, 1997).
Understanding the positionality in the world of oppression not only leads the oppressed to challenge the dominant ideology but also asks the oppressors to relocate their positionalities. “Recognizing the minor cannot erase the aspects of the major, … We must leave home, as it were, since our homes are often sites of racism, sexism, and other damaging social practices … What we gain is a reterritorialization; we reinhabit a world of our making (here ‘our’ is expanded to a coalition of identities—neither universal nor particular)” (Kaplan, 1987, pp. 187-188 quoted from Giroux, 1988, p. 175). According to Giroux (1988), “by locating differences in a particular historical and social location, it becomes possible to understand how they are organized and constructed within maps of rules and regulations and located within dominant social forms which either enable or disable such differences” (p. 170).

Lived Experiences. While historicity and positionality are solid conditions for emancipatory epistemologies as well as immediate potentials for resistance to the world of oppression, lived experiences are ongoing processes of epistemological formation for social justice (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Fernandez, 2002; Merryfield, 1998, 2000a; Merryfield & Subedi, 2003). Lived experiences ignite the conditions and activate the potentials. For this reason, many scholars begin their books with their lived experiences of oppression in order to challenge the world of oppression and struggle for social justice (hooks, 1992, 1994; Collins, 1991, 1998; Nieto, 2000;
Sleeter, 1995; Krieger, 1983; Bell, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Ayers et al., 1998; Finn, 1999; Mabokela & Green, 2001).

Merryfield (2000a) describes three qualities of lived experiences that are commonly found among successful multicultural and global educators who teach for diversity, equity, and global interconnectedness. Those are encounters with people different from themselves, experiences with discrimination, injustice or outsider status, and their felt contradictions in dealing with multiple realities (p. 438-440). These experiences have been privileged through storytelling, counter-storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, and narratives from the marginalized people’s perspectives (Fernandez, 2002; Delgado, 1989; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002a, 2002b).

Empathic Knowledge

Experiential knowledge of social injustice can never be fully appreciated by those who don’t belong to the oppressed (Duncan, 2002, p. 88). However, as Freire (1970/2003) mentions, in the process of permanent liberation social justice belongs to all people. For this reason, the privileged unlearn social injustices from those who experience oppression. Yosso (2002) emphasizes the importance of “empathy with and action alongside communities of color” (p. 100). It is empathy that plays an important role in going beyond and through experiences of social injustice. Martin L. Hoffman (1976, 1990, 200) emphasizes the need to consider empathy in morality by
taking the lead in criticizing Rawls’s and Kohlberg’s justice orientation. He defines empathy as “an affective response more appropriate to someone else’s situation than to one’s own” (1990, p. 48).

Empathy-based feelings such as empathic distress, empathic anger and empathic injustice play an important role in constructing empathic knowledge of social injustice. There are two types of empathic anger. “In the first, relatively simple type, the victim is angry at the abuser and the observer picks up that anger through the empathy-arousing mechanisms and feels empathic anger. In the second, more complex type, the victim feels sad, hurt, or disappointed but not angry at the abuser. The observer empathizes with these feelings, but also feels empathy-based anger at the abuser as a result of taking the victim’s perspective, even though the victim is not angry” (Hoffman, 2000, p. 98). In an empirical study on empathic anger as a predictor of helping and punishing desires, Vitaglione and Barnett (2003) find that experiencing episodes of anger often result in greater understanding of a contentious issue, and sometimes actual changes in behavior that improves the situation. Empathic anger is closely related to empathic injustice (Hoffman, 1990, 2000). Seeing the oppressed as victims of social injustice, the privileged transform “their empathic distress into an empathic feeling of injustice, including a motive to right the wrong” (Hoffman, 2000, p. 107). Sometime empathic anger is hard to distinguish from direct anger because the behavioral outcomes are similar (Hoffman, 2000).
A way of arousing empathic anger is counterstorytelling which is “both a method of telling the story of those experiences that have not been told … and a tool for analyzing and challenging the stories of those in power and whose story is a natural part of the dominant discourse” (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002b, p. 156). It has an “empathic duality”, which are “an empathic-distress-for-victim component and empathy-based anger-at-aggressor component” (Hoffman, 2000, p. 98).

Research on whiteness and white privileges is an example of how empathy plays a role in reflecting on social injustice from the privileged people’s perspectives (McIntosh, 1992; Sleeter, 1993; Roediger, 1991, 1994; hooks, 1992). Without empathic knowledge of social injustice, it is not possible for a white female teacher to be called “culturally Black” (Gloria Ladson-Billings, 1992, p. 383). Racial oppression takes place without recognizing whiteness as a new ethnicity (Applebaum, 2004; Giroux, 1997). Hence, the privileged or the oppressors need their locations to see the world within a hierarchical structure (hooks, 1992; Applebaum, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1992).

Empathic knowledge is necessary but not sufficient in understanding the oppressive nature of the world. Although it is essential for the privileged to understand social injustice, it should be based on “the connections between deep caring, moral authority, and freedom struggles for justice” (Collins, 1998, p. 246). It can be fallacious when the oppressors think that they understand everything the oppressed
have experienced (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Duncan, 2002). A global educator Robert Hanvey (1975/1982) claims for moving beyond empathy. “Empathy … means the capacity to imagine oneself in another role within the context of one’s own culture. Transnspection means the capacity to imagine oneself in a role within the context of a foreign culture” (p. 12).

Social Justice as Deconstructive Moral Formation

Social justice is a political and moral project that aims to eliminate social injustice and build a socially just world. Accordingly, I understand social justice as a deconstructive moral formation of social justice.

Deconstructive Necessary Reversal

Social justice is a deconstructive necessary reversal in the world of social injustice. This political principle of social justice has its coalition with all critical theories (Bell, 1997; Lather, 1988, Freire, 1970/2003, hooks, 1994). For example, feminist research is a deconstructive necessary reversal that “denaturalizes phallocentric masculinity in an effort to transform the social contract and give purchase to seeing science as a site of contestation, an already gendered practice” (Lather, 2004, p. 27). Feminist perspectives correct “the invisibility and distortion of female experience in ways relevant to ending women’s unequal social position” (Lather, 1988, p. 571).
Derrida’s deconstructionism and his strategies of deconstruction play an important role in social justice discourses. In his book *Of Grammatology* Derrida (1976) utilizes structuralist’s concept of binary opposition for the purpose of deconstructing the hierarchy between the written being and the being written. Derrida holds that “any positive representation of a concept in language … rests on the negative representation of its ‘opposite’” (Cheek, 2000, p. 416). Powell (1997) accounts for Derrida’s strategy of deconstruction, which “first focuses on the binary oppositions within a text – like man/woman. Next it shows how these opposites are related, how one is central, natural and privileged, the other ignored, repressed and marginalized. Next it temporarily undoes or subverts the hierarchy to make the text mean the opposite of what it originally appeared to mean. Then in the last step both terms of the opposition are seen dancing in a free play of non-hierarchical, non-stable meanings” (Powell, 1997, p. 30). The strategy of deconstruction is to destabilize, complicate, or bring out the paradox of values (Derrida, 1992). The following table shows that Derrida’s strategy of deconstruction can be applied to social justice education.
Table 2.2 Strategy of deconstruction and social justice education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy of deconstruction</th>
<th>Of Grammatology (Derrida, 1976)</th>
<th>Social Justice Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To focus on the binary oppositions</td>
<td>Speech vs. Writing</td>
<td>Justice vs. Injustice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To find the hierarchical relations between the opposites</td>
<td>Speech &gt; Writing</td>
<td>Justice &gt; Injustice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To subvert the hierarchy</td>
<td>Speech &lt; Writing</td>
<td>Justice &lt; Injustice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To examine the meanings in non-hierarchical structures</td>
<td>Speech and Writing</td>
<td>Justice and injustice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Deconstructive necessary reversal is a “challenge to logocentric authority” (Landry, 2000, p. 47). Derrida uses the deconstructive reversal to “invert the hierarchy that favors speech as natural and central and to reveal how writing, which had been seen as perverted, pathological and derivative, can be central and not marginal” (Powell, 1997, p. 46). He disprivileges all received texts and established discourses on logocentric concepts of justice by deconstructing the hierarchy in linguistic usage of words (Derrida, 1976, 1978, 1992; Vidich & Lyman, 2000). Deconstruction takes place within a non-hierarchical spectrum of difference. According to Derrida, differánce makes “the opposition of presence and absence possible. Without the
possibility of differance, the desire of presence as such would not find its breathing-space” (Derrida, 1976, p. 143). As I mentioned earlier, I utilize Derrida’s concept of deconstruction in order to alternate logocentric theories of justice and prioritize social injustice. His concept of deconstruction gives the same linguistic authority to social injustice in subverting its hierarchical usage in social justice discourses. However, it is notable that his deconstruction needs to move beyond the textual meanings. Otherwise, his concept of deconstruction is not different from logocentric concepts of fabricated justice. Deconstruction is a process of building a non-hierarchical social structure.

Derrida (1992) views social justice as a possibility of deconstruction. Social justice means that “[human] contains the potential, the possibility of justice, the yet-to-come (avenir) or justice, the yet-to-come of his being-just, of his having-to-be just” (Derrida, 1992, p. 53-54). Although his deconstructionism provides a basis of prioritizing social injustice within the spectrum of difference, it requires sociopolitical consciousness and collective resistance. A deconstructive necessary reversal has been emphasized through critical examination of cultural mismatches (Rist, 1970; Delpit, 1988, 1995; Ogbu, 1999, 2001; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Epstein, 1998; Steele, 1997; Olneck, 2001; Ferguson, 2003; Siddle Walker, 2001, 2005; Mitchell, 1998; Dixon, 2003; Howard, 2001b), centrality of racism and its intersectionality of all forms of oppression (Mastuda, 1991; Bell, 1992; Omi & Winant, 1993; Ladson-Billings & Tate

Social justice is a collective resistance to the oppressive nature of the world. It is called “a rainbow of resistance” (Bigelow et al., 2000, p. 5). Resistance is a “creative maladjustment”, which was drawn from one of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s speeches, in which he said “But there are some things within our social order to which I am proud to be maladjusted and to which I call upon you to be maladjusted. I never intend to adjust myself to segregation and discrimination” (quoted from Kohl, 1994, p. 129). Invisibility and powerlessness in the world of oppression have made marginalized people muffle down their voices. Postmodern notion of resistance privileges storytelling, counterstorytelling, and ritual knowledge by the oppressed (Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995; McLaren, 1989; Young, 1990; Bell, 1997; Pang, 2001; Freire, 1970/2003; Duncan, 2002; Fernandez, 2002; Delgado Bernal, 2002).

According to Freire (1970/2003), “the presence of the oppressed in the struggle for their liberation will be what it should be: not pseudo-participation, but committed involvement” (p. 69). Social justice is “a way of gaining power, celebrating pleasure,
and fighting oppression in the lived historicity of the moment” (Giroux, 1994, p. 194-195).

Constructive Moral Formation

Social justice is a constructive moral formation of a socially just world. It is “to nurture the resiliency of oppressed people as they struggle against the structural violence in their lives” (Watts & Erevelles, 2004, p. 294). The act of breaking silence and correcting distortion is constant moral formation. For example, as a response to racial microaggression African American students create counter-spaces that serve as “sites where deficit notions of people of color can be challenged and where a positive collegiate racial climate can be established and maintained” (Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000, p. 70). In the counter-spaces their knowledge validation processes become valid and important.

Counterstorytelling is not only a powerful way of deconstructing social injustice, but also it is a constructive formation of counter-values (Fernandez, 2002; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Parker & Lynn, 2002; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002a; Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995). The functions of the counter-stories “(a) They can build community among those at the margins of society … (b) they can challenge the perceived wisdom of those at society’s center … (c) they can open new windows into the reality of those at the margins of society …, and (d) they can teach others that by combining elements from both the story and the current reality” (Solorzano & Yosso,
Contemporary realistic fictions are counter-hegemonic works in
reinstate “shamefully silenced discourses” (Gilligan & Ward, 2004, p. xi). Children
moves toward social action by making intertextual connections between the stories in
contemporary realistic fictions and their everyday lives in the oppressive world

Social justice is an “article of faith expressed through deep feelings that move
people to action” (Collins, 1998, p. 248). It is inevitably a counter-hegemonic work
from the “deep-seated moralism” (Lynn, Johnston, & Hassan, 1999, p. 49). Moral
urgency derives from a model of deficiency and, consequently, distorted
participated in the civil rights movement not because it was logically defensible to do
so but because it was the right thing to do. In this context, ‘rightness’ encompasses
more than mere logic or rationality – ‘rightness’ emerged from faith and had moral
authority” (p. 247).

Guided by a model of deficiency, social scientists repeatedly attempted to
assimilate and acculturate marginalized people to mainstream culture (Yosso, 2002;
Ford et al., 2000; Gay, 2000; Olneck, 2001; Giroux, 1999; Howard, 2003; Delgado
Bernal, 2002). According to Gay (2000) the greatest of all obstacles to diversity is
mainstream ethnocentrism. The imposition of Eurocentric values and orientation on
diverse racial and ethnic groups of children is “morally suspect and pedagogically
unsound” (Gay, 2000, p. 208). Bell (1997) points out that the most promising strategy for teaching for social justice is to build coalitions among diverse people. Moral agency is needed both by the oppressors and the oppressed (Applebaum, 2004; Collins, 1998). Social justice is to “assert our moral authority in the face of continuing injustice and intolerance” (Gilligan & Ward, 2004, p. xi).

According to Applebaum (2004), “it is only through an appeal to the moral agency of those privileged by hegemonic systems that critical consciousness of their positionality can arise. … because moral agency is an integral aspect of teaching privileged subjects/students about social justice, and because moral agency does not stand ‘outside’ of power structures, it is crucial to examine how moral agency is conceived within a social justice pedagogy” (p. 68). Social agents have the ability of understanding social injustice and then enacting social action for transformation (Giroux, 1994; Tyson, 1999, 2002; Kieff, 2003). Social agency aims “the elimination of racism, sexism, and poverty” and “the empowering of subordinated minority groups” (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002a, p. 26).

The moral project is social construction of a socially just world. It is an “unending project of democratic social transformation” (Giroux, 2002, p. 1157). Social agents do not find or discover knowledge so much as we construct it (Schwandt, 2000). Experiential and empathic experiences of social injustice are re-
constructed through texts and voices (Richardson, 2000; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Ellis, 2004).
Pedagogies for Social Justice

In this section I review literature on critical multicultural pedagogies such as culturally relevant teaching, critical race theory, and critical pedagogies. I also examine cognitive, affective and action components in social justice education.

Critical Multicultural Pedagogies

Culturally Relevant Teaching. Culturally relevant teaching is a “pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 17-18). It addresses social injustice through a critical examination of cultural mismatches between marginalized and mainstream cultures. Culturally relevant teachers use cultural knowledge, prior experiences and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to meet their academic and social needs (Gay, 2000; Howard, 2001a).

Culturally relevant teachers help students become academically successful not merely in student performance on standardized tests but rather a more robust and authentic learning (Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 2001). A variety of reasons have been examined to explain academic achievement gaps among diverse groups of students. These are cultural differences between home and school (Delpit, 1988; Ogbu, 1999, 2001), different historical perspectives (Epstein, 1998), teachers’
expectations of academic achievement (Rist, 1970; Steele, 1997; Ferguson, 2003), teachers’ caring and devotion to students (Siddle Walker, 2001, 2005; Mitchell, 1998; Dixon, 2003; Howard, 2001b).

African American students experience “disaffiliation and alienation from African American culture” (Ladson-Billings, 2000b, p. 210). They also undertake cultural accusation of “acting white” from kinship friends for their academic efforts (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). They are marginalized or ignored from curriculum to school cultures (Epstein, 1998; Ogbu, 1999). Teachers need to help students develop cross-cultural competency with their own subculture, and within and across different subsocieties and cultures (Banks, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Culturally relevant teachers enhance marginalized students’ cultural competence by interacting with students and families (Mitchelle, 1998), utilizing culturally consistent communicative skills (Howard, 2001a; Delpit, 1988; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Gay, 2000), caring their students (Siddle Walker, 2001, 2005; Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Mitchell, 1998; Dixon, 2003; Brown, 2002; Lynn, Johnson, and Hassan, 1999; Lynn, 2002).

Sociopolitical consciousness goes beyond the individual characteristics of academic achievement and cultural competence (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995a). This is what Freire called “conscientization.” Students as political agents need not only to understand the political nature of schooling, but also see their role in the community, the nation, and the world” (Lipman, 1998; Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 1999, 2002; Powell,
Beauboeuf-Lafontant (1999) propose politically relevant teaching to “emphasize the political understanding of social systems of power and a personal commitment to educating children regardless of their social origins” (p. 718).

According to Gay (2000), culturally relevant/responsive teachers have “(1) thorough knowledge about the cultural values, learning styles, historical legacies, contributions, and achievements of different ethnic groups; (2) the courage to stop blaming the victims of school failure and to admit that something is seriously wrong with existing educational systems; (3) the will to confront prevailing educational cannons and convictions, and to rethink traditional assumptions of cultural universality and/or neutrality in teaching and learning; (4) the skills to act productively in translating knowledge and sensitivity about cultural diversity into pedagogical practices; and (5) the tenacity to relentlessly pursue comprehensive and high-level performance for children who are currently underachieving in schools” (p. 44). In what follows I examine characteristics of culturally relevant pedagogy.

**Critical Race Theory.** Critical Race Theory (CRT) in education is defined as a “pedagogy, curriculum, and research agenda that accounts for the role of racism in U.S. education and works toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of eliminating all forms of subordination in education” (Solorzano, 1997, p. 7). CRT educators argue that although children are exposed to macro and micro forms of oppression, the discourse on diversity has failed to penetrate the silence of racism in
education (Yosso, 2002; Lopez, 2003; Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995; Lynn, 1999; Carbado, 2002; Lynn & Adams, 2002; Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso, 2000). Critical race curriculum “exposes the oppressive and marginalizing power of schools and challenges school curriculum to emancipate and empower” (Yosso, 2002, p. 102-103).

CRT begins with its focus on race/racism as a central form of oppression in the United States (Mastuda, 1991; Bell, 1992; Omi & Winant, 1993; Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995; Lynn, Yosso, Solorzano, & Parker, 2002). A goal of CRT is to eliminate racial oppression as part of a larger project to eradicate all forms of oppression (Tate IV, 1993). According to Lorde (1992), racism is “the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominance” (p. 496). The characteristics of racism are “(1) one group believes itself to be superior, (2) the group which believes itself to be superior has the power to carry out the racist behavior, and (3) racism effects multiple racial/ethnic groups” (Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000, p. 61). Racism becomes complex when it intersects with ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and other forms of oppression (Villenas, Deyhle, & Parker, 1999). When gender and race intersect, Du Bois’s (1903/1989) notion of double consciousness extends to multiple consciousnesses of women (Collins, 1991, 1998; Dillard, 2000; Jones, 2001; Delgado Bernal, 1998, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2000a). Terinashi (2002) examines how race and ethnicity intersect by investigating how Chinese and Filipino students are treated by teachers, counselors and peers at schools.
CRT originates from the Civil Rights Movements in 1960s and African American thoughts in the post-civil rights era (Tate IV, 1993). It is a radical tool for dismantling prevailing notions of fairness and neutrality (Villenas, Deyhle, & Parker, 1999). CRT scholars calls for Whites to take responsibility for racial privilege and to struggle against structures of racism, sexism, classism and other forms of subordination (Yosso, 2002).

As a social justice project CRT is “to nurture the resiliency of oppressed people as they struggle against the structural violence in their lives” (Watts & Erevelles, 2004, p. 294). A social justice research agenda leads toward “the elimination of racism, sexism, and poverty” and “the empowering of subordinated minority groups” (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 313; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002a, p. 26). Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) argue that “one of the defining characteristics of transformational resistance is a strong commitment to social justice” (p. 314). CRT replaces a color-blind justice with a race-conscious justice through exposing oppression and challenging the dominant ideology. Social justice is to cure the “susceptibility and vulnerability” to inequality and oppression (Terinashi, 2002, p. 151).

CRT privileges the experiential knowledge of people of color as critical ways of knowing and naming racism and other forms of oppression (Fernandez, 2002; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Parker & Lynn, 2002; Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995).
voices of the oppressed legitimize the reality of social injustice through storytelling or counterstorytelling (Fernandez, 2002; Delgado, 1989; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002a, 2002b).

CRT challenges “ahistoricism and the unidisciplinary focus of most analyses and insists on analyzing race and racism … by placing them in both historical and contemporary context using interdisciplinary methods” (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 314).

Critical Pedagogies. According to Giroux and Simon (1989), a critical pedagogy takes into consideration “how the symbolic and material transactions of the everyday provide the basis for rethinking how people give meaning and ethical substance to their experiences and voices” (See also Bowles & Gintis, 1989; McLaren, 1989, 1998; Giroux, 2002; Finn, 1999). A critical pedagogy theorist Paulo Freire (1970/2003) proposes the pedagogy of the oppressed, which is “an instrument for their critical discovery that both they and their oppressors are manifestations of dehumanization” (p. 48). Critical pedagogy theorists criticize liberal educational theories for justifying schooling as a form of domination (Bowles and Gintis, 1989; Bigelow et al., 2000, 2001; Bigelow & Peterson, 2002). Critical pedagogy has not been theorized, but its educational approach begins with the recognition of the dynamics of social oppression (Adams et al., 1997). In what follows I review what Adams (1997) suggest social justice education principles.
First, critical pedagogy balances the emotional and cognitive components of the learning process. According to Collins (1998), justice constitutes “an article of faith expressed through deep feelings that move people to action” (p. 248). The disequilibrium between information and feelings generate significant learning (Bell, Washington, Weinstein, & Love, 1997; Griffin, 1997; Bell & Griffin, 1997). Marginalized students feel frustrated, victimized, empathetic, or angry from their experiences of oppression.

Second, it acknowledges and supports the personal (the individual student’s experience) while illuminating the systemic (the interactions among social groups). Social justice education not only brings structural issues of social justice into the classroom, but also reflects children’s everyday lives onto the structures. It focuses on both the “here-and-now of the classroom setting” and the “systematic or abstract in an accumulation of concrete, real-life examples” (Adams, 1997, p. 42). Teachers encourage students to critique the larger society through sharing their lives (Bigelow, 1992; Bigelow et al., 2000). Students learn “a connectedness and relational context – a ‘lived meaning’ – while negotiating their day-to-day existence” (McLaren, 1989, p. 193).

Third, it attends to social relations within the classroom. Regardless of the roles in the system of oppression, every member in a society plays a role either as an agent or a target. As Delpit (1988) points out unjust social realities are projected into
the classroom through codes of power. Both teachers and students are both transmitters and receivers of cultural messages both in the classroom and in the society (Bell, 1997; Hardiman & Jackson, 1997; Applebaum, 2004). Schools and classroom are sites of social justice education where both oppression and transformation are found and discussed (Applebaum, 2003; Bell, 1997; Bigelow & Peterson, 2002).

Fourth, critical social justice educators utilize reflection and experience as tools for student-centered learning. Teachers value students’ worldviews and it poses problems from marginalized students’ perspectives (Adams, 1997; Bigleow et al., 2000). Students continuously resist to school instruction as a means of a “fight against the erasure of their streetcorner gestures and symbols” (McLaren, 1989, p. 194).

Lastly, critical social justice educators value awareness, personal growth, and change as outcomes of the learning process. Teachers raise children’s civic courage for a just world. According to Giroux (2002b), civic courage “makes concrete the possibility for transforming hope and politics into an ethical space and public act that confronts the flow of everyday experience and the weight of social suffering with the force of individual and collective resistance and the unending project of democratic social transformation” (p. 1157). Teachers and students become moral agents for social justice.
Cognitive, Affective and Action Components

bell hooks (1994) states that “liberatory education connects the will to know with the will to become” (pp. 18-19). Teaching for social justice aims to increase students’ understandings of, attitudes toward, and action for social justice.

Cognitive Approach. Teachers must help children understand the world of oppression and its impacts on marginalized people. Only by naming the problem correctly is it possible to undertake social action that will lead to educational equity and social justice (Villenas, Deyhle, & Parker, 1999). However, oppression as structural violence is “almost always invisible, embedded in ubiquitous social structures, normalized by stable institutions and regular experience” (Winter & Leighton, 2001, p. 99). Therefore teachers must raise children’s critical literacy with which teachers and students read the world of oppression through reading words (Freire, 1970/2003; Finn, 1999).

As Freire’s (1970/2003) problem-posing theory and practice take the people’s historicity as their starting point, teachers for social justice bring children’s individual and collective historicity into the classroom. As targets and agents of oppression everyone in the classroom must probe processes of oppression in the politics of diversity in a global context. Understanding of the processes for social justice enables children not only to see invisible world of oppression and hear unheard voices of subordination, but also to find their own agency.
Darling-Hammond (2002) describes the importance of teaching for social justice. It involves “coming to understand oneself in relation to others; examining how society constructs privilege and inequality and how this affects one’s own opportunities as well as those of different people; exploring the experiences of others and appreciating how those inform their worldviews, perspectives, and opportunities; and evaluating how schools and classrooms operated and can be structured to value diverse human experiences and to enable learning for all students” (p. 201).

**Affective Approach.** Social justice constitutes an “article of faith expressed through deep feelings that move people to action” (Collins, 1998, p. 248). Teachers not just teach about the deep feelings of marginalized children, but they bring those feelings into a classroom and legitimize them with an attitude toward social justice (Finn, 1999; Freire, 1970/2003). Teaching for social justice is also a moral education based on “deep-seated moralism” (Lynn, Johnston, & Hassan, 1999, p. 49). Applebaum (2004) appeal to the moral agency of the oppressors and Collins (1998) claims for an alternative moral agency of Black women. Especially, social justice is connected to “a heightened reflexive and moral sense of race consciousness” (Denzin, 2000, p. 911). The power of affective domains in teaching for social justice should not be underestimated for their potentials of social action.

Procedural attitudes are explained with social identity development theory (Hardiman & Jackson, 1997) and/or racial identity formation (Pang, 2001). Attitudinal
differences in the stages help teachers provide students with more inclusive perspectives toward social justice. Attitudinal changes lead students to imminent potentials to social action by realizing their own agency. However, emotions are an integral part of oppression that can get in the way of real communication and personal change (Pang, 2001). Attitudinal changes are processes toward social justice. The lives of social activists not only provide students with knowledge of oppression, but also facilitate children’s emotions toward social justice. Teachers need to help children internalize civic courage (Giroux, 2002).

The Banks’s value inquiry model consists of the following steps: Defining and recognizing value problems; Describing value-relevant behavior; Naming values exemplified by the behavior; Determining conflicting values in behavior described; Hypothesizing about the possible consequence of the values analyzed; Naming alternative values to those described by behavior observed; Hypothesizing about the possible consequences of values analyzed; Declaring value preferences and choosing; Stating reasons, sources, and possible consequences of value choice-justifying, hypothesizing, predicting. (Banks & Clegg, 1990, p. 445; Banks, 1991, pp. 134-135). Based on these inquiry steps students can list all of the possible actions they need to take. This value inquiry model is useful in identifying and analyzing values related to social justice. However, I argue that it is necessary to teach counter-values that
directly challenge the world of oppression and the worldviews of the oppressors. Counter-values rely on transformative experiences for social justice.

**Action Approach.** Social/cultural action is a “systematic and deliberate form of action which operates upon the social structure, either with the objective of preserving that structure or of transforming it” (Freire, 1970/2003, p. 179). It requires people to unite for empowerment and transformation. Students with higher collective value orientation are more likely to endorse citizenship actions than those lower in collectivism (Williamson et al., 2003). The collective power of resistance to hegemony should be incessantly procedural movement for social justice.

Contemporary realistic fictions help children understand the meaning of social action by making intertextual connections between the texts and their lived experiences (Tyson, 1999, 2002; Kieff, 2003). The intertextual connections move children from the words to the world. Cooperative learning and service learning that provide group support empower children and catalyze their social agency (Sapon-Shevin & Schniedewind, 1991).

According to Ladson-Billings (1992), “culturally relevant pedagogy urges collective action grounded in cultural understandings, experiences, and ways of knowing the world” (p. 382). When teachers help children see the world of oppression and feel the interconnectedness with others, but don’t encourage them to act for social justice, children will not be able to escape from cynicism (Bigelow et al., 2000;
Giroux, 1988; Adams et al., 1997). Social action as empowerment is a fundamental goal in education (Sleeter, 1991; Banks, 1991, 2001; Gay, 2000). Teaching for social justice should be the same as living for social justice.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study is designed to investigate teachers’ perceptions of teaching for social justice. It is an attempt to explore teachers’ onto-epistemological assumptions of the world and their pedagogical practices for social justice. Given the nature of the study on teachers’ perceptions, I conduct this study in “natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). My study is situated in a postmodern time-space by a new sensibility, by doubt and by a refusal to privilege any single method or theory (Richardson, 2000). It rejects the modernist notion of a single truth claim (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Instead, I aim to triangulate complexities of social justice discourses by challenging the logocentric masculinist knowledge validation process (Collins, 1991). This study provides an alternative paradigm to the distributive paradigm (Young, 1990).

I attempt to answer to the following research questions: 1) What are the characteristics of teachers’ understanding of social injustice? 2) How do teachers construct the concept of social justice? 3) What are the characteristics of their pedagogical practices for social justice?
In this chapter I describe the methodological decisions and procedures used in my study. First, I proposed a socially just methodology in order to align my methodological approach with social justice issues. It was an attempt to re-search for social justice in a socially unjust world. Second, I situated myself methodologically into the study in order to discuss potential sources of bias. Third, I outlined the research design such as community nomination processes, data collection and analysis. Fourth, I discussed my writing as an ethical re-presentation of what I learned about and from my participants. Finally, I explained how I built trustworthiness in the data and findings.

**Toward Socially Just Research**

As a researcher interested in social justice issues, I feel obliged to answer the question of “what it means to do empirical research in an unjust world” (Lather, 1988, p.570). Researchers dealing with social justice issues are inevitably engaged in a cacophony of onto-epistemological issues. In other words, they examine epistemological orientation to social justice in an ontologically unjust world. For this reason, social justice discourses have “complex, frequently contradictory, and relational aspects” (North, 2006, p. 528). In this context, social justice has been examined in its relation to dehumanization, oppression and domination (Freire, 1970; Young, 1990; Collins, 1991, 1998; Adams et al., 1997).
In this section I attempt to build a theory of socially just research (SJR) based on a postmodern proposition that any approach is unjust unless it filters through the perspectives of the people who experience social injustice. My agenda is to theorize a research paradigm for social justice within a concurrent set of epistemological, ontological and methodological premises. It is to re-search for social justice in an unjust world. By reflecting Collins’s (1998) epistemological criteria for critical social theory, I propose three criteria for SJR: ontological restoration of social injustice into research, epistemological resistance to the world of oppression, and methodological action for empowerment.

*Question 1: Does it speak the truth to people about the reality of their lives?*

SJR prioritizes social injustice by “lifting” the veil of ignorance (Tyson & Park, 2006; Wade, 2007). It reinstates concrete examples of social injustice into research. In this aspect, it is different from research that “(a) ignored historically marginalized groups by simply not addressing their concerns, (b) relied heavily on genetic or biological determinist perspectives to explain away complex social educational problems, or (c) epiphenomenized or de-emphasized race by arguing that the problems minority students experience in schools can be understood via class or gender analyses that do not fully take race, culture, language, and immigrant status into account” (Parker & Lynn, 2002, p. 13).
Question 2: Does it equip people to resist oppression?

SJR stresses experiential and empathic knowledge of social injustice because it is an “ethical framework grounded in notions of justice as specific cultural material” (Collins, 1998, p. 199). It validates knowledge through counterstorytelling which is “both a method of [re]telling the story … and a tool for analyzing and challenging the stories of those in power” (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002b, p. 156). This makes it different from the logocentric approach to social justice which focuses on material distribution from everyone’s perspectives in a normatively and culturally neutral context (Young, 1990; North, 2006).

Question 3: Does it move people to struggle?

SJR is not just about social justice issues, but it is for correcting social injustice and transforming it into social justice. It is inevitably engaged in the empowerment of “deep feelings that move people to action” (Collins, 1998, p. 248). Research itself is “not pseudo-participation, but committed involvement” (Freire, 1970, p. 69). It is also a “catalyst to support and complement larger struggles for liberation” (Tyson, 2006, p. 49).
Ontological restoration of social injustice into research

The methodological starting point in SJR is to find the relational meaning of social justice because socially “just” research inevitably embraces socially “unjust” realities in a research design. In other words, when a researcher understands that social injustice is prevalent in the world, he or she needs to explain how his or her everyday experiences of social injustice is related to the desire for social justice. In this section, I employ Derrida’s concept of differance and his strategy of deconstruction to uncover the relational, sometimes elusive, meaning of social justice. This leads to an examination of how the grounded approach can be applied to SJR.

Derrida (1982) employs the concept of differance, which “unceasingly dislocates itself in a chain of differing and deferring substitutions” (p. 26). Accordingly, “any positive representation of a concept in language … rests on the negative representation of its ‘opposite’” (Cheek, 2000, p. 416). In other words, the meaning of a word is “constantly deferred because the word can have meaning only in relation to its difference from other words within a given system of language” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 291). The following text shows how social justice and social injustice can coexist without contradicting each other, and how our epistemological orientation to social justice can be possible even with abundant examples of social injustice:
“Differance makes the opposition of presence and absence possible. Without the possibility of differance, the desire of presence as such would not find its breathing-space” (Derrida, 1976, p. 143).

Derrida uses the deconstructive reversal to “invert the hierarchy that favors [social justice] as natural and central and to reveal how [social injustice], which had been seen as perverted, pathological and derivative, can be central and not marginal” (Powell, 1997, p. 46).

SJR aims to address both the presence and the absence of social justice. Without beginning with social injustice as a set of the binary opposition to social justice, it tends to ignore the social structure and institutional context (Young, 1990). While logocentric theorists pay little attention to the absence of social justice, socially just researchers begin with the clear presence of social injustice and move forward to social justice. Derrida’s strategies of deconstruction give researchers the linguistic authority to social injustice by subverting the predilections to social justice. It is a necessary deconstructive reversal, which is a “challenge to logocentric authority” (Landry, 2000, p. 47). As Collins (2000) points out, a deconstructive methodology aims to “generate skepticism about beliefs that are often taken for granted within sociology, economics, psychology, and other social scientific discourses of modernity” (p. 53). As a consequence, social justice research becomes successfully both a process and a goal (Bell, 1997). It is not only the ontological restoration of
social injustice but also the epistemological orientation to social justice that achieves this.

As I discussed in the Chapter 2, the logocentric theory of justice has an intrinsic inadequacy in addressing socially, culturally, and institutionally unjust relationships because it reduces social justice to material distribution and procedure. Contradicting the procedural concept of justice, Young (1990), a grounded theorist, develops a different theory of justice aiming to eliminate oppressions, which are “the vast and deep injustices some groups suffer as a consequence of often unconscious assumptions and reactions of well-meaning people in … the normal processes of everyday life” (p. 41). Unlike the logocentric theorists, grounded theorists deal with concrete examples of social injustices without wearing “the veil of ignorance.” Instead of theorizing social justice, grounded theorists focus on social injustice by constructing an account of separate systems of oppression such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, anti-Semitism, ableism, classism, and multiple issues (Adams et al., 1997, 2000), or by describing criteria for determining whether individuals and groups are oppressed (Young, 1990; Bell, 1997).

A grounded approach to social justice begins with socially unjust realities. It moves people to struggle “not just because they either think justice is logical or see pragmatic reasons for pursuing it, but because they believe that achieving it is the right thing to do” (Collins, 1998, p. 244). It is to “first focus on what is wrong before
embarking upon a program based on what is right” (Simon, 1995, p. 24). Social injustice takes priority over social justice and it is not an abnormality or breakdown of social justice (Shklar, 1990; Simon, 1995). Necessity of social justice does not come from aberration of social justice but from clear presence of social injustice. Unlike traditional theorists whose focus is heavily on social justice focusing on redistribution from everyone’s perspective in a normatively and culturally neutral stance, grounded theorists deal with social injustice as well as social justice from the oppressed perspectives in culturally specific contexts.

My participants’ empirical knowledge of social injustice was the center of this research. I investigated teachers’ empirical understanding of social injustice before discussing the concept of social justice. In addition, the use of the first person narrative in biographies (Chapter 4) was to center the socially unjust reality in eight different contexts in their own voices. Throughout the research period my participants brought their experiences of social injustice into the interviews as well as their lessons.

**Epistemological resistance to the world of oppression**

When the concrete reality of oppression is never subjective (Freire, 1970), the next question is whose knowledge validation process is more legitimate and authoritative in identifying social injustice. SJR is grounded on the epistemologies of emancipation that problematize dominant ideology by crystallizing multifaceted
oppression from the oppressed perspectives (Scheurich & Young, 1997; Tyson, 1998, 2006; Parker & Lynn, 2002). It is because SJR is “not solely based on victimization, but also on struggle and survival” (Tyson, 1998, p. 22). In this section, I examine knowledge validation process in order to accentuate “alternative knowledge claims” that are routinely ignored, discredited, or simply absorbed and marginalized in existing paradigms (Collins, 1991).

Experiential knowledge of social injustice endows the oppressed with the authority of identifying social injustices. As the holder and creator of experiential knowledge, the oppressed deconstruct the realities of social injustice and construct the sense of social justice by telling their lived experiences of discrimination (Fernandez, 2002; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Yosso, 2002; Matsuda, 1991; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002b). Historicity, positionality, and lived experiences are inseparably interconnected to one another.

Epistemologies of social injustice take “people’s historicity as their starting point” (Freire, 1970, p. 84). Different groups of people do not think alike, nor do they interpret realities in the same way because of their different historical and cultural backgrounds (Standfield, 1985; Scheurich & Young, 1997; Epstein, 1998; Giroux, 1994). Not only does historicity ask the oppressed to challenge the dominant Eurocentric epistemologies, but it also asks the oppressors to conceive of themselves as members of a race, to recognize the privileges attached to the color of white, and to

In the center of historicity is the “specificity of oppression” (Tyson, 1998, 2006). According to Delgado Bernal (1998) it is “cultural intuition” that extends one’s personal experience to include collective experience and community memory (p. 563). The oppressed have the expertise to identify and analyze social injustice. Their history itself is the process of being marginalized, silenced, and misrepresented. Historicity endows marginalized people with human agency against domination by making their own voices heard.

Positionality is more situational than historical and enables us to understand the world “from particular positions at specific times” (Richardson, 2000, p. 929). According to Collins (1991), positionality is to be “simultaneously a member of a group and yet standing apart from it” (p. 207) and it creates “a new angle of vision on the process of suppression” (p. 11-12). Therefore, those who have the same or similar collective experience and community memory do not necessarily develop the same epistemologies. Unlike the macro level historicity, positionality explains epistemologies at micro levels such as subjectivity (Peshkin, 1988; Kegan, 1982).

“Recognizing the minor cannot erase the aspects of the major, … We must leave home, as it were, since our homes are often sites of racism, sexism, and other damaging social practices … What we gain is a reterritorialization; we reinhabit a world of our making (here ‘our’ is

Understanding the positionality in the world of oppression not only leads the oppressed to challenge the dominant ideology but it also asks the oppressors to relocate their positionalities.

According to Giroux (1988), “by locating differences in a particular historical and social location, it becomes possible to understand how they are organized and constructed within maps of rules and regulations and located within dominant social forms which either enable or disable such differences” (p. 170).

While historicity and positionality are solid conditions for emancipatory epistemologies as well as immediate potentials for resistance to the world of oppression, lived experiences are ongoing processes of epistemological formation for social justice (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Fernandez, 2002; Merryfield, 1998, 2000a; Merryfield & Subedi, 2003). Lived experiences ignite conditions and activate potentials. For this reason, realistic narratives are commonly used in scholarly works in order to challenge the world of oppression and to struggle for social justice (Hooks, 1992, 1994; Collins, 1991, 1998; Nieto, 2000; Sleeter, 1995; Krieger, 1983; Bell, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Ayers et al., 1998; Finn, 1999; Mabokela & Green, 2001).
Merryfield (2000a) describes qualities of lived experiences commonly found among successful multicultural and global educators. These include encounters with people different from themselves, experiences with discrimination, injustice or outsider status, and their felt contradictions in dealing with multiple realities (p. 438-440). These experiences have been gained through storytelling, counter-storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, and narratives from the marginalized (Fernandez, 2002; Delgado, 1989; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002a, 2002b).

Experiential knowledge of social injustice can never be fully appreciated by those who don’t belong to the oppressed (Duncan, 2002, p. 88). However, it is never unclear that social justice is for all people from all historical and all cultural backgrounds. According to Freire (1970), “the oppressed unveil the world of oppression” and then “[the] pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all people in the process of permanent liberation” (p. 54). The privileged learn social injustices from those who experience oppression by taking on marginalized perspectives.

Empathy plays an important role in going beyond and through experiences of social injustice. Yosso (2002) emphasizes the importance of “empathy with and action alongside communities of color” (p. 100). While Martin L. Hoffman (1976, 1990, 200) emphasizes the need to consider empathy in morality by taking the lead in criticizing Rawls’s and Kohlberg’s justice orientation. He defines empathy as “an affective
response more appropriate to someone else’s situation than to one’s own” (1990, p. 48). Empathy-based feelings such as empathic distress, empathic anger, and empathic injustice play an important role in constructing empathic knowledge of social injustice. There are two types of empathic anger.

“In the first, relatively simple type, the victim is angry at the abuser and the observer picks up that anger through the empathy-arousing mechanisms and feels empathic anger. In the second, more complex type, the victim feels sad, hurt, or disappointed but not angry at the abuser. The observer empathizes with these feelings, but also feels empathy-based anger at the abuser as a result of taking the victim’s perspective, even though the victim is not angry” (Hoffman, 2000, p. 98).

In an empirical study on empathic anger, Vitaglione and Barnett (2003) find that experiencing episodes of anger often result in greater understanding of a contentious issue, and sometimes actual changes in behavior to improve the situation. Empathic anger is closely related to empathic injustice (Hoffman, 1990, 2000). Seeing the oppressed as victims of social injustice, the privileged transform “their empathic distress into an empathic feeling of injustice, including a motive to right the wrong” (Hoffman, 2000, p. 107). Sometimes empathic anger is hard to distinguish from direct anger because the behavioral outcomes are similar (Hoffman, 2000).

A way of arousing empathic anger is through counterstorytelling. It has an “empathic duality”, the first component being “an empathic-distress-for-victim” and the second is an “empathy-based anger-at-aggressor” (Hoffman, 2000, p. 98).
Empathic knowledge is necessary but not sufficient in understanding the oppressive nature of the world. Although it is essential for the privileged to understand social injustice, it should be based on “the connections between deep caring, moral authority, and freedom struggles for justice” (Collins, 1998, p. 246). It can be fallacious when the oppressors think that they understand everything the oppressed have experienced (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Duncan, 2002). A global educator Robert Hanvey (1975) claims for moving beyond empathy. “Empathy … means the capacity to imagine oneself in another role within the context of one’s own culture. Treansspetction means the capacity to imagine oneself in a role within the context of a foreign culture” (p. 12).

The recognition of whiteness as a race and a source of privileges is a way of identifying social injustice by empathizing with those who do not have the same privileges. This is true, because it is not possible to realize their own privileges without seeing unprivileged people (McIntosh, 1992; Sleeter, 1993; Roediger, 1991, 1994; hooks, 1992). The privileged or the oppressors need to be consciously aware of their locations to see the world within a hierarchical structure (hooks, 1992; Applebaum, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1992).

The epistemological orientation of my participants toward social justice was an ethical framework for building a socially just reality by challenging the status quo. By acknowledging the culture of power and knowledge, they made constant efforts for
social justice. Their epistemological orientation was geared toward representing all students from all cultures. In the same context, my study was to build a community of social justice educators whose epistemological resistance empowered their students in an unjust world.

**Methodological action for empowerment**

SJR is a methodological action for empowerment, through which social justice researchers enhance the “resiliency of [participants] as they struggle against the structural violence in their lives” (Watts & Erevelles, 2004, p. 294). In this regard, the participants acknowledged me that my study contributed to empowering them in teaching for social justice. In this section I provide how participation in my study or my presence in their classroom influenced their pedagogies.

Charo: Well it really affected the Asian students [in my class]. I mean they really loved having you here. It just lets them have a sense of pride, which is really nice. And then just asking these questions always make me think about social justice. So, it is good. It is always good to look at [oneself] more critically and carefully.
Ellen: I am not sure that it really did [influence me]. I was conscious that you were here. I was aware of your presence and maybe I tried to explain a little more or make sure you knew what I was doing. But, I didn’t change anything and I didn’t do anything for you.

Helen: It makes me think about why I do everything. Normally I don’t sit and analyze it. Anytime you improve on clarifying your own goals, you improve, and you make yourself a better teacher. Reflection is always good. It’s nice to be constantly asked to question your practices, it doesn’t happen much after college is over.

Hristo: I think it has made me more aware of what I am doing. It is the same process I try to put my students through so that they reflect more on what they are doing. It made me reflect more on what I was doing. So, I think it helped me identify things that I can use more often and that were successful for me as a teacher. It improves my own job satisfaction. It also made me more aware of what was and was not a social justice issue. Sometimes I was teaching social justice without consciously thinking about it. It made me better able to focus on the key elements [to determine] what to share with the students.
Jean: You are starting to make me think about things that I have never thought about before. It makes me more aware of what I am doing because I just think to myself that this is what I do. It is not a big deal. And then you come in and you are so interested in it. It starts to make me realize [that] I am a social justice educator. I never thought of it that way before. It makes me more aware of what I am doing related to social justice in my classroom because before I never thought of it as anything different or special or noteworthy before. It also makes me know that there are other teachers to share with, and other resources to connect to.

Martha: I think it is good for me to reflect on it. Anytime a teacher is asked to verbalize or think about her practice or his practice, it moves you deeper into what you are doing well and what you want to change. So it opens up many new questions for me so that I can grow. For the children it is seeing another face in the room and in this case another face that looks different from them.

Tom: I think it has definitely affected my thinking because I think I did a lot of the stuff that we have talked about unconsciously and I think it has made me consciously think of what I am doing. I do think of that more now. It has brought thoughts to my head about how other things that I am doing or how I
can do it better than what I am doing. So yeah I think that our discussions have been thought provoking to me and [have helped] me grow as a person and as a teacher. I don’t think I would have thought so intensely about those issues without those conversations.

Troy: It blends so beautifully with what our community is trying to do - Open the world to social justice - because we see so much injustice. … This is a wonderful thing. I can gain some knowledge from what you are studying to help my students, my school, and improve myself. … It is a very good thing because it makes me continually question. … ‘Am I doing it well?’ ‘How can I do it better?’ ‘What can I infuse into my teaching that will really reinforce this?’ ‘How can I be even a better educator in this area?’

**Situating Myself Methodologically**

Situating a self methodologically is “the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 183). Methodological identification of a self is “sensitive to the relationship of researchers to their subjects as dialogical and co-constructive, the relationship of researchers to their audiences as interdependent, and the negotiation of meaning within any relationship as potentially ramifying outward into the society, individual agency ceases to be our major concern” (Gergen
& Gergen, 2000, p. 1042). A critical examination of my methodological self is a prerequisite step for building a we-context by telling audience and readers who I am within social contexts (Errante, 1998; Fontana & Frey, 2000). It is also a way of identifying potential sources of bias in my study. At the same time, I examined the stories I brought into the interviews with my participants. In what follows I discuss six “subjective-I’s that I shared with my participants. They were also found in my “researcher’s stories” node from the data. It is aligned with Peshkin’s (1988) reflections on himself as a researcher in an urban school setting. My subjectivities were both potential biases as well as potential strengths in my study, which constituted in my study (Ellis and Bochner, 2000).

The first subjective-I uncovered in this study is the “Racial-Maintenance-I.” Although my Racial-Maintenance-I was recently constructed, its newness raised my vigilant awareness of race and racism. It was socially constructed for me because it did not exist before I came to the U.S. As I am from a racially homogeneous country, and six years of living in the U.S. has been a learning process of how race is associated with political struggles and moral accusations. Unlike people who were born in racially-grounded cultures, my learning of race and racism has not gone through the racial identity formation stages (Cross, 1991; Tatum, 1997; Bennett, 1993). With regard to race and racism I take a “curious-outsider-within stance” (Collins, 1991, p. 11). Throughout the research period, I talked about my son’s race and his marginal
situation in the category of Asian. I paid special attention to the complexities of race and racism and its intersectionalities with other forms of oppression.

My second subjective-I is the “Ethnic-Maintenance-I.” I consider myself a cultural stranger who came from South Korea. I found myself comparing American cultures with my Korean cultures. My Ethnic-Maintenance-I became a referent for cultural understanding in different social contexts. For example, during the interviews my participants asked me about Korean culture and schools. I also gave presentations to Hristo’s sociology classes about how I as a person from South Korea felt after the Virginia Tech massacre. Being aware of this subjective-I made me aware of multiple perspectives based on cultural and historical backgrounds.

My third subjective-I is the “Family-Maintenance-I.” After going through the IRB process in June 2006, my data collection was delayed due to the loss of my father in South Korea. Poverty and the Korean War deprived him of the opportunity of education, which influenced my learning, teaching and researching for people with less privileges. Therefore my study on social justice education was “an arena of hope and struggle” (Ayers, 1998, p. xvii). In the interviews and in my autobiography, I mentioned to my participants that my educational journey was a hope of my family and struggle for my family. This particular research was special to me because it was a struggle for people who did not have educational opportunities.
My fourth subjective-I is the “Justice-Tendency-I.” Although there would be discussions about what justice meant in the Korean cultures, I learned and taught about a public sense of justice or “what is right and wrong” in the Confucian cultures. My tendency toward justice led me to examine privileges and marginalities that people experience in the United States. In this regards, I have experienced a special marginality that comes from my limited communication skills, financial worries, lack of American cultural understandings, etc. Still, however, I have learned that I had my own privileges such as being a male, being a success in school, etc.

My fifth subjective-I is the “In-Between-I.” I have found myself on many different borders. These include the borders between school and home as well as between Korean and American cultures. My positionalities between cultural, economical, racial, ethnical, and personal borders endowed me with a “curious outsider-within stance” (Collins, 1991). It also helped me realize an “interdependent sense of self” (Wood, 1994).

**Research Design**

**Participants**

The participants in this study were purposefully selected to create “information-rich cases for study in depth” (Patton, 1990, p. 169). However, I refused any utilitarian orientations toward information from participants. The teachers in this
study are “holders and creators of knowledge” (Delgado Bernal, 2002, p. 107). The
decision to participate in my study was not to be a passive informant, but to be a
knowledge creator. Strictly speaking, it was not the selection of participants, but the
selection of a researcher and research. In this process I tried not to take “the
imperialist position” (Smith & Deemer, 2000, p. 890), but to build a new community
for social justice education. As a researcher I was then able to “walk into” the
community and “work with” participants.

The question, “who are to be selected by whom,” is inevitably related to
power relationships between the researcher and the researched. I claim that this
research is only truthful when it prioritizes the power of participants’ experiential and
empathic knowledge (Foucault, 1984). Thus, I negate any conventional beliefs in the
power of a researcher in selecting participants. Instead, I decentralized myself as a
researcher and placed authority on the community as well as the willingness of the
participants. These factors determined who would be in the community for this study.
This ensured that participants never fell into a lower ladder of power structure during
the study.
Community Nomination

I used community nominations not only to limit my power, but also to authorize the community in building the new community of social justice educators (Foster, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1995). For a period of three weeks from January 25, 2007 to February 15, 2007, I asked 35 educational professionals to recommend teachers to me who were teaching for social justice. The community consisted of teachers, teacher educators, and school administrators in a Midwest metropolitan area. The following is part of the letter that I sent out to the 35 community members.

I understand teaching itself is a social justice project and every teacher works for a better society. For this reason, it is not easy for us to identify who works better for social justice than others. However, I would like you to be self-assured in nominating and recommending social justice educators. You may consider whether or not they address social injustice issues in their curricula work, take care of students from all cultural backgrounds and extend their pedagogical practices into the community.

In asking for names of potential participants, I provided the community members with three wide-ranging criteria: curricula work, mentoring relationships, and community projects. I did not ask the community to constrain any participants by race, gender, class, teaching subject, grade level, school district, teaching experience, degree, or any other criteria. It was because I refused to provide any exclusive criteria for selecting potential participants. My study was not for exclusion, but for inclusion.
Instead of identifying characteristics of a social justice educator, I provided them with information on my study including the purpose of the study, research questions, and data collection methods.

Seventeen out of the thirty-five community members responded and I was given 29 names of potential participants. I sent out letters and emails to all 29 potential participants and asked if they were interested in participating in my study. I also made visits to their schools and had conversations about the study. The following is part of the letter I sent out to them.

I would like to let you know that you were recommended to me as a social justice educator. I am wondering if you would be interested in participating in my study. My study will be a small step for social justice education, but I believe it will help pre-service and in-service teachers develop pedagogies for social justice. My research will be a beneficiary of social justice educators’ pedagogical practices. At the same time, participants in my study will also have opportunities to share and develop lesson ideas and community projects within a new community of social justice educators. Attached you will find a brief information on my study and teachers’ participation in the study.

12 of the 29 potential participants showed their interests in participating in my study. I was happy to get quick responses from the teachers, but at the same time I was also anxious to have such a large number of participants. It was because I initially thought of working with 5 participants and gave the community the authority to select participants. Therefore, I increased the number of participants in my study by revising the IRB application to work with up to 13 teachers. Out of the 12 teachers, however,
four teachers were not able to participate in my study. The following two email correspondences were from two of the four teachers.

-----Original Message-----
From: Sarah (pseudonym)
Sent: Wednesday, February 07, 2007 9:08 AM
To: SungChoon Park
Subject: Re: Research on social justice education

Hi SungChoon -

My schedule is busy with Social Studies Club, Model United Nations, Ski Club, applying for the International Baccalaureate program, along with teaching. If you really need and want me to participate, I am absolutely there for you. Let me know what you decide. I won't be offended if you have the right type and numbers already. Best of luck with your program!

Sarah

-----Original Message-----
From: Ryan (pseudonym)
Sent: Friday, February 09, 2007 12:07 AM
To: SungChoon Park
Subject: Re: Research on social justice education

Sung Choon,

I would love to participate but I'm not sure I qualify. I teach gifted elementary students now and don't teach specifically social justice. ...

Ryan
I knew Sarah and Ryan were very interested in social justice education because of previous experiences I had with them. Sarah and I took a doctoral seminar course, “Teaching for Social Justice” in 2002. Ryan and I worked together for pre-service teachers within the Professional Development School network. However, I did not invite them to my study because I respected their commitments to other projects as well as and their initial feelings about participation.

The other two teachers were also unable to participate in my study because they were busy working with pre-service teachers and other projects. When I initially met with them and talked with them about their multicultural backgrounds, I knew that they would help me understand social justice education. I have to admit that I really wanted to have a nominee who was an African American teacher at an elementary school. In the following journal I reflected on the power issues between the researcher and the participants in the process of participant selection.

No matter how much I want to limit my power and take the authority from the community in selecting participants, I think I have to admit that a researcher takes an important role in decision-making processes. I still want to have a diverse cultural group of teachers in my study. I wish Ms. Jones (pseudonym) would join. But I think it is not likely because of her other commitments. I will ask her one more time tomorrow if she will be able to participate. By the way, can I be fully out of the decision making process? Can I be fully out of power in terms of selecting participants? Hmm… I am happy that I have Hristo.
But I don’t know what cultural backgrounds the other seven teachers have. The name Charo seems to have multicultural backgrounds. I have no idea who the rest of the six teachers are. I am really looking forward to meeting with and learning from the teachers (February 14, 2007).

In the end, I had eight participants who were recommended by the community and, at the same time, volunteered to contribute to my study. They are two high school English teachers, two high school Social Studies teachers, one high school Art teacher, one middle school English and Social Studies teacher, and two elementary school teachers. The eight teachers taught at eight different schools located in five different school districts and one charter school. The schools are widely spread out in the Midwest metropolitan area. In this chapter I decided not to provide a short description of each teacher. I decided to dedicate Chapter 4 to the biographies of these teachers in order to prove thick descriptions of their cultural backgrounds and school cultures.

Data Collection

As Vidich (1960) points out, data collection does not take place in a vacuum. Data in this study aims to change the world instead of describe it (Popkewitz, 1998). Tyson (2003b) rejects “data for data’s sake” and states that if data is used correctly, “research would become a conscious political, economic and personal conduit for empowerment” (p. 4). Social justice research is “antifoundational” pursuing
Data collection in this study aims to accumulate empirical knowledge of social injustice and pedagogical practices for social justice. It is to open time-space for social justice by re-presenting participants’ historical and lived experiences. I shared my own experiences of social injustice with participants, encouraged them to come up with their knowledge of social injustice by organizing my interview questions, and built up our collective voices for social justice. Data collection is not only a necessary deconstructive reversal to social injustice, but it is also a constructive moral formation for social justice.

In order to ensure that my participants had ownership of data, I made consistent efforts for continuous member-check throughout the research period. “It is important (but never sufficient) for targeted persons to receive drafts revealing how they are presented, quoted, and interpreted, and for the researcher to listen well for signs of concern” (Stake, 2000, p. 448-449). Interviews, observations, and researcher reflective journals were mainly used as data sources for my research. Multiple sources of data provided this study with crystalized triangulation during data analysis.
Interviews

The interview in this study was the process of restoring participants’ knowledge of social injustice and constructing their concepts of social justice. Interviews were used because participants were actively constructing knowledge around questions and responses (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Kvale, 1996; Schwandt, 2000). The interview served as opportunities for participants to describe the nyktuoike nature of the world from their situated positions. Thus, it was essential that this study sought for “descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena” (Kvale, 1996, p. 6-7). Knowledge was constructed from the social dynamics of interviewing participants and sharing transcriptions (Fontana & Frey, 2000).

Five individual interviews were conducted with open-ended and semi-structured questions. In each interview I tried to create “the reality of relational process” and a “relational reconceptualization of [selves]” (Gergen & Gergen, 2000, p. 1042). In my autobiography that was given to the participants before starting data collection, I wrote about my historical and cultural backgrounds, lived experiences, and interests in social justice education. The semi-structured interview questions were about cultural backgrounds, experiences of social injustice, concepts of social justice, pedagogical practices, and community projects. (See Appendix B for interview
questions). The interview topics and questions helped teachers reflect on their thoughts and pedagogies before each interview.

Interviews were audio taped, transcribed, and member checked. Although Lincoln and Guba (1985) do not recommend recording except for unusual reasons due to the intrusiveness of recording devices and the possibility of technical failure, Patton (1990) says that a tape recorder is indispensable because it has the advantage of capturing data more faithfully than hurriedly written notes might and it also makes it easier for the researcher to focus on the interview. Sharing transcriptions with participants enhanced the credibility of the stories through member check. Conversations over the transcriptions increased social dynamics between the researcher and participants by showing the progresses of constructive thoughts. It was to validate the "presence of voice in the text" (Eisner, 1991, p. 36). Through consitious conversations with participants about previous interviews and observations, I confirmed that member checking was “the most crucial technique for establishing credibility” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 314).

The following table shows when and how long each interview was conducted. The time was counted from my voice recorder even though the actual length of the interviews is longer than the time recorded. I also included the volume of transcription (which was doubled spaced using the font Times New Roman, size 12). All
transcription was member checked with each participant, which generated more conversations afterwards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Observations enabled me to walk into and live in the contexts of interaction in which social events occurred (Malinowski, 1922/1961; Angrosino & Perez, 2000). Malinowski (1922/1961) stresses the importance of understanding “the inponderabilia of actual life” which is “a series of phenomena of great importance which cannot possibly be recorded by questioning or computing documents but have to be observed
in their full actuality” (p. 18). Ethnographic explanations were recorded with “an effort at penetrating the mental attitude expressed in [the world]” (Malinowski, 1922/1961, p. 19). In order to build ethnographic authority, I made thick descriptions for “fairly accurate renditions of what I see, hear, feel, taste, and so on” (Richardson, 2000, p. 941). Thick descriptions involve “literal description of the entity being evaluated, the circumstances under which it is used, the characteristics of the people involved in it, the nature of the community in which it is located, and the like” (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 119).

I conducted the study not as a detached, neutral, and unobtrusive observer, but as a participant observer. The data collected depended on my particular position in a network of relationships, and the image participants hold of me (Vidich, 1960). Any observation was inevitably time- and context-dependent (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Guba & Lincoln (1985), “observation (particularly participant observation) maximizes the inquirer’s ability to grasp motives, beliefs, concerns, interests, unconscious behaviors, customs, and the like; observation … allows the inquirer to see the world as his subjects see it, to live in their time frames, to capture the phenomenon in and on its own terms, and to grasp the culture in its own natural, ongoing environment; observation … provides the inquirer with access to the emotional reactions of the group introspectively – that is, in a real sense it permits the
observer to us himself as a data source/ and observation … allows the observer to build on tacit knowledge, both his own and that of members of the group” (p. 193).

My observation was made in and out of the classroom. I focused on how participants incorporated their experiences of social injustice into teaching. Then I also observed them interact with people outside the classroom in order to comprehend the “major social dimensions of the situation in which data [are to be] collected” (Vidich, 1960, p. 360). The following table shows my observation of participants in the classroom and the community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Classroom observation</th>
<th>School or community</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jean</td>
<td>3/2, 3/5, 3/7, 3/9, 3/12, 3/16, 3/19, 4/2, 4/20, 5/2</td>
<td>3/16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of observations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table. 3. 2 Observation dates
Researcher Reflective Journal

Throughout the research period I kept researcher reflective journals for data collection and analysis. This was to connect myself with the people interviewed and the world observed. In addition to observational notes, my reflective writings included “uncensored feeling statements about the research, the people I am talking to, my doubts, my anxieties, [and] my pleasures” (Richardson, 2000, p. 941). It was a way of “seeing through and beyond social scientific naturalisms” (Richardson, 2000, p. 930). Writing about a researching self becomes a meaningful source of data, because knowing the self and the others are intertwined (Richardson, 2000; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Janesick, 2000).

Data Analysis

This study employed the constant comparative analysis method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Patton, 1990; Merriam, 1998). According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993), it “combines inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison of all social incidents observed and coded” (p. 256). I lived, played, and conversed with data throughout the research period by going back and forth from one source to another when patterns emerged. It is an inevitably on-going interaction between a researcher and participants and, at the same time, between the people in the research and the world around them. Data analysis in my study was a continual process of construction,
deconstruction and reconstruction. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state “data are … the constructions offered by or in the sources; data analysis leads to a reconstruction of those constructions” (p. 332). I ground data analysis in my participants’ understandings, as well as my own (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). The interactive data analyzing processes between a researcher and participants build credibility and dependability.

I coded data into categories both manually and electronically. Working with data manually enhanced my initial understanding of the data. It was also helpful to use the qualitative data analysis software Nvivo 7.0 because it is an efficient way of data coding and retrieving. First, I coded the data factually in order to understand each participant. The two biggest nodes in the factual coding were “teachers” and “school and community.” Under these two nodes, there were 36 child nodes including “class information,” “community around the school,” “students’ awareness of social injustice,” “teachers’ growing up,” “teachers’ feelings,” “teachers’ family,” etc. This factual coding involved an initial analysis of the data. Second, I coded the data analytically by answering my research questions. The three biggest nodes in the analytic coding were “social injustice,” “social justice,” and “pedagogies.” There were 28 child nodes under this analytic coding that included “hegemony,” “isms,” “concept of social justice,” “ideal school,” “curricula decision,” “lessons taught,” etc. I also had two child nodes under a “researcher” node, in which I wanted to examine both how I
as a researcher was perceived by the participants and what stories I brought into the study during the interviews. This analysis helped me situate myself methodologically and discover how my study empowered my participants.

**Writing and Ethical Representation**

Writing is a way of knowing – “a method of discovery and analysis” (Richardson, 2000, p. 923). My writing is a claim to truth by answering critical issues such as “what narratives do, what consequences they have, to what uses they can be put” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 746). According to Denzin (2000), the claims are assessed “if a text (a) interrogates existing cultural, sexist, and racial stereotypes, especially those connected to family, femininity, masculinity, marriage, and intimacy; (b) gives primacy to concrete lived experience; (c) uses dialogue and an ethics of personal responsibility, values beauty, spirituality, and love of others; (d) implements an emancipatory agenda committed to equality, freedom, social justice, and participatory democratic practices; and (e) emphasizes community, collective action, solidarity, and group empowerment” (p. 910). Writing is “not merely the transcribing of some reality” but “a process of discovery: discovery of the subject … and discovery of the self” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 184). Intertextual connections are made between the words and the world, and between participants and a researcher.
As this research inevitably brings up participants’ personal stories from experiential knowledge of oppression, they may become emotional, and sometimes vulnerable during the research. Because of this, it is a constant reflection on the “question of responsibility” (Fine, et al., 2000, p. 125). To be responsible and respectful it must be based on feminist communitarian ethics. It stresses “the values of empowerment, shared governance, care, solidarity, love, community, covenant, morally involved observers, and civic transformation” (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000, p. 1052). There are two goals in my writing. One is to discover moral agency in participants and the other is to be a political and moral conduit for empowerment (Tyson, 2006).

Participants were given written and oral information on the research purpose, procedures, and methods. They were also informed of ethical considerations regarding “privacy, consent, confidentiality, deceit, and deception…[these] call for decent and fair conduct of the research to avoid harm of whatever sort … either in the course of data gathering and analysis or in the subsequent text” (Olsen, 2000, p. 233). Data was constantly member checked with each participant for the ownership as well as for the accuracy of information.

Writing is an additional process of inter- and intra-lingual connections to me whose native language is not English. On one hand, the inter-lingual connection between Korean and English enabled me to employ incessantly comparative
perspectives by utilizing two ways of thinking in two different languages. On the other hand, the intra-lingual connection was a challenge for me to catch delicate nuances in English. Being a non-native speaking researcher, I am aware of the importance of consistent member-checks.

In describing my participants’ perceptions of teaching for social justice, I made consistent efforts to represent them authentically. However, as a critical poststructuralist, I understand that my writing does not aim to be the precise description of the participants, but it is the political and moral reconstruction of social justice educators and their pedagogies through my lens as well as theirs. When I wrote the biographies in Chapter 4, I revisited the issue of representation by addressing the nature of narrative, my role in storytelling, and the ethics of speaking about others (See the introduction to Chapter 4).

**Establishment of Trustworthiness**

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), trustworthiness is the answer to the basic questions: “How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?" (p. 290). He also emphasizes the importance of using the correct arguments, criteria, and questions that will be persuasive on the research issues (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). In what follows I
discuss how to establish trustworthiness for this study by examining credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility

To build credibility is to have “truth value” in a naturalist inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 103). The five major techniques to increase credibility are “activities that make it more likely that credible findings and interpretations will be produced (prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation); an activity that provides an external check on the inquiry process (peer debriefing); an activity aimed at refining working hypotheses as more and more information becomes available (negative case analysis); an activity that makes possible checking preliminary findings and interpretations against archived ‘raw data’ (referential adequacy); and an activity providing for the direct test of findings and interpretations with the human sources from which they have come – the constructors of the multiple realities being studies (member checking)” (p. 301).

Prolonged engagement helps me “go native” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 304). Since February 22, 2007 I have invested sufficient time to achieve reciprocal and interpersonal relationships, learn participants’ cultures, test for misinformation, and build trust (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I added depth into my study through periodic
interviews and observations throughout the research period. I also made visits to the classroom for member check and follow-up conversations.

Triangulation has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, by verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation (Stake, 2000, p. 443). Instead of using the notion of triangulation, Richardson (2000) proposes the idea of crystallization as a better way to provide a qualitative researcher with “a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic (p. 934). The notion of crystallization helped me include and cherish the multiplicity of different sources, perspectives, methods, procedures, and representations. The participants’ multiple source of empirical knowledge of social injustice gave this research social justice validity, which “posits a research validity that is seriously grounded in social justice … and long-term involvement” (Parker & Lynn, 2002, p. 11).

My consistent interactions with a peer debriefer who was a former high school math teacher allowed me to reflect on my inquiry process. I discussed with her the processes of my research since the beginning of my study. Having taught in the metropolitan area she had understanding of cultural contexts. At the same time, her newness in social justice education helped me clarify my findings and discussions. Peer debriefing is a “process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry
that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer’s mind” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308).

As member check is “the most crucial technique for establishing credibility” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314), a qualitative researcher “must decide what form the member check will take” (Janesick, 2000, p. 393). Member checking is also an ethical procedure (Schwandt, 2000). Member checks have been conducted formally and informally throughout the research periods. The member check as “conjoint representation” (Janesick, 2000, p. 393) reduced the line between researcher and participants through the on-going loops of feedback. In particular, the biographies in Chapter 4 were constantly revised and reorganized after going through member checks.

Transferability and dependability

The term transferability replaces the usual positivist criteria of external validity or generalizability. However, qualitative research operating within complex contexts is far from being generalized. Geertz’s (1967) notion of “thick description” replaces the notion of generalizability in that it provides “everything the reader may need to know in order to understand the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 152). Dependability that is a replacement of the term reliability is to be negotiated by overlapping data collection.
Chapter 4

LEARNING ABOUT SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATORS:
IN THEIR OWN VOICES

Introduction

In this chapter I provided cultural and contextual information about the social justice educators by re-presenting the stories and pedagogical practices they shared with me during the interviews. Using the form of a biography, I highlighted each teacher’s stories covering the topics of family, values, childhood memories, significant experiences, community, school, and students. In the writing biographies, I found myself asking “Can [I] ever hope to speak authentically of the experience of the Other, or an Other?” (Lincoln and Denzin, 2000, p. 1050) Reflecting on the question, I paid special attention to three areas: the nature of the narrative, my role in storytelling, and the ethics of speaking about others.

First, the social justice educators are both the narrators and the main characters in the biography. Hence, I used first person narrative by selecting words directly from the interview transcriptions. This not only made the voice more authentic than any other way, but it also reduced the actual or potential disparity in understanding the lives of the social justice educators (Scholes and Kellogg’s, 1966).
Second, I remained as an immediate listener or a conversation partner in the biography by refusing to be an anonymous and remote audience. Therefore, my presence was purposefully insinuated in each biography. While I am not a storyteller within the text, I actively share the stories with people outside the study. The story selection was meticulously, but not manipulatively done. It was based on the criteria of addressing my three research questions. As I follow this process, my writing or story-sharing becomes a method of discovery and analysis (Richardson, 2000).

Third, it was an ethical task for me to speak about my teachers to those who are outside the study. Some of the stories shared were painful to hear and share. Therefore, in selecting stories I went through a “process of emotional recall in which I imagine being back in the scene emotionally and physically” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 752). In this regard, member-check with my teachers was beyond a claim to truth. It was an ethical proposal and approval between researcher and participants. At the same time, as a researcher for social justice education I also felt it my responsibility to tell what I learned about and from the social justice educators to people outside the study.

In this chapter I answered my research questions in a post-structural way by juxtaposing my teachers’ biographies in their own voices. While each biography was written to convey specificities of each teacher’s life and perception, the anthology of eight autobiographies was indented to bring up multiplicities and complexities in social justice discourses. In re-presenting my teachers’ lives through their own voices I
decided to minimize my own voice in order to maximize the voice of my teachers and allow an unbiased interpretation for all potential readers. The biographies are organized by the names of social justice educators in an alphabetical order. All names addressed in my study were pseudonyms that were chosen by the participants.

**Charo’s biography**

4\textsuperscript{th} grade teacher at an elementary school

\textbf{Cultural backgrounds}

Growing up I used to come home and ask my parents what I should put down. “What do I put down on race?” My father said to me “Put down human. You are part of the human race.” My mother told me “Put down both.” And I said “There is not a blank and they don’t let you put down both.” I thought at that time that belonging to both was bad and that intermarriage was bad. I wanted to, you know, not have anybody notice me and just fit in. I didn’t want to be different, but I was. Growing-up bi-culturally I had two cultures valued at the same time. And I didn’t realize that not everybody thought the same way as I did. It took me a long time to figure that out.

I was born in the Midwest. I have always been going back and forth from the U.S. to Latin America. I also lived in Latin America for 8 years and had two sons there. My mother is from the Midwest. She is a seventh generation European
American with English and German roots. I started my teaching career with my mother and worked with her for two years. What I learned most from her is that you really have to involve families. My mother could have taught anywhere, but she chose to teach people who were poor. She taught me a lot of things about working with people living in poverty.

My father was born in South America. He is a descendent from the Inca Indians. He has a very Indian looking face. So, he looks pretty much like you, SungChoon. He was into very liberal politics. We grew up in a small conservative town. It was hard being his child. We just wanted him to stop and just let us, you know, be normal. But, he really showed me how you have to fight for justice. A lot of the immigrants who migrated from Mexico would come to our town in summer to pick tomatoes and cucumbers. When they got in trouble like for driving without a driver’s license or whatever, the police always brought them to my house because my father was a lawyer. My father could talk in Spanish and translate. He gave them legal advice. So I saw how the police treated these people and how my father treated them trying to help them.

I’ve experienced and witnessed social injustice a lot. When you witness it with a family member, you kind of feel it yourself. I was pretty young when I first realized that the world was racist. I saw how people responded to my father’s face, his name, and his accent. That was almost painful because here is this person that you love and
admire and you see other people think less of him because of his face. Let me tell you this story. One day my father was driving his old banged-up rusty car with my mother. They went out to see some people in the poor neighborhood. When they came out of it, the police thought my father was one of the poor Mexicans who lived there. They pulled him over and said, “You’ve been driving drunk.” And my father said, “I’m not driving drunk.” And they said, “Yeah you were driving drunk. You were swerving all over the road.” And he said, “No, I’m not swerving all over the road.” And they said, “Get out of the car.” And my father said, “I’m not getting out of the car.” So they reached in and grabbed him by his hair, and started banging his head against the side of the car. When another policeman came up, he went “Do you know who that is? That’s Julio Galarza. He’s a lawyer and he’s a judge.” There is another story about my father. He had to serve in World War II as a non-citizen. He never could move up in his rank or in his pay. At the same time, he was the one that was sent on dangerous missions to go across enemy lines, spy and come back all. He got shot in the head, but he lived. He survived. They made him do all of the really dangerous work, which was just blatant racism. They did not value his life as much as they did a white soldier’s life.

I remember asking my father when the Civil Rights movements were going on. “Why don’t they just call the police?” He said, “The police are the ones doing the harm.” I felt like I lost a whole sense of innocence. Then I asked him “What do they
do then?” And he said, “They just have to fight damn hard.” And then he said to me “You just always have to fight.” I graduated from high school in 1965 and I watched a lot of social injustices. I watched kids tease my friends. I always had to stand up for them.

I majored in African American Studies in college. It was just starting as a major then, and there were no Latino Studies back then. It really helped me understand the dominant versus non-dominant culture. My whole childhood made sense to me after that. I went back to another university, got a teaching certificate and a Masters’ degree. I also got a PhD in education about seven years ago.

Community, School and Teaching

I try to create social justice in my classroom and make it obvious in here. I would like the kids to see it in the context of their own world. I have taught 4th graders every year but one at this school. This is my 18th year teaching here. Elm Street Elementary School is one of the most diverse schools in this suburban district. The community is pretty much middle class and there are a few who are living in poverty. Actually with this government we have lost a lot of jobs. More and more suburban people are going to food banks and are out of work. I would say probably 3 or 4 students out of 21 are on free or reduced lunch.
We have a really nice classroom with a lot of books. In fact, I won an award for my classroom library and what I do with literature. I am really careful about which books select. I have literature that represents all cultures. I think kids need to see their cultures represented in a special way. I have a bulletin board up for February as an African American history month. I have some pictures of African American heroes. I read about all their lives to the kids. I have everybody’s picture and artwork up too.

I have four kids from Asia, one from Japan, one from China, and two from India. I have one African American, one who is biracial – African American and European American, one Puerto Rican, one from Peru, and one whose father is from Columbia. The rest of them are pretty much European American. This year I have eight kids who have really blond hair, eight with black hair and the other eight are between blond and black. Academically, I have two special ed kids and four gifted kids. I have four kids who go to the ESL class. They all have strengths and weaknesses. A few years before, I had a boy who was from India. When he was in 2nd and 3rd grade, people thought he could not learn things. I didn’t think that was true at all. When I had him in my class, I had a woman come in and talk about Indian cultures. He just opened up. He started talking about everything related to India. At the end of the year he got honorary scores on all of his tests. As you have seen, we start every morning with the story sharing time so that we can get to know each other more. One girl talked about going to the temple on the Chinese New Year’s day. She shared
about what they did there and the other kids were all curious and they listened.

When a substitute teacher was here in the classroom, a boy called another boy gay. The kid who is doing the name-calling feels bad about himself and considered this an insult. He is from South America. He speaks to me in Spanish and I speak back to him in Spanish. He feels really safe with me. He brought me a Mother’s Day present, but still he feels bad about who he is. His mother keeps sending me e-mails and saying thank you for being such a great teacher and such a great human, which is caring for him as a human being. When you try to hurt somebody or bully someone, it is because you don’t feel good about yourself. He wanted to bring somebody down lower than he is. The kid who was bullied was a good choice because he is already pretty low on the totem pole for a lot of reasons. The kids who are outside of mainstream culture feel inferior. Even if they can’t articulate that, it happens.

Ellen’s biography

Social Studies teacher at a high school

Cultural backgrounds

“What if I don’t believe in God?” There were some moments of silence. It was when we were talking about freedom of religion and speech. And I said, “You are putting me in a situation that I can’t get out of.” They assume that I am a Christian, but
I am not a Christian, which blows them away. I am Dakota, Sioux. We believe that everything is related, which is what this tattoo on my arm says. It says “Mitake-Oyasin” and that means we are all related. It is actually a greeting, a salutation, or a sign of agreement. I don’t know how to explain the word. Maybe I am my brother’s keeper. But, I don’t think I have any special qualities. I think maybe it makes you aware of difference. It’s from my father’s side. But, I do consider myself as a white. I was a change of life baby raised by my single mother and older sister. In some ways I am like an oldest child, because my sister was having her kids.

I was born in the 1960s during the Civil Rights Movement. I remember curfews and race riots. I also remember Kent State and Richard Nixon. I think my mom was a racist to some extent, you know, she made snide jokes. But I don’t remember her overtly treating anyone poorly. She was older and she grew up with that. Part of it was innately learned in previous generations. I am not defending her, but you know the times were different. That is all I can say. I guess it was that everybody was that way.

I worked for a legal aid society during the Reagan era and we had huge cuts in social services. In fact I remember I was making $12,000 a year and my paycheck got cut to $10,000 and I had to quit. I am a single mom with three daughters. There was no way I could stay. I started going to different firms and doing different things, medical malpractice, product liability, all of that kind of stuff. I learned a tremendous
amount. And then I finally went to the Supreme Court and started investigating lawyers who were ripping off old ladies. You didn’t ask me this, but I am going to tell you why I became a teacher. I am not a religious person, but I swore that I would go to hell if I stayed doing that job. There was just something immoral about it. Saving money for big insurance companies, I just couldn’t do it anymore. I just woke up everyday going “This is wrong.” The other thing that I saw as a paralegal was the need for good government teachers. I mean I saw people out there who had no idea how their own government worked.

When I went back and got my teaching certificate, I was really into environmentalism. I read something that said if you really want to save the earth, become a teacher and teach others to save the earth. I thought that I would save the earth by teaching, but when you start getting involved with things that are environmentally conscious, you are just exposed to a whole bunch of different other things.

I have always been active. Last year I went down to New Orleans and worked for Camp Hope where we gutted out homes. Basically we went in, took everything out of the home down to the studs. This year I went back and I worked for Habitat. It is actually building brand new houses. They were creating what they call the Musician’s Village since New Orleans is known for its music. They are trying to have homes to bring musicians and families back home. They wanted the village to be 50 % families
and 50% musicians so that the musicians would teach children their instrument. There were about three hundred people at the Habitat camp. Most of them were middle age and older. That really bothered me because there were not many young people there. Then when we went to St. Bernard, there were younger kids there. I am glad they were there, but they weren’t like me. They either got some college credits for it or they were going to get paid for it. For them there was another incentive. I mean I am glad they did it anyway, but it bothered me that there weren’t more young people there just helping. I mean that the nation has just forgotten about it. The president didn’t even mention Katrina victims in the State of the Union. That bothered me. It is very sad.

Community, School and Students

“Be Ashamed to Die until You Have Won Some Victory for Humanity.”

That’s been on my wall since I started teaching. That really is what I believe. That’s basically my philosophy in life. Here above the blackboard I have “What Do You Stand For?” Over on that side of the room, I have almost 20 bumper stickers to represent the First Amendment. Some of them read, “Your ignorance is their strength.” “In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act.” It is from George Orwell. “Peace is patriotic.” “Freedom of religion means ANY religion.” And so on. That Constitution, next to the stickers, has always been in my room too. It will always be up in my room. The art work on the back in the corner was done by a
student. He also did the one out in the hallway. It says, “Revolt.” I taught him 10th grade World Studies. He wasn’t really good at bookwork, so I said, “You have got to come up with something to summarize what you have learned.” And that was it. It worked and it was perfect. I usually have pictures of all my seniors. They give me senior pictures as they graduate. They are on the board right here right behind my desk. Do you remember the girls who came to this room a couple of weeks ago when we were doing an interview after school? Many graduates come to my classroom and tell me everything and anything.

When we started out this year, the first thing we did was a brochure about their community and in their brochure they had to give me poverty rates and all of that kind of stuff. It is not pretty, but I think it is important that they take a look at their community. There were at least three people murdered over the weekend and two shootings last night in places that my student know and hear about. They just went to a funeral last week. It is my community and my students’ community.

There is very little diversity in this school. Probably 96 percent are African Americans. The other 4 percent would be white, Hispanic or Asian. I don’t even know if we have any Somalis in the building, which is unusual because this district has a big Somali population. Our ESL teacher is only part time, so that tells you what our population is like. I have one student whose English is not his first language, but he is
not an ESL student. A lot of students tell me that I am really black. I am an Oreo or black inside.

I want to tell you this. When your skin is Caucasian in the United States, you are almost automatically trusted. There is no trial period to see if you are a good person or a bad person, or to see if you are smart or not. I think very often that privilege is just innate and it is a white privilege in the United States. I don’t feel guilty about being white, but when I try to provide black students with an idea of social justice, I sometimes feel guilty about not being black.

Academically we are supposed to be one of the better schools because it is one of the three lottery high schools in the district. The graduation rate is 96%. They will all graduate. This school is different. People think our school is a black ivy program. Most of them have parents who know the strength of academics. But, I am of the opinion that many of my students are intellectually lazy. I always hold higher expectations of my students and not necessarily for academic achievement, but for social and political awareness of the society.

There are newspapers on the floor and the desks. I get newspapers for every senior in the high school everyday. Sometimes they take them and sometimes they don’t. Other teachers also take some. I expect my students to pick up a newspaper and breeze through it. Even if they read a little bit, they maybe pick up some vocabulary, pick up a picture of Condoleezza Rice, and put a face with a name. It would be nice if
they would read the whole thing. Half of them skim it. I really stress Editorials. I think it’s important. You can’t change the world if you don’t know what’s going on in the world. People just assume that it is here because it has been. I pay for half and I get supports for the other half. In the past, I wrote random letters literally to people who needed tax write offs. I got *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today* for free for my students.

What I’m putting up here this week is all the school funding stuff from newspapers. We have been working very hard in many different ways. My students went to elementary schools and asked what children wanted to have in their schools, and made paper chains with their wishes in them. We will make a long paper chain with all of the children’s wishes for their schools. Last week you helped me and my students get a petition signed for changing the unequal school funding at the university. The boy who had a difficulty in speaking was very proud of himself. So was I. When I first had him in my class, he didn’t speak much because of his speech. But, he spoke to many graduate students about the social issue. We make a lot of social actions. I think my job is to get them to stop about something and then to motivate them enough to go do something. What would I teach if I didn’t teach that? If there wasn’t injustice going on in the world, why would I bother?
Helen’s biography

English and Social Studies teacher at a middle school

Cultural backgrounds

I used to coach cheerleading. We wanted to do some fundraising and all the other coaches looked at me and said, “You’re going to have to go ask them.” It didn’t really occur to me. I was like “Huh?” And they were said, “You have to go ask if we can do it because you’re the white one. They’ll say yes to you. But if we all go in there, it looks like a whole bunch of black people are coming in. They will probably say no.” So it put me on the other side. That was probably one of the first times in my life where people said to my face that I have something they don’t. It was a realization of what other people who aren’t white go through everyday.

I really think the social justice in me stems from my mother starting from a really young age. She always told me that nobody should be treated differently on the playground. I don’t know why my mother did it other than the fact that she is just really open-minded and she has a diverse group of friends. She went to a Catholic school where there were mostly white children. So I am not sure what triggered it in her. I have never asked her what made her that way. However, I think she and I view things similarly. I really don’t know the root of it because my grandmother, her mother, makes jokes every once in a while like “I am going to take my car out for a Jewish car wash when it rains.” And I am say “Grandma, it’s not funny. No. Don’t say
Jewish car wash. That is not appropriate.” My grandma was born in the 1920s and lived through desegregation and all of that stuff living through a time like the Jim Crow Laws.

I grew up in a metropolitan city which I think is a really conservative place. Many people in the community don’t accept homosexuality. It really does matter to me because I have friends and family members who are homosexual. There are many conservative ideas there and that’s why I don’t live there. I think it’s a little bit too small-minded. My parents got divorced when I was a teenager. My brother and I went and lived with my mom, her best friend, and her best friend’s kids. It was the easiest way to pay the bills. I went to a school that was from the working middle class. Now the neighborhood has kind of changed to the two really distinct areas: one with money, and the other without. We were kind of in the middle.

My boyfriend for three years in college was, well he still is, but he’s not my boyfriend anymore, he’s black. I don’t feel uncomfortable being the only white person around. I went to his family events and his parents’ church. It really opened my eyes to another culture or another world that is different from my own. This fall I had to take another good friend of mine to the hospital. He is an African American too. When I was sitting in the waiting room with his mom, dad, sister, uncle, and step-dad, I was again the only white person in the group. They kept saying “Your boyfriend is going to be okay.” The assumption was how else I would fit with this group of people if I
wasn’t his girlfriend. There was no other way that they could contextually fit me in with everybody else. I said, “He’s not my boyfriend, but I hope he’s okay.”

When we read the article, *Unpacking the White Knapsack* in our Masters program, I knew people had a realization of their own whiteness. This was because they had never had to question their own whiteness before. But, you know, it wasn’t as much of a revelation for me because I had been in situations where I was a minority or a racial minority I should say.

**Community, School and Students**

The community around here for the most part is working poor. I don’t really know why people call this area the valley. The whole city is very flat with no hills at all. But they still have this concept of the valley, which does not have a positive connotation. There is kind of a stigma of being in this neighborhood. They are for the most part stuck in the cycle of poverty, which is a huge injustice. The free and reduced lunch rate is almost 90%. When I first started teaching six years ago, it was 82%. But, now it is around 87 or 88. I would like to see the poverty rate go the other way, but I don’t know how likely that is, I really don’t know. There is a huge inequality between this school and Stewart High School where you went to this morning. I feel like if we skip teaching about social injustice, we wouldn’t have any reason to teach for social justice.
The school itself, though, is a really positive community. There are a lot of programs going on. We have many after school activities for the kids to join and try to participate in. The staff here is very positive and we work really well together. Pretty much the whole entire staff is always focused on what is best for the kids. We have been working on a project called the Penny War. Students want to buy toys and school supplies for kids who live in homeless shelters. I think it is still important for them to realize they are still more fortunate than some other people and it is important to help them. But, sometimes it’s hard. When we started the Penny War, some kids said “I don’t want to give my money to the homeless people.” To them, their idea of the homeless is still the people on the streets out there, not in the realm of their little community, which is kind of what we were talking about at your apartment last Saturday. I know in my mind fully well there are some kids in the classroom who are currently homeless. I had one student who lives in a shelter, but it is not really near here. So, he has to take two city buses to get here. When he misses one, it makes him really late to school because the next one does not come for a long time. Another girl who is almost always tardy is in a shelter too.

I have 180 students this year. Over there I have six crates with folders for each student. Student work is put in there. A lot of kids are frequently absent. There are kids who are absent 80 or 90 days of the school year. It is difficult because they miss so much of what goes on in the classroom. I can give them things they can make up,
but they still miss a lot just by not being here. This is true particularly in Social
Studies we do a lot of group work and collaborative things, projects, and
presentations. They might miss the whole project because they may not be here for
four or five days. That means they might miss the whole unit. In English if we are
reading a novel, they get a copy of the chapter they missed. And then unfortunately,
they have to do it on their own.

In this school I’d say there are about 55% Caucasian whose background is
Appalachia. We have a lot of Cambodians, Hispanics, Somalis, and African
Americans. We have a lot of ESL students too. They get along well in the classroom,
but if you watch the playground (I used to have lunch duty) there are two popular girls
groups. The popular white girls, and the popular black girls. They don’t mix, but in the
classroom they get along. For the most part, the groups are pretty intermixed. I think
that it represents the fact that they’re in the same community outside the school. Their
families know each other, they go to the same church, and they live near each other.
But you will hear the kids say things like “My mom doesn’t want me to date so and so
because they are in different race than me.” So a lot of that is still deeply embedded in
their family system. They are fighting against it. They will say “Why does my parent
care? They shouldn’t care.”
In this classroom, I have pictures of me and my family so that kids can see me as someone other than their teacher. The rest of my decorations are about either positive messages related to the school, or efforts about respecting differences and diversity. Kids are really open and honest with you. Some will come up and just start talking because they just need to talk to you about anything. It starts from me saying “hey what’s going on?” and then they’ll just start talking about anything and everything you did or did not want to know. You find out a lot when you get to talk to them a little bit more. Then through their writing, you get to hear more and more about it, which is why I like teaching.

**Hristo’s biography**

Social Studies teacher in a high school

**Cultural backgrounds**

My name is a barrier. No one even tries to say it. My name is Hristo Vasilev. As soon as you hear it, the wall is up. I am basically white when I am shopping until I go to pay with my credit card because then they then see my name and I cease being white. When my name was published in the school paper, people came up to my colleagues and asked them if I spoke English. I am from a small immigrant community with Eastern-European backgrounds. Both of my parents were born outside the U.S. My father was born in camp in Germany after the World War II and
then came to the United States when he was two years old. My mother moved here from a former communist country in Eastern Europe when she was 20 years old.

On a yearly basis I would go to my mother’s country. I went to school there during Elementary school for two years. It was not the whole two years in a row. But, it was like three months here in the U.S. and six months there in Eastern Europe. In fact, I was in school during the revolution, which overturned communism. I was in 4th grade in 1990. It was strange and interesting because before the revolution we were all marching and learning Russian, but after the revolution we had much more free time. That was probably the moment when I got interested in history. From 4th grade on I lived full time here, but made a visit to the country every year. Last summer I took my fiancé to the country and we stayed there with my grandmother and relatives for three weeks.

I was very different and difficult to be not noticed. People call me Gorbachev or Gorbi all throughout school here. I was born in America and lived here for the most of my life, but they said that I was a person from the former communist country, which is okay. I like to see myself as a person from the country. I identify myself as a Slavic that is my ethnic background. I don’t identify myself as white. In conversations I will say I am a Slavic or I am from Eastern Europe. I will not say that I am white even though I check a box for White or Caucasian on paper. My country has turned me to a nationalist type of person, feeling in a way that I should protect it. My brother
doesn’t have much Eastern Europe experience and he is more Americanized than I am by far. He is still very defensive of the country where our historical and cultural backgrounds are. It is a very nice place, but people look down on it because it used to be a communist country.

I think I perceive things more consciously than most other people because of living here and there, and going to the country back and forth. Since I would always be gone for three or four months and come back, I felt like I missed something that occurred here and I had to keep my eyes open to see what was on the agenda. I was very conscious of my surroundings. I think that I have the dual upbringings where I’m not 100% comfortable. It’s not 100 % unconsciously taken. The interesting thing is that I can be on the other side. I can be part of the mainstream because I can speak with no accent and because I fit in enough. I can do both sides.

Community, School and Students

For my first two years of teaching I came to this school in the morning and went to another school in the afternoon, I was hired half here at Wilson High School and half at another school in this school district. The afternoon school is more like a suburban school and this one is more like an inner city school. I liked teaching in both schools because I got to see more of the district and more of the students. Even in this school we have two populations. This school is located within the beltway around the
city it is one of the four schools that belong to a suburban school district. We have students who live directly across from a city school and who are bussed to our school just because of the way the lines were drawn. So, it is difficult in the classroom to relate to each group. A lot of the difference is in the speech they use. Those who have a more inner city mind set will talk with extra slang. It’s even more than you hear in the inner city. I think they want to show that they have street credentials. The ones who are from the outside of the beltway speak more conventionally.

I didn’t have my own classroom because I was half here and half there. Now I am hired here fulltime, but am low in seniority so I teach in three classrooms. It’s not bad over all. In my first classroom I share with a colleague who teaches History, he gives me equal control of the classroom space. As you have seen, the second classroom I teach in is dark. It has a heater that smells like pancakes. People get sick from the heater. It’s warm in summer, and very cold or sometimes very warm in winter. The third room is a science room, which is difficult because it is all science based. Usually things are everywhere. I always have to lay my things down anywhere I can find. It’s full of DNA and pictures of science stuff, and I am trying to teach (laughs) history (laughs). The nice thing is there is air conditioning in this room. I think the only classrooms in the school with air conditioning are the six in the science wing and the business room because it is full of computers. I mean we are teaching in a sauna. It is awful. We have 95 degrees some days. There is a classroom I taught in
that gets up to 90 degrees just after 9:00am. We have water damage from the roof in some classrooms. They are not falling apart though, but it is exactly like the classrooms that were described in the book, *Savage Inequality*.

I had 152 students when I started this year. I have lost 20 students from the beginning of the year and gained 10 others. Culturally, we have a large Somali population. I’d say we have 50 percent white, 5 percent Asian, 10 percent Hispanic, 20-30 percent African American, and 10-20 percent are Somali students. It changes. I might have students for three weeks, then they would be gone out for two months and then come back for another two months. Somalis are going round and round rotating. They are very mixed in terms of their interactions with other cultural groups. They think white or black is much more of a surface thing. It is an appearance thing because they live in the same community where black and white aren’t really a big deal in the same socioeconomic category. However, it was not always this way. One of my colleagues told me that until about 12 years ago this school had two hallways: a white hallway and a black hallway. If you went down the wrong hallway, you got beaten up.

Let me tell you one story that recently happened here. Muslim students were not allowed to pray at lunch. It wasn’t because of any type of school policy, though. It was just because of poor communications between them and the school. There was an empty room they went in during lunch. It was right across from the lunchroom. So they could go in, eat lunch and do their noon prayers quietly. No problems, you know,
because teachers can look in. Then somebody started locking the door. They didn’t say anything. They just started locking the door. It was the certified lunch workers who did it. The Somali students didn’t know about it, their impression was that this was done on purpose to prevent them from praying because there were negative comments on their noon prayers. They weren’t really listened to and they didn’t know what to do. They felt like they were ignored. They came to me and shed tears. So I had to step in and mediate between the students and the staff to fix the situation. They are devout, they are very serious with their work, and they are very good students. I mean they are a dream in your class because they work hard and they participate. But, nobody really listened to them. I feel like I have to teach them in many cases how to be advocates for themselves.

Jean’s biography

English teacher at a high school

Cultural backgrounds

I was at the bottom in my community. I didn’t fit into the very white upper class high-end suburban community because I was a lower class kid in my neighborhood. Both of my parents were in the working-class. My mom did childcare, secretarial work, and other stuff. My dad worked at various car places as a service advisor. My mom taught me all about the Civil Rights Movements and she always
made me aware of racial injustice and other social justice issues. Maybe that has something to do with my teaching. My mom was always consistent about treating people in the right way. My dad was different. I heard him perpetrating injustices more often. He would just make racist comments and things like that, you know.

I think I had no concept of social justice until I was 18, when I started going to college. I must have had some ideas, because I never picked on people and I knew to treat people with disabilities well. I had a general sense of it, but I didn’t know much about anything. I saw people get picked on at my school and I empathized with them. But at that time I was concerned with what I looked like, what I was wearing and what other people were doing. Adolescents can be a very self-centered and I was not an exception. I was worried about my boyfriend and what I looked like in all of my clothes. I don’t think I had teachers talking about social justice issues until the 12th grade level. Maybe I was just more ready to hear it then.

Perhaps that was the time when I saw outside my own community. I crossed the border or boundary of my community because I lived down in a college town in Appalachia. That is when I started making connections. And then it really hit me and it really changed fast. Once you open your eyes to it and you are willing to take a step and say I am going to help things, I am going to be part of changing the world for the better whatever that means. You really get thrown into the deep end of the pool. It is because there is so much to tackle and you feel a lot of responsibility. I’d say that is
where my social justice education started. That is when I became a vegetarian. There is a lot of logging deforestation in my college town. So I started caring about the environment first and then I made connections and got involved in activities. We worked against sweatshops. I am an animal rights activist. I learned, I just soaked it up. I loved it and I loved college. Somehow my track took me into classes that really taught different things. I take social justice very seriously. If you look at my life, I just painted my house with environmentally friendly paint. I go to farmer’s markets and support my local farmers. I try to weave it throughout my whole life and be an example of it. I am up in front of people everyday, I can’t be a hypocrite.

Community, School and Students

This is a charter school. As you know, we have had an unconstitutional funding system in the State, and it hasn’t been fixed. Students come to us from all places in and around the metropolitan area. I would say it is mostly from urban areas though. It’s probably 60% urban at least and the other 30–40% would be suburban. We have a few rural students who come a long way. The school is intentionally a small school with 220 to 230 students. We try to build a school community, so we have activities like the town meeting you saw. It is our school gathering every Friday. Everybody is in the big room all at once. It is a way that students are allowed to create policy, vote on things and improve the school. We also try to connect with the outside
community. When they go to their internships on Tuesdays and Thursdays, they are out somewhere nearby in the community and do work for free as an internship. That is a huge community builder. Sometimes it’s our site mentors that can reach students when we can’t. It is a really cool community connection.

I began teaching after being taught a very traditional approach to education. I taught for four years at a big suburban school with over 2200 students. I have been here for two years. I would say that my real training and my teaching philosophy came from my Masters program. It was focused on alternative education and small schools largely headed by the Coalition of Essential Schools. I was trained in nontraditional methods of education and nontraditional theories of education.

Culturally we are probably less diverse than the urban public schools because we have African American students and white students. Some students are both white and black. We do not have a lot of other cultures. Just a couple of kids represent other cultures. We have Irish and Jewish students. But I am not aware of many people from Hispanic or Asian descents. Every year our percentage of African American students increases. But, if you look at staff, we are all white with one exception. We have one Hispanic teacher even though we have very few if any Hispanic students.

Academically they are all over the place. We have some students who can’t write sentences very well and some students who are going to go to very prestigious colleges. They are all together in the same class. We have a bunch of kids somewhere
in the middle, actually most of them are in the middle. We have a whole academic spectrum.

In my classroom I have a Salvador Dali’s painting of elephants and swans. If you look at every elephant, it is also a swan. I use it for a point of view. I put my equal sign on the wall above the entrance door. It is a pretty big one. I have very small icons like refrigerator magnets with many messages as well. I think that might have given them the clue about how I feel. A lot of times I would bring up issues into the class that dealt with social justice or homosexuality. With those things combined over a course of a semester, I think students understand that I feel the way that I do and that it is safe to talk about issues in here. I teach two subjects this year. One is called “Hot Topics,” which is about current events. It is related very closely to social justice. My other classes are English geared, you know, more traditional reading and writing papers. But I bring in social justice by the fact that I teach African American Literature. I think teaching that class itself is a social justice issue. I am a white teacher teaching African American Literature. It is a very popular class.

I learned from my experience as an advisor for high school seniors, that many of my students don’t consider college as an option. They don’t think they are going to get enough money for college. The truth is they can. I try to help them do that. However, when they don’t consider it as an option, it is harder to get them there. You know I never thought about it twice. I always knew I was going to college. I mean I
paid for it myself, but I was in a high school where 97% or 98% of the students moved on to college. I just always assumed I would. If you are in a culture where not many people go to college, you just don’t consider it an option for yourself. It really hit me hard when I was picking awards because I noticed that the people who were winning them have two parents who generally care, come to the meetings, and are involved in school. In other words, breakfast is not a magic portion that makes you do better in school. It means that there is food in the house and someone is making sure that you eat in the morning. These are the things that some of the lower class kids do not have. So it is really interesting that is it not always race or gender, but it can be just situational. There are some great people who come out of those situations for sure, but most people don’t come out of those situations well. Our educational system awards the background not the student, which is a social injustice.

In my English class we are reading my favorite novel, *To Kill a Mocking Bird*. This morning we talked about childhood in rural south during the 1930’s and compared it to childhood in the rural south today. There were a lot more similarities than I realized. Connecting people with their past and showing them where they come from are absolutely important. It is the root that tells you where to go. Social Justice is a responsibility to somebody or something else. You should connect somewhere. I really try to integrate how I feel about social justice in the world and incorporate that
into my daily life. I don’t know what exactly cued my teaching for social justice. But, that is what I do.

Martha’s biography

Kindergarten teacher at an elementary school

Cultural backgrounds

I was raised on a pig farm. We had plenty to eat, but we didn’t have a lot of money. When I first came into a city to go to school, I felt on edge about being a farm girl. I always felt like I was dropped in the wrong place at the wrong time. I always felt judged for what I was wearing or how I was viewed rather than what I was like inside. This judgment takes place between women and men. What is worst, are the ones that happen between women and women. Some women value or view other women based on clothing or interests. That is why I am sometimes concerned about what goes on behind my back more from women than from men. I don’t know what that is. Maybe you are right in that some women think in stereotypes because they are miseducated to think in stereotypic ways in this society.

I’ve also experienced social injustice with race, strongly with my friends who come from the diverse backgrounds of Africa, African American, Latina, and Ireland. Racial injustice definitely goes on with a black man and a white woman. Let me tell
you what happened when I was with Gamba, my very close friend, who is an artist from Africa. When he was in town, we spent a lot of time together. When we were in the car together we always had an issue with someone pulling up beside us, pointing to us, and sometimes yelling at us. Yes, in this city and just last March. He asked me what was going on. And I said that they were upset because I was a white woman riding with him, a black male. It happened in the middle of an African American community where I live. I really believe that color awareness or racial prejudice starts the day people are born.

My father is a very kind person, but sometimes perpetuates myths just out of history. Recently when my husband went to Africa, a comment was made by my father. “Oh, those people are still out hunting with spears in the bush.” He wasn’t doing it out of being mean. He was doing it out of what he thought was humor. I think a lot of people perpetuate social injustice through humor. I was so drawn back and shocked that he would say that. I told him “You shouldn’t have said that, that is not okay.” It was huge for me to be able to do it to him. I catch my dad on it every time now. My grandfather wasn’t accepting of black people at all. I mean it’s very hard to question your parents or grandparents. You love and respect them. It’s almost like two different time frames we live in together. They will use language that was socially acceptable back then. They might not mean to be stinging by it. But it stings me so much living in 2007 when they were living in 1950. It brings me to tears.
Are we getting closer to the socially just world? No, I think we have a long way to go. We have made some progress such as women’s vote, but my question is “Are we doing the same thing now with understanding heterogeneous relationships?” It is going to move forward. There is always going to be something too. I don’t think social justice is a product. There will never be an ending point. I don’t ever think we will be socially just. It is like time. There is no end in time. We are always going to be working and changing and growing.

Community, School and Students

We are primarily white, secondary African American, and there are other races in our school, not as many as I would like. The Somali culture is growing, which is nice. Our population of Asian children is maybe 5 kids in the school. When some people come into this classroom, they think my classroom looks chaotic. But there is an intense structure for kindergarteners in this room. What you see in and out changes based on what we are studying. You always see children’s writing, artwork and books. I really think it is important to value children’s work. There are always items from nature that are in or around for children to be thinking about. The only pre-made thing in this classroom is the sign language alphabet. We are learning the sign language alphabet. We have also learned pieces of an African language because we are communicating with children in Africa.
It is warm here. It is 90 degrees in this classroom. We are still in May. I was on the third floor last year it can get very close and above 100 degrees up there. Down here it will probably stay below 100, but you can feel it. We survive. I used to feel hurt. I used to get angry about the fact that our children can’t have air when children in suburban schools are not dealing with this. Then I go, “Why is it that our children have enough food to eat everyday and the children in Africa don’t?” To me, that is how I handle it in my head. It is important that children are fed and they have proper health care more important than if we have air. Just because we don’t have air doesn’t mean we are not privileged. I want the kids to think that way too. Sure, it would be nice if we had air, but here is the question “Would you be willing to give up air for a week here in this school district if every child could eat for a year in Africa?” I will ask it this afternoon when they come back from lunch recess. They are playing in the parking lot. I will bet every one of these children will say “Oh yeah.”

We created an animal alphabet book to send to the children in an African school. We water-colored beautiful animals and learned their names in both the African language and English. We have also collected sixty large garbage bags full of clothes and ten boxes full of school supplies. We bought a tape recorder for them and taped their songs, readings, and talks. My husband and friend went to the school for three weeks. The project is involved in my classroom and in my family. My children feel a connectedness through the activities, it is a long term relationship.
I have learned to think more deeply about how I am reading with children. Reading aloud with children is an interactive process where we are deconstructing the written text and the illustration in and out together. My strength is reading with children and talking about how the story moves in and out of life and our connections between life to text, text to life, and text to our lives. I also use pretending, or dramatic inquiry in the classroom. It’s not second nature to me, it takes a lot of work. But I’m always thinking about how children can be learning through another mode other than me talking at them. I also try to model social justice in my classroom by using my power appropriately with children and for children.

**Tom’s Biography**

Art teacher at a high school

**Cultural backgrounds**

I remember standing as close to the curb as I could and yelling at those kids to stop. For no reason other than he was black, they hit him and hit him. I will never forget that. I was in third grade. When the African American kid moved into my neighborhood, there was a lot of racial prejudice against him. He was one of the first black kids who went to our school. We became pretty good friends. He lived across the street. Walking home from school we were just talking to each other across the
street. These two fifth grade kids followed him home and they jumped on him at his front porch. I couldn’t cross the street because I knew I’d get into trouble for crossing without my mom’s permission. That memory is clear to me today. It bothers me enough that I want to change. So, when things like that happening I make an effort to change it.

My mom was a big influence in my life. She told me a thousand times that all people no matter their sex or race were equal. It felt right to me in my heart. That is just what I am. It just became part of me. I remember that my grandfather used to eat Brazil nuts and he would call them “nigger toes.” It was something that a lot of Caucasians would call that nut when I was young. My mom would not ever tolerate it. She would tell my grandfather “You don’t talk like that around my kids. They are Brazil nuts.” She really taught me that there was no difference between people.

I think my sons feel the same way. One day when my oldest son was in 2nd grade, he came home and said, “I can’t believe people would do that to black people.” He was learning about Martin Luther King Jr. at school. He had no concept that that type of prejudice ever existed. That’s positive. As a matter of fact, I took my oldest and middle kids to where I grew up, showed the house I lived in, and talked about the story of my friend getting beaten up. I wanted to pass the experience on to my kids so that they will have that knowledge. This is an important aspect of my family. My wife is a social justice educator. She actually started a charter school for students who don’t
succeed in the traditional educational system. When you sent me the invitation email
to your study, I thought of my wife because she has been working with a lot of social
injustices. I really liked your idea of creating the dialogue among social justice
educators.

I really feel art is important, or I wouldn’t have become an art educator. I went
to one of the better art schools in the United States. In art school there are so many
different people. I mean it’s acceptable to be different. You are exposed to that. You
have a lot of diversity in that environment. As an art teacher, I don’t feel like I am an
imperator of knowledge or skills. My students are not empty vessels that I dump myself
into. I really like the idea of showing students how to do it and letting them explore on
their own how to do it. I try to do the work that they are doing in class along with them
so that they have an example of someone who does it. It is like the old art masters.
They would show the students by example. I think that’s really important. When I
used to teach ceramics, it used to be a lot more by example because I could sit down
and they could really see me do the same work. Now when they come up to my desk,
if I am not helping them, they can see me working on an animation. I used to be a head
soccer coach for five years. You can be an Olympic soccer player, but you can’t coach
anything if you don’t know how to inspire people to get there.
Community, School and Students

I don’t think I would be as proud of my community if it didn’t have social diversity and acceptance in it. You can see diversity going through the hallways. It’s not odd to hear people speak in different languages in Spanish, Russian, Pakistani and all kinds of different languages. We have a variety of socioeconomic groups as well in the community. There are many middle class African Americans whose parents are professionals. The kids who live in the neighborhoods that are integrated with white kids are often the ones that are integrated with white kids in the school as well. So students from the lower economic class who are black see that it’s okay to integrate. In some schools you see in the cafeteria African Americans sit at this table and white kids sit at that table. In this school, black and white kids are sit together at the table. This school has a reputation of meeting the needs of minority students in our building. Recently, we were on NPR because our achievement gap between Caucasian students and African American students is like 0.01, which is statistically insignificant.

I don’t know if I told you this before, but I had one of my students who was African American go down to the library and look at the old yearbooks. It was for the memorial art project about the fallen veterans who graduated from our school. I asked him to tell me in what year that person was actually in our school. When he came back, he said “There weren’t more than three black people in this high school back in the
1960s. This high school was all white.” He was totally surprised by that. He thought this school had always been this way. When I started teaching here 15 years ago, there were only 1200 students. It has doubled in 15 years to 2400. This is an exploding suburban community. They are thinking we’ll be probably have about 2800 students if not more by the end of two years.

I have only one rule in my classroom. That is to respect. I think that the rule really sets the tone of how my class runs. It is not perfect but I think if you set that tone, then the ship heads in the right direction. You are going on a journey where the students are able to feel comfortable. They feel like who they are as a person is respected. I have some kids who have never talked in a class before, but they talk in my class. I thrive on that. I like to hear what kids have to say, especially those who did not have a voice in their education. When students are doing their art, they have opportunities to speak with each other. I encourage that. A big part of being a student is having an opportunity for socialization in the classroom.

I started taking pictures of my students five years ago. There are the pictures of the kids on the wall. Kids will go up and they’ll see their brothers or friends who had been through the same class. On that side of the wall, I also have a picture of me with my art teacher and another picture of myself when I was a senior in high school. They like making fun of my hairstyle. It helps the environment of the classroom when it becomes more personal. You still have to keep some sort of professional distance, the
more they see you as a human being though, the easier it is in my opinion to get them motivated to work hard. When I first started teaching, I felt like it was important for me to live in the community that my school is serving in order to be a better teacher. I see my kids in the community. I think that is powerful because they know that their mom and dad can stop to talk with me anytime, even at church. The community becomes smaller that way.

When I use artists, I consciously try to get artists from different cultures because I think it is good for kids to see that. There are so many good artists out there who are not white and are not Western European. It is not a hard thing for me to incorporate that into my classes. In college as you take an Art History class, it is just all white European artwork that you are going to get exposed to for the most part. So, I try to mix it up. When I choose to deal with an artist, I look at my student class make-up and try to fit the needs of my students. I also really try to use what they are interested in here and now for my lessons. As you have seen, the wave artwork of Katsashika, the Japanese print maker, was the most popular one that the kids chose this year. I think when teenagers start dealing with social issues, they become more impassioned about what they are doing. The portrait lesson in my drawing class is a way for them to see, accept, and appreciate diversity. For the social commentary animation project in my computer animation class, they have to create an animation that relays a social message. We talk about how that message is related. The main
focus of animation may not be on social justice. My students are constantly dealing with social issues.

Troy’s biography

English teacher in a high school

Cultural backgrounds

I grew up in a college town that is nestled in a coal mining region in the middle of rural Appalachia. I have experienced two very diverse or divided cultures. There is extreme poverty with generational welfare, and then there is a university with extremely educated people who come in with a strong academic background. I kind of floated in between the two cultures. I knew what it was like to be laughed at for being a “townie” (someone who had grown up in this rural college community) my mother’s family has been there since 1870s. Still my family was affiliated with the university in the town as well. So I was part of that culture too. I knew what it was like to have a university affiliation and have the townies dislike me because of it. The two worlds kind of collided. I was very shy and a very quiet soft spoken teenager. I did not fit into a lot of the groups. I was very unhappy in high school, but I had a few close friends. That unhappiness helped me understand others. I knew what it was like to feel like an
outsider. I felt like there was something wrong simply because I was me. As a result, I
developed a perspective of what it was like to be on the other side.

Education was the most valuable thing in my family. At the turn of the century,
my paternal great grandparents sent all five of their daughters onto some type of post
high school education. This was at a time when many women did not even finish high
school. My father went to college during the 1940s, most of his generation did not
necessarily go. My maternal grandparents sent all nine of their children to college.
One received a Masters degree and another became a doctor. My mother tells of
growing up in the depression era. There were nine children in her family. She said,
“We were so poor. We had nothing.” Her father was a farmer and he also railroaded in
the winter. Whenever he would go away for a week or two at a time and come back,
he always brought home books. She said we didn’t have anything else to do and we
were too poor to afford anything. That influenced me a great deal. I believe that
education is the quickest avenue in eradicating the ignorance that brings social
injustice.

My mother’s family is Irish, German, and French. My father’s family is
French, English, German, and Scottish. My family is Roman Catholic. My mother lost
a job back in the 1940s because she was a Catholic. My father was serious about a
young lady when he was young. But her father refused to let them date because he was
a Catholic. The Catholics were the outcasts in our country at that time and even
through the 1960s. Forty years ago when I was born, Catholicism was still something that created an outsider. I also found religious intolerance as recently as the 1980s. I asked out a girl in high school who said that she only dated Christians and that her family believed that Catholics were not Christians. As far as racial discrimination goes, my family faced some as well since my mother is Irish. I don’t think it is a problem now simply because the Irish have melted into the mainstream both in appearance and behavior. We still see a lack of acceptance in so many things.

**Community, School and Students**

When I first started teaching at Stewart High School in this affluent suburb community, there was a great divide because it had been a rural community. Suddenly, this affluent community was literally dropped right in the middle of a cornfield. People who were in this community resented the fact that the affluent community was moving in. I saw a lot of friction in my first few years here. I could sympathize with both sides. The students whose families had been here for three or four generations felt like they no longer belonged in the community. The new kids who were coming in felt like they were not wanted here because their families were affluent. There was conflict there. But I don’t see as much now because much of the farmland has been sold and families have moved on.

I used to teach at an inner city school. I had six classes a day with 25 to 36 students in each class. I didn’t have enough desks nor enough books for the classes. I
taught with what I had. When I was at that school, I had a class of students who were repeating 9th grade English either for the first time, second time, or third time. Many of them were from impoverished and broken homes. One day I had a student who was going to a prison for at least a year. He had stolen a car, again. Before he left, I said, “I am sorry this has happened. I know it is a matter of choices, but I want you to promise me when you are in there, please get your GED and finish high school so you have a better start when you get out.” About a year and a half later when I was teaching, the phone rang and when I grabbed it. I heard him say “You were the only teacher who did not say ‘I told you so’ out of all of my teachers. I passed the test and got my GED and I secured a job with a construction company.” That was very moving. What I said to him in two minutes made him think.

I think one thing in America that we would still see is that no matter how equal the classroom is, maybe with the exact amount of money and the exact number of students, we still have inequality coming from homes. When I look at my students in this seemingly ideal suburban setting, I have to remember that students here are coming in with things unlike the students in the inner city school. We started a poverty unit because we saw such ignorance toward the impoverished lifestyle. I have students who have summer homes in beautiful places, who have lived in Europe and who travel to Europe each year. They go all over the world, but they’ve never been to the downtown district in this metropolitan area. They have never seen an impoverished
family or community. Not all of my students are well off, but for the most part they are. So, coming here is quite a privilege. This place is a country club in comparison to what many teachers face.

I have the “Rules of the World” on that wall. I always put that up there. It has been kept up there for years. The first rule out of the 9 reads, “The world is not fair.” We read them and discuss whether this is true or not. It is refreshing teaching here in that students don’t necessarily see some of the harsh realities. Their eyes will be opened eventually. For the bulletin board, we are studying the Harlem Renaissance right now. What I wanted to do is to expand upon what we were studying out of textbook and novel, by exposing them to some other poems and authors. I want them see what life was like for a group of people who lived during the 1920s and 1930s without legal rights and having only been considered citizens since the 1860s. We talk about what others have gone through to try to open their eyes.

One of my goals with education is to I help students to learn tolerance of others. I can’t plan without asking these questions. How would it benefit the students? What will this do to improve their lives? How will it help them see society better? When they leave my classroom, I want them to think that they could see any of the literature characters walking down the street. If I see a character I don’t like, then I see his behavior I don’t like and I can see those behaviors in me, then I should change. They slowly change their behavior. Literature makes them question their values and it
can either confirm what they have been raised with or it will reject it. Either way, they are thinking about *why* they hold specific values. This is where the seeds of understanding and social justice begin to grow.
Chapter 5

LEARNING FROM SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATORS:
FINDINGS IN COLLECTIVE VOICES

Introduction

In the previous chapter I prioritized and centered the voices of social justice educators in order to investigate their onto-epistemological understandings of social justice and pedagogical practices for social justice. In this chapter I present the emerging themes across all participants in collective voices by answering research questions. There were six emerging categories: 1) Everyone experiences social injustice, 2) We step into other people’s shoes, 3) You have to feel it, 4) What in the world is social justice, 5) Teaching for social justice is not easy, and 6) We teach for social justice.

First, social justice educators demonstrated the importance of experiences to identify social injustice. Based on their historical, cultural, and lived experiences, they acknowledged both powerlessness and privilege. They also expressed the importance of bi- and cross-cultural experiences between rural, urban, suburban, and global contexts. Second, social justice educators extended their knowledge of social injustice by empathizing with those who experienced social injustice. They expressed empathic
distress with victims and empathy-based anger at aggressors or the hierarchical structure. Empathic knowledge of social injustice was gained through and beyond their experiential knowledge of social injustice and related to the proximity to the people and the events. Third, social justice educators emphasized their own and their students’ feelings in the face of social injustice. The feelings included pain, anger, hate, discomfort, guilt, caring, responsibility, etc. These feelings helped them move beyond understanding what social injustice is and inspired them to work toward social justice. Fourth, social justice educators constructed the concept of social justice dialectically. They understood the concept of social justice to be the void or the opposite situation of social injustice. They also recognized new causes for social justice, which made teaching for social justice both process and goal. Fifth, social justice educators differentiated themselves and their pedagogies from other teachers who did not teach for social justice. Even with challenges in teaching for social justice, they showed solid understanding of social justice, willingness to work toward social justice, and social action. Finally, social justice educators created a socially just classroom environment, developed socially just curriculum, and empowered students from all cultural backgrounds. They also expressed their responsibilities to teach for social justice.
Everyone Experiences It.

Unequal Diversity and Diverse Inequality

As I mentioned in Chapter 3, the eight schools I worked with were widely spread out in the Midwest metropolitan area with the population of about 1.5 million people. When I drove from school to school for interviews and observations, I found myself thinking about social justice issues. The following is from my journal written on March 19, 2007.

As I drove through the rush hour traffic on a highway to Sebastian Middle School, cold rain slowed down the traffic even more on this dark Monday morning. I got off the highway and passed by a gas station that was out of business. I heard the meteorologist on the radio say that the temperature was just above 32 degrees. As I got closer to the school, I saw many students walking to school. There were some with umbrellas, but others were without them. Some parents were dropping their kids off at the school. I signaled to turn into the school and remembered that 90% of the students here were either on a free or a reduced lunch rate. Here poverty was visible and tangible. It was as obvious and touchable as the cold raindrops hitting the coats and heads of the students. While I was still waiting to make a turn, I remembered a letter I wrote last night. I had to write a letter asking my son’s preschool administrator to apply the lowest tuition rate to his enrollment. I had no proof that I needed this lowest rate, because I did not have paycheck. This morning I was at Sebastian Middle School and worried about my son’s tuition. My thoughts then took me to another group of students at Stewart High School who were studying a unit on “poverty” in their English class. Is it a socially just world? Students
at an urban school like Sebastian Middle School must walk through poverty everyday while students at Stewart High School must study it. What kind of diversity is it? I think it is diverse inequality and unequal diversity. Is this another day of “good” morning in America?

In the previous chapter I started each biography with a significant experience of social injustice, which included Charo’s painful memories growing up biculturally, Ellen’s experiences of being marginalized, Hellen’s unlearning of white privileges, Hristo’s double-consciousness from bi- and cross-cultural backgrounds, Jean’s situational minority position in an upper class community, Martha’s border-crossing experiences between rural, urban, and global communities, Tom’s childhood experience of brutal racism, and Troy’s experience of being in-between different cultures. Social justice educators constantly brought their experiences of social injustice into the interviews as well as their lessons. Experience was a critical key to understand the socially unjust reality.

Charo, Hristo, and Ellen had bi-cultural backgrounds and revealed a critical consciousness of the hierarchy in society. They experienced and learned the socially unjust reality at younger ages. For example, Charo was born into a racist world several years before the Brown vs. the Board of Education. Growing up with a bicultural background she realized the hierarchy by taking on the perspectives of her father and the marginalized.
“The problem is not having differences, the problem is the hierarchy. When some cultures are up here, other cultures are down there. That is the problem” (Charo).

“I’ve experienced and witnessed social injustice a lot. When you witness it with a family member, you feel it yourself. I realized that the world was racist when I was pretty young. I saw how people responded to my father’s face and his name and his accent” (Charo).

Experience itself does not necessarily lead to understanding. As she mentioned in Chapter 4, her whole childhood experience of racism made sense to her after she majored in African American studies. This gave her the understanding of the dominant versus non-dominant culture. It is a critical consciousness of the reality and the experience.

Other social justice educators who did not have bicultural backgrounds also experienced the socially unjust reality by crossing cultural borders and experiencing different cultures. In the biographies of Troy, Helen, Martha, and Jean, they talked about cross-cultural experiences between rural, urban, suburban, and global cultures. For example, Troy experienced being an outsider. “I felt like there was something wrong simply because I was me.” Martha’s cultural journey from rural to urban and
then to a global community enabled her to see the socially unjust reality in a broader context. She has used this to help people in local communities see social injustices in Africa and work to better the situation. Jean’s border crossing from a high upper-end community to a rural and urban community enabled her to see her own privileges and her students’ disadvantages from critical perspectives. Helen’s situational minority position as the only white person an African American community enhanced her socio-political consciousness of unearned privileges.

The social justice educators demonstrated cultural ambidexterity between mainstream and marginal cultures in the society. They were able to see both sides of society, the one with power and the other with less power. Hristo expressed it well by saying, “I can be the other. I can be part of the mainstream … I can do both sides.”

**Powerlessness and Privilege**

Social justice educators experienced powerlessness in the face of social injustice events. This came from individual experiences of being marginalized or discriminated. In the following, Hristo talked about powerlessness.

“I am experiencing strong injustice because some people have singled me out. When you experience that type of behavior, you never really know why it is happening. It could be personal, racial, linguistic,
cultural, or anything else. But you don’t really know the exact causes. I am in a situation where I am completely powerless” (Hristo).

Powerlessness was also understood by acknowledging one’s own privileges. For example, Helen learned about her whiteness through the fundraising experience, which enabled her to realize the powerlessness of her African American friends. She was consciously aware of power issues among different groups of people. She said, “You have to be aware of what you are aware of” (Helen).

“I used to coach cheerleading. We wanted to do fundraising and the other coaches looked at me said ‘You’re going to have to go ask them.’ It didn’t really occur to me. I was like ‘Huh?’ And they were like ‘You have to go ask if we can do it because you’re the white one. They’ll say yes to you. But if we all go in there, it looks like a whole bunch of black people are coming in. They will probably say no.’ So it put me on the other side. That was probably one of the first times people said to my face that I have something they don’t. It was a realization of what other people who aren’t white go through every day” (Helen).
Social justice educators from the mainstream culture also experienced powerlessness. For example, Troy experienced being rejected to date a girl in his high school days because of his religion. He experienced powerlessness from religion and extended his understanding to racial discrimination.

“Her parents were very much against her dating me who was a Catholic. There was nothing that I could really do at that point … When we start discriminating also on race, there is absolutely nothing I can do about my race. I did not choose to come from the places that I did” (Troy).

Social justice educators showed their solid understanding of social injustice by going beyond the “categorical isms.” They talked about situational and positional injustices from their experiences. For example, Jean talked about growing up in a working class household placed in a high-end upper class community, which led her to see situational injustices.

“It is not always race or gender, it is just situational. Have you been abused? Have you sometimes been in foster care? There are some great people who come out of those situations for sure, but most people don’t come out of those situations well. Are there drugs at home? Do your
parents accept the use of drugs? If yes, you are probably going to have worse grades. Do you know what I am saying? So there is a lot more to it than race and gender and money” (Jean).

Social justice educators addressed multiple layers in understanding social injustice. For example, Hristo and Martha understood more oppressed groups of people in different contexts. Their realization came from understanding both powerlessness and privilege in situational contexts.

“I have been fortunate not to personally have been victimized as much. I think I have seen and experienced other peoples’ injustice” (Hristo)

“Just because we don’t have air doesn’t mean we are not privileged. I want the kids to think that way too. Sure it would be nice if we had air, but would you be willing give up air here for a week in this school district if every child could eat for a year in Africa?” (Martha)

Social justice educators’ understanding of social injustice stemmed from two kinds of experiences: inherited and lived. While some experiences were culturally and historically acquired from family, other experiences were
situationally and positionally lived. These experiences helped them understand the socially unjust reality.

We Step into Other People’s Shoes.

Empathy: Through and Beyond Experience

Teachers showed evidences of empathy. Empathy is an extended, shared, and reasoned feeling. Each teacher’s experience of social injustice was unique and specific in his or her own cultural and situational contexts. In this regard, Jean asked a critical question about empathy.

“I wonder why we are still touched even though we haven’t lived the experience. There is no way that each of us could live somebody else’s experience” (Jean).

Social justice educators extended their knowledge of social injustice by empathizing with others who experienced social injustice. Empathy had two major components: interconnectedness and perspective taking. Teachers extended their sense of a self by connecting themselves to family, friends, and others. They identified themselves with those who were oppressed by taking on their perspectives. In the
following stories, Charo talked about how she empathized with her father and other Hispanics.

“I feel connected to everybody not just to my group. I have a father from South America and a mother from North America. I feel connected to a lot of people. I really do feel connected to everybody. I think people have to have some kind of experience so they feel connected to everybody. And then when somebody else is being oppressed, it matters because you identify with them” (Charo).

“My father was from South America, but he was well educated. Almost all the other Hispanics in my school were children of migrant workers. So they were treated very differently than we were, but I felt really proximal. I felt close to them because I knew that our backgrounds were similar in a lot of ways … So I felt it whenever any of them got teased or whenever teachers were mean to them, I just felt it” (Charo).

Social justice educators also showed evidences of empathy by going beyond their own racial or ethnic backgrounds. Empathy has no boundaries. Martha empathized with her African and African American friends. “I can’t say that I have
experienced as much social injustice as other people. But, I have experienced it with strongly with my friends who are not white.” She also helped five year old children build empathic understanding. She made consistent efforts to connect her children with children in Africa. “I want them to move into another child’s shoe right beside them, the children’s shoes at the school in Africa. I ask ‘would you be okay if …’ ‘how do you feel about …?’ or ‘what do you think about …?’” Her questioning skills showed that she emphasized the importance of enhancing empathy. She said “it is to build empathetic understanding of what it means to be part of something bigger than yourself.”

In teaching English with *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, Jean and Troy highlighted the importance of empathic understanding. As Troy said, “If you never leave your own nucleus, you never understand.” Empathy is to extend the sense of a self into others. It was also very obvious that students from marginalized cultures felt that their teachers empathized with and understood them.

**Empathic Distress and Anger**

Social justice educators showed two kinds of empathy-based feelings: Empathic distress and anger. Tom, a white male high school Art teacher, was the only teacher who addressed neither about bi-cultural backgrounds nor significant cross-cultural experiences. However, he talked about his experience of witnessing racism.
“For no reason other than he was black, [two 5th graders] hit him and hit him.” The proximity both to the event and the person made the experience authentic enough to understand racism. His experience of witnessing brutal racism had nothing to do with his previous experience of racism. However, it led him to an empathic understanding of what it was like to be discriminated against.

“But I couldn’t cross the street because I knew I’d get into trouble for my mom. That memory to me is clear today. Within a week he moved out of our neighborhood. And I’ll never forget that” (Tom).

The empathic distress he experienced and remembered influenced Tom’s life and teaching for social justice. The brutal racism was against his sense of social justice. It also helped him realize privilege and powerlessness. Ellen, who taught at a school where 96% of student body is African American, also expressed empathic distress by recognizing white privileges.

“I don’t know if we will ever overcome [racism]. I don’t know that blacks will ever stop feeling inferior and whites will stop feeling superior … I don’t feel guilty about being white, but I sometimes feel
guilty about not being black when I try to provide black students with an idea of social justice” (Ellen).

Social justice educators experienced empathic distress and anger in their everyday lives by taking the perspectives of the oppressed and making efforts to change the oppression. Tom also talked about empathic distress with his friend and anger to aggressors.

“I had another friend who had cerebral palsy in his lower leg. His tendon was shorter and it made his foot point down. He couldn’t straighten his foot at a right angle. It would always point down. He would always limp. He was a great guy, but he was a prime target for the cut down thing because you could really hammer on that. He was one of my good friends even into high school. I don’t know how many times I almost got into fights because people were picking on him and I would step in” (Tom).

While empathic distress was an internal reflection, empathic anger was a critical reaction to both aggressors and the socially unjust reality. In the following conversation, Hristo and I talked about anger.
Hristo: There is anger. These students have the anger and you can see it.

One of the initial emotional responses to any type of perceived injustice is always anger. The first thing they will see is ignorance, and then anger.

SungChoon: Between ignorance and anger, I think, you are there, right?

When you as a social justice educator break their ignorance, then they come up with anger. How do you think?

Hristo: The thing is I don’t know if the anger ever goes away. A lot of their initial responses on the material we discuss [in class] are emotional anger. By having them actually acknowledge their feelings, it makes them be able to use them in class. They are holding onto the anger instead of acknowledging the anger.

When social justice educators identified students’ emotional anger at the socially unjust reality, they empathized with students by feeling both empathic distress and anger. Throughout the research period Ellen and her students were actively involved in changing the unequal school funding system. I took her and her students to
my university campus and helped them get signatures on a petition for changing school funding system. Her students went to urban elementary schools and made a paper chain with children’s wishes for their schools. In addition to school inequalities, she brought up a political issue about the War in Iraq. It was empathic anger that made connection between the unhealthy educational system with the War.

“I was always very neutral about politics [in class] I never told them who I favored and who I didn’t. I showed them the worst of both political parties until this war started. I cannot be responsible of this. I cannot be an American who supports killing 100,000 Iraquis for no good reason. I used to be good. I used to be good about not telling them where I was coming from, but I can’t do it anymore” (Ellen).

Social justice educators showed evidences of empathizing with students who had experiential knowledge of social injustice. They understood the emotional feelings of their students, experienced empathic distress by realizing their privilege and powerlessness, and felt empathic anger at abusers. In teaching for social justice, social justice educators helped students extend the sense of a self into a bigger community by empathizing with others who experienced social injustice.
You Have to Feel It.

Authenticity in Identifying Social Injustice

Feeling was an affective reflection on and reaction to the socially unjust reality, which led social justice educators to understandings of power relations. It was understood as a prerequisite step to understanding. Throughout the research period they expressed the feelings they had had in the face of social injustice. They also appreciated students’ feelings in bringing social justice issues into the classroom.

“The kids who are outside of [mainstream] culture feel inferior. Even if they can’t articulate that, it happens” (Charo).

“You really have to feel what it is like to be an outsider sometimes to understand it” (Charo).

“You have to feel it first. It has got to be internal” (Ellen).

Racism was painful to Charo who was born in the 1940s and saw her father being discriminated against. While she talked about her father, my understanding of racism was grounded on the authentic feelings that were conveyed to me through her.
Hristo also conveyed the Somali students’ feelings of being ignored. The feelings resulted from powerlessness and frustration.

“I saw how people responded to my father’s face and his name and his accent. That was almost painful because here was this person that you love and admire. And then you see other people think that he is less than something because of his face” (Charo).

“[Somali students] just felt like they were ignored. It was unfortunate because they would actually come to me and cry” (Hristo).

The word “feel” or “feeling” was beyond emotional and ethical expression. It was used in an analogous and interchangeable way with the word “think” or “understand.” Feeling was interconnected with understanding. For example, Tom used the verbs “feel” and “know” in the same sentence and context.

“I think the most people don’t feel that what we did to the Native Americans was right. Most people don’t think that slavery was right. Most people think that discrimination is wrong” (Tom).
“I don’t know if [teaching for social justice] is something that I really consciously do. … It is something that you should feel and know it is the right thing to do” (Tom).

The feelings helped social justice educators see power issues from ethical and critical perspectives. In what follows, Martha and Jean talked about how power was related to ethical issues in social justice education.

“I just started making connections between animal rights issues and people who had less power and less fortune” (Jean).

“[Social injustice] is always about power … Anything that you are dealing with in the classroom content wise should have an ethical dilemma to [social injustice]. It is moral justice or social justice. Otherwise what’s the point? What does this mean to us in our world? Who am I in this world? What are my responsibilities? (Martha)

Social justice educators expressed the importance of feeling in identifying social injustice. It was associated with critical and ethical questions to the socially unjust reality. While pain, anger, discomfort, and guilt were responsive feelings to
social injustice, responsibility and caring were conscientious and deliberate feelings toward social justice. The feelings were inseparable from each other.

Feelings From Social Injustice Toward Social Justice

The feelings expressed throughout the research period were not psychologically analyticable emotions, but they were critical questions attached to social injustice and ethical orientations to social justice. Ellen talked about her feeling of right and wrong.

“You didn’t ask me this, but I am going to tell you why I became a teacher. I am not a religious person, but I swore that I would go to hell if I stayed [working as a paralegal]. There was just something immoral about it. Saving money for big insurance companies, I just couldn’t do it anymore. I just woke up everyday going ‘This is wrong’” (Ellen).

Based on a solid understanding of social injustice, social justice educators showed the affective inclination from “what is wrong” to “what is right.” Feeling was the bridge between the ontology of social injustice and the epistemology to social justice. It was not logos, but pathos and ethos that helped them understand social injustice. In other words, social injustice such as racism did not logically make sense
to social justice educators. Instead, the illogical social injustice awakened them to both pathos, emotional feelings from social injustice and ethos, ethical orientations toward social justice. In this regard, Martha addressed the relationship between feeling and understanding by addressing a moral question attached to social justice.

“Justice is more about feeling than understanding … I feel what is right instead of saying I fully understand what it is. I have an attitude or a leaning toward justice. That makes teaching for social justice is a progress forever” (Martha).

Feeling both social injustice and justice was the center of the pedagogical practices for each social justice educator. For example, Hristo’s feelings from bicultural and cross-cultural experiences indicated the importance of multiple perspectives. Jean’s teaching and life were related to her feelings for social justice.

“I really feel that once you can see both sides, then you can see there is a third side or a fourth side or a fifth side … We are afraid to look at one more point” (Hristo).
“I really try to integrate how I feel about social justice in the world and incorporate that into my daily life” (Jean).

In the classroom students were encouraged to experience the feelings both from social injustice and toward social justice. For example, Charo helped students express and discuss feelings through tablau activities. Fourth graders did not hide their feelings after they read a book *Leon’s Story* by Leon Waltor Tillage who told his own stories about living through racial discriminations in the 1950’s and 1960’s. In their tableux activity or the frozen performance, children were split into five groups of 4-5 students. Two of these groups performed a scene in which Leon, an African American boy, was scared by a snarling dog which was owned by white people. Another group performed a freeze scene in which the father of a white girl asked her to kick Leon. While students were expressing the pain and the anger from racial discrimination, Charo encouraged them to take moral courage to fight against social injustice. Some of her questions during the tableux activity were “Why is this scene important?” “How did white people treat black people?” “Where is social injustice [in this scene]?” “How did the change start?” Students conveyed the painful feelings that Leon had from overt racism, expressed the caring feelings
for him by empathizing with him, and discussed how to stand up against social injustice.

Social justice educators used literature in helping students understand social justice issues. They asked critical questions such as “What do you think her feelings are?” “How do you think she is feeling?” “What else might she feel?” “She is stuck in a situation that seems to be absolutely nowhere out.” “How would you feel if …?” and “Would you be okay if …” These questions helped students move from beyond the feelings of social injustice to the feelings toward social justice.

What in the World is Social Justice?

Social Justice as Goal and Process

Social justice educators showed their skeptical views on an unshakable concept of social justice. When I asked what they thought social justice was, they gave me the following answers.

“That is a good question because I had no concept of social justice for a long time … I had a general sense of it, but I didn’t know much about it” (Jean).
“I wish I knew it. I have never experienced that … I really don’t know what social justice looks like” (Ellen).

“A socially just world, I think, is a goal. I would love to see it” (Troy).

“I don’t know if there is a perfect school, a perfect world. I don’t think it exists” (Helen).

Social justice is a goal to achieve the opposite side or to have the void situation of existing social injustice. When the teachers accounted for social justice, they constantly reconstructed it by addressing complex and multiple realities of social injustice. Social justice educators started with social injustice and described their concept of social justice passively. The concept of social justice was built around unequal power relationships.

“Social justice has to do with inequity and imbalance of power because some thing is not fair to somebody to some extent. Whatever reason some people are marginalized, they are left out of certain things” (Helen).
“To have social justice would be to have all groups have equal power. Some groups not dominating others.”

“In a socially just world there would not be hungry children, there would not be abused women, and there would not be significant differences in education. Every person should care about other people and the earth” (Ellen).

“It is a better distribution of our resources” (Jean).

“A socially just world is where people have actual equal opportunity and equal chance” (Hristo).

At the same time, social justice is an everlasting process of challenging power relationships in the hierarchical structure. Based on their solid understanding of social injustice, they addressed new causes for social justice.
“I don’t think social justice is a product. There will never be an ending point because it is a circle or a cycle of life … We are always going to be working and changing and growing” (Martha).

“I think in some respects we are [making progresses], but I still feel like not enough of the world is moving. It is moving too slow. There are still so many institutionalized policies keeping it the way it is” (Helen).

“Two steps forward and then two steps backward. Some things are getting a whole lot better, but some things are getting worse or aren’t changing at all … I think that individuals are becoming more accepting of gays and lesbians, but our society is stacked against them right now” (Jean).

“I think there will always be some cause for social justice whether it is racial, or gender, or age, or religion, or something. There will always be a group that needs support and understanding and a group that will try to ostracize them” (Troy).
Dialectical Concept of Social Justice

The conceptualization of social justice was dialectical. Social justice educators did not account for social justice without addressing examples of social injustice. In constructing the concept of social justice, teachers rejected the logocentric concept of social justice that was based on an ideal, reciprocal, and distributive concept. According to Charo,

“Fairness means that everybody gets the same. But children start to realize that having the same for everybody is not fair. People have different needs. I think kids actually understand it better than adults. The concept of social justice gets pretty sophisticated” (Charo).

Social justice educators did not envision a hypothetically attainable concept of social justice. Reflecting on the history, they saw positive progresses to social justice. However, they also addressed new causes for social justice. The conceptual construction is inevitably changing because the socially unjust reality is complex.

“I think that is something that will be ever changing because as soon as we begin to get close to one aspect, something new comes up. You know we have made strides in that aspect, but I think there will always
be a group that needs attention and support. So it is a forever lasting process” (Troy).

“I don’t think we are as near as I would like to be. I think that we are in some ways a lot further than we have been … But I think that there are still injustices going on right now that” (Helen).

The dialectical conceptualization of social justice was also based on comparative perspectives on powerlessness and privilege. As I mentioned earlier there was no air conditioning at Martha’s school. Children at Peace Road Elementary School did not have a nice playground space. However, she saw that her students had privileges compared to the children in Africa. This connection was possible for her to make when she saw social justice issues in global contexts. Helen’s project, the Penny War, was another example of dialectical conceptualization of social justice. Students at Sebastian Middle School, where 88% of students are on free or reduced lunch, wanted to help children at homeless shelters.

“We have been working on a project called the Penny War. Students want to buy toys and school supplies for kids who live in homeless shelters. I think it is still important for them to help others because they
are still more fortunate than some other people … I know fully well
there are some kids in the classroom who are currently homeless”
(Helen).

**Teaching for Social Justice Is Not Easy**

**Teachers Who Do Not Teach for Social Justice**

Social justice educators differentiated their pedagogical thoughts and practices
from those who they did not consider to be social justice educators.

“Other people aren’t teaching for social justice. I am trying to be
realistic of it. But I am going to keep doing what I do anyway even if it
looks bleak” (Jean).

“ Social justice is really important to me. But, personally, I don’t think
it’s important enough to other teachers. So, in that sense I think more
research is necessary because I don’t think everybody realizes the value
in it. I think there are too many teachers who are still teaching what
they know and are stuck in their own ways” (Helen).
Social justice educators expressed that teaching for social justice was not easy for some of their colleagues. While social justice educators paid special attention to cultural differences and inequalities, other teachers did not have a critical consciousness of social justice issues. They pointed out that some teachers were unconscious of the socially unjust reality. In the following Charo and Hristo talked about the importance of understanding cultural issues.

“I had a kid interview me for his Boy Scout project. One of his questions was what the biggest problem was here at this school. I said that some children’s cultures were never represented. And then he said that everybody else was talking about parking. It just tells you where I am in the community. Everybody else is worried about the shortage of parking and I am worried about cultural issues” (Charo).

“Some people I know even in my own building don’t understand really where the kids are coming from. They don’t have a good relationship with them. They don’t recognize differences. I mean there are differences. There are cultural differences” (Hristo).
While social justice educators were willing to address the socially unjust realities, other teachers did not have the willingness to bring social justice issues into their classroom. It was the most common issue with non-social justice educators. Even when teachers acknowledge and reflect on the socially unjust reality, they had to overcome negative feelings that resulted from the critical consciousness of cultural differences. Their feelings include discomfort and guilt because they were members of the mainstream culture. In the following, social justice educators addressed how difficult it was for people to reflect on themselves in the face of socially unjust realities.

“I think some people aren’t comfortable teaching for social justice because it is not easy. I don’t think people want to face [social injustices] because they then have to think ‘How do I act?’ ‘How have I acted in the past?’ That is hard. What if you have been a jerk in the past?” (Jean)

“It is difficult to reflect critically on oneself because it can be painful sometimes if the reflection doesn’t result positively” (Hristo).
“You have to ask hard questions about yourself. You have to be willing to say there are times that I am prejudice … There are teachers who say ‘I am not prejudice.’ But, we all are. We all are” (Martha).

While social justice educators believed in their agency to change some of the socially unjust realities, other teachers did not choose to move further and challenge the realities. Seeing themselves as agents for social justice, social justice educators feel it is their responsibility to address the socially unjust realities and help students challenge social injustice.

“I feel very responsible because I feel like I am somebody with influence. I mean I grew up in a place where I would go to college. I had all the basics I needed in life. I own a home and I have a job. I feel very responsible. That’s why I am here” (Jean).

“I don’t want these students that I have, due to my lack of effort, to be put in a class system where they cannot advance themselves” (Hristo).

“It is agency. There is something you can do about it. It matters that you bring these up and that you teach this way. Because a lot of people
you know maybe they see that issue but they don’t think they can do anything or they choose not to do anything about it. So I think that seeing yourself as an agent is part of that too” (Helen).

“I think that others may see social injustices just as clearly as I do. They don’t feel compelled to do anything about it though. I see it as my responsibility to say hey look what is going on there” (Ellen).

Challenges in Teaching for Social Justice

Social justice educators had to make consistent efforts in planning and teaching because of the challenges in teaching for social justice. They encountered students’ low motivation, parents’ disapproval to curriculum decisions, and administrators’ lack of support. The main challenge came from students. Some students showed their resistance to social justice oriented lessons. Therefore, my teachers talked about the importance of motivating students to get involved in social justice issues. In the following teachers talked about student motivation.

“I have more resistance from students. They ask questions like ‘Can’t I just take notes and take a test?’ ‘Why do I get to do this?’ ‘Why do I
have to read this?’ ‘Why do I have to do a presentation?’ and ‘Why do I have to meet these guys?’” (Ellen)

“Sometimes students ask ‘Why do we have to read this?’ or ‘Why are we talking about this issue?’ So, I talk about being equal and fair and how everyone should be represented [in the classroom]” (Helen).

“The last project was an easy project. It was to find women’s role in twenty commercials from TV, internet, or magazines. After going through a checklist for each ad, they were supposed to write what the role of each woman was. It was very simple. It is a very nice project. But since 70% [of my students] didn’t do it, it is not something we can address as a class. So we did a discussion about gender issues in general” (Hristo).

From these challenges, social justice educators understood the importance of helping students to be socially minded. Challenging the status quo is a difficult thing because it is accompanied by pain, anger, and responsibility, so teachers helped students to be strong and created within them a willingness to make a change.
“It is really hard at this age because a majority of them are so focused on themselves. They are still looking within instead of without” (Ellen).

“They seem to believe that since their lives are hard, they think injustice is normal. Getting them to see beyond the unjust reality is sometimes a challenge” (Hristo).

“Sometimes it’s hard. When we started the Penny War project, some kids were like ‘I don’t want to give my money to the homeless people.’ To them, their idea of the homeless is still the people on the street out there, not in the realm of their little community” (Helen).

“Letting go of old values is definitely part of it. Their fear of exploring something new creates resistance. They become uncomfortable when you ask them to change. Their fear of peer reaction is a big one. How will their friends react when they say something that may be going against the mainstream?” (Troy)
While student motivation was passive resistance, social justice educators encountered a direct resistance as well. For example, Jean experienced a resistance from an African American student who challenged her whiteness in teaching African American literature.

“I have experienced basically none here at this school. It is a great school. Nobody is going to challenge you on [teaching for social justice] except one student who was insinuating that I wasn’t qualified to teach African American Literature because I was not black … but everybody [else] has been very positive about it” (Jean).

Social justice educators also faced challenges from parents. In the following Martha and Helen talked about their curriculum decisions.

“This year I had a parent who didn’t want me to do the work with the children in Africa. When I asked why, she said, ‘My child was adopted and I don’t want her to know about orphanages. I don’t want her to know that there are children out there who don’t have parents … For one more year I want my child to think the world is a perfect place.’ It is just a different way of thinking. I am not saying she is wrong and I
am right. But, have I ever wanted my children to think that the world is a perfect place?” (Martha)

“We usually read a book called Luna, which is about a child who is born as a boy, but internally he feels like a girl. Last year was the first year a parent ever came in upset about it. She was really truly upset because her child told her only one part of the story … So, the mom came in and said ‘Well, I don’t want him reading this book.’ And I said ‘Well, we’ve got two chapters to go. We are going to finish it today. But if you don’t want him to finish it, I understand. But can I please tell you why we chose this book?’ … There are students in the room who are or will be a part of that group as they grow up. It is not fair to them to not feel represented in the classroom” (Helen).

We Teach for Social Justice.

The Socially Just Classroom Environment

Social justice educators created a socially just classroom environment in which they created a caring and safe atmosphere. It resulted from a critical consciousness of the culture of power and knowledge enacted in the classroom. For example, Charo
expressed how her pedagogy was reflected on the culture of power and knowledge in the classroom.

“I heard Frederick Erickson speak at a university. He said ‘Whenever I walked into a classroom, I want to know who knows what, who doesn’t know what, and why not.’ I have been thinking about that for a long time. What do I think when I walk into a classroom? When I come into a classroom, I want to know who has power and how they are using it. I think this is huge for social justice” (Charo).

Not only did they recognize influences and dynamics of cultural politics in the classroom, they also reflected on their own roles within the culture of power and knowledge. Martha explained to me that her pedagogy resulted from her reflections on the concept of “power over,” “power with,” and “power for.”

“I am trying to use my power with children for my children. You see? But I used to think that I could never say ‘You need to stop what you are doing right now, you need to go over there and you need sit, and you need to take a moment to think about how you make that other kid feel.’ There was a time when I wouldn’t do that in my teaching. Still I
like to do it privately as much as possible. But I learned that then I am perpetuating social injustice because I am the one in the room who has to step in. So, when I am using my power over appropriately in a situation, once again I am using my power for. Learning when to step in, when my power is shared, and when I need to be of authority so that my power is for has been big for me. It’s about modeling social justice in the room for children” (Martha).

In sharing power and knowledge with students, social justice educators emphasized the ethics of respect and caring. For example, on the wall of Tom’s computer animation class was the “Code of Moral, Ethical, Humane, Commonsensical, Throughful, Good Conscience, Positive, and otherwise filled with Goodness, Standard of Animation Content and Meaning.” Under the Code were examples to avoid in all animations, which included “extreme violence; drug and alcohol abuse; foul language; sexual or provocative situations; blood, guts, and base bodily; derogatory statements or implications towards race, ethnicity, gender or sexual preference.” The way he clarified his code with the “irrespectable” examples was the same way that social justice educators constructed the concept of social justice dialectically. It reflected his teaching philosophy.
“My primary role of course is to teach students art. But I think probably equal to that is to teach students how to be good people, how to look at one another, how to respect one another, and hopefully how to cherish some of the differences we all have” (Tom).

Other social justice educators also built a socially just classroom environment. Troy had the “Rules of the World” on the wall, which began with “The world is not fair.” On the other side of the classroom wall, was Langston Hughes’s poem, *Harlem*. The last part of the poem read:

So we stand here
On the edge of hell
In Harlem
And look out on the world
And wonder
What we’re gonna do
In the face of what we
We remember

He also changed the classroom bulletin board periodically in order for students to see and learn about the socially unjust realities. Charo’s choice of literature was to
represent all cultures of all children in her classroom. Ellen put up pictures and articles from newspapers, had bumper stickers on the wall, and a poster for saving the environment with a Native American girl in it. In what follows, Jean talked about the importance of building a socially just classroom environment.

“There needs to be somebody at school where they are everyday. Sometimes there is nobody to be trusted at home. They need somebody there who puts the equal sign on ... I guess those things combined over a course of a semester or a year and students are going to understand that I feel the way that I do and that it is safe to talk about it” (Jean).

Social justice educators built a socially just classroom community in order for all students to have the sense of belonging. They built a safe place physically and emotionally for all students. They cared about and for students who came from social margins.

“I have to make everybody feel safe. If you don’t feel safe, you are not going to learn. I have to keep everybody physically safe ... and they also have to feel emotionally safe. I know this is harder for kids who come from the outside. If they live in poverty, if they have some kinds
of learning disability, or if they have another culture or another religion, it is going to be harder for them to have a sense of belonging. It really is. So, I have to make sure that they feel like they belong here. They are not outsiders. They are part of this community. So my first thing is to build a community and a learning community. And then, everything else falls into place. By modeling that in the classroom, hopefully it extends to the bigger world. It won’t right now, but hopefully one day it will” (Charo).

The classroom environment was built on the socially just relationships between teachers and students. Based on teachers’ experiential and empathic knowledge of social injustice, they understood how children from social margins would feel. As teachers understood the feelings of the students, they cherished and appreciated a cultural environment that embraced all students in the classroom.
Socially Just Curriculum

“I have a responsibility because sharing information is how knowledge is spread. When information is withheld, that is a big thing” (Ellen).

Social justice educators constantly planned and developed socially just curriculum. They helped students be social agents by increasing their critical consciousness, attitudes toward social justice, and actions for social justice. Challenging the existing curriculum that reinforced and consolidated stereotypes and prejudices, they developed a socially just curriculum. For example, Helen criticized the existing hegemonic curriculum. “How many pages has it been until the first African American was mentioned in the Social Studies textbook? How many pages has it been until we first see a woman? Why is it?” She and other teachers tried to represent the cultures of all students. Helen said, “My goal truly by the end of the year is to try to hit as many different groups as I can in as many different ways as I can.”

Their curriculum development was based on their understanding of students’ cultures. For example, Jean and Charo talked about the goal in teaching for social justice.
“Connecting people with their past and showing them where they come from are absolutely important. It is the root to tell you where to go. So I think that is what social justice is to myself, to society, and to students. It is a responsibility” (Jean).

Based on the culture of power and knowledge, teachers gave students power by having them express their own voices and experiences. Charo diligently tried to make sure that all kids were represented.

“I keep trying to give more and more voice and power to the kids and then teach them how to use it. Slowly I give them more and more power and more choices, but have the lesson in there too on how to use it” (Charo).

When fourth graders did tableux activities after reading a book, they were excited about the activity because they felt empowered by creating their own curriculum. While each group performed the frozen scenes, everyone else including Charo had to guess what the group was performing. In the following, Charo talked about curriculum development and decisions.
“Plus they get to create the curriculum [through the tableux activity]. They are in charge of the curriculum for a minute, which is huge. It is about power. That they feel the power and the curriculum itself is pretty impressive too. I mean they have very good ideas of what the curriculum should be” (Charo).

The other teachers also gave their students more power and voice in developing curriculum and presenting their works. In Tom’s computer animation classroom, all students felt pride in their work. Tom organized the Computer Animation Festival and showed students’ animation works in the auditorium to their parents and friends in the community. The students felt empowered with and through their own curricula works. In Jean’s Hot Topics classroom, students chose social issues to discuss and then discussed how to make a change.

At the same time, social justice educators also felt their power in developing a socially just curriculum. Helen, who did her student teaching in Math, understood that she could bring many social justice issues into her Math curriculum. However, she felt more freedom and power in developing socially just curriculum in Social Studies and English. Instead of bringing pieces of statistical information into the curriculum, her goal was to represent all of the cultural groups in her community in creative ways.
“Yes I have so much more freedom. I think that Social Studies and English are the easiest places to incorporate social justice at any point. With Math there are some parts where it fits like graphing and statistics, but a lot of it doesn’t fit. I mean you can fit it into word problems and stuff but not always. Science it is even harder… I definitely prefer English just because I can pick what I want to read.”

Social justice educators developed their lessons by focusing on social injustice. Troy and his colleagues at Stewart High School developed a unit on “poverty” because their students did not know about impoverished life styles. He constantly cautioned other teachers and students who came from rich families.

“We saw such ignorance toward the impoverished lifestyle. I have students who have summer homes in the Hamptons, they’ve lived in Europe, and they travel to Europe each year. They go all over the world, but they’ve never been to the downtown area. They have never seen how an impoverished family lives” (Troy).
They spread the idea of critical thinking. They help students have a deeper understanding of social injustice, not just a superficial understanding. The deeper understanding resulted from a critical and close examination of students’ historical, cultural, and everyday contexts.

“I like to pose questions, to discuss them and see if and why. Why is it the best way? Why is it not the best way? It brings up a lot of knowledge to a table. When we discuss economic systems, I tell them how our economic policy keeps 5 percent of people unemployed and looking for jobs. Now they might not know economics, but it sounds wrong for them because their parents and neighbors are those 5 percent of people. Then, I get responses from students” (Hristo).
Chapter 6

TOWARD SOCIALLY JUST PEDAGOGY

Introduction

This study has provided me with a great opportunity to work with and learn from community-nominated social justice educators. By negating the logocentric idea of social justice, I centered on teachers’ experiences and thoughts in order to investigate their grounded perceptions of teaching for social justice. In particular, I tried to convey my teachers’ passion and enthusiasm for social justice in their own voices as well as in collective voices. My teachers’ stories have resonated in me since the beginning of the study. I hope their stories will find breathing space in the lives of other people.

In this final chapter I open up a space for discussion, implication, and further research by revisiting my research questions. What I learned about and from the community-nominated social justice educators revealed the importance of a solid understanding of social injustice, attitudes toward social justice, and pedagogical practices for social justice.
First, experience and empathy were vital in understanding social injustice and teaching for social justice. I found that cultural border-crossing experiences between rural, urban, suburban, and global communities enhanced their empirical knowledge of social injustice. They experienced the otherness through and beyond their own experiences. Though there is a body of research on experiential knowledge, further research is needed on enhancing empathy in teaching for social justice.

Second, teachers revealed a strong emphasis on feelings such as pain, anger, discomfort, guilt, caring, and responsibility in teaching for social justice. The feelings were not psychologically analyticable emotions, but socio-moral-critical questions attached to social justice issues. The feelings resulted both in understanding social injustices and attitudes toward social justice. However, there is lack of research on how teachers deal with their feelings and those of their students’ when encountering social injustice as they teach for social justice. In addition, teachers understood social justice as a goal and a process by constantly challenging the socially unjust reality. The concept of social justice was dialectically constructed. I propose the usage of the word social (in)justice as a way to convey both social injustice and social justice.

Third, teaching for social justice is to challenge the socially unjust reality in the culture of power and knowledge. Not only did teachers create a socially just classroom environment, but they also developed a socially just curriculum in which all cultural groups of people were represented. Their pedagogies were deeply grounded
on cultural aspects in education. However, further research is still needed on the differences between culturally relevant pedagogy and socially just pedagogy. I argue that the latter is more inclusive than the former because it embraces white teachers who teach at predominantly white schools.

**Discussion**

**Empirical knowledge of Social Injustice**

My teachers experienced social injustice in “the normal processes of everyday life” (Young, 1990, p. 41). As a consequence, they had a solid understanding of social injustice and helped student examine the socially unjust reality. It was a prerequisite and essential step in teaching for social justice. In this regard, my study supports a body of literature on social (in)justice (Adams et al., 1997, 2000; Young, 1990). Their experience of marginalization and awareness of privilege enabled them to realize structural violence in the hierarchical society.

It was important to note that “every” teacher expressed his or her experiences of marginalization regardless of historical and cultural backgrounds. At one point of their lives they experienced powerlessness as a member of situational minority. For example, Jean’s comparatively lower economic status in the high upper-end community helped her realize social injustice from the perspectives of the
economically marginalized groups of people. Troy, a white middle class male, experienced the otherness by associating himself with different cultural groups. In this regard, it is notable to pay attention to Yoshino’s (2006) work about gay covering, race covering, and sex-based covering in relation to human authenticity and civil rights.

“Everyone covers. To cover is to tone down a disfavored identity to fit into the mainstream. In our increasingly diverse society, all of us are outside the mainstream in some way … For this reason, every reader of this book has covered, whether consciously or not, and sometimes at significant personal cost … I doubt any of these people covered willingly. I suspect they were all bowing to an unjust reality that required them to tone down their stigmatized identities to get along in life” (pp. ix - x)

As social injustice is structural and institutional, no individual is free from experiencing the power relations. Teachers with bi-cultural backgrounds expressed their pain and anger from social injustice. As I mentioned in the biographies, Charo once wished that she was not different and could fit into the mainstream. But, she was different. Hriso’s bi-cultural and cross-cultural experience distinguished him from the mainstream. Ellen’s critical consciousness of her whiteness was somewhat related to her Native American cultural backgrounds. At the same time, their two-ness enabled them to acknowledge privileges. Instead of covering their otherness, they “uncovered” their empirical knowledge of social injustice in teaching for social justice.
All teachers including the three bi-cultural teachers expressed their privileges coming from whiteness. Cultural border-crossing experiences enabled them to experience “multiple outsider-within locations” (Collins, 1998, p. 230) in different cultural contexts. Martha’s cross-cultural experiences between rural, urban, and global communities helped her and her children understand the socially unjust realities in broader contexts. The kindergarteners at the urban school had comparative privileges in global contexts. It was notable that privileges were easily identified from cross-cultural experiences. Teachers’ experiential knowledge of social injustice was closely related to a double-consciousness that is the “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others” (DuBois, 1903, p. 45).

In addition, my study suggests that discourses on social injustice go beyond the categorical isms such as racism, sexism, classism, ableism, etc. Intersections among various types of oppression create unique situations for individuals who fall into multiple categories of disenfranchisement (Israel, 2006). Tyson’s (2006) concept of specificity of oppression and Young’s (1990) faces of oppression deal with intersectionalities and complexities of social injustice in our everyday lives.

My teachers extended their experiential knowledge of social injustice by empathizing with others who experienced social injustice. My finding supports Hoffman’s (2000) empathic duality of “empathic-distress-for victim components and
empathy-based anger-at-aggressor component” (p. 98). It also supports that empathy is based on critical thinking. According to Gallo (1989),

“an empathic response is one which contains both a cognitive and an affective dimension … the term empathy [is] used in at least two ways; to mean a predominantly cognitive response, understanding how another feels, or to mean an affective communion with the other” (p. 100).

My study reveals that empathy is a reasoned feeling. On one hand, it is a cognitive analysis of the socially unjust reality. On the other hand, it is an affective reaction to the oppressive nature of the world. Ellen’s environmentalism and Jean’s advocate for animal rights are examples of making cognitive and affective connections with the world. Ellen said, “I thought that I would save the earth by teaching. When I started getting involved with things that are environmentally conscious, I was just exposed to a whole bunch of different other things.” In addition, teachers’ understanding of other people’s powerlessness was also based on critical consciousness of the socially unjust reality. Witnessing racial discrimination against family members and close friends extended their empirical knowledge of social injustice. Tom’s experience of witnessing brutal racism against his African American friend led to empathic understanding of the socially unjust reality.
Empathy was related to caring (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1989, 1992; Gilligan & Ward, 2004). In this regard, my study supports that teaching for social justice needs to focus on empathy and caring rather than logical understanding. It is important to note that teachers help students broaden their cultural boundaries by exposing them to diverse cultures through literature.

**Conceptualization of Social (In)justice**

Teachers expressed their concept of social justice based on their understanding of and feelings from social injustice. They constructed it in a dialectical way by considering both social injustice and social justice. In this regard, my finding negates the logocentric approach to social justice (Rawls, 1971, 1993; Barry, 1989). No teacher in my study agreed with the concept of the original position on which Rawls fabricated two principles of justice. In constructing the idea of social justice, teachers appreciated the particular perspectives in historical and social situations. In this regard, my study supports Young’s (1990) criticism of the logocentric approach to social justice.

“The attempt to adopt an impartial and universal perspective on reality leaves behind the particular perspectives from which it begins, and reconstructs them as mere appearances as opposed to the reality that objective reason apprehends. The experience of these appearances, however, is itself part of reality. If reason seeks to know the whole of reality, then, it must apprehend all the particular perspectives from their
particular points of view. The impartiality and therefore objectivity of reason, however, depends on its detaching itself from particulars and excluding them from its account of the truth” (p. 102).

My study that proposes the dialectic concept of social (in)justice extends the grounded approach by addressing both social injustice and social justice within a theoretical framework. It is based on Derrida’s concept of differance and strategy of deconstruction, which enables me to account for social justice education both as a goal and a process. For example, while teachers identified social injustice in a particular context such as an urban community, they also made connections with other cultural contexts such as rural, suburban, and global. Consequently, they developed comparative perspectives of privilege and powerlessness. They realized the spectrum of the oppressive nature in broader cultural contexts. In this aspect, I use the parenthesis in the term, social (in)justice as a way of addressing both sides of social justice issues in any particular situation and context.

Throughout the research period my teachers expressed how they felt when they experienced social injustice or witnessed others experiencing social injustice. The feelings were authentic in identifying social injustice, conveyed socio-moral inquiries to social justice issues, and moving toward the idea of social justice. Bloom’s (1956) taxonomy of educational objectives for affective domain includes receiving, responding, valuing, organizing, and characterizing by a value of value complex. Banks’s (1991) value inquiry model and Collins’s (1998) search for social justice
emphasize the importance of affective domain. Adams et al.’s (1997) also claims that social justice education practice balances the emotional and cognitive components of the learning process. However, it is notable that there is a lack of empirical research on affective domain such as attitudes, emotions, and feelings.

The feeling is an example of “shamefully silenced discourses” (Gilligan & Ward, 2004). Addressing feelings from social justice is not only to enhance critical consciousness of the socially unjust reality, but also to authenticate attitudes toward social justice. Teachers in my study used counter-storytelling methods and contemporary realistic fictions. My finding supports Solorzano & Yosso’s (2002) study on counter-storytelling and Tyson’s (2004) use of contemporary realistic fictions. My study extends the literature that stresses the feelings of those who are oppressed in the society. The feelings of social (in)justice make connections between the reality of social injustice and the orientation to social justice. Based on the distressful feelings from social injustice, teachers moved toward social justice.

**Social justice educators and pedagogy**

My teachers’ pedagogical practices were grounded on a culturally relevant pedagogy. They understood the gaps between mainstream and marginal cultures as a critical framework in understanding the socially unjust reality. In the face of challenges in teaching for social justice, they showed
“(1) thorough knowledge about the cultural values, learning styles, historical legacies, contributions, and achievements of different ethnic groups; (2) the courage to stop blaming the victims of school failure and to admit that something is seriously wrong with existing educational system; (3) the will to confront prevailing educational cannons and convictions, and to rethink traditional assumptions of cultural universality and/or neutrality in teaching and learning; (4) the skills to act productively in translating knowledge and sensitivity about cultural diversity into pedagogical practices; and (5) the tenacity to relentlessly pursue comprehensive and high-level performance for children who are currently underachieving in schools” (Gay, 2000, p. 44).

My study brings a question to Ladson-Billings’s (1995) theory of cultural relevant pedagogy. For example, Troy is a white male English teacher who teaches at a predominantly white school in an economically upper class area. There is no doubt that his pedagogy is based on the cultural understanding of his students. He understood where his students were coming from culturally and economically. He constantly brought up social justice issues and his lessons were grounded on cultural aspects in the society. His cultural background in a rural town and teaching experience at an urban school surely made him competent in diverse cultures. However, it is notable that Troy is different from teachers who are described as culturally relevant teachers in literature. First, he teaches at a predominately white school. Second, many of his lessons are about the impoverished cultures that are different from his not about the culture of his students coming from the privileged families, but about the
impoverished culture. Can he still be considered as a culturally relevant teacher? My study suggests that social justice pedagogy is more inclusive than culturally relevant pedagogy. Culturally relevant pedagogy and social justice pedagogy are grounded on the same ontological assumption that the world is socially unjust. However, while the former starts with a critical examination of cultural gaps between European and African American students based on the perspectives of the oppressed, the latter starts with the realization of the socially unjust reality from the perspectives of both the oppressed and the mainstream. In addition the former centers on the concept of culture, while the latter prioritizes the socio-political consciousness of the socially unjust reality.

My study supports the literature on characteristics of social justice pedagogy. My teachers’ pedagogies are student-centered, collaborative, experiential, intellectual, critical, multicultural, and activist (Wade, 2004, 2007; Biglow et al., 1994).

Implications

In this section I provide two main implications from my study. First, this study confirmed my assumption that a solid understanding of social injustice was critical in teaching for social justice. Social justice education should not be under the veil of ignorance. Social (in)justice can be identified in the everyday contexts by
acknowledging privileges and experiencing powerlessness. In particular, teachers with bi-cultural backgrounds were competent in identifying social injustice from the perspectives of the mainstream and the margin. It enabled them to have critical socio-political consciousness of the socially unjust reality. Teachers with cross-cultural experiences also developed this sense of two-ness by leaving their own cultural boundaries and experiencing the otherness. They encountered diverse groups of people, experienced discrimination, and felt the unequal power structure (Merryfield, 2000a). Therefore, teacher educators need to provide pre-service teachers with opportunities to work in multicultural contexts. Bringing diversity into teacher education programs is essential because the majority of the teacher population comes from white middle class. Service learning can provide the opportunities that pre-service teachers have these essential border crossing experiences.

Second, social justice education needs to center on the affective domains in teaching for social justice. It cannot exclude feelings such as pain, anger, discomfort, guilt, and responsibility. By prioritizing the experiences and the feelings of people from social margins, teachers can prioritize marginalized voices of the oppressed in their curriculum. As I discussed earlier, teachers need to have a solid cognitive understanding of social injustice in order to deal with emotional expressions such as anger and discomfort. As Senator Obama addressed in a campaign, “without understanding [the] roots of anger, [it] only serves to widen the chasm of
Therefore, teachers need to help students understand the roots of anger and discomfort from historical and everyday contexts of social injustice. Without dealing with their own feelings from social injustice, they might not be able to help students from the mainstream deal with the feelings of discomfort and guilt that may arise. At the same time, pre-service teachers need to acknowledge any potential prejudices and privileges in formal settings such as in the classroom. Teaching for social justice is only possible when teachers build a socially just classroom environment.

**Further Research**

This dissertation study was the beginning of my research on teaching for social justice. I plan to extend this study by collecting more voices of teachers. First, I plan to investigate pre-service teachers’ perceptions of teaching for social justice. I want to examine if there are differences between pre-service teachers and community-nominated social justice educators in their perceptions of teaching for social justice. Second, I also plan to conduct a longitudinal study with the same group of pre-service teachers and the community-nominated social justice educators. Third, I understand the need of researching social justice education from the perspectives of students as well as teachers. Fourth, I believe that affective domains in teaching for social justice
need to be researched. As I learn more about social justice education from more teachers, I plan to narrow my research topic to examine the role of empathy in teaching for social justice.
Appendix A. Consent for Research Participation
CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

I, ___________________________ (participant’s name), agree to participate in the study entitled: Teachers’ Perceptions of Teaching for Social Justice.

Dr. Cynthia Tyson, Principal Investigator, or her authorized representative Sung Choon Park has explained the purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed, the methods to be applied during the research period, and the expected duration of my participation. I am aware that my interviews will be tape-recorded. These audiotapes will be used only for the purpose of this study and will be destroyed at the end of the completion of the study. I also consent to the note taking of the observations in my classroom. I acknowledge that I will be given copies of the information collected from me, and a copy of the findings. I understand that I can obtain all information related to me throughout the research period.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without complications. Furthermore, I also understand that this project is not expected to involve any risk or harm to me. I understand that the results of this research may be published or reported to scientific and/or educational groups, but my name will not be associated in anyway with any published results.

I understand that if I have any questions or would like any information regarding the processes or outcomes of this research, that I can contact Sung Choon Park at (614) 761 – 1091 or his faculty advisor, Dr. Cynthia Tyson at (614) 292 – 0194.

I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the consent form and that Sung Choon Park has answered all my questions to my full satisfaction. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form has given to me.

Signed: __________________________________ Date: ____________
Witness: _________________________________ Date: ____________
Principal Investigator: ______________________ Date: ____________
Appendix B. Interview Questions
First Interview:
Please tell me about the pictures in your classroom.
Please tell me about the school and the community.
Please tell me about your students (academically and culturally).
Please tell me about your teaching experiences and philosophy.
What do you think has influenced your teaching most and how?
Please tell me about your personal and educational backgrounds.
Please tell me about your family and community (in relation to social justice issues).
How would you describe yourself as a social justice educator and why do you think your colleagues consider you as a social justice educator?
Please tell me why you are interested in my study on social justice and how you think my study is related to your pedagogy. (Any suggestions will be welcome).

Second Interview:
What kinds of social injustice have you experienced?
Please tell me how did you feel about and respond to those experiences.
What do you think is the most significant example of social injustice in the history of the United States and the world?
Please tell me about how the historical event affects your (and your students’) everyday lives today.
What kinds of social injustice do you think your students are experiencing?
What kinds of social injustice do you see in your classroom, school and community?
How do those experiences affect your teaching?
Questions from the previous interview and observations

Third Interview:
Please tell me about what you think is a socially just world.
How does it relate to your experiences of social injustice?
How has your concept of social justice changed throughout your lifetime?
How do you think the concept of social justice affect yourself, your students, and a society?
How do you think discourses on social justice today are different from before?
What do you think are the characteristics of social justice in local and global contexts?
How do you think social justice is related to schooling, education and a society?
Questions from the previous interview and observations

Fourth Interview:
Please tell me about some of your lessons related to social justice issues.
What do you think are characteristics of social justice education?
Please tell me about how you bring social justice issues into your classroom. What have been the major challenges or resistances you have faced in teaching for social justice? In reflecting on your teaching experiences, how has your pedagogy been changed throughout your teaching experiences? How do you think social justice education changes student attitude toward social justice? What do you think makes a social justice educator? Questions from the previous interview and observations

Fifth Interview:
Please tell me about community efforts for social justice. How have you involved in community social justice projects? What have you personally learned from your association with the community projects? How would you see the connections of the projects to social justice education? What do you wish could happen for the community in the next five years? How would you describe teaching as a social justice project? How do you think your participation in my study or my presence in your classroom has affected your teaching? Questions from the previous interview and observations
REFERENCES


Chouinard, V., & Crooks, V. (2005). ‘Because they have all the power and I have none’: State restructuring of income and employment supports and disabled women’s lives in Ontario, Canada. *Disability & Society*, 20(1), 19-32.


Janesick, V. J. (2000). The choreography of qualitative research design: Minuets, improvisations, and crystallization. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.),


perspectives on social studies (pp. 15-25). Greenwich, Connecticut: Information Age.


Villenas, S. Deyhle, D., & Parker, L. (1999). Critical race theory and praxis: Chicano(a)/Latino(a) and Navajo struggles for dignity, educational equity and social justice. In L. Parker, D. Deyhle, & S. Villenas (Eds.), Race is ... Race isn’t: Critical race theory and qualitative studies in education (pp. 31-52). Boulder, CO: Westview.


